

## INTEGER IPSE? SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-REPRESENTATION IN PERSIUS SATIRES 4

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PERSIUS' FOURTH SATIRE IS MODELLED ON the pseudo-Platonic dialogue, *Alcibiades* 1. Socrates and Alcibiades are translated to Rome and to Roman satire.<sup>1</sup> The subject of both dialogue and satire is the foundation of criticism: *Quo fretus* (3) does Alcibiades administer the state? Both works urge Alcibiades to disavow the superficial criticism of the crowd and the superficial beauty of his own body and to direct his gaze inward: only here is true criticism and true self-knowledge to be found. This contrast between public and private criticism is a familiar topic in Persius' satires.<sup>2</sup> For Persius, as for Horace before him, genres of criticism are defined in terms simultaneously literary and ethical. The subject of this self-conscious satire, then, is the translation of the Socratic "Know yourself" into a different genre. With what voice are you to "know yourself" in satire?

Persius' literary landscape is dominated by Roman Callimacheanism, his primary target, and by Horace. In the violence of his attacks on the effeminate followers of Callimachus and in his ugly distortion of the Horatian aesthetic Persius diverges from his predecessor and rejects the balance Horace had struck between refinement and emasculation in his satires. Persius and Horace have characteristic styles and concerns and one may generalize about the differences between them. In addition each of Persius' satires has a more specific relationship, pointed by verbal reminiscence, with one or more poems of Horace. For *Satires* 4 the Horatian models are *Satires* 2.1 and *Epistles* 1.16 and 2.2. After some introductory remarks on the attribution of lines to speakers in Persius *Satires* 4, I turn in the second part of the article to Horace *Satires* 2.1 and the critical language with which Horace constructs his aesthetic. As in other programmatic satires, his representation of Lucilius, whatever its relevance for reading Lucilius' poetry and its reception,<sup>3</sup> is a vehicle of Horace's self-representation. This section

I am grateful to Michael Comber and John Fitch for reading and discussing this article with me and to Elena Theodorakopoulos and Paul Smith for earlier discussion of Persius. Translations of Horace and Persius are taken or adapted from Rudd's 1973 Penguin translation.

<sup>1</sup> It has long been recognized that the first part of the poem (lines 1–22) responds closely to the pseudo-Platonic dialogue: "*Rem populi tractas*"—*barbatum haec crede magistrum / dicere, sorbitio tollit quem dira cicuta*—"quo fretus"? (Pers. 4.1–3). Cf. Pl. *Alc.* 1.106c. For more parallels between the pseudo-Platonic dialogue and Persius' *Satires*, see Jahn 1843, 1967: 167–172. See also Morford 1984: 51; Dessen 1968, 1996: 58–70, esp. 58–64. As important as Dessen's demonstration that the pseudo-Platonic argument is relevant for the whole of Persius' *Satires* is the view she attacks, that the remainder of the poem reverts to (satiric) type.

<sup>2</sup> See below, n. 9.

<sup>3</sup> The praise and criticisms of Lucilius and his reception by later poets as recorded in Horace's satires are without doubt vehicles of Horace's self-representation, but in what sense Horace is sketching

has two functions: to introduce the critical language which Persius also uses and to introduce points of specific contact between Persius' and Horace's texts. Persius' rejection of Horace's aesthetic is a rejection of Callimachean refinement as a vehicle of private, inner criticism and as an alternative to the voice of the crowd.

The third part of the article (sections III–V) turns from Persius' rejection of the Horatian aesthetic to reservations about his own satire. *Satires* 4 is the only satire conducted by a speaker other than the satirist's own persona and the only satire to take a philosophical dialogue as its primary model. In the course of the poem the persona of Socrates and the argument of the philosophical dialogue are incorporated in a satiric context. As he speaks for satire Socrates puts on its mask and acquires the characteristics and the frailties of the genre. These frailties are apparent particularly in the second part of the satire where Socrates' attacks on the sensualist Alcibiades are interrupted by an attack on an ugly miser (27–32), who recalls in several details the abrasive persona familiar as the usual speaker of Persius' satires. While Alcibiades cannot reasonably be accused of the false austerity of a miser, Socrates' prurient but characteristically satiric revelations of ugly truths are more vulnerable to this charge. The authority of Socrates and the philosophical dialogue are compromised as they are reworked in the context of Persius' satire.

It is rarely appropriate to read the relationship between one text or genre and another in unqualified terms: poems and personas do not simply erase their models; attributes of one genre are not assimilated to extinction when incorporated into another. Yet this absolutism, the defeatist isolation of a genre which corrupts the extra-generic models which might inform and restore it, is the reading which Persius demands. Persius' dissonant aesthetic writes satire as a process of endless, limitless abrasion. Socratic self-knowledge, translated to this genre, is no more than a vision of satire's critical poverty.

#### I. THE SPEAKERS OF PERSIUS SATIRES 4

The allocation of lines to speakers is a recurrent problem in interpretation of Persius' satires and a distinctive feature of his art: if our texts were marked for performance the problem would merely be refashioned as named speakers acquired a plurality of voices or personas. Recent commentators on Persius such as Henderson (1991) and Hooley (1997) have refused to make a formal allocation of lines to particular speakers on the grounds that any allocation confers an unwelcome authority on a text that is by design unclear. Dessen (1968) uses a different critical rhetoric, but her analysis of the fourth satire as a monologue

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Lucilius' place in Roman literary history is less clear. On this elusive question, see Scodel 1987 and note especially her cautious method at 205, n. 12: "Rudd (1966: 119–123) argues for such affinities, *but they appear convincing only on the basis of a historicist-literal reading of the satire, which almost demands that they exist*" (my emphasis).

delivered by a persona "consistently ironic and therefore ambiguous"<sup>4</sup> speaks to the same indeterminacy. The satire is modelled on a dialogue, inherits two readily identifiable characters (Socrates and Alcibiades), and implies an exchange of criticism (especially lines 42–43 and 23–24). As a critical method the allocation of lines to speakers responds to these features of the poem, but more useful than any final allocation is the process which reveals the awkwardness of that resolution. I will return to the allocation of particular lines to speakers in context and in more detail later in the article, but here is an introductory summary.

In this satire the identification of speakers is unproblematic in the first section (lines 1–22): in the opening lines (1–2) Persius introduces Socrates, who attacks Alcibiades for relying on an attractive exterior to charm the people. A man who closely resembles Alcibiades in the care he lavishes on his skin is attacked in the later part of the satire (33–41), but—and this is the central problem of the satire—this attack is apparently presented as an example of criticism which does not look to its own faults. Balancing the attack on the luxuriance of the sunbather is an attack on the false austerity of a miser (25–32) and here again one must ask whether the miser or the attack on the miser is being criticized.

Lines 42–43, *caedimus inque vicem praebemus crura sagittis. / vivitur hoc pacto, sic novimus*, describe an exchange of fire, and Jenkinson reads the entire satire as an exchange between Socrates and Alcibiades:<sup>5</sup> Socrates 1–22, Alcibiades 23–32, S. 33–41, A. 42–43, S. 43–46, A. 46–47, S. 47–52. It is difficult, however, to reconcile the easy relativism of lines 42–43 (see above) with the lament of 23–24 that no one directs criticism inwards: *ut nemo in sese temptat descendere, nemo, / sed praecedenti spectatur mantica tergo!* The tone of this lament, which Jenkinson attributes to Alcibiades, has more in common with the closing command of the satire which he attributes to Socrates, *tecum habita; noris quam sit tibi curta supellex* (52).

The attack on the miser (25–32) which apparently provokes the violent attack on the sunbather<sup>6</sup> cannot easily be separated from the lament on inadequate criticism (23–24) which introduces it. The problem can be solved with irony either if Alcibiades laments the failure of criticism ironically at lines 23–24 or if Socrates is consistently ironic and does not associate himself directly with the critics of Alcibiades in the second half of the satire. Rather than pursue this hybrid method, in which the satire is divided among different speakers only for their voices then to be multiplied by irony, I have adapted Jenkinson's model by creating another speaker for lines 23–32 and 51–52. This speaker frames the second part of the satire and laments the futility of satiric criticism. I have

<sup>4</sup>Dessen 1968, 1996: 64.

<sup>5</sup>The arguments for this division and a survey of the divisions made by other scholars are discussed in Jenkinson 1980: 114–115.

<sup>6</sup>So Jenkinson (1980) and Jahn (1843, 1967: 167 and 175), who argues that the sunbather must have attacked Vettidius.

called this framing speaker Persius to align him with the speaker who introduces Socrates in the first lines of the satire but otherwise has no role in the argument between Socrates and Alcibiades. This Persius is to be identified neither with the historical author of the satire nor with the persona of the satirist in other satires; I simply found it easier to speak of Persius than of "the reflective/framing voice" or of Socrates 2. The satire then is divided as follows: Persius 1–2, Socrates 3–22, P. 23–32, S. 33–41, Alcibiades 42–43, S. 43–46, A. 46–47, S. 47–50, P. 51–52.

## II. HORACE SATIRES 2.1 AND PERSIUS SATIRES 4

*Satires* 2.1 is the first Horatian text recalled by Persius in his fourth satire and it exercises a dominant influence on the first section of this poem (lines 1–22). Before discussing the points of contact between the two satires I give here a brief sketch of the central concerns of Horace's poem and of his critical language. Horace's interlocutor is the jurist Trebatius who warns him that writing satire will lead to his indictment. Horace insists, taking Lucilius as example and model, that he will be acquitted. The law is a recurrent figure and like Lucilius defined in the course of the poem. The opening of the satire explains *nimis acer* with *ultra legem*:

*Sunt quibus in satira videar nimis acer et ultra  
legem tendere opus; sine nervis altera, quicquid  
composui, pars esse putat similisque meorum  
mille die versus deduci posse.*

I seem to some too harsh in my satire and  
to strain my work beyond what is lawful. The rest think that whatever  
I have composed is slack and that a thousand verses like mine  
could be wound off every day. (Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.1–4)

In the first two lines *acer* can be interpreted as "aggressive" and *ultra legem* as "libellous": Horace's poetry can be read in the context of and therefore subject to civil law. They can also be read in the context of artistic law. Art like life has its laws and the judgment passed on Horace, that his poetry is *acer*, is used in the criticism of literary style. Although in the following lines the charge can only be that his verse falls short of the standard of good poetry, one cannot return to the first two lines reassured that the law and its judgments were "only aesthetic." In this poem writing satire persistently has consequences for the life of the satirist: Horace battles throughout the poem to make satire safe<sup>7</sup> by redefining its laws in exclusively aesthetic terms. In the final part of the satire when Trebatius warns him of the dangers of writing bad (hostile) poetry, Horace deliberately

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the more playful interpretation of Rudd (1966: 124–131, esp. 130). Cf. also the view of Anderson (1982: 43–44) that Trebatius and his arguments are "somewhat ridiculous": "Against the background of the legalistic Trebatius' obtuse remarks, the satirist's confident grasp of the genre wins our smiling respect."

misunderstands this as a warning about writing bad poetry in a narrowly literary sense:<sup>8</sup> the satire ends as it began.

Horace's redefinition of the law of satire in exclusively poetic terms is characterized by a movement from a public to a private audience. The privacy of this more exclusive audience is described in aesthetic terms which recall specifically Callimachean refinement. In his first substantial description of Lucilius, his model, Horace writes:<sup>9</sup>

*Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim  
credebat libris; neque si male cesserat, usquam  
decurrrens alio, neque si bene; quo fit, ut omnis  
votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella  
vita senis.*

In the past he would confide his secrets to his books which he trusted like friends; and whether things went well or badly he'd always turn to them; in consequence, the whole of the old man's life lies open as if it were painted on a votive tablet. (Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.30–34)

There is a paradox here in Lucilius' open secrets: *pateat* does not sit easily with *arcana*.<sup>10</sup> Anderson has argued that a votive tablet is "art at the lowest level" and therefore that lines 32–34 are a criticism of Lucilius:<sup>11</sup> the jarring *pateat* exposes an unwelcome openness in Horace's model, a lack of tact and polish.<sup>12</sup> Horace's representation of Lucilius is not confused any more than is his representation of the law: both are figures through whose definition Horace expresses his poetic programme. Here Horace retains the autobiographical mode but intends to moderate the carelessness of Lucilius' revelations.

<sup>8</sup> See Clauss 1985: 205.

<sup>9</sup> This passage is an important point of comparison for programmatic passages in Persius' first and fifth satires. See Pers. 1.119–122: *Me muttire nefas? Nec clam, nec cum scrobe? Nusquam. / Hic tamen infodiam vidi, vidi ipse, libelle: / auriculas asini quis non habet? Hoc ego opertum, / hoc ridere meum, tam nil, nulla tibi vendo / Iliade*. The emphasis here is on a perspective both private and incommunicable. Whereas Lucilius' friends (his satires) open his whole life to the reader, Persius' satire is a buried secret not for sale. Nothing bridges the gap between the complete isolation of the *ipse* and the uncompromising indefinite, *quis non* . . . ? This opposition is foregrounded at the satire's opening (1–8). If the first line, *O curas hominum! O quantum est in rebus inane!*, is indeed a line of Lucilius, the rewrite at 119–122 is all the more pointed. For discussion of this line (concluding that it is Lucilius'), see Zetzel 1977. Cf. also on inexpressibility Pers. 5.21–29, especially *secrete loquimur . . . / totumque hoc verba resignent / quod latet arcana non enarrabile fibra* (5.21, 28–29). For the language of Persius' satires as "a private language" (146) and this perspective as the development of a Horatian persona (147–149), see Relihan 1989.

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to discussion with Michael Comber for the rest of this paragraph.

<sup>11</sup> In support of this argument one might usefully compare Juv. 12.24–28, where a hackneyed epic description of a storm at sea is cut short: *genus ecce aliud discriminis audi / et miserere iterum, quamquam sint cetera sortis / eiusdem pars dira quidem sed cognita multis / et quam votiva testantur fana tabella / plurima*. For Horace's criticism (through apparently biographical detail) of Lucilius' inartistry, see Anderson 1982: esp. 15–17, 30–38; Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.2–4, 1.4.9–10.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hooley 1997: 70 on *hiare* and the Callimachean disapproval of "gaping" verse.

The nature of Horace's proposed refinement of Lucilius is clearer in the longer description at lines 62–79. In an image to which Persius will return Horace praises Lucilius for stripping away the public skin to show corruption beneath:

*cum est Lucilius ausus  
primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem  
detrahere et pellem, nitidus qua quisque per ora  
cederet, introrsum turpis*

When Lucilius first had the courage  
to write this kind of poetry and remove the glossy skin  
in which people were parading before the world  
while disgusting inside (Hor. Sat. 2.1.62–65)

The simple moral figure of a beautiful skin concealing corruption beneath is transformed in *Satires* 2.1. Lucilius, defender of public morality, *indicted* powerful politicians: *primores populi arripuit* (69). Scipio and Laelius, far from being offended, even participated themselves when their public duties were done:

*quin ubi se a volgo et scaena in secreta remorant  
virtus Scipiadae et mitis sapientia Laeli  
nugari cum illo et discincti ludere, donec  
decoqueretur holus, soliti.*

But when the worthy Scipio and the wise and gentle Laelius  
left the stage of public life for the privacy of home  
they would turn to trifles and in disarray join the poet in play,  
as they waited for the greens to cook. (Hor. Sat. 2.1.71–74)

A key aspect here is the shift from public (*a volgo et scaena*) to private (*in secreta*). Lucilius indicted politicians, but at a private court over which he, the virtue of Scipio, and the wisdom of Laelius preside. Though the detail of the stewing vegetable confers some aura of “old-time values,”<sup>13</sup> the conduct of the court is otherwise less severe. *Nugari* and *ludere* are not words one would obviously associate with the exposure and denunciation of inner corruption, but they are words one might associate with Horace's Callimachean satires.<sup>14</sup> Horace refashions his model in the same way that he diverted the charge against him in the opening four lines: satire's potential for offence is defused as it turns its criticism in on itself and trades moralism for more private or exclusive aesthetic concerns. Horace says that Lucilius stripped away the public skin to reveal the disgusting inner self, but the movement from public to private that he actually gives is the movement of Scipio and Laelius to Lucilius' private court.

<sup>13</sup> Cf., e.g., Hor. Sat. 2.6.60–65 for overtly literary food and, more generally, the various menus in Juv. 11, especially *Curius parvo quae legerat horto / ipse focus brevibus ponebat holuscula* (78–79). See also Gowers 1993: esp. 109–188 on satire, Horace, and Persius; Bramble 1974: 45–59.

<sup>14</sup> For the use of *nugari* cf., e.g., Hor. Epist. 2.1.93 and Pers. 1.56. See also Anderson 1982: 33–34 on *ludere*; Fordyce 1961: 85 and 215–216 on both roots in Cat. 1.4 and 50.2.

In this private court Scipio and Laelius are described as *discincti*, a looseness which is anticipated by *sine nervis* (2) and which has meaning in both ethical and literary criticism.<sup>15</sup> The satire opens with a distinction between those who find Horace's poetry *nimis acer* and those who find it *sine nervis*. These judgments connote virility and effeminacy respectively, and the sexual rhetoric, in common currency in literary criticism, "is sustained throughout the entire piece."<sup>16</sup> For example, Horace's description of Lucilius as the first to "draw back the skin" (*detrahere . . . pellem*, 64) is a familiar innuendo: "Horace could count on his audience to hear the obscene dialogue beneath the surface, which hinges upon the word *pellis* in the sense of 'foreskin'."<sup>17</sup> Various different styles of speech are described as "nerveless/penis-less" in ancient literary criticism, but in the narrower context of Roman poetry and of Horace's criticism of Lucilius, there is at the very least a strong possibility that the stylistic effeminacy is that of the "soft" followers of Callimachus.<sup>18</sup>

The argument that the movement into a more private court is intended to express a movement into the exclusivity of Callimachean aesthetics is supported both by the presence of catchwords like *nugari* and by the end of the satire. Horace reminds Trebatius that he too has lived with the great (76), and closes the satire by creating a version in his world of Lucilius' private court. Here Caesar plays Scipio but, as Clauss has argued, in a way which recalls the Apollo of Callimachus' famously programmatic hymn.<sup>19</sup> Horace chooses to understand Trebatius' reference to "bad poetry" (*mala . . . carmina*, 82) as "aesthetically bad poetry," but more narrowly he represents good poetry in a Callimachean context, i.e., in Callimachean terms. It is this redefinition of the law of satire in terms of the Callimachean aesthetic which makes writing satire safe. Earlier in the satire Horace said that he wrote satire because nature ordered it (*imperet hoc natura potens*, 51): it is something *intus monstratum* (52–53), and he will write without reference to outward circumstances even if his life is threatened (*quisquis erit vitae scribam color*, 60).<sup>20</sup> Finally he does find himself in court, as Trebatius had warned

<sup>15</sup>The most famous example describes Maecenas as "loose" in both verse and life (Sen. *Ep.* 114.4 and 6). This is noted by Dessen (1968, 1996: 68).

<sup>16</sup>Freudenburg 1990: 193.

<sup>17</sup>Freudenburg 1990: 196 with n. 20.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Freudenburg (1990: 199–200), who, without rejecting the Callimachean dimension, reads the charge of "nerveless" composition in its wider literary sense. Cf. also Freudenburg 1996 on Hor. *Sat.* 2.4 and 2.3, where the contrast between nerveless and (overly) virile composition characterizes the contrast between a Callimachean poetic style and the more rugged style of a Stoic moralist.

<sup>19</sup>Clauss 1985: 197–206. The argument depends on an earlier part of the satire (16–20) where Trebatius suggests that Horace write for Octavian as Lucilius did for Scipio, and where Horace's approach to Octavian's ear recalls the approach of Envy to Apollo's ear (Callim. *Hymn to Apollo* 105–107).

<sup>20</sup>Leeman (1963: 232) defines *color* as "the 'colouring' of the case or a person's conduct with the help of clever insinuation, etc." In using this rhetorical term for the form of his life Horace locates it

him he would. He himself is found to be blameless and the charges against him are dismissed:

"si quis  
*opprobriis dignum latraverit, integer ipse?"*  
*solvuntur risu tabulae, tu missus abibis.*

"What if someone  
 snarls at a public menace when he himself is blameless?"  
 The indictment will be dissolved with a laugh, and you'll go scot free.  
 (Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.84–86)

Horace's integrity is upheld by a court whose law and criticism have been redefined in Callimachean terms. Just as there is an important difference between Lucilius' revelations of the public's inner corruption (62–70) and the literary trifling which takes place at his private court, so there is an important difference between the inner truths which nature commands Horace to reveal and the personal integrity he displays through the "good poetry" he recites at Caesar's Callimachean court. Satiric criticism finds a safe voice in the Callimachean aesthetic, but that safety is achieved through the refinement of ethical criticism into narrowly aesthetic criticism. It is in this process of refinement that Persius intervenes in his fourth satire.

The broad subject of Persius' satire, the foundation of criticism, is very close to that of Horace's, the definition of a law of satire. Every satire of Persius is pervaded with specific allusions to Horace. Central to an interpretation of this satire is the fact that its models are of different genres. It expresses its dual ancestry by alluding to Horatian satire even as it introduces the hero of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue: *barbatum haec crede magistrum / dicere, sorbitio tollit quem dira cicutae* (1–2) recalls Horace *Satires* 2.1.56: *sed mala tollet anum vitiato melle cicuta*.<sup>21</sup> Horace's old woman is the last casualty in a list of attackers and victims. The list begins with Cervius and Turius, who threaten people with the law (47, 49), and between them Canidia, who threatens people with poison (48). In the lines immediately following the death of the old woman from hemlock Horace turns to himself and the writing of satire:

*ne longum faciam: seu me tranquilla senectus  
 expectat seu mors atris circumvolat alis,  
 dives, inops, Romae seu fors ita iusserit exul,  
 quisquis erit vitae scribam color.*

In short, whether a serene old age awaits me or whether  
 death is already hovering near on sable wing,

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in the courtroom. Note also that in the declamations which the Elder Seneca discusses the facts of the various cases may be changed and *color* is the term used for the (re)fashioned reality: see, e.g., *Contr.* 1.3.11 and 1.6.9.

<sup>21</sup> So Conington 1874: 72; Kissel 1990: 503.



in Rome or if fortune so ordains in exile—whatever  
the complexion of my life, I'll continue to write.

(Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.57–60)

As the conclusion to a list of attackers and victims which began with legal action and poison and ends with a poisoned old woman, and in the wider context of a satire about the dangers of transgressing its law, this reflection on the alternatives of a peaceful old age or imminent death is no idle remark. The Horatian satirist faces the threat of death until he redefines the law of the genre. Persius, by alluding to the old woman at the same time as the more famous victim of hemlock, brings together the figures of the philosopher and the satirist. Significant also for later discussion is the representation of criticism as a matter of life and death.<sup>22</sup> In his description of Alcibiades' judgment Socrates says, *et potis es nigrum vitio praefigere theta* ("and you can put the black mark of death on vice," *Pers.* 4.13).<sup>23</sup> Seeing that Alcibiades has abandoned his knowledge of virtue for the values of the crowd, he recommends that he drink (*sorbere*, 16) a whole crop of hellebore. *Sorbere* cannot but recall the *sorbitio* (2) which killed Socrates, while hemlock and hellebore, to a poet if not to a doctor, have similar properties: both can cure madness and both can be fatal.<sup>24</sup> The divide between justice and injustice, sanity and madness is written as that separating life from death.

Horace responded to the dangers of writing satire and of "peeling back the skin" (64) in public with a Callimachean refinement of Lucilius: in his private court Scipio and Laelius were accustomed *nugari cum illo et discincti ludere* (Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.73). What Persius thinks of this critical "refinement" is predictable. His most familiar target is a delicacy that has its roots in the same Roman Callimacheanism that one associates with Horace. While Persius is quite capable of distinguishing between the Horatian aesthetic and its sickly Neronian relative, he does often recall Horace to mark that his path is different.<sup>25</sup> In this case

<sup>22</sup> On death, see below, 65–67, 73–77.

<sup>23</sup> Theta, the first letter of θάνατος. See Conington 1874: 74. On death in this passage, see Peterson 1972–73: 207.

<sup>24</sup> For the dangers of hellebore and the benefits of hemlock, see *Pers.* 5.100 and 145 respectively. Jenkinson (1980: 90) suggests that "the poets mention hemlock because the patient's condition is too serious not merely for drugs but even for death to be of much assistance," but cf. Rudd 1989: 129 on Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.53 for ancient medical evidence of similarity in the use of hemlock and hellebore.

<sup>25</sup> Horace does himself attack Alexandrian effeminacy, e.g., in *Sat.* 1.10.90–91 and *Odes* 2.9. Scodel (1987) on *Sat.* 1.10 argues that Horace represents the neoteric defenders of Lucilius as slavishly and superficially Callimachean—in fact as not truly Callimachean at all. The argument is made possible by a variety in Callimachus' artistic values which is not apparent in the clichés of Callimacheanism in Roman poetry (the pure stream, the slender poem, etc.). Though they differ in their responses, both Horace and Persius target a superficial, usually neoteric, Callimacheanism. For Neronian and Persius' attacks on various forms of Neo-Callimacheanism, see Sullivan 1985: 74–114; cf. the more political and biographical approach of Witke (1984). For Persius' allusion to Horace to mark his difference, see Hooley 1997: 48–63, which culminates in Persius' assumption of the persona of Horace's mad poet from the *Ars Poetica* (453–476).

he admonishes one satire “too near the wrong kind of (neo-Callimachean) neighbourhood”<sup>26</sup> by alluding to a more austere epistle (1.16). Persius in *Satires* 4 does not accept the reformulation in Callimachean terms of the opposition between public and private, superficial and inner. He signals his intent by imitating the description of the shining skin not from *Satires* 2.1 but from *Epistles* 1.16.<sup>27</sup> Alcibiades has abandoned his own standards for the display that pleases the crowd.

*quin tu igitur, summa nequiquam pelle decorus,  
ante diem blando caudam iactare popello  
desinis, Anticyras melior sorbere meracas!*

So why not doff that attractive skin (it does you no good)  
and stop shaking your tail for the flattering rabble before you must.  
You'd be better to drain whole Anticyras of neat hellebore!

(Pers. 4.14–16)

*Epistles* 1.16, the source of Persius' image of the shining skin, is inflexible in its argument. After a brief sketch of Horace's farm (1–16) it offers little variety of theme: humanity's many different faces all conceal similarly unhealthy desires. The poem ends with a Stoic assertion of the freedom to be found in death:

*“ipse deus, simul atque volam, me solvet.” opinor,  
hoc sentit “moriar.” mors ultima linea rerum est.*

“God himself will set me free whenever I wish.”  
He means, I take it, “I’ll die.” Death is the end of the race.

(Hor. *Epist.* 1.16.78–79)

The role of the sage who embraces death underlies the dead philosopher-satirist who delivers Persius' *Satires* 4 and redraws the sharp line between life and death, virtue and vice, sanity and madness. There is no place in this austere landscape for the Callimachean reformulation, and the poetic community of Horace/Lucilius (*Satires* 2.1.71–74) is treated as brutally as the mythic Baucis:

*expecta, haud aliud respondeat haec anus. i nunc  
“Dinomaches ego sum,” suffla “sum candidus.” esto;  
dum ne deterius sapiat pannucia Baucis,  
cum bene discincto cantaverit ocima vernae.*

But wait—this old woman would give the very same answer. Go on, then,  
puff out your chest: “I’m Lady Dinomache’s son; and I’m splendid.”

<sup>26</sup> Hooley 1997: 51 (on a different passage).

<sup>27</sup> On the importance of Hor. *Epist.* 1.16, see Hooley 1997: 142, neatly: “Persius *drinks deep* of this poem” (my italics). But the idea that *Epist.* 1.16 should now displace *Sat.* 2.1 as the dominant influence would be misplaced, for the two are linked to each other not just by the general image but by specific verbal reminiscence: *introrsum turpem/-is* (*Epist.* 1.16.45: *Introrsus turpem, speciosum pelle decora*; cf. *Satires* 2.1.65: *introrsum turpis*). See also Conington's note at 1874: 74. On the blending of these same passages of Horace in Pers. 5.115–118, see Rudd 1976: 77–78.

Fine, but wrinkled Baucis is no less wise  
as she hawks her sexy herbs to a loose slave.

(Pers. 4.19–22)

Any old woman would give as worthless a judgment of the greatest good as Alcibiades does now, and let him admit that he is no more splendid when he governs the people than Baucis when she peddles aphrodisiacs to a lecherous slave.<sup>28</sup> This Baucis recalls Baucis in the myth who transcends the meanness of her surroundings to entertain the glorious gods.<sup>29</sup> Persius inverts and deforms: Alcibiades becomes a wrinkled old woman, becomes the *marcentis vulvas* of 36.<sup>30</sup> Lines 21–22 are the true inward partner of the outward show and a harsh deviation from Horace. *Bene discincto* (22) recalls *discincti* of Horace *Satires* 2.1.73 and reclaims its (im)moral connotations. The “loose literary trifling” of Scipio and Laelius, which Lucilius sponsored in his private court as a safe alternative to the excoriation of public vice, is here recalled, degraded, and rejected.<sup>31</sup>

The speaker of the opening section of Persius *Satires* 4 derives from the Socrates of *Alcibiades* 1. He therefore speaks to some degree from outside not just this satire but the genre as a whole. His knowledge of justice is tied to a world beyond this both metaphysically and generically, but his voice, his criticism, is satiric. Socrates complains that a man who can rely on an interior knowledge of justice to govern the people has chosen instead to be ruled by the people, and he accuses Alcibiades of charming the people with his beautiful body. This sexual metaphor has its roots in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue where Alcibiades is advised not to be a *δημεραστής* (132a3)<sup>32</sup> and play the slave (*δουλεύειν*, 135c2). Socrates distinguishes between the flowering of Alcibiades’ true self and the degeneration of his body and other property and

<sup>28</sup> If *ocima* is an aphrodisiac (so Conington, coyly, at 1874: 76, Marmorale at 1941, 1963: 271, and Dessen at 1968, 1996: 68), then it seems very likely that Persius is to be read as deforming Alcibiades’ wisdom/taste—*sapiat*, 21—through the related contexts of food and sex in the same way as he does with this verb elsewhere. See Pers. 1.106; Bramble 1974: 129–131, 143–144; Hooley 1997: 51; Gowers 1993: 180–181.

<sup>29</sup> Baucis’ story is told by Ovid at *Met.* 8.611–724. Kissel (1990: 526–527) suggests that Persius’ description of Baucis in line 19 as *haec anus* perhaps recalls Ovid’s *pia Baucis anus* (*Ov. Met.* 8.631) but, like the other commentators, concludes that she is to be read as a type. Other Latin poets did look back to Ovid’s text, and Callimachus’ *Hecale* behind it, to represent or more simply undermine *rusticitas* and *paupertas*, but Persius’ urban Baucis, if from Ovid, is too far altered to be productive. On Baucis in post-Ovidian Latin poetry, see Hollis 1970: 106–108, 114.

<sup>30</sup> So Dessen 1968, 1996: 68. Cf. also Richlin 1984: 12: “the [female] genitals form a major vehicle for invective based on animal metaphors, and disgust for them reaches the point of a *perception of them as decayed or dead*” (my italics).

<sup>31</sup> See above, 61–62.

<sup>32</sup> On the sexual metaphor for Alcibiades’ relationship with the people of Athens, see Dessen 1968, 1996: 62–63. Socrates introduces himself in the first sentence of the dialogue as Alcibiades’ first and faithful lover (103a1–2) and he will observe Alcibiades’ failure to care for his soul, his true self, in the context of his conduct towards his lovers (103b2–3). Thus the distinction between true and apparent value is constructed as a distinction between true love and its inferior images. See also the play on *καλός* as physically and/or morally fine (108c6–7 and *passim*).

imagines the ugliness which awaits him if he continues to be a lover of the people (131a10–132a2). As for the people of Athens, ἀποδύντα χρὴ αὐτὸν θεάσασθαι (132a6). Socrates is too polite to reproach the beautiful man by naming his behaviour any more precisely (ἵνα μὴ ὀνομάζωμεν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ καλῷ ἀνδρί, 135c13), but his Persianic counterpart develops the sexual metaphor in a grotesque and distinctively satiric<sup>33</sup> representation of the voluntary renunciation of power and self-definition. The accusation that Alcibiades waves his tail before the people (*blando caudam iactare popello*, 15) is also a satiric phrasing. It recalls the peacock's tail of Horace *Satires* 2.2.26: *et picta pandat spectacula cauda*. This does not at first glance seem a convincing parallel, particularly since the verb has changed (*pandat* to *iactare*). However, as Reckford shows,<sup>34</sup> this weakness is a virtue: *pandere* is deliberately withheld until line 36 where the sexual potential in *caudam iactare*<sup>35</sup> is realized. Framing and encouraging these manoeuvres is the familiarity of the peacock figure and, I would say, the neatness with which Horace's particular peacock smoothes Persius' awkward shift from images of ingestion to the image of the attractive skin: Horace complains in *Satires* 2.2.23–28 that peacock is eaten in preference to chicken because its tail looks prettier. This text would also underpin the form of Socrates' statement of Alcibiades' highest ideal: *uncta vixisse patella / semper et adsiduo curata cuticula sole* (17–18).

Horace transformed the satirist's natural imperative and *intus monstratum* into a *ludus* subject to Alexandrian law. When Persius introduces his speaker he looks back to the point in Horace's satire immediately before this transformation takes place (see above, 62–63). He recalls the Stoic death-wish of *Epistles* 1.16 to realign his speaker with the unrefined defiance of Horace *Satires* 2.1.57–58 and, through the martyred Socrates, the perspective of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue. The implication is that when Persius rejects Horatian refinement he restores an inner "natural" voice unvarnished with the *colores*<sup>36</sup> of this world and its poetry. Although Socrates speaks from beyond the *ultima linea*, his voice, so obviously rooted in satire, cannot sensibly be described as independent of world and genre. Allusion can perhaps be made to a distant image of truth and virtue,<sup>37</sup> but clearly satiric criticism cannot speak from beyond satire. However, this is a genre that styles itself as free of social and poetic artifice,<sup>38</sup> and this claim to autonomy is so strident in Persius as to be one of the most familiar features of his work.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Henderson 1989; Bramble 1974; Richlin 1983.

<sup>34</sup> Following Henss 1955. See Reckford 1962: 485–486.

<sup>35</sup> See Dessen 1968, 1996: 67. Line 36: *populo marcentis pandere vulvas*.

<sup>36</sup> See Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.60.

<sup>37</sup> By pointing outside the genre/world, e.g., to Pl. *Alc.* 1 or, as Hooley (1997: 146–153) suggests, to Virg. *G.* 2.217–225, 238–241. See below, 75–76.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.63–65, 103–106; Pers. *Prologue*; Juv. 1.63–64, 79–80.

<sup>39</sup> This assertion hardly requires a note, but Wehrle's (1992: 128) description of Persius as an "anti-aesthetic artist" is a convenient tag. Particularly interesting is Miller's (1986: 151–164) argument

*Satires* 4 heralds its interest in the topic with a paradoxical figure who speaks with the voice of a world in which he does not live.

### III. PERSIUS *SATIRES* 4.23–43: DOUBLE-EDGED CRITICISM

The problems of distributing lines between the speakers of *Satires* 4 begin in lines 23–24. The major problem is an ambiguity as to whether a critic or his target is the primary object of criticism. The general lament of lines 23–24, *ut nemo in sese temptat descendere, nemo, / sed praecedenti spectatur mantica tergo!* is followed by two examples (25–32, 33–41). Then follows another general statement, *caedimus inque vicem praebemus crura sagittis. / vivitur hoc pacto, sic novimus* (42–43), which concedes and yet shrugs off the first criticism. The remainder of the satire (discussed below in section v) is a dialogue between speakers who continue and develop the perspectives of this central section. There are two clear targets of criticism in lines 23–43: the miser Vettidius and the luxurious sunbather. The sunbather recalls Alcibiades, who is represented as a sunbather earlier in the satire, and one naturally assumes that the target here is the sunbather not his critic and that the unknown critic is a cypher for Socrates.<sup>40</sup> The miser is a familiar target in satire: he presents an austere exterior which conceals an attachment to transient and illusory goods.<sup>41</sup> There is nothing miserly in Alcibiades; rather it is Socrates who presents an austere exterior and of the two is more vulnerable to this caricature.<sup>42</sup> The identification of the miser with the voice of authority in the satire can be developed further: Vettidius is attacked in language which perhaps recalls the ugly Cynic moralist of Horace *Satires* 2.2<sup>43</sup> and certainly echoes Persius' description elsewhere of his own satire. If the voice of authority is to be defended the example of the miser must be an example of misrepresentation, yet there are no markers to suggest that the two examples are not complementary and

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that poets reject divine inspiration in order to qualify and refine their position within a genre. Persius' rejection, unlike Ovid's and Propertius', offers no alternative. "This satirist stands alone: original, honest, by himself" (161). In the argument that follows Miller does find an alternative—*ars* and *ingenium* (162–163)—but as so often (and this is my qualification) only the perversions of these virtues exist in his satires. Against his interpretation of Persius as alone, original, and by himself see especially Henderson 1991.

<sup>40</sup> *At si unctus cesses et frigas in cute solem* (33); cf. *quae tibi summa boni est? uncta vixisse patella / semper et adsiduo curata cuticula sole?* (17–18). So, e.g., Jenkinson 1980: 115. Dessen (1968, 1996: 65) quotes Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.17.16 to support the identification of the unknown speaker with Socrates' view but not his persona. See also Plato's seventh letter (340d6–341a1) for superficial understanding figured as a suntan: those coloured by belief are καθάπερ οἱ τὰ σώματα ὑπο τοῦ ἡλίου ἐπικεκαυμένοι (340d8–9).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Hor. *Epist.* 1.16 for a survey of different forms of hypocrisy and "hidden wounds." Cf. also *Epist.* 1.19.12–14.

<sup>42</sup> Dessen (1968, 1996: 66) accepts Socrates' appearance as a reliable indicator of his moral worth. Cf. Peterson (1972–73: 208), who, strangely, sees Socrates in the sunbather but not in the miser.

<sup>43</sup> I am thinking particularly of line 62, *veteris non parvus aceti*. Cf. Pers. 4.32: *faecem morientis sorbet aceti*. If this is the model, the emphasis on death in Persius' reworking is all the more marked.

parallel. Both attacks appear in self-contained dialogues (25–32 and 33–41), and the relationship between the speaker who introduces a scene and the voices within a scene is ambiguous.<sup>44</sup> This difficulty is clearly central to Persius' design, but it remains to be seen whether the location of his programmatic terminology in an unsolved dialogue is a statement of satiric method or an admission of defeat.<sup>45</sup>

Vettidius is attacked in language which recalls Persius' presentation of his satire:

*qui, quandoque iugum pertusa ad compita figit  
seriolae veterem metuens deradere limum  
ingemit "hoc bene sit!" tunicatum cum sale mordens  
cepe et farratam pueris plaudentibus ollam  
pannosam faecem morientis sorbet aceti?*

On a public holiday he hangs up his yoke at the cross-road shrines;  
fearing to scrape the old dirt from his little wine-jar,  
he groans, "Cheers!" and, with some salt, biting a tunic-wearing  
onion and a pot of porridge—to the applause of his slaves—  
he drinks the ragged dregs of dying vinegar. (Pers. 4.28–32)

The setting/frame of these verbal reminiscences<sup>46</sup> is significant. Vettidius puts on his display at "the feast of 'Compitalia' . . . , one of the rustic holidays, like the 'Paganalia' (*Prol.* 6) and the 'Palilia'" (1.72).<sup>47</sup> The country festival is a programmatic site for Persius. In the prologue he terms himself *semipaganus* (6)<sup>48</sup> and constructs this semi-participation by condensing into a single scene a variety of different poetic environments and responses to them. In *Satires* 1.69–75 Persius complains that the poets of his day, *nugari solitos graece*, have not the art to praise the origin of Roman Republican heroes, the *rus saturnum*. The eulogy which Persius gives is to Roman ears an ugly parody, and from this incongruous treatment of the topic arises a tacit indictment of a writer and an age so remote

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hooley 1997: 130: "The uncertainty is compounded with a sudden complication of voices . . . . These are voices within voices."

<sup>45</sup> Unmarked voices in dialogue are a recurrent problem in Persius and a topic of his interpretation, notably on the first and third satires. Indispensable for Pers. 4 is the discussion of Hooley at 1997: 122–153, esp. 128–129 and 135–138. Hooley like Henderson (1991) before him sees an escape from the worn out genre in the "dislocation of the narrative contexts that give us the reassuring awareness of who is being got at" (Hooley 1997: 137). Partly because I think that the attack on the miser is an attack on Persius' satire particularly rather than on the genre generally, I do not agree that the implication of the reader in the criticism is the basis for a "saving and transcending recognition" (138), nor that the bleakness of the final lines is to any degree relieved (cf. Hooley 1997: 153).

<sup>46</sup> Bramble (1974, for Pers. 1), Dessen (1968, 1996), and Reckford (1962: esp. 476–482) have fuller discussions of the passages which I cite as relevant for the miser of Pers. 4 in their own context.

<sup>47</sup> Conington 1874: 78.

<sup>48</sup> *Semipaganus*, the word which perhaps invokes the rustic festival of the Paganalia and which defines Persius' distant presence at the *sacra vaturnum* (7) has been and still is worth an article on its own. Starting points would include D'Anna 1964 (reading Persius' *semipaganus* as reacting against Propertius' *rusticus* . . . *aliquis*, 2.5.26); Witke 1962; Wimmel 1960: esp. 309–319.

from the agricultural virtues of Rome's past as to have misrepresented them so badly.<sup>49</sup> As Juvenal sometimes complicates his attacks on modern decadence with parodies of rustic values,<sup>50</sup> so Persius here shows the abrasive austerity of criticism corrupted into meanness.

The first key word is *deradere*. An interlocutor in *Satires* 1 asks, *sed quid opus teneras mordaci radere vero / auriculas?* (107–108), and Persius is praised in *Satires* 5, the other obviously programmatic satire,<sup>51</sup> for being *pallentis radere mores / doctus* (15–16). Compare also, in alimentary mode, from *Satires* 3, *tenero latet ulcus in ore / putre, quod haud deceat plebeia radere beta* (113–114). In *Satires* 4 the miser fears to scrape off the dirty exterior of his bottle. Instead he bites down *cum sale* on a tunic-wearing . . . onion. Though the image as a whole perhaps recalls Lucilius breaking his tooth on Lupus, Mucius, and the rest of the city,<sup>52</sup> narrower verbal reminiscence is to be found in the *mord-* root seen above in *mordaci radere vero* (1.107) and elsewhere in the description of the Stoic in *Satires* 5: *aurem mordaci lotus aceto* (86).<sup>53</sup> The bite of truth or vinegar is diverted here in *Satires* 4 as it transpires that the tunic-wearing victim is only an onion. The joke is developed by the pun on *cum sale* as “with salt” and “wittily.” Then in line 32 there is the draught of vinegar.<sup>54</sup> Vinegar or acid is an ear-cleansing agent for Persius, and it is used both for philosophy (as in 5.86) and, one must infer, satire: *inde vaporata lector mihi ferveat aure* (1.126). Here in *Satires* 4 it is linked through *sorbet* to the draughts of hellebore and hemlock earlier (lines 16 and 2), but importantly this vinegar is dying. Wine has decayed to vinegar and finally wrinkled dregs.

In every case Vettidius fails: he does not abrade for fear he smooth his rough image; he misses his bite and drinks dying vinegar. Satire represents itself and other literature as written for consumption<sup>55</sup> and wine is more generally familiar in classical literature as a symbol for poetry.<sup>56</sup> The deviant austerity of this

<sup>49</sup> See Conington (1874: 22) and Bramble (1974: 119–120), whose interpretation I have rewritten rather than quoted because I am not convinced that the writers of the incompetent eulogy are the *Graecissantes* rather than Persius himself. The “breaches of decorum” which Conington and Bramble note are to my mind typical of Persius’ desire to abandon Horatian classicism as a remedy for Alexandrian excesses even if the result is “bad” poetry. Cf. Bramble 1974: 121: “Persius, like other classicising critics . . .” Cf. Hooley 1997: 47–51 and above, nn. 25–26, where I have referred to the same passage in Hooley.

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., Juv. 6.1–13.

<sup>51</sup> See, e.g., the selection of Paratore (1964).

<sup>52</sup> Pers. 1.114–115.

<sup>53</sup> For a possible pun on Cynicism, see Bramble 1974: 132, n. 2. On the blurring of Stoic with Cynic in Horace and Persius, see Rudd 1976: 63–64 on Pers. 1.133 and Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.133–136.

<sup>54</sup> I have introduced verbal reminiscences to anticipate the next—*mordaci radere vero*, then *mordaci aceto*, but this is not dishonest: scraping, biting, and vinegar are all related to each other as part of the major metaphor of ear-cleansing discussed by Reckford (1962: 476–483). For the similarity of figurative salt and vinegar, see Bramble 1974: 52–53.

<sup>55</sup> See above, n. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Cf., e.g., Pind. *Ol.* 9.48–49; Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.34; Tib. 1.7.37. At the simplest level, as in the passage of Tibullus, wine can be represented as the inspiration of poetry by analogy (poetic enthusiasm

miser exemplified by his wine is a failing both moral and literary: the wine he offers is abrasive vinegar but itself unscrapped, lest it recall in any way the smooth Alexandrian law of a Pedius:

*Pedius quid? crimina rasis  
librat in antithetis: doctas posuisse figuras  
laudatur "bellum hoc!" hoc bellum? An, Romule, ceves?*

And Pedius? He weighs  
the charges in smoothed antitheses and is praised for his clever figures  
"It's lovely!" Is it lovely? Or are you turning tricks, Romulus?

(Pers. 1.85–87)

In Persius' restless aesthetic only a process of perpetual abrasion, endless warfare,<sup>57</sup> can ward off the charge of pathic complaisance. The miser's critic seizes on the limitations of an aesthetic that is, by design, pointless: its wine sharpens to vinegar but, unlimited by a stable ideal, decays further into ragged dirt. Dissonant it may be, but it is an aimless corrosion.

The failure of Socrates' moral authority is bound up with his translation into Persius' satiric genre and his abrasive aesthetic. In the first part of the poem Socrates' criticism becomes increasingly satiric: while the description of Alcibiades weighing justice in scales is quite consistent with the language of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue,<sup>58</sup> the description of Alcibiades as Baucis selling aphrodisiacs to a loose slave represents a marked shift in the style of his criticism. He allows Alcibiades to delight in his splendour, *dum ne deterius sapiat pannucia Baucis*, "provided that wrinkled Baucis have no worse a taste/mind" (21). Vettidius' draught of dying vinegar recalls not only Socrates' draught of hemlock and Persius' acid brew but also this attack on Alcibiades: *pannucia* (21) and *pannosa* (32) are related. The rites of the miser-philosopher recall the ugly truth which Socrates opposes to the superficial acclaim of the crowd: the twisted moral vision of Vettidius recalls Socrates' moral vision of the twisted. There is more than verbal reminiscence here: the ugly and sexual old woman and the miser-philosopher are

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may be likened to intoxication) or through the festive setting of poetry's performance. See Crowther 1979; Smith 1913: 334; Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.139–146. Callimachus and Horace develop the familiar analogy between poetry and wine in descriptions of mixing dialects and genres or, in Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.23–24, Greek with Latin: *at sermo lingua concinnus utraque / suavior, ut Chio nota si commixta Falerni est*. On this passage and its model in Callim. *Iamb.* 13, see Scodel 1987: 210; Freudenburg 1993: 106–107. A common development of the analogy concerns the question of age as in Pind. *Ol.* 9.48–49 and Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.34. Brink (1982: 75) comments on the Horatian passage, "The comparison wine-poetry has traditional standing . . . H[orace] agreed with Pindar, old wine but new song." This last topos is perhaps particularly relevant for Persius' description of a decaying aesthetic, but the important general point to be made is that a poem is familiarly represented as wine.

<sup>57</sup> See Conington 1874 on Pers. 1.96 (*Arma virum! Nonne hoc spumosum et cortice pingui. . .*): "Persius does not say '*bellum hoc*' (v. 87), but '*nonne hoc spumosum*'." See also Bramble 1974: 125–126.

<sup>58</sup> On this metaphor in *Alcibiades* 1, see Dessen 1968, 1996: 60–61.



topoi;<sup>59</sup> they are both the kind of vision that satire has. The generic similarity between Socrates' voice in the closing lines of the first part of the poem and the philosopher caricatured in the Vettidius episode undermines Socrates' status as an external judge, as a persona from outside the genre.

Lines 23–24, the lament that no one directs criticism inwards, may seem to deflect the attack on the miser (and through him the Persianic Socrates) which immediately follows. However, the simple parallelism between the attack on the miser and the attack on the sunbather makes it very difficult to accept one and to reject the other. If there are reasons to believe that a Persianic Socrates is vulnerable to the attack on Vettidius, as I have suggested, then there is also the problem that Socrates' attack on Alcibiades, voiced by an unknown mouth though it may be, is an ugly and awkward realization of the inwardly directed criticism recommended in lines 23–24. The force of the parallelism between the two examples becomes clearer in Alcibiades' response to Socrates' attack:

*caedimus inque vicem praebemus crura sagittis.  
vivitur hoc pacto; sic novimus.*

We shoot and in turn present a target to the barbs of others.  
By this law we live; it's the way we know. (Pers. 4.42–43)

As commentators have observed, these lines are modelled on *caedimur et totidem plagis consumimus hostem* (Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.97), "a martial image that Horace has cannily inverted to describe fatuous exchanges of mutual flattery."<sup>60</sup> Alcibiades suggests, through Horace, that Socrates' acid criticism is not the voice of the inward self but equally public, conventional, and superficial as his own popular rhetoric. He endorses the substance of Persius' lament at lines 23–24 but rejects its aspirations. I quote from Hooley's discussion again:<sup>61</sup>

*Vivitur hoc pacto / sic novimus* confirms this: not "we recognize that we may be hurt in turn," but "we understand this process, this convention." Peterson has keyed on this line: our (self-) knowledge is this, to concur in this process of fruitless (critical) exchange, thus keeping ourselves from far more painful inward regard. "*Sic novimus*," in *this* way we know. The pact: "not to know."

There is perhaps here a pointed contrast to be drawn between the Socrates whom Persius' Alcibiades sees and the Socrates whom Plato's Alcibiades saw in the *Symposium*. Beneath the satyr's mask and Socrates' humble language are to be

<sup>59</sup> See Richlin 1984: 69–71; Hooley 1997: 135.

<sup>60</sup> Hooley 1997: 136. Note also the discussion at 135–138 to which I am clearly indebted.

<sup>61</sup> Hooley 1997: 136. Peterson attributes these lines to Socrates while Hooley rejects any stable dramatization of the satire and therefore can only truly be said to attribute them to one of the many voices which constitute the satirist/reader. Inevitably therefore they make different use of the significance of the lines.

found a beautiful soul and divine thoughts. It is precisely Alcibiades' vision of an internal, divine truth discovered apart from the words which express it<sup>62</sup> which this Alcibiades' vision of a worn-out exchange of criticism excludes.

Although I read the attack on Vettidius (lines 25–32) as provoking Socrates' angry response in lines 33–41, I cannot reconcile the mocking tone of Alcibiades' words in lines 42–43 and 46–47 (*egregium cum me vicinia dicat, / non credam?*) with that of the speaker who laments the failure of criticism in lines 23–24. In my distribution the lament (23–24) and the following caricature of the philosopher-satirist (25–32) are spoken by Persius himself, i.e., the persona who introduced Socrates in the opening lines. The final lines of the satire (51–52) are also spoken by Persius and are concerned with the limitations of the familiar Persianic voice and his response to his predecessor. In both interventions the line marking the dramatic illusion is blurred: Socrates responds to the description of Vettidius as if attacked by Alcibiades rather than a figure outside the dramatic illusion. Similarly (see below, 80) the final lines of the satire, although they continue Socrates' attack on Alcibiades (47–50), show a self-consciousness unparalleled in his persona. In attributing lines 51–52 to Persius I have allowed the speech to fade out of the dramatic illusion at the close of the satire as it fades into the dramatic illusion during the attack on Vettidius.

Whatever the distribution of lines to speakers and the variety of tone, there is a recurrent concern in this satire with the foundation of knowledge: lines 42–43 echo not only the lament of lines 23–24 but also Socrates' first question, *rem populi tractas . . . quo fretus?* (1–2). Socrates had praised Alcibiades earlier for being able to distinguish the straight path between the curves deviating to either side: *rectum discernis ubi inter / curva subit* (11–12). The miser and the sunbather, framed by statements that the true interior voice is never discovered, deviate in opposite directions. As deviants the miserly satirist and the sunbather are misrepresentations respectively of austerity and beauty, but in what context do the true forms of these virtues find expression? Clearly the admiration of the public and the applause of disciples (*pueris plaudentibus*, 31) are inadequate, but the audience of inner truth, the middle ground between the two vices, remains elusive. Without a stable ideal and a valid middle ground Persianic satire is doomed to decay and exhaustion.

#### IV. HORACE EPISTLES 1.16 AND 2.2: THE CONTEXTS OF LIFE

Horace *Epistles* 1.16 and 2.2 are invoked to expose the failings of different aesthetic and ethical postures in Persius *Satires* 4. Dead Socrates recalls the suicidal Stoic of *Epistles* 1.16, and Socrates' conflict with Alcibiades in the early

<sup>62</sup> See Pl. *Symp.* 221d1–222a6, esp. 222a2–3: πρῶτον μὲν νοῦν ἔχοντα ἐνδον μόνους εὐρήσει τῶν λόγων, ἔπειτα θειοτάτους . . . Cf. also Pl. *Ep.* 7, quoted above in connection with sunbathing (n. 40), on the absence of a σύγγραμμα: ῥητὸν γὰρ οὐδαμῶς ἐστὶν ὡς ἄλλα μαθήματα (341c7).

part of the satire is constructed in part through allusions to the dissonant critical perspectives of this epistle and of *Satires* 2.1 (see above, 64–65). In the later part of the satire Alcibiades questions the validity of Socrates' criticism through a reference to *Epistles* 2.2 (see above, 72). In both epistles Horace offers a refuge from bankrupt criticism in landscapes which the poet writes for himself. There are no such redemptive landscapes in Persius' satire, no sanctuary of the kind constructed in the Horatian epistles. Instead the land in Persius' satire—the estate misused by Vettidius and the metaphorical land of the sunbather's groin—recalls descriptions of the land from Virgil's *Georgics*. Vettidius' ugly rustic festival and the sunbather's sterile cultivation of his body are distinctively satiric corruptions of virtues and values from another genre.

*Epistles* 1.16 rejects the conventional marks of virtue in public life as superficial attractions and uses the image of the beautiful skin not of a sybarite but of a law-abiding public citizen whose physical appearance would presumably be very different. His appearance may suggest self-restraint rather than luxuriance but because it is only an outward appearance it is unreliable. His Rome,<sup>63</sup> in which outward form is severed from inner reality, is framed by a literary rustic idyll (1–16) and death (73–79), which are alternative forms of escape. Although Horace's Stoic does underlie Persius' Socrates and points to a terminal response to Rome's corruption, this is no facile gesture.<sup>64</sup> The contrast between the stability of death and the transience of the public world is obvious, but an equally important distinction is drawn between the insecurity of the public citizen and the power of the secluded poet. Whereas the public citizen can call nothing his own,<sup>65</sup> the poet is the author of his landscape: *scribetur tibi forma loquaciter et situs agri* (4). Its existence is conditional on the poet's will to express it.<sup>66</sup> A number of passages in Persius *Satires* 4 recall Horace's Rome,<sup>67</sup> but Persius diverges noticeably from Horace in the response he allows to the twin evils of effeminate luxury and false austerity. Whereas Horace had allowed two different modes of withdrawal into the self, Persius pointedly omits the poetic sanctuary.

<sup>63</sup> Note *Epist.* 1.16.18, *iactamus iam pridem omnis te Roma beatum*.

<sup>64</sup> Hooley 1997: 153: "a facile romanticism."

<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., *qui dedit hoc hodie, cras, si volet, auferet* (*Epist.* 1.16.33). Conington (1874: 81) and Hooley (1997: 141) both comment on the relevance of this and the following line to Pers. 4.51. To say that Persius "refers" (Conington) to it is to overstate, but the two passages may usefully be compared. Hooley does not find the first sixteen lines of *Epistles* 1.16 productive and his reading of the relationship between the poems differs from mine accordingly.

<sup>66</sup> The indicative mood is avoided in lines 5–11. Note especially lines 8–11: "What if the bushes were to bear corns and plums . . .? You would say that . . ." The first indicative appears in line 14, *fluit*, but here the stream that flows has in place of a name generic praise. This is particularly striking since the passage raises the question of its name and then does not give it: *fons etiam rivo dare nomen idoneus* (12). The whole scene is again questioned at the close: *hae latebrae dulces et, iam si credis, amoenae / incolumem me tibi praestant* (15–16).

<sup>67</sup> See, e.g., Hooley's list of correspondences (1997: 142).

*Epistles* 2.2 is longer and altogether more complicated than *Epistles* 1.16. Death appears only briefly in the early part of the poem at lines 55–57, where the passing years bring the end of (the subjects of) lyric poetry. However, it dominates the final part of the poem and threatens Horace's brief tenure of a variety of landscapes which are his refuge from the trials of Rome and the mutual admiration of its poets. In the first part of the poem Horace leaves behind the sterile poetic flattery to which Persius alludes (see above, 72) and other empty<sup>68</sup> forms of poetry in favour of an ideal landscape in which the perfect lyric poet is likened to a pure stream enriching Latium. Both Latium and the poem are farmed<sup>69</sup> as the poet stands outside time to select words from the entirety of Rome's history. As farming refines nature so the poet refines the raw material provided by *genitor usus* (119) and becomes a feature of the new, improved landscape. Though the poet is not said to be immortal he is presented as rooted in something more stable than the whims of the people.<sup>70</sup> Again, as in *Epistles* 1.16, the landscape is overtly literary. Horace's Roman countryside is the space within which the elements of his literary and ethical ideals are blended and transformed: here the river from the *Hymn to Apollo* flows *vemens* through Latium such that "the metaphor no longer expresses the terms of reference which Callimachus and his true Roman disciples could have recognized as their own."<sup>71</sup> Later in the epistle this incarnation of a public self is rejected in favour of a retirement into a more private countryside.<sup>72</sup> Even if death ultimately triumphs over every landscape which Horace throws in its path, within these written worlds, for as long as death allows their use, life and poetry flourish.

The distortion of agriculture evident both in the metaphorical weeding and ploughing of the sunbather<sup>73</sup> and in Vettidius' mean relationship with the land does not recall the Horatian poems except in the most general terms.<sup>74</sup> Much more compelling are Hooley's observations of two points of contact with Virgil's

<sup>68</sup> See *vacuas* ... *Athenas* (81), *vacuam* ... *aedem* (94), and *in vacuo laetus sessor plausorque theatro* (130).

<sup>69</sup> Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.109–125.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.103: *cum scribo et supplex populi suffragia capto*.

<sup>71</sup> Brink 1982: 3.341.

<sup>72</sup> If the idealized Latium is indeed rejected at lines 141–144, the land is refashioned to give shape to the withdrawal into the self which displaces it (*quocirca mecum loquor haec tacitusque recordor*, 145). Cf. Stack 1985: 138–139 on Pope's *Imitation* of Horace: "Indeed he brings into Horace's poem Horace's own retreat where the self can return to itself once more: '*Vilice silvarum et mihi me reddentis agelli*' ('Bailiff of my woods and of the little farm which restores me to my self again') (*Epistle* 1.XIV.1)." Cf. McGann (1954: 343–358), who sees the hopes for a poetic life in any terms ending at line 126 (with the ending of the Latium episode): "Horace here *rejects* the idea of a life devoted to the highest standards in poetry" (355).

<sup>73</sup> See Reckford 1962: 486; Dessen 1968, 1996: 69; Hooley 1997: 146–153.

<sup>74</sup> Perhaps Horace's enriching river finds its inverted parallel in the miser's dying acid: *vemens et liquidus puroque simillimus amni / fundet opes Latiumque beabit divite lingua* (Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.120–121); cf. *dives arat Curibus* ... / *pannosam faciem morientis sorbet aceto* (Pers. 4.26 and 32).

*Georgics*.<sup>75</sup> it is this text specifically which Persius' characters distort. The description of Vettidius, *dives arat Curibus* (26), recalls Virgil's *dives arat Capua* (G. 2.217), while the description of the sunbather's groin, *non tamen ista filix ullo mansuescit aratro* (41) recalls Virgil's description of bitter, infertile land, *frugibus infelix ea, nec mansuescit arando* (G. 2.239). In terms of verbal reminiscence the first allusion is clearly weaker, but it is strengthened by the second allusion to a proximate passage.<sup>76</sup> In the second passage the sterility of the sunbather's devotion to his body is expressed by the allusion to land which bears no crops. This land is to be compared with the agricultural idyll of rich Capua with which Virgil closes the preceding section (G. 2.217–225). Vettidius, the rich ploughman at Cures, is not a positive comparison in the same way: his miserliness indicates "massive psychic dislocation from the bounties of the land he owns and from the common association of countryside and virtue, long a topos in Roman literature."<sup>77</sup> The miser's failure is underlined by the reader's recollection of an idyll from Virgil's didactic poem.

Virtue appears in Persius' satire only as distant memories from other genres. The landscapes of Horace's epistles and the poetic sanctuary which they offer are simply absent from Persius' satires. Virgil's idyll and the virtue which it connotes appears only in a satirically distorted form. The distortion of Virgil's didactic landscape in the satiric context is an expression of the inaccessibility of virtue in Persius' world/genre.<sup>78</sup> The location of the satire's protagonist in some sense beyond the genre and its life (see above, 65–68) is comparable: Socrates appears, Persius would have us believe,<sup>79</sup> within his satire but struggles to find there an untarnished voice. The pseudo-Platonic dialogue and the Virgilian didactic poem are distant locations of the values so conspicuously absent in the world of Persius' satire.

In the first part of the poem Horace's Callimachean satire, as represented by his *Satires* 2.1, was rejected as a sound basis for a withdrawal from public display: the voice of the martyred philosopher cannot be reformulated *thus*. However, Persius' abrasive aesthetic, caricatured in the person of Vettidius, is found to be equally unsatisfactory: inner truth lies voiceless between the rotten smoothness of Callimacheanism and the ugliness of Persius' scourge. In the second part of the poem there is no obvious engagement with any of the Horatian landscapes which in *Epistles* 1.16 and 2.2 stand between the poet and death, merely the silence of a creative space excluded. The rejection here is of mode: the Horatian landscapes intervene between the corruption of Rome (its poetry, its criticism),

<sup>75</sup> Hooley 1997: 146–153.

<sup>76</sup> There is surely some further support for Hooley's allusions, particularly the second, in Kissel's (1990: 558–562) discussion of this same passage of Virgil's *Georgics* with reference to Pers. 4.48–49. See below, n. 94.

<sup>77</sup> Hooley 1997: 148.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Persius' frustrated desire (Pers. 5.1–29) to sing his praises of Cornutus in a high genre.

<sup>79</sup> Note *barbatum haec crede magistrum / dicere* (Pers. 4.1.2).

and the wordless extinction of death. They are sites of negotiation, literally, as in *Epistle* 1.16,<sup>80</sup> or through the presentation of a sequence of differing landscapes, or through the recombination of familiar elements. There is no true land at all in Persius' satire, no space accorded to the straight line between deviations or the retirement into the self. What land there is, is a sterile and degenerate metaphor of land which gives expression to corruption rather than providing sanctuary from it. As important as the distortion of the Virgilian landscape is the departure from the form of the two Horatian epistles where the poet defines his voice and his opposition to the superficial public by writing the countryside. With unmistakable verbal reminiscence Persius borrows Horatian targets—the miserly, the luxurious, the self-satisfied—but then turns from the Horatian response (the construction of an opposing landscape in which the poet can live) to the distant authority of a Virgilian didactic lost to this satiric world.

It is a familiar Stoic paradox that a life of subservience to the conventions of a corrupted world is deathly, while the decision to retire from such a world represents in some sense life reclaimed. Except to the mind of a true Stoic<sup>81</sup> this brief act of rejection is not much of a life, and for this reason Horace balances his Stoic martyr in *Epistles* 1.16 with the description of another kind of retirement in the opening sixteen lines. Dead Socrates' voice and his metaphysical truths are immortal. There is also a timeless quality about an Italian countryside written as the Golden Age.<sup>82</sup> The *laudes Italiae*, which balance the pseudo-Platonic Socrates as Horace's landscape balances his Stoic sage, provide a realization within a Roman poetic context of the moral authority corrupted in Persius' satire. In the early part of the satire Socrates phrased the opposition between virtue and vice as (a matter of) life and death (line 13: see above, 64). The timelessness of his voice and that of its parallel in Virgil's golden land contrast with the decay evident in the worlds of Alcibiades, Vettidius, and the sunbather. Under Socrates' satiric gaze, figured as Vettidius' vinegar becoming *pannosa faex* as it dies, Alcibiades ages into *pannucia Baucis*, and the sunbather's beautiful skin wrinkles.<sup>83</sup> This dying world, with no recessed landscape for poetic renewal, is distinctive of Persius' isolationist stance and the presentation of his satire as a hopeless and misguided departure from the sanctuary of a silent self.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup> See above, n. 66. The succession of landscapes of Hor. *Epist.* 2.2 can be productively read as a negotiation in soliloquy.

<sup>81</sup> Time is not a significant factor: *ut satis vixerimus, nec anni nec dies faciunt, sed animus* (Sen. *Ep.* 61.4). Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 24.20–26, 41.4. See also Cic. *Parad.* 2 and 5; Marti 1945: 216–245 on Seneca's *Troades*. The slavery theme in Hor. *Epist.* 1.16 can be easily traced with the help of, e.g., Mayer 1994: 224–231.

<sup>82</sup> Mynors 1990: 124–125: “that long golden springtime.”

<sup>83</sup> Peterson (1972–73: 208) argues that “the victim must be an *old* experienced queer” (my italics) without explaining exactly why. Certainly *populo marcentis pandere vulvas* (41) recalls lines 14–22 and Alcibiades aging into Baucis: see above, 66.

<sup>84</sup> See above, n. 9. *Satires* 1 begins at line 13 only after Persius' failure to control his laughter in lines 11–12.

## V. THE WORD INCARNATE

Socrates responds angrily to the representation of the miserly satirist-moralist. He insists that his criticism, rooted in the flesh,<sup>85</sup> is true in a way that Alcibiades' superficial beauty is not. Alcibiades, through Horace,<sup>86</sup> implies in lines 42–43 that Socrates' criticism is no more or less superficial than that of the people, and prefers to accept his neighbour's praise: *egregium cum me vicina dicat, non credam?* (46–47). The argument between them addresses the question which Socrates raised at the very beginning of the satire: the foundation of criticism. The voices of Alcibiades and Persianic Socrates are both on trial here. Is the ugliness of Socrates' Persianic criticism really preferable to the beauty of Alcibiades' voice?

The attack on the sunbather is motivated by the description of the miser, but it is not a refutation of it: Socrates prefers to attack Alcibiades rather than to correct what he sees as a misrepresentation of himself. The charge that Socrates' Persianic voice is pointlessly ugly is still awaiting an answer when Socrates contrasts Alcibiades' beautifully combed beard with his shorn penis<sup>87</sup> and imagines the duties of his masseurs:

*hi mores! penemque arcanaque lumbi  
runcantem populo marcentis pandere vulvas.  
tum, cum maxillis balanatum gausape pectas,  
inguinibus quare detonsus gurgulio extat?  
quinque palaestritae licet haec plantaria vellant  
elixasque nates labefactent forcipe adunca,  
non tamen ista filix ullo mansuescit aratro.*

What a way to behave, weeding your privates  
and the recesses of your rump, displaying your shrivelled vulva to the public!  
On your jaws you keep a length of rug which you comb and perfume;  
so why is your crotch plucked smooth around your dangling worm?  
Though half a dozen masseurs in the gym uproot this plantation,  
assailing your flabby buttocks with hot pitch and the claws  
of tweezers, no plough ever made will tame that bracken. (Pers. 4.35–41)

It is difficult to shake the feeling that this attack, though direct, is not so much "plain-speaking" as voyeurism. For Peterson, Socrates "knew too much": he "could not speak as he does were he not speaking from experience."<sup>88</sup> In a sense this is true: Socrates, translated from the pseudo-Platonic dialogue, has adopted a generic voice which does have this kind of experience and speaks with this kind of understanding. Socrates' attack on Alcibiades is a characteristically

<sup>85</sup> See also *ilia subter / caecum vulnus habes, sed lato balteus auro / praetegit* (43–45); *si facis in penem quidquid tibi venit* (48).

<sup>86</sup> See above, 72.

<sup>87</sup> What seems an awkward contrast is not: *gurgulio* is a throat or *windpipe* (so Jenkinson's translation at 1980: 39) and, secondarily, a penis.

<sup>88</sup> Peterson 1972–73: 206.

satiric amplification of more delicate suggestions made by his pseudo-Platonic counterpart (see above, 66–67). As in the Vettidius scene the distinction between warped perception and perception of the warped is fragile, and satiric Socrates must show that his vision, however ugly, is of naked *truth*.

Socrates locates his truth in the flesh:

*ilia subter  
caecum vulnus habes, sed lato balteus auro  
praetegit. ut mavis, da verba et decipe nervos,  
si potes.*

You've a hidden wound down in your groin, but it's covered by a broad golden belt.  
As you wish; tell lies to the nerves in your body and deceive them if you can.

(Pers. 4.43–46)

This beautiful covering is akin to the shining skin which Socrates mentioned earlier (14–15), but the image of the *caecum vulnus* recalls more closely the *ulcera* of Horace *Epistles* 1.16.24: *stultorum incurata pudor malus ulcera celat*.<sup>89</sup> In this context there is a sexual dimension to the attack: the vulva which Socrates revealed in the male sunbather is parallel to the unseen wound which he reveals in the warrior. Conington explains *decipe nervos* thus: "cheat your physical powers . . . by fighting on, as if you were not wounded."<sup>90</sup> *Nervi* is commonly a penis<sup>91</sup> and one may reasonably continue the explanation, "or, by continuing to play the man, as if you were not a woman."<sup>92</sup> Alcibiades' effeminate body, the truth, is concealed by his beautiful words. Socrates' criticism is true because it tears away the words to reveal the body beneath. Socrates' last attack on Alcibiades (47–50) represents him as the slave of his penis and his thirsty ears.<sup>93</sup> The line, *amarum / si puteal multa cautus vibice flagellas* (48–49) has long vexed translators and commentators, but Kissel argues convincingly and at length that this too is an example of sexual deviance and therefore of a kind with Socrates' other attacks.<sup>94</sup>

In Roman literary criticism effeminacy is habitually related to Callimachus' legacy (see above, 62). Persius' description of Neo-Callimachean Pedius as

<sup>89</sup> So Hooley 1997: 142. Conington (1874), surprisingly, quotes Hor. *Epist.* 1.16.19–23 in connection with Pers. 4.46 but does not extend its relevance to the previous two lines.

<sup>90</sup> Conington 1874: 80.

<sup>91</sup> See, e.g., Ov. *Am.* 3.7.35 and above, 62 on Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.

<sup>92</sup> John Fitch directed me to Sen. *Herc. f.* 543: *aurato religans ilia balteo*; see also Kissel 1990: 556. This *balteus* belongs to Hippolyte, while the golden *balteus* which Conington (1874: 80) offers as a parallel from Virg. *Aen.* 5.312 is also Amazonian and so also has female associations. As both Fitch and Conington point out, the *balteus* is properly a belt to support a quiver of arrows and this detail recalls the archery metaphor of line 42. The significance of archery might perhaps be developed further in this section: the sexual meaning of *nervus/nervi* as penis derives from the activity of a bowstring (see Freudenburg 1990: 193).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Peterson 1972–73: 209: "External things and bodily parts take on a weird animation."

<sup>94</sup> Kissel 1990: 558–562. In his interpretation Alcibiades' activity is another example of perverted, sterile agriculture: Virg. *G.* 2.238–241 is discussed and, in connection with *amarum / puteal*, *G.* 2.230–231: *alteque iubebis / in solido puteum demitti*.



Romulus effeminized (see above, 71) is but one example of a familiar figure. In the satiric genre particularly, sexual aggression and accusations of effeminacy are normal, and therefore “true,” criticisms. Henderson’s reading of Lucilius’ persona may usefully be transferred to Socrates’ satiric persona here: “it does offer readers its ‘truth,’ which is to say that it implies a set of meanings, values and pleasures to which readers are to be subjected in conformity with their ‘author’.”<sup>95</sup> As Socrates authors the “weeding of the secrets of the groin” his criticism is validated by the established norms of the genre within which he is speaking. To modern ears satire’s pleasure and pride in its plain-talking, in its reality, and in the gross materiality of body and food invite deconstruction. Ancient ears, less delicate, may need encouragement. Alcibiades’ suggestion at lines 42–43 that Socrates’ criticism is not only familiar but bankrupt encourages reflection on the foundation of the satiric voice. Further encouragement is to be found at the end of the satire.

The satire closes with the following lines:

*respue quod non es: tollat sua munera Cerdo.  
Tecum habita; noris quam sit tibi curta supellex.*

Spit out what isn’t you; let the crowd take back what they have conferred;  
live alone, and learn how sparse your furniture is. (Pers. 4.51–52)

These lines (which like lines 23–24 I assign to Persius) reiterate the contrast between the values of the people and inner truth. The final command, *noris quam sit tibi curta supellex*, attacks the poverty of the kind of knowledge which satisfies Alcibiades in lines 42–43: *sic novimus*. *Tecum habita* looks back further to the pivotal lament at line 23, *ut nemo in sese temptat descendere, nemo*, and closes the satire. In addition, however, the graphic *respue* recalls the *despuat* of line 35.<sup>96</sup> This is a crucial reminiscence. At line 35 Socrates has the unknown critic spit out satiric invective which is reassuring in its lack of restraint. What could be left to say and to uncover? At line 51 the advice given is simply *respue quod non es*. Following from Socrates’ criticism in the previous lines, and explained in the terms which immediately follow, this advice is clearly meant for Alcibiades. However, the parallelism with the attack in the palaestra suggests that Socrates consider his own voice, and for this reason I have allocated these lines to the reflective speaker of lines 23–32.

Throughout the satire, understanding and criticism, whether hellebore (16), dying acid (32), or popular opinion (50), are absorbed in the metaphor of a drink.<sup>97</sup> The image of spitting out is thus a rejection of a mode of understanding or criticism. The effect of recalling line 35 at line 51 is to suggest that the descent into “what one (truly) is” is fashioned no more from the criticism which we recognize as satiric than it is from the criticism which pleases the people.

<sup>95</sup> Henderson 1989: 56.

<sup>96</sup> So Hooley 1997: 144.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. also *sapiat* (21). See above, n. 28.

It confirms Persius' lament at lines 23–24 and Alcibiades' smiling cynicism at lines 42–43. Vettidius' coarse exterior has its followers (*pueris plaudentibus*, 31) no less than Alcibiades' shining skin, but lack of refinement is no substitute for truth. With Vettidius' façade and the attack on Alcibiades drawn as realistic rather than real, the difference between Alcibiades and his detractors is one of style. Alcibiades' serenity under fire highlights Socrates' frustration as he pursues a more than verbal truth. Peterson, reading the effect in terms of character, wondered if the corruption was in Socrates' mind. Recasting this in generic terms one may wonder if satire and particularly Persius' satire produces corruption. If satiric criticism is dislocated from plain truth this suspicion is difficult to put aside.

Persius puts a stop to Socrates' tirade in the final two lines: his criticism which we recognize as satiric and Persianic is no less hollow than Alcibiades'. The final image of the poem is of (critical) poverty. The fear that his true satire and his true self are inexpressible is characteristic of Persius' programme. In the following satire Persius writes, *totumque hoc verba resignent / quod latet arcana non enarrabile fibra* (5.28–29). The self-defeating paradox of calling on words to reveal what lies hidden in his secret heart and *cannot be narrated*<sup>98</sup> recalls the absolutism of this satire: *da verba et decipe nervos, si potes* (4.45–46). Although one could invoke the figure of a (pseudo-)Platonic Socrates to attack the very notion of verbal truth, Persius, here and elsewhere, does ground his anxiety about inexpressibility in more specific terms. His target (Callimachus' legacy) and his material (Horace's satires and epistles) define his anxiety as a fear that his abrasive reforming of his predecessor is an inadequate response to the stylistic and moral decadence of his age.

In *Satires* 4 Persius pointedly avoids the Horatian landscapes which stand between the bankruptcy of fashionable criticism and the silence of death. He looks outside the genre briefly to the landscapes of Virgil's *Georgics* and more determinedly to the Socrates of *Alcibiades* 1. As these extra-satiric loci of value are translated to his genre, far from restoring it, they are assimilated, infected, and warped by it. The land of Italy exists in Persianic satire only as a distorted echo. Persius introduces Socrates to repeat satirically what he said in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue. But this repetition is imperfect: satire gives him the voice to amplify the earlier text's suggestions of sexual depravity but it has no other. In a critical environment where serenity is the mark of an effeminate self-satisfaction, dissenting satire can assert its integrity only through corrosive violence. It is, as a genre, beyond redemption.

Persius' introduction of pseudo-Platonic Socrates is, generically, an experiment without parallel in his satires. At lines 23–24 Persius, speaking with his own voice (i.e., the voice which introduced Socrates in the first line), withdraws

<sup>98</sup>This paradox is accentuated by the ambiguity of the word *resigno*, which can mean both "reveal" and "annul" or "invalidate."

Socrates as his authorized voice for the satire.<sup>99</sup> This loss of confidence is echoed at the end of the satire in a withdrawal from the dramatic illusion into the silence of isolation. The representation of satire as beyond redemption is underlined by absolute distinctions: between the verbal and the non-verbal and, more pervasively, between life and death. Socrates, the restorative, extra-generic influence, is called back from death to this satiric world, but his voice is translated in the association of Persianic satire with dying vinegar. The contrast of opposites—beyond death/dying, static/transient—writes the genres as antithetical. Philosophical dialogue (or Virgil's didactic) cannot revive a satire which is its negative echo: Persius has written the genres as having no point of contact and the defeat is unqualified. The satire's final line is no Socratic *aporia* awaiting restorative dialectic but a bitter loneliness: *tecum habita; noris quam sit tibi curta supellex* (52).<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Rather than speaking himself Socrates introduces an unnamed speaker in lines 33–35 to deliver the attack on the sunbather. This gesture might perhaps be interpreted as Socrates distancing himself from the voice which satire has given him but I have not otherwise represented Socrates as self-conscious in this way.

<sup>100</sup> The following satire is a dialogue between Persius and his explicitly Socratic (Pers. 5.37) master Cornutus. Its opening discussion of Persius' voice is to be seen as a response to the pessimism of Pers. 4. There is again a marked concern with inexpressibility as well as similarity with the argument of Pers. 1, the other programmatic poem. After reading Pers. 4 and the effect of satire on Socrates, few readers should be reassured by Persius' statement that as a young man he sat in the lap of "Mr Horny": *teneros tu suscipis annos / Socratico, Cornute, sinu* (Pers. 5.36–37). On the name Cornutus, see Henderson 1989: 64.

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