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Reading the Sick Body: Decomposition and Morality in Persius' Third Satire

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Before considering bodies, let us think about voices. How shall we distinguish the speakers or *personae* or (as I prefer) the voices of Persius' third satire? Back in 1913, Housman argued from first person plural verbs that Persius "makes division of himself" in *Satire* 3 into "the whole man," "his higher nature," and "his lower nature," and thereby "holds parley with himself." [1] Although scholars soon questioned, and largely rejected, the biographical implications of Housman's argument, I want to argue that (with modifications) Housman's intuition was basically right: only, that "whole man" has not yet been realized. He is, rather, the object of Persius' passionate search; as also, if we read the satire thoughtfully and receptively, he must be of ours. [2] **[End Page 337]**

May we imagine *Satire* 3 as a dramatic monologue in different voices as Persius himself might have performed it before a small circle of friends and relations, many of them Stoics? In the first part, the inner dialogue, we may identify Housman's three voices and give them various names, old or new. There is, first, the narrator or presenter who sets the scene for us, introducing the action. He may also be called the observer, the satirist, or the raconteur. Second, there is the reluctant student: dissipated, spoilt, and lazy, who may embody something of Persius' own background and tendencies. And, third, there is the *comes*, a friend or attendant or adviser, who enters abruptly to scold the youth into taking himself and his studies more seriously, and who may later blend into the more abstract Stoic voice that preaches, especially in the satire's second half, to an unconverted world.

It is hard to pin down these voices (which Persius will himself have distinguished in that first dramatic reading); hard, too, to ascertain the best punctuation of our present text. Even the first words, *nempe haec adsidue*, could be spoken in two very different ways: by the narrator as a sort of title for the satire before the fuller stage setting of lines 1b-4; or by the (as yet undistinguished) *comes* bursting in sarcastically, "So *this* is what you've been doing [sleeping and snoring]!" [3] The first person plural verbs in lines 1-16 are complex and fascinating with their implied or, better, implicated authorial presence. Thus, *stertimus* (3): "Here we are, snoring": the spoilt student, yes, but also something of Persius, a genuine shared "we." So, too, with the repeated *querimur* (12, 14): "Here we go again, **[End Page 338]** complaining . . ." The *venimus* of 16 is clearly sarcastic: "Have we come to *this*?" It should be introduced in quotation marks together with the following very sarcastic rebuke of the student's babyish behavior. But it equally suggests an intense inner dialogue within Persius such as Housman envisaged. We might compare the way Plautus' Epidicus "holds parley" with himself in his first scene (*Epid*. 81-103) in what Slater has called "a dramatic monologue framed as schizophrenic internal dialogue." [4] Epidicus, by warning and scolding himself, called forth his own strongest powers as *servus callidus*--the *id* and *ego*, we might say, allied against the spoilsport *superego*, the ever-deceived father. Differently (though with no less comic energy), Persius rouses himself against moral lethargy. He must work out his salvation in fear and trembling.

Voices shift in *Satire* 3 and sometimes blend. The detached observer, my initial narrator, soon disappears, fading perhaps into the *comes* who anticipates, mimics, and scornfully refutes the student's objections. "To the mob with your trappings! I know you from within and beneath the skin." The "inside joke" is suggestive. Persius is the first object of his own satire: dialogue before diatribe. He is, as we shall see, symbolically and symptomatically a broken person, modeling not so much Stoic integrity as the passionate need and search for integrity, the struggle to become that "whole person" with whom we did not start. He is also the living author, a fragile human being (the words are redundant) who dissects

himself in the operating theater of his satire--which brings me to our "vile bodies" and the main problem of this essay.

The theme of *Satire* 3 is the need for moral and spiritual healing, which Stoicism uniquely provides. This theme is supported by a traditional, long-elaborated medical analogy: the moral faults and passions that disturb our lives are like diseases; they grow upon us stealthily, from small to great, and even show physical (or psychosomatic) symptoms; and they urgently require the attention, care, and advice of the philosopher, as of the doctor--advice that must absolutely be followed. [5] Critical studies of the 1960s and **[End Page 339]** 1970s showed how Persius transformed these philosophical commonplaces into new and exciting images and scenes; how these gave continuity of language and thought to the *Satire*, especially linking the "dialogue" and "diatribe" sections; and how Persius built on Horatian verses and scenes to create strikingly new modernistic effects that we, schooled as we were in modernism, might appreciate as poetry, not scorn as (obscurantist) hackwork. [6] Much of this still holds true today, although, in the light of poststructuralist theory, Persius' satires must seem less self-contained, and more open-ended, than the "new critics" so reassuringly (and controllingly) thought them.

Earlier still, in my critically innocent student days, I was impressed by Persius' grotesque images in *Satire* 3, his Hogarthian scenes of decay, suffering, and death. I want now to ask: Do these images and scenes get out of hand? Do they subvert the Stoic moral they were meant to support? Shall we find an *anti-Perse*, so to speak, *chez Perse*, as others found (or seemed to find), in his passionate images of dissolution and desire, an *anti-Lucrèce chez Lucrèce*?

In what follows, I shall argue that Persius' language and imagery--the leaky or broken *vas*, sinking into coma, sudden death--are truly horrifying. They permeate the safe walls of satire and of the criticism of satire. They reveal the fragility, the porousness, the open-endedness of all human bodies, most emphatically including the satirist's own. All the more urgent, then, and intense is the struggle for integrity that Persius models in *Satire* 3 and that he first enacted in that same body, that same "leaky vessel" that we all, professors included, know well enough, but would sometimes prefer to forget. **[End Page 340]**

1. The Faulty *Vas*

I begin with what may seem an overkill of metaphor at lines 20 to 24. Here the censor or moral tutor rebukes the dilatory student, comparing him (a) to a leaky vessel, then (b) to an unbaked one, and finally (c) to moist clay ready for the shaping:

> effluis amens,
> contemnere. sonat vitium percussa, maligne
> respondet viridi non cocta fidelia limo.
> udum et molle lutum es, nunc nunc properandus et acri
> fingendus sine fine rota.
>
> You're leaking mindlessly, you'll be despised.
> No good response comes from the unbaked jar
> with its green clay: strike it, you hear the fault.
> You are soft wet clay that needs to be taken in hand
> right away and shaped on the endless wheel.

Comical and insulting, the conflated triple comparison points up the urgency of Stoic education. Study now, not later, and you may yet pass the test of integrity. Lead a dissolute life and it will be just that: dissolute, fragmented, or flowing away. At the same time, Persius' vase-metaphors transgress their Stoic borders, the accepted (and, in *Satire* 3, controlling) equation of moral fault and physical sickness: for, as bodily creatures, we are all of us leaky or flawed vessels, bound to decay and death--a realization that, by its very uncontrollability and universality, may challenge and reshape the moral teaching it was supposed to enforce.

To begin with the leaky jar: *effluis* carries a range of possible meanings from "You're babbling" to "Your life's flowing away." [7] Persius' **[End Page 341]** comparison, though, takes us back to Plato's *Gorgias* where Socrates opposes Callicles' view that the best life is one in which we satisfy every possible

desire. This is, Socrates has heard, like carrying water in a sieve to pour it into a leaky vessel, the desirous (*epithymêtikos*) part of the soul. His informant drew on Orphic depictions of the Danaids carrying water in Tartarus; thus fare the uninitiated. With wit and wordplay, Plato applies the parable to the uneducated soul and to pleasure-seekers like Callicles who think they're clever and who can be such a disaster in Athenian public life. [8]

The sexual implications of all this "inflow" and "outflow" in Plato are rather funny and would repay further study. [9] But there is more, as we see from the third book of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. Here again, if you are not morally educated--following Epicurus, this time--you will have poured your life's efforts into leaky vessels where they "flow through" and are lost, thanklessly: *perfluxere atque ingrata interiere* (3.937). The Danaids, again, illustrate the moral point. Lucretius also compares the indulging of wrong desires, the pursuing of "impure" pleasures, with using dirty containers that spoil the taste of whatever you put into them. [10] But other parts of Lucretius' poem tell a different, less morally defined story: for often, as Charles Segal has noted in his book, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety*, he depicts the human body--every human body--as a frail, flawed, utterly permeable vessel that cannot easily or long protect the life-giving interconnections of mind and soul (*vitai claustra coercens*). [11] Time **[End Page 342]** and again, to prove the mortality of the soul and its interdependent life with the body, Lucretius cites horrific examples of physical decay and dissolution. He is also much concerned, as males often are, with the protection or loss of precious bodily fluids--which, again, is another story. [12] (It is also a story in which feminist literary theory has a special interest: for women have long been regarded, in some detail, as the weaker vessel; and women scholars have had much to say in recent years about that "some detail" where men might fear to comment.) [13] But the main point, coming back to Lucretius, is that, body and soul together, we all *leak* and that, in the end, our bodies, like Falstaff's, will not "keep in a little life." [14] Or, as Epicurus put it, every person is "an unwalled city." [15]

Persius' *vas*-metaphor may go back not just to Plato and Lucretius, but also to Aristophanes, for whom metaphorical expressions take on a remarkable life of their own on the comic stage. Think of the informer in *Acharnians* 910-58 who denounces Boeotian contraband and who is packaged up himself like a piece of pottery for export: a "crackpot," in fact. [16] So, too, in Persius, the *vas* comparison takes on a comic literalness, not just in lines 20-24, but in their dramatic sequel, 58-62: **[End Page 343]**

> stertis adhuc laxumque caput conpage soluta
> oscitat hesternum dissutis undique malis.
> est aliquid quo tendis et in quod derigis arcum?
> an passim sequeris corvos testaque lutoque,
> securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivis?
>
> You are still snoring. Your head falls loose with its
> neck-joints unhinged; it yawns off yesterday from
> unsewn jaws. Have you an aim, a place to direct your
> shot? Or do you just run after the crows, in all directions,
> throwing sherds or clay, not caring where your feet
> may take you, but living off the moment?

The reluctant student has relapsed into physical and moral somnolence. He is so relaxed, in fact, that his head almost falls off; he snores so violently that his jaws become loosened--images that will recur in the death-scene later on. But there is a further, horrendous suggestion. The youth has quite regressed, quite "gone to pieces." When, like a careless child, he throws sherds and clay at the crows, it is as though he is throwing away parts of himself, of his unformed self. [17] So much for dissolute living. "Clay thou art, and unto clay thou shalt return."

2. Falling into Unconsciousness

Persius uses traditional, "Socratic" commonplaces in *Satire* 3 when he issues his "wake-up call" to study philosophy. Ordinary, unenlightened people, if not stung awake by the philosopher-gadfly, will sleep away their so-called lives in a moral torpor, a kind of living death. ("I had not thought death had undone so many," says Eliot, after Dante, of the crowds flowing over **[End Page 344]** London Bridge.) [18] Horace used this *topos* briefly in *Epistles* 1.2.27-37, on which Persius draws; Seneca develops it in a

letter to Lucilius. [19] But Persius does more. He turns that comatose existence into an image of death by drowning. Natta goes under, heavily. He won't "bubble up again" on life's surface. This is not like Horace's funny story in *Satires* 2.3.145-57 about the miser in a coma (*lethargo grandi*) who is just barely revived by his shrewd and faithful doctor and yet refuses to take the prescribed teaspoonful of medicine: "What difference does it make if I'm killed by sickness or by highway robbery?" Persius will use this story shortly. For now, he dwells on the comatose existence itself as it slides into that other, very Lucretian image of sinking into utter dissolution, the universal nothingness of death. [20]

And this frightening sensation of going down, or going under, [21] is further developed in lines 35-43. The point made there is drawn from Stoic teaching about moral responsibility: namely, that the tortures of a bad conscience, when one has learned better, are much worse than a child's obliviousness or a natural fool's. Lucretius, too, spoke powerfully of the psychological Hell endured by evildoers. In Persius, though, images of poison and wasting away, torture and terror, lead to the strange climactic lines 41-43:

> "imus,
> imus praecipites" quam si sibi dicat et intus
> palleat infelix quod proxima nesciat uxor? **[End Page 345]**
>
> [What terror is worse] than if one should say
> to himself, "We're falling, falling headlong!" and
> turn pale within, poor wretch, at what his wife,
> lying beside him, can never know?

This is like nightmare. It images not just the pain arising from some horrible guilt (we wonder, what *has* the man been doing?), but more, the sense of slipping into unconsciousness, of falling headlong, *praecipites*, into the final nothingness of death. [22] The anxiety is existential. It concerns us all: not just the tortured husband, or the half-educated person, again, who ought to know better, but all of humankind.

3. An Ugly Death

Satire 3 climaxes in a graphic depiction of sudden death. This belongs to the poem's dialectic, for the Stoic's brief sermon on the necessity of good moral living and learning was introduced, precisely, by the analogous warning not to neglect symptoms of disease (63-65):

> elleborum frustra, cum iam cutis aegra tumebit,
> poscentis videas; venienti occurrite morbo,
> et quid opus Cratero magnos promittere montis?
>
> You can see people clamoring in vain for hellebore when
> their sick hide is already swollen. Hurry and fight the
> disease at its onset--or would you rather promise
> great mountains of money to Doctor Craterus?

The philistine, in turn, ridicules philosophers. They are (in his caricature) stooped and bent, intent on their thoughts, muttering to themselves, weighing their words, and concentrated on "the crazy dreams of some old invalid" (83). "And that's what you're pale about? That's why a man **[End Page 346]** shouldn't eat?" (85). To us, of course, who are *professors*, whose business it is to distinguish, say, between Pythagoras and Epicurus, the joke is on the confused, know-nothing centurion. We are also, with reason, sensitive to his attacks. But they are also, we must admit, very funny; and we might imagine the speaker of the dramatic monologue, who was once Persius himself, playing the centurion's part with a comic mimesis that might have come straight from Aristophanes' *Clouds*. We laugh with him, not just at him. That is to say, we become accomplices in his anti-intellectual guffaws--for something in ourselves (the Roman audience and the twentieth-century audience) must enjoy making fun of professors. I emphasize this laughter because Persius gives us here a good old comic *agon*--in which, to be sure, the Stoic rebuttalist will have (or so it seems) the last big laugh.

In the climactic parable of the Sick Man's Death, the invalid disregards his doctor's orders, disregards his friend's warning (he's looking pale), eats, drinks, and bathes, and suddenly dies. What is striking is

the ugliness, the grotesqueness of the description, especially against the background of Horace's *Epistle* 1.16. There, in his most Stoic poem, Horace urged the need of self-knowledge and strong moral standards using the analogy of disease. It is as foolish to go by public opinion in moral questions as in matters of physical health or disease. He fears the consequences (21-23):

> neu si te populus sanum recteque valentem
> dictitet, occultam febrem sub tempus edendi
> dissimules, donec manibus tremor incidat unctis.
>
> or that, if the crowd should assert, time and again, that you
> are fine and healthy, you might keep your fever
> concealed until, when dinner comes, your greasy
> hands are taken with a fit of trembling.

The deluded man shakes with a fever that may prove mortal; Horace doesn't spell out the results. But Persius does. For him, the punishment is deserved, and it comes with sudden obscene violence (98-102):

> turgidus hic epulis atque albo ventre lavatur,
> gutture sulpureas lente exhalante mefites. **[End Page 347]**
> sed tremor inter vina subit calidumque trientem
> excutit e manibus, dentes crepuere retecti,
> uncta cadunt laxis tunc pulmentaria labris.
>
> Swollen with food, with pale white belly, he
> goes to the bath, his throat slowly exhaling
> sulphurous fumes. But a trembling seizes him
> even as he drinks, shaking the warm wine cup
> out of his hand; his teeth are bared and they
> chatter; and now the greasy tidbits drop from
> his unresisting lips.

The man shakes violently all over, his hands lose their grip, his teeth chatter as his lips part in a loose grimace that will become, directly, the mocking grimace of death. The last laugh is quite literally *on him*. As the food falls from his now loosened lips, *uncta cadunt laxis tunc pulmentaria labris* (one of the ugliest lines in Latin literature), we are reminded of the reluctant, easy-living student earlier, relaxed and almost drowned in spiritual torpor, or else yawning with weariness and boredom to the point of becoming almost literally unhinged.

And there is more. Though we may live sluggishly, things move fast enough after death: horns and tapers ready; prepare the corpse; feet first, out the door; and "he" is carried away by his newly freed slaves (and presumably forgotten). Juvenal will take the story further in *Satire* 1. His selfish solitary glutton will be mocked, after a sudden death, at other people's dinner tables; the angry clients (*amici*) will applaud the funeral procession as it passes (142-46). We are on the way to Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come. But I return to two quietly sarcastic points in Persius. First, the dead man is *tandem[que] . . . compositus*, "finally put together" after his loose, fragmented life. Shall we say that, in the end, his life achieved closure? But differently, the corpse is *lutatus*: not just "smeared" with unguents, but also, more literally, "turned to clay." *Lutum* thou art, and unto *lutum* thou shalt return. When it comes to any body, closure is a brief pretense. Dissolution is forever.

The poetic images just reviewed, of decay and death, are strikingly original. They show Persius at his best, as a master of "uglification and derision." They also convey the horror of non-being so powerfully that it threatens to subvert, not just revivify, the Stoic equation of physical and moral sickness. Granted that the death's head may sometimes shake us **[End Page 348]** loose from our ordinary "ambition and distraction," and that, as Dr. Johnson said, the prospect of hanging wonderfully concentrates a man's mind; still, why should we rouse ourselves and study philosophy, if all is vanity in the end?

I do not myself believe in an "*anti-Perse chez Perse*" any more than I believe in that old, discredited "*anti-Lucrèce chez Lucrèce*." In Persius' satire, as in Lucretius' epic, the emotional urgencies evoked by images of bodily vulnerability, decay, and death may challenge and test the philosophical argument, but

they do not finally refute it. Poetry and philosophy, feeling and thought, self-searching and education of others still keep pace one with another. I want to insist, however, on the fearfulness of Persius' own vulnerable body in which this satire was first performed, and whose physical presence we might still imagine (in a sort of virtual reality?) as underlying that long series of performances and reperformances that culminates in our own acts of reading today. This was a body, after all, that may have been frailer than most--whose owner may have struggled, more than most, with thoughts of sickness and death. "His father Flaccus," says the *Vita* (which seems reasonably reliable), "died when he was about six, leaving him an orphan. Later on, his mother Fulvia Sisennia married Fusius, a Roman knight, and buried him too within a few years." He found, it would seem, new father-figures: Cornutus, first of all, but also "two learned and upright men who keenly pursued philosophy, Claudius Agathinus, a Spartan doctor, and Petronius Aristocrates Magnes, older men whom he uniquely admired and imitated." Role models matter enormously. Should we think of that Stoic doctor, concerned with body and soul together, and of Persius' early death, *vitio stomachi*? Was it cancer? Did that disease (as often happens) cast a backward shadow on Persius' later years, and on his poetry?

I do believe that Persius (like T. S. Eliot) was unusually aware of his own human brokenness and vulnerability, and that he was all the more passionately involved, on that account, in the search for health, sanity, wholeness, and personal integrity. His satires, most of all the third, dramatize this search in its intense inwardness and simultaneously model it for others in ways that can only be outlined here in very summary fashion.

First: when Persius "makes division of himself," as described earlier, we might say that this division serves a diagnostic purpose, like Freud's *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, or perhaps like the Child, Parent, and Adult of "Transactional Analysis," briefly popular in the 1970s. But division may also indicate illness. When the youth, calling for writing materials, bawls **[End Page 349]** out "*Findor!*" he means that he has "a splitting headache" from impatience and from his hangover: already a symptom of anger and unrestraint to which the doctor-philosopher would pay close attention. But there is more: a split or splitting personality, a surrealistic image of brokenness, anticipating the potsherds and loose clay later on. [23] Compare Dante's grisly description of the heretics and schismatics in *Inferno* 28: *seminator di scandalo e di scisma*, who suffer the same grotesque cleavage that they have inflicted on the body of Christendom. This brokenness, this pain, this lack of wholeness, is where we must begin.

Secondly: Persius (the man behind the masks) is not yet a "whole man." He is, in Stoic terms, a *proficiens*, not a *sapiens*: an advanced student, not an imperturbable sage. If some of his *personae*, like the *comes*, the diatribe preacher, and the good doctor, embody something of the rational understanding and self-mastery that Persius has been at pains to acquire, yet other figures in his comic gallery--the reluctant student, the remembered child playing hooky (who was really quite justified), the know-nothing centurion who mocks philosophers (and is really quite funny), and the impatient patient--all these comic characters embody not just the imperviousness, philistinism, and anti-intellectual prejudice of the outside world, but also something of the very real reluctance and resistance to the pain of growth (and decay) that Persius must often have felt within himself. The enemy to be overcome is first within. And here we must go beyond Housman, for Persius gives us, from the first, not the achieved, controlling *persona* of the "whole man" as a detached observer, but rather the more complicated *persona* of what anthropologists call the participant-observer, here studying himself as he does or does not become involved, passionately involved, in the quest for salvation. Hence, again, those problematic first-person plurals, which make unusually good sense if Persius identifies with both narrator and sleepy youth ("Here we go again, snoring . . . complaining . . ."). And this is more than Horatian tact or irony. Persius really does need help to complete what seventeenth-century Puritans would call the process of sanctification. Perhaps that is why the satire, though not **[End Page 350]** obviously open-ended, yet concludes with an ambiguous joke at the poet's expense, perhaps, not just the philistine's. [24] These are only "progress notes" (as they say in hospitals) after all.

Differently (and thirdly): we might call *Satire* 3 an exercise in Stoic self-fashioning or, more precisely, *self-composition*. Here Persius diverges strikingly from Horace. When Horace says in *Satires* I.4 that his satire-writing springs from an old habit of taking notes on people's behavior for his own self-improvement, we sense, though we cannot prove, that he is teasing us from behind the mask (beloved by later satirists) of the ingenuous observer. And, in *Satires* 2.3, the closest model for Persius' third satire, Horace depicts himself as the near-helpless victim of the wild street-preacher Damasippus who bursts into his Sabine retreat, denounces him for sloth in writing, and unloads a long, rambling, cumbersome version of the Stoic paradox, "Every fool is mad," upon his unoffending head. The joke is,

of course, on Damasippus, the greater madman. The satire--Horace's longest, for all his "sloth"--is a send-up of (third-hand) Stoic dogmatism and a plea, once again, for good sense in judging ourselves and others. But Persius un-deconstructs the Stoic sermon, turning the joke, though perhaps not finally, against the surefooted ironist: for now, writing (or study) is truly urgent and sloth is deadly. And *compositio*, the poet's craft, literally the "putting together" of words--the craft learned well and gratefully from Horace's *callida iunctura,* and improved on too--has become a way of modeling that other moral and spiritual recomposition, or reconstruction, of all those dissolving fragments of ourselves, the potsherds, the liquid clay, the decomposing corpse so briefly and ironically "gotten together" for his own funeral. It is, we might say, an exercise in reconstructive surgery, performed for medical students, and patients too, in the great operating theater of satire, and first and most remarkably performed by the poet himself upon his own *corpus vile.* Reading the satire, reimagining the performance, we are already halfway to Augustine's *Confessions*.

Let me conclude in a personal voice, with the last words that I spoke *in the body* in San Diego, California, the morning of Friday, **[End Page 351]** December 29, l995, to my blessedly live fellow-panelists and members of the audience:

> As we read the satire, then, we become terribly aware of the *dismembering* forces to which all are subject: youth, tutor, preacher, philistine, doctor, patient; and the poet who created these voices and performed these roles; and then ourselves, who are here present in the (decaying) body and who *remember* Persius gratefully, even as we read, dissect, and reconstruct the sick body in and of his satire. He is (if I may say the A-word) an Author, or *auctor*: one of those to whom the long chain of readings and performances goes back; whose urgent, living voice still speaks to us out of the distant past; and who, if we but listen, may still *authorize* us to grow. [25]

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Notes

1. Housman 1913.16-18; cf. the discussions of Reckford 1962.494-95, Rudd 1970, Jenkinson 1973.521-34, Kissel 1990.368-73 and nn., Hooley 1997.202-07. By using the first person plural *stertimus*, Persius establishes his role "als die eines beteiligten (!) und damit bereits mittelbar in das Geschehen involvierten Beobachters" (Kissel 1990.376). *Satire* l.1-12 presents a comparably intense inner dialogue; also *Satire* 5.1-18, if Witke 1970.89-90 is right in thinking that Cornutus does not speak lines 5-18 [except as an internalized voice?]. On the inwardness of dialogue in Persius' satires generally, see the perceptive comments of Relihan 1989.152-54, with special reference to Menippean satires such as Varro's *Bimarcus* (154, and cf. n. 36 on Bakhtin).

I follow Clausen 1956 unless otherwise noted.

2. The underlying issue of the ever-shifting relation between the satiric *personae* and the author's person could not be discussed adequately within the bounds of the present essay. For the basic "new critical" approach, see Anderson 1982, Dessen 1996 (for Persius), and, with more recent qualifications, Freudenburg 1993 (for Horace) and Braund 1988 (for Juvenal); Braund 1996 gives a good general summary. My own revisionist efforts to reconstruct a sense of connection between the living author and his shifting fictional *personae* find encouragement and challenge in Martindale 1993.11-18 (on Horace) and now Oliensis 1997.97: "The new-critical claim that the author Horace and the character Horace share nothing more than a name is as ill-founded as the naive historicist claim that they are one and the same. Readers such as Zetzel and Freudenburg give Horace too much credit when they ascribe every false step to Horace's *persona*, postulating a godlike author smiling somewhere high above as he pulls the puppet's strings. It is sometimes the author, not his *persona*, who stumbles."

3. For the latter, see Rudd 1970.287. My own tentative arrangement of voices (to be argued more fully elsewhere) is as follows. Let PC represent Persius-as-*comes*, PN Persius-as-narrator, PA Persius-as-*adulescens*, PS Persius-as-generalized diatribe speaker: then 1a (PC), 1b-4 (PN), 5-6 (PC), 7 (PN/PA), 8 (PA/PN), 9 (PA/PN), 10-14 (PN with some mimesis of PA); 15-34 (PC and/or PN joining in, with mimesis of PA at 19a, 25-26); similarly, 35-43 and (more directed at PA) 44-62. Then PS from 63-76, with dramatic confrontations and insets at 77-87, 88-106. Does 107-18 return us to PC and PA, somewhat as Jenkinson 1973.547-49 argues? That is not so clear.

4. Slater 1985.20-24, quoted from 21. Slater studies the monologue "for its depiction of the transition from non-illusory modes of playing to the illusory" (21). One voice is Epidicus, the slave in trouble; the other "is both imperious and censorious" (23). Slater further suggests that the actor playing Epidicus might hold a dialogue with his mask; by the end, Epidicus "has . . . talked himself into his role" (24). The similarities with Persius 1.1-12 are striking.

5. For a good general discussion, see Nussbaum 1994.388-93; for further detail and controversy, Long and Sedley 1987 #65. Although Posidonius' dispute with Chrysippus (65R) seems like quibbling, it indicates weakness in the Stoic analogy, for healthy people, not just the illness-prone, fall into fevers and sometimes from minor causes. Again, the wise man's soul may be immune to affections, but no body is *apathes* (dis-passionate) by nature. Still, Posidonius ultimately agrees with Chrysippus (on whom Persius probably relied) that all inferior people are sick in soul and in ways resembling the diseases of the body: so, basically, the analogy holds.

6. The best summaries and critical re-evaluations of the older Persius criticism are in Italian: La Penna 1981, Pasoli 1985, Squillante Saccone 1985. For a new, very insightful approach, see Henderson 1991, who metasatirically extends Persius' subjective dialectic, shock treatment, and Socratic inquiry beyond all proper bounds into our own lives. For another, see Hooley 1997, who analyzes Persius' satires as strong readings of Horace's. Thus *Satire* 3 is "a responsive counter-creation" (208) to Horace *S.* 2.3 (and, I would add, *Ep.* 1.2); its disorienting "manipulated perspective" is "not so much a shift away from irony as an unsettling of customary Horatian indicators of that irony" (211).

7. According to the *OLD, effluo* is used of liquids flowing out or away and solids melting away, dissolving. If *effluis* was a vulgar metaphor, as Kissel suggests, then Persius revives the literal sense of "leaking through"; cf. Ter. *Eun*. 121, where Parmeno uses *effluet* of falsehood "leaking out," with reference back to 104-05 (with indecent gestures?): *hac atque illac perfluo*; there is probably a macaronic play on the Greek *phluareô*, "talk nonsense," "chatter." Persius may be influenced by other uses of *effluo* cited in *TLL* v, 2.192-94, including the flowing-away of our time (and life); cf. Sen. *Epist*. 1.1: *quaedam tempora eripiuntur nobis, quaedam subducuntur, quaedam effluunt.* Cf. also La Penna 1981.68 on Persius' probably new application of the metaphorical *effluere* to moral dissolution.

8. See Plato *Gorg*. 493a5-b3 (the leaky jar, with a play on *pithanos/pithos* unavailable in Latin, though perhaps recalled by Persius' *fidelia*, 73); 493b5-c3 (uninitiated souls like sieves); and 493e6-494a (some water jars can be filled, others are perforated and rotten); thus the maximum "inflow" (*epirrhein*) of pleasure and the maximum "fulfillment" (*plêrôsis*) desired by Callias must also, as Socrates points out, require a large "outlet" and "outflow" (*ekroai*, 494b1-2), so that the pleasure-seeker's life will resemble that of the gully-bird that excretes even as it eats. In his masterly commentary, Dodds 1959.296-306 notes the shift from the myth of the Watercarriers to philosophical allegory, maybe Pythagorean but now developed with much of Plato's own playfulness.

9. For the implied sexual humor, cf. Eryximachus' involuntary self-parody at *Symp*. 186c5-7: "Medicine is, in a nutshell, the science of the erotics of the body with respect to filling and emptying (*plêsmonên kai kenôsin*)," with Aristophanes' further parody at 191c6 and elsewhere.

10. Cf. Lucr. 3.434-41, 551-57 (the body as a life-containing *vas*); 3.935-37, 1008-10 (the ungrateful man's life as a leaky *vas*); 6.17-25 (the unphilosophical life as a perforated and leaky *vas* and as a filthy, stinking one). Hence Pers. 3.73: *nec invideas quod multa fidelia putet?* Horace praised the clean vessel, more encouragingly, in *Ep*. 1.2.54, 67-70.

11. Segal 1990.141: "Lucretius' point is the dependence of the soul on its physical container, or 'vessel,' the body, and therefore its mortality. But an indirect result of this proof of the soul's mortality is that the body's fragility is thrown into relief: it is merely a vessel, easily shattered. The poet's account thus tends to identify the wholeness of the individual, 'man himself,' with his perishable, precarious mortal shell." Lucretius often expresses anxiety about "the invasion, transformation, or deformation of one's corporeal being"; but this, Segal suggests, may be "a displaced form of the real fear of death" (21).

12. Epicurus (fr. 62 Usener) seems to have worried about the harm done [to males?] by sexual intercourse. Cf. also Douglas 1966.126 (cited by Segal 1981.113, n. 22): "Both male and female physiology lend themselves to the analogy with the vessel which must not pour away or dilute its vital

fluids. Females are correctly seen as, literally, the entry by which the pure content may be adulterated. Males are treated as pores through which the precious stuff may ooze out and be lost, the whole system being thereby enfeebled." On the ambivalence of Galen and the Greco-Roman medical tradition towards sexual activity generally, see Foucault 1986.99-144.

13. See, for example, Paster 1993.23-63 ("Leaky Vessels: The Incontinent Women of City Comedy") and Burns 1993.31-70 ("A Close Look at Female Orifices in Farce and Fabliau"). See also the insightful discussion by duBois 1988.40-59 of the female body as receptacle and the perceived danger of opening up earth, vase, or body. For other useful references, see Gold's essay and notes in the present volume.

14. Shakespeare, *King Henry IV*, Part I, v, iv, 100-01: [The Prince] "What, old acquaintance, could not all this flesh / keep in a little life?" Actually, it can (after 109, *Falstaff riseth up*)--for a short time.

15. *Sent. Vat.* 31 (= fr. 339 Usener): "but as far as death is concerned all of us mortals inhabit an unwalled city."

16. My pun, not Aristophanes'. Nicarchus is wrapped up "like pottery" (*keramon*, 928) and may prove serviceable in the manner of various household vessels (935-39). Even though it makes horrible noises, this new multi-purpose container can't easily be broken (940-45). The stage action, though unrecoverable, must have been hilarious.

17. My teacher, Robert Brooks, made this suggestion in March 1951. Cf. the grotesque image, *sparsisse oculos*, at Pers. 5.33. *Lutum*, like the Greek *pêlos*, can refer both to the clay or earth used by masons and potters from which (in the creation myth and elsewhere) humans were first fashioned and to the mud or mire that we usually avoid. Persius may connect it imaginatively with the Greek verb *luô*, to loose or dissolve, from which, Chrysippus said, distress (*lupê*) got its name (Cic. *Tusc*. 3.61).

18. T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" 63, with his own reference to Dante, *Inferno* 3.55-56 in the Notes.

19. In Sen. *Ep*. 53.5-8, possibly based on Persius, deep sleep provides an analogy for unawareness of self (*animumque altius mergit*), but there is no sense of horror, only the warning, *expergiscamur ergo*.

20. Cf. Lucr. 3.465-66 (*gravi lethargo fertur in altum / aeternumque soporem*; note the first suggestion, of being carried out to sea) and 3.829 (*in nigras lethargi mergitur undas*), both picked up by Pers. 3.33-34: *et alto / demersus summa rursus non bullit in unda*. Cf. Segal 1990.83-84: "In particular, by associating death with the sensation of drowning or sinking into a sea of darkness, Lucretius depicts some of the anxieties that Plutarch singled out in his criticisms of Epicurus, and he presents them vividly: the loss of control, the dissolution of identity, the entrance into a mysterious zone or substance that is ominously black or engulfing."

21. Persius may be influenced here by a well-known Stoic analogy. "Yes," they say, "but just as in the sea, the man an arm's length from the surface is drowning no less than the man who has sunk five hundred fathoms deep, so even those who are getting close to virtue are no less in a state of vice than those who are far from it . . ." (Plut. *Comm. not*. 1063AB [= 61 T Long and Sedley]).

22. Lines 41-43, especially *praecipites*, were probably influenced by associated ideas and images in Lucr. 4.1018-23 on dreams and dream-images: (a) many people reveal guilty secrets in sleep, (b) many die [in dreams], (c) many wake up terrified from dreams of falling (*de montibus altis / ut qui praecipitent ad terram corpore toto*, 1020-21). Persius transfers this terror to an awareness of moral decline and failure.

23. I part company with Clausen and several other editors when I put "*Findor!*" in quotation marks, as a loud exclamation. The more usual word would be *rumpor*, "burst with emotion": cf. Kissel 1990.381-82. Gowers 1994.142 shares my sense (we came to it independently) of *findor*'s significance: "There, in the word *findor* (literally, 'I am split in two') is the first intimation of the poet's split personality . . ."

24. The dialogue in 107-18 mainly reinforces the moral thrust of the preceding parable: illness is not just a metaphor for moral weakness but its real expression. Yet 118 suggests a "Cretan Liar" paradox: "Even/only a crazy man would realize you were crazy!" Differently, Hooley 1997.224-29 describes Persius' subversion of Horace's ending: "The effect is rather to cast the reader back into the first stage of

Horace's poem in order to unwind its closing complexities" (228).

25. Our collaborative volume poses questions that resist closure, calling rather for the fluidity of ongoing dialogue (see the Introduction). I am compelled, especially by Barbara Gold's essay, to ask how far Persius' imagery of leaky vessels reflects (and reinforces) specifically male anxieties, casting the more general human anxiety about decay and dissolution into the now familiar antithesis of "male" solidity and hardness vs. "female" seepage and fluidity. With respect to Bakhtin and Paul Allen Miller's essay: although I agree that much of the grotesque in Roman verse satire is negative and sterile, and so not entitled to the doubleness of decrowning and revitalization that Bakhtin found in Rabelais and might well have found in Aristophanes, I would also argue that as we read through Persius' *Satires* we find intimations of a comic reversal toward wholeness beyond fragmentation and toward new productivity beyond "the waste land." If Horace's satire aligned itself with the new comedy of Menander and Terence, Persius' satire may return to an older allegiance to the old comedy of Aristophanes and his rivals (cf. Pers. 1.123-26)--the true Bakhtinian sphere.

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