

Lecture-seminar 7: Satire's bodies: Horace**1. *Satire 1.1.1-12*****note especially:**

- the interaction between *satura* + abundance/ fullness (being '*satur*') and Horace's new satirical 'satiety'/moderation (setting limits: *satis est*, 'it is enough').
- examples: granaries vs. loaves of bread in lines 45-7, swollen rivers vs. tiny springs in lines 55-7, piles of money vs. small change in lines 70-74; wealth and miserliness at lines 94-100 (the rich Ummidius, who dressed no better than a slave, was finally murdered by an axe-wielding freedwoman!)
- Horace's counter-intuitive play on a Callimachean aesthetic of the small, pared down, slender.
- the simile at lines 25-6, comparing this didactic satire to the biscuits teachers give children to bribe them to learn their alphabet.
- the irony of announcing 'enough is enough' in the very first poem...

2. *Satire 1.2 (in avoiding one vice, fools run to the opposite extreme)*

- a. Damning obscenity, obscenely... (see his use of the 'c' word at lines 36, 70, and his use of the 'f' word at 127).
- b. The superficial 'golden mean': adultery not with the posh matron or the lowly prostitute, but with the 'second class freedwoman', the *medium corpus* (lines 47ff.)
- c. Who needs the upper-class matron? Ease of satisfaction is the REAL golden mean. The aristocracy is pretentious (they boast that the high-born woman they are cavorting with is 'born from a great father' : *magno patre nata puella*, 72), just as in 1.6.6, they taunt Horace about being 'born to a freedman father' (*libertino patre natum*). The upper classes are also vulnerable (their women are out of control; class purity is always already sullied). The poet seems out to humiliate and ruin the reputation of such aristocratic men here, telling it like it is and exposing bodies and lust as unmarked by class.

Key passages for discussion:**1.2.23-63**

If you ask now: 'What's your point in all this? Well,
In avoiding one vice a fool rushes into its opposite.
Maltinus ambles around with his tunic hanging down:

Another, a dandy, hoists his obscenely up to his crotch.
 Rufillus smells of lozenges, and Gargonius of goat.
**There's no happy medium. Some will only touch women
 Whose ankles are hidden beneath a wife's flounces:
 Another only those who frequent stinking brothels.**
 Seeing someone he knew exit from one, Cato's
 Noble words were: 'A blessing on all your doings, since
 It's fine when shameful lust swells youngsters' veins
 For them to wander down here, and not mess around
 With other men's wives.' **'I'd hate to be praised for that,'
 Says Cupiennius though, an admirer of white-robed snatch.
 If you wish bad luck on adulterers, it's worth your while
 To listen how they struggle in every direction,
 And how their pleasure is marred by plenty of pain,
 And how in the midst of cruel dangers it's rarely won.**
 One man leaps from a roof: another, flogged, is hurt
 To the point of death: another in flight falls in with
 A gang of fierce robbers: a fourth pays gold for his life,
 A fifth's done over by lads, it's even happened
 That a husband with a sword's reaped the lover's
 Lusty cock and balls. 'Legal' all cried: Galba dissenting.
**How much safer it is to trade in second class wares,
 I mean with freedwomen, whom Sallust runs after
 As insanely as any adulterer.** Yet if he wished
 To be kind and generous in accord with his means,
**With reason's prompting, as modest liberality allows,
 He'd give just enough, not what meant shame and ruin
 For himself. But no he hugs himself and admires himself
 And praises himself for it, because: 'I never touch wives.'**
 As Marsaeus, Origo's lover, who gave the house and farm
 He inherited to an actress, once said: 'May I never
 Have anything to do with other men's wives.'
**But you go with prostitutes and actresses, and so
 Your reputation suffers more than your wealth.** Or
 Is it enough for you to avoid the tag, but not what
 Causes harm on every side? **To throw away a good name,
 And squander an inheritance, is always wicked.
 What matter whether you sin with a wife or a whore.**

73-110

If you'd only manage things sensibly, and not confuse
 What's desirable with what hurts you, how much wiser
 The opposite advice Nature, rich in her own wealth, gives.
 Do you think it's irrelevant whether your problems
 Are your fault or fate's? Stop angling for wives if you don't
 Want to be sorry, You're more likely to gain from it pain
 And effort, rather than reaping the fruits of delight.
 Cerinthus, her leg is no straighter, her thigh no softer,
 Among emeralds or snowy pearls, whatever you think,
 And it's often better still with a girl in a cloak.

At least she offers her goods without disguise, shows
What she has for sale openly, won't boast and flaunt
Whatever charms she has, while hiding her faults.
 It's like rich men buying horses: they inspect them
 When they're blanketed, so that if, as often happens,
 The hoof supporting a beautiful form is tender, the buyer
 Gazing isn't misled by fine haunches, long neck, small head.
 In this they're wise: don't study her bodily graces
 With Lynceus' eyes, yet blinder than Hypseae
 Ignore her imperfections. 'Oh, what legs, what arms!' True,
 But she's narrow-hipped, long-nosed: short waist, big feet.
 With a wife you can only get to see her face:
 Unless she's a Catia long robes hide the rest.
 If you want what's forbidden (since that *is* what excites you),
 What walls protect, there's a host of things in your way,
 Bodyguards, closed litters, hairdressers, hangers-on,
 A dress-hem down to her ankles, a robe on top,
 A thousand things that stop you gaining an open view.
 With the other type, no problem: You can see her almost
 Naked in Coan silk, no sign there of bad legs or ugly feet:
 And check her out with your eyes. Or would you rather
 Be tricked, parted from your cash before the goods are
 Revealed? **Callimachus says how 'the hunter chases**
The hare through deep snow, but won't touch it at rest',
Adding: 'That's what my love is like, since it flies past
What's near, and only chases after what runs away.'
Do you hope with such verses as those to keep
Pain, passion, and a weight of care from your heart?

3. *Satire 1.4* (a defence of the tradition of satire and of Horace's place in it: the new vulnerability, and a new genealogy for satire)

Whenever anyone deserved to be shown as a crook
 A thief, a libertine, a murderer, or merely notorious
 In some other way, the true poets, those who powered
 The Old Comedy: Eupolis, Aristophanes,
 Cratinus, used to mark (*notabant*) such a man out quite freely (*multa cum libertate*) 5
Lucilius derives from them, as a follower
 Who only changed rhythm and metre: witty
 With a sharp nose, true, but the verse he wrote was rough (*durus*, +ve or -ve?)
That's where the fault lay: often, epically, he'd dictate
Two hundred lines, do it standing on one foot even! (*pun on metre*) 10
A lot should have been dredged from his murky stream.
 He was garrulous, hated the labour involved in writing,
 Writing well, I mean: I don't care for mere quantity.
 Watch Crispinus offer me long odds: 'Now, if you please,
 Take your tablets and I'll take mine: pick a time, a place,
 The judges: let's see which of us can scribble the most.' 15

**Thank the gods for making me (*finxerunt*) a man of few ideas, with no spirit,
One who speaks only rarely, and then says little.**

But if it's what you prefer, then you imitate air shut

In a goat-skin bellows, labouring away till the fire Hephaestus? Il.18.372-7 **20**

Makes the iron melt. Blessed be Fannius who offers (Fannius =unknown enemy)

His books and a bust unasked, **while no one reads**

What I write, and I'm afraid to recite it aloud

Since some care little for that sort of thing, and most

Men deserve censure. Choose any man from the crowd: 25

He'll be bothered by avarice or some wretched ambition.

This man is crazy for married women, another for boys:

That man's captivated by gleaming silver: Albius

Marvels at bronze: this man trades his goods from the east

To the lands warmed by the evening rays, rushes headlong **30**

Just like the dust caught up by the wind, full of fear

Lest he loses his capital or the chance of a profit.

All of them dread our verses and hate the poets.

'He's dangerous, flee, he's marked by hay tied to his horns! 34

He won't spare a single friend to get a laugh for himself: 35

And whatever he's scribbled all over his parchments

He's eager for all the slaves and old women to know,

On their way from the well or the bake-house.' Well listen

To these few words of reply. First I'd cut my own name

From those I listed as poets: it's not enough (*satis*) merely 40

To turn out a verse, and you can't call someone a poet

Who writes like me in a style close to everyday speech.

Give the honour owed to that name to a man of talent,

One with a soul divine, and a powerful gift of song.

That's why some people have doubted if Comedy **45**

Is true poetry, since in words and content it lacks

Inspired force and fire, and except that it differs

From prose in its regular beat (*pede certo*), is **merely prose.**

'But it highlights a **father** there in a raging temper,

Because his **son**, a spendthrift whose madly in love **50**

With his mistress, a slut, shuns a girl with an ample dowry,

Reels around drunk, and causes a scandal, with torches

At even-tide.' Yes, but wouldn't Pomponius get

A lecture no less severe from a real father? So,

It's not nearly enough (*non satis est*) to write out a line in plain speech, **55**

That if you arranged it, would allow any father to fume (*stomachetur*)

Like the one in the play. **Take the regular rhythm**

From this that I'm writing now, or Lucilius wrote,

Putting the first words last, placing the last ones first, 60

It's not like transposing Ennius', 'When hideous Discord

Shattered the iron posts and the gateways of War.'

Even dismembered you'll find there the limbs of a poet.

Enough! We'll ask some other time if it's poetry.

The only question for now is whether you're right

To view such things with suspicion. Sulcius 65

And Caprius prowl about zealously armed with writs:

And, terribly hoarse, are a terror to thieves: but a man
 With **clean hands** (*manibus puris*) who lives decently, scorns them both.
 Even if you're a Caelius or Birrius, a thief,
 I'm not Caprius or Sulcius: **so why fear me?** 70
No stall or pillar will offer up my little books
To the sweaty hands of the mob, and Hermogenes:
I only recite them to friends, and only when pressed,
Not anywhere, not to anyone. There are plenty
Who read out their works in the Forum, or baths: 75
 (How nicely the vaulted space resonates to the voice!)
 It delights the inane, who never consider, whether
 Time and taste are right. 'But you take delight in wounding
 And you work your evil zealously.' Where did you find
 That spear to throw? Is anyone I know the author 80
 Of that? **The man who will slander an absent friend,**
And fails to defend him from others' attacks,
Who's after others' laughter, and the name of a wit,
And invents things he's never seen, and can't keep
A secret: beware of him, Rome, he's a blackguard. 85
 When there's a party of four and only three couches,
 Often there's one guest who likes to bespatter the rest
Excluding his host who supplies the water: his host too
Though later when, drunk, truthful Liber unlocks the heart.
Yet you, hating blackguards, consider him charming. 90
 Direct, and urbane. **Did I seem then spiteful or vicious,**
If I laughed because stupid Rufillus smells of pastils,
Gargonius of goat? If someone while you were there
 Gave a hint of Petillius Capitolinus' thefts,
 You'd be sure to defend him as is your habit: 95
 'Capitolinus has been a dear friend and companion
 Since childhood: he's done me many a favour when asked,
 I'm delighted he's living freely here in the City:
 But I'm still amazed at how he escaped that trial.'
 That's the black ink a cuttlefish squirts, now, that's 100
 Pure venom. **Let such nastiness be far from my work,**
 And well before that from my heart: if there's anything
 I can truly promise, I'll promise you that. **If I**
Speak too freely, too lightly perhaps, you'll allow me
That liberty, please. The best of fathers formed me: 105
 So I'd flee from vice, he'd mark each sin out (*notando*) by example.
 When he exhorted me to be thrifty and careful,
 So as to live in content on what he'd leave me:
 He'd say: 'Don't you see how badly young Albius
 Is doing, how poor Baius is? A clear warning: don't 110
 Wilfully squander your birthright.' Or steering me
 From base love of a whore: 'Don't take after Scetanus.'
 Or from chasing an adulteress where I might enjoy
 Free sex: 'Not nice, Trebonius' name now he's caught:
 Some wise man can tell you why it's better to seek 115
 Or avoid something: it's enough for me (*mi satis est*) that I follow

The code our ancestors handed down, and while you
 Need a guardian I'll keep your reputation and health
 From harm: **then when age has strengthened your body
 And mind, you can swim free of the float.** With words **120**
 Such as these he formed the child, whether urging me on
 If I acted, with 'You've an authority for doing this,'
 Pointing to one of the judges the praetor had chosen:
 Or forbidding it, with 'Can you really be doubtful
 Whether it's wrong or harmful, when scandal's ablaze **125**
 About that man and this?' As a neighbour's funeral scares
 The sick glutton, and makes him diet, fearful of dying,
 So tender spirits are often deterred from doing wrong
 By others' shame. **That's why I'm free of whatever vices
 Bring ruin, though I'm guilty of lesser failings, ones
 You might pardon. Perhaps growing older will largely
 Erase even these, or honest friends, or self-reflection:**
 Since when my armchair welcomes me, or a stroll
 In the portico, alert to myself: 'It's more honest,'
 I'll say, 'if I do that my life will be better: that way I'll **135**
 Make good friends: what he did wasn't nice: could I ever
 Unthinkingly do something similar one day?' **So**
**I advise myself with my lips tight closed: and when I'm free
 I toy with my writings. It's one of the minor failings
 I mentioned:** and if it's something you can't accept, **140**
 A vast crowd of poets will flock to my aid (for we
 Are by far the majority), and just as the Jews do
 In Rome, we'll force you to join our congregation!

o **Seminar group exercise on vv.56-62**

his, ego quae nunc,
 olim quae scripsit Lucilius, eripias si
 tempora certa modosque, et quod prius ordine verbum est
 posterius facias praeponens ultima primis,
 non, ut si solvas "*postquam Discordia taetra
 belli ferratos postis portasque refregit.*"
 inuenias etiam disiecti membra poetae.

Take the regular rhythm

**From this that I'm writing now, or Lucilius wrote,
 Putting the first words last, placing the last ones first, and
 It's not like transposing Ennius', 'When hideous Discord
 Shattered the iron posts and the gateways of War.'
 Even dismembered you'll find there the limbs of a poet.**

60

Horace's argument here is that his *sermones* are not poetry *just because* they are arranged in metre (hexameters). It takes much more to write 'real' poetry. If you were to transform these lines of Ennius into prose, or 'dismember the body of his epic verse', Horace claims by way of an example, it would still read as poetry. Unlike my *sermones*...

Questions for discussion:

- Do you agree that Horace's satiric body is 'unpoetic'?
- How might Horace be comically undermining his own argument here?
- What is Horace implying about the 'weakness' or 'strength' of his poetry-as-body?

Look at the Ennius quote again: how 'poetic' is this word order?

Postquam Discordia taetra belli ferratos postis portasque refregit
After loud Discord the iron posts of war and the gates broke

Essential follow-up reading:

- Barchiesi, A. and Cucchiarelli, A. (2005) 'Satire and the poet: the body as self-referential symbol' in Freudenburg, K. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*. Cambridge, 207-223.
- Freudenburg, K. (2001) *Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal*. Cambridge (chapters 1 and 2)
- Gowers, E. (2012) *Horace Satires 1*. Cambridge.
- Gunderson, E. (2005) 'The libidinal rhetoric of satire' in Freudenburg, K. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*. Cambridge, 224-242.
- Gunderson, E. (2005) 'The libidinal rhetoric of satire' in Freudenburg (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*, 224-242.