Arethusa 32.3 (1999) 337-352

Horace *Satires* 1.7: Satire as Conflict Irresolution

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The seventh poem in Horace's first book of *Satires*, often slighted for its brevity, raucous mirth, and the stupefying pun at the finish, nevertheless has much to say about the program for satire that Horace is constructing in that book of poems. [1] The echoes within the poem both of Lucilius and of Horace's critical treatment of Lucilius in *Sat*. 1.4 and 1.10 place 1.7 in Horace's ongoing debate with his genre in *Satires* I. The poem's satiric frame, its Lucilian combatants, and the dark allusion to Brutus all participate in an elucidation of Horace's ambivalent stance towards his genre and his model Lucilius. Moreover, the poem's epic parodies and the implication of the murderous proceedings of the Roman civil wars in the regicidal pun provide a deep commentary on the human conflict that motivates both epic and invective combat.

Horace is concerned with conflict in the *Satires*, and I will argue that the analysis of conflict that is visible in *Sat*. 1.7 is at the heart of Horace's objections to Lucilian satire in regard to both its stylistic and its invective nature. But we need to note first that the *appeal* of invective for **[End Page 337]** Horace is evident. Unlike persuasive speech, which, however manipulative or overbearing, must depend on the needs of the listener in order to be effective, invective is powerful speech, a medium through which the speaker asserts himself against another and thus identifies himself positively as a separate self; as such it may serve as a defensive weapon, as Horace notes in *Sat*. 2.1 when he compares his pen to Canidia's *venenum* (2.1.48). [2] Though we never see Horace use his speech, *in propria persona*, in such a way in the *Satires*, he promises us that he can. And invective has the appeal, obvious in its exposition in *Sat*. 1.7, of sheer pleasure, like the explosion of fireworks, in the tumbling boisterous verbiage of invective exchange; it is a pleasure of transgression, of limitlessness, of speaking that no longer needs to hear, and is a proposition of the self that is unbounded by the ear's obedience to another speaker. As 1.7 will show, the invective speaker uses his speech as if it were a material weapon against another and claims the whole verbal field with the obliterating exuberance of his assault. Invective thus provides a source of merriment for its audience, so long as the audience is not the object of its attacks. But while invective appeals to Horace as a powerful tool in the poetic arsenal, his awareness of that appeal is complicated by a consciousness of the deadly pleasures of conflict and of how invective enacts conflict.

The dangers of invective for Horace are akin to its pleasures. These dangers receive a critical exposition in *Sat*. 1.4 where Horace first addresses the problem of his satiric predecessor Lucilius. The expansiveness of invective is mirrored in Lucilius' stylistic unrestraint. In 1.4, Horace contrasts his criticism of Lucilius, that Lucilius' verses flow like a muddy stream (*flueret lutulentus*, 12), [3] with a boast of his own verbal poverty: *di bene fecerunt inopis me quodque pusilli / finxerunt animi, raro et perpauca loquentis* (17-18). The gods did a good thing when they made his spirit short on resources: a wee thing, as it were, speaking a few words infrequently. It is a curiosity of *Sat*. 1.4 that Horace, who might have simply established himself in the genre of his predecessor with praise and imitation of Lucilius, instead establishes a relation of conflict between himself and **[End Page 338]** his satiric predecessor. He writes what amounts to a *recusatio* of satire in the genre of satire.

Where Lucilius flows muddy, Horace is spare. [4] On the surface, stylistic objections are the only ones Horace allows himself to make to his satiric model. Potential ethical objections to Lucilius' invective practice are hidden in the convoluted arguments of 1.4, which concern the status of this genre as poetry, and in the fear and hatred that Horace presents as the predictable response first to satire (*hoc genus*, 24) and then to poetry and to poets (33). So, in 1.4, Horace mounts a campaign against the

reckless speaker and the bad friend and, as a resolution to the problem of the genre itself, establishes his own character as the surety against the danger posed by his poetry.

Sat. 1.4 begins with what is apparently praise for Lucilius as the direct descendant of the Old Comic Poets who marked (*notabant*, 1.4.5) the criminal and the notorious. That practice of Lucilius' poetry becomes aligned, in the course of 1.4, with the practice by which Horace's father improved his son, by marking (*notando*, 106) the faults in others that he would have his son avoid. It is thanks to this satiric practice of Horace's father that Horace says he is *sanus*, clean of serious faults that would bring *perniciem* (130). But Horace has further adopted the practice himself and ponders in silence (*compressis labris*, 138) the behavior of others. What Lucilius did with too many words, Horace does not merely with restraint but in complete silence; satire as Lucilius practiced it is reduced to an interior monologue in Horace. In what time he has left to him, Horace says, he fools with his poetry (*illudo chartis*, 139). As if to assert that he has not entirely emasculated his craft, Horace ends 1.4 with the odd boast that anyone left objecting to his now wholly benign practice of poetry will be assailed by a band of poets and forced to join their troupe (140-43). The strangeness of 1.4 is born of Horace's impossible ambivalence about the attractions and dangers of Lucilian poetic speech. If we take 1.4 as Horace's program for satire, a program based on a poetics and a social disposition that are fundamentally characterized by the same principle of verbal restraint, it is not hard to deduce the nature of Horace's critique of Lucilian invective. **[End Page 339]**

Moreover, the personal and poetic restraint Horace practices, with a view to being the poet of a kind of satire that does not inspire fear and hatred, and that is therefore not under suspicion (*suspectum genus hoc scribendi*, 1.4.65), is consistent with the larger theme in the *Satires* that the limits nature has imposed upon our existence establish the boundaries to desire and the conditions for our happiness. To go beyond those boundaries is to court disaster; to stay within them is to live according to reason's assessment of reality and to be *sanus*. [5] *Satires* 1.1, not classified as pro-grammatic by scholars because it doesn't mention Lucilius, nevertheless is explicit about this aspect of the Horatian program for satire: it is a genre grounded in ordinary, material reality; the limits of desire can be found in the limits of the stomach, and to demand more is to live in a wretched fantasy. Likewise, in regard to social reality, the existence of other human beings and the need to live among them present a limit to our desires analogous to those material limits nature imposes.

Speech, which can be seen in terms of social desire, is enacted within the limits of a hearing audience: a hearing "other" sets the boundary to the speaking "self." If a speaker disregards the comfort of the hearer, he has failed to recognize a limit on his speech. Reasoned speech, which aims at communication, thus requires a recognition that the self is limited by other and different "selves" in the world. To flood like a muddy stream is to indulge the speaking self without regard for the hearing other. Similarly, the invective impulse knows no limits and is an attempt to exercise power over another, indeed to obliterate another; its pleasure lies in the fantasy of an expanded, unlimited self, free from restraint. But to live in the world as it is truly configured is to live in accordance with reason. To recognize the limits of the self is also to permit, tolerate, and enjoy the existence of others and, in the differences of others, to experience the real pleasures of the self. **[End Page 340]** Correlative to the pleasure in the recognition of difference is the anxiety inherent in the failure to recognize difference. The other may present an intolerable threat if he seems to occupy the very same space as the self. Without the distance created by differentiation, the self labors under the constant threat of expropriation by the all too similar other. Speech occurring between people who recognize that the differentiation of selves permits the operation of *logos* is a use of language that makes it "the medium of exchange and the bond of union" (to quote H. W. Fowler, *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1934.iv), and is thus a tool for recognizing the separate identities of self and other. This medium of exchange, allowing for mutual recognition between people, is the medium of friendship in the *Satires* and, as such, says Horace in *Sat*. 1.5, is a symptom of his sanity.

Within the frame of Horace's satiric program, *Sat*. 1.7 concerns itself with enmity, not friendship, and it is in this context that the poet focuses on the relationship between Lucilian invective and the operation of conflict. Again, Horace has taken care to frame his relationship with his satiric predecessor Lucilius in *Satires* I as one of unresolved conflict, and this tension plays its part in 1.7, in company with the invective, epic, and historical conflicts it treats. Horace's introduction of his principals, Persius and Rex, is set in barbershops and pharmacies, which, as ordinary spaces where people gather to attend to their bodies, are typical of Horatian satire (1.7.1-3):

> Proscripti Regis Rupili pus atque venenum
> hybrida quo pacto sit Persius ultus, opinor
> omnibus et lippis notum et tonsoribus esse.
>
> The pus and poison of the outlaw Rupilius Rex, how the half-breed Persius got his vengeance on it, I think, is something known to every pink-eyed man and barber. [6]

Evidence of the poet's own voice in this poem, in the mild first-person verb *opinor*, "I suppose," keeps the persona of Horace at a distance from the scene he relates. *Pus atque venenum*, words here describing speech, are a prominent link both to Lucilius and to Canidia, Horace's practitioner of **[End Page 341]** magical invective. [7] Persius takes vengeance on the speech of Rex; as one who takes vengeance on a "King," Persius is thus made structurally parallel from the outset to the poem's final construction of Brutus, who takes vengeance on kings (Etruscan or Roman), and who is the poem's final figure of mock-epic dimension. Persius is carefully drawn: a rich man with big business in Clazomene and a noisome lawsuit with Rex, he is a hard character (*durus homo*)--the sort able to defeat Rex in *odium*--self-assured, swollen, and a man of keenly bitter speech (1.7.4-8). As does Rex, he bears lexical links to the Horatian Lucilius in being *durus* and swift and sharp of tongue. [8]

It is often noted by critics that Horace is fond of having it both ways in the *Satires* and that his persona is removed from the very things that he participates in by the act of composition. But I find Horace's ambivalence somewhat trickier than this evaluation of a contented stance of uninvolved involvement suggests. Rudd (1966.65-66), in speaking of 1.7, likens the poet's position to "that of a man at a party who stands on the fringe of a rather boisterous and drunken group. He stays close enough to enjoy what is being said, but for the benefit of the other guests he wears a satirical smile." [9] It seems to me rather, borrowing Rudd's analogy, that Horace is simultaneously in the drunken group and out of it, that is, he is one of the roisterers at the same time as he is a commentator; this is a much more difficult position. Put another way, Horace wants to eat his cake and not eat his cake too. There is no way to truly take the account of the conflict in 1.7 away from Horace's account; he is the maker and the teller of the poem, no matter how much distance he imaginatively tries to fabricate between himself and the poem's matter. Similarly, Horace's relation to Lucilius rests in part on a critique of the nature of invective speech, but this puts him in a position of critical opposition to Lucilius. We may recognize **[End Page 342]** the Horatian strategies for cobbling together a persona who can be in two places at once, but this is not a realistic maneuver, and we are left with the tension that always inheres in ambivalence--a disquieting, simultaneous affiliation with two opposing stands.

With a Lucilian echo, the poet says *ad regem redeo*, "I return to Rex" (1.7.9), [10] which he humorously fails to do, instead interrupting his account of the two litigants, between whom nothing could be agreed upon (*nihil inter utrumque / convenit*, 9-10), to muse on epic conflict. All tiresome people (*molesti*, 10) are like heroes (*fortes*, 11) when they meet in battle, says Horace. His example is that tireless pair, Hector and Achilles, who thus function as equivalents to Persius and Rex. The epic parody mocks and illustrates the unheroic nature of the poem's two protagonists, but it has the equal effect of reducing Hector and Achilles to another tiresome quarreling pair. The *summa virtus* of each allows only death as an outcome to their conflict, and that is the only reason their anger is "deadly" (. . . *ut ultima divideret mors, / non aliam ob causam, nisi quod virtus in utroque / summa fuit*, 13-15). The narrative succeeds in undermining *virtus* as a virtue; for what is its value if all it can achieve is death? The satire portrays epic conflict solely in terms of its activity and outcome, without a motivation whose nobility could potentially justify it. Seen in its naked activity and deprived of motive, conflict has no purpose. There is no logic in conflict, no virtue in *virtus*. [11]

As friendship allows for productive speech shared between speakers who recognize and tolerate their differences, enmity, by contrast, gives rise to speech that serves not to link but to separate speakers whose differences have blurred in their devotion to their conflict. Invective identifies the flaws of the other while relying on the assumption that the speaker is blameless. Blame-speech, however, encourages its return in kind, with the result that the two parties involved in the exchange of invective appear to the outside observer to be more or less identical. Indeed, a basic **[End Page 343]** feature of violent conflict is that the sameness of the opposing parties inspires them both to attempt to differentiate themselves with increasing vehemence, with the ironic result that the two appear more and more similar. As René Girard (1979.2) observes, there is nothing so similar to an angry man as another angry man. By displaying the similarity of the combatants, to each other and to Hector and Achilles, the poem

demonstrates the implicit thesis that *molesti* and *fortes* are in the end equivalent. If conflict arises because two people fail to distinguish between self and other, each believing that the other has the power to expropriate the self (hence, as Girard [61ff.] points out, the recurrent mythical theme of conflict between twins and siblings), only death can separate them, as the poem says (*ultima divideret mors*).

By characterizing his would-be heroes as Lucilian, Horace is not only able to demonstrate the essential likeness of Persius and Rex to each other, but to frame a commentary on Lucilian invective. The epic parody of 1.7 makes the verbal weapons of invective equivalent to the weapons of epic combat, with speech as the low-man's spear. Both forms of conflict rely on the obliteration of the other by means of their weapons. In epic, conflict demands the exchange of a death for a life: the hero, attempting to substitute his own mortality for that of another, enacts a longing for life without limits. Homer's heroes don the armor of their slain enemies, thus signaling that the process of expropriation of the enemy "other" is complete. This procedure is most famously dramatized in the episode of Achilles' pursuit of Hector around the walls of Troy, in which Hector is wearing Achilles' armor, taken when he killed Patroclus. Visually, Achilles is chasing a second self, a Hector dressed as Achilles. The invective speaker enacts the same procedure with words; his less deadly purpose is to obtain the silence of the other. [12]

Horace's favoring of the unheroic in his meditation on epic is clearly countenanced by his satiric program. *Summa virtus* is the problem with Hector and Achilles, just as with Persius and Rex. The only end to conflict is the death, in epic, or the silence, in invective, of the vanquished. By way of instructive contrast, however, Horace presents a satiric alternative to this operation of conflict (1.7.15-18): **[End Page 344]**

> duo si discordia vexet inertis,
> aut si disparibus bellum incidat, ut Diomedi
> cum Lycio Glauco, discedat pigrior ultro
> muneribus missis . . .
>
> If conflict harries two lazy men, or war breaks out between unequals--as in the case of Diomedes and Lycian Glaucus--the slower one gives way of his own accord, and sends gifts besides . . .

When *discordia* occurs between cowards, or between two who are unequal in battle, the conflict is resolved without fatalities and both parties survive. Another Iliadic pair, Glaucus and Diomedes, serve as Horace's exemplum of conflict resolution. But Horace has told the story wrong or, at least, has mistold Homer's story. Homer's story in Book 6 of the *Iliad* (119-236) is a tale of guest-friendship discovered at the moment of battle between the Greek Diomedes and the Trojan Glaucus. To that encounter belongs Homer's famous statement of archaic Greek realism, in which the son of Hippolochus compares the lives of men to the generations of leaves, words that epitomize the keen grace of epic. Glaucus tells the story of his family, and Diomedes, hurling his spear into the ground, declares they will do no battle, for they are bound by the guest-friendship of their fathers. They leap from their horses, grip hands, and make their exchange of friendship. Then the narrative adds its little sting: Zeus stole the wits of Glaucus who exchanged with Diomedes gold armor for bronze, armor worth a hundred oxen for the value of nine. The narrative leaves them here in its characteristically mute fashion; it leaves Glaucus bested but ignorant of the fraud, and the conquest by Diomedes is not in battle but in the exchange of gifts, a betrayal in an act of friendship.

In his satirizing of epic, Horace presents Glaucus and Diomedes as unevenly matched warriors, an assumption never tested in Homer's account, and he presents the cheating of Glaucus, achieved by Zeus in a moment of Greek partisanship, as if it were a deliberate acknowledgement by Glaucus of Diomedes' superior strength. The satiric version in 1.7 turns that exquisite and puzzling moment of the *Iliad* into a pragmatic assessment of strength and weakness in which the mutual recognition by Glaucus and Diomedes of their dissimilarity is the grounds on which they settle a potential conflict. Horace rationalizes Homer's story: Glaucus is not fooled but rather strikes a deal with Diomedes to keep from getting killed. The **[End Page 345]** satire puts reason over passion, denying conflict its glory and insisting on the possibility of reasonable compromise, including compensation to the stronger party, Diomedes, so that he forgo the chance of battle. All the beauty and pathos of Homer is missing: the dignity of Glaucus, the discovery of the friendship, the careless betrayal worked by Zeus, and the arbitrary fraud. But in its place, Horace offers a resolution to a conflict, one that, however unheroic, is

intelligible to both sides and permits life to continue. Horace's version also firmly removes the epic's irrational impulse, embodied in the acts of the gods not of humans, and grants to the mortals involved the reward of life for a reasoned resolution.

On the level of comedy, this is fine stuff; the surprising new view of epic heroes and the elimination of noble motive are funny. It has in addition the ring of satiric commonsense, and the debunked epic material takes on a new status that questions fundamental assumptions about the value of conflict. In Horace's version of the Glaucus-Diomedes episode, the divine unreason of Zeus is converted into the ordinary injustice of the world, and Glaucus, as *pigrior*, yields and lives. The tale is recast to demonstrate the view that the value of life lies in the mundane and to convey the peculiarly Horatian intolerance for the unreason of conflict. In Horace's hands, satire captures the higher ground of human reason and leaves epic to glorify senseless conflict. The race in Horace's satire goes not to the swift but to the *inertis*.

Having made its point concerning heroes, epic and otherwise, the poem again takes up the conflict at hand, mid-line (18) and, as it were, *in medias res*. The similarity of the two combatants is again made evident as the pair Persius and Rex rush into court, as fit a match for each other as the gladiators Bacchius and Bithus, in Horace's words, each a splendid spectacle. Brutus, the assassin of Julius Caesar, hovers over the proceedings in an ablative absolute (1.7.18-21):

> Bruto praetore tenente
> ditem Asiam, Rupili et Persi par pugnat, uti non
> compositum melius cum Bitho Bacchius. in ius
> acres procurrunt, magnum spectaculum uterque.
>
> Brutus is Praetor in fat Asia; Rupilius and Persius fight their fight, contenders as well-matched as Bithius and Bacchius. Into the court, the fierce foes fly, each a towering sight. **[End Page 346]**

Brutus is slyly introduced to the poem as the officiating magistrate of the trial with the remark that he was then praetor in "wealthy Asia." The mention of Brutus signals a return to the narrative, and its position in v. 18 seems to furnish information purely circumstantial to the invective spectacle that follows. We see, however, at the end that, in fact, Brutus is crucial to the irresolution of the poem. Consistent with the poem's strategy of taking the heroism out of conflict, Horace now likens Persius and Rex to the Greek heroes (slaves) of the Roman gladiatorial ring, using the language of gladiatorial competition. That language again makes clear the principle of conflict that those set in competition (*compositum*) are equals and alike, *par*. [13] The rest of the poem presents the competitive spectacle.

The spectators are not only those in the court but we ourselves, the readers of the poem. What we see, in addition to the spectacle, is a shrewd agglomeration of Horace's ideas on poetic practice. Persius sets out his case, and it is greeted by the laughter of all assembled: *Persius exponit causam; ridetur ab omni / conventu* (22-23). In a reliable courtroom strategy, Persius extravagantly praises the presiding magistrate, calling Brutus "the sun of Asia" (as if Brutus were himself an inflated epic hero), and his cohort--with the exception of Rex--his "healthful stars." Rex is the dog-star, hateful to farmers. Persius and Rex are both made to share the poetic faults of Lucilius, as verbal echoes of Horace's critique of Lucilius in *Sat*. 1.4 and 1.10 are placed in the context of the invective exchange (1.7.26-35).

> ruebat
> flumen ut hibernum fertur quo rara securis.
> tum Praenestinus salso multoque fluenti
> expressa arbusto regerit convicia, durus
> vindemiator et invictus, cui saepe viator
> cessisset magna compellans voce cuculum. **[End Page 347]**
> at Graecus, postquam est Italo perfusus aceto,
> Persius exclamat "per magnos, Brute, deos te
> oro, qui reges consueris tollere, cur non
> hunc Regem iugulas? operum hoc, mihi crede, tuorum est."
>
> He was rushing like the river in winter in a place where hardly anyone brings an ax. Then the Praenestine, full-flooding in wit, hurls back insults pressed fresh from the vineyard--

> he's like a tough vine-man, undaunted, the kind the tourist, while yelling out "Cuckoo," often must give way to. But the Greek Persius, after he's soaked in Italian vinegar, cries out, "By the great gods, Brutus, I beg you--you're in the habit of taking out kings--why don't you slaughter this King? This is your work, I do believe."

Persius goes rushing on, Horace says, like the river in winter near which the pruning ax is rarely borne. His speech bears not only the watery hallmark of Lucilian rushing (water in heedless abundance), but lacks an editor--an ax (*securis*). The *OLD* has three definitions for *securis*: an ax, hatchet, battle-ax; an executioner's ax, in particular one carried in the *fasces* of a Roman magistrate (or, earlier, of kings); a part of the blade of a vine-dresser's knife used for chopping. The *rara securis* of v. 27 does multiple metaphorical work: Persius' speech is not cut short by the *securis* of the magistrate, Brutus, who lets the speech run on; nor is it interrupted by Rex, the *vindemiator*, who might also have such a blade; and, in the immediate poetic sense, the *securis* adumbrates the pastoral context that is continued as Rex retorts from another sort of country scene.

As if in contrast with the urbane cultivation of Horace's poetry, both speakers in the courtroom are countrified: Persius speaks like the uncultivated Italian landscape of late winter; Rex talks from the rough country space of an Italian vintner. Whereas Persius had the Lucilian tag *durus*, and was a man unconquerable in hatred in v. 6, now Rex is *durus* (29) and unconquered (*invictus*, 30) like "the tough vintner and an invincible one." Against the salty, abundant flooding of Persius, Rex hurls back insults again of a liquid nature, "squeezed from the vine." The text simultaneously links and differentiates the two combatants throughout its account of their exchange, revealing the procedure of identification and **[End Page 348]** distinction between the participants of a conflict. The two share invective liquidity; [14] but Persius, *hybrida* at the poem's start, is fully *Graecus* in v. 32, though he speaks with an Italian affiliation, while Rex becomes the *Praenestinus* at v. 28. Rex, the man from Praeneste, soaks the Greek Persius with Italian vinegar (*aceto*, 32), his return for Persius' salty wit (*salso*, 28).

Thus soaked and flooded and squeezed, the invective exchange meets its end with Persius' final appeal to the magistrate: "Great gods, Brutus, I beseech you, who habitually overthrow kings, why don't you cut the throat of [murder] this King [this Rex]? Believe me, it's a job for you!" Here ends the poem: this verbal coup is the vengeance by Persius known to the *lippi* and *tonsores* of the beginning of the poem, now revealed to Horace's readers. Now, too, we have one more use suggested for the *securis* of v. 29: the magistrate's ax might execute this Rex.

Modern distaste for puns seems to have obscured Horace's gleeful daring in allowing his Persius to implicate Brutus in this last bit of word-wielding. [15] Commentary on the pun has been withering, and the decorum of the allusion to the assassination of Caesar has often escaped readers, who have struggled to find a date of composition for the poem that would render this reference benign. [16] Critics dislike the pun on aesthetic grounds, as a **[End Page 349]** poor joke, and they dislike it on grounds of etiquette, that it is "tasteless" to allude to Brutus' murder of Caesar. [17] But there *is* no etiquette in the reference to Caesar's assassination. As the end to the conflict of *Satires* 1.7 is enacted, the pun, which merges the signifier "Rex" with the traditional opponent of Brutuses, is the linguistic equivalent of a deathblow; as a plunge beneath *logos* that defies verbal response, the pun has finished off the verbal conflict.

The pun is a verbal trick; it is like a deft move with a spear. It puts an end to the exchange of verbal weapons, dealing a deathblow to the argument by leaving language as communicative exchange finally dead. There is no riposte to a pun; it is a communication stopper. A pun presents a linguistic situation in which two meanings coexist in a single signifier; it is then impossible to fix the meaning, and the arbitrariness of language is revealed. One cannot choose between the two meanings; hence meaning, *logos*, is denied. Once invective is in operation, and the listening part of speech-exchange is denied, language forfeits its informative function; lis-tening in 1.7 has been left to the hearing spectators, to the courtroom witnesses, to the *lippi et tonsores*, and to us. The pun, as the epitome of the conflict, is appropriate as a strategy and makes the verbal exchange and its sudden finish precisely equivalent to the finish of physical combat. The conflict ends with the loss of meaning in speech and the defeat of reason. The absence of reason in the pun, its smashing of signifiers, takes the logic out of speech, and, as Horace has arranged it for us here, summarizes the absence of reason in conflict.

One might say that this is enough, *satis est*, that epic has been deflated, conflict mocked, and invective appreciated for its exuberance--but at a safe distance from the poet and us, his audience. The laughter the tale supplies, reproduced in those satirical spaces of barbershops and pharmacies, proves satire's

work. But it is as if Horace can't leave that satirical space alone. The pun undermines its resolution when it plays with the names of Brutus and Rex, and thus introduces an epic context that, **[End Page 350]** unlike Homer's, cannot be retold, or untold. If the absence of reason in the pun echoes the absence of reason in conflict, which the poem has demonstrated, then the name of Brutus as king-killer nicely makes the point. The work of the pun, as it undoes the *logos* of speech and undoes reason, reaffirms the unreason of persistent conflict--its appealing "triumphs" and its whole lack of resolution. If there is a winner and a loser the conflict itself remains. The successful removal of Julius Caesar did not end the civil wars. [18] Those puzzled by the etiquette of the pun forget what scholars, from Ronald Syme onwards, have taught us about Rome in the 40s and 30s b.c.e.: a city relentlessly drenched in the carnage of warring factions. Horace stabs us with non-satirical reality; Brutus killed Caesar, and there was no laughter and no peace, nor did the Roman power-players relinquish their dedication to heroic values. They fought on because of their *summa virtus*. But the poem has shown the value of such *virtus*: it furnishes a temporary stall to death by exchanging the death of another for the inevitable death of the self; heroism exceeds reason, denies reality, life, and the limits nature supplies for our sanity.

There is an optimism inherent in Horace's treatment of conflict in 1.7: it can be reduced from any level to be the subject of consensual laughter. But the nonsense of the pun of 1.7 itself reintroduces the problem: conflict persists, is deadly, and, although assassination removes the tyrant, tyranny still persists. [19] The appeal of invective speech, as a tool that empowers the weak, remains tempting and unresolved for Horace in Book I of the *Satires*. The temptation to overpower another, the longing for a self without limits, is judged by the poem to be by turns ridiculous or deadly. The pun on Brutus' name is a joke containing, I think, not bad taste but a small cry of pain, which is not in fact dissonant with comedy. Horace has given us his best in 1.7: he serves us an exemplum of invective speech by which he contrives his own commentary on the ambivalent pleasures of laughter, anger, and satire.

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* I would like to thank Pamela Bleisch, Rebecca Resinki, my colleagues Daniel Sheerin and Henry Weinfield, and the anonymous referee of this essay for their comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. Rudd's influential work on Horace's *Satires* is representative of the impulse to discount the poem (1966.64-67). Others, however, have seen various serious purposes at work in it. Schröter 1967, Buchheit 1968, and Van Rooy 1971 see articulations of literary critical theory in the Homeric parodies and the arrangement of the satire in its book; DuQuesnay (1984.34) views the poem's litigants as identified with a Republicanism that Horace, as *amicus Maecenatis*, now mocks. Henderson's compelling, and disequilibrating, essay on 1.7 is salutary for any one tempted to overlook the lack of innocence in either the poem or its critical reception: "most commentary has obediently taken up the work of be-littling that the poem represents and in its work of representation incites" (1994.148).

2. For Horace's ongoing relationship with the magical-invective figure of Canidia, see Oliensis 1991.109: "Horace alludes to Canidia *en passant* as if to establish her as a fixture in his poetic world." Canidia appears in *Epodes* 3, 5, 17; *Sat*. 1.8, 2.1; and she provides the last breath of the *Satires* in 2.8.

3. This criticism is reprised at 1.10.50, in self-justification.

4. Horace's spare style slips into a whole disposition of restraint in 1.4: he doesn't recite in the forum, but only to friends and only when compelled; nor does he make careless attacks on others.

5. *Sat*. 1.2, which applies this satirical program to sexuality, argues that the body's needs are simple and that it is immoderate desires that get people in trouble. At 1.2.68-71, a man's penis is the speaker of reason, noting the limits of its wishes; the body provides the natural, and right, limits to desire. For Horace, in general, indulgence of desire leaps past the boundaries of the body, for instance greed in 1.1, sexual ambition in 1.2. What we can imagine will make us happier, less mortal, larger in life, has the opposite effect. Freudenburg 1993.192, in discussing the philosophical disposition Horace adopts in *Satires* I, notes that *iam satis est*, at 1.1.120, "links the satirist's stylistic principles . . . to the traditional moral values he has preached throughout." Horace's recurrent puns on *sat-* reinforce the point that satire is a genre driven by the concept of "sufficiency."

6. All translations are my own.

7. *Venenum* is the stuff of Canidia's troublesome work in *Sat.* 1.8.19, and, in *Sat.* 2.1.48, *venenum* is Canidia's defensive weapon, favorably compared to Horace's *stilus* (2.1.39). *Pus*, the festering matter of a sore, is found in Lucilius, who says that Lucius Trebellius calls it up in old men, along with fevers and vomit (*in numero quorum nunc primus Trebellius multost / Lucius, nam arcessit febris senium vomitum pus*; 494-5M / 531-2W).

8. Lucilius, in Horace's account, is *durus componere versus*, 1.4.8; at 1.10.57, Horace calls the nature of Lucilius' material *dura*. On the situation of the *Satires* in late Republican stylistics, and the issues in *durus* and *fluere*, see the excellent treatment by Freudenburg 1993, ch. 3.

9. I am indebted to the anonymous reader for *Arethusa* for highlighting this reference and Horace's manipulation of his persona's engagement in the *Satires*.

10. Lucilius frag. 1227 M / 1076 W: *nunc ad te redeo*. For the thorough, if sometimes adventuresome, discussion of Lucilius in Horace's *Satires,* see Fiske 1919. Fraenkel (1957.121 and 103) notes this particular allusion and its partner in *Sat*. 1.6.45.

11. While it is sorely tempting to construct a parodic connection between Horace's critique of heroic *virtus* here and our long fragment of Lucilius, the so-called "*virtus*" fragment (1326-38M / 1196-1208W), I am wary of such an impulse. Horace had some 30,000 more verses of Lucilius to play off of and be influenced by than we do, and what we have in the *virtus* fragment from Lucilius seems to explore a very different strain of the semantic range of *virtus* from that which Horace is exploring in 1.7.

12. The iambic tradition, beginning with Archilochus, did of course contain the idea that words could be lethal, a tradition that Horace and the Romans knew well. For a discussion of the movement from magical invective to satire in the course of the development of culture and literature, see Elliott 1960.

13. On *par pugnat* and *compositum*, see, e.g., *Sat.* 1.1.102-03: *pergis pugnantia secum / frontibus adversis componere*; at 2.6.44, Maecenas asks the poet: *Thraex est Gallina Syro par?* The technical language of gladiatorial conflict is frequently deployed by Roman writers metaphorically in both epic and political contexts. Barton 1993 discusses the growth of the significance of the gladiatorial arena in the late Republic and early Empire as a metaphor for civil war (see 1993.38, on Lucan in the *Bellum Civile* 4.705-10, for a conjunction of the epic and the political). See, too, Barton's remarks on the necessity of equal opponents: "there was, quite literally, no triumph without equality" (1993.182).

14. *flumen*, 27; *fluenti*, 29; *expressa*, 28; *perfusus*, 32. Parker 1986.73 remarks of the relation between Horace and Lucilius in *Sat*. 1.5: "We are meant to compare the two satirists, and Horace ensures that we do by invoking over and over the imagery of mud and water with which he had damned Lucilius in the poem before." The process continues in 1.7.

15. DuQuesnay (1984.37) recognizes the political nature of Horace's "word act" here, but denies it any daring by situating Horace snugly under Maecenas' wing at his writing of the poem. DuQuesnay's view of the poem as a send-up of Republican pretensions to *libertas* and *virtus*, written (as he suggests were all ten satires of Horace's first book), for the poet's friend Maecenas, goes against the view that 1.7 must have been written before Philippi in 42 b.c.e.

16. One argument for the early composition of *Sat.* 1.7 is based on the assumption that the joke involving Brutus would be tasteless to make *after* his death; but as Rudd (1966.66) wonders, why publish it at all in that case? The secondary argument is that the poem's style and construction are immature, i.e., not to the liking of the editor in question. Palmer 1893.208: "though the poor pun celebrated might at the time it was uttered be deemed worthy of a poetic address . . . to recur to it after years would show weakness and silliness of mind." Dryden hated the poem and, speaking of the conclusion, says: "a miserable clench, in my opinion, for Horace to record. I have heard honest Mr. Swan make many a better, and yet have had the grace to hold my countenance" (quoted by Anthon 1860.466). Rudd considers the poem a failure (1966.66-67). Fraenkel (1957.118-21), succinct and wise on the question of dating *Sat.* 1.7 (there is no cause to think it is early), is delighted by it, though he classes it among the poems that Horace pulled from his portfolio to round up the number of poems in the first book of *Satires* to ten in emulation of Vergil's *Eclogues* (along with 1.8 and 1.9); cf. Zetzel

1980.73 n. 3 on the relation between the *Eclogues* and the *Satires*. Coffey (1976.78) thinks the final pun "lacks civilized decorum," and sees the poem as "an inept make-weight." Henderson (1994.154) revises a similar catalogue of annoyance.

17. The very evident Roman fondness for puns in their literature makes moot the critical rejection of *Sat*. 1.7 on the grounds of not liking puns. Porphyrio calls the pun on Rex *urbanissimus iocus*. See Van Rooy 1971.81 n. 54 on "the Roman love for word-play, including puns on names."

18. Henderson 1994 calls this moment "the *sparagmos* of the Signifier, our glimpse of the body politic lynching Language" (163).

19. This is (part of) Henderson's point, "there is always unfinished business with Caesars" (1994.151), and, "Horace won't get rid of Brutus' memory, of Brutuses, of the replicability of '*Brutus*', so easily as the *ultio* got rid of Brutus" (167).

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