

negative differentiation, that is, through the repeated assertions of what something is not. Satire repeatedly disavows other discourses: it is not poetry, or rhetoric, or philosophy, even if it parasitically sustains itself on them. Imperial satirists drew on a range of rhetorical resources: technical categories from treatises, actual orations, and the practice speeches of the declaimers. At the same time authors insisted on the superiority of their own speech in the face of rhetorical discourse; like rhetoric but better than it.

This mode of negative definition has considerable power, even in the present day. We can compare, for example, interdisciplinarity, whose cachet largely derives from the arresting power of its indefinite nature. Interdisciplinary scholarship authorizes itself by appropriating the putative authority of neighboring discourses (Garber (2001) 53–96 discusses disciplinary interaction in academia). For the Romans, satire's power included its expansive claim upon neighboring literary genres. It could not boast a rich heritage of Greek exemplars, and so turned to other possibilities in the processes of creation and re-creation inevitable to any tradition. For Persius and especially for Juvenal, the assumption of rhetoric was a further stage in that process, one which left an indelible stamp on the genre.

#### FURTHER READING

Numerous articles have detailed the interrelationship of rhetoric and satire. The essays collected in Anderson (1982) began to appear in the 1950s. They laid the foundation for continued interest in the technical and presentational aspects of rhetoric and for the theory of the satirist's *persona*, especially in Juvenal. Particularly helpful are Kenney (1963); Braund (1988), (1992b), (1996a), and (1997b); the last two provide the most succinct and approachable treatment of the topic in Juvenal.

Martin (1974, in German) outlines the system of rhetoric. Individual articles in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* (Ueding (1992–2010)) can be consulted for in-depth discussion of the functional and technical sides of rhetoric from antiquity to the present day. The more approachable narrative in Kennedy (1994) details the history of texts and theories.

I am unaware of any general study devoted to rhetoric of the imperial period. Bonner (1949) surveys declamation, but largely focuses on prose texts, and offers a fairly negative account. De Decker (1913, in French) is the seminal study of declamation in Juvenal. An overview of declamation across genres and with an appreciation of the subject matter remains a desideratum in the scholarship. Gleason (1995) and Gunderson (2000) and (2003) survey public performance culture along socio-cultural lines.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# Politics and Invective in Persius and Juvenal

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### 13.1 Introduction

No literary form would seem to have greater potential to be “political” than Roman verse satire. Satire is conventionally called the most Protean of genres (if it is a genre), one that resolutely defies critical attempts to pin it down. Yet it does have regular characteristics, at least within the formalized bounds of the hexameter writings of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, which go under the titles of *sermones* or *saturae*. First, a speaking *ego* often attacks and mocks a target – whether an individual, type, or institution – for putative moral or aesthetic transgressions, often employing a rhetorical pose of angry indignation. Thus invective, which aims to arouse laughter and contempt against its target, is an indispensable rhetorical tool of satire. Second, this speaker – whom modern critics conventionally call “the satirist” – seeks to persuade an audience of readers or listeners to make common cause with him in condemning, mocking, and ridiculing the target's transgressions. Given these characteristics, “political” figures and institutions look like ideal targets. Their high visibility invites scrutiny: accepted values can be measured against actions, and secret faces compared to public ones, in the quest to expose hypocrisy, deceit, or complicity. Visibility also implies familiarity: a large audience for satire directed against politicians and political institutions automatically preexists. And since “political” persons and entities allocate resources within society, impacting many people for good or ill, this audience might feel especially threatened by or angry at a “political” individual or institution represented as corrupt,

hypocritical, or the like, hence the more ready to be seduced by the satirist's *j'accuse*. A third shared characteristic among the writers of hexameter satire is that they name Lucilius as the founder and normative practitioner of this kind of writing. And what he does, according to them, is direct vigorous, moralizing ridicule at prominent and powerful contemporaries. Thus the match between "politics" and invective, within the armature of Latin verse satire, appears to be made in heaven.

Yet, the satires of Persius and Juvenal firmly disappoint this expectation. Neither poet explicitly attacks or praises any contemporary figure who holds an influential position in government. Also, both – like Horace before them – adduce Lucilius as the satiric scourge of powerful contemporaries only to *decline* to follow his model. Out of these silences and refusals arise the questions I address in this chapter. First, is our poets' silence about leading figures and governmental institutions – their self-avowed failure to attack contemporaries – a failure to be "political" at all? That is, is the conception of "politics" implied in the previous paragraph appropriate to satire? Second, how do these satirists select or construct their targets, and position themselves, so as to facilitate attack or render it more difficult – that is, to justify their claims that they can or cannot speak freely against their targets? And what, exactly, are the dynamics of freedom and constraint operating between the satirist and his targets? For satiric attack aims to constrain and disempower its target, yet the target is sometimes said or implied to be able to constrain and disempower the satirist instead. In pursuing these questions, I hope to show that "politics" and "invective" are, indeed, inseparable and intertwined aspects of Latin verse satire, though not precisely in the way suggested earlier.

### 13.2 Approaches to the "Politics" of Latin Literature

In everyday English usage, the word "politics" normally refers to government and related activities, or – more abstractly – to matters of sovereignty and its legitimation. At the center of the semantic category is the idea of the state; the spotlight shone by the term "politics" or "political" illuminates specifically those activities or aspects of activities that engage the actor(s) with the apparatus of state. In this usage, the English word stays close to its etymological roots in the Greek substantival phrase *to politikon*, "that which concerns the *polis*, its institutions, and its governance," "civic matters." Latin has no lexical equivalent, though certain usages of the phrase *res (publica)* come close. Now, much "political" activity in this sense involves individuals or groups deploying the machinery of government to secure resources or allocate them in a particular way, often competing against others who would allocate them

differently. The idea of competition leads to a secondary but also widespread usage of "politics" to refer to the struggle for power or status as such, in arenas not limited to government. Such usages may include modifiers identifying the arena, making the extension of meaning explicit: "academic politics," "family politics," "politics of gender," and the like. Often, the specified arena is itself an institution, with distinctive rules governing the positions social actors can take and the strategies by which they seek advantage. This stretching or shifting of the word "politics" to label competitive activity as such, in whatever arena it occurs, has theoretical roots in feminism, and in the poststructuralist Marxist social theory developed by Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu. These scholars' work reminds us that society is shot through with playable systems that structure, mediate, and ritualize competitions for social and economic power; government is but one such field.

The history of "political" criticism of Latin literature over the past forty years has followed a trajectory through the concepts of politics similar to the one just sketched: starting from a longstanding and traditional interest in what texts say about activities of government, scholarly attention has expanded to encompass, in addition, the texts' representation of struggles for power and status in other arenas of competition, and the texts' own interventions in those struggles. Modern scholars have long followed the lead of ancient critics in scrutinizing Latin literary texts, especially from the imperial age, for their expressed or implied judgments on the current governmental dispensation. Such investigations received a new impetus in the 1970s and 1980s, as scholars began to reject the decontextualization of texts practiced since mid-century under the name "new criticism," and sought to reconnect texts to their social conditions of production. In this period the focus of "political" criticism was firmly on poetry. Much effort was devoted to working out what poetic texts were "saying," overtly or covertly, about the government – especially the imperial regime – and leading figures in it. Poetic patronage was an especially important theme: for to understand a poet's or poem's political stance (in this sense), one needed to know how and by whom the poet was supported (e.g., Ahl (1984a); Woodman and West (1984); Sullivan (1985); A. Powell (1992)). Regarding verse satire in particular, the important critical advances by W.S. Anderson and others in the 1950s and 1960s, especially their elaboration of the theory of the satiric *persona*, were supplemented in the 1970s and 1980s by efforts to understand how satiric poetry reflected the governmental dispensation under which it was produced. Some Persius scholars followed the scholiasts' lead in combing the satires for hidden, critical references to Nero (scholia *ad* 1.4, 29, 93, 99, 121, 127; also *Vita Persii* on 1.120; cf. Sullivan (1985) 74–114; Gowers (1994)), and Juvenal scholars have long puzzled about how to connect this poet's work, with its paucity of contemporary references, to the Trajanic-Hadrianic era when it was written

(e.g., Waters (1970); Hardie (1998); Galimberti (2007) 155–61). Yet the quest for hidden references, in satire and other literary forms, has not been very successful, and has produced many unpersuasive interpretations. Most scholars would probably accept that literary texts are products of concrete historical conditions, and therefore necessarily contain and transmit traces of those conditions. But it is obviously Procrustean to regard such traces as consisting exclusively, or even substantially, of hidden, critical commentary on the imperial regime.

In the 1990s, the quest for such traces began to broaden, admitting new intellectual currents and posing more fundamental questions. In line with the general evolution of usage, Latin literary critics increasingly spoke of a text's "politics" when considering how it represents arenas of competition, and the distribution of power, beyond the governmental frame. Also discernible in this period was a growing scholarly interest in what texts *do* politically (mostly, but not only, in the broadened sense of the word): for texts not only represent, but also may intervene in, struggles for power. Hence they can be means by which authors pursue their interests, by contesting with others the distribution of power in a given arena (Gunderson (1996); Habinek (1998); Roller (1998); Roller (2001) 17–126). Regarding Persius and Juvenal, scholars grew increasingly interested in how satire represents, engages with, and helps to construct the ideologies of the society in which it is produced (Henderson (1999) 233–35; Freudenburg (2001) 125–32, 168–71, 209–77; Reckford (2009) 130–60). As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, scholarly investigations of the "politics" of Latin literary texts are conceptually diverse, embracing any or all of these approaches to the politics of literature (Dominik, Garthwaite, and Roche (2009) 1–21 and *passim*; Feldherr (2010) 60–122).

My own approach to the "politics" of literature is shaped by an interest in all varieties of social competition. Within the Roman elite – the main producers and consumers of literary texts – the activities of government constitute one key field of competition. But equally important are the courts, the battlefield, gift exchange (including patronal relations), ancestry and familial connections, civic benefactions, the consumption and display of prestige objects, and literary production itself, among others. Each field has its own positions to be occupied, its own "rules" of play, its own criteria for evaluating players as more or less successful: no field is reducible to any other. Yet there are homologies among them, so that positions taken and moves made in one field according to that field's own rules may influence the positions available and moves possible in another field. (I owe this terminology and general framework to Bourdieu, e.g. Bourdieu (1993) 29–73.) Consider, for instance, the interconvertibility of symbolic capital within the Roman elite. Prestige derived (for instance) from one's ancestry, from one's generalship in battle, or from one's advocacy in the lawcourts, can be converted into high magistracies,

priesthoods, expanded property holdings, or opportunities for literary achievement, and these in turn into opportunities for public benefaction, further military or artistic achievement, and so on. Thus it is possible, at certain points, for a player in a given field to cash out his holdings and jump over into an advantageous position in another field. In embracing the broad definition, I consider "political" all competitive moves made within and across various fields of competition – the arenas in which individual elites, or sectors of the elite, seek to advance their interests against others.

With the politics of literature so conceived, there are many possibilities for vindicating Roman verse satire as "political" – even though Persius and Juvenal are broadly silent about sitting emperors, about key figures in the contemporary imperial court and administration, and about current activities of government. For their poetry does nothing if not portray and perform competitions for status and power. The satirist draws lines, demarcated in moral and aesthetic terms, between himself (along with other right-thinking people) and his targets. He seeks to tear down, stigmatize, and marginalize the individuals and groups he targets – to exclude them from what he presents as respectable society, and reduce them in status relative to himself and those for whom he speaks. Mocking, aggressive, invective speech delivered through poetry is the satirist's weapon; all political possibilities turn on his ability to execute successful verbal attacks. To illustrate the politics (in the broad sense favored here) of Persius and Juvenal, then, I focus on the nexus of speech and power: how constraints or the lack of constraints upon speech are represented and performed in certain passages of their poetry, and how these matters impact each satirist's ability to allocate social power to the individuals or social sectors he favors.

### 13.3 The Politics of "Free Speech" in Persius and Juvenal

The programmatic first satires of Persius and Juvenal are shot through with matters of free speech – specifically, how the satirist is to enunciate criticism of the powerful, either directly to those persons or to a wider audience. In Persius, the satirist undertakes to attack stylistic vices in contemporary poetry, though his superficially moral-cum-aesthetic agenda quickly gets entangled with broader issues of social power and status. In Juvenal, the satirist declares his intention to attack figures and types he deems deviant in some respect (sex, morals, social status, criminality), an agenda that foregrounds competition for social power. Each satirist locates an ideal of free speaking in the poetry of Lucilius – thereby furnishing his own poetry with a generic genealogy – yet quails at the difficulty of achieving that ideal. The raw materials for a political

analysis are thus clearly present: our satirists employ moralizing discourse to evaluate competitors in various arenas of social competition, but present themselves as subject to constraint in enunciating those evaluations. I now analyze passages from each author from this perspective, to illustrate what a “political” reading in the broader sense could look like.

### 13.3.1 Persius

In his first Satire, Persius stages a dialogue between two voices. One is the satirist – a first-person voice represented as a poet who objects on aesthetic and moral grounds to the style and content of contemporary poetry, and decries the pursuit of fame by those who affect this style. The other voice speaks up for the acclaim and social rewards that come from writing what people want to hear. Midway through the poem, the satirist mockingly portrays an aristocratic patron and dilettante poet who provides cloaks and a dinner to his clients, and recites his elegies (*elegidia*, a contemptuous diminutive) during the party. This aristocrat then asks one of these clients to tell him the “truth” about himself (51–55). The satirist, having already pronounced harsh criticisms of contemporary poetry, is implied to be the client from whom this evaluation is requested. But how can he do so – *qui pote?* (“How, actually?” 56) – after receiving dinner and a cloak? His “true” opinion is critical, yet the protocols of gift exchange, and the satirist-poet’s continuing need for patronal resources, forbid reciprocating the goods received with vituperation of the patron’s poetry. Thus the patron’s request is disingenuous: he is extorting praise that is pre-constructed as representing the client’s “true” opinion, regardless of what the client actually thinks. What he really seeks is to be flattered. “Flattery” can be defined as praise, usually false (i.e., not believed by the person pronouncing it), bestowed by someone who lacks resources upon another who controls them. By praising, the flatterer seeks to ingratiate himself and so to gain access to the desired resources (Roller (2001) 108–15).

Will our satirist enter into this bargain, jettisoning his integrity to secure his future receipt of food, clothing, and other forms of support from the patron? At first sight, no, for he poses and then answers a rhetorical question: *uis dicam? nugavis* (56): “You (really) want me to tell you? You write trifling nonsense.” An outrageous personal insult follows for good measure: “for, baldy, your fat belly sticks out a down-hanging foot and a half” (*cum tibi, calue, | pinguis aqualiculus propenso sesquipede extet*, 56–57, my trans.). This comic image of a crass body implies, among other moral defects, a crass mind incapable of producing good poetry (Kissel (1990) *ad loc.*; Bramble (1974) 111–12). Yet this insult is not “actually” spoken to the patron: he is merely apostrophized. For the satirist’s audience here consists of the readers he imagines for himself (very few: *uel duo uel nemo*, 3) and the interlocutor,

whom he wryly declares to be a mere self-projection (44 – though, being portrayed as an independent external voice, it models a possible audience response). This “truth,” then, is spoken behind the patron’s back, addressed to the interlocutor and others, but not directly to the patron who demanded it. It is precisely this situation that the satirist then mockingly warns the aristocrat, again apostrophized, to be alert to: criticisms that cannot be spoken to his face are assuredly being spoken behind his back (58–62). Here the satirist addresses the patron with the ironically grandiose *patricius sanguis* (61–62), then deflatingly contrasts him with the god Janus, who cannot be so mocked thanks to his backward-pointing face (58–60). This passage thus describes and performs one possible solution to the social inferior’s conundrum of how to speak “truth” to power, when his ability to enunciate that truth is constrained by economic need and the protocols of social politeness. The patron’s power play, his attempt to extort praise in the guise of “truth,” is reciprocated by the client’s own power play, an exposure to others (behind the patron’s back) of the patron’s disingenuousness *as well as* his poetic incompetence. A generation later, Martial too adopts this solution when subject to the same extortion (*Epigr.* 8.76). Apostrophizing a patron, via a poem addressed to a broader readership, he informs him that the “truth” (i.e., Martial’s actual, critical judgment) is not, in fact, what the patron wants to hear.

Persius returns to these matters later in the poem. The satirist denounces as unmanly (103–4) certain verses that he says represent a popular contemporary style (92–106). Then, in a move having precedent in Horace (and perhaps Lucilius), and to appear again in Juvenal, the interlocutor warns the satirist to be careful what he says: “What need is there to scrape tender ears with biting truth? Do take care lest the doors of the great grow cold to you: here sounds the ‘rrr’ from a dog’s muzzle” (*sed quid opus teneras mordaci radere uero | auriculas? uide sis ne maiorum tibi forte | limina frigescant: sonat hic de nare canina | littera*, 107–10; see Braund (1996a) 116–19, (2004a) 418–21; Courtney (1980) 83; Kenney (1962)). The interlocutor’s point is that the judgments the satirist has just been making, here called “biting truth,” risk alienating wealthy patrons and causing the satirist to be rejected from their society. For “cold threshold” suggests he will not be admitted for the *salutatio*, nor receive further dinner invitations of the sort that previously yielded him food and clothing. This outcome will follow from failing to praise the patron’s poetry, and from betraying irritation at the patron’s bald attempt to extort praise. Again it is implied that he incurs these risks because of his client status: he needs the resources on offer from aristocratic patrons to support his own poetic production.

How, then, is the satirist to speak? He responds, first, with (mock) capitulation, as if agreeing that bestowing false praise is the way to secure resources: “Well, then, as far as I’m concerned, everything is fine from now on; no

objections. Bravo everyone, well done everyone, you'll all be something amazing. Will that do?" (*per me equidem sint omnia protinus alba; | nil moror. euge omnes, omnes bene, mirae eritis res. | hoc iuuat?* 110–12). These ironic words illustrate the sort of flattery being sought in return for the resources the satirist needs – the flattery he refused to provide earlier. After all, as he comically continues, criticizing a great man, or the poetry in which he delights, is tantamount to relieving oneself on a tomb; the poet mad enough to commit such sacrilege must be apotropaically warded off (112–14; Hooley (1997) 58–60). Yet his predecessors Lucilius and Horace, he thinks, were not under such constraint, or at least they found ways to express their “frank,” “true” opinions. Lucilius, he says, “ripped into the city – you, Lupus, you, Mucius – and broke his molar on them” (*secuit Lucilius urbem | te Lupe te Muci et genuinum fregit in illis*, 114–15). The molar (*genuinum*) may recall the “biting truth” that characterizes our own satirist’s style (*mordax uerum*, 107); this may suggest that our satirist regards his project and style as similar to Lucilius’. Yet the implication is that Lucilius, unlike our satirist, felt no constraints in staging open, cutting, *ad hominem* attacks against named individuals – indeed, the reader may recognize Lupus and Mucius from Lucilius’ poetry as powerful contemporaries (Krenkel (1970) 64–65; fragments 4 W, 46 W, 1138–41 W; cf. below).

How could Lucilius get away with such attacks, when according to the interlocutor our satirist cannot? Persius does not say, but it may be implied, from context and/or from prior knowledge, that Lucilius was a lofty aristocrat who did not require patronage. Insofar as fragments and testimonia allow us to judge, Lucilius was a “senatorial equestrian” – moving in senatorial society, of senatorial census, and from a family containing senators, though not a senator himself (Krenkel (1970) 18–23; Lefèvre (2001)). Such a man might be expected to hold his ground against anyone, and not mince words (Reckford (2009) 37–38). Yet Persius too, if the ancient *Vita* is trustworthy, was an equestrian, well-connected through familial and social ties to some of the loftiest men in Claudian and Neronian Rome – not, perhaps, fundamentally dissimilar to Lucilius. Why, then, does he assume the mask of a client in his satires? As Rosen has shown ((2007) 11), the client-poet mask is a generic convention of mocking poetry throughout the Greco-Roman tradition: the mocker, using his subjective voice, typically presents himself as an impoverished, beleaguered social underling, regardless of the author’s actual social status. On this view, the Lucilius depicted by Horace, Persius, and Juvenal is the outlier in failing to adopt such a *persona*. In fact, however, the surviving fragments of Lucilius suggest that he, too, presented himself as struggling to get his way. We might conjecture that, when our satirist claims that his great predecessor could speak more freely and had it better overall, he is enacting the pose of abjection that is expected of the satiric *persona*, rather than “correctly”

representing Lucilius’ actual social position or the character of his satire. At any rate, our satirist suggests that he is not in a social position to “rip into” his targets, as high-status Lucilius allegedly could. (On Lucilius, see Rosen, Chapter 1.)

Having taken one bearing from Lucilius, our satirist now takes another from Horace. Horace, he writes, could “put his finger on the faults of a friend, who laughed nonetheless,” thanks to his verbal skill and cunning (*omne uasfer uitium ridenti Flaccus amico | tangit*, 116–17). This “laughing friend” may be a generalizing singular, referring to any of Horace’s addressees in the *Sermones* or *Epistulae*. If taken at its (singular) face value, however, it can only refer to Maecenas, or Augustus. On this more pointed interpretation, Horace is represented as sharing our satirist’s client status, and the challenge of speaking the “truth” to his “friends” under these circumstances. Yet this model, too, avails our satirist nothing: perhaps he believes he lacks the subtlety by which Horace succeeded. Our satirist thus exhibits Lucilian directness without the allegedly high Lucilian status needed to carry it off, and allegedly low Horatian status without the requisite Horatian verbal art.

With both generic models failing him, how is he to express himself? “Am I not permitted (even) to grumble? not secretly? not (even share it) with a hole in the earth? nowhere at all?” (*me muttire nefas? nec clam? nec cum scrobe? nusquam?* 119) These questions envisage a negative answer from the interlocutor and the aristocratic patrons whose viewpoint the interlocutor transmits. But the satirist’s point in invoking his predecessors is, in part, to suggest that he *should* be allowed, and that he – like them, in fact – will find a way that suits his own capabilities and limitations. Thus he continues: “I will dig here; little book, I have seen it, I have indeed: who in Rome doesn’t have ass’s ears?” (*hic tamen infodiam. uidi, uidi ipse, libelle: | auriculas asini quis non habet?* 120–21). The references to ass’s ears and to whispering secrets into holes allude to the myth of King Midas, whom Apollo afflicted with an anatomical humiliation for misjudging a musical contest. The barber who discovered that the king now had ass’s ears whispered the secret into a hole, from which grew reeds that “whispered” the secret to all. As scholars since antiquity have recognized, the satirist’s “secret,” which the interlocutor warns him not to disseminate (at least not in the houses of the powerful) – that nobody in Rome can judge poetry any better than Midas could – will, like Midas’ secret, be disseminated from its “hole,” which is nothing other than the poet’s book, his *libellus*. As before, then, the satirist refrains from speaking his “truth” directly to those with the power to withhold resources from him, but speaks it indirectly, this time into the “hole” from which it will eventually be spread abroad. And who is the audience? As readers, we ourselves must be in the select group of “two or zero.” We have also been maneuvered into siding with the satirist in mocking the self-deceiving rich. The poem entangles us, in part by supplying the interlocutor as a model for our own responses, and in part by

allowing us to overhear the satirist's private thoughts and internal debates as he struggles, first, with how to secure resources without yielding his integrity, and second, with how to even the score. Indeed, we are the essential and only recipients of his "truth," serving both as the behind-the-back audience (58–62) and as the readers of the book-as-hole (120–21), in both cases unheard and unseen by his lofty tormenters.

We can now assess the "politics" of this poem. The situation it presents illustrates splendidly the understanding of "politics" embraced in this chapter, referring to moves made within and among different fields of competition. For our satirist and his patron are locked in struggle in two different fields simultaneously. First, they compete in the field of poetic production: both write poetry, yet hold divergent, competing views on poetic aesthetics and morality. In this field the satirist is acknowledged as superior, and the patron seeks his approval. Second, they contend on the socioeconomic plane; here the patron is superior, as he possesses, distributes, and rations material resources that the satirist desires. Furthermore, these fields are homologous insofar as positions taken and moves made in each field impact such possibilities in the other. In particular, the patron attempts to cash out his superior position in the socioeconomic field for an advantageous position in the poetic field. For he seeks to exchange the currency of economic status, namely material resources, for the currency of poetic status, namely praise from the satirist. The satirist, arguably, has already parlayed his superior poetic position into an enhanced economic position, by obtaining via a dinner invitation some of the resources he needs. Yet he now risks losing that economic benefit, should he fail to comply in praising the patron. Ultimately, he resists the bargain by putting criticism of the patron and his poetry into circulation through back channels – especially via his own poetry, which describes and exemplifies the "correct" style and morals in comparison to which the patron's favored poetry falls short. The matter of how "free" or constrained evaluative speech becomes intensely politicized in this environment, since evaluative language mediates not only the competition within the field of poetic production, but also the negotiation of the homologies between the poetic and socioeconomic fields. The poem itself is part of that negotiation, a power play and intervention in the very competitions it describes.

### 13.3.2 Juvenal

Juvenal too, in his programmatic first poem, explores the limits and possibilities of satiric "free speech." This poem again features a first-person voice – "the satirist" – who presents himself as unwillingly subjected to recitations of bad poetry, and vexed by a rising tide of vice in society. He declares that he will write verse satire, first in order to take (comic) revenge on other

poets – presumably, by inviting them to his own recitations, and thus dosing them with their own medicine – and second because, as he repeatedly insists, satire is the appropriate literary mode for pillorying vice. In the bulk of the poem, the satirist demarcates the bounds of propriety, describing and defining as transgressive the activities against which he will direct satiric attack. He does not limit himself, like the Persianic satirist, to criticizing poets and poetry: his moralizing, ridiculing eye ranges over all of society. Vivid sketches follow of gender and sexual deviants, immigrants and foreigners grown wealthy and powerful or taking priority over their betters, people who extort or defraud their way to riches, husbands conniving in their wives' prostitution, spend-thrifts, gamblers, patrons who are suspicious and mean (for the excellent reason that their clients cheat them), and so on. All of this, the satirist declares, is the motivation for and fodder of satire. To identify and denounce vice in a way that raises a laugh at the target's, and indeed his own, expense is a "political" project in the broader sense of the term, as it involves articulating social norms (sometimes comically distorted), identifying transgressors, and stigmatizing them so as to reduce their status relative to "right-thinking" individuals. Juvenal's satiric project is thus invested in preserving, allocating, or redistributing social power.

The vices defined by the satirist as his field of attack have a timeless and universal quality: there have always been and always will be cheaters, hypocrites, and so on. Late in the poem, however (147–50), the satirist declares that *this* is a moment when vices are especially abundant, and the danger they threaten is especially great; hence the need for satire specifically now. "Spread wide all your sails" he apostrophizes himself (see Braund (1996a) 114–16 on the rhetoric of urgency). But how, exactly, is he to speak? For in a move recalling Persius' strategy, Juvenal now introduces an interlocutor, someone generally well-disposed toward the satirist, who cautions him to be careful what he says. This interlocutor warns that the directness of the satirist's predecessors in writing whatever they want, with their spirit blazing – a reference to Lucilian free speech follows: "whose name do I not dare to speak? What does it matter if Mucius forgives my words or not?" – is not advisable here. For if you describe Tigillinus, you'll find yourself turned into a burning torch in the arena (150–57).

Let us examine the interlocutor's presuppositions. First, he assumes that the satirist intends to inveigh against living contemporaries – not unreasonably, as the satirist has just declared that *now* is the time for satire. The statement regarding Mucius, implied to be spoken by Lucilius, refers to exactly such a situation. For in his second book of *Satires*, dating to the 120s BCE, Lucilius staged a legal dispute involving two living contemporaries, at least one of whom, Mucius Scaevola, was harshly characterized. Thus Lucilius exemplifies the unrestrained, carefree attack on living contemporaries that our satirist

proposes to emulate. Second, as the satirist and his audience are probably expected to “know,” Mucius was the scion of an ancient and noble family, who later (117 BCE) attained the consulship. The Lucilian model adduced by the interlocutor, then, implies that the satirist proposes to target the lofty and powerful in particular. The statement about Tigillinus involves the same two presuppositions. Nero’s infamous henchman, dead forty years or more by the time of Juvenal’s writing, was either already a byword for cruelty or was being made into one by Juvenal’s contemporaries Tacitus, Suetonius, and Plutarch (Tac. *Ann.* 14.60, 15.58, 15.61; *Hist.* 1.72; Suet. *Galba* 15.2; Plut. *Otho* 2.2). The interlocutor collapses the temporal distance between the satirist and Tigillinus, using present and future tenses to describe what *will* happen if you describe him (*pone . . . lucebis*). This attack is thus presented as if directed against a powerful, high-status contemporary. But while it may not matter to Lucilius whether Mucius overlooks his words, it will matter to the satirist: Tigillinus will not overlook them, and will retaliate. Furthermore the punishment, burning alive, is notionally reserved for slaves and prohibited from application to the free, let alone to the higher orders (Garnsey (1970) 122–31). In the early Empire, however, slavish styles of execution were sometimes extended even to aristocrats who had offended the emperor, either to humiliate them through a symbolic reduction in status or as part of a more general mapping of the master–slave relationship onto the relationship between the emperor and his (juridically free, non-slave) subjects (Roller (2001) 213–87). Here, then, is a new “political” angle: the satirist’s attempt to reduce his target’s status through moralizing verbal attack will be reciprocated by harsh corporal punishment that symbolically reduces the satirist to slave status, while also killing him.

The satirist’s reply seems to affirm these presuppositions as correct. The satirist does not deny – indeed, he implicitly confirms – that he intends to attack powerful contemporaries. For, he asks indignantly, is the man who grew rich by poisoning his relatives, and is carried aloft on a luxurious sedan chair, simply to look down on us (158–59)? This question concedes that such a man is indeed powerful, rich, and prominent, but declares him an ideal target for status-deflating moralizing criticism: for he must not be allowed to maintain the status he so illegitimately obtained. To this the interlocutor replies, “close your lips tight when he goes by: anyone who says ‘this is the man’ will be (considered) an accuser” (160–61). The interlocutor imagines that the target will regard the envisioned satiric attack as a formal capital charge. Such a charge would elevate the stakes no less for the target than for the satirist, against whom (we must imagine) all the target’s resources will be directed in the effort to defeat him and his accusation. For the interlocutor goes on to explain that writing epic poetry puts no poet at risk (*securus licet . . . committas, nulli grauis est*, 162–63), but when Lucilius thunders with his sword drawn, a listener

whose “mind is frozen (i.e., with fear) because of reasons for accusation” blushes and his heart sweats (166–67). The representation of the target as a contemporary who sits and listens to the satirist, together with the reference to the target’s “crimes” or awareness of grounds on which he may be accused (*criminibus*, 167) present satire, at least of the Lucilian type, in the armature of a formal legal proceeding (Keane (2006) 73–104). And this approach, in contrast to the carefree writing of epic, brings the poet trouble: “Hence anger and tears” (*inde ira et lacrimae*, 168) – the anger presumably being the target’s, and the tears, in consequence, being the satirist’s (scholia, Braund (1996a) *ad loc.*).

To describe this power struggle in more precisely “political” terms, the satirist has arrogated (on no clear grounds) the authority to pass moral judgment on others, thus claiming a superior position in the field of moral authority. The criticisms he levels at his targets, we are led to believe, will harm their position and constrain their future moves in the broader field of social prestige, since moral status is a component of social prestige. The targets, naturally, will exert pressure in the other direction, seeking to avoid the threatened harm by constraining the moves available to the satirist (i.e., what he can say) within his moralizing discourse. “Speaking freely,” in this context, would mean that the satirist experiences no constraint upon his manipulation of moralizing discourse, and can attack and constrain his targets at will – the Lucilian ideal. But in Juvenal, as in Persius, the satirist may indeed experience constraint from a target’s countering moves. The Persianic satirist, as we saw, is rendered vulnerable but also empowered by his complex exchange relationship with his target, who is also his patron: each party stands to benefit and suffer at the other’s hands, and a careful dance ensues. Juvenal’s satirist, though he fleetingly presents himself as a client (97–101), appears to have no immediate relationship with his targets that either side has any incentive to maintain (on this satirist’s status see Armstrong in this volume, Chapter 3, and Freudenburg (2001) 246). At this greater social distance, the fight is bare-knuckles, and both sides pursue extreme measures.

The interlocutor’s warnings and arguments play a further “political” role by granting the satirist credibility. Although he is part of the satire, the interlocutor is rhetorically positioned as “metasatiric,” commenting upon the satirist’s declared program as if he were a detached, external observer – as if, in short, he were a reader or listener, like “us.” And if “we” were inclined to dismiss the satirist as a blustering crank, and laugh at his over-the-top ranting, the interlocutor’s intervention aims to dissuade us from this conclusion. For with his warning – “be careful what you say!” – the interlocutor tacitly accepts, indeed presents as unproblematically true, that powerful and dangerous people *really are* attending closely to the satirist’s words, *really do* fear that his accusations will diminish their power and status, *really will* take preventive

measures, and hence that the satirist *really is* courageously risking life and limb to expose their vices. With his warning, then, the interlocutor bears “objective” witness, from the world beyond the text, that the satirist and his program are credible, and so he models for other “external” observers, like ourselves, the desired response to the satirist and his program (Keane (2006) 51; Bogel (2001) 10–12).

In persuading the satirist not to tell the “truth” by denouncing the transgressions and shortcomings of the powerful, the interlocutor brings him to the same impasse as the Persianic satirist. While the latter’s solution was to speak his truth only behind his target’s back, Juvenal’s satirist hits upon an entirely different solution, closing the poem with a surprise. He declares, “I will try what is allowed (sc. in speaking) against those whose ashes are covered by the Flaminian and Latin Ways” (*experiar quid concedatur in illos | quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis atque Latina*, 170–71). This sentence is generally taken as asserting that the satirist will attack only the dead, on the (implied) ground that they cannot retaliate as living contemporaries may. In fact, this strategy appears to be implemented already in this very poem, prior to its express articulation at the end: for the very idea of attacking a powerful contemporary is conveyed by referring to Lucilian practice, or by collapsing past into present, as in the imagined confrontation with the long dead Tigillinus. Other identifiable figures named in the poem – Thymele, Crispinus, Massa, Carus, Marius, Lucusta, etc. – are likewise from the past, preceding Juvenal’s writing by a decade or more; there is no indication here or in any of Juvenal’s satires that contemporaries of any significance are attacked by name (Freudenburg (2001) 213–15; Waters (1970), Ferguson (1987) for prosopography, with Courtney’s commentary (1980)).

This declaration looks like a pusillanimous, anticlimactic climb down from the high-flown programmatic declaration that satire is needed *right now*, at the high tide of vice. By presenting himself as collapsing in the face of threats, our satirist skewers his own aggressive, moralizing bluster and assumes instead that other familiar satiric pose, the abject underling abused by his superiors. But this particular climb down poses a generic conundrum. Can satire exist at all in the absence of contemporary reference? Can one fall so very short of what one has asserted to be the Lucilian standard of direct, open criticism, and still claim Lucilius as one’s model and ideal? These difficulties have prompted much scholarly comment. Views range from holding that references to the past lightly conceal specific contemporary events, circumstances, and persons (e.g., Hardie (1998)), to identifying an exemplary dynamic where contemporary relevance is sought at the level of persistent personal types and social structures (Kenney (1962) 38–40; Richlin (1992) 195–209; Winkler (2009c) 464–69). It has even been suggested that Juvenal’s discourse about the past is, rather, a metadiscourse, in which the poet’s over-the-top denunciations send up

the whole industry of *ex post facto* outrage against the monster emperors of the first century of the Empire (Freudenburg (2001) 209–48, and personal communication).

My own view is that our satirist, like the Persianic satirist before him, is presenting and performing a strategy for speaking truth to power “safely.” By expressly naming and attacking figures who are notorious, powerful, and dead, the satirist invites derisive laughter at his own cowardice, but also prods his readers to consider how the past he thereby invokes is connected to the present that he claims has so roused his indignation. This is the discourse of exemplarity, where the present is regarded as linked to the past by relations of ethical continuity and performative analogy. Ethical continuity means that past and present actions can be evaluated within the same moral categories, rendering them mutually comprehensible and commensurable. Performative analogy means that past and present actors will perform, or expect others to perform, similar actions under similar circumstances: in any era one will find forgers, poisoners, sycophants, liars, perverts, social climbers, and so on, because the structures that make such actions possible and advantageous persist (Roller (2004) 1–7; (2009) 214–19). Criticism of past instances therefore stigmatizes present instances, and discourages contemporaries or posterity from assuming the stigmatized roles. Thus, without expressly naming powerful, vicious contemporaries, the satirist deploys past figures to establish moral and behavioral norms against which such contemporaries can be measured. In short, the satirist’s climb down marks a turn to speech that is “figured” through typologies and analogies, and away from what he has presented as direct, open, unfigured, *ad hominem* “Lucilian” speech, which he deems too dangerous to himself (Ahl (1984b) 186–208).

Is such speech really “safe,” as this move implies? Juvenal’s contemporaries Pliny and Tacitus present informatively divergent views on this matter. Pliny, in his *Panegyricus*, declares that criticism of bad previous emperors puts future emperors on notice that they risk execration after death if they go bad, a patently exemplary argument. Yet Pliny also remarks that Domitian would have regarded criticism of Nero as aimed at himself, because of their similarity: hence, Pliny implies, the trope of exemplarity bestowed no safety in these circumstances (53.3–4). Likewise Tacitus, in the fourth book of his *Annales*, says that a historian puts himself at risk by inveighing against past figures, whether because touchy descendants remain or because certain readers see themselves reproached for their moral similarities to the target. Even *praise* of past figures is risky, as certain readers may see themselves reproached by contrast (4.33.4) – another danger potentially lurking in exemplary discourse. In the speech of Cremutius Cordus immediately following, however, Cremutius is made to say that one should be entirely free to praise and blame the dead, without these opinions being thought relevant to the present at all



(4.35.1–2). Yet Cremutius, a historiographer, speaks tendentiously out of self-interest: here he is being prosecuted for praising Brutus and Cassius in his histories. Thus Cremutius' experience actually substantiates the earlier remarks by Tacitus in his own voice, regarding the danger a historiographer may incur for praising and blaming past figures (Saylor (2008) 269–70). In light of these passages, the satirist's expectation of finding safety in the trope of exemplarity looks at best optimistic, and perhaps delusional.

Many additional passages in Juvenal and Persius thematize and perform issues of speech and power. Here let me focus briefly on Juvenal's fourth Satire. This poem, set in the court of Domitian, richly depicts the ways in which hope of rewards and fear of punishment impact speech. As the satirist tells the story, Domitian has been given an enormous fish. Several courtiers – Veiento, Catullus, and Montanus in particular – flatter the emperor by extravagantly admiring the fish, for they fear suffering harm if they do not play along (113–39). The satirist, as usual claiming superior status in the field of moral authority, passes uniformly negative judgments upon these flatterers and their speech. Receiving relatively gentle treatment, however, is the courtier Crispus, who (the satirist says) “had morals to match his eloquence” (82) and might have been the most useful of advisers “had it been permitted to condemn savagery and offer proper counsel,” i.e., to speak critically to the emperor (84–86). But the tyrant (*tyrannus*) is violent, even to friends (*amici*) who speak of innocuous topics like the weather (86–88). So Crispus “never extended his arms against the torrent: he was not the kind of citizen who could offer up free words sincerely and risk his life for the truth” (89–91). Significantly, Juvenal gives Crispus no words *in propria uoce*, for speech is impossible if one is upright enough not to flatter yet too fearful to speak critically (Williams (2010) 175–78). This brief but careful characterization of Crispus fashions him into an *exemplum* as described above. For the generalizing presentation of his predicament as an *amicus tyranni* (86, 88) helps to suggest its diachronic reach. There will always be tyrants and their friends; here is what happens to friends of a certain character. Indeed, in this poem the satirist sketches an exemplary moral hierarchy of ways of speaking to power. Flattery is worst, for it entails ethical perjury and loss of integrity, as well as encouraging the tyrant along his murderous course (Veiento, Montanus). Better is no speech whatsoever (Crispus). But where is integrity, the harsh and condemnatory “truth”? Only, it seems, in the satirist's own words, as he denounces the failings of others from his self-asserted position of moral superiority. This “truth”-speaking, however, takes the form proposed in *Satire 1*: presenting figures from the past – Domitian and his courtiers, now all dead – as *exempla* whose conduct under these conditions, duly branded “good” or “bad,” informs how actions by similarly positioned figures in the present and future are performed and evaluated.

“Free speech,” as we have seen, is normally a euphemism for “critical speech.” While praise and blame both participate in establishing, confirming, and challenging social hierarchies and power relations, blame seizes the limelight in satire, where mockery and ridicule are the typical rhetorical modes. Testifying to the political effectiveness of verbal attack in satire is that – according to the satirists – it motivates targets to take countermeasures, and to seek to constrain the satirist's speech so as to stop the attack. However self-serving such a representation may be (for the satirist wants us to believe that his targets fear him), it invites us to look more closely at the dynamics of satiric invective, and to refine our understanding of how and where verbal attacks land their blows.

### 13.4 Invective

The satirist, to paraphrase Fredric Bogel's title (Bogel (2001)), “makes difference” by drawing lines. These lines distinguish his target – whether an individual or a group – from himself by locating the target in the realm of moral transgression, and himself on the side of normative values and the “true” beliefs and needs of the larger community. These acts of defining and distinguishing are played out before an audience of readers or auditors, embodying the community whose interests the satirist purports to represent. He seeks to recruit this audience to his own side, isolating the target and excluding it from the community as he stigmatizes its moral failings. These moves have obvious “political” implications, in the broader sense discussed above.

Invective is perhaps the most powerful line-drawing, difference-making tool in the satirist's kit. By “invective” I mean vituperative mockery or other verbal abuse, couched in explicitly or implicitly moral terms, directed by the satirist against a target. Its aim is to humiliate the target through the open declaration of faults. Invective occurs in many discursive forms. Especially well studied is its operation in Ciceronian oratory (Corbeill (2002); (1996) 16–20 and *passim*) and in “iambic” or similar poetic forms, which in certain respects resemble satire (Richlin (1992) esp. 81–163; Walters (1998); Wray (2001); in general, Rosen (2007)). In Persius and especially Juvenal, invective typically accompanies the pose of angry indignation, which is characterized by short, sharp sentences, rhetorical questions, exclamations, and apostrophes (Braund (1988) 1–6). Invective can be directed against a wide variety of characteristics or behaviors: it may allege crimes such as theft, fraud, forgery, or poisoning; vices such as cowardice, gluttony, drunkenness, greed, extravagance, sexual deviance, luxuriousness, ambition, meanness, or stinginess; physical and social characteristics such as being fat, bald, short, pale, or of low birth; any sort of

behavior deemed inappropriate to the target's status or position; and so on. The topics of invective may be interlinked, as when clothing or poetic style or a physical characteristic is taken to betray sexual deviance (see below), or when low birth combined with extravagant living supports the inference that the wealth was gained by criminal means – forging a will, defrauding a ward, poisoning a rich relative. Of course, not all critical speech takes invective form. Blistering attacks may be delivered using the trope of irony, where the words employed “overtly” seem to confer praise, as in Laronia's speech in Juvenal 2.36–63. Also, there are gentle ways of expressing reservation or disapproval, as part of a strategy of correction or the simple registering of a different opinion (as in the satirist's reproach to his friend Umbricius, at Juv. 3.1–3).

A common topic of invective is sexual deviance. The affinity of invective for sexual topics is likely due, in part, to the universality of sexual behavior, along with the fact that sexual and scatological terms are especially arresting when deployed in public discourses from which notions of propriety normally exclude them (Richlin (1992) 1–31, (1984); Corbeill (1996) 128–69). The use of such terms in “taboo” contexts conveys the degree of anger and passion to which the satirist wishes to seem transported by the target's alleged transgressions – leading him to breach decorum in one way even as he accuses his target of breaching it in other ways. In addition, sexual invective is often couched in a rhetoric of detection and exposure, implying that the target not only is perverted, but has hypocritically tried to conceal these perversions. The combined allegation of perversion and hypocrisy ideally suffices to bring the audience to share the satirist's anger, stand with him on the side of normative values, and isolate and stigmatize the target.

This drawing of lines, co-opting of audience, and isolating and demeaning of the target through invective are far from straightforward. Indeed, Persius and Juvenal pointedly show just how unstraightforward this activity is. First, as the satirist draws the line separating his normative self from the allegedly deviant target, and as he seeks to co-opt the audience, the possibility exists that the target will reverse the field, claim the audience for himself, and strand the satirist as the stigmatized, vilified outsider on what is suddenly the “wrong” side of that very line. This specter looms over the satirists' maneuverings in the passages discussed in section 13.3 above. In Persius' first Satire, the satirist “draws the line” by deploying invective against the patron's poetry, morals, and person (1.56–57), in response to the patron's convivial power play described above (1.53–54). Thus he distinguishes his own supposedly better morals and poetic taste from the patron's worse versions, and invites the audience's complicity by making it party to his behind-the-back mocking of the patron. But when the interlocutor later warns the satirist that “the thresholds of the rich may grow cold” to him (1.108–110), the threat is that the line he drew will be concretized precisely as forbidden entry to the

great house. Now, indeed, the satirist is distinguished from the patron – by his physical exclusion from the *salutationes* and *convivia* to which he needs access. Meanwhile, other clients will presumably continue to attend these events and gain the resources they need – effectively, an audience that has chosen the target over the satirist and so formed a community from which the latter is excluded. In Juvenal's first Satire, Tigillinus' envisioned retaliation (1.155–57) involves a similar reversal of field, as Catherine Keane has observed ((2006) 18, 50–51). Here, the projected attack upon Tigillinus' vices is imagined to result in the satirist being burned alive in the arena, literally stigmatized as a criminal or slave and literally leaving his mark on the sand. Meanwhile, the satirist's potential audience is co-opted to Tigillinus' side of the line. For it would be sitting in the seats of the arena, watching the spectacle of the burning satirist.

A second complexity attending the line-drawing of satiric invective is the *constructedness* of the opposition between satirist (plus the audience he seeks to co-opt) and target. The reason invective so often employs a rhetoric of detection and exposure is that the target's vices are not necessarily patent and visible to all. The satirist must work hard to portray the target as repulsive and vicious, not only to persuade his audience to come over to his side, but to convince it that there are sides to be taken at all. He must always be prepared for an audience that is unaware of or indifferent to the vices ascribed to the target, or that fears the satirist's own aggressive self-righteousness above all (an Horatian preoccupation: Hor. *Carm.* 1.4.21–37, 2.1.21–23). In identifying and denouncing his target, then, the satirist must also educate and mobilize his audience, communicating the norms and practices it should hold dear, and persuading it that the target has violated these (Bogel (2001) 27–32). To augment the complexity, satirists who draw lines employing moralizing invective tend to catch themselves, or parts of themselves, on the wrong side. Thus they may implicate themselves in their own denunciations, and the opposition between satirist and target threatens to deconstruct in the very process of being articulated. The exemplary and typological terms in which satiric attack is framed – for again, no living contemporaries are named – may facilitate these slippages and reversals, as the structural similarities between satirist and target emerge more readily within a categorical framework than from *ad hominem* attack. The latter, as found in oratory (e.g., Cicero attacking Antony in *Phil.* 2), elevates the social stakes but may help keep attacker and target conceptually distinct.

I illustrate these dynamics in Juvenal and Persius by analyzing passages of sexual invective in which the satirist demeans a male target by alleging that he engages in receptive sex with other males. Central to this invective is the figure of the *cinaedus*. As work on Roman sexual roles has shown (Parker (1997) 56–62; Williams (1999) 172–218; (2010)), the *cinaedus* is a cultural stereotype of sexual deviance: a free adult male who is open to, or actively

desires, anal sexual penetration by another male. This figure represents the negation of the normative, exclusively penetrative, sexual role that Roman society ascribed to the properly constituted free adult male, the *uir*. It is thus more a scare-figure countertype of proper manhood than a real sexual identity. *Cinaedus* is thus a term of abuse that discredits and stigmatizes the target as morally vicious – not only in his sexual behavior, however, but more broadly as well: for one either is or is not a *uir*; proper constitution as a Roman man does not come by parts. Furthermore, someone alleged to be a *cinaedus* is assumed to try to conceal his vice, hoping to maintain the public face and social benefits of an integral *uir*. To be clear, satiric invective that invokes the *cinaedus* is not directed *against* this figure: the *cinaedus* comes to satire already pre-stigmatized in the broader culture. Rather, satiric invective deploys this figure as a paradigm for the *target's* viciousness. If the audience can be persuaded that there is a good match between the *cinaedus* paradigm and the target, the latter's face as an integral *uir* is demolished and the attacker's work is done (Corbeil (2002) 202–4).

### 13.4.1 Juvenal

Juvenal's second Satire opens with precisely such an attack. There are, the satirist says, men who parade as exemplars of old-time Roman virtue in public and cultivate the hairy body of the stereotypical philosopher, but behave licentiously in secret (2–3, 11–12). Soon the *cinaedus* is invoked, implying that the “secret” behavior in question is receptive sex (*castigas turpia, cum sis | inter Socraticos notissima fossa cinaedos?* 9–10). A doctor (*medicus*) is then introduced who detects the vice hidden under the false show of virtue: he lances the man's anal piles, which (according to the scholia) are a symptom and therefore proof of deviant sexual activity. The doctor laughs at the incongruity between outward appearance and hidden sign, with their opposite implications (12–13). Continuing his exploration of this theme, the satirist introduces “Peribomius” (16–19) – whether this is a personal name or the title of some type of cult personnel is uncertain (scholia, Courtney (1980) *ad loc.*, Ferguson (1987) 176). This man, the satirist says, “confesses his disease in his expression and gait.” In contrast to the hairy, philosophical-looking “Socratic” *cinaedi* just discussed, this *cinaedus* has an outward appearance that announces, rather than conceals, his sexual deviance. Thus he has integrity, albeit of a pitiful sort (*horum simplicitas miserabilis*, 18) and his behavior is “truer and more candid” (*uerius . . . et magis ingenue*, 14–15) than theirs. Such people's very madness wins the satirist's forbearance (*his furor ipse | dat ueniam*, 18–19), meaning that he will refrain from invective: after all, what need is there to pin the *cinaedus* label on someone who does not attempt to conceal his deviance, nor purports to be an integral *uir*? Rather, it is the man who designs his outward

appearance to belie his deviance, and seeks the social rewards of virtue he does not possess, who is dangerous and therefore an appropriate target for invective.

So far, so good. But as the poem goes on, things get increasingly sticky for the satirist. In verse 65 he launches an attack on one Creticus, a prosecutor of adultery cases whose name is redolent of the honorific *cognomina* of the Republican aristocracy. A grand personage, then, successfully competing in the law courts, a prestigious arena of aristocratic activity. But the satirist's invective seeks to persuade us that Creticus is a *cinaedus*. As proof we are offered the elegant toga he wears in court: the fabric is so thin that it is all but transparent, recalling the costumes of the prostitutes and adulteresses he prosecutes (67–70). It is as if he pleads with no clothes on at all (71). Creticus' toga, with help from the satirist, “reveals” him (in all senses) for what he is, notwithstanding his honorable and traditional aristocratic activity (77–78: *acer et indomitus libertatisque magister, | Cretice, perluces*, “you fierce, indomitable champion of liberty, Creticus – you are transparent!” trans. Braund). With this argument, the satirist both constitutes Creticus as repulsive deviant and educates the audience on how to read the sartorial signs of this deviance. But if Creticus' deviance is really so patent (*perluces*), what need to expose and denounce him at such length? Why can he not be passed over in a few lines, with a backhanded compliment for his integrity, like Peribomius? Perhaps an aristocrat cannot be as easily forgiven and dismissed as the (probably) non-elite Peribomius – whose Greek name may suggest freedman status, while its meaning hints at a disreputable foreign cult. But the most economical explanation is that the alleged deviance cannot, in fact, be read off easily from the toga's appearance. Hence the need for the semiotic and analogical argument that conjures Creticus as a (concealed) *cinaedus*, and explains to the audience how to see him in this threatening guise. For the lesson in semiotics and the assertion of obviousness are logically at odds: if the former is necessary, the latter is false, and if the latter is true, the former is unnecessary. But the satirist is trying to have his cake and eat it. He wishes to expose the hypocritically hidden *cinaedus*, and also allege that he was bad at hiding; to reveal to his audience the secret “truth,” and coerce it into agreeing that this “truth” is patent. The satirist is working very hard here to constitute a sufficiently repellent target and assemble a sufficiently sympathetic audience.

Late in the poem, the satirist adduces his deviant *par excellence*. Another man bearing an old aristocratic name, Gracchus, is to marry a (male) horn-player. The transgression of status boundaries is part of the outrage – Gracchus is clearly “marrying down” – but the deviance of the male–male marriage as such is the main target. The satirist comically presents it as a prodigy requiring expert interpretation and expiation (121–23), and as a vexation to Mars, the patron divinity of the city (126–31); he also explains, somewhat ponderously

(137–42), that such a marriage cannot produce offspring, presumably another basis for outrage. But the satirist also directs a barb at the audience, or one sector of it. For he imagines someone preparing to attend the ceremony, articulating the paradox of the marriage as if it were perfectly unexceptional: *quid quaeris? nubit amicus* (134). The first phrase, *quid quaeris*, is a naturalizing “what’s the matter?” while in the second phrase, *nubere* – the verb for a bride taking a husband – is used paradoxically with a male subject: “my (male) friend is becoming a bride.” The satirist infers from this nonchalance that, in time, such ceremonies will be entirely open and publicized (135–36), not only defying community norms but threatening to *become* the norm (Walters (1998) 356). Again, however, one may ask why Gracchus and his husband don’t receive the same concession as Peribomius. For in marrying openly, they surely demonstrate the same integrity (*simplicitas*) and frankness (*ingenuitas*) that exempted him from attack. At least part of the audience may think so, the satirist fears. For by declaring outrageous those who do not share his own outrage, he draws his line down the middle of the audience and thereby concedes that it is not unified, but contains divergent views. He must mock, corral, and exterminate the contrary view so as to harry a monolithic, sympathetic, co-optable audience into existence. Yet in drawing this line he also catches his own non-outraged self, who declined to wax wroth against Peribomius, on the wrong side. For the attendees of the wedding – the *quid quaeris* crowd – could cite the satirist’s earlier words to authorize their own tolerance. Or they could redirect his own mockery and derision against himself, as one who previously endorsed the very view he now condemns. His overblown invective renders him as laughable, and as vulnerable to his own attack, as his targets.

The difficulties run even deeper. We saw that the poem opened with the satirist attacking those whose behavior, physiognomy, and words indicate an old-time moralist, but who practice sexual vices in secret – “Socratic *cinaedi*” he calls them. Scholars have long noted that the doctor who sees and laughs at what these men hide is a doublet for the satirist himself, who exposes and mocks their vice through poetry. But there is another possible doublet for the satirist: the hairy, philosophical-looking “Socratic *cinaedi*” themselves. The satirist too poses as an old-time moralist, denouncing vice just as he says his targets do; how do we know that he is not himself a secret practitioner of vice, potentially vulnerable to the very same exposure and denunciation? True, he loudly affirms his normative values and community concern – precisely the sort of superficial appearance he then warns us not to trust (*frontis nulla fides*, 8; also 20–22). Moreover, he warns that every quarter of the city is crawling with virtuous-looking deviants (8–10), and the plague is spreading (78–81). If hypocritically moralistic *cinaedi* are to be suspected everywhere, the satirist himself seems worth a closer look. To shake the moralistic pose further, as Erik

Gunderson points out ((2005) 227, 232–36), the satirist’s quest for outrageous perversions means that he must be an expert in sexual deviance himself, in order to detect, expose, and explain others’ deviance to his audience. One may suspect that he and his “right-thinking” audience take vicarious, voyeuristic pleasure in the sexual antics described, even as they declare their outrage and showily vindicate their normative values and social respectability by contrast. In these respects too, the satirist resembles the deviants he decries, and leaves himself open to the same attack he levels against them (Walters (1998) 362–64; Freudenburg (2001) 257–58; Bogel (2001) 38–40). The more insistently the satirist inscribes the line that distinguishes himself and his audience from the *cinaedus*, the more permeable that line seems to become.

Can satirist and *cinaedus* indeed be one and the same? The idea is suggestive. In Juvenal’s fourth Satire, a courtier of Domitian, named Rubrius, is described as being “charged with an ancient crime that must not be spoken of, yet more shameless than a satire-writing *cinaedus*” (*Rubrius offensae ueteris reus atque tacendae | et tamen improbius saturam scribente cinaedo*, 105–6). That is, Rubrius denounces others’ transgressions while his own are passed over without comment. This is *improbitas*, a lack of principle. It is aptly exemplified by the “*cinaedus* who writes satire,” for a *cinaedus* is properly the target of satiric invective, as we have seen. Imagining the *cinaedus* as satirist would mean that he denounces in others the vices he himself practices (*qui in aliis sua uitia reprehendebat*, Schol.). Our satirist is not exactly pinning the *cinaedus* label on Rubrius, for the point is not to stigmatize him for sexual deviance or compromised manhood per se. It is, rather, to criticize the assumption of a *persona* that is hypocritical given the underlying vices. Nor do I believe that Juvenal is implicating himself as a *cinaedus* here (Braund (1996a) *ad loc.*, Rosen (2007) 230–31). But this evocative image of the satire-writing *cinaedus* underscores the degree to which the satirist and his targets are implicated, even co-dependent. If satire succeeded in its ostensible aim of destroying its targets, it would put itself out of business. Perhaps the only way for the satirist to secure his targets’ survival, hence his own, is to fabricate them out of pieces of himself and his audience – even if this means that clear, sharp lines can never be drawn (Habinek (2005a) 181–87; Rosen (2007) 239–42; Bogel (2001) 31–33).

### 13.4.2 Persius

Persius, too, sometimes employs invective alleging male sexual deviance. However, the dynamics of line drawing and audience construction in his poems differ from those seen in Juvenal. Deviance is central to the very first vignette (13–21) in the programmatic first Satire. Here, as discussed earlier, the satirist declares his objection to the morals and aesthetics of contemporary poetry. The vignette opens by describing the process of composition.

Whether writing in prose or verse, we work privately – the satirist uses an inclusive, generalizing first person plural – on something so big that it requires a whole lungful of air to gasp out (*scribimus inclusi, numeros ille, hic pede liber, | grande aliquid quod pulmo animae praelargus anhelet*, 13–14). In due course, having dolled yourself up with combed hair, a new toga, and a gemstone ring, you – now in the second person singular – will recite (*leges*) your composition to an audience, “when you have washed your limber throat with a flowing modulation, enfeebled by your ejaculating eye” (*liquido cum plasmate guttur | mobile collueris, patranti fractus oculo*, 17–18). The imagery here, though difficult, indicates a poetic style that the satirist considers unmanly: for the limberness and flowing quality of the voice, as well as the enervation of the reciter (*fractus*), are stereotypically feminine (or effeminate) characteristics. We could perhaps imagine, with Freudenburg, that the reciter has written a tragedy featuring a grief-stricken woman, whose role he “performs” in the recitation; then the climax that should draw tears from the eye is figured, shockingly, as an ocular sexual climax (Freudenburg (2001) 162–66, cf. Bramble (1974) 75–79; Hooley (1997) 38–41; Harvey (1981); and Kissel (1990) *ad loc.*).

If his own composition unmans the poet, it does the same and more to the audience. “Then you [second person singular] would see burly Tituses quivering, in no seemly manner nor with tranquil voice, when the poems penetrate their loins and their inward parts are tickled by the quavering verse” (*tunc neque more probo uideas nec uoce serena | ingentis trepidare Titos, cum carmina lumbum | intrans et tremulo scalpuntur ubi intima uersu*, 19–21). The aural pleasure that the poem gives its audience is figured, by a bold metaphorical extension, as anal pleasure. For the big, manly Romans who hear the poem are presented as taking pleasure not in the sound of the poem entering their ears, but – in typical *cinaedus* imagery – in its vibrations entering their anuses. Compactly, then, the satirist presents the poetry, poet, and audience as sexually deviant all. The imagery is paradoxical: the poem’s pleasurable quivering, warbling, effeminate sound (*liquido, mobile, tremulo*) is also, at the same time, its (or the poet’s) pleasurable quivering, virile, penetrating penis (*lumbum intrans*). At any rate, the satirist marshals the standard invective resources – the language and imagery of male sexual deviance, particularly the stereotype of the *cinaedus* – to condemn all participants in the economy of poetic production, recitation, and praise, including the poems themselves, as corrupt. The positioning of this acerbic blast near the start of the programmatic first poem suggests that the satirist regards such language as an effective (and shocking) way to launch his assault on contemporary literary aesthetics. Indeed, he sustains this blanket condemnation through the remainder of the poem, even as he elaborates particular aspects like the difficulty of speaking “frankly” that we examined earlier.

In condemning contemporary poetic style and recitation culture as morally corrupt, our satirist draws his line. He positions his targets on the stigmatized side and himself on the valorized side, outside of and apart from this corruption. He presents himself as one who can judge correctly and honestly, praising virtue and condemning vice (if only he can find a way to express himself: section 13.3 above). But does he speak, like Juvenal’s satirist claims to do, for community values broadly, thus co-opting his readers to his own side and isolating the target as a stigmatized, deviant outcast? On the contrary: in this poem, the broader community is complicit in the corruption and deviance. The satirist tars every Titus in the audience as a *cinaedus*, perfectly in accord with the deviance of the poet and poetry. Thus he suggests that their shared corruption and deviance is mainstream: it is the satirist, as upright moralist, who is the outcast. He has drawn the line such that he is all alone on his side – or rather, he and the “two or zero” other people who might read his work, those with the aesthetic and social sensibility that he describes at the poem’s end (123–34). Now, Persius himself will have presented this poem in a recitation, leaving “us,” his audience and readers, to puzzle out where we stand in this schema (so Hooley (1997) 38–39). Supposing we enjoy this poem, are we aligned with the Tituses of the internal audience as part of the corrupt, deviant pleasuring culture here satirized? And is Persius himself one of the corrupt reciters, “ejaculating eye” and all? For the satirist ecumenically includes himself as one of the “we” who “write in private” (13), before (perhaps?) distancing himself by moving to a second-person address for the reciter (15–20). Furthermore, a story in the *Vita Persii* – that the poet Lucan, attending a recitation by Persius, could scarcely restrain himself from leaping up and shouting that *here* was real poetry – accords uncomfortably well with the dynamic of poetic titillation and indiscriminate audience enthusiasm that the first Satire satirizes. Alternatively, perhaps we are not Tituses but rather members of that tiny, right-minded community “who will read this stuff” – as, in fact, we patently are doing. If so, how exactly are we to enjoy it? As Lucan did, or not? As with the Juvenalian invective discussed earlier, so too with Persianic invective we find that the apparently sharp dividing lines, created by apparently black-and-white moral and aesthetic distinctions, on closer examination seem to split the satirist himself, as well as any audience he may attract, right down the middle, leaving our own moral status as readers altogether unclear.

Another blast of invective against deviant male sexuality, in *Satire 4*, presents even greater challenges to understanding where the satirist is drawing his lines. This poem opens with a scene in which Socrates and Alcibiades discuss the latter’s desire to enter public life at a tender age. The general drift of Socrates’ advice is Delphic: Alcibiades lacks the self-knowledge necessary for statesmanly duties. So far, so good. In the second half, however, this *mise-en-scène* with its

dialogical structure disappears. Speakers cease to be clearly identified or differentiated – indeed, it becomes unclear who and how many the speakers are. Also, the material presented is not clearly related to the scene, subject matter, or broader themes of the first half (Hooley (1997) 122–42). Structurally, however, the second half is organized by a pair of gnomic statements (23–24, 42–43) bracketing a pair of what look like they should be illustrative examples supporting these generalizations. The first gnomic statement is the exclamation, “How nobody tries the descent into self, nobody! – but looks at the bag on the back of the person in front” (*ut nemo in sese temptat descendere, nemo, | sed praecedenti spectatur mantica tergo!* 23–24). Persius here alludes to the fable in which people notice others’ faults but not their own (scholia, Harvey (1981), Kissel (1990) *ad loc.*). There follows (25–32) a description of someone inveighing against a miserly rich man, then a second scene in which someone inveighs against a nude sunbather who has apparently depilated his groin, and is tarred by his attacker as a shamelessly self-displaying sexual deviant (33–41; detailed analysis by Kissel (1990) *ad loc.*, Richlin (1992) 187–90).

What lines is the satirist drawing with these invective passages? We logically expect them to exemplify the preceding maxim, and illustrate attacks made by people who pillory the faults of others while disregarding their own. If so, then the satirist is targeting those who deliver these invectives, rather than those against whom the invectives are directed. He would thus be satirizing moralizing attack speech, as deployed by hypocrites who attack others without having a moral leg to stand on. However, we are never informed what these attackers’ own faults or vices are, as seems necessary to properly illustrate the maxim. Indeed, the second example, where the attacker infers the sunbather’s sexual deviance from his depilated genitals (a sign that is visible because the target is naked), offers the kind of inference from external appearance and deportment that regularly appears in sexual invective – for example, in Juvenal’s attack on Creticus, where deviance is inferred from his clothing. Here the issue seems to be not whether the attacker himself has vices, but whether the invective he delivers is justified by the target’s own deportment. We might conclude, then, that the maxim at 23–24 does *not* organize the examples of invective that follow. But then it is hard to understand what these examples are doing at all in relation to the rest of the poem. As members of Persius’ audience we struggle to understand, as Hooley puts it ((1997) 137), “who is being got at” and why – to understand what line the satirist is drawing, where the various voices are being made to stand in relation to that line, and where we as audience are supposed to stand. Even by Persianic standards, this poem makes stringent demands upon its audience, challenging it to “fill in the gaps” and to find a perspective from which these pieces snap into place and “make sense” according to conventional expectations of continuity and coherence. While scholars have proposed ingenious solutions to these

perplexities (esp. Kissel (1990) 495–98, 542–46; Hooley (1997) 122–42, with further references), perhaps part of the point – assuming we have the poem as Persius intended it – is to put the audience through such an exercise, to compel us to reflect upon and question our assumptions about consistency, unity, and moral positionality in and through our struggle to locate these features in this satire (Hooley (1997) 136–40; Henderson (1999) 243–44).

Returning to the narrower theme of invective, I suggest that the second gnomic statement, which follows the two invective passages and seems to present itself as a summarizing or resumptive move, could serve as an epigraph for invective – not only in this poem, but in satire generally, and perhaps in Roman culture overall. Persius writes, “We deal wounds, and in turn expose our legs to the arrows. Life is lived on this basis; this is the way we know it” (*caedimus inque vicem praebemus crura sagittis. | uiuitur hoc pacto, sic nouimus,* 42–43). Armed combat is a metaphor for verbal combat, of which examples have just been presented. The maxim thus asserts that one who employs invective is naturally and inevitably subject to invective in turn; to join this battle is *ipso facto* to expose oneself. Whether this dynamic is illustrated in this poem is unclear: Kissel proposes that the person who attacks the miser is the very person subsequently attacked for his nude sunbathing, thus exemplifying this dynamic (Kissel (1990) 545–46; Braund, personal communication; however, this interpretation is far from certain. But we have seen that satiric invective is indeed as double-edged as the maxim implies. Not only does the satirist attack others and suffer attacks in turn, but he attacks himself in the very act of attacking another, and attacks his audience in the very act of seeking to co-opt it. The line he draws with his vice-imputing, socially stigmatizing verbal assault seems constitutionally doomed to go *through* himself and the audience he hopes to co-opt, always stranding parts of himself and his audience on the wrong side. As a result, invective insistently poses fundamental questions about the satirist’s moral status and the legitimacy of his attack, as well as challenging the satirist’s audience – not least, us readers – to grapple with where the satirist, the target, and we ourselves stand in relation to the moral distinctions being articulated. Fredric Bogel argues that satire seizes upon differences internal to the satirist, his community, or its value system, and projects these differences outward – from “within” to “between” – to create, rhetorically, a relation of pure difference and alienation, with the target serving as community scapegoat ((2001) 46–52). In Persius and Juvenal, the traces of that process, and of the initial, morally ambiguous state, can be seen in every nook and cranny: indeed, one may speculate that the poets leave these traces visible not only because they are impossible to erase, but also in order to hang their satiric *personae* out to dry. John Henderson, compactly articulating a position that other contemporary scholars have found attractive, speaks of the satirist’s “self-cancelling” voice that is “calculated to awake skepticism,” and

that ultimately teaches its audience “no other lesson than self-reliance” (Henderson (1999) 231–32) – to which we might add “all by stirring up mocking laughter at its own antics and bluster, no less than at the target’s alleged transgressions” (cf. Freudenburg (2001) 258; Bogel (2001) 61–62). On this view, satiric invective employs laughably excessive verbal attack in part to illustrate the peril that attends all attempts, including its own, to draw lines via verbal aggression.

### 13.5 Conclusion: Invective and Politics

In this chapter I have tried to establish several points about politics, invective, and their relationship in the satires of Persius and Juvenal. (1) The satirist typically poses as a put-upon but self-righteous underling, who dares to challenge on aesthetic and/or moral grounds the social prominence achieved – illegitimately, in his view – by certain other (usually named) people. This challenge to manifest hierarchies, articulated and executed within one field of competition or across several, constitutes the “politics” of satire. (2) Moralizing speech is the satirist’s weapon of choice and necessity – specifically “free” speech, which in practice means critical speech, delivered through his poetry. And since invective is the most grating, challenging, socially aggressive (or transgressive) form of critical speech, it is among his most potent rhetorical tools for grabbing attention and pretending outrage. (3) Satiric invective has a way of impinging on the satirist and the audience he seeks to attract and co-opt, no less than on the target, to the point of raising severe doubts about the satirist’s own moral status and credibility in the very categories in which he pillories his target.

But what consequence does (3) have for (1)? If the verbal attacks that define the satirist’s social and moral posture undermine the authority that this posture claims for itself, where does that leave the satirist’s challenge to and competition with his targets? Does any “politics,” in the sense accepted here, remain? I suggest that satire thematizes (*inter alia*) the question of what constitutes a valid moral complaint. By this I mean not only how the complaint stands on its own merits, but also to what extent the very articulation and vehemence of the attack indict its own presenter, and whether in so doing the attack demands to be read as a parodic send-up of moralizing discourses in general. In the latter case, satire would aim to raise a derisive laugh against all such speech, including the satirist’s own, making moralizers as such into the (or a) target, rather than or in addition to the alleged moral transgressions of the targets he overtly identifies. “Politics” are robustly present in such a case, but the actual opponents and arenas of competition are not, or not only, the declared ones. As readers of Persius and Juvenal, we are invited, indeed forced, to

consider all these complexities arising from the use of verbal attack to pursue political advantage.

### FURTHER READING

On the “politics” of Latin literature, representative studies that presuppose the narrower definition of the term as referring to activities of government include Woodman and West (1984), Sullivan (1985), and – moving in a new direction – A. Powell (1992). On the “politics” (in this sense) of verse satire in particular, Waters (1970) and Hardie (1998) provide instances. On Latin literature’s “politics” in the broader sense, see especially Habinek (1998), and for satire in particular, Henderson (1999) and Freudenburg (2001). Dominik, Garthwaite, and Roche (2009) present a range of current approaches to “politics” in imperial Latin literature. For the theoretical foundations of the broader sense of “politics” as I define it here, see Foucault (1988) and Bourdieu (1993) – neither are systematic expositions, but critical explorations that presuppose the broad view. For a convenient handbook-style overview of poststructuralist, Marxist approaches to the “politics” of literature, see Goldstein (1990), esp. 162–98, with further references.

Invective in Latin literature generally has not been deeply explored; in verse satire still less so. Richlin (1992, lightly revised from the groundbreaking 1983 study), Corbeil (1996), and Wray (2001) are foundational for understanding verbal aggression in various genres of Latin literature, though only Richlin (164–209) expressly discusses satire. Koster (1980), examining invective in particular authors and genres (excluding satire), focuses more on collecting and describing instances of invective than in developing conceptual frameworks. Plaza (2006) offers a rich study of humor in satire, with some discussion of its role in mockery and attack; Rosen (2007) 207–42 shines valuable light on invective in Juvenal by placing it in a longer Greco-Roman tradition of mocking poetry. From the field of English satire studies, Bogel (2001) develops a theory of satiric attack that illuminates Roman satire as well.