HORACE THE SATIRIST:  
FORM AND METHOD IN SATIRES 1.4

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Though Satires 1.4 is Horace’s first statement on the nature of his own writing, and writing in general, its difficulties cannot be explained away on the grounds that it is early and therefore inept. A poet with Horace’s dedication to self-criticism1 would not have allowed the survival of something which he did not think lived up to his ideal scribendi recte. Similarly, it would be a mistake to conclude that, because his argumentation is playful, Horace is not saying anything serious about the ethics and poetics of satire. The aim of my reading of the poem is to arrive at Horace’s concept of himself as satirist, for in the end it is his own character which holds together the two seemingly disparate threads of the argument — the moral justification of satire and its definition as an artistic form.2

The poem takes the form of an argument, a polemical apologia in reply to purportedly hostile criticism.3 Whether Horace had really been criticized or not is a question that need not detain us, since an answer to it would not in any case help us to understand the poem better. What matters is that Horace has adopted this strategy in order to explore certain issues that arise from the fact that he is now a writer of satire. These matters — the character of the satirist, the form and method of satire, both as writing and as social criticism, and, more widely, the relationship of satire to life — are all for him interdependent, and so, for us, only to be understood in the context which gives them full meaning. It is necessary, therefore, to define the way in which 1.4 is an argument. A.Y. Campbell found that Horace is

1. See C. W. Macleod, CQ N.S.27 (1977), 359ff., esp. 375f. I wish to record with gratitude my debt to Mr C.W. Macleod for his generous suggestions for the improvement of this paper. In an earlier form it was read at the 19th AULLA Congress held from 21 to 25 August, 1978 in Brisbane, Australia.
3. Niall Rudd (AJPh 76 (1955), 165ff.) is the champion of the view that Horace is defending himself against hostile criticism in a dispute which actually took place at the time. G.L. Hendrickson (AJPh 21 (1900), 121ff.) started the controversy on this point by arguing that 1.4 was essentially ‘criticism of literary theory put concretely’. Likewise, Gordon Williams (Horace, Greece and Rome. New Surveys in the Classics No. 6 (1962), pp.15f.) takes the attack and defence as a poetic framework used by Horace for the expression of his ideas. Between these two positions we find C.O. Brink (Horace on Poetry (1963), p.157, n.1), who accepts the view that Horace is defending himself against an actual attack, but thinks it necessary, in interpreting the poem, to go beyond the question of literary feuds to that of the poet’s own aspirations.
‘illogical’ and ‘deliberately clouds issues’. On the other hand, Coffey has recently described 1.4 as ‘closely argued’ and contrasted it with 2.1 on just this point: ‘In place of the poet’s reasoned exposition of arguments there is a swift dialogue in which issues are evaded by clever shifts of position and ambiguities of language.’

My feeling is that 1.4 in fact only pretends to be a ‘reasoned exposition of arguments’ and that it, no less than 2.1, is also characterised by ‘evasion of issues’ through ‘shifts of position and ambiguities of language’, if this is how we choose to describe the play of ideas in the poem. It has often been remarked that Horace’s ‘illogicality’ and his avoidance of a systematic exposition of literary or ethical theory are typical of his technique in the Satires. What does Horace gain by it here? I think it helps to consider again who he is arguing with. The debate on the question of contemporary literary feuds has rather obscured the point that the ‘critics’ whose views are represented are essentially readers, and readers of the wrong kind (cf. the more explicit handling of this topic at 1.10.76ff.). Complementary to the question of what the satirist is and is not is that of how satire should and should not be read. In wrestling with the problem of where to situate Horace the reader is forced to define his own position, to construct ‘Horace’ on the basis of the poet’s ironic disclaimers and under-statements and to dissociate himself from the limited perspectives of the interlocutor. It is in this way that the form of the poem enacts the poet’s meaning, the explicit (and rather futile) debate on traditional topics motivating a more subtle dialectic.

The central paradox in the theory of satire is that it is poetry and wants to be read for the sake of the words, while it claims a function that implies an unusual degree of involvement with life. This function, of course, is not simply that of imitating life, though satire does claim this kind of realism (cf.25, ‘quemuis media elige turba’), but of improving it. Horace humorously focuses this dilemma on the audience. Given the state of mankind, his readers are his actual or potential victims. Their moral im-

6. op.cit., p.82.
8. A. Cartault (Étude sur les satires d’Horace (1899), p.146) proposed a single interlocutor from line 38 to 143. I agree with Lejay (Satires (1911), pp.106ff.) that the ‘interlocuteur fictif’ does not exist: he is ‘un simple procédé de discussion’. In 1.4: ‘Il est tour à tour une victime de la satire, un hypocrite venimeux, un critique d’école différente, et surtout le lecteur.’
provement, we come to realise, consists initially in their being taught how to read satire. 10 Let us see how this is done.

The poem opens with a standard piece of literary history, an innocent-looking disguise for one of the basic matters of contention — satire’s aggressiveness. Lucilius is said to depend on Old Comedy. This implies that a genre exists and that certain expectations have been formed as to its style and content, expectations which any subsequent writer has to take into account. Horace’s implied definition accords with that found in Diomedes (G.L. i. p.485) and generally agreed to be Varronian:11 ‘carmen maledicum ad carpendum uitia hominum archaeae comoediae charactere compositum’. The more specific point made in lines 1-5, that the libertas (παρρησία) of a verbal attack can be justified on the grounds that the target deserves it (is dignus) is confirmed as current by a letter from Trebonius to Cicero (ad Fam. 12.16.3),12 which uses the same argument and also cites Lucilius as a precedent. Horace therefore begins by outlining the traditional conception of satire as the public exercise of censorious wit, directed at individuals (όνομαστι κωμωδείν). It was Hendrickson’s main thesis that Horace wished to dissociate himself from this kind of satire, and to propose a new definition more in accord with the milder spirit of his own work.13

I agree with those who have rejected Hendrickson’s interpretation. While admitting differences between himself and Lucilius, Horace still wishes to claim adherence to the Lucilian tradition.14 What he is really protesting against is a set of popular misconceptions of the Lucilian satirist.15 For, regardless of whether Horace’s satire was offensive, and of whether Lucilius’s notare was anything like the όνομαστι κωμωδείν of Old Comedy,16 Horace did not want to eliminate the function of social criticism from the definition of satire.

This is confirmed by the parallels between lines 1-5 and 25ff. I take these correspondences (especially dignus describi and culpari dignos) as showing that Horace’s position in relation to society is analogous to that of the Attic comedians and Lucilius, analogous but not exactly the same.17 The difference in expression indicates a difference in approach. In lines 3-5 the individuals are totally identified with their uitia, as fur, moechus, sicarius and
so on. But in the later passage the emphasis is on the *uitia* themselves, which individuals may be taken as exemplifying, while still, we note, being named. Here Horace is hinting at what is special about his social criticism — he is putting satire on a sound ethical footing, in accord with the *descriptio* or *ηθολογία* of moral philosophy (cf.105ff. and the discussion of this passage below). In contrast, lines 33ff. with their imputation of irresponsible personal attack show how fundamentally he has been misunderstood.

The stylistic criticisms of Lucilius which follow lines 1-8 should not be thought of as opposed to the definition of satire by content. On the contrary, *res* and *uerba* are complementary facts of writing,¹⁸ and Horace is being comprehensive as well as finding a way of introducing himself into the argument (cf.1.10.47, ‘melius quod scribere possem’). It is worth pausing for a moment with *uitiosus* in line 9, since so much of the poem is about *uitia*. In the context this refers first to technical faults, *uitium* and *uir tur* being technical terms of stylistic analysis,¹⁹ but, given Horace’s tendency to slide between literature and morality,²⁰ I think there may be an indication of moral irresponsibility which is picked up in lines 12-13 in *garrulus atque piger* and also present in *scribendi recte*. When at *A.P.*309 Horace says ‘*scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons*’, he is demanding, according to Brink *ad loc.*, a combination of technical expertise with knowledge of moral theory, not only as separate qualities, but as related by the play on *sapere*. *Vitiosus* similarly unites the two fields.

In an interesting discussion of lines 1-21 van Rooy has suggested that here (as throughout the poem) Horace is translating to the sphere of literary criticism the ethical principles of friendship that he has outlined in 1.3. Hence Horace praises the *virtutes* of Lucilius before criticising his *uitia*, balancing his exemplar’s virtues against his faults (cf.1.3.67-72). This reading gives support to taking *uitiosus* as ambiguous and van Rooy makes a similar suggestion for *scribendi recte*, recalling that the concern of Horace’s satires in general is the *ars* (and *labor*) ‘iuueendi recte’.²¹

In lines 9ff. it is the Callimachean ideals of refinement of technique, practised on a small scale²² that inform Horace’s contrast of himself with Crispinus and Fannius²³ on the points of production and publication. The mock modesty of lines 17-18 is typical of Horace’s self-defence in this

21. op.cit., pp.60f. and n.43. His argument is of relevance to the whole theme of my paper, but in demonstrating Horace’s application of ‘aequitas’ he ignores the special emphasis in 1.4 on ‘libertas’, which is also an ethical requirement of friendship (N. De Witt, *Epicurus and his Philosophy* (1954), pp.297-303).
23. He tactfully does not make the contrast directly with Lucilius. Van Rooy (op.cit., p.60 and n.38) speaks of Crispinus as being deliberately ‘substituted’ for Lucilius.
poem. By claiming that his practices as a writer are an intrinsic part of his own character, he begins the moves by which he will give the positive value of ethical commitment to his tactical self-effacement. In lines 22ff. he says: 'No one reads what I write, because I am afraid to give public recitations of it.' The whole question of publication is surrounded with irony. Even at the stage at which the satires were not circulating officially, the claim that they were written solely for Horace's edification and that of his friends would have been contradicted by their evident status as pieces of writing. In any case, what he represents as fear of publication soon reveals itself as contempt for the mass of uneducated or undiscriminating readers (*uulgus* 23, cf. 71ff.). This too is a Callimachean attitude, the implied desire for a select audience being founded on the earlier demand for rigorous stylistic technique (*scribendi . . . laborem*), and again Callimachean stylistic ideals are married to a quite un-Callimachean ethical purpose. The fear of giving offence should not be taken as the whole truth as it immediately transforms itself into renewed attack, in lines 24-25 with *culpari dignos* and in line 69 with 'ut sis tu similis Caeli Birrique latronum'. Such an audience has no right to complain.

In lines 34-38 the fear of the victim of satire is expressed. The way in which the answer to this complaint is postponed to lines 65ff. has often been noticed. What is presented as a counter-argument (*pauca accipe contra*) develops into a seemingly irrelevant disquisition on the nature of poetry. The argument takes off from line 33 ('omnes hi metuunt versus, odere poetas'). Horace replies in lines 39ff. 'I am not a poet'. What is he getting at here? The initial disclaimer of the title of 'poet' may be motivated by the injunction in the Twelve Tables against 'mala carmina' (as Kiessling-Heinze suggest), but the passage leaves the joke behind to discuss the position of satire as a genre, again in the light of *uerba* and *res*. Horace will only give the status of poet to someone writing in the grand style, with the inspirational force and verbal power to match an elevated subject matter. Ennius is cited as the example. In contrast, Horace and Lucilius write *sermo*, a nicely ambiguous term. From the stylistic point of view, it is the discourse of everyday life, the colloquial. In comedy, for example, it is the dialogue

24. De Witt (op.cit., p.298) quotes as a parallel for Sat. 1.4.71 Epicurus *D.L.* 10.120:

\[\text{καὶ ἀναγνώσσοι τὴν πλήθει. ἀλλ' οὐχ ἐκόντα.}\]

'he will also give readings in public, but not without being asked.' The rejection of publicity is also a philosophical attitude.


27. See below on p.6.


29. Lejay on line 44.

30. It looks as if *sermones* was the technical term for Lucilius's satire. See 1039M. and John G. Griffith, *Hermes* 98 (1970), 66 n.1.
appropriate to the realistic content, and thus we are brought back to the question of the content of satire.

The passage 48-56 makes much more than the stylistic point which, on the surface, it is intended to illustrate. The objector’s argument is contained in his opening words — ‘at pater ardens saeuit’ — that is, comedy can portray passion,\(^{31}\) but Horace squashes this with the prosaic word *stomachetur*\(^{32}\) — the anger of the *personatus pater* is not that of an Achilles. In giving the reason for the father’s rage the objector outlines a situation typical of New Comedy, conflict between a stern father and a wastrel son. Horace immediately identifies this situation with that of Pomponius, a concrete illustration of the difference between New Comedy and satire. If New Comedy presents moral conflicts in a generalized form, satire points to the same universal moral problems by identifying individual examples of them. No less than lines 25ff. this passage anticipates lines 105ff., the section where Horace’s father teaches him how to ‘read’ life. Therefore, though satire does have the function which was probably attributed to New Comedy even at the time of its original composition,\(^ {33}\) the function of holding a mirror up to life, it goes further, offering not just a representation of reality, but also a critique of it.

We find in Cicero (*Pro Sex. Roscio* 47) an interesting contrast to Horace’s use of comedy:

> Verum homines notos sumere odiosum est, cum et illud incertum sit uelintne ei sese nominari, et nemo uobis magis notus futurus sit quam est hic Eutychus, et certe ad rem nihil intersit utrum hunc ego comicum adulescentem an aliquem ex agro Veienti nominem. Etenim haec conficta arbitror esse a poetis ut effictos nostros mores in alienis personis expressamque imaginem uitae cotidianae uideremus.

‘But it is invidious to take as examples men who are well-known, since it is uncertain whether they would like their names to be given, and besides none of them is likely to be better known to you than Eutychus, and certainly it makes no difference to the argument whether I quote the name of this young man in the comedy or of someone from the territory of Veii. I think, in fact, that these fictions of the poets are intended to give us a representation of our manners in the characters of others and a vivid picture of daily life.

\(^{31}\) Cf. *A.P.* 93-4: ‘interdum tamen et uocem comoedia tollit,/iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.’

\(^{32}\) See Nisbet and Hubbard on *Odes* 1.6.6.

\(^{33}\) See Fraenkel on *Ag.* 838ff. A. Plebe (*La Teoria del Comico* (1952), p.44) traces this idea to Theophrastus.
life.’ The universality of comedy and the fidelity of its reproduction of life are adduced as an excuse for not drawing examples from contemporaries.

Even in its earliest theoretical utterances Roman satire seems to have resorted to the developed Peripatetic theory of comedy, particularly on this question of realism. Realism of content inevitably entails realism of style. We note that the *quaestio* of the *grammatici* on which Horace hangs his discussion of the poetical status of satire is a question in the theory of comedy: can comic discourse be said to be poetry seeing that its only difference from the speech of everyday life is that it is in verse? It is *sermo* which is the key word here, and Horace exploits its flexibility as the word for everyday speech, for comic dialogue and for Lucilius’s satire to prove his point about their equivalence.

But, since it implies an occasion and an interlocutor, the word *sermo* has a bearing on content as well as style. If *sermo* in comedy is ‘dialogue’, in everyday life it is conversation, and this is the meaning for which Varro provides an etymological justification (*de ling. lat.* 6.64, ‘sermo est a serie: sermo non potest in uno homine esse solo, sed ubi oratio cum altero coniuncta’). And conversation, as the mode of discourse appropriate to informal social intercourse, is subject to ethical strictures. It is in fact very enlightening to compare Cicero’s remarks on *sermo* in *De Officiis* (1.37.132-5) with what Horace does in his satires as a whole. For the sake of brevity I quote the most apposite of Cicero’s precepts (1.37.134):

In primisque prouideat ne sermo uitium aliquid indicet esse in moribus: quod maxume tum solet euenire, cum studiose de absentibus detrahendi causa aut per ridiculum aut seueru, maledice contumelioseque dicitur.

‘Above all, he should be on the watch that his conversation does not reveal any fault of character. This is most likely to happen when people are eager


35. On the realism of comedy see Russell on ‘Longinus’ 9.15. For illustration of the adherence of the theory of satire to the theory of comedy see Brink, op.cit., p.165 n.4. Marx set line 1029 from Book XXX of Lucilius (‘sicuti te, qui ea quae speciem uitae esse putemus’) in the conceptual context to which I have just referred (but see Griffith, op.cit., p.66 and n.2). This is intriguing given that there obviously was some connection between a programmatic Book XXX, which contained a defence of satire against an accusatory interlocutor, and Horace’s literary satires. See most recently Griffith, op.cit., pp.66ff. and Johannes Christes, *Der fruhe Lucilius* (1971).

36. Cicero *Or.* 67 with Kroll ad loc. Wilamowitz attributed the *quaestio* to Theophrastus (K-H).

37. Such a comparison was made by G. Fiske in *Lucilius and Horace* (1920, reprinted 1966), pp.85ff. Fraenkel (op.cit., p.129) quotes *De Off.* 1.38.136 with reference to *Satires* 1.10.
to disparage others in their absence whether in jest or in earnest, by slanderous or abusive statements.'

Now it is part of the strategy of Satires 1.4 that Horace represents himself as accused of such a uitium, as it has been revealed in his sermo (101f.). He is accused of βωμολοχία (illiberal humour) and of stabbing friends in the back. In lines 33ff. (an epitome of the charges Horace deals with in the poem) the satirist is compared to a dangerous animal (an analogy proper to iambic invective), accused of irresponsible personal attack, βωμολοχία, lack of proper self-respect and loyalty to his friends, careless and sloppy composition and desire for publicity among an inappropriate audience. As an indication that we are in the sphere of ethics, lines 34-5 read as a translation of Aristotle on the βωμολόχος (Eth.Nic. 4.14) (but note Horace's more pointed parcet amico):

ο δὲ βωμολόχος ἢττων ἔστι τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ οὔτε ἐαυτοῦ οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεχόμενος εἰ γέλωτα ποιήσει.

'The buffoon on the other hand is the slave of his sense of humour and spares neither himself nor others if he can raise a laugh.' (Ross). Horace uses only one strand of the ethical-rhetorical tradition on illiberal humour. Ignoring the element of αἰσχρολογία he concentrates on the more relevant aspect of making fun at the expense of others. Cf. Aristotle Eth.Nic. 4.14:

οἱ μὲν οὖν τῷ γελοίῳ ύπερβάλλοντες βωμολόχοι ὀσκούσιν εἶναι καὶ φορτικοί, γλιχόμενοι πάντως τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ μάλλον στοχαζόμενοι τοῦ γελώτα ποιήσαι ἢ τοῦ λέγειν εὔσχήμωνα καὶ μὴ λυπεῖν τὸν σκωπτόμενον.

'Those who carry humour to excess are thought to be vulgar buffoons, striving after humour at all costs, and aiming rather at raising a laugh than at saying what is becoming and at avoiding pain to the object of their fun.'(Ross).

Such recklessness and lack of concern for others demonstrate a fundamental lack of decorum (τὸ πρέπον), a concept basic to Peripatetic rhetoric and ethics. One kind of propriety important in the ethical-rhetorical discussions of humour was propriety of occasion. There is a nice comment on this in Cicero De Off. 1.29.103:

Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum et iocum facti esse uideamur: ad seueritatem potius et ad quaedam studia grauiora atque maiora. Ludo autem et ioco uti illo quidem licet, sed, sicut somno et quietibus ceteris, tum cum grauibus seriisque rebus satis fecerimus.

‘For we were not created by nature to act as if we were made for play and jest, but rather for serious matters and the more important pursuits of life. Frivolity of course has its place, but it is to be used, like sleep and other means of relaxation, only when we have satisfied the claims of serious and important matters.’ (based on Higginbotham). In the context of rhetoric Cicero used the criterion of propriety to distinguish the orator from the scurra (De Orat. 2.60.247):

Temporis igitur ratio et ipsius dicacitatis moderatio et temperantia et raritas dictorum distinguet oratorem a scurra, et quod nos cum causa dicimus, non ut ridiculi uideamur, sed ut proficiamus aliquid, illi totum diem et sine causa.

‘Therefore it is the propriety of the moment, the moderation of the raillery itself, and the restraint and infrequency of his mots, that makes the orator different from the scurra, and besides, the fact that we have a reason to use them, not to make ourselves appear funny, but to get some advantage, whereas they use them all day and without any reason.’

Horace replies (65ff.) to the charge of scurrilitas by making distinctions following the method taught him by his father. He sees two informers, but he can say he is unlike them on the point of public denunciation, even if their victims are like his targets.42 The interlocutor brings him back to the main point (78-9): ‘laedere gaudes . . . et hoc studio prauus fads’. Ullman has called our attention to the significance of prauus.43 Again Horace’s satire is said to reveal a fault of his own character. The poet replies at some length, in order to distinguish himself from the scurra, who is described generally in lines 81ff., and then shown in action at a dinner party (86ff.), one of Cicero’s proper occasions for sermo (De Off. 1.37.132). The attack is directed not only against the scurra (and there is good illustration of this in Ullman44) but also against those whose hypocrisy allows them to approve the perversion of civilised values that scurrilitas represents. Again Cicero provides a good commentary in a letter to Paetus (Ad Fam. 9.24.3) where he tries ‘philosophically’ to persuade his addressee to dine out more. He remarks on the etymology of conuuium, so called ‘quod tum maxime simul

42. This comparison of the satirist with the self-appointed public prosecutor may be traditional. See Marx on Lucilius 1022ff. and Christes, op.cit., pp.159-161.
43. op.cit., p.125.
44. op.cit., pp.121ff.
 nihil est aptius uitae, nihil ad beate uiuendum accomodatius, nec id ad 
uuluptatem refero sed ad communitatem uitae atque uictus remissi-
que animorum, quae maxime sermone efficitur familiari, qui est in con-
uiuis dulcissimus.

'There is nothing better suited to life, nothing better adapted to a life of 
happiness, and I do not attribute this to the pleasures of the palate but to 
the sharing of a way of life and that relaxation of mind which is most effec-
tively induced by talk among friends, which is at its most pleasant at con-
uiua.'

As Bramble has seen, Horace's real answer to the charge lies in the value 
he places on friendship: 'what matters is not his lack of publicity, but his 
regard for the finer points of human fellowship.' Therefore, in answer to 
those passages which show the scurra rejecting the claims of communitas 
uitae, Horace vindicates his character by showing the role that friendship 
plays in his own life (73, 80f., 135f.). The demonstration is not complete, 
however, until the defining feature of satire is shown, by a certain sleight of 
hand, to be an essential quality of friendship.

In the opening lines of the poem we saw that the chief characteristic of 
satire, the quality that it derives from Old Comedy, was free speech used in 
the stigmatizing of individuals. Libertas, the key concept in the moral 
justification of satire, again becomes prominent in lines 79ff., where the 
satirist shows how he differs from the niger, another description for whom 
might be the 'truculentior atque/plus aequo liber' of 1.3.51f. Horace's tac-
tic in the passage is to transfer the accusation of 'blackness' from the satirist 
to the socially acceptable scurra. But it is the quality of libertas (properly 
defined) by which 'infido scurrae distabit amicus' (£/7.1.18.4). In the 
perverted scale of social values that Horace is exposing the scurra is regard-
med as 'comis et urbanus liberque' (90), while, in fact, his hypocritical can-
dour conceals poison and treachery (101f.). This is the uitium that Horace 
disclaims at a pivotal stage in the argument. He now apologetically takes to

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45. op.cit., p.198.
46. Quint, 10.1.65, 12.2.22, K-H. on line 1, Fraenkel, op.cit., p.126 n.2, Brink on A.P. 282. 
See Rudd, Mnem. 10 (1957), 319ff.
47. liber in line 90 echoes Liber in the preceding line, the pun having been anticipated there by 
the linking of Liber and aperit (Lejay on line 89). Cf. Ep. 1.5.16ff. and A.P. 85 with Brink's 
note. Seneca De tranquillitate 17.8f. connects Bacchus's title Liber with liberare (Macleod, CQ 
N.S.27 (1977), 361). It is ironical that it is the scurra's failure to pass drinking as a test of 
friendship (A.P. 434ff., cf. De Witt, op.cit., p.300) that recommends him as a companion. 
48. The cuttle-fish with its white exterior concealing a black ink is an apt image here. Cf. Ovid 
Halieut. 129 'et nigrum niueo portans in corpore uirus' (quoted by Lejay). K-H. cite Plut. de
himself the descriptions ‘liberius’ and ‘iocosius’ (cf.91-3) and begins the final justification of satire in terms of his own character (105ff.), where the emphasis is now all on his own liberation from his remaining uitia. But this is a task he cannot accomplish alone; he needs the help of a liber amicus (132), whose duty it is to criticize honestly the uitia of his friend.

The concept of libertas, therefore, spans literary and ethical theory. Through it Horace can claim a link with Old Comedy and Lucilius (‘multa cum libertate’) while admitting that his own freedom is different in degree and kind. At the same time it allows the very quality of satire that is suspect to be redefined as a desirable virtue. Even if Horace does not explicitly claim the role of liber amicus for the satirist, he shows that it is candour and friendliness that distinguish him from the niger.

Finally I shall discuss Horace’s account of his upbringing by his father. Some commentators have been worried by an inconsistency between what Horace says here and the earlier implication that he was following Lucilius. But there is no serious inconsistency, since his following of Lucilius is a matter of the choice of a genre, his instruction by his father a matter of formation of character. Not that these are separate questions — indeed it is the purpose of the poem to trace their interdependence. For, in literary imitation Horace is not the kind of writer who cannot see the real faults and virtues of his model, the reason he is able to do this lying in his own character, in the habit of making moral distinctions that he has formed.

The device of attributing this habit to his father’s concern for him is most elegant, and more than a simple piece of autobiography. It shows Horace as generous enough to recognise his debts to others, and it also allows him to continue his game of ironic self-effacement. But while appreciating all
that this passage tells us about the character of the satirist, we should not overlook what it says about the method of satire. Its relevance to this theme is clearly signalled by line 106: ‘ut fugerem exemplis uitiorum quaeque notando’.

The repetition of notare from line 5 demands comment. Brink is certainly right to say that: ‘His father’s naive “exemplifying” was notare practised by the light of nature: that, Horace is saying humorously, put him on the way to the artistic notare of satire which Lucilius had practised before him.’

The distinction between nature and art is not the whole point, however. If we ask what this passage adds to the basic concern of the poem, the definition of Horace’s satire, we find that its value lies precisely in the notion of ‘exemplification’ which now supplements notare in line 106. It is this that moves satire away from the extreme of óνομαστι καμώδειν (savage personal attack) and towards moral philosophy, from which it also differs (cf.115f.) because of its concentration on specific individuals depicted in the context of real life.

The philosophical ηθολογία advocated as a teaching method by Posidonius is more general, and does not seem to admit the naming of individuals (Seneca Ep.95.65-6):


‘Likewise he says a description of each virtue will be useful; this Posidonius calls “ethologia” but some call it “characterismos”, the giving of the marks of each virtue and vice and the characteristics, by which those that are similar may be distinguished from each other. This method has the same force as teaching by precept; for he who teaches by precept says “you will do certain things if you wish to observe moderation”, while he who uses description says “the moderate man is he who does certain things and does not do others”. What is the difference, you ask? The one gives precepts of virtue, the other a model.’ While the method is still didactic, it obviously recommends itself by its more subtle, indirect approach. Horace’s use of ηθολογία is similarly didactic in purpose, though he takes pains to disguise it. The sketch of his father is itself ηθολογία, and the uirtus he is shown to

58. I owe this reference to Mr C.W. Macleod.
embody makes his criticism of the *uitia* of others more acceptable. This is the model to which Horace as yet only aspires, since he presents himself still in need of correction, the taught rather than the teacher, or more accurately (now that he is grown up) the teacher of himself.

We should note, finally, that Horace has portrayed himself and his father as characters from comedy. The allusion to Demea’s account of his education of his son in Terence *Adelphoe* 441ff. has often been noticed:

\[
\text{denique}
\]

\[
\text{inspicere, tamquam in speculum, in uitas omnium}
\]

\[
\text{iubeo atque ex aliis sumere exemplum sibi.}\]

‘Finally I bid him to look into the lives of all as if into a mirror, and to take from others an example for himself.’ But what has less often been taken into account is that in the original context Demea’s words are immediately parodied by the slave Syrus (425-9). This is one of Terence’s funniest scenes and it should not be easy to forget that Demea is its butt. To my mind the Terentian allusion throws an ironic light on the whole passage and prevents us from reading it simply as a piece of autobiography attesting ‘true pietas’. This does not mean that all seriousness is excluded.

Lejay has made a valuable contribution to the understanding of this passage by suggesting that Horace’s father takes life as a comedy: ‘La méthode préconçue par le père d’Horace offrait au poète quelques avantages accessoires. Elle avait suggéré les peintures de la comédie: les personnages que l’on se montrait du doigt étaient les héros ordinaires des intrigues comiques.’ There is in fact a considerable overlap between the *dramatis personae* of satire and of comedy and the ethical-rhetorical tradition. This is best illustrated by the passage in which the author of the *Ad Herennium* sums up his example of *notatio* (4.65):

\[
\text{Huiusmodi notationes, quae describunt, quod consentaneum sit unius}
\]

\[
cuiusque naturae, uehementer habent magnam delectationem: totam enim naturam cuiuspiam ponunt ante oculos aut gloriosi . . . aut inuidi aut tumidi aut auari, ambitiosi, amatoris, luxuriosi, furis, quadruplatoris; denique cuiusuis studium protrahi potest in medium tali notatone.}

‘Characterisations of this kind which describe that which is proper to each man’s nature have great power to please: for they set before our eyes a per-

60. Van Rooy, op.cit., p.66 and n.50.
61. Lejay, op.cit., p.98.
son's whole character, either of the boastful man . . . or of the envious or pompous man or the miser, the climber, the lover, the voluptuary, the thief, the public informer; in short, by such a characterisation the ruling passion of anyone can be revealed.' Theoretically the author advocates objective description, but the morally neutral stance is somewhat belied by the fact that the characters are chosen for their humorous potential (cf. Cic., De Orat. 3.115, Top. 83). This ambiguity is reflected in the semantic range of the words notare and describere, which often imply moral censoriousness, but need not always do so.\(^{62}\) The difference between the descriptio of satire and that of comedy is that while comedy gives the impression of people acting autonomously, satire approaches its characters subjectively, presenting an interpretation of the spectacle of life mediated through an individual human consciousness.

This is the sense in which satire is 'personal' poetry, not so much 'autobiographical' as venturing into that kind of moral philosophy spoken of by Plato as 'conversation of the soul with itself',\(^{63}\) and this is the reason why the character of the satirist himself is of such importance in the vindication of satire as a genre. The dialectical form of the satire reflects the satirist's internal dialogue, the logical equivocations and discontinuities allowing both sides of the case to be represented in a way prohibited by a systematic exposition of the argument. Perhaps the use of irony and ambiguity, the constant reminders that every idea comes into the world with its equally valid (or invalid) counter-idea and that life allows us to put our feet up on very few certainties (if any) — perhaps all this does undermine the status of this piece as a contribution to a poetics narrowly conceived. But it is the merit of this poem to have transformed literary critical commonplaces into issues of vital concern for the poet himself and for the reader linked to him in their common enterprise.

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62. Brink, op.cit., p.112n.1 and on A.P. 156. See TLL v.1.659.67ff.