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Preface

As is the case of other volumes in this series, this book is meant to be introductory. Consequently, I've not sought to develop or deepen specialists' understanding of the many poems that come into consideration here; nor have I attempted to set out major controversies or positions held by those specialists; nor have I made reference in the course of my presentation to non-Anglophone criticism, since the intended audience, intelligent English-reading students, can do pretty well beginning with what a limited selection of English-writing critics in readily available sources have said. Needless to say, there is a great deal more out there in the European languages, and in English, for the curious and philologically adept – a good portion of it extremely important.

That's enough by way of apology; what this book doesn't do will be immediately evident to every reader. What was wanted, I thought as I wrote, was a friendly book that went some distance toward bringing a somewhat difficult and distant Roman literature into nearer familiarity. Satire has the perennial problem of being locked into its contemporary world; it is "topical," its references and contexts local, even while good satire, like good literature in general, breaks free of its situational gravity so as to appeal to readers of other times and places, as the abiding popularity of Juvenal testifies to. But ask even a well-read acquaintance her thoughts on Horace's first book of satires, or better, Lucilius' first book, and you're likely to get a blank stare – or a proposal to run down to the pub for a beer and change of subject. While a drink with friends is nearly always a good idea, the change of subject, I contend in this book, is not. For, although a little tricky for

moderns to get a handle on at first, Roman satire is in fact remarkably compelling poetry. Even now. And the more so when seen as a singular flowering of a broader satiric impulse (commonly found in pub and coffee-shop discourse) that we all, frankly, love. My job, then, has been to make us better acquainted with what, particularly, Horace and Persius and Juvenal were up to, what their literary backgrounds were, what makes them especially worth spending time with, and what they and other classical satirists did for later European literature.

Toward those ends I've structured the book with endpiece chapters that sketch out, respectively, background and the post-classical afterlife of Roman satire. Neither chapter, especially the latter, is intended to be more than a partial summary, but both will I hope provide at least *essential* guidance. The major verse satirists, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, have a chapter each his own. The methodology of presentation is generally consistent (more or less detailed summaries of most poems, with attendant general commentary), but Horace's first book, because so important for the whole Roman satiric enterprise in its details and structure, gets more lavish treatment, poem by poem. Further reading sections at the end of each chapter will lead back to the sources of many of the better ideas of this book and get the curious started on the road to fuller discussions elsewhere.

Even if I knew a whole lot more than I do, I wouldn't think it a good idea to oversimplify a volume like this, to talk down to clever readers. A book won't be interesting (to anyone) if it doesn't challenge people to engage its subject ambitiously, to work a bit, thinking, questioning, quibbling with arguments and interpretations. Readers will have to pay attention, and I imagine most will not agree with at least several things I say here: that's all to the good. Horace's word for satire is *sermo*, talk, discussion; satire talks at us and fully expects to be talked back to. The same holds for critics of satire and their readers. This book is best conceived, then, not as an introduction to a "subject," but as an invitation to a dialogic relationship with a literature that gets richer and more fascinating the more time one spends with it. Satire is fun, often naughty, at times surprising, difficult, offensive, delightful, earnest, cynical, deceptive, moral, amoral, almost always challenging. Sorting out *what* it's doing *when* requires close regard, a certain persistence, and a good brain to work with.

Helping me sort out my own thoughts have been generous and kind colleagues with the very best brains. Kirk Freudenburg and John Henderson read through the manuscript in its entirety and commented

extensively; their responses, laced with judicious corrections, are treasure-troves of ideas. Many of those ideas I've silently incorporated; a few others of particular note I document in the footnotes with a mysterious "per litteras," yet others I've just tucked away for use elsewhere. All writers should have such readers. In addition, my near neighbor in satire Cathy Keane has, in savvy conversation and bibliographical advice, been a great help, as have in sundry ways my colleagues and friends: Michael Barnes, John Foley, Jim McGlew, Anatole Mori, Charles Saylor, David Schenker, Dennis Trout, and Barbara Wallach. Al Bertrand, Sophie Gibson, Ben Thatcher, Angela Cohen, and Margaret Aherne at Blackwell, saintly in their patience, have been perceptive, thoughtful, in all respects superb. I owe them all, colleagues and editors, great thanks and immunity from responsibility for any foolishness contained herein.

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My son Matthew is one of those clever students of literature for whom this book was written. I've already learned enormously from his own writing on American and Native American literatures – even in ways that bear on this study. In gratitude and love, I dedicate this book to him.

Timeline: Roman Satire and Its Influence

(Dates in some cases are approximate)

BCE	
700–540	Greek iambic poetry, Archilochus through Hipponax
440–405	Greek Old Comedy, Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes
320–250	Greek New Comedy, Menander
315–245	Bion of Borysthenes in Athens
305(?)–240	Callimachus, poet and librarian of the Ptolemaic court at Alexandria
300–250(?)	Menippus of Gadara
239–169	Quintus Ennius
168/7(?)–102	Gaius Lucilius
116–27	M. Terentius Varro, 150 books of "Menippean" satires
84–54(?)	Catullus
65	Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) born
42	Battle of Philippi, M. Antonius and Octavian defeat Brutus
35	Horace's First Book of *Satires* (*Sermones*) published
31	Battle of Actium, Octavian defeats M. Antonius
30–29	Book 2 of Horace's *Satires* and his book of *Epodes* published,
27	Octavian designated "Augustus"
23	Books 1–3 of Horace's *Odes* published
20	Book 1 of Horace's *Epistles* published
18–13(?)	Book 2 of Horace's *Epistles* published

15(?)	Phaedrus, freedman of Augustus, born
13	Book 4 of Horace's *Odes* published
8	Horace's death
CE	
14	Death of Augustus
14–37	Reign of Tiberius
34	Persius (Aules Persius Flaccus) born
37–41	Reign of Gaius (Caligula)
41–54	Reign of Claudius
54	Accession of Nero, deification of Claudius
62	Death of Persius
65–6	Suicides of Seneca and Petronius
67(?)	Birth of Juvenal
68	Suicide of Nero
69	Year of four emperors
69–81	Reigns of Vespasian and Titus
81–96	Reign of Domitian
86–96	Martial in Rome, composes *Epigrams* Books 1–10
98	Accession of Trajan
100–130	Juvenal's *Satires*
117	Death of Trajan, accession of Hadrian
180	Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead, Icaromenippus*
361	Julian "the Apostate," *The Caesars*
410–430	Martianus Capella (*fl.*), *Marriage of Philology and Mercury*
467–532	Fulgentius, *Mythologies*
524	Boethius executed, *Consolation of Philosophy*
1387–1400	Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Tale*
1460–1529	John Skelton
1509	Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*
1532	Rabelais, *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*
1558–1625	Thomas Lodge
1572–1631	John Donne
1572–1637	Ben Jonson
1574–1656	Joseph Hall
1575–1634	John Marston
1599	Bishops' ban against the publication of satires
1601	Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*
1605	Isaac Casaubon, *De Satyrica Graecorum et Satira Romanorum*

1631–1700	John Dryden
1660s	Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, imitations of Horace's *Satires*
1667–1745	Jonathan Swift
1675	John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, *Allusion to Horace*
1688–1744	Alexander Pope
1693	John Dryden, *Discourse on Satire*
1709–1784	Samuel Johnson
1726	Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
1728	Alexander Pope, *Dunciad*
1731–1764	Charles Churchill
1732	Pope begins *Imitations of Horace*
1749	Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*

Introduction

A World of Satire(s)

We all have an intuitive sense of what satire is. Satire of our politicians, our habits, our preoccupations, our waistlines – just about everything we are and do – appears in every day's newspaper; it is ubiquitous on television. Most of us think of it in a vague sort of way as something funnily critical, or critically funny – the stress varies. And that description will do for a beginning, since that broad understanding of satire goes right back to its beginnings, beginnings that come far earlier than the Roman Satire that is the subject of this book. The urge to satirize antedates written literature; indeed it is locked foundationally in the gestures of early ritual. It is incorporated, with a twist, in the trickster figures of folklore and story, China's Monkey King, West Africans' Eshu and Legba, Native Americans' Coyote and Nanabozho, among thousands of others. And it appears in the earliest literature we have; you can find traces of it in Homer and Hesiod, and it adopts an exclusive voice of its own in ancient literary invective, blame poetry. At one of the highest moments of Greek intellectual achievement, the satirical impulse virtually dominates the Old Comedy of Aristophanes, which, along with tragedy, was the major cultural institution of its day. Aristophanes used satire to criticize Athens' long war with the Peloponnesian alliance, to criticize intellectual showboats (especially Socrates), to criticize the major dramatists and politicians of his time. Ancient "comedy" is in fact a misleading designator; this "comedy" means satire.

Conceived in these terms, satire is simply one of the fundamental modes of human expression. It is always with us, and has left its traces

in artistic, and artless, expression throughout human history. It is always interesting to us because it is always about us, our habits, our manners, our leaders, our enemies, our sins, our absurdities. Humankind will stop satirizing only when it stops existing – which, a satirist would point out, could be at any moment now. A comprehensive book about this satire might be very interesting (or very boring) if it could map out both the varieties of satiric expression and the ways in which satire is wired into human consciousness. But it would be impossibly huge. Scholars and critics have therefore had to focus (it is what scholars like to do anyway) – focus on particular periods or kinds of satire. That may sound characteristically unenterprising to an intelligent general reader, but in some instances, focus has its merits. In the present case, it can fairly be said that the Romans did something unique enough with the satiric spirit as to justify a special look – for they made a literary genre out of it, one that was to leave its imprint on literary history up to the present moment.

We can start with a list of names: Horace, Persius, Juvenal – these are the canonical Roman verse satirists most of us know about. We can grow the list a little fuller to include the names of the lost and fragmentary, thus: Ennius, Lucilius, Pacuvius Turnus. Or make another, adding in writers of Menippean satire, fable, and satiric epigram: Varro, Seneca, Petronius, Martial, Gellius. Or another, with some Greek names (for Greek, in that curious assimilation of cultures, *becomes* Roman) to season the mix with comedy, invective, and later mixtures of prose and verse: Aristophanes, Eupolis, Cratinus, Archilochus, Hipponax, Bion, Callimachus, Posidippus, Lucian, Julian, Boethius – stopping where? For satire certainly doesn't end (whether it did or did not begin) with the Romans. If you know anything about these variously collocated names, you see something of the problem that satire has had in its literary-historical life: satire is a generic child of other genres, precisely a mixture of lineages, with a lifelong identity problem. To say so is a commonplace, but it really is true. Scholars from Quintilian onward have speculated about origins, about registers of discourse, generic affinities, typical subjects and targets. Handbooks and guides resort to broad definition, like mine above, and bland sets of attributes to do the descriptive job. Here, for instance, is one:

> it may be loosely defined as a piece of verse, or prose mingled with verse, intended both to entertain and to improve society by exposing to derision and hatred the follies, vices, and crimes of men. Among its salient characteristics are spontaneity (real or apparent), topicality, ironic wit, coarse humour, colloquial language, frequent intrusions of the author's personality or *persona*, and incessant variations of tone and style.[1]

These features are meant to translate through history and hence describe a quality we call the satiric, but in their generality and imprecision fail to define sufficiently what might constitute the formal thing we call "genre." Within ostensible ranges of characteristic elements scholars have further pursued questions of satire's transparency to life, its *personae*, the reliability of its voice(s), its relation to authority, its complicities – without resolving any of them.

Of course, there *is* a way out: to rely on the kind of formal definition the ancients themselves espoused. Thus Roman verse satires are hexameter poems composed in a certain conversational register that *generally* turn on some kind of criticism. If we leave out the fragmentary and lost authors, this leaves us with the first of the lists above: Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. This is how much of the subsequent European literary tradition, satire's reception-history, understood it, and that is still a powerfully normative force. In fact it is with these three hexameter poets that we shall be spending most of our time in this book. At the same time, we recognize that the problem of generic categorization is still with us. Horace, Persius, and Juvenal clearly had uncertainties about the generic identity of their own poems, as did Lucilius their major forebear; if one considers what some of the others listed above wrote, things get really confused.[2] An indicator of this radical uncertainty is the fact that satire, like all identity-challenged children, is almost pathologically self-conscious. No genre is more programmatically burdened, none more busily and inconclusively talkative about itself, its limits and place in the scheme of things. The situation has been just too tempting for any number of scholars keen to join the identity hunt; hence, satirists' programmatic musings, their recalling the "right," definitive ancestors, answered by a veritable rush of scholarship focusing precisely on this self-reflective aspect of the genre, giving it all the appearance at times of the compound creature opening Horace's *Ars Poetica* in ever more earnest pursuit of its tail.

One is tempted to avoid the fuss. Just get on with the business of thinking as best we can about what these, as it happens, great writers composed for themselves and their readers. But the generic-identity issue entails legitimate concerns. First, it is intrinsically good to know

where and how this literary enterprise got going; what literary influences contributed to the formulation of these poems and how these influences might map out for us what our satires intend. Hence, those Greek names above. Further, it is good to know how the satire game unfolds, where it generates new, related work both in the classical Roman tradition proper and in subsequent literary history. Hence, those extra names in the third list, Varro, Seneca, Petronius, Martial, Boethius, et al. – it goes on; the epigrammatists and later Menippeans play a role that moderates a transformation of satire as genre into satire as cultural modality or modalities. Hence more names: Erasmus, More, Rabelais, Rochester, Dryden, Boileau, Pope, Gay, Swift, Johnson, Churchill, Sterne, Byron, Waugh, Orwell, Huxley, Monty Python's Flying Circus, Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor – a representative few.

Making a Name for Itself

These are issues of placement and comprehension in (ostensibly) objective terms. But there is another, less objective, implication of satire's conspicuous quest to make a name for itself, having to do with *how* we see this literature. The first way has been a leitmotif of the way *this* book has been talking in its first few paragraphs: satire is, was, a latecomer to the generic party, unsure of itself, clearly parasitical on others of nobler parentage (epic, didactic, invective, comedy, philosophy), a lesser genre speaking in a lesser voice. Minor, in short. And that has certainly been the prevailing impression of satirists from ancient times right down to the present. The classical hierarchy of literary genres – seen for instance in Quintilian, the Roman rhetorician and educator whose major work, the *Institutiones Oratoriae*, comprised a rhetorical and literary history – ranks satire right near the bottom, uncomfortably close to mime and the kinds of invective we see, prettied up a bit, in Horace's *Epodes*. Its subjects and topics, too, are drawn from ordinary life, from the dining hall (pretentious vulgarity of), bustling street, even the schoolhouse; no gorgeously decorated celebrations of Olympian triumphs, no epic or tragic grandeur of language or emotion (but for parodic enactments of), no philosophical density or sublimity. Horace, in *Satire* 1.4, declares bluntly that satire is not proper poetry. But this is a satirist writing, and besides, to some ears the oral-freestyling of HipHop is not proper poetry either, which doesn't keep it from touching a lot of people where they live and

becoming a significant cultural medium packing no small message. Satire, too, seeks to make a name for itself because it is a lowborn genre on the make, hoping for a *little* street cred.

There is a paradox in this, for satire was from its Ennian/Lucilian beginnings a literary expression of the privileged, secure, leisured, and educated. The equestrian Lucilius with his affiliations to the Scipionic aristocracy sets this tone; Horace, the genre's most revolutionary practitioner, writes satire as a means of access to the most celestial literary circle of his day; Persius, an old-blood aristocrat, never shakes the stamp of his class; the massively well-read Juvenal writes through the mentality of the aggrieved, shabby gentry. Verse satire's sister genre, Menippean satire, has the scholarly Varro, the posh Seneca, and the decadent courtier Petronius as its major classical practitioners. Moreover, the texture of the writing itself, despite satire's reputation for plain speaking, betrays highbrow literary consciousness. Lucilius was an amateur scholar who wrote learnedly about linguistics, even in his satires. Varro was the very paradigm of the professional scholar; Petronius (called *arbiter elegantiae*) was the model of the decadent man of letters. Seneca was a significant philosopher and tragedian. Horace, Persius, and Juvenal consciously allude to other canonical work on a massive scale. Satire, despite appearances, was really no game for marginal outsiders or cultural naïfs.

So a second reading of satire making a name for itself might consider the paradox of privileged insiders writing satire. Could there possibly be any objective moral force in its criticisms? Or how must what it says be conditioned by the position and interest of its writers?[3] And then there is the ambition implicit in satire's canny, self-deprecating literary sophistication, a quality that may be tied to satire's historical place. Ennius (239–169 BCE), "father" of Roman literature, composed *Saturae* that were largely miscellaneous collections of poetry on a variety of subjects, in a variety of moods.[4] He is generally held not to be a proper satirist because his verse, what we have of its satiric remains, does not seem to have contained much of the element of aggressive criticism that subsequent scholarship has deemed essential to the genre. But the fragments are so scant as to make it really impossible to exclude stringent criticism from his range. Further, Ennius was, crucially, a Hellenizing Roman writer, soaked in Greek, who knew his Posidippus, Callimachus, and popular Hellenistic philosophy, and already *these* Greeks were dismantling, reconfiguring classical genres in new experiment. Ennius' own experiment with

occasional, polymetric, personal verse led to Lucilius' further experimentation and development of "satire" in thirty books, beginning with metric variety but soon settling down to what became the dactylic hexameter that formally defined later verse satire. Ennius and Lucilius both write with an awareness of historical moment; theirs is *the* time when Rome transforms itself from provincial polis to national and even world power. Ennius' *Annales* tell the story, and as Ennius has it, it is precisely a story: the tale of Rome's development rendered in high, Homeric style; the chronicle, like Rome, is important, and Ennius knew it. That fact doesn't necessarily make his *Saturae* important too, but their novelty and experiment, combined with Ennius' sense of living in a pivotal time, suggest the image of the engaged intellectual emerging from his scriptorium and having his say about being Roman on this particular day. That is clearly the image that Lucilius picks up, and he has his say on virtually every aspect of private and public life, at some volume. There is no inferiority complex in any of this; quite the contrary.

The notion of literary experiment is in itself important. While modeled after Hellenistic Greek innovation, the new satire clearly intends something else. Hellenistic Greek intellectuals imagined their way out of classic scripts: Homer and that daunting Fifth Century. They created works on smaller scales, made up new kinds of epic heroes, domesticated comedy. Both Ennius and Lucilius imagined still differently: their problem was to address what they saw coming and what they were living through, a dramatically, sometimes frighteningly changing world, a very big story. Now, one can write epic and/or tragic poems about that, and Ennius did so. Epic and tragedy cope with unsettled circumstances by effecting narrative structure and closure; events of history can be thematized and placed in relation, logics of causality constructed, large questions raised and resolved, ideologies propagated. One might also set about cobbling together a less secure discourse out of sundry inherited elements, one inherently unresolved or unresolving and whose approach to circumstances calls into question the authority of its own formulations. A new discourse that somehow answers the felt need of the moment. If the *Annales* are the big story of Rome coming on, the satires of both Ennius and Lucilius constitute other stories about being Roman and what that might mean, played out on a more human scale. Already, in its first beginnings, satire was neither the artful construction of epic/tragedy nor a simple window into Roman social life (one of the abiding myths

we've inherited from people who should have known better); Ennius' satires, the bits we have, are composed of fable, dialogue, and direct, indirect, and ventriloquized speech: "he do the Police in different voices," as T. S. Eliot put it in his *Waste Land* draft. From the beginning, satire did its job in different voices – refracted impressions, observations, perspectives, opinions, confessions. Personal voices from the vortex. Sometimes these voices are comfortingly homely, sometimes urgent or vehement; always they are in play within a conspicuously "present" social context. What this gives us is precisely an invention designed for a purpose, not just *sermo,* as the Romans came to call it, plain conversation written up; nor is it just personal, occasional, topical, or trivial; the moment and conditions of its inception tell us that.

Yet a persistent impression the major verse satirists, Horace and Persius and Juvenal, give – it has been said – is of (just) pointing out the follies of humanity in the larger swim of Roman civil life. A consequence of that impression has been an exceptional consistency and, in some senses, superficiality of critical treatment. While specialists have treated satire with due seriousness and on occasion have brought remarkable insight to bear on particular authors and poems, the larger themes of synthetic treatments of the genre as a whole have tended to be of the question-begging sort: origins, generic identity, developments through its various canonical practitioners. A begged question tangles premises and conclusions; satire is thus and such because we assume thus and such in looking at its beginnings. It is a nasty circle that hasn't led us to the implicit "why." Why did men of learning and position find their way to this particular mode of expression; what role did it play in that important but brief two and a half centuries of Roman history (130 BCE through 140 CE)? Conceding a secondary rank to satire, criticism has essentially left the poems to speak for themselves as (merely) literary artifacts with a portable "moral" burden. And indeed there was a long period of time when satire was widely read in both Latin and translation as moral didactic by the educated classes. As people found other reasons for reading literature, the Roman satirists slipped into the cryogenic preservation systems of the classical curriculum. Until, that is, the salutary critical attentions of feminism and culture criticism began to stir things up. Foucault, Bakhtin, Lacan, variously influential, along with broader new historicist and politically engaged criticism, have led scholars to functionalities of satire on a number of levels, bringing it, thus, back to

a more central role in twenty-first-century reception of Roman culture. What role might that be? If satire is not to be seen (still) as (only) didactic, or simply as a collection of "classic poems," or as verbal artifacts now to be read as specimens of a flawed, regressive morality, but rather as the literary trace of a certain, ambitious human response to specific pressures at a particular time (with some consequences for us), we have to raise briefly a few more possible conceptions, ways of seeing satire.

One might, for instance, think of it as a particular kind of generic space, a place where certain unruly sides of ourselves come out to play – those aspects of our animal humanness that get excluded from or bottled up in other genres (nobody pisses in epic). Shit, vomit, pus, gas, semen (not much blood, an epic fluid), the smells of brothel sex, grotesqueries of human disfigurement – the shaming, unpleasant, embarrassing, laughable and contemptible in people, and yet, how we really in some respects are. So, Roman Literature Noir; the underside, the back streets and alleys of the world power's world capital. Satire says things not allowed in polite discourse, transgresses, steps over the limit, provokes. There is fun in this, satire contends, and liberation too. As we shall explore in Chapter 5 (pp. 155–6), Bakhtinians have played with the idea that satire (or one of its versions, Menippean) is a species of carnival, that variously institutionalized social exercise wherein the enslaved, suppressed, and marginalized of us have our moment of exuberant license before the clamps come down again. My sense is that all of satire is up to more than this, but there *is* release and relief in satire's opening up to view and expression the body, in both its literal and (often deeply) metaphorical senses;[5] hence the common medical notions of satire as relieving bile – and so, in part, the proliferation of bile, piss, pus, etc. Satire centerstages the disfigured body: flawed, maimed, contorted, decaying. Let the body be seen in literature and its symbology ramifies, morphs. Decadent and decayed, it takes in everything from psychic implosion to the disintegrating "bodies" of polity, culture, and society. "Things fall apart," and satire is there to map their regresses – to cheer or deplore, but above all to show us how it happens.

Or one might think of satire as the (first?) place where the poet's "I" gets to run with the possibilities of literary discourse. The 1950s ushered in a sea-change in satire criticism wherein the idea of a poet's potentially fictive persona displaced conventional notions of satire's naive reportage. Rather than a moralizing record of the

corruptions of Rome, satire came to be the genre where the poet could manipulate his textual image as a self-consciously foregrounded character or caricature in his own work. We learned not to trust satire's *personae*, those configurations of voice and perspective that were seen to be unreliable: partial, self-interested, sometimes bigoted. Recognizing this meant that the reader could take the whole of any particular satire as a literary construction made to purpose; it also meant that readers could take the whole as "literary" *tout court* so that, consequently, any aspect of real life that satire might incorporate could become (just) literary setting, estranged from social or other semantic fields and twisted into fictional shape for the poem's sake. Though their day is past, the New Critics and formalists in general did wonderful things with the satires, exploring the possibilities of rhetorical color implicit in their mixing in authorial unreliability or fictionalized narrator with ostensibly moralizing discourse. More current criticism, while recognizing satire's sexed-up speaker, has sought to bring more of the poet and his world back into discussion, exposing the limitations of satire's exposure of poetry's rhetoric, identifying features of Roman reality that can't be neatly transposed into the netherworld of "just literature." Just possibly satire already knew all this before the partial eyes of our criticisms got to it. Satire challenges the ordinary reader to fess up too. How much of our participation in the poem's rhetorical reciprocity is *fashioned*, how much of our moralizing, or otherwise responding, selves, if we go along with satire's moralizing, is a made up, better front for a more complex, darker, less certain reality? What self do we push up there to meet the poet's constructed self? And if the author's and reader's selves are concocted for the occasion, can either, satire asks, be anything else? Satire is not the only Graeco-Roman genre where this sort of thing goes on, but it may have spotted first of all those qualities of literature we lately call postmodern.[6]

Satire is at once the most and least mundane of literary kinds. Its themes are basic and repetitive, its literary register is far from sublime, low to middle, in fact, with street talk and colloquialism in healthy doses, it does not even try to move us or make us laugh *very* hard, it shuns the political spotlight, it is always about little things, even when they are big (fish). But all that quotidian mundanity makes satire paradigmatically the genre where displacement and indirection provoke larger questions. Emily Gowers, for instance, has shown us how all that food in satire means so much more than the stuff we, or they, eat: food is cultural ritual.[7] Whether that food is rough greens or

egregiously large turbot, it is, in satire, precisely a spectacle of values put on display. Kirk Freudenburg puts it nicely: "Every Roman knows that food isn't just stuff you eat to stay alive. It's elaborate showmanship, outlandishly produced to please and seduce and gratify and move ahead in the world."[8] So too are drink and sex and prayer and money-grubbing and the other ordinary things satire likes to talk about. Satire does not (just) say "these are the ordinary compulsions and addictions that, unduly, occupy our lives" but "let us consider how they mean to us and what they say about us." One could, for instance, write satires of football mania, European and American style, that would have serious and very different things to say about the social constellations of the respective fans. The football analogy is fair enough, since satire goes further than just presenting itself to the odd reader who happens along. Not framed as a romanticized, fantasized, or epicized imaginative act, satire plumps down right there in front of us, not pretending to be of another time or place. It is street theater, consciously theatrical in its self-references,[9] that buttonholes us as we walk by and literally requires our participation. The show can't go on unless we're part of it. Aristotle writes of the appeals of tragedy – pity and fear, cartharsis of emotion – and we might generalize those appeals to epic as well; comedy and lyric please us in different ways; satire calls us out, confronting us with some impression of our world and requiring us to place ourselves within the complex triangulation of poet-speaker, satirized target, audiences (there are perhaps several in question). Just where we place ourselves is always tricky, entailing a decision that is not entirely voluntary, and satire makes us think about that fact too. Satire, crucially, *criticizes*. At times facilely, cheaply, even deviously, especially in the fact that the criticism is open-ended, asking you to agree. Do you? How *can* you? In the end, satire's mundane scenarios and stock criticisms lead to tough and serious questions. It makes us commit, and, once we have, catches us out.

Satire's criticism has a final complication. It targets in obvious ways people and practices it disapproves of, or seems to; as we've noted, it asks us into the process of targeting and so compromises our distance from the textual performance; but satire explicitly targets itself as well. That is most conspicuously seen in its famous programmatic passages where each satirist positions himself in relation to his predecessors, always formulating some compound of "I am doing this better than they" and "I am to some degree compromised, less than the others." Horace dances around these poles openly with Lucilius in his *Satires* 1.4, 1.10, and 2.1; in his prologue and first satire, Persius outlines his own compromised position relative to Lucilius and Horace, but in so doing delineates an almost abrasive independence from tradition; Juvenal's first satire marks, most of all, its distance from satire's beginnings and the expressive possibilities characteristic of those beginnings; its most explicit bearing is Lucilius, so to designate as it were the beginning and end of the tradition: what Lucilius could do, Juvenal avers, he could not, yet the satire, cut and trimmed for his belated day, will in the end be every bit as prepossessing, or more so, most would say. To be sure, this, along with the numerous metapoetic (self-) references, never so thick on the ground in ancient literature as here, is generic self-consciousness, born in part out of a need to find a place for this kind of writing within the literary cosmos of its day. But it also establishes (again, for the first time?) a textual space where poetry performs its own criticism. Satire's reiterated geneses, born again in Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, are inherently critical acts, reading-down forebears as they refashion something else in explicitly critical terms; criticism and creation fused. It further sets up a paradigm within which "what one creates" and "how one reads" are obverse facets of the same thing. Satire's own poetry tells us that (this) literature *is* its reception; Lucilius can only be what his satiric readers, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, say him to be, and that saying is part and parcel of their different formulations of their different sorts of satire. In all this are implications for *our* reading of satire: satiric poems invite us into a conceptual space where textuality turns all ways: to the real worlds of its topicality and ours, to itself, commenting on its own comment, to its auditors, dialogically anticipating – needing – response.

That response is all yours. This book won't script it for you. Read (satire) on.

Further Reading

Valuable general works on Roman satire include M. Coffey, *Roman Satire*, 2nd edition (London, 1989), a clearly written, reliable introduction; J. P. Sullivan, ed., *Critical Essays on Roman Literature: Satire* (London, 1963) still has valuable things to say in its essays by various hands; C. A. Van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory* (Leiden, 1970) remains invaluable. You will also find very good things in C. Witke, *Latin Satire* (Leiden, 1970), N. Rudd, *Themes in Roman Satire* (London, 1986),

and, for some seminally important work, W. S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, 1982). More recently, K. Freudenburg's *Satires of Rome* (Cambridge, 2001) is an incisive, comprehensive modern study of the three major Roman satirists. Freudenburg has also edited *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* (Cambridge, 2005); the many times its essays turn up in this book are an index of the *Companion*'s importance. See too the several individual studies, profoundly influential, by J. Henderson, gathered in his *Writing Down Rome: Satire, Comedy, and Other Offences in Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1999); Henderson's is the most exhilarating and challenging writing on satire you will find. Other very good books of recent vintage, though not intended as introductions, include C. Keane, *Figuring Genre in Roman Satire* (Oxford, 2006) and C. Schlegel, *Satire and the Threat of Speech* (Madison, 2005). On a much smaller scale, but packed with good introductory information, is S. Braund's *Roman Verse Satire, Greece and Rome*: New Surveys in the Classics, 23 (Oxford, 1992). C. J. Classen's "Satire – the Elusive Genre," *Symbolae Osloenses* 63 (1988): 95–121 is a thoughtful introduction to generic issues.

On satire, broadly construed and theorized, see F. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* (Ithaca, 2001); B. A. Connery and K. Combe, eds., *Theorizing Satire* (New York, 1995); R. C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, 1960); N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957); D. Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington, 1994); G. Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton, 1962); M. A. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge, 1993); L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (London, 1985) and *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London, 1994); and G. A. Test, *Satire: Spirit and Art* (Tampa, 1991).

1

Beginnings (?)

Every general or introductory book on classical satire you can find in the library contains a section trying to explain how satire got its name. That story, as all those books will say, is no longer very controversial, though in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries people got worked up into quite a lather over whether the Latin word *satura* derived from satyrs or from *satur*, a Latin adjective roughly meaning "full."[1] There was good reason for the preoccupation: knowing its "original" sense could be a key to the dispositions of the genre's earliest practitioners: is this a poetry "intended" in its first instances to be naughty, irreverent, satyr-like, or is it a term reflecting the diversity of elements collected within its "fullness"? The fourth century (CE) grammarian Diomedes doesn't himself know the truth of the matter, but he does seem to have derived his opinions from sources as far back as Varro (116–27 BCE), and he has set out what have become definitive options:

> *Satura* is the name of a verse composition amongst the Romans. At present certainly it is defamatory and composed to carp at human vices in the manner of the Old (Greek) Comedy: this type of *satura* was written by Lucilius, Horace, and Persius. Previously however *satura* was the name of a composition in verse consisting of miscellaneous poems, such as Pacuvius and Ennius wrote. ... Now *satura* is so called either from the Satyrs, because in this type of poem (i.e. *satura*) laughable and shameful things are related in the same way even as those recited and performed by the Satyrs, or it is called *satura* from a platter which was laden full with a large variety of first fruits, and used to be offered to the gods in the cult of the ancients; and from the abundance and fullness of the dish it was called *satura* ... or from a kind of stuffing which was crammed full with many ingredients and called *satura* according to the

> testimony of Varro. . . . Others however think it derives its name from a law, *satura*, which includes many provisions at once in a single bill, for it is evident that the verse composition *satura* also comprises many poems at once . . . [2]

By the time Diomedes was writing, opinion had settled on the first of these options, since the critically abrasive side of satire had become its most identifiable characteristic. But it appears that Diomedes' source Varro thought otherwise, and in fact the Latin word, because of its short second vowel, cannot legitimately derive from *satyros* with its long u-sound.[3] By default, then, the source-meaning of the word suggests fullness (thus related to *satis*, "enough," the occasion of frequent self-conscious puns in Roman satires), with the further idea of a composite mixture of things. Certainly interesting things can be teased out of this originary definition: there is correspondence here to Juvenal's figure for his own poems as a *farrago*, mixed feed for cattle (*Sat.* 1.86); the idea of a miscellaneous collection paradigmatically seen in Ennius and Lucilius; the easy figural assimilation of culturally loaded themes of food – feasting, overeating, entertaining, what one does to get ahead, the perils of the patronage system, the culture of the *triclinium* (dining room) as index of Roman identity. But there is a significant sense, too, in which this "original" sense of satire is no help at all, rather like the "goat-song" etymology of tragedy. There is, after all, nothing in it that prescribes what ought to be stuffed into these miscellaneous collections of verse, nothing suggesting tone, approach, register, attitude. To take another example, Livy (7.2.4–10) tells us that *satura* was once the name of an early, native form of Roman drama; but here too, apart from a vague connection to dialogue within some satires and to the occasional presence of Greek Old Comedy as a model for satire's social criticism, this early source tells us little about what satire came to be, and as crucially, how it came to be. For that we have to look at its extant practitioners.

Ennius

Quintus Ennius (239–169), whose very few remaining fragments of satire make him the vaguely remembered grandfather of the genre, seems to authorize the paradigm of satire as medley.[4] One of the few things generally known about his four, or six, books (we are unsure of the number) is that they combined poems written in different meters on a number of themes and topics. There are fables, dialogues, debate, anecdotes, satiric portraits of parasites and botherers, references to food – in short much of the farrago that would appear in later satire. So few fragments of the *Satires* survive that it is impossible to make a comprehensive judgment of the poetry as a whole, or of the *Saturae* as satire in anything like the later Roman or modern senses. But the satires do offer intriguing glimpses into a remarkable and dare we say novel poetic chemistry. Perhaps the first thing to keep in mind about Ennius is that he takes himself seriously as a writer, as one of the fragments of the Satires tells us:

> Your health, poet Ennius, you who pass to mortal men
> a cup of flaming verses drawn from your very marrow.[5]

The "flaming verses" have to be a reference to his patriotic history, *Annales,* or his tragedies, for the remaining fragments of the *Saturae* don't have much firepower, but this little couplet reminds us that this is the poet who in the early verses of his great annalistic epic imagines Homer himself appearing to the poet in a dream vision. It is the egoism of that gesture that mainly strikes us today, but for Ennius it was at least as much a conscious metapoetic act, linking his own ambition (and achievement) to a distinctly pre-Roman tradition. And elements of that tradition surely influence the formation of satire as a genre. Horace names, for instance, writers of Greek Old Comedy, Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes, as foundational (*Sat.* 1.4.1–7):

> Consider the poets Eupolis and Cratinus and Aristophanes
> and the others who composed Old Comedy,
> if anyone ever deserved to be written up, because he was no-good,
> or a thief, or adulterer or cutthroat, or otherwise
> notorious, they used to satirize them liberally.
> Lucilius depends altogether on these, and follows them,
> with only the meter changed.

And Persius affirms comedy's still current affinity of spirit (*Sat.* 1.123–125):

> Whenever you are stirred up by daring Cratinus
> or you become devoted to tetchy Eupolis or great old Aristophanes,
> look also here, if perchance you'd hear something cooked down and sharp.

This Old Comedy, while very different from satire in verse-form and many of its qualities in intent and performance conditions, was nonetheless frank in its critical appraisal of individuals and society. The satirists seize on its license to say what it wants to and its unwillingness to mince words. Satire also takes in, like a generic sponge, features of other Greek writing: invective, philosophical diatribe, and epistle. Ennius' affinities for Greek literature of a number of kinds make him, symbolically, a pivotal figure. He wrote tragedies, history, comedies, gastronomic poetry, encomiastic poetry, and a rationalizing prose work on mythology, as well as a few books of miscellaneous verse called *Saturae*. If we think of him, as Horace arguably does, as satire's *auctor* (*Sat.* 1.10.66), we are reminded that his literary scope is emblematic of the genre that would name itself after one of his works. We think back through Ennius, wondering what made up (composed) Ennius making up those *Saturae* – through him to all those other poetic kinds and especially, since they will become important to developing satire, to comedy, popular philosophy, even to Greek invective. Ennius is usually not seen to be prominently influenced by the invective poets, Archilochus, Hipponax, Semonides, and Anacreon, generally from the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, or by writers of Hellenistic iambic such as Alcaeus, Callimachus, Sotades, and Menippus. But he did write some of his *Saturae* in iambic meter, perhaps intending to invoke both comedy and iambic invective.[6] And sometimes his tone sounds a little like proper invective: *malo hercle magno suo convivat sine modo!* ("Let him be one of the guzzlers without limit, and, by god, may he be utterly damned for it!").[7] Van Rooy summarizes Ennius' blending of comic and lyric iambic: "It is probably not without significance that the poet who was so fond of personal utterance . . . should have made considerable use of the iambic meter which, being the natural medium for dialogue, had been made by Archilochus the literary medium for free, colloquial, personal utterance. Nor is it without significance that both these poets should have reflected their individual personality in their poetry."[8] But Ennius is no Roman Archilochus; what is striking is the transformation of Archilochian influence; transformative because it seeks to make something else: not quite comedy, not quite invective, not quite diatribe. The artistry of this particularly delicate balancing act is Ennius' first contribution to the genre.

There is another sense, too, in which the larger conditions of the invective tradition touch Ennius, initially, and satire in general later.

David Mankin fits invective into a broader category of blame poetry, which includes satire and comedy as well, and centers its criticisms around the idea of *philotes*: "[t]he *iambus* was meant to remind the audience of what might be a threat to the very shared customs, morals, and so on which brought them together and united them as an audience. Whether as fellow citizens or as drinking companions, the members of the audience would consider themselves *philoi* ("friends") and what they shared as *philotes* ("friendship"), a term which has the same complex range of meaning in Greek as *amicitia* has in Latin."[9] *Amicitia* was that network of alliance and patronage, more political than personal, which underpinned Rome's version of republican government and social disposition. When Horace wrote his epodes or *Iambi* (30s BCE), roughly contemporaneously with his *Satires*, he may have been thinking, Mankin contends, of the profound crisis in Roman *amicitia* brought about by decades of social disruption and civil war: "Horace turned to a type of poetry whose function had been the affirmation of 'friendship' in its community . . . he may have hoped that his *iambi* would somehow 'blame' his friends and fellow citizens into at least asking themselves *quo ruitis* ["what are you (madly) rushing to?"] ([*Ep.*] 7.1)."[10] That appraisal may be optimistic, though a full five of the seventeen epodes focus thematically on recent civil disruption and Mankin is right in pointing to a larger contingency in the writing of iambic verse in general.

Thus, a crucial overlap with satire. Neither genre is blame poetry *tout court*; both fashion a vocabulary of blame out of a larger fabric, intertextual and social, within which the blaming "means" more than sending a wretched victim of abuse off to the gallows tree. So when Persius invokes Hipponax in his prologue by employing the latter's characteristic meter, the scazon or limping iambic, he means to suggest more than verbal abuse.[11] In fact, Persius' prologue scarcely abuses at all in a personal sense; rather it attacks the entire social system responsible for generating bad verse, corrupt patronage and cultural values. Both iambic and satire are "about" human, social relations, and while specific targeting may be local, consequences of that targeting are never so. Yet overlap does not mean identity. We could say that iambic is the preferred verse form for satire in Greek; hexametric for satire in Latin; or we could say that iambic tends toward personal abuse while (Roman) satire tends toward criticism of stock figures and broader social mores. These are fair generalizations, but even in making them we see how mixed and interlocked these things are.

Ennius will, then, sometimes sound, in his *Saturae*, a little like an iambic poet, sometimes like a satirist, for instance like one of Horace's longwinded (satirized) stoics:

> Why, when you come along carefree,
> spick and span, your cheeks unstuffed, your arm bared, ready,
> tripping a-tip-toe waiting all taut like a wolf –
> when next you are lapping up another's goods,
> in what mind, do you think, is your host?[12]

And sometimes he will sound like neither. And while we can arguably claim that Ennius's *Saturae* include more than later satire comes to do, it would be merely arbitrary to argue that they are not satire for that reason. That larger Ennian grasp, in point of fact, itself designates one of satire's crucially defining features, its transformative incorporation of other generic influences.

There is another such defining feature, already mentioned above. Ennius writes his *Saturae* in pivotal and parlous times, when Greek cultural bearings and the realities of Roman political and military power were sweeping whole peoples into their train. Ennius lived every Greek teacher's fantasy, which is to say he was "important" (one of his first Greek students was Cato). Born a non-citizen in old Calabria in the year 239 BCE, Ennius' arrival in Rome brought him into contact and even friendship with Rome's leading citizens: Marcus Fulvius Nobilior, his son Quintus Fulvius, and the Scipionic clan. Those major players were riding and driving Rome's rise in the Mediterranean basin in the decisive days of the second Punic war. Ennius' adult life corresponds to the period (220–168 BCE) selected by the historian Polybius to mark Rome's triumph in the Mediterranean. Ennius would die barely a year before the defeat of the Macedonian Perseus at Pydna. In Rome's relatively rapid metamorphosis from polis to world-power, literature as well as *Realpolitik* is involved; or rather, literature might be seen as an element of, or closely involved with, that *Realpolitik*. Ennius' very association with Scipio Africanus made what he wrote worthy of attention. The fact that Cato, initially a patron, came reportedly to resent Ennius and his (Hellenizing) influence is a tribute to the sway a Greek pedagogue and man of letters might have. Ennius' experiments with Romanized Greek genres, virtually inventing a literature for Rome, initially define, as well as help shape, Romans' sense of self in and for the wider world. A passage from

Ennius' *Annales*, passed down to us from Gellius whose quotation is responsible for the fragment's survival, has been frequently cited to make this very point. The passage has to do with the relation of one Geminus Servilius with a trusted friend of lesser rank; Gellius refers to Lucius Aelius Stilo who contends that the friend is a self-portrait of Ennius:

> So saying he (Servilius) called to one with whom he shared willingly and cheerfully and right often his table, his talks, and his affairs, when, tired out, he had spent long hours of the day in managing the greatest affairs, by counsel given in the wide mart and sacred senate-house; one to whom care-free he would often speak out boldly matters great and small, and joke the while, and blurt out words good and bad to say, if so he wished at all, and store them in loyal keeping . . .[13]

There is more than a touch of saccharine idealizing in this picture, but the image of the writer (if this is an Ennian self-portrait) as the intimate confidante of the powerful, not directly involved in issues of state but counselor and friend of those who are, is programmatically important. As Frances Muecke points out, it is taken up by later satirists, Lucilius and Horace, who find in this personal intimacy with public men a "place" for satire.[14] It allows the satirist to play off his own servility and the modesty of his discourse against the sense of importance it may derive from being close to the beating heart of Rome. It represents the private side of the voice of authority, and no matter how public and ordinary its scenes are in Ennius and will become in others, it bears with it something of this insider's perspective, secret knowledge, the implicit power of secrets unrevealed. Satire is not the plain man's commentary on the big world out there. Like the politician claiming to speak for ordinary folk, it is a compounded voice, darker and duplicitous. Ennius' image tells us too that the satirist is not an apolitical creature. Rather he writes from within a rather tightly prescribed political position: both Ennius and Lucilius are partisans of the Scipios; Horace positions himself within Augustus' coterie; Persius and Juvenal define themselves in opposition to different manifestations of imperial power, perforce ambiguously and elusively and (as they alert us) not without care to their own interests. Whatever its pretense to disinterested observation of society, Roman satire is always born of a highly developed awareness of the satirist's political position. Ennius tells us this from the beginning.

Lucilius

But it is Lucilius (168/7–102 BCE), aristocratic friend of P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, who is the widely acknowledged father of satire; Horace calls him the "inventor" of the genre (*Sat.* 1.10.48).[15] All three major "hexameter" satirists, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, refer to Lucilius as the authorizing inaugurator of their craft. Certainly, Lucilius' decision to compose his satires in hexameters was generically determinative; his earliest books, owing to a quirk in transmission, are numbered 26–30, the first four of which books were composed in a number of meters, but 30 and the later books, numbered 1–21, are all hexameters, the meter that succeeding satirists would adopt.[16] We can see in this circumstance the origins of an evolving generic autobiography or composition of theme and variations: Lucilius invents a genre to be developed and altered in Horace, Persius, Juvenal (and others lost), so that we have by Juvenal's death a rather neat, entirely Roman generic package; *satura quidem tota nostra est*, "at least *this* genre's all ours," wrote the Roman Quintilian in simplifying summation. The various Greek influences, or prefigurations, initially drawn together by Ennius are elided. In this spirit, the later grammarian Diomedes marginalized Ennius and his nephew Pacuvius: "Previously however *satura* was the name of a composition in verse consisting of miscellaneous poems, such as Pacuvius and Ennius wrote . . . "[17] Diomedes thus distinguishes satire from grab-bags like Posidippus' epigrammatic collection, the *Soros* ("Pile"). But Quintilian's formulation of a popular impression, *tota nostra est*, is not disinterested description. It is a statement, too, of Roman identity, a declaration that the words of the satirist, whatever their source or influence, become naturalized, born of and about Rome. This fashioning of verses reflecting Roman identity is not much different from Ennius' practice, but it is Lucilius whose gathering of diverse elements and qualities is founded most deeply and aggressively on recording a certain kind of *Romanitas* in a moment of national identity crisis. That *Romanitas*, as we shall now see via a grammarian's non-thematic filtration system, is less about what is said or subjects covered than a certain posture.

(Short-order) Cook's tour

The grammarian is one Nonius, of the fourth century CE. In composing his *De Compendiosa Doctrina*, he found Lucilius a good source for words and usages, odd and otherwise, that he wanted to discuss. Consequently, after the full texts of Lucilius were lost, the fragments Nonius quoted as illustration became posterity's chief source of the sketchy outlines of "our" Lucilius. A number of other post-Lucilian authors made several further contributions, and much thought has been put into placing them all in their contexts and in reconstructing the organization of the books and poems within them. But it is all very uncertain, and today no one can read through Lucilius as a literary text simply because there is not enough continuity among the fragments to make a lot of sense of them. Still, Nonius' grammatical dragnet and others' variously interested anglings have pulled up interesting tidbits for the satirical table.

Books 26–30: Preprogramming satire

Lucilius programs satire's notoriously self-reflexive programmatic verse (see pages 4–11). He tells us up front that he is writing for only the middling-clever (632–634[18]), thus welcoming the general run of us, but excluding too: no scholars, no culture snobs ("I don't want [scholarly] *Persius* to read me" [635]). But he *must* write ("I've *got* to speak out" [696]). This too will be paradigmatic; Persius will twist fragment 696 into the grotesque imagery of a satirical fig tree bursting from the writer's spleen, but Lucilius' imperative, that satire will out, remains constant through Juvenal. Lucilius will do more programming later, but we note that from this first beginning satire maps its place in the generic geography, a decisive gesture. Ensuing fragments survey the thematic field: wives, mostly bad, bothersome agents, especially if they are not quite Roman, drink, boon companions, food – scenes at table are everywhere in Lucilius, and they become ubiquitous in later satire. Eating is perfect for satire; utterly trivial yet the place where class, social codes, and personal habits come under scrutiny. Lucilian satire first recognizes that it is precisely over the banal and necessary process of filling one's belly that issues of "taste" (*sapio*), discrimination, distinction, propriety, the limits of meagerness and excess become primary. Satire's favorite bad pun is *satis*; a moralizing "what's enough." Paradoxically, satire fills itself beyond *satis*faction until the writer or reader, too late, cries *satis*, "enough," naming the genre even while trying to escape it: you can't escape satire. Feasting defines a world where little and big things matter: big fish, stuffed dormice, stuffed boars, stuffed diners, coarse

food too, tough veg to show the fastidious what's what, some vinegary wine, but more faux Margaux than Mogen David. An occasional healthy snack to juxtapose the rarified fare of desperately climbing gourmands. All of it culturally coded; food is about how society works. Food for thought, too; Lucilius introduces philosophy in these books, mostly the Hellenistic concoctions of the Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans: recipes for living. Satire first gets its moralizing mission here, and its first stress on the "real" as opposed to the fictive subjects of tragedy and epic: "something important – the people's health and prosperity – this is Lucilius' greeting imparted to verses such as he can write, and all this with heartiness and earnestness" (791–792). Ideas like food get digested and sometimes go bad, and the body becomes the site for moral diagnosis ("we see him who is sick in mind showing the mark of it on his body" [678] . . . "before he felt the rascal's pulse and tested his heart" [680]); mind, "soul," and society are entailed in the body's palpitations and ulcers.[19]

What else in these chartering first books? Literature: poetry, historiography, comedy, tragedy, none of it treated in appreciative terms. That attitude is more than satiric mean-spiritedness, for satire invokes other literature as much as any dimension of human living. Certainly part of the interest is self-interest, making a place for itself in the cosmos of Graeco-Roman literature. We have seen and will see considerably more evidence of precisely this generic self-fashioning in later satirists, and it is easy to discern in this the kind of parlor game self-conscious literary artists and critics like to play. But there is a deeper and more important sense that literature taps deep into fundamental currents of life and human values, and it too is about taste. Persius' searing critique of his contemporary literary scene opens his book of satires, and to see that poem as (just) "about literature" is to miss the point. Here again we might see in satire a first, in satire's reading of literature as cultural artifact, drawn from and invested in the political life of Rome. Then there is sex, of the chummy, misogynist sort – the *libertas*, free speech, of the privileged male with sexual choices, the power to take his *satis*factions. What matters most to Lucilius is the body on offer ("Here you will find a firm, full body / and breasts standing out on a marble-white chest" [923–924]) and convenience (in the brothel, "[I want] women who will ask for less and also make their offers with much more propriety / and without reproach" [927–928]). He happily goes both ways, not unusually for his class and day, but there's never a question of who's on top – at least figuratively.

There is invective in these books, and friendship too, and law (805–813). This last association will become intrinsic, for satire has its brushes with the law. The satirist sometimes-pretendingly fears libel laws, fears retribution; yet he is a law unto himself: he accuses, he passes judgement, he punishes ("Lucilius flayed the city, cracked down on its Lupuses and Muciuses; Horace twisted the conscience of his smiling friend" [Persius *Sat.* 1.114–117]).

Books 1–21: Program, map, menu

Horses, fish, Latin grammar, Homer, superstition, misers, sex(-ism), rhetoric, travel, autobiography, luxury and poverty, country living, defecation, law, friendship, literary criticism, gods, enemies, polemic, politics, gladiators, wanton women, gangrene, food, more food, drink and drunkenness, one good belch, and much else in these books. Even within such a farrago, the reader can discern themes and recurrent obsessions. These books thus become, even more decisively than do the first five, the chartering conceptual map of the genre. All subsequent verse satire is to some degree traceable to Books 1–21 of Lucilius. Almost as if he were aware of that situation, Lucilius opens with program. If Persius' scholiast is correct, the first line of the first satire of the later satirist quotes the first line of Lucilius's "first": *O curas hominum! O quantum est in rebus inane!* ("Oh, the cares of humankind, oh, the triviality of things!"). Satire's focus is immediately, and permanently, bifocal: that *inane* is meant to gloss *curas hominum* as well as *rebus* [the world], so that human responses to pressures from without come under as much scrutiny as any absurdity "out there." Yet *rebus* doesn't just mean "things" or the stuff of material existence, but the world as seen and conceived by people; it entails society, what we broadly call culture, and the movements of human history. Crucially, therefore, satire is less about particular things or situations than about *how* we are connected, plugged into the Zeitgeist.

Sometimes that plugging-in channels nastiness; Lucilius glosses the art with an image: "the letter, r[rrrrrr], which the teased dog speaks more clearly than a man does" (3–4). Satire, voice of the provoked outsider, growls. Later, Lucilius will tell us, using an anatomical figure to locate satire's disdain that will be much imitated, that it snorts as well: "I found fault with the severe law of Calpurnius Piso, and snorted my anger through the nostrils at the tip of my nose" (607–608). It can also tell an amusing tale, punctuated with growls and snorts.

Fragments 5 and following come from his Second Satire devoted to an imaginary debate among the gods (*Concilium Deorum*) considering the admission of an enemy of Scipio, one Lucius Cornelius Lentulus Lupus. This satirical treatment will map out parts of Juvenal's Fourth Satire and Seneca's satirical treatment of Claudius in his *Apocolocyntosis* ("Pumpkinification"). In Book 2, Lucilius goes after another enemy, Quintus Mucius Scaevola, without mincing words: Scaevola is a "corrupt man, and scot-free thief" (57), who is hot with boy-lust (63), and knows how to "penetrate into a hairy bag" (61). It is in this accusatory context that Lucilius drops a suggestive word: *non dico "vincat licet"; et vagus exul et erret exlex* ("I do *not* say 'let him win the case,' no, let him be an exiled vagabond and an outlawed wanderer" [64–65]). *Exlex* captures not only the victim's but also satire's ambiguous relation with law, both (fearful of) being subject to it and somehow beyond it, acting as legal agency unto itself. Like the duly sentenced Scaevola, the satirist travels, and Book 3 is all about Lucilius' trip to Sicily. Not a Cook's Tour at all, for its focus is less on the seen than the focalized perceptions of the seer: gladiator contests, animal births, fetching hostesses, eating, drinking, belching. Horace would imitate this satire in his first book (1.5), describing his own journey with Maecenas, Vergil, and others on a diplomatic mission to Brundisium, an imitation that, in its considered and complex responses to the Lucilian model, goes far in establishing Horace's own program and poetic identity.

Incerta (and uncentered to boot)

The fragments unassigned to particular books offer some of the longer and more interesting selections from Lucilius' writing. Here we find his intriguingly dismissive description of his satire as "makeshift verse" (*schedium fac<io>* [1131]) – an evasive gesture that Horace will pick up and develop in his first book of satires. The Forum (the City, Wall Street) – paradigmatic setting of satire – appears with sufficient trimmings here (1145–1151):

> But now from morning to night, holidays or not,
> the whole commons and senators too,
> all bustle about the forum and never leave;
> all give themselves over to one and the same enthusiasm and artifices,
> to swindle with impunity, to fight cunningly, to contend

> through ingratiation, to act the fine fellow,
> to set traps as if everyone were enemies of everyone.

Counterpoint to such cynicism stands just a few fragments away, an old-fashioned version of Roman virtue (1196–1208):

> Virtue is to be able to pay a fair price for things
> in the world we live and work in;
> virtue is knowing what every situation holds for one;
> virtue is knowing what is correct, useful, and honorable for one,
> what things are good, what bad, what without use, wicked, and dishonorable;
> virtue is knowing the proper end and limit of acquiring;
> virtue is being able to pay out the full price from our stores;
> virtue is giving what in truth is due to honour,
> being an enemy and hostile to bad men and their ways,
> a defender of good men and their ways,
> to value greatly the latter, wish them well, and live a friend to them;
> beyond all this, to prize our country's interests first,
> our parents' next, and lastly our own.

It should now not surprise us to see in proximity to this kind of idealizing, ethical set-piece, which would become a *topos* in later satire, a fair number of salaciously coarse fragments: "the whores of Pyrgi," "the nightly-poked slut," "the rump, my dear Hortensius, that provides the jerks born for the purpose" (1178–1180), "she stains you, but he bedungs you," "I wet the bed and soiled the bedclothes" (1182–1183). Or crude invective and the tumors, pimples, and blisters of the vile body. Satire thrives on this counterpoint; its readers deflected from instance to instance in a world whose values remain unsettled, perpetually in play. Which is why the image of the *soros*, the pile, the farrago, the proper limits and, precisely, definition of all these, is so decisively indicative of satire. To know what is "enough," *satis*, is to know where the beginning and end are, where the center, the center of values, is. Lucilian satire is uncentered writing, its matter the predilections and interests of a particular aristocratic Roman whose personal and political values are both specific to his time and largely unformulated.

Lucilius' books are thus so surprisingly inclusive that the reader/critic's job is less to describe what is included than to mark what is excluded. Big ideas, obviously, run outside satire's ambit. The themes of tragedy and epic, of high-minded, celebratory lyric, of encomium,

of propagandistic historiography aren't much found in Lucilian or later satire. Lucilius made an initial decision about that and it stuck. Yet Lucilius' social position, privileged and powerful, his remarkable access to Scipio and other members of the political elite, and his involvement in political polemic ensure that his chosen satiric register and discourse is not an outsider's counter-genre, the protesting voice of the unempowered. Rather Lucilius created another means of looking into not the real stuff of Roman life, but the sensibility of the contemporary Roman engaged in that real stuff. It's all about how a Roman gent like Lucilius takes it in, how he processes the encounters and events of quotidian existence. He has ideas about drink, dinners, words, sex, bodies – his own and others'. In some corner of his mind he is concerned about mortality and morality, about questions posed by the philosophers he has read, but he knows too that what he might write about (his version of) mundane things seen in this particular Roman way, can/should stir things up in the minds of like- and unlike-minded contemporaries and might just possibly be worth putting down in books – the better to remember with. Lucilian satire is not, precisely not, a "history" of current events; its very anti-canonical posture is an indication that it is to be taken as both a version of "things out there" (Lucilius' view, elitist, etc., etc.) and a discourse whose status is "to be questioned." Eschewing the credibility of the big, canonical genres, Lucilius tries out a look at the under-and-other sides of living in a Rome growing into a new place in the world and out of its old assumptions, while asking his readers to believe it or not. Lucilian satire is the first (Roman or other) genre to instate dubiety as chartering dictum. In the radically uncertain and rapidly changing state of Roman things, Lucilius' satire is a "certain" voice whose very normative impulse is subverted the moment it comes into satire. Lucilius may thus say, without risking triviality, "Here (amid seismic changes in the world polity) are my ideas about ... fish." This is the most challenging conceptual paradox of satire.

Further Reading

The most available texts for Ennius and Lucilius are the Loeb editions, edited by E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), in four volumes. For satire's beginnings, C. A. Van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory* (Leiden, 1965) is essential. And now see F. Muecke's hospitable introduction, "Rome's First 'Satirists': Themes and Genre in Ennius and Lucilius," in K. Freudenburg, *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* (Cambridge, 2005), 33–47 as well as S. Goldberg's good chapter "Enter Satire" in his recent *Constructing Literature in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 2005). A. S. Gratwick in "The Satires of Ennius and Lucilius" in E. J. Kenney and W. V. Clausen, eds., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1982), 156–71, lays out the Hellenistic background of Ennius' *Saturae*. Others of note include M. Coffey, *Roman Satire* (London, 1989), 11–23; J. H. Waszink, "Problems Concerning the *Satura* of Ennius," in O. Skutsch, ed., *Ennius, Fondation Hardt, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique* XVII: 99–137 (Geneva, 1972); N. Rudd, *Themes in Roman Satire* (London, 1986); and A. Richlin's *Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (rev. edn., New York, 1992), 164–74. On Lucilius and his social context, see E. Gruen's *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca, 1992), 272–317. W. Raschke has written extensively and informatively on Lucilius: "*Arma pro amico* – Lucilian Satire at the Crisis of the Roman Republic," *Hermes* 115 (1987): 299–318, "The Virtue of Lucilius," *Latomus* 49 (1990): 352–369, and "The Chronology of the Early Books of Lucilius," *Journal of Roman Studies* 69 (1979): 78–89. On style (though you will need your Latin) see H. Petersmann, "The Language of Early Roman Satire: Its Function and Characteristics," in J. N. Adams and R. G. Mayer, eds., *Aspects of the Language of Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1999), 289–310.