

ON GETTING RID OF KINGS: HORACE, SATIRE 1.7

INTRODUCTION

*Gossip is news in a red silk dress.*¹

This satire has often been accounted a *poor* poem, *repetitive, irrelevant and self-indulgent*. Rather than recover one more cultured display of refinement as disguise, this essay explores instead the fall-out that radiates from a classic text's play with the 'loose talk' of *plebeian* gossip. The proposal here is that Horace and his intimates could, and *can*, easily share a view of the view of 'their' populace, but at the price of surrendering control over the import of their intervention. This claim turns on the figure '*Brutus*', which noises a republican politics of resistance to tyranny through what linguists term nonphonation: as we shall find, Horace both tells a dummy tale about '*przemilczenie*' ('not speaking about something, 'failing to mention something')² and at the same time performs a dumbshow of his own.³

The poem plays with literary intertextuality, especially with self-indulgent Homer parody, and it hosts street-legal 'Word' that dissembles abyssally and disseminates indiscriminately, in punster slanguage. The essay replicates the former by nods toward 'our' (Shakespeare's) *Julius Caesar* and the latter by winks in its punnishing English: thus, a *live* anecdote which but expatiates to vacuity on a pun or two (content); a *vile* hexameter scribble (form); an *evil* piece of unofficial knowledge, or political *aside* (message); but not least, a *veil* of verse screening the ideological stakes of what our own politics, or complaisance, has us dub, so inter, the 'Late Republic' (semiosis: the power to signify).

While the literary, literary-historical and mimetic relevances of the poem have claimed their share of attention alongside the author's autobiography, the present concern is with *modality*, with the shiftiness of thought in the polity.⁴ Horace's subject here will be the density of language in the chances of its circulation around the civic body. Once a sample of popular *sermo* infiltrates the literary canon and thereby earns close critical attention, its unruly character leaves a clear imprint on readers. 'Yesterday's News', the 'B-movie' repeat, the staleness of a *trivial Kleinigkeit* in bad

¹ News clip quoted by P. M. Spacks, *Gossip* (Chicago, 1986), p. xi. 'Gossip gets its power by the illusion of mastery gained through taking imaginative possession of another's experience. People use this pseudo-mastery for their own purposes.... Unlike joking... gossip involves unconcealed threat.' (Ib. pp. 22f., 51). I would like to thank, among others, *CQ's* brutologists for their efforts.

² A. Jaworski, *The Power of Silence. Social and Pragmatic Perspectives* (London, 1992), pp. 108ff. Cf. ib. p. 47, quoting W. Enninger: '*nonphonations*... are speech segments of high uncertainty'. On political silence, cf. B. Brummet, 'Towards a Theory of Silence as a Political Strategy', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980), 289–303, and essays in D. Tannen and M. Saville-Troike (edd.), *Perspectives on Silence* (New Jersey, 1985).

³ The normative force that governs 'How to Avoid Speaking' are explored in J. Derrida's essay in S. Budick and W. Iser (edd.), *Languages of the Unsayable. The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory* (New York, 1989), pp. 3–70, esp. p. 15, on '*Comment ne pas dire...*'

⁴ 'i.e. the set of ways that the meanings of texts are keyed in to structures of meanings outside them in such a way as to command or disclaim belief', R. Hodge, *Literature as Discourse* (Cambridge, 1990), p. x.

taste, the anecdote that features nonce nonentities from nowhere interesting and is pegged to the eclipsed dateline of a *passé* international crisis, this writing yields no profitably *worked-through* upshot, bears no statement; rather, Rome's repressed returns, and repeats, in critical reaction and scholarship. Readers can but indulge themselves in passing through the European, or 'Western', discourse on assassination/political martyrdom, demagoguery/Republicanism, tyranny/*coup d'état*, if the poet's joke captures their attention. Thereto they play deaf to the foundation myth of The Republic borne by the anecdote, get shot of *hi sermones...secreta haec murmura uolgi* ('all this talk...the mob mumbling up its sleeve', Juv. 10.89), which can have no single, closed, classical voice. The anecdote's ironies claim-and-repudiate solidarity, short of propositionality and even legibility: 'Why', prompts the adage with/out the comradely elusiveness it hints at celebrating, 'is it that the only people capable of running this country are either driving taxis or cutting hair?' (See the key v. 3).

1. RIDDLE AND RIDDANCE

'Where's Ceausescu! / There's no more Ceausescu!'⁵

1.1. This little poem of Horace, briefest of the Satires, is a nasty piece of work which asks for good riddance: nasty, brutish and short. In it, a no-good nobody 'roars: "For god's sake Brutus! You are used / to getting rid of kings. Have you no dagger for this King's throat? / Believe me, we badly need your special skill!"'.⁶ And that's it. As gossips put it, 'Trust me' (*mihi crede*, v. 35).

⁵ The Bucharest shout of December 1989. Which echoes on, e.g. in J. Simpson, *From the House of War* (London, 1991) excerpted in *The Observer Review* for 27.7.91, p. 42, 'Saddam...produced a picture of the executed Nicolae Ceausescu at a meeting of the Revolution Command Council to show his closest colleagues that what had happened in Romania could happen in Iraq as well.' A World War calls for this exemplary mythologic of replicative *dénouement*, which historians cannot get rid of by assertion and foot-note relegation, but must only promulgate despite themselves: 'Chapter Seven. The Death of Hitler. §When von Bulow left the bunker, Hitler was already preparing for the end. During the day the last news from the outside world had been brought in. Mussolini was dead. Hitler's partner in crime, the herald of Fascism, who had first shown to Hitler the possibilities of dictatorship in modern Europe, ... had now illustrated in a signal manner the fate which fallen tyrants must expect. ... If the full details were ever known to them, Hitler and Eva Braun could only have repeated the orders they had already given: their bodies were to be destroyed "so that nothing remains"; "I will not fall into the hands of an enemy who requires a new spectacle to divert his hysterical masses". In fact it is improbable that these details were reported. ... * [It has often been stated, by those whose imagination is stronger than their memory, that Hitler's decision was affected by the fate of Mussolini. ... The *Sunday Express*, August 25th, 1946, even quotes Goering as saying: 'You remember the Mussolini incident? We had pictures of Mussolini dead in the gutter with his mistress, and hanging in the air upside-down. They were awful! Hitler went into a frenzy, shouting: "This will never happen to me!"' A glance at the dates disposes of this romance' (H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (London, 1962), p. 226 and n. 1). Cf. W. L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1960), p. 1343, 'Mussolini, Hitler's fellow fascist dictator and partner in aggression, had met his end and it had been shared by his mistress. ... It is not known how many of the details of the Duce's shabby end were communicated to the Fuehrer. One can only speculate that if he heard many of them -', A. Bullock, *Hitler. A Study in Tyranny* (Harmondsworth, 1962), p. 798, 'The Duce, too, had shared his fate with his mistress. ... If Hitler made any comment on the end of his brother dictator it is unrecorded; but the news can only have ...'. Evidently narration does *not* mean to get rid of this climactic moment of *ultio*/'*Brutus*', far from it.

⁶ Access to the scholarship may be found through these, the most important recent contributions, which I shall refer to by author's surname only: E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 118-21, N. Rudd, *The Satires of Horace* (Bristol, 1982), pp. 64-7, C. A. Van Rooy,

The poem feints to disavow whatever it would be about. But in working to get rid of its power to mean or to matter, this satire reveals precisely what it means for the implementation of power that meaning be reviled, in a signal exemplum of the riddle as revealed meaning, the impulsion to veil the live evil of meaning. *This*, satiric revelling in this, *does* matter. Not least for that hot potato, the ethics of criticism. Most commentary has obediently taken up the work of be-littling that the poem represents and in its work of representation incites. Anything to get rid of the damned thing. Its very opening words *label* the poem 'foul and venomous outlaw' (/ *Proscripti...pus atque uenenum* /, v. 1). 'Black it, then! Proscribe this poisonous putrefaction!'

Reading of this (kind of) poem is bound fast to our *resistance* to reading, to our impulsion to join in with the poem and get rid of its text. Reading reactivates the riddance which the anecdote has as its theme, repeats it at its own level. This deserves explicit consideration.

1.2. This, Horace's '*Brutus*' anecdote can usefully square up to its other, those two classic 'versions' of the 'Message of Tyranny': (1) in Herodotus, Sosicles' tale of Thrasylbulus' *Bildrätzel* for Periander: 'Shear off the tallest ears of corn in the field' (5.92.ζ, ὑποθέμενος οὐδὲν ἔπος); and (2) Livy's/Ovid's Tarquin performing the 'same' riddle as paternal precept for Tarquin Minor: 'Cut off the highest poppy/lilies-heads' (1.54.6-10, *nil uoce responsum est*, cf. *Fast.* 2.701-10, *nec mora* ('i.e. epitomate Livy by cutting the story down'), 709). These silent riddles point paradigmatically toward Tyranny's self-elision from language, its dependence on the muteness of brute action: 'Off With Their Heads, Like So!'. A veil of metaphoricity, performative discourse here finds itself in green fields of trope without a city-wall, harvests a see-through *alibi*. Whatever our readings of Latin readers of Livy's museum of the Republic or of Hellenic readers of Herodotus' Spartans' and their allies' readings-in-the-text might prove to be (and whatever we may take that to prove ourselves to be), the contest of values here revolves around the hush-hush presentation of the 'Secret' of Power *as* the transmission of its secret, the secret that it is, secret of representation.⁷ The coding of figuration, the veiling and disguising of meaning, *is* power over meaning: in the violence of representation is displayed representation *as* violence.⁸ Horace pitches his Quiritary scene a level or so closer to discourse *on* discourse, but still his writing with the Republic parades its own brand of political silencing: not poppies against the grain, but 'Kings' and all their synonyms, in whatever mutation.

⁷ 'Arrangement and Structure of Satires in Horace, *Sermones*, Book I: *Satire 7* as related to *Satires 10* and *8*', *AClass* 14 (1971), 67-90, E. Kraggerud, 'Die *Satire 1.7* des Horaz', *SO* 54 (1979), 91-109, I. M. Le M. DuQuesnay, 'Horace and Maecenas: The Propaganda Value of *Sermones 1*', in T. Woodman and D. West (edd.), *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 36-8, P. Connor, *Horace's Lyric Poetry: The Force of Humour* (Ramus Monograph 2 / Victoria, 1987), pp. 105ff. I shall use N. Rudd's *tour de force* Penguin translation throughout (Harmondsworth, 1973).

⁸ See esp. P. Wendland, 'Symbolische Handlungen als Ersatz oder Begleitung der Rede', *NJb* (1916), pp. 233f.

⁹ See S. Jed, 'The Scene of Tyranny: Violence and the Humanistic Tradition', in N. Armstrong and L. Tennenhouse (edd.), *The Violence of Representation* (London, 1989), pp. 29ff. Discussion in this area centres on the work of Foucault (esp. 'The Order of Discourse', in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the Text* (London, 1981), pp. 51ff.) and of Gramsci (T. Crowley, 'Language and Hegemony: Principles, Morals and Pronunciation', *Textual Practice* 1.3 (1987), pp. 278ff.; cf. J. Frow, 'Discourse and Power', in M. Gane (ed.), *Ideological Representation and Power in Social Relations* (London, 1989), pp. 198ff.).

1.3. We (readers) in what we have been schooled into knowing as 'The' (sc. our) 'West' face in 'our' media right now a bombard of representations of the violence of an *orientalized* other, representations which before all else work to disavow the violence of their work of representation. Our daily scripts for thinking (say) 'East Europe' capitalize on violence, as if violence only existed to supply us with our dosage of representations, to replace us in the 'peace' of our lives. With *kidology* gloves. Every day in every way the violence of politics is policed far away by 'head-lines' (parts for us to learn for the daily thought-play of ideology) which celebrate the otherness of political violence.⁹ This is a *good* time to re-read Horace's poem, a poem that frames re-reading, has that for its subject and project. Un/like the Tyrant's Self-Representation (i.e. like it at the level of Herodotus' Corinthian orator, unlike it, perhaps, at that of Herodotus), Horace's riddle-me-ree *satire* works to get rid of displayed veiling of its own violence; but that work *is* its own violence, for this is a purge—a textual purge, but a purge for all that. We readers are intricated within the *Putsch* it performs, the *Putsch* it wants us to repeat: 'Put it down! Put it down!'

1.4. 'Down, in fact, with *Putsches*!'. Horace re-tells (refuses to re-tell, disfigures) in *Satire* 1.7 the Roman charter-myth of *ciuitas* as liberationist militancy. This scrap of writing is at the heart of Rome. All the Romans had *heard* their *fathers* say, 'There was a Brutus once...' (J.C. 1.2.157). At any rate, the Brutus narrative on which the *respublica libera* founded itself is here cited, albeit its recitation is blotted out in motley travesty. The call to tyrannicidal action, the moral imperative trained into the *ciuis Romanus*' marrow, is distanced and de-mystified: it sanctioned violence *olim*; our poem's politics are to get rid of the archetypal tale of The Purge, so that Politics *nunc* can be purified of pollution. Civic activism is exposed as a simplistic fiction, kept in misplaced currency by charlatans and knaves: *if* such naïveté belongs anywhere, Horace would put it in store, back in Ancient History. Such may be the work of his piece of writing, the political goal of its rhetoric. But beards return to royals' chins just when the satirist writes *quis priscum illud miratur acumen, / Brute, tuum? facile est barbato imponere regi* ('Who marvels at the legendary subtlety of "Brutus"? It's a push-over to outwit a pre-shaving king', Juv. 4.102f.).

The simplicity of the culture-narrative which equated the presence to society of a Brutus with the commandment to vindicate *libertas* from *regnum* had re-inscribed itself on J. Caesar's body. Such was the rule of thumb of, for instance, the people's couplet: *Brutus, quia reges eiecit, consul primus factus est: / hic, quia consules eiecit, rex postremo factus est* ('Brutus because he expelled kings, became first consul; / this one, because he expelled consuls, became finally king', Suet. *Iul.* 80.3).¹⁰ Still more eloquently (to add one further instance), the *soi-disant* tyrannicide Brutus' hopes of re-utilizing Accius' play *Brutus* (for the *gens* it had first been written for) to top the bill of his *ludi Apollinares* in 'celebration' of the official 'birthday' of Julius on 13th *Quintilis* 44 B.C.E. 'acted out' the political script of the foundation myth of the Republic. Whether or not C. Antonius literally cut *Brutus* and displaced it with *Tereus*, the horrible muting of the cry of 'Liberty' was violently projected round Pompey's theatre and amplified for all to read, in loud and clear silence. Brutus' perennial cloak-and-dagger dumbshow that names the condition of resistance to

⁹ See D. Tannen, *Talking Voices. Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 44, citing Becker, 'much of "apparently free conversation is a replay of remembered texts—from TV news, radio talk, the *New York Times*" ...'.

¹⁰ Cf. J. Dunkle, 'The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective in the Late Republic', *TAPhA* 98 (1967), pp. 151ff.

despotic *force majeure*, the hopeful trace of a promised redress, was revived for its public in its cancellation.¹¹ For the very name 'Brutus' ('lumpen, dumb, mute, sub-human, macho') speaks even through the absence of its signified, as ever since the beginning, and this is the signification of the veiling of language from power, the stolid power of those excluded from discourse which stems from their very exclusion.¹² Showing a hack *Tereus* would only amplify the pain of muffled freedom.¹³ Get rid of *Brutus* (from Rome, from the stage, from a story) and all powers-that-be achieve is to reactivate the silent vocality of 'Brutus' and all that that signifies, the legend, its compulsion toward self-realisation in direct action, the liberation it bespeaks from the control of dominant hierarchies and their significations. Tyranny always surrounds itself with speaking silence, the eloquence evoked by the muted. And in return the mute mark out the tyrannical.¹⁴

1.5. Horace's jolly text incisively juggles its own (*Brutus*) voice away, severs its *Brutus* from language: in the process, it courts re-activation of the founding principle of the assortment of meanings heaped together under the term (or *puncept*) '*Brutus*', *longe alius ingenii quam cuius simulationem induerat* ('Not half as dumb as the dummy he'd put on for show', Liv. 1.56.7).¹⁵ And to turn this round, in Horace's anecdote the Republican subtext weathers its repression, it dons the mask of a stupidity, the

¹¹ Cf. M. Clavel-Lévêque, *L'Empire en Jeux* (Paris, 1984), p. 57, J. de Rose Evans, *The Art of Persuasion. Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (Michigan, 1992), pp. 145ff. M. L. Clarke, *The Noblest Roman. Marcus Brutus and his Reputation* (London, 1981), p. 140 n. 40 warns that the scrapping of *Brutus* may be 'simply a joke' remark from Cicero (So *not* a simple joke). For '*Brutus*' in the late 40's B.C.E., cf. esp. Cic. *Epp. ad Brut.* 1.15.6, *consilia inire coepi Brutina plane (uestri enim haec sunt propria sanguinis) reipublicae liberandae*, Dio 44.12, J. Boes, 'A propos du *De Divinatione*, Ironie de Cicéron sur le *Nomen* et l'*omen* de Brutus', *REL* 59 (1981), 164–76.

¹² Cf. S. Stewart, 'Shouts on the Street: Bakhtin's Anti-Linguistics', in G. S. Morson (ed.), *Bakhtin. Essays and Dialogues on his Work* (Chicago, 1986), p. 46, 'Bakhtin is the master of what we might call "unhappiness conditions"... Utterances are always preceded by alien utterances which face them in the form of an addressee or social Other and which surround them with an always significant silence... Linguistic theory... must be grateful to Bakhtin for articulating the powerful force of the silenced in language use.'

¹³ Even a snuff-*Tereus*' Philomela can get rid of a king. That is what she *means*, her message. Her silenced charade never stops beaming this message from victims to their oppressors, at all Caesars. Philomela makes tongues wag, then knives, cf. A. Richlin, 'Reading Ovid's Rapes', in A. Richlin (ed.), *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 162–5.

¹⁴ Cf. J.-P. Vernant, 'From Oedipus to Periander: Lameness, Tyranny, Incest in Legend and History', *Arethusa* 15 (1982), pp. 19ff., T. A. Sebeok and E. Brady, 'The Two Sons of Croesus: A Myth about Communication', *QUCC* 30 (1979), pp. 18f.

¹⁵ Two instances—besides the canonical tale of *Regifugium* as in Ov. *Fast.* 2.685–852, with *Brutus...stulti sapiens imitator* ('wise mock-fool'), v. 717 (cf. / *Brutus...ut esset / tutus*; and *turba...Superbe...promus...offenso procubuisse pede*, vv. 716–20), *Brutus adest...animo sua nomina fallit* ('Brutus' big moment: belies his name with brute courage'), v. 837 (cf. *edidit impavidos ore minante sonos; uirtus dissimulata; Brutus clamore*, vv. 840–49, with D. C. Feeney, 'Si licet et fas est: Ovid's *Fasti* and the Problem of Free Speech under the Principate', in A. Powell (ed.), *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* (Bristol, 1992), p. 11)—(1) Cicero motivates his discussion of the timeliness of death, the *Tusculans*, by the dedication to Brutus, as from the scion of Servius *Tullius* to that of the liberator(s) (*Brutus* and *Ahala*) (1.38, 88; cf. *Brut.* 331ff., where the text fades away in eloquent expectancy). (2) Ovid inaugurates (re-titles?) his *Epistulae ex Ponto*, where the structure of address is on show (after the anonymity of *Tristia*) as the 'failed tyrannicide' Naso at length names names, by devoting 1.1 to one 'Brutus', so that he can write para-Ciceronian *Epistulae ad Brutum* (1.1, 3.9, 4.6 all explore the overt/covert force of *Brutus*, coming closest to remarking its 'stupidity' at 4.6.28–38). The anti-endoxal scattering of the *puncept* is explained by G. Ulmer, 'The Puncept in Grammatology', in J. Culler (ed.), *On Puns. The Foundation of Letters* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 164ff.

masking stupidity of a satirist's caricature. But 'What need we any spur, but our own cause, / to prick us to redress? What other bond than secret Romans, that have spoke the word, / and will not palter?' (J.C. 2.1.124-6).

The raconteur-narrator's performance of his anecdote itself acts out a social-political drama, enters the lists of civic discourse in dispute with its telling. Horace's poem stages another *Bildrätzel*, its own silent gesture of masking Brutus from language spells its own contradiction. The riddle of 'Brutus' is there to keep liberty alive through the stillest night: will cultured sophistication override this simplicity, bent on joining its poet's repudiation of them? For instance, the unfinishedness of Michelangelo's bust of (Lorenzino de' Medici as) Brutus *may* make for haunting artwork; but any *explanation* of it only jams the message that there is always unfinished business with Caesars.¹⁶

1.6. Horace's jugular text begins by disgusting, disguising and deferring. It thrusts tasteless putrefaction and poison at us first (v. 1), subordinating the narrative to a deflationary main clause which brands this a story of contraband: 'The Outlaw (*proscripti*, v. 1) vs. The Half-breed' (*hybrida*, v. 2: 'the man of violence, of *hybris*, who transgresses against racist/nationalist/whatever categories'). This is to be but the mundane property of everyday chit-chat (v. 3). And we are fobbed off, with the summary's final signifier that appears(,) to complete the sense and the epitomê: *ultus* ('taking revenge', v. 2: stressed by the word-order of ...*sit Persius ultus*). With that, the story is handed us in preliminary *précis*, comprehensively written off before we can even begin. So that we can get rid of it all the more easily: 'Just tittle-tattle'.

Yet the notion of 'revenge' may be blank enough to serve as a frustration of the delivery of signification. Does it conspire with the colourful but similarly opaque phrasing of *Rupili pus atque uenenum* (v. 1) to whet the appetite for an explication?¹⁷ If we read on, it will be to get rid of annoying uncertainties about the weighting of the narrative. We await the clarification of closure, looking for confirmation. But we will find this only if we are prepared to force, do violence to, the text. Scholarship duly obliges: in *ultus* we may be confronting a (carnivalised) elaboration of the master-signifier of the Rome of the 30's B.C.E., scene of the politics of *Caesar Octavianus*: representation of his violence as a specific duty of pious *counter-violence*, sanctioned filial *vendetta* against the self-proclaimed tyrannicides, re-written by triumviral *fiat* as *hostes* (RGDA 2, DuQuesnay, p. 205 n. 79). A novel sense, this, for 'Brutus' (*consul primus*): a dictator's abuse of *Latinitas*.

We can decide to get rid of any such leakage of meaning away from the skit scene of 'Persius vs. Rupilius' only if we can fight off reading the satire as a catachrestic stand-in for the struggle for control of Rome, for control of meaning in Latin, together with its enabling condition, the suppression of the violence of that arrest of signification. We can declare what 'the pus and poison' of Tweedledum and its match, the 'revenge' of Tweedledee, are (to be) only if we stifle the volatilities of the poem's finale: 'Persius' *bad pun* avenges Rupilius' *abuse*'. If that is all there is to it, that is exactly what *ultus* was always already signalling, in advance. Closure by *cataphora*: 'Seen it, case dismissed.'

¹⁶ Cf. D. J. Gordon, 'Giannotti, Michelangelo and the Cult of Brutus', in S. Orgel (ed.), *The Renaissance Imagination* (Berkeley, 1975), 233-45, Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 90 and ch. 2, 'The Reputation of a Tyrannicide'.

¹⁷ Is Rupilius mock-dignified with a para-epic circumlocution? Are Rupilius and Persius opposed in a telling formula of 'othering epithet (/ *Proscripti* : / *hybrida*) + proper name + defiling attribution of nastiness' (*pus atque uenenum* : *ultus* [Cf. *ulcus*?])? Is this set off by chiasmic abutting of *p. atque u.* / with / *hybrida* (Van Rooy, p. 74)?

2. SKUNKS AND SATIRE

*It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe.*¹⁸

2.1. More silly silliness and sillier smelliness are to follow, in and as the stuff that comes next: 1.8, where *brut* Horace plays the jester 'Dickhead' (*Priapus*) and talks out of his backside for Maecenas;¹⁹ before we (thankfully) climb up out of the epodic gutter of Horace's youth into the light of day with 1.9's ethopoeic encounter *à la* Terence (*Eun.* 335ff.):²⁰ here the poet-client will be back in person again (Sighs of relief), to confront one more *alter ego*, the would-be emulator 'Pest'. On the *Via Sacra*, no longer the first damned spot that leapt to mind for getting rid of a king (Suet. *Iul.* 80.4), or the gallery for the *ciuitas* to find iambic voice in poetry, giving another *alter ego* of Horace, another servile military tribune (cf. *Sat.* 1.6.46ff.),²¹ an earful of *libertas* ('Freedom, free speech as invective', *Epod.* 4), but rather down Maecenas' way, *sc.* down *Diui filius*' way, down *Apollo's* way, defending Civilisation with the poetic justice of 'Good Riddance', warding off evil to save the day for (Octavian's) Rome. For 1.9 will be the procession where Horatius begins to lift his head toward the vatic sublimities of post-Actian maturity: Apollo's visitation to close the poem *ex machina* is motivated to get rid of The Pest, of *Satire* 1.9's plaguey offensiveness to Poesie, all this Lucilian urban sprawl, of Momos and Phthonos, in short, those virulent Enemies of (Callimachean) Poetry. We can think, so throw, The Pest, away along with everything you can want him to represent, all the poisonous purulence invested in the spleen, gut and groin of Flaccus' writing of the vocal body, the Horace of the man-in-the-street's civic *inuidia*. The *pharmakos*-reject who will bear off with him the *philtr*-and-*pharmaka* (the *uenenum*) of the ulcerous world of chaos post-Ides-of-March. We will Horace to get rid of his 'shadow', but understand that his patience offers the occasion for the long arm of the law to reach out and get shot of any offender, anyone who gives 'us' offence: behind the placid exterior of Flaccus is re-veiled divine Wrath, Big Brother's triumviral Justice, working invisibly through the concrete jungle of civic space to clear a centre from which a civil radiance can promise to re-order the world-state, saving it from itself. Our part is to welcome the invisible workings of Order with/out recognition of the suppression of violence that Horace's poem (violently) works upon its readers, as it charms away (our) recognition of the violence involved in the suppression we are to co-operate in performing upon ourselves.²² We will, frankly, be glad to see the back of The Pest, the nuisance of his world. And The Pest stood for his era's back side, when the 30's B.C.E. forced even Horace to take sides, and we are forced, too, to back his side. We have prized *Satire's*/our precious freedom to speak out: but in 1.9/nor we feel with relief the glad sensation that we need no longer exercise civic frankness. For to be civilised is, exactly, to aspire to a *res publica* in which we are rid of the duty to be unpleasant, above nastiness, beyond dissension. Politeness polices the polity – *that* is what 'Horace' stands for, in the citizens' arrest we are softly con-scripted into making

¹⁸ B. Dylan, 'Idiot Wind', on *Blood on the Tracks* (1974).

¹⁹ 'La raie de mon fondement à été publique, donc je suis la République' ('The crack in my arse has been made public, and therefore I am the Republic'), as one patient later put it (W. Redfern, *Runs* [Oxford, 1984], p. 116).

²⁰ Cf. L. Radermacher, 'Horaz Satire 1, 7', in D. Korzeniewski (ed.), *Die römische Satire* (Darmstadt, 1970), p. 277.

²¹ D. Armstrong, 'Horatius Eques et Scriba: Satires 1.6 and 2.7', *TAPhA* 116 (1986), pp. 271f., comparing Tillius in *Sat.* 1.6.24ff.

²² Cf. J.-J. Lecercle, *The Violence of Language* (London, 1990), esp. pp. 242f.

'for' him, we his under-studies. But if the claim is made that this ideal is now *attained*, then ...? To keep Caesars out of view, out of the reading of 1.9/the reckoning, can prove just as violent an act of collusion in representation as ever it was back in 1.7/as ever.²³

2.2. Indeed the Trial, that perennial scene where society validates and returns to itself the terms in which its self-image, its normality, can be confirmed and strengthened without the unveiling of violence, *must* be eased from Horace's 'sacred path'. For if a trial is the route to desiderated 'Good Riddance', it is nevertheless a scene which we *need* to fade out: a trial shimmers all too questioningly with ambiguity. It is hard indeed to (pretend to) hear only the verdict, while obliterating its contestation.²⁴

But then, it is not meant to be an easy self-suppression, the suave discipline of politesse, the modal régime we learn to re-produce from within our selves, the fine tuning of our cultural solidarity. Perhaps we manage, and pay the text back in kind, in its own coin, with abjection, mimetically emulating its obliteration of the poisonous spells we and it turn upon its dumped victims.²⁵ Readers of Satire are co-opted into the persecution of the 'Fall Guys', all the losers in the stakes of cultural capital, so that a solidary conception of a civilisation may (get us to) spin the web of its values tight. What is *really* being (re)produced in these poems is an orderliness, the *seriousness* of a hegemonic mindset, as the very term of our work of interpretation, the condition of its possibility and the horizon of its teleology, projected back, so canonized, in an originary narrative of mastery which will pose itself as the authorized *intent*.²⁶

You'll see, the *genius* of Horace was always already at the controls, soon to shake itself free from the dissimulative wallowing in the mess of counter-sublimation that mars the unpleasant bars of the musick of his youth. He was using the image-repertoire and discursive tropology of the *populus*, but precisely as a rhetoric to conjure into performative self-assertion a (noble) *civility*. Wherever the early poetry could appear to be immature, tasteless, offensive, it calls for rescue in the name of the decency and sweet decorum of civilised Moderation. Every bit of it, if we can pull that off: the first book of *Sermones*, pictured by 1.8 as 'A Speech Act in Ten Farts', then *Epode* 3's garlic model for its book of 'Bad Mouth in Seventeen Breaths'.²⁷ For the interpreter's challenge is to reclaim ubiquity for Reason, to snatch control of the *logos* from the libertine disorder of brutish carnival. In the classic script the repressed must

²³ See J. Henderson, 'Be Alert (Your Country Needs Lerts): Horace, *Satire* 1.9', in *PCPhS* 39 (1993), 67–93.

²⁴ T. Siebers, *The Mirror of Medusa* (California, 1983), esp. pp. 21ff. powerfully arrays a (Girardian) world of accusation, 'representations of difference' seen as 'the origin of representation' which 'seeks to conceal the violence of its origin'. I return to this briefly below.

²⁵ Just as Horace and we manage to disown the humiliating power-play, the rapist violence of verbal 'flashing' that our priapic stand-in turns on 1.8's pair of 'witches', the 'nuclear waste' of the discursive stock-pile of a traditional society. (Cf. J. Henderson, 'Satire Writes Woman: *Gendersong*', *PCPhS* 215 [1989], pp. 57–63 on the [violent] *humanism* modelled in 1.8 and *Satires* I as a whole.)

²⁶ See A. White, "'The Dismall Sacred Word.'" Academic Language and the Social Reproduction of Seriousness', *Literature, Teaching, Politics* 2 (1983), pp. 4ff. So F. M. Ahl, '*Ars Est Caelare Artem* (Art in Puns and Anagrams Engraved)', in Culler, op. cit., p. 32, 'Seriousness has become, as it were, the default drive of the Western mind'. For Satire's view of *intent*, cf. J. Swift, *A Tale of A Tub* (Oxford, 1958), p. 179, "'Heark in your Ear ...'"* (with the footnote:) '*I cannot tell what the Author means here, or how this chasm could be fill'd.'

²⁷ Cf. E. J. Gowers, *The Loaded Table. Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 281–310, for the 'love-hate relationship' of (this) 'Garlic Breath'.

put in a rationed appearance in order that it may be *returned* to its repression; the work of seriousness that the canonical text commands applies all the brute farce of an exorcism to banish from the text's semiosis whatever mocks Reason.²⁸ The irreducible residue is for you to marginalize, suppress one way or another, and scapegoat: 'Best of a Bad Job'.²⁹

What is at stake, from *Satire* 1.7 through the *Ars Poetica*, is whether Order can account for Everything while veiling the violence of its totalization; whether you really are (*sc.* totally) at its command; what you would be saying/accepting about yourself if you didn't help keep Order in the best repair. And this includes hiding from view the unpleasantness of this work of 'purification': what we might call the *splashback* pollution of expurgation.

2.3. Now editorial caution *à la* Palmer all too obviously demonizes its victims.³⁰ The violence of *that* sort of suppression is *too* brutal: 'Throws the baby out with the bathwater'. So we must print the (whole) text, but clip on a cautionary stigma. Brand the thing the exception that proves the rule, a work of Horace that *he* wanted (meant) to get rid of. If post-Victorians can no longer jettison with the conviction that it was an early, so hardly *Horatian*, composition, then we can marginalize it, instead, as a meaningful blank: 'It was precisely for such nothings (*Nichtigkeiten*), or, to say it in Latin, *nugae*, as themes to be embroidered by him, that Horace was looking when he had decided to fill up his book of satires by the insertion of a few additional pieces'. Thus Horace resorted to 1.7 as a last-minute expedient so that he could get rid of the whole book; and, on the other hand, let us take up the 'trifle', as a 'refined poem' largely voided of Lucilian infelicity: 'The characterization of the two adversaries goes far beyond the immediate requirements of the anecdote. They are made to represent in two extreme types the two most important groups among the population of the Mediterranean world controlled by Rome.' (Fraenkel, pp. 120f.) The obviously pertinent attention given the poem's 'literary/aesthetic' coding for Horatian/Callimachean poetics by much recent criticism (Buchheit, Schröter, Anderson, Bernardi Perini, Van Rooy) saves the poem for Horatian tastefulness, saves these ruddy verses from dismissal as a 'trivial' 'failure',³¹ 'an inept make-weight to fill up the book'.³²

And yet. Even as we are led to ponder the significance of '*Rupilius vs. Persius*'—'What they represent nags at our thoughts' (Connor, p. 106)—we are still well caught in the work of repressing the text. The *joke*, i.e. the end of the poem's pun on Rupilius'

²⁸ Academic readings look their worst when they deal with writers who signal the cancellation of their writings' 'seriousness', see G. Almansi, *The Writer as Liar. Narrative Technique in the Decameron* (London, 1975), esp. ch. 1.

²⁹ Cf. C. Wills, 'Upsetting the Public: Carnival, Hysteria and Women's Texts', in K. Hirschkop and D. Shepherd (edd.), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Manchester, 1989), pp. 130f., A. White, 'Hysteria and the End of Carnival: Festivity and Bourgeois Neurosis', in Armstrong and Tennenhouse, op. cit., pp. 157ff., on the civilised internalizing and inhibition of the festal repertoire as our pollutant/purgation.

³⁰ The trimmed 1.2 and 1.8 palmered off in old editions stage violence committed on slang, forcible repression of *obscene* language. The convention of 'obscenity' once had its civilising way as the recognition, sanctification, of 'obscene language', masking what now it marks as the singular importance of veiling the hard-core of *gender*-discrimination in the economy of traditional culture. Both poems become through cutting, if c***t-less and f***t-less, nonetheless blatantly point-less. And *that* no longer becomes the Bard, the Classic-to-be, our 'Horace'.

³¹ Ridd, pp. 66f., 'Having paid for a ringside seat we feel like demanding our money back.'

³² M. Coffey, *Roman Satire* (London, 1976), p. 78: 'not' to be 'uncharitable', is *his* saving formula, the formula that would save him from his uncharity, if...

cognomen of *Rex*, can't be what we're here for.³³ The Humour *must* have some force beyond that. We can all test this out: 'With this poem one might start, at the very end as it were, by considering the effect produced on the reader as he (*sic*) completes the poem. The reader is left with a feeling of distaste.' Once we have found the humour to be of the *forced* kind, we can allow the poem's 'jaundiced view' to jaundice our 'view of epic and its code of conduct.' (Connor, pp. 105f.) This de-mystificatory work of representation 'glittering in its epic pomp' (Fraenkel, p. 120) falls where it means to fall, which is to say well short of *real* violence.

2.4. But, it could nag readers, aren't we saving at most a residue of the poem now, forcing the thing to behave, to tell us something we can feel comfortable with, to feel we are nice, nice as Horace usually contrives to be? Seeing the characters as *representing* at all, necessary if we are to see their story as vehicle to some underlying tenor (poetic, cultural, ideological, political, whatever), is *eo ipso* bound to be a way of getting rid of them in some measure, of discounting their excess, of trimming. For representation is clearly caught up in the drive to interpret, to recognize pattern, and the normalization at work in interpretation is targeted on satisfaction.

Strong will is needed to elicit a satisfactory sense of controlled signification for the poem. Commentators try to affix values to '*Rupilius* :: *Persius*', as differentiated contraries and/or as convergent upon an identity. They look to educe a fruitful, or frightful, dialectic by counterposing either one or the pair of them against 'Horace', against *Horatian* values (Kraggerud, pp. 95ff., 98, Van Rooy, p. 76 and n. 36). But the poem, which *may* recommend such dialectical evaluation by practising it, also puts paid to any notion that mastery of the representation is attainable. The poem's 'filling', vv. 10–18, ensures this, given over to the parodic, self-satirizing, turgidity of extended comparison of '*Rupilius* vs. *Persius*' before the law (*ius*, v. 20) with contrastive scenes of man-to-man combat from the *Iliad*, with *their* law (*iure*, v. 10).³⁴ In the proportions '*Achilles* : *Hector*' and '*Diomedes* : *Glaucus*' there is imported into Horace's poem an invitation to bring to Horace's 'duel' the proceeds of your reading in Literature, your cultural formation, no less. In the process Horace's text opens onto that classic *locus conclamatus* of Homeric scholarship, the evaluation of Glaukos' exchange of arms with Diomedes.³⁵ This evidently points to an abyss for interpretation: 'It is right to exercise some caution.' (Van Rooy, p. 75)

In the *Iliad*, '*Diomedes* vs. *Glaukos*' reads locally as a key move in the dialectical traverse from '*Sarpedon* vs. *Tlepolemos*' to '*Hektor* vs. *Aias*', wherein heroes negotiate recognition/killing in the face of mortality,³⁶ *en route* ultimately to '*Akhilleus* vs. *Hektor*', the critical moment of the narrative's exchange with its audience, interpretation's pay-off. More specifically, ancient no less than modern readers fasten on the *Iliad*'s own marking of '*Diomedes* vs. *Glaukos*' as a pregnant 'moment' of 'inequivalence...in the exchange of arms'.³⁷ We can never be

³³ It is anticipated at v. 6, *qui posset uincere regem/Regem* ('who had the beating of (a) king /King'), Van Rooy, p. 74 n. 24, cf. vv. 29f., *re-gerit conuicia...uindemiator...inuictus*. For the currency of the pun in the late 40's B.C.E., cf. Cic. *Ad Att.* 1.16.10, *Quousque, inquit, hunc [Marcium] regem/Regem feremus?*, V. J. Matthews, 'Some Puns on Roman Cognomina', *G&R* 20 (1973), p. 23.

³⁴ John Penwill reminds me to connect *Persius*' name with Herodotean flashbacks to *Homer's* Trojan War.

³⁵ Along with the episode it climaxes, cf. M. Maftai, *Antike Diskussionen über die Episode von Glaukos und Diomedes im VI. Buch der Ilias* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), esp. pp. 52ff.

³⁶ Cf. S. Benardete, 'The *Aristeia* of Diomedes and the Plot of the *Iliad*', *Agon* 2 (1968), esp. p. 29.

³⁷ M. Lynn-George, *Epos: Word, Narrative and the Iliad* (London, 1988), p. 200.

comfortably reconciled with the heroes' own reconciliation through reciprocal exchange of words, arms, recognition, for their narrator scandalously stigmatizes Glaucos. Horace in fact had no option but to join an acknowledged contest between interpretations, the contest of *Interpretation*. Willy-nilly, his Homeric analogue *opens* intertextuality. Besides, any mention of The Diomedes/Glaucus Affair would awake readerly suspicions of a leg-pull, for there were both literary precedent for aping Homer's 'ridicule' for his own hero by picking out and picking on Glaucus the epic text's own figure of fun, and a (quasi-)proverbial currency for Glaucus' bad deal: *Χρύσέα χαλκείων* ('gold for bronze').³⁸ Thus the poem's bloated and self-indulgent aside on '*Diomedes vs. Glaucus*' injects a discordant note into the presentation of the '*Rupilius vs. Persius*' dispute.³⁹ Readers, readers at any rate with a nose for satire, must scent self-reflexivity, as the poem 1.7 offers us Horatian 'gold', the representation and its work of re-presentation, in lieu of the nasty Civil War 'bronze' of its represented, as a stake in the deal by which it exchanges Homeric 'gold' for Lucilian 'bronze'. Thus, Persius' *flumen...hibernum* ('wintry torrent'), v. 27, is interchanged through *salso multoque fluenti* ('that mighty flood of wit'), v. 28, with Rupilius the *Praenestinus*' *expressa arbusto conuicia* ('abuse squeezed from the vineyard'), as from a *uindemiator* ('a tough vine-dresser'), with all his *Italo...aceto* ('Italian vinegar', i.e. 'plonk'), vv. 29–32, and then switched back by *Persius...Graecus* ('Persius the Greek'), vv. 32f., in his final 'exclamation'. Gold for bronze, for...We should wonder, as scholars have done, what this trade-off, of *sermonis amari* ('scathing abuse', i.e. 'bitter whine') v. 7, *in sermo* has to say to the presentation of Horatian poetics, the abrasive sting of an adoxographic poetry that works on and through the refuse 'fall-out' of Culture after the example of Callimachus' iambic performances.⁴⁰ But we should not stop there, merely registering a *literary* profile for 1.7. Nor is it sufficient to sketch out a *political intent* for the poem, as if this work of 'sketching' were not itself caught up in an ideological, a political, productivity. For in the *ideological* stakes of the work of representation, the 'gold' of *ditem Asiam* ('Asia and all its wealth'), v. 19, is represented in the poem's reckoning by *Persius...diues* ('Persius...a rich man'), v. 4. Does/n't Horace satirically demand that his readers give him, in exchange for the 'glitch' of his throw-away lines, the 'gold' of their esteem for his performance? Does/n't the 'faint-hearted' poet 'withdraw' à la Glaucus (*discedat pigrior*, v. 17), ducking a show-down with his critics, palming off on us an offer we can't refuse, the golden gift of a gilded suit of satirical armour (*ultra / muneribus missis*, 'even send / gifts of appeasement', vv. 17f.), his initiative matched by our brazen complicity?

The *sine qua non* of in-put from the reader keeps the text live, open to reading and re-reading. It wears on its sleeve the slogan 'Gold for bronze', a disconcertingly plain warning that: 'Someone round here is being had!' Such nagging suspicions constitute satiric narrative as the implication of readers' values, sophistication, politics. They are, precisely, what you cannot get rid of, what you can only wish good riddance.⁴¹

2.5. In the matter of the dispute '*Rupilius vs. Persius*', there is no 'agreement' to put before the 'assembled company' (vv. 9f., *nihil...conuenit; conuentus*, v. 23) and no

³⁸ H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Oxford, 1982), p. 120 on Callimachus (?) 276.2, *Heroa Lycium Lycio glossemate obiurgat*; A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter der Römer* (Hildesheim, 1971), p. 82, s.v. *chrysus*.

³⁹ *duo, discordia, disparibus, Diomedes, discedat*, vv. 15–7, cf. *diuideret*, v. 13, vs. *cum, confidens, cum, compositum, cum, conuentu, cohortem, comites, compellans, consueris*, vv. 5–34.

⁴⁰ Cf. R. Scodel, 'Horace, Lucilius, and Callimachean Polemic', *HSCPh* 91 (1987), pp. 199ff.

⁴¹ Cf. L. Marin, *Le Récit est un Piège* (Paris, 1978), F. Palmeri, *Satire in Narrative*. Petronius, Swift, Gibbon, Melville, and Pynchon (Texas, 1990), esp. pp. 1–10, on 'open-ended dialogicality'.

agreed valorisation of Horace's combatants through comparison with Homer is forthcoming. Rupilius and Persius will not represent securely and we are not assured of control of the sense of their poem, of the joke they figure (in). Still, one of our options is, naturally, to look to the end and welcome the final joke as getting rid of the nastiness of desperado-invective, for us as for the poem's congregation: 'The bad pun devised by Persius as a last resort achieves more than he anticipated: the audience laughs at his enemy. No doubt, the audience was laughing at both foes, and the main result is that the pun reduces the tensions of the bitter dispute.'⁴² 'No doubt.' (That's an order.)

But so much of views such as this is sedative fiction pushed onto the text that the violence of its demand for uplift all too easily becomes palpable, even unmissable. The text authorises *no* estimate of the impact of the 'bad pun'. *None whatever*. The poem does not even warrant the understanding of Persius' 'exclamation' as a 'pun', of whatever quality to whoever's ears, nor even as a 'joke'. If there is to be a laugh, whether of appreciation or of derision, on whatever interpretation or refusal to interpret, the text has precisely been staged to get rid of it. Any smirks, groans, cackles, hoots, roars, brutific smiles come, *if* they come, from the reader.

Most recent readers have got rid of the pun from their estimation of the poem's good offices precisely because they cannot, when put on the spot, abide by 'the fact that in the Roman world of the second half of the last century B.C. the pun on "rex" was in fact a very polished (and most popular) joke'.⁴³ Thus, what matters more than its 'quality' is the positionality of the pun: the pun that climaxes an anecdote is not *langue* but *parole*, it is not iterable but rather discursively set as a specific performance.⁴⁴ 'The pun', above all figures and instances of language, is not seized in the enumeration of its instances, its brute force resides in the grain of social drama. This is why it can only be a formalist misrecognition to declare: 'In itself the pun is not too bad.' (Rudd, p. 65). For it *has* no intrinsic *self*.⁴⁵

3. RIDDLED WITH FICTIONAL BULLETS

*Am I so far gone, in my desperate need for meaning, that I'm prepared to distort everything—to rewrite the whole history of my times purely in order to place myself in a central role? Today, in my confusion, I can't judge. I'll have to leave it to others.*⁴⁶

3.1. As anecdotes always do, the anecdote challenges its participants to ask first: 'Where is the joke?' One response, one pioneered by Horace, is to get rudd of this question, lock, stock and barrel. For the poet has disowned 'his' anecdote, marginalised the 'joke' along with its denizens' whole world, disengaged from the

⁴² W. S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, 1982), p. 80.

⁴³ Van Rooy, p. 81. Insistence on 'the fact of the matter' betrays strain: this pun *would* matter to any Van Rooy from any Pretoria.

⁴⁴ E. Goffman, 'The Neglected Situation', in P. P. Giglioli (ed.), *Language and Social Context* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 65, 'The act of speaking must always be referred to the state of talk that is sustained through the particular turn at talking... and ... this state of talk involves a circle of others ratified as co-participants'; cf. essays in P. Drew and A. Wootton (edd.), *Erving Goffman. Exploring the Interaction Order* (Cambridge, 1988).

⁴⁵ Cf. J. Culler, 'The Call of the Phoneme: Introduction', in Culler, op. cit., p. 4, 'The pun is the foundation of letters, in that the exploitation of formal resemblance to establish connections of meaning seems the basic activity of literature; but this foundation is a foundation of letters only, a foundation of marks whose significance depends on relations, whose own significative status is a function of practices of reading, forms of attention, and social convention'.

⁴⁶ [Saleem, worried about getting the date of Gandhi's death wrong forever, in] S. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London, 1981), p. 166.

whole shooting-match. 'It is not really Horace's garbage.'⁴⁷ That is to say, we cannot play blind to the fact that Horace has *got rid of himself* from Brutus' *conuentus* ('entourage/assizes', v. 23). In one effort to come to terms with this, we are told that: 'He cannot be accused of malicious invention: every reader knows he was there and that the anecdote has all the authority of an eyewitness account. In any case, we are assured that the tale is well known.'⁴⁸ But however reassuringly authoritative we find such assurances, and whatever the force of 'In any case' here, in any case, there has to be both more and less to the re-presentation of the anecdote as 'common property of the chemist-queue and barber-shop' (*omnibus et lippis notum et tonsoribus*, v. 3), rather than as *Icherzählung*, than this.

Horace is far from giving 'a direct and detailed picture of the republican side'. At the very least, 'He is playing a double game'.⁴⁹ Or, rather, he frames his performance into provocative and undecidable multiplicity by thus siting his material as the citation of a much-bruited re-citation.

You may have decided to decide that Horace writes the poem but that the people of Rome tell the tale through his voice. That *is* one valorisation, of many. You may wish to be rid of the gaps that open up in this structuring of the material as a relay, a re-production. For example, have your Horace laugh *with* as well as *at* his characters and their repartee;⁵⁰ then decide for yourself whether his derision of them is more savagely biting than their in-fighting is to each other, working out as you do so how to save the poet's seriousness for your own. If you can. For example, make the poet's good humour overcome the hatefulness of the era whose good riddance was Philippi, all that the nasty sting of Lucilian satire is best fit to evoke: Horatian *sermo* gives up on spleen, bounces aggressive spite out of civilisation.⁵¹ Doesn't the story come right out with it and *say* it is an eyesore looking for a poultice, polluted by the ailing point of view of the political body, and a contaminated bit of its ephemeral refuse, the unwanted facial hair that a cultured patriarchal citizen leaves with his (*sic*) barber as the sign of his purgation (v. 3)?

Decide, in the very best tradition, to attend to what the text says: '*Wir sind deshalb nicht berechtigt, Aussagen über den Ausgang des Rechtsstreites zu machen... Wenn also der Dichter über den Ausgang schweigt, dann sollte auch der Interpret diese Frage nicht aufwerfen.*' And in so deciding, iron out the text so that it may, all the same, offer in caricature a serious assessment of Brutus, through the comic reflectors of his associates, the anecdote's exhibits. For 'At the centre of all this activity is Brutus.'⁵²

Horace gets rid of important victims from this poem/his texts only so that he may the better home in *indirectly* on its/their target.⁵³ He conjures up the atmosphere of the Civil War: 'The Republicans are depicted at each other's throats in litigation... But he cannot be accused of malicious invention.'⁵⁴ Why? Because... he/we won't let ourselves accuse him of that. Because we won't read dissembled vituperation, verbal violence under cover of genial humour, *as* (violent) vituperation. Because we want to side with the representation. *Whatever* we may find ourselves making it say.

3.2. It is important to recognize that relations between the voicing of the anecdote as (1) Horace's own evacuation, and (2) a favourite (*bad?*) joke from the people's

⁴⁷ Rudd, p. 65.

⁴⁸ DuQuesnay, pp. 37f.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 36; Rudd, p. 65.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Kraggerud, pp. 104f.

⁵² Ibid. pp. 92f.; DuQuesnay, p. 36.

⁵³ Kraggerud, p. 95.

⁵⁴ DuQuesnay, p. 37, punning on Persius' *iugulas* ('Have you a dagger for the throat'), v. 35, to cover the text seamlessly with its interpretation.

repertoire, are undecidable in their specifics, and that this problematizes the tenor of the narration. There is, for instance, a 'clear' contrast between the *reporting* of Persius' first verbal salvo (vv. 22–7), and the *quoting* of his final exclamation (vv. 33–5).⁵⁵ We could, as Commentary has, extrapolate from the terms of the representation of either the first or the first two sallies in the bout to the sense of its finale with a judicious (i.e. opportunistic) blend of analogy and differentiation: if 'general laughter' (v. 22) greeted Persius' offering of Hellenistic-style, 'soteriological', flattery, we may hear it again, re-doubled, as the response to the 'exclamation' he goes on to offer, this time in the very different terms of recourse to the rhetoric of Roman Tyrannicide (vv. 33–5). Will the 'laughter' be just the same, for the diametrically different style of oratory? Or will any 'laughter', if laughter there is to be, from the *conuentus* and/or from its general, Brutus, be of a diametrically different kind, for Persius' equally derisory/risible/agreeable/cheery oratorical *tours de force*? Does Horace's repetitive style of reportage for Persius' first effort, *laudat...laudatque, / sol(em)...salubris /, Brutum...Brutum...salubris, appellat...stellas...appellat* (vv. 23–5), communicate long-winded prolixity, Persius droning on and on round the constellations, and so pre-figure a *volte face* in his pithy 'exclamation'? Does the vocally involving music of Horace's report create or evoke a style of (Asiatic) sonority, over against the Roman *tene rem, uerba sequuntur*-style of Persius' later colloquial 'quip' (?), his pseudo-atavistic thrust to Brutus, *ad hominem*? "Indirect discourse" in narration never escapes some degree of implied "stylistic physiognomy" – the sound of the man's (*sic*) voice."⁵⁶

Shall we see Persius' first effort as setting in train an *agôn* in the successful mobilisation of power through nomination? When he calls Brutus and co. 'the solar system', he is binding 'Brutus' to a burden of obligations: his deferential '*Salaam*' accords supreme power its potential for violence toward his own ends. Already, within his speech, Persius re-names his co-star Rupilius 'the Dog(-Star)', the place in the topology of the metaphorical firmament to which the outcast beast is driven by the force of analogy. Thus Percy *already* mobilizes the verbal pun against *Rex*, as he others him from Brutus-the-'Sun'(-King). As he does so, he catastrophizes, so mock-magnifies his victim, however much those who identify with the 'farmers', those primeval bearers of culture, will join them in 'detesting' the coming of the Dog-Star (vv. 25–6). This semiosis constitutes a *matrix* for Persius' later attempt to manipulate metonymy in place of metaphor, by complimentary naming of Brutus for the power and obligations of his pedigree. But do his two examples of the politics of rhetoric chime and/or do they clash the one with the other?

Clearly the structuring of the anecdote so that direct speech is withheld to the climax so functions that its mimetic force may the more effectively tie its reader into actualising the scene, into '*living*' it.⁵⁷ But how is the reader to lose sight of (the unresolvable problem of) how much and how little in the poem is ascribable to 'Horace', behind and beyond his dummy narrators in the chemists' and barbers'? Rupilius and Persius, Brutus and the rest of the audience, too, cannot, for example, have appreciated any matching of Persius' insult 'the Dog' (*can(em) illum* /, v. 25), with Rupilius' abuse which is, in the *poem*'s narration, *à la* vine-dresser... who routs

⁵⁵ By contrast, Rupilius' first effort is eclipsed by silence: its report even yields speech to the internal opponent, the 'passer-by' who before yielding to the 'vine-dresser', 'shouts' at him (vv. 30f.).

⁵⁶ Tannen, op. cit., p. 99. The poem is an echo-text *à la cu-culus* ('cuckoo'), cf. / *conuentu...cohortem* /; *comites, conuentu...uenisse*; *inuís(um) agricolis sidus*; *inuís(um)...uenisse*, vv. 23–6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 25ff.

any passer-by that shouts a loud 'Cuckoo!' (*cuculum* /, v. 31). Only a telling of the story which features the 'comparisons' with the Homeric adversaries of Horace's poem could find an analogy for the 'passer-by' in this image who is 'routed' (*uiator* / *cessisset*, vv. 30f.), in the 'withdrawal' of 'the more faint-hearted' (*discedat pigror*, v. 17).⁵⁸ Similarly, the Dog-Star is a favourite marker of early Horatian writing,⁵⁹ and only in a hexametric parody of the *epos* does Persius' canine abuse of Rupilius bespeak the Homeric imagery of comparison of serious heroes (Akhilleus and his under-study, Diomedes) with *Sirius*.

The narration blinks and blurs between its several narrators and its audiences: a world of assumptions naturalises the 'pair' of combatants as a very particular judication between one-off eccentrics and all-too-familiar social stereotypes, but authority for this is suspended indefinitely between (1) the characters; (2) the citation 'for sore eyes' at the chemist's which has also been a close shave 'at the barber's' (v. 3); and (3) the poet's voice materialised in his writing. Even and especially the final 'exclamation', which we could easily see as the *raison d'être* of the performance, demands that we hear in its foregrounded, ostentatiously *uerbatim*, quotation the proximate narrator Horace, rather than Persius' *ipissima uerba*. For that is the rule in the anecdote, that in it apparent 'direct speech' is itself a species of 'fictive utterance', a form of 'constructed dialogue'.⁶⁰ Thus, for example, it is certainly and effectively, even if not only, in Horace's poem that the introduction of Persius as the man with 'very big business' whom we meet 'calling' and 'calling' out his flatteries, could be amplified through the 'loud' voice of the passer-by who 'shouts loud', to set up his 'exclamation', 'For god's sake' (*permagna...negotia*, v. 4, *appellat...appellat*, vv. 24–5, *magna compellans uoce*, v. 31, *per magnos...deos*, v. 33: marked out by the intertwined echo of *Brute...te*). For the reader, the very wording of the 'exclamation' is itself part of the styling as well as the authorizing of the narration. For instance, '*permagnus*' does not have a very big distribution in Latin verse.

In short, we might judge that the anecdote arises *tout court* from Horace's desire to get what he has to say *à propos* 'Brutus' said, and that all the rest is the *alibi* of 'reportage', whether or not it is at all accurate, in the sense (1) that it accurately reports a or the popular tale going the rounds – the tale whose entire *raison d'être* was to get what the people had to say *à propos* 'Brutus' said –, and (2) that that telling accurately reports what Persius actually said at the time.

3.3. Thus the *political* force of this re-presentation of violent politics need not be purged from the poem (This is the breakthrough made by Kraggerud and DuQuesnay). We can appreciate Horace's elimination of authorial explicitation by writing his authority back into the text in our reading. We can get rid of his withholding of the conclusion of his tale. And we can be subtle enough to leave (impel) our readers to draw the right conclusions as their own by writing in the name of Horace: 'Horace is subtle enough to leave the reader to draw his (*sic*) own conclusions.' (DuQuesnay, p. 37).

⁵⁸ The passer-by *could* be a shadow for Persius, if Persius were just passing through Brutus' camp, some trade-route bound, innocently stumbling upon *Roman Civil War*.

⁵⁹ See E. Oliensis, 'Canidia, *Canicula*, and the Decorum of Horace's *Epodes*', *Arethusa* 24 (1991), esp. pp. 120f.

⁶⁰ Tannen, op. cit., esp. pp. 110ff.: 'The act of transforming others' words into one's own discourse is a creative and enlivening one...even if "reported" accurately. In many, perhaps most, cases, however, material represented as dialogue was never spoken by anyone else in a form resembling that constructed, if at all.'

We should by all means appreciate the partisan force of the absenting of Horace from 1.7. Especially after 1.6, which paradigmatically constructs the coherent autonomy, the self-complete *Ego*, of a Human Nature for its Horace. The shift from 1.6 to 1.7 bespeaks volumes in mutual confirmation. The nursling *protégé* of 1.6 appeared before the tribunal of his social father-figure Maecenas to declare his own function of modelling for the new dispensation. *quod eram narro* ('I told you what I was'), v. 60, was the self-reflexive point of the whole piece, where Mr Clean Horace bathed his well-rounded self in the warmth of his representation: / *non patre praeclaro sed uita et pectore puro* / ('not by having a highly distinguished father but by decency of heart and character'), v. 64, *purus et insons* ('clean and above reproach'), v. 69, *obiciet nemo sordes mihi* ('Noone will call me stingy'), v. 107, *vs. immundus Natta* ('that filthy Natta'), v. 124. This is the *scriba* welcomed into Maecenas' *amicitia*, talked in by his epic fellows', Virgil's and Varius', introduction, past the barrier of his unbirth, the lack of stemma made good under the new dispensation for new blood of that new era which Horace here inaugurates through discussion around the structure of public service, focused on the glorious arena of military command, to the disdain of *ambitio*.

1.6 narrated and relayed the making of 'Horace', 'Horace' its narrator, as it welded narrator to narration beneath the approving eye of Maecenas. It is here that Horace fills in the positive '*I*-deal' that is implied by his negative portrayal of the circus-parade of his satirical menagerie. This catholic congregation is representatively and collectively catechized in 1.2.1ff., 'The federated flute-girls' union, pedlars of quack medicines, holy beggars, strippers, comics, and all that lot... Tigellius the singer', but appears in the book's disquisitions *passim*. It is viewed *tandem* in the form of the cast of its narratives, in 1.5 along the length of Italy and then, in close-up, in the assortment of anecdotes 1.7-9. This is the anti-world of Horace the singing mock-*flâneur*, who comes across the anarchistic swirl of the "street walkers", the beggars, the prostitutes, the old men and women..., the rubbish collectors and street-sweepers, the itinerant vendors and open-air stall keepers... and, last but not least, the buskers and *saltimbanques* (itinerant clowns, singers, acrobats, and mimes).⁶¹ In Book 2, the story will go, Horace will get rid of the risks of narrating altogether, under orders from his lawyer-censor Trebatius who rules satiric self-exposure out of court in 2.1. Meantime, the writing rakes across the *ciuitas* as if in his name.

3.4. But could there be a more *pointed* withdrawal of authorisation after 1.6 than Horace's ablegation of his next venture, 1.7? Here, the anti-types approach, not Maecenas' purse but, Brutus' tribunal: Rupilius joins Brutus' *cohors* or *conuentus* as *proscriptus*, 'outlaw'; the 'half-breed' Persius joins as Mr. Moneybags ('a rich man engaged in very big business'), v. 4.⁶² The unepic fellows Rupilius and Persius rudely 'introduce' each other only to incite *their* 'patron' against each other. 1.6 indeed always already showers 1.7 with cold disapprobation: in its dim view of Republican politics, *regnum* is the Ancient History of Maecenas' forebears (vv. 1ff., 9ff.); aeons before Horace's origins are conceivable, it was a *Valerius* who expelled Tarquin (v. 12); even a Horace has commanded a Roman army (v. 48), and *that* left its legacy of false valorisation of past glories, for the Republic has been no more than the aristocracy's *ambitio*, the self-blind 'stupidity of elections' (*populus stupet in titulis*

⁶¹ M. Maclean, *Narrative as Performance. The Baudelairean Experiment* (London, 1988), p. 56, q.v.

⁶² Cf. The Pest's wrong-headed approach to Maecenas' good-books, 'I'll bribe his servants', 1.9.57.

et imaginibus, v. 15). 1.6 has amounted, then, to a forcible directive on where to read 1.7 from.⁶³ Horace performs still, as through the book, before the law of Maecenas, Maecenas, whose *scriptorium* pushes Horace's pen. This is the invisible frame for reading 1.7, all the more securely in place for its invisibility.⁶⁴

But even as we obediently follow the trail blazed by 1.6, to reclaim *risus* for *uerum*, 1.7's structure of address cuts our moorings. The suppression of a response to Persius' 'exclamation', whether within the scenario from Brutus and/or his *conuentus*, or within the representation from its narrator, or failing him from its narration, obliges the reader to do the dirty work. If we are supposed to know what (a) Maecenas can assume to be obvious, if we can presume on a *rapport* with him, in the meeting of minds that Human(ist) Nature timelessly posits, then to do the poem justice by reading its hints as assurances we must assure ourselves that 'we' belong within the charmed circle. We can tell a hint when we are given one, we can read in. But the bind of the poem is that it instals us as Maecenases, but Maecenates who are put through the mill of playing Brutus: we are made to put our *pauca* before Brutus' court and we await, forever, the *pauca* of Brutus' response (1.6.56, 61, 'a few words... briefly'), for the last word, all that counts, is this time his—just as in 1.6 the verdict on Horace was Maecenas'. Like The Patron, but out in the *ciuitas*, 'Brutus' is not someone (dead) we meet. He is, rather, a *way of seeing*, a viewpoint from where we can observe ourselves coming into view. As poets, citizens, readers.

3.5. Horace's civil poem may be writing off civic uncivility as a semiotic fix (an error in *labelling*) utilizing the pun as 'the wit of crassitude'.⁶⁵ The joke shows that 'Rocky III' *Rupilius Rex* (*rupex*, 'ruffian/clown': *rupices a rūpibus*, Fest. 226L.) is no more a 'King', and the hybrid-signifier *Persius* (half-Persian, half-Greek, half-Italian?) is no less a 'King of Kings', than any 'Brutus'. All three are also 'hard men' brutes (*durus... durus*, 'a tough customer... tough', vv. 6, 29). To confirm that he walks tall as the parody of epic *uirtus* should, *Rex* comes from *Praeneste* (from *praestet*).⁶⁶ And, though we know that 'it's the same distance from anywhere to hell',⁶⁷ Persius' business puts him to work at *Klazomenai* so that he may 'exclaim' with all the force of a kledonomantic tropology (*exclamat*, v. 33; *Klazomenai* as from *κλάζω*).⁶⁸

As 'Brutus' leaves the order of reality to join the specimen of low humour passed by Horace, he must become a verbal joke. This joke would trivialize the Tyrannicidal imperative: it goes right to the heart of that sanction of violence by figuring Brutus' act of violence as the act of verbalization, not his assertion of power on the Ides of March, but the political act of self-identification he performed when he verbalised – to himself and to others – the intent to get rid of the 'King'. The act was 'the verbalization of a political act' and it was accordingly 'itself... a political act'.⁶⁹ It

⁶³ See Armstrong, loc. cit., for the political dialectic of 1.6. Links with 1.7 include *Barrus*, 6.30, 7.8, and the motif of recursion, *ad...redeo*, 6.45, 7.9, cf. Van Rooy, p. 68 n. 3.

⁶⁴ 1.6 has articulated the *force* behind 1.1.1's titular ascription of the book to its controller, / *Qui fit, Maecenas...* ('How is it, Maecenas...'), namely the entitlement of Horace to speak, to speak in the name of his (satirically caricatured) *Iuppiter... iratus* (1.1.20f., 'Jupiter... in anger').

⁶⁵ Ahl in Culler, op. cit., p. 32.

⁶⁶ *RE* 22.2, p. 1550, J. N. Bremmer and N. M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography*, *BICS Suppl.* 52 (1987), p. 60.

⁶⁷ See Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.104, where 'Lord-of-Language' *Anaxagoras* of Clazomenae dies in the 'light' of *Lampsacus*. ⁶⁸ As in Auson. *Epigr.* 93, *pace RE* 11, pp. 554f.

⁶⁹ J. G. A. Pocock, 'Verbalizing a Political Act: Toward a Politics of Speech', in M. Shapiro (ed.), *Language and Politics* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 25ff., and T. Hampton, 'Writing after History' in *Writing after History: the Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Cornell, 1990), p. 221, using the example of the stage Brutus.

fused Brutus' subjectivity into the stereotype of 'a Brutus', over against a, Caesar's, 'Tarquin' and in that proportion Brutus made 'Caesar' mean 'Rex'.

3.6. What Horace's spurious anecdote performs is the terrifying spectre of replicability in the violent power of evocation that inheres within the schéma of 'Tyrrannicide': Persius is here to speak a hideous parody of and spin-off from Brutus' act of self-representation, the violence of his verbalization of Tyrrannicide as (beyond the meiosis *tollere*, 'getting rid of', v. 34) *iugulas* ('(a) dagger for (his) throat'), v. 35. A paraded verbal violence which ascribes to the Tyrrannicide the violence that *should* destine a 'King' for the chop.⁷⁰ A bloodthirsty Tyrrannicide avatar for M. Brutus would be his doubly-claimed ancestor Servilius Ahala, who skewered the 'would-be tyrant' Sp. Maelius in the Forum.⁷¹ Whereas Brutus the Liberator only *expelled* the Tarquins. *Stricto...sensu*, he was no 'Tyrrannicide' at all: 'If there is progress in history... The abolition of the death penalty is the moment when a country really delivers itself of its kings. What has been said about this delivery, in history books or picture books, was only a lie.'⁷²

Once the cry 'Rex' is out of the bag, we must recognize, anyone can play 'Brutus', play the demeaning game of euphemism, 'Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers... / Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully; / let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods, / now hew him as a carcass fit for hounds' (J.C. 2.1.166-74).⁷³ Here begins a nightmare of the *déjà lu*, the mimetic contagiousness that plunges a tribe into an abyss of *anomie*. Horace's Persius shows us how 'Tyrrannicide' always already perverts into a see-through verbal *alibi* for violence. He (mock-)proposes that his comrade Rupilius be slaughtered as if he were (a) Caesar, not the victim of Caesarism, and verbally replicates that killing for a name alone that is the *reductio ad absurdum* of mob violence, the *ultio* exacted *per errorem (cog)nominis* from the tribune Cinna by the rampaging Caesarian crowd on the Ides of March, as if from the conspirator Cinna.⁷⁴ Horace tells us, then, that Caesar was still less of a *rex* than was Rupilius: hardly *as faire a name as 'Cinna'*, let alone *as 'Caesar'*. Rupilius at least owned (up to) the name 'Rex'. Rupilius at least provided the minimal justification of a pun.

Horace has brought us to wallow in the mire of 'Rupilius vs. Persius', for this abyssal pay-off in the *sparagmos* of the Signifier, our glimpse of the body politic lynching Language. This is, for example in Girardian mytho-logic, the message for which representation was instituted as a form of social life, its primeval sanction.⁷⁵ Horace's text can well be read as making a power-play for ideological high ground

⁷⁰ So in Cic. *Phil.* 3.8ff., where D. Brutus and Antony replay L. Brutus and Tarquinius Superbus, tyrannous Antony 'cut the throats and butchered' surrendered citizens (*iugulavit...et...trucidauerat*, 10).

⁷¹ Cf. Plut. *Brut.* 1.2, R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1-5* (Oxford, 1965), on Liv. 4.12-16; cf. DuQuesnay, p. 206 n. 89, *RE* 2A, p. 1771. He specially asked Atticus to trace the *Iunia familia* from stock to the present, Nep. *Att.* 18.3.

⁷² M. Serres, *Rome. The Book of Foundations* (Stanford, 1991), p. 135.

⁷³ The inoculatory language of these ritualistic formulae (*nb.* 'gods/dogs') is undone by 'these butchers' at 3.1.255, cf. B. Sterling, 'Ritual in *Julius Caesar*', in P. Ure (ed.), *Shakespeare* (London, 1970), pp. 160ff.

⁷⁴ Mistaken 'vengeance', so not vengeance at all. Cf. Suet. *Iul.* 85, Hampton, op. cit., 213, J. D. Morgan, 'The Death of Cinna the Poet', *CQ* 40 (1990), 558-9.

⁷⁵ R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore, 1977): demystified by R. Gordon, 'Reason and Ritual in Greek Tragedy', in E. Shaffer (ed.), *Comparative Criticism* 1 (1979), pp. 279ff. Cf. Serres, op. cit., p. 167, 'Sextus Tarquinius is sacrificed at Gabii.... He is expelled from the City.... Here is the condition of the new liberty, history says. Here is the sacrificial mechanism of the social pact, the anthropologist would say. Here is the requisite for the constitution of the world, the philosopher said.'

as he exploits the tragic pathos of the proper name in just this sense: at the top of the spiral down through 'Brutus' to 'Rupilius' comes 'Caesar'. The proper name bulks large in the 'axiological-ideological' stakes of any clash between monarchy and people-power: the 'motivated' (reified, fetishized) name of The King centres his 'symbolic world-order', the World as his, over against the democratic demystification of 'arbitrary' (conventional, mundane) nomination in the 'syntagmatic world-order' of *res publica*.⁷⁶ As Shakespeare's play and the history of the West write large, Caesar is (makes a bid to be, insists on being) his name, the force of the name 'Caesar'.⁷⁷ The concretion of Power resides in the naming a Caesar enforces for himself. Caesar is, then, *precisely* to be killed for his name, 'for the great opinion / that Rome holds of his name' (J.C. 1.2.322f.). And by the mimetic compulsion of violence, Brutus must kill for his name, and then, at once, 'Let him be Caesar...'.⁷⁸ So next on the hit-list, next for the chop come Caesar-Rupilius and Persius-Brutus. To take Horace seriously could mean we are committed to believing that in the case of (a) 'Caesar' 'There is everything in a name'.⁷⁹ This is exactly what the Roman tradition offered its Tyrannicides for precedent: everyone 'knew' that 'Tarquinius' had been expunged as clan from the body politic and no less as name from the Latin language.⁸⁰ 'Antony' is prime candidate to succeed the Tyrannicides as 'Regent'—or Pharaoh. In *Arturo Ui*, 'the gangster-Führer takes lessons in elocution from an old ham actor, who appropriately trains him on Antony's speech to the crowd in *Julius Caesar*'.⁸¹

3.7. But perhaps such politicization of Horace's jovial 'damp squib' is, for those with tasteful, floppily *Horatian*, ears, dispensable: 'Get rid of it!' Closer to the *tone* of the poem, one can find instead that one's urbanity is here taking an opportunity to show off its reach. Then, the poem is rigged as an occasion for urbanity. 'Indirectness (or, in formal pragmatics, *implicature*): conveying unstated meaning' is exactly the function of anecdotal exchange (Tannen, *op. cit.*, p. 23). We 'Horaces' are here to play dirty, talk rough, to play-talk *sermo* into a *Sermo*. Social involvement and concordance are brought about by rehearsal of meaning 'in the resonating silence of the unsaid' that betokens and enables the sharing of conversation.⁸² Why else would we descend to the poverty, repetitiousness, self-indulgence, of the *plebeian*? We are here to talk rough enough to parade our comprehensive mastery of social discourse,

⁷⁶ A. Serpieri, 'Reading the Signs: Towards a Semiotics of Shakespearean Drama', in J. Drakakis (ed.), *Alternative Shakespeares* (London, 1985), pp. 126ff.

⁷⁷ Cf. J. Henderson, 'Lucan/The Word at War', in A. J. Boyle (ed.), *The Imperial Muse, Volume 1, To Juvenal Through Ovid* (Victoria, 1988), pp. 126ff.

⁷⁸ Thus Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* culminates in Cassius' suicide 'with his self-same tyrannicide blade', and ends with Brutus' assisted decease.

⁷⁹ Pace M. Mahood, 'Words and Names', in Ure, *op. cit.*, p. 78, who would hold that this superstition is only 'for the ignorant and irrational'.

⁸⁰ So Cic. *De Off.* 3.40, *cognitionem Superbi nomenque Tarquiniorum et memoriam regni esse tollendam*, *De Rep.* 2.53, *Collatinum innocentem offensione cognominis expulerunt et reliquos Tarquinos offensione nominis*, Ogilvie, *op. cit.*, on Liv. 2.2. The myth requires that we keep mum about 'the fact that Brutus is also a Tarquin, son of the king's sister Tarquinia', cf. C. S. Kraus, 'Initium turbandi omnia a femina ortum est: Fabia Minor and the Election of 367 B.C.', *Phoenix* 45 (1991), p. 320 n. 25. To prove the rule: how splendid that Cicero should contrive to unearth *quidam L. Tarquinius* 'arrested on his way to join Catiline's bid for Rome' (Sall. *Cat.* 48.3): P. McGushin, *Sallust. Bellum Catilinae* (Bristol, 1980) drily comments *ad loc.*, 'Nothing else is known about this man'. Nothing, that is, bar his *name*: but that is the force of his existence, his part is to play the last of the Roman Tarquins, true to pedigree to the end.

⁸¹ M. Heinemann, 'How Brecht Read Shakespeare', in J. Dollimore and A. Sinfield (edd.), *Political Shakespeare. New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester, 1985), p. 220.

⁸² See S. Tyler, *The Said and the Unsaid* (New York, 1978), p. 465.

but we are clear that it would be a ridiculously *faux pas* to suppose that this excursion could represent the subjectivity of any of 'us', anyone like us: along with getting rid of 'Getting rid of kings', we are here with Horace getting rid of puns, by ridiculing the idea that anyone (anyone of *us*) could find this risible, or that it could be humorous to make a joke out of this material.⁸³ It *could* only be a joke to suppose that we, we who are constituted as a 'we' by our likemindedness in this, could find this funny: 'A brute *us*'.

4. GOOD RIDDANCE

*Senator, you are no Jack Kennedy!*⁸⁴

4.1. Even so, the story puts Brutus in the driving-seat. Even though Horace puts the civic lore of Tyrannicide in the mouth of the outsider *Graecus*, as just a twist from his orientalistically forked tongue in a rootlessly halfbreed ethos, what he says *does* sign (off) the poem, self-reflexively, as a tribute to 'Brutus': *operum hoc... tuorum est* ('your special skill'), v. 35: 'This *opus* belongs to all Brutuses'. Reading dedicates us to the duty of finding the 'Brutus' in us to act; the writing is a 'work' in so far as it works on and through our 'works'.

Brutus presides, so he must decide (for example whether or not to decide). His verdict impends: academic *epoché* and/or a thorough enquiry *de uirtute* might be *one's* (*doctus*) Brutus-hypostasis' preference, but the narrational structure of address wills readers to realise what Rupilius and Persius represent for (their) Brutus, so what is at stake for him here, the urgency of his strategic dilemma. Put to the test, your *political* seriousness. Who can blink this, play blind to why this scenario is no joke for (a) Brutus, none of it is?

To take him first, the proscribed Rupilius (whether or no he is the *praetor designatus*, *RE* 1A, p. 1231, no. 10) is a martyr for the Republican Cause: even if he is, even if he is in the eyes of Brutus (and co.), a hoodlum gangster who deserves all he has had coming, still the illegality of his triumphal damnation must make of him an invaluable walking indictment of the 'Caesarian' faction. '*These many then shall die; their names are prick'd...*'. The Republic insists that this his significance be maintained at all costs. In him, willy-nilly, is reposed and risked the force of Tyrannicide, its currency as the creed of the Republic/*Italia*, the enabling and ennobling condition of that superpositioning which diagrams the political system of rule by popular election at Rome of representatives drawn from an enfranchised Italy. It cannot matter, *in medio*, what Rupilius is (*sc.* privately, or for real) for Brutus: 'Politics makes strange bedfellows.'

What represses these considerations from Commentary on the poem? Is it the call to get rid of the nagging thought of Horace the lickspit of a *junta*? Do we instead prefer obediently to second the violent blackballing of Rupilius, under cover of projecting violence away and onto him, and is this because we insist always on recognizing the representation of violence *before* the violence of representation – before we recognize the complicity in violence (which is to say: the violence) of our own representation? How we *need* to be rid of the notions *both* that Persius' flattery of Brutus might hypotopose Horace's flattery of Maecenas/Octavian/Power, *and* that Persius' and Rupilius' abuse might figure Horatian satire's vitriol, working unseen to poison the air for his Masters.

⁸³ For the constitution of a *régime* of *politesse* through evasion of explicitation, see P. Brown and S. Levinson, *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge, 1987).

⁸⁴ Lloyd Bentsen.

Now in the case of Persius, let's turn to consider, as if we cared, the logistics rather than the propaganda of the Philippi campaign. One tiff with this linchpin of the mercantile fraternity that controls the flow between the East-West halves of the Empire, and the Republic had as much chance of a successful crusade through Greece to march on Rome as... the Kings of Persia. Less, indeed, for any general, any Good Soldier Schweik, knows that the trafficking tycoons of munitions and the magnate Mamurras of the supply network are the *real* Masters of War: 'One out, all out!' And *then*, requisitioning or no requisitioning, *there* would be no *tide in the affairs of men* and Brutus' Republicans would certainly *lose* their *ventures*. But, once more, to put it thus is, so far, to accept (impose, force through) a virulent, triumviral, representation: the poison of *our* in-folded acquiescence in the Tyranny of the Stereotype, in this case a prejudice against Business – Business in the hands of that Turkey, The Alien Entrepreneur.

For some of us, Persius' name is enough, always already, to fix his number. And we must here own up that Commentary, silently or otherwise, fails to object to, so ratifies, so relays, reinforces and forces through, the slurry of this story's slur on birth, as if the 'half-breed', as if the social code of breeding, is (still) an unproblematically descriptive category, for *us*.⁸⁵ The reporting of a slur is itself not simply exonerated from implication in the slur, as this nasty essay means to make abundantly clear. So do go ahead with imagining your Persius, join in, stamp on this king-pin *Pasha*: but see what you thereby say about yourself.

4.2. The Brutus you construct might conceivably agree with the poem's assessment of his predicament. Perhaps he was, in his own eyes as well as for real, doomed all along, a tragic misfit, with two jailbirds here hung round his neck to stand for all the albatrosses he accumulated: '*Pristine Reptilian + Personage from the Orient*' (whether that was or wasn't just what he had coming, all he deserved). Either, then, your Brutus is one played false by History, (*no doubt* honourably) obeying his Duty, living up to his name, but out of season, murdering the wrong man rather than assassinating the right tyrant, tarred forever with the recrimination of '*E-t t-u Br-u-t-e*', that sonically recursive complaint, with its suggestion of mimetic compulsion, an order to play Follow-my-Leader: 'Your turn next, Brutus'.⁸⁶

Or else, you might decide, the so-called Republicans are a ratpack, Birds of a Feather, due for Caesar's *ultio* and (even a moderately sane) Brutus must have seen in the 'Biff-and-Bash' (*compositum...cum Bitho Bacchius*, v. 20) of the *par* '*Rupilius vs. Persius*' the Writing on the Wall, for his gang as for its chief.⁸⁷ This at any rate

⁸⁵ 1.6 has indeed just re-valourised through its repudiation 'breeding' as the yardstick against which self-worth can be measured: must the *libertinus* plead parity with the atavistically regal Etruscan, or is that the Ancient History of the *populus Romanus*? For the point, cf. esp. S. Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*', in Dollimore and Sinfield, op. cit., p. 29, quoting Kafka, 'We identify as the principle of order and authority in Renaissance texts things that we would, if we took them seriously, find subversive for ourselves.... "There is subversion, no end of subversion, *only not for us*"'.

⁸⁶ Caesar died in silence, or his last words were unRoman: καὶ σύ, τέκνον ('"To hell with you, too, lad!"... In using this apotropaic expression, Caesar died with a curse on his lips', J. Russell, 'Caesar's Last Words. A Reinterpretation', in B. Marshall (ed.), *Vindex Humanitatis. Essays in Honour of J. H. Bishop* (New England, 1980), p. 128. *Et tu Brute* is first extant from 1595, ib. p. 124 and n. 7).

⁸⁷ You may hear a *sotto voce* interfusion merge the satiric *personae*: / *Proscripti Regis Rupili* *p*us... / *hybrida...pacto...Persius...opinor* / ...*Persius...permagna...Rege...posset uincere Regem* / ...*Barros...praecurreret...Regem redeo. postquam...Priamiden...disparibus...pigror*

is the force of Horace's retrospect, the re-visionary view imposed on and through him by the violence of Philippi's victory for Octavian and Maecenas, and relayed to us through our (acquiescent, complicitous) reading.

The important point here will be that, how, Rupilius and Persius represent (as Fraenkel proposed), and what they represent turns out to be what they represent *to Brutus*, for Brutus, and so what Brutus represents to us, which Brutus we mean to be ours and what '*Brutus*' means to us, and in turn what Horace's representation means to us, what represents us, what *we* mean. This is the force of this humorous writing.

4.3. And yet, still, the poem's structure of address occludes its vituperation of Brutus. This is a frame-up, it would de-throne '*Brutus*' from its mythic function. A 'king'-by-another-name, the power-*bloc* of Maecenas, the name '*Caesar*', hereby installs itself, declares itself already installed. '*Tarquin*' spells, is to be spelled henceforth, '*Caesar*'. Delete '*Brutus*' from the new era. *Fiat Dux*. But when Horace delegates authority for his narration to his chosen samples from the populace, getting their prescriptions filled and cocks combed, more *and* less happens than that he seals himself and all that he represents off from the nastiness he is about to perpetrate and than that he manufactures a solidary 'popularity' for the mud of *invidia* that he means to slang in Brutus' direction.

For Horace won't get rid of Brutus' memory, of Brutuses, of the replicability of '*Brutus*', so easily as *ultio* got rid of Brutus. He can slap a writ from Rupilius and Persius on Brutus' court, stamp it out with their sickly abuse, their worse flattery and the killer *mal mot*, and he can stop Brutus' voice.⁸⁸ But will this brutalization wash with the people, will it 'work' with your *ciuitas*? If we let (make) Horace's labelling in v. 3, 'every barber in town and everyone with bad eyes', gift the anecdote to his *mechanicals*, the (representatives of) 'the people', the *carpenter* and the *mender of bad soles*... with *awl* of Shakespeare's *entrée*, then it acquires withal, along with *droit de cité*, the condition of the popular discourse it represents: the casual, formless, seamless, local, fractious heterogeneity and dispersion, the catachrestic *unruliness*, of civic multiplicity.⁸⁹ Here, there is no orthodoxy, no given hierarchy, no foregone conclusion. (Nor is opinion to be consolidated *kat'antiphrasin*.) Proprieties and niceties of thought or language live elsewhere; respect for reputations, persons, the

...*Bruto praetore...Rupili et Persi par pugnat...acres procurrunt...Persius exponit...ridetur...Brutum...Brutum...salubris...Rege...hibernum fertur...ruebat rara securis...Praenestinus...expressa regerit...compellans...postquam...perfusus...Persius...per...Brute...reges...tollere...Regem...oper(um)...tuorumst.*

⁸⁸ Shakespeare shows that the already silenced can't be silenced when he designs his *Portia* to figure the tyrannicides' suicides: 'It is not necessarily a power to have a voice, not necessarily a sign of subjection to lose it.' (J. Goldberg, 'Shakespearean Inscriptions: The Voicing of Power', in P. Parker and G. Hartman (edd.), *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (London, 1985), p. 130.)

⁸⁹ On this load of old cobbler's puns, cf. Hampton, op. cit., p. 213, and D. Margolies, 'Teaching the Handsaw to Fly: Shakespeare as a Hegemonic Instrument', in G. Holderness (ed.), *The Shakespeare Myth* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 43–5, 'Indirection still characterises the cobbler's response.... If the tribunes appear to have "won" from the standpoint of the action, in terms of style it is the cobbler who wins. His circumlocution is part of traditional popular humour. Like the clever stupidity of Brer Rabbit or the Arkansas Traveller, it expresses the ironic power of the politically powerless.... Only through insistence on the complete and general superiority of those who hold superior social position....'. Political reading regularly consists in realising and theorizing the mythic and historical specificities of 'the crowd', cf. Heinemann, loc. cit., p. 226: a Shakespearean 'pre-industrial city crowd' equates with 'modern miners and dockers' only as 'stereotype'.

powers-that-be, cannot be read off from conversation in its natural habitat. You won't find any of that in the drug-store queue or at the barber's salon, only 5 o'clock shadow-boxing and evil eye. Trust me, just this once.

The 'Tyranny' of The Word is that like the tyrant it mows down the ears/poppy- or lily-heads of all the 'excellent', the *ὑπερέχοντα*, the *summa...capita*, as they show themselves, soon as they emerge. But, all the same, mob banter could caricature Brutus many times more nastily than Horace's niceness can bear to re-present and yet, even so, its caricature could serve as a tribute of respect; indeed it could work precisely to worship his memory, exactly to preserve the puncept '*Brutus*' as the collective sanction against the powerful, whoever that may be, from time to time. Vulgar insults can and do cherish folk-heroes, trashing the lexikon with popular usage, the *catachresis* of abuse.⁹⁰

The *people's* '*Brutus*' need not speak his mind, there need be no valorized reading of '*Rupilius vs. Persius*', no one may ever pronounce *the* last word on Brutus and his (Civil) War, on the Ides of March (and their *ultio*), on the Republic and Republicanism, on Caesars and Caesarism. For what the *mobile uulcus* does, they say, is bide its time before getting its own back on The Kings, those that citizens are disposed to damn with the title. We have seen that *ultio* is (like *talio*) an essentially self-regenerating structure within the power-relations of society, a discourse that cannot be settled. Thus what '*Brutus*' means is not what Brutus meant 'in himself' but what '*Brutus*' means 'in itself', what the Cloaked Dagger dumbly proclaims to the *ciuitas*.

4.4. Just why this anecdote, this 'exclamation', should (be supposed to) become the common property of the streetwise of Rome is not something you can read out from Horace's re-presentation; we can't screen out his version's, his comic inversion's, interference with the anecdote, nor would any controlled reading be conceivable for 'the real thing', if any such thing be imagined, *before* inverted commas. For this is polyglossic discourse off the record, language at large, loose talk 'On The Corner'. This is myth at work, not the citizen's acquisition of lore, but the lore 'actually acquiring him or her...: *FOUR YEAR OLD BOY*: Dad, when is a bus not a bus? *FATHER*: I don't know, when is a bus not a bus? *BOY*: When it turns into a street. *FATHER (and other adults present)*: Ha ha. *BOY (five minutes later, taking his father aside)*: Dad, why is that funny?'⁹¹

Now the anecdote *form* of the tale is something we recognize as such and what it signals is the *nadir* of narrative-form, for it shrugs off teleology and orderly seizure. It is patterned in the archetypal 'priamel' structure of: '*Foil*: 1) Persius¹, vs. 2) Rupilius; *Cap*: 3) Persius²', but this says nothing to its *hermeneutic* closure.⁹² For street talk is not the same as 'The Fable', where 'we' are given to read through the riddle set for the other, and the other (i.e. the 'King') is left to read only of his double-bound exclusion from the *logos*. Even when we are offered a 'fable' (i.e. when we are told any narrative whatever) this will always and constitutively be the vehicle for some other, unspoken, agenda, for which it plays *alibi*. Stories that interpret their meaning within their own telling can only be seeking to expropriate, beguile, the audience with

⁹⁰ This is an aspect of the struggle for power over the dispersion of language through the populace, cf. T. Crowley, 'Bakhtin and the History of the Language', in Hirschkop and Shepherd, op. cit., pp. 68–90.

⁹¹ D. Leith and G. Myerson, *The Power of Address. Explorations in Rhetoric* (London, 1989), pp. 36, 39.

⁹² Cf. W. Nash, *The Language of Humour. Style and Technique in Comic Discourse* (London, 1985), pp. 62ff., esp. pp. 70f. on the taking up of the anecdote into larger and higher forms.

the force of representation.⁹³ Every (re-)telling plays a new part in the drama of social intercourse, and on the street real Aesop-scenes always open on to the crowd's *mêlée* of 'interpretations'; they lack *epimythia*, no one can impose monological 'morals', once for all, *for the generall*. 'What, then, is so perilous in the fact that people speak, and that their discourse proliferates to infinity? Where is the danger in that?'⁹⁴

5. BAD RUBBISH: ENDERSONG

*When Rome, to end royalty, chases the kings out, it is not expelling royalty but defining it.*⁹⁵

5.1. As Horace moralises, among the proceeds of his first book: *ridiculum ... magnas ... secat res* ('Humour ... cut(s) knotty issues'), 1.10.15.⁹⁶ The shortest poem cuts the most ice. The silliest poem is 'very big business' (*permagna negotia*, v. 4), 'a memorable sight' (*magnum spectaculum*, v. 21), 'shouts a loud' (*magna ... uoce*, v. 31). The writing of proscription is hard to come to terms with: for 'outlaw' (*Proscripti*, v. 1), try writing, then understanding, 'fatwa': *quod scriptum est, scriptum est*. What has stopped us hearing any such thing is (the violence of) representation, all that makes us want to get into the socially shared universe of meaning that stands for a polite and decent World, the cultural domain coordinated by the contract between narrator and reader, namely the power to evoke mimesis, the violence of concordance: 'Reading Horace'.

The investment in self-preservation of the civilised (*sc.* the patronized) stops 'us' from leaving the table to join the powerless, self-condemned to an identification with what we all heard in the '*Brutus*' chant in Bucharest against the Roman(ian) 'King', Caesar-by-his-other-name-of-Ceausescu, the *echolalia* of a *glasnosty*, *unBritish*, shout: '*Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!*' ([*Brutus* in] *J.C.* 3.1.78.)

5.2. The catchword '*Brutus*' has its place in the contestation of representation that surges through the flux of civic discourse, the violence that powers society.⁹⁷ The poetic *jeu* does not simply re-present the Ides of March. It is not just proleptic of Philippi. Horace is doing more than 'mediate' between these crises of the Republic, turning-points in (imposed) social self-conceptualization. True, his anecdote stages, together with its successors, the writing of his poetry as the purgative work of a political weave away from deadly hostility between its writer and his mentor and toward the cultured collaboration of their *amicitia*. But against its role of *epideixis*, 'The Discourse of the Flatterer', Satire trades off its generic abjection, shielding its work of representation behind a screen of disavowal, a comic show and undecidable relay of fictive authorization. After 1.6, as I saw, '*Brutus*' is, even, a *put-off* for Maecenas.⁹⁸ If temporarily, ironic catachresis grips together Tyrannicide/Butchery with Suicide/*Ultio* in one power-filled sweep of displacement and condensation.⁹⁹

⁹³ Cf. R. Chambers, *Story and Situation. Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction* (Manchester, 1984).

⁹⁴ M. Foucault, 'The Order of Mimesis', in Young, op. cit., p. 52 (= Shapiro, op. cit., p. 109).

⁹⁵ Serres, op. cit., p. 124.

⁹⁶ Cf. esp. Van Rooy, pp. 71, 77ff.

⁹⁷ See N. Rapport, *Talking Violence. An Anthropological Interpretation of Conversation in the City* (Newfoundland, 1987), pp. 174ff., tracing deployment of the concept 'violence' in the self-figuration of a contemporary citizenry.

⁹⁸ As in 'Where are you going?—To see a man about a dog', Leith and Myerson, op. cit., p. 120.

⁹⁹ Cf. L. Marin, *The Discourse of the King* (London, 1988), p. 61, 'Thus the man of letters lures power with the lure of his instrument, discourse, meta-discourse, and its figures. Thus simultaneously, he obtains from power—and with his trap—the power of the power of the discourse that he holds.'

Readers may feel, or play, 'Humble Joe' before the lability of popular politics, but the raw figure '*Brutus*' holds us, still: at the apothecary bleary patients expect *collyrium*, 'a topical remedy for disorders' (of the eyes, *OED* s.v.; cf. *Serm.* 1.5.30) and discuss—what? Cyanide capsules? While another stropky queue makes barber's music as the stubble approaches the cut-throat blade: 'From 'ere to 'ere, like *this*!'.

'The King must die.' *Regifuge* is, soberingly, thin cover for *Regicide*, both caught in the excentricity of mass will to supernal directive, risked to representation in every crisis. 'Then what does the exclusion of kings signify, if kings are kings precisely by being excluded? We are not so easily rid of them. Whether there are kings or not, there are always some.'¹⁰⁰

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¹⁰⁰ Serres, op. cit., p. 171. 'For his *Brutus* begun in 1788, David did choose a Roman Republican theme—the expulsion of a tyrant—.... In the very same year Alfieri...in Paris dedicated his tragedy *Bruto Primo* to George Washington with the words: "Only the name of the liberator of America can stand on the opening page of the tragedy of the liberator of Rome."...David was not the only genius, nor were his the only works, that were supposed to have anticipated the revolution. Voltaire also was hailed as a prophet and his tragedy of *Brutus* (first performed sixty years earlier) was revived in the autumn of 1790 with David's picture staged as a *tableau vivant* at its close. ...In painting...the *Brutus*, David expressed the mood of those intellectuals who, like himself, were to be swept along on the wave of the Revolution. ...Soon David...was to see Napoleon...as the one man capable of...' (H. Honour, *Neo-Classicism* [Harmondsworth, 1968], 72–7).