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Throughout his poetry, Horace asserts that creative forces must be balanced in order for a poetic undertaking to be successful. Therefore, a poet’s ingenium is fashioned by ars, and the ferocity of iambic rabies is tempered by Callimachean aesthetics. The main objective of the Ars Poetica is to illustrate Horace’s doctrine that ars and ingenium are essential elements in the creative process that, far from being hostile to one another, are yoked together to produce good poetry. Horace illustrates this doctrine through the exempla of Democritus’ band of mad poets and the vesanus poeta who cultivate ingenium alone and shun a Callimachean ars that would mold their creative output into worthwhile poetry. Horace, while disavowing the excesses of ingenium, recognizes it as an essential element in the creative process, but maintains that ingenium, as a creative force, must be tempered by ars.

Just as ingenium is a potential source of creativity, so the iambic rabies, which produced the civil wars out of which the Epodes sprung, serves also as Horace’s poetic
inspiration. Horace’s collection of *Epodes* contain potent invective anger but he is careful in his *Epistles* to distinguish Archilochean *iambi* from his own. Horace insists that Callimachean aesthetics were instrumental in the composition of the *Epodes* so that they avoided the excessive violence of Archilochean anger which, if left unchecked, has the power to transgress the bounds of acceptable social behavior and results in violence.

Horace’s doctrine of *mediocritas* in the creative process is also operative in his encounters with Bacchus in his *Odes*. Bacchus is one source of poetic inspiration and he is instrumental in drawing out Horace’s own unique *ingenium* for the creation of praise poetry. Bacchus, however, is also the source of inspiration behind Horace’s sympotic odes insofar as Horace is concerned throughout the *Odes* with illustrating the gifts of Bacchus and the dangers of overindulgence. Horace, as *magister bibendi*, at times endorses excessive indulgence in Bacchus’ gifts, but these odes must be understood within the larger context of the collection of *Odes*, which advocates a moderate consumption of wine.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Horace’s Ars Poetica and Epistles are unique documents in that they present Horace’s own reflections over his lifetime of work: an opportunity that is rarely afforded in other authors from antiquity.¹ In these writings Horace’s readers are able to form an impression of his views on the nature and function of the poet in fashioning society. Horace’s later poetry then serves as one means of evaluating Horace’s vatic voice in his Epodes and Odes. The Ars Poetica begins as a practical guidebook on poetry to the Pisones, but becomes a personal reflection on the character of the poet and his role in society.² The poem shifts from advice on the mechanics of composing poetry to consider the critical differences between the role of ingenium and ars in the poet’s craft, differences which are at times far from straightforward. Good poetry, Horace claims, is only attained when these two elements work together in harmonious balance. This fundamental principle is illustrated through Horace’s discussion of Democritus’ poets

¹ Ovid’s exilic writings also offer a rare exception.

² Rudd (1989), 19-21, puts the Ars at 10 BC and identifies the elder Piso brother with Lucius Calpurnius Piso Pontifex (son of the patron of Philodemus). Brink (1963), 239-243, stresses the difficulty of dating the Ars, citing the fact that there is neither sufficient external nor internal evidence to provide a certain date. He concludes that the Ars Poetica was written either during the intervalum lyricum or after Odes IV. Brink ends with Bentley’s statement on the problem: Ars Poetica anno incerto; cp. Armstrong (1993), 185-230, who places the date of the Ars Poetica at 10 BC; see also Oliensis (1998), 198. Bernard Frischer (1991), puts the date of the Ars Poetica between 24-20 BC. Frischer’s work has received mixed reviews (see reviews by Edward Sacks and Paul Keyser, BMCR 3.2 [1992] and the response to this review by Dee Clayman, Gregory Crane and Donald Guthrie: BMCR 3.6 [1992]).
who hide themselves away from society to cultivate *ingenium* and neglect a Callimachean *ars* that Horace insists must temper the excesses of *ingenium*.³

Like Democritus’ band of mad poets, wealthy composers such as the Pisones are not tied to any serious critic, like Quintilius, to file down their excesses. They may hear nothing but applause from sycophants and deem themselves “poets.” This devaluation of poetry is to be expected, Horace believes, in a society where Roman youths only learn to lust after gain: *an haec animos aerugo et cura peculi / cum semel imberit, speramus carmina fingi posse linenda cedro et levi servanda cupresso* (AP 330-1)?⁴ As a result, Horace finds himself in a society in which he feels he does not intellectually belong. He therefore turns to the Greeks for a model of the poet’s role in society. He contrasts the money-grubbing Roman educational institution with the Greek: *Gravis ingenium, Gravis dedit ore rotundo / Musa loqui, praeter laudem nullius avaris* (AP 323-25). Horace’s discussion of the highest aim of the *vates* in civilizing society only names Greek poets,⁵ and at one time, he even composed verses in Greek.⁶ It is this alienation from Roman society, which does not value the labors of the genuine poet, that designates the poet “mad”⁷ and explains Horace’s increasing bitterness and frustration throughout the poem that reaches its climax in his sympathetic portrayal of the mad poet.

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³ Cf. S.1.10.50-51 where Horace says of his predecessor Lucilius: *at dixi fluere hunc lutulentum, saepe ferentem / plura cuidem tollenda relinquis.*

⁴ All quotations of Horace are taken from Eduard C. Wickham’s 1901 edition.

⁵ *AP* 391-407.

⁶ S. 1.10.31-35.

⁷ Oliensis (1998), 209: “It is Rome’s misvaluation of the art of poetry, Horace argues, that has kept her from achieving preeminence in the field of letters.” Cf. *AP* 289-294: *nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis / quam lingua Latium, si non offenderet unum / quemque poetarum limae labor et mora. vos, o / Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite quod non / multa dies et multa litura coercuit atque / praesectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.*
One primary question that remains in the interpretation of the *Ars Poetica* is Horace’s choice to end with the seemingly abrupt and surprising depiction of a mad poet trapped in a pit, alienated from his fellow citizens (452-476). The mad poet, in his attempts to become immortal through his poetry, seeks to communicate with the society that has rejected him. The mad poet illustrates the essence of Horace’s position in Roman society. If he is not to be identified with the mad poet, Horace’s insight into his plight at least reveals an intimate knowledge that is situated “inside the experience” of the mad poet. The mad poet, then, perhaps represents Horace’s fears about the poet’s inside/outside relationship with Roman society. It is this relationship that is Horace’s overarching concern and the poet’s alienation serves as a fitting warning to aspiring poets at the conclusion to the *Ars Poetica*.

*Epistle* 1.19.23-25 provides us with a tantalizing glimpse of Horace’s thoughts on one of his earliest works, his book of *Epodes* (or as he calls them, *iambi*). For the *Epodes*, Horace tells us, he chose as his model the Archaic seventh century Parian poet Archilochus, infamous in antiquity for his skill in composing iambic verses. However, Horace’s claims to have followed Archilochean *animos* while disavowing the *agentia verba* that slandered Lycambes has engendered a great deal of scholarship on the exact nature of Horace’s *aemulatio*. What has not been understood is the question of just how angry Horace’s *Epodes* are. Chapter two will focus on this question to show that while Horace does not follow the *verba* of Archilochus in employing sustained attack against an individual, his *iambi* are, nevertheless, full of invective *rabies* that serves as Horace’s

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8 Brink (1971), 421, contends that Horace’s depiction of the mad poet is a demonstration of *reductio ad absurdum* that is a caricature of poetic inspiration and of poetic error. He allows, however, that Horace understands and even identifies with the struggles of the mad poet: “It fascinates because it is written from inside the experience which it professes to ridicule” (516).
poetic inspiration throughout the *Epodes*. Horace seeks to modify this raw iambic *rabies* with a Callimachean aesthetic, just as he advocates molding *ingeniun* with Callimachean *ars* in the *Ars Poetica*.

The fact that Horace selected the iambic genre with its traditional theme of retaliation is a fitting reflection of the anxieties and self-destructive tendencies that marred the Roman state in the difficult period between Octavian’s defeat of Cassius and Brutus at Philippi in 42 BC and the Battle of Actium in 31 BC. Indeed, the work has rightly been identified as positioned on the “brink of the battle of Actium” and may be described as civil war poetry. It will be necessary to treat Horace’s vatic role in the *Epodes* in his simultaneous attempts to free himself and his community from the cycle of iambic *rabies* which marks the collection of *Epodes*. It is in his capacity as *vates* that Horace serves to illustrate the *Ars Poetica*’s doctrine of the poet’s duty.

The implicit Callimacheanism in *Ep.* 1.19.21-34 is essential to understanding the *Epodes* and is key in Horace’s encounters with Bacchus in his first three books of odes. Just as Horace tempers *ingeniun* with *ars* in the *Ars Poetica*, he tempers Bacchic revelry with Apollonian restraint. This is reflected in his placement of Bacchus at the front of his collection (1.1) and Apollo at its close (3.30). Throughout *Odes* I-III Bacchus is the god most frequently addressed and is the source of Horace’s inspiration. The third chapter will address what the role of Bacchic inspiration is in Horace’s poetic program by demonstrating that there is a clear and persistent link throughout the *Odes* between the dichotomy of Bacchus/ *ingeniun* and Apollo/ *ars* as discussed in the *Ars Poetica*.

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10 Putnam (1973), 1-17.

11 C.1.18, 2.19, 3.3, 3.25; cf. the *carmina* addressed to Apollo: 1.21, 1.31.
Furthermore, the *vesanus poeta* of the *Ars Poetica* embodies the dangers of Bacchic inspiration and the overindulgence of *ingenium*, and so represents Horace’s presentation of the poet and his poetry as an often precarious but careful balance between the extremes of *ars* and *ingenium*. 
CHAPTER 2
ON THE MARGIN OF SOCIETY: INSIDE THE EXPERIENCE OF THE VESANUS POETA

The epistle to the Pisones (Ars Poetica) is ostensibly Horace’s guidebook on how to write good poetry. The letter was written to the as-yet-unidentified Pisones and its date is still controversial. Scholars have recognized in the work two main sections (1-295 and 296-476). There is a shift at line 295 from a discussion of *ars* (art) to the *artifex* (artist). Horace begins the *Ars Poetica* by giving advice on such topics as meter and drama, and telling the Pisones (he particularly seems to be addressing the older brother) that there must be unity in all that they write (*AP* 23). This unity is expressed by using the proper meters for the proper occasions: the weighty dactylic hexameter for heavy subjects as found in epic (*AP* 73-74) and iambic for comedy and tragedy because it is suitable for dialogue (*AP* 79-82). Horace advises the Pisones to maintain the traditional uses of the meters: *singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decente* (*AP* 92). In drama, Horace similarly stresses to the young novices that they must maintain traditional character types. They may use mythology in their dramas, but the characters must retain their traditional personalities; for example, Achilles must maintain the same character traits as described in Homer, and likewise, Penelope cannot be a harlot. The audience’s expectations, developed through the traditions, does matter and the poet must take them into account.

Until line 295 Horace appears to be composing a work similar to Aristotle’s *Poetics*, but, as Hardison and Golden contend, the *Ars* is perhaps best described as an
example of metapoetry, where the poet examines the nature of poetry. Horace does not focus, as Aristotle does, on detailed aspects of poetic theory or composition, but rather his focus is on “the nature, function, commitment, and psychology of the poet...”¹ We find in the second portion of the *Ars* a speaker who is so bitter and at times downright angry at the intellectual environment in which he is expected to compose that he almost seems to forget that he is addressing young adolescents who know nothing of the internal struggles of the poet. The effect is that the would-be-poets might very well ask themselves whether they wish to be poets or not.

Consider Horace’s critique of the philosopher Democritus (*AP* 295-308). Democritus, Horace tells us, values *ingenium* above *ars* and excludes the *sanos poetas* from Helicon, the home of the Muses. Democritus only admits those whom he believes to possess *ingenium*, those who go about with untrimmed nails and unkempt appearance to demonstrate their divine inspiration. Horace’s speaker in the *Ars* cannot contain his bitter indignation at these imitators:

```
Ingenium misera quia fortunatius arte
credit et excludit sanos Helicone poetas
Democritus, bona pars non unguis ponere curat,
non barbam, secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.²
(AP 295-298)
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[Because Democritus believes that innate talent is more blessed than wretched art and excludes sane poets from Helicon, a good number take no care to trim their nails, nor their hair; they seek isolated places, and avoid the baths.]

These pretenders to the poetic throne only cheapen the mission of the *vates*.³ For Horace the madness of these unkempt imitators cannot even be cured with three times the

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¹ Golden (2000), 145.

² Golden (2000), 150, comments: “by the simple expedient of forsaking the baths and haircuts [they] can lay claim to a reputation for artistic genius among an uncritical public...”

³ For the usage of *poeta* and *vates* in the Augustan period, see Newman (1967), 51-52.
output of Anticyra’s production of hellebore (AP 295-300). Valerius Maximus relates that Carneades took hellebore to purge himself in order to bring forth (ad expromendum) his innate talent (ingenium). Rudd notes that the purging of the bile with hellebore was a therapy used to treat mental instability caused by an excess of black bile. However, Brink has commented that hellebore could be taken “to render the mind alert and inventive,” pointing out that the “Stoic Chrysippus was thought to be strong-minded enough to drug himself three times over for this purpose.” When hellebore is referred to throughout Horace’s works, it always refers to a purgative that discharges excessive black bile, and thus insanity. Horace takes hellebore to relieve himself of madness, but he does not claim that he has taken it in order to bring forth his ingenium for creative purposes as Cerneades was said to have done. Horace does not, therefore, appear to view hellebore as a means of artificial inspiration as did Chrysippus and Carneades.

By taking hellebore Horace wishes away the madness of unrestrained ingenium as an enhancer of poetic power:

\[
o \text{ego laevus, qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam!}
\]

\[
\text{non alius faceret meliora poemata. verum}
\]

---

4 Anticyra was famed for its production of hellebore.

5 Val. Max. VIII. 7 ext. 5: ergo animo tantum modo vita fruebatur corpore uero quasi alieno et supernacuo circumdatus erat. idem cum Chrysippo disputaturus elleboro se ante purgabat ad expromendum ingenium suum aduentius et illius refellendum acerius; see Gell. XVII. 15 for a similar account of Carneades’ use of hellebore. Here, however, Carneades is said to take hellebore to purge himself of corrupt liquid from his stomach (black bile) that might weaken the power and strength of his intellect. This use of hellebore is closer to Horace’s use of the drug described at AP 301-304; yet Horace does not claim that he takes hellebore to help him compose his writings as Carneades does: Carneades Acedemicus, scripturus adversum Stoici Zenonis libros, superiiora corporis elleboro candido purgavit, ne quid ex corruptis in stomacho humoribus ad domicilia usque animi redundaret et instantiam vigoremque mentis labefaceret...

6 Rudd (1989), 201: “According to Greek medical theory, one’s health depended on a correct mixture of the four humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Madness was thought to result from an excess of black bile…”

7 Brink (1971), 333-4; cf. Petron. 88. 4: Chrysippus, ut ad inventionem sufficeret, ter elleboro animum detersit.

8 Cf. S.2.3.83,166; Ep. 2.2.137.
O fool that I am, who is cleansed of bile in the season of spring. None other would make better poetry; but in truth, it is not worth it.

If writing inspired poetry requires the type of rigmarole that Democritus’ poets undergo, Horace sarcastically states that he would rather be done with it and be sane. As a result, the speaker tells the Pisones that he has put aside poetry and now only serves as a whetstone upon which aspiring poets can sharpen their skills. Writing poetry well, Horace instructs the Pisones, does not require such extreme pretenses. In fact, Democritus’ preference for ingenium over misera...arte (295) ignores the meticulous self-criticism that must shape the raw poetic inspiration of ingenium. Horace, however, does recognize that innate talent is crucial to the poet’s success, as he claims at S.1.4.43-4:

ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior atque os magna sonaturum, des nominis huius honorem.

[To him who has innate talent, to whom there is a divinely inspired mind and a mouth that will speak great things, may you give the honor of this name (poet)].

The idealized bards of Greece attained the honor of this name. Horace describes their achievement in similar language: sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque | carminibus venit (AP 400-1). Yet, although in the Ars Poetica Horace recognizes the importance of ingenium in the poetic process, the majority of the epistle is concerned with the importance of ars, and Horace’s two major examples of unrestrained

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9 Cf. Ep. 2.2.141-4: nimirum sapere est abiectis utile nugis, | et tempestivum pueris concedere ludum, | ac non verba sequi fidibus modulanda Latinis, | sed verae numerosque modosque ediscere vitae.

10 Cf. Ep. 2.2.122-124a: luxuriantia compescet, nimirum aspera sano | levabit cultu, virtute carentia tollet, | ludentis speciem dabit et torquebitur. Here the initial creative output of poetic inspiration must be fashioned by a sound cultivation (sano cultu) which Democritus’ poets shun. Cf. S.1.4.
*ingenium*—that of Democritus’ poets and the mad poet—serve as examples of what to avoid, much like the absurd portrait that begins the *Ars Poetica*.

In the Satires, as in the *Ars Poetica*, Horace is always conscious that the divinely inspired voice must be yoked to *ars*. Horace simultaneously praises and condemns his predecessor and inventor of satire, Lucilius, in characteristically Callimachean language for Lucilius’ lack of artfulness:

```
nam fuit hoc vitiosus: in hora saepe ducentos, ut magnum, versus dictabat stans pede in uno:
cum flueret lutulentus, erat quod tollere velles: garrulus atque piger scribendi ferre laborem, scribendi recte…
(5.1.4.9-13 [italics are mine])
```

[He was full of error in this way: in an hour, as if this was a great accomplishment, often he would dictate two hundred verses, standing on one foot. In his muddy river there was flotsam you would wish to remove: he blubbered and was too lazy to endure the toil of composing, that is, composing correctly…]

Like those lazy Roman poets whom Horace derides for their inability to endure the toil of fashioning worthwhile verses (*AP* 291-2), Lucilius is too lazy (*piger*) to endure the labor (*ferre laborem*) of the self-criticizing poet. Horace signals his observance of Callimachean *ars* by likening Lucilius’ verbosity and careless writing to a muddy stream. In terms of metapoetics, then, the poet’s *ingenium* must be tempered and joined with *ars*. Horace tells the Pisones:

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natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte quaesitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena
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11 Cf. *AP* 457: *hic, dum sublimis versus ructatur et errat*…
12 Cf. *S*. 1.9.23-24 where the “Boor” is the speaker: *nam quis me scribere pluris | aut cithus possit versus?* See also *S*. 1.4.13-16: *ecce | Crispinus minimo me provocat: 'accipe, si vis, | accipe iam tabulas: detur nobis locus, hora, | custodes; videamus uter plus scribere possit.*
13 Cf. Call. Hym. *Apoll.* 108-12 where Apollo is the speaker:  Άσσυρίου ποταμοίο μέγας ρόος, ἀλλά τὰ πολλὰ | λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὲς ἐφ᾽ ἔκαε συρφέτων ἔλκει, | Δηοῦ δ᾽ οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέωςι Μέλισσαι, | ἀλλ᾽ ἔτης καθαρῆ τε καὶ ἄχριάντος ἀνέφει | πίδακος εἴς ιερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον, *Ep. 2.2.120: vehemens et liquidus puroque similimus amni | fundet opes Latiumque beabit divite lingua. Here the poet is likened to a clear stream that enriches Latium with language; cf. *AP* 46-72.
nec rude quid prosit video ingenium; alterius sic (410)
altera poscit opem res et coniurat amice.
(AP 408-11)

[It is asked whether a praiseworthy poem results from nature or art. I
do not see how study without a rich vein of talent, nor rough innate
nature is useful. Thus, each seeks the aid of the other and swears a
friendly pact.]

Democritus’ poets, then, lack the balancing influence of ars whereby their
ingenium may be pruned into worthwhile poetry. As a result, Horace does not address
the unkempt amateurs as poets accepted into Helicon, but as mere imitators.

Contrary to the proper role of the poet in society, the poets of Helicon have rejected
society and seek isolation to cultivate their inspiration (AP 298). Admittedly, Horace too
seeks isolation to cultivate his inspiration, shunning public performance and the opinions
of the fickle Roman audience and preferring instead a few critical readers.14 Though
Horace chastises Democritus’ poets for their isolation, he has also experienced alienation
from the vulgus.15 Horace’s displeasure with the uncritical vulgus is paralleled in his
Odes. In C. 1.1 the Roman people are “fickle” (mobilium turba Quirittium) and Horace is
separated from the populus by bands of Satyrs and Nymphs (secernunt populo). At C.
2.4.18, the crowd is scelesta plebe and at C. 3.2.20 they are again fickle (arbitrio
popularis) and vulgar (coetusque vulgares). This fickleness carries over into the arts
where the vulgus cannot be trusted to discern a true poet from the imitators of
Democritus’ school. Horace hearkens back to the Greeks, whom he believes to be the
true masters of poetry, and in his own society he is an outsider looking in. The speaker in

14 Ep. 2.2.77-8: scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus et fugit urbem, | rite cliens Bacchi somno gaudentis et umbra: Ep.2.1.214-18: verum age et his, qui se lectori credere malunt | quam spectatoris fastidia ferre superbi, | curam reddre brevem, si manus Apolline dignum | vis complere libris et vatibus addere calcar, | ut studio maiore petant Helicona virentem; see also S. 1.10.78-91.

15 See S. 1.4.25; S. 1.10.73; S. 2.6.28; AP 419.
the *Ars* indicates through his bitter complaints that he has been locked out of Roman society.

The bitterness expressed in the *Ars* can best be explained by the great importance that Horace attaches to the mission of the poet. For Horace, poets are *utilis urbi,* and they have been recognized by the Greeks as divinely inspired for providing the social, legal, and behavioral codes by which to live. The speaker has idealized the great poets of the Greek tradition, attributing to them divine inspiration which is, in contrast to Democritus’ poets, “benign” and lacking outlandish “poetic frenzy.” Orpheus, who is a priest and prophet of the gods, civilized men by teaching them to avoid bloodshed and abominable ways of life. Solon gave the Athenians laws inscribed on wooden planks in order to keep his society from descending into civil war. Homer’s shield of Achilles demonstrated how a society could live in harmony, and also illustrated the dangers that result from a breakdown in order (*AP* 392). Horace in his own times witnessed the destruction that Rome visited upon herself and was keenly interested in the re-creation of society out of the ashes of civil war. It is this tension between the public and the private role of the poet that Horace addresses in the conclusion of the *Ars.* The fact that poetry serves such an important function in society explains why the speaker in the *Ars* emphasizes to the young Pisones that mediocrity is not permissible in the craft as it is for a lawyer (*AP* 366-373).

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16 *Ep.* 2.2.124.
17 *AP* 391-407.
19 *Epod.* 16: *Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas,* | *suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit.*
In this daunting task, the aspiring Roman poet faces the challenge of maintaining his artistic integrity, especially within the fragmented social environment in which he must compose. The role of the serious critic is compromised in a society where rich patrons compose for sycophants. Consequently, Horace sarcastically scoffs at those who by virtue of their birth believe that they can be called *poetae*:

> qui nescit versus tamen audet fingere. quidni?  
> liber et ingenuus, praesertim census equestrem  
> summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.  
> *(AP 382-384)*

[He who does not know how to fashion verses, nevertheless dares to do so. Why not? He is free, freeborn even, estimated as a knight of the highest fortune, removed from all fault.]

To avoid the pitfalls of such dilettantes, Horace encourages the youths to seek out a harsh critic, one who will rigorously correct their work so that they will not make fools of themselves on the public stage. Horace subtly signals his adherence to neoteric and Callimachean aesthetics in his advice to hold back publication of a work until after the ninth year of its composition: *si quid tamen olim scripseris, in Maeci descendat iudicis auris | et patris et nostras, nonumque prematur in annum, | membranis intus positis: delere licebit | quod non edideris* *(AP 386-390)*. A generation before, Catullus had praised Cinna’s Zmyrna in similar language: *Zmyrna mei Cinnae nonam post denique | messem quam coepta est nonamque edita post hiemem* *(C. 95.1-2)*. The dedication and meticulous effort required of a good poet is a necessary component of the poet’s duty as *vates*. This duty, the Pisones should realize, is an incredibly demanding task which cannot be entrusted to mediocre poets.

Horace seems to acknowledge the strain of composing meticulous poetry in *Ep. 2.2* when he claims in a statement that is sarcastic when compared to *AP 301-4*, that he

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20 AP 419-437.
would prefer to be judged a foolish and artless author than to be wise and angry:

praetulerim scriptor delirus inersque videri, | dum mea delectent mala me vel denique fallant, | quam sapere et ringi. Horace punctuates this surprising statement by likening himself to a delusional man from Argos who both resembles and differs from the vesanus poeta of the *Ars Poetica*. It would be easy for an audience of *Ep. 2.2* to recall the image of the mad poet of the *Ars Poetica* trapped in a pit, with the difference that the Argive, and by extension Horace, have been able to avoid the pit. When the mad poet falls into a pit with his attention on other matters, he demonstrates that “Ignorance of any obstacle in one’s path seems to have become proverbial for lack of practical sense…” The Argive (and Horace) have the practical sense that the vesanus poeta lacks, yet he is still mad and is linked to the mad poet through the delight he takes in his personal illusions/delusions. The mad poet lives in his own illusory world where his poems and his notable death will (he believes) enshrine him among the immortal bards, while the Argive is under the delusion that he is watching wonderful plays while he sits in an empty theater.

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21 *Ep. 2.2.126*-8. Cf. ps.-Aero on 126: *irridendo hoc ait. ego quidem, inquit, eorum vitam praetulerim, qui non intellegunt vitia sua, his qui sapient et emendatione torquentur, unde subnectit fabulam*. Brink (1971), 349, also notes the disjunction between *Ep. 2.2.126*-8 and *AP 301*-4: “The provocative statement introduces the Argive tale which it is supposed to bear out. Its irony is apparent from the very un-Horatian content: however bad the quality of my poems, I should prefer enjoyable illusions to saddening knowledge (of my shortcomings). In the *Ars* a similar interpretation is put on the (inspired) madness of poets and its cure, *A.P. 301*-4. There too H. purports to speak of himself but draws the opposite conclusion, pretending to prefer clarity of mind, *sapere*, to creative madness.”

22 *AP 458*-59: *si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps | in puteum foveamve, licet ‘succurite’ longum | clamet ‘io cives!’ non sit qui tollere curet;* Cf. *Ep. 2.2.135*: *posset qui rupem et puteum vitare patentem.*

23 Brink (1971), 424.

24 Horace has just stated (*Ep. 2.2.106*-8) that those poets who compose poor verses are a joke, but they rejoice and highly esteem their own writing, happy in their illusions, as long as an honest critic says nothing against their work: *ridentu r mala qui componunt carmina; verum | gaudent scribentes et se venerantur et ultras, | si taceas, laudant quidquid scripsere beati.* I contend that Horace refers here to poets similar to Democritus’ mad poets and to the vesanus poeta of the *AP*. 
Horace further links the mad Argive with the mad poet when Horace describes the attempts of others to cure them of their madness. The Argive has friends and relatives who believe they are helping him by administering hellebore in order to relieve his madness. His response, far from the gratitude that they expect, is instead a rebuke: ‘pol me occidistis, amici, | non servastis’ ait, ‘cui sic extorta voluptas | et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error (Ep. 2.2.138-140).’ In the Ars Poetica, Horace discourages anyone from attempting to save those poets who destroy themselves, since doing so would be the same as killing them: sit ius liceatque perire poetis. | invitum qui servat idem facit occidenti (AP 466-7). The mad Argive’s relatives have saved him from his delusions against his will, and have done the same as murder him (pol me occidistis).

Madmen, according to Horace, must be left to their insanity, even though it may lead to their own destruction. By likening himself to the mad Argive, and by extension the mad poet of the Ars Poetica, Horace, in an “un-Horatian” manner, distances himself from ars as the most valuable element in the poet’s composition, and, like the mad Argive and the vesanus poeta, privileges his own unique ingenium.

Horace is able to warn the Pisones of the difficulties the poet faces because he has experienced them himself. His portrait of the vesanus poeta in the concluding section of the Ars implies an intimate knowledge of the mad poet’s alienation from society. But Horace does not wish to lock himself away and render himself useless to society as Democritus’ poets have done. It is this struggle for communication that is at the heart of Horace’s depiction of the mad poet isolated in a pit, calling to his fellow citizens in vain. Rejected and mocked, he simultaneously shuns society and longs to communicate with it.

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25 See supra.
It is evident that the mad poet desires to communicate with his fellow citizens from Horace’s likening him to a leech that reads to death anyone willing to listen to him (*AP* 475-476). But the poet also has tendencies towards isolation and even self-destruction, resulting from the intense pressure placed upon him. The mad poet, focused solely on poetry, wanders about with his head in the clouds, like a bird-catcher gazing at black birds, and falls into a pit (*AP* 458-59). The poet calls for aid: ‘*succurrite*’ *longum clamet io cives!*’ He is isolated from society and at first no one cares to aid him. He is not even considered a member of the human race (*homo* *AP* 469). But, the speaker tells us, perhaps the poet threw himself into the pit on purpose. Again, Horace shows that he is “inside the experience” of the mad poet when he reads the mad poet’s motivation:

> ‘qui scis an prudens hoc deiecerit atque servari nolit?’ *dicam...*  
> (*AP* 462-3; italics are mine)

> [“How do you know,” I will say, “perhaps he has thrown himself in on purpose and does not wish to be saved?”]

Horace uses the first person, and indicates that he may know something of the mad poet’s mind and why he may have fallen or thrown himself into the pit. We learn that the Sicilian poet Empedocles cast himself into burning Aetna: *deus immortalis haberi | dum cupid Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aetnam | insiluit* (*AP* 464-66). In their quest for immortality through their craft, poets destroy themselves. It is difficult not to identify Horace as a potential Empedocles based on the claims to immortality that he makes about himself in his *Odes*.

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26 Cf. Oliensis (1998), 219, who links Horace with the leech: “But there is another candidate for the role of the murderously exuberant versifier within the *Ars* itself. In the most literal and immediate sense it is Horace-Horace, who clings and clings to his readers for all of 476 lines…before dropping off into silence—who is the leech of the *Ars Poetica.*”
Horace can speak authoritatively about the dangers that the poet will encounter in his attempt for immortality because he has experienced them. On several occasions Horace makes reference to his immortality as a *vates*, beginning with his address to Maecenas in *Odes* 1.1. Here, Horace claims, the ivy leaves that are the reward of poets actually link him with the gods: *me...hederae | ...dis miscent superis*. The mad poet, with head upraised (*sublimis versus ructatur et errat*), is glimpsed in Horace’s desire to be counted among the immortal lyric bards:

> quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseris,
> *sublimi* feriam sidera vertice.
> (*Odes* 1.1.35-36; italics are mine)

[But if you count me among the lyric bards, I will strike the stars with my exalted head.]

On several occasions Horace revels in his grandiose, nearly obsessive claims to fame using graphic symbols of metamorphosis. In *C*. 2.20, another address to Maecenas, Horace prophesies his own immortality, becoming a swan in the tradition of Pindar, the Dircaean swan. At *C*. 3.30, in an address to the Muse Melpomene, Horace boldly claims that he has constructed a monument more noble than the royal pyramids (*regalique situ pyramidum altius*), and that he shall not wholly die but his fame will grow with time. Horace has the *ingenium* and the *ars* necessary to make such claims since he has joined natural genius with discipline and studied the immortal Greek bards and adapted their verses to Latin (*C*. 3.30.13-14).

The true poet, then, finds himself outside of society but still unwilling to shrug off his duty and obligation to his countrymen as Democritus’ poets have done. The mad poet strives for greatness, but finds himself trapped in a pit. In this respect, he shares in the alienation that Democritus’ poets express. Shut out from the society he longs to
communicate with, children mock him and wise men (*qui sapiunt*) avoid him. It is this image that encapsulates Horace’s position “inside the experience” of the mad poet, a state with which he is intimately familiar. Horace is undoubtedly linked with the mad poet through his pursuit of immortality, as his *Odes* attest, and if he is not to be identified with the *vesanus poeta*, he finds himself uncomfortably close to this character. The *Ars Poetica* is littered with warnings of the pitfalls that await aspiring poets, a daunting task for the young addressees of the poem.

Horace has presented the mad poet as the climax of his *Ars Poetica* and if we fault him for breaking off the piece *in medias res*, we misunderstand the structure of the poem. Horace’s main concern in the *Ars* is not to present a mechanical guidebook to poetry, but to call for the unity of *ingenium* and *ars* in the poet’s craft. Horace is grieved that Roman poets lack the dedication that their Greek predecessors had for poetic greatness. Rome has been consumed with materialism and its ensuing moral decline is reflected in a general decline in the arts. Horace’s indignation makes sense in light of the immense importance that he places on the mission of the poet to reform and refashion society. Horace does not believe that a *vates* can develop out of a society that only seeks wealth and is uncritical in their appraisal of poetry. Neither Democritus’ poets nor the mad poet have a stern critic to mold their *ingenium*. Just as unkempt long hair is symbolic of the unpolished writings of the Democritean poets, so the image of a rampaging bear that has burst its cage is symbolic of the mad poet’s unrestrained *ingenium*. Untrained talent

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27 Oliensis (1998), 218: “...he is, for all his feigned unsociability, a creature of society to his very core.”

28 *AP* 472-4: *certe furit, ac velut ursus, | obiectos caveae valuit si frangere clathros, | indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus...
must be matched with *ars*, just as we shall see in the following chapter that the raw poetic inspiration that iambic *rabies* affords must be tempered with a Callimachean aesthetic.
CHAPTER 3
CAVE, CAVE: RABIES AS POETIC INSPIRATION IN THE EPODES

ira furor brevis est: animum rege, qui nisi paret, imperat; hunc frenis, hunc tu compesce catena.
(Ep. 1.2.62-63)

In Ep. 1.19.21-25 Horace claims to have been the first to introduce Parian iambi to Latium, a boast supported by his dependence on Archilochean metrics throughout the Epodes.¹ The fact that Horace selected the iambic genre, which already had Roman adherents,² and selected Archilochus as his model would lead his audience to expect a certain kind of poetry, since iambi had come to be associated with invective.³ But the question remains of just how angry Horace’s Epodes are and to what extent iambic rabies serves as Horace’s inspiration in the Epodes.⁴ While rife with invective anger, Horace’s

¹ Horace most obviously follows Archilochean meter in his use of the iambic trimeter followed by iambic dimeter in Epodes 1-10. This same metrical scheme is discernable in Archilochus ff. 172-181 W. Only Epodes 12, 13, and 16 lack a corresponding metrical example from Archilochus, a fact that most likely stems from the fragmentary nature of Archilochus’ writings. Recall that Epode 11 only found its corresponding Archilochean example with the publication of The Cologne Epode (fr. 196a W.) in 1974.

² Horace’s claim to have been the first to exhibit Parian iambi to Latium has been questioned on account of the precedent of Catullan iambi. However, Catullus uses a variety of metrical formulas such as the hendecasyllabics that are not in the archaic iambic canon (Heyworth, 2001).

³ Pind. Pyth. 2.52-56 ἐμὲ δὲ χρεών | φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγορίαν | εἶδον γὰρ ἐκάς ἐών τὰ πόλλ’ ἐν ἀμαχανίᾳ | ψογερῶν Ἀρχίλοχου βαρυλόγοις ἐξέβαιν | πιαινόμενοι; Arist. Poet. 1448b31 ἰαμβεῖον καλείται ὃν ὅτι ἐν τῷ μέτρῳ τούτῳ ἰαμβίζου θεῖον; Cf. West (1974), 22: “Invective was clearly regarded as the outstanding feature of the genre.”

⁴ For the debate on Horace’s poetic models in the Epodes, see Watson (2003), 4: “Both Archilochus and Callimachus were of crucial importance in the genesis of the poems. The two passages in which Horace explicitly adverts to the literary inspiration behind the Epodes (Epode 6 and Ep. 1.19) are emblematic of that duality of influence, since, in each case, an overt evocation of Archilochus as the moving spirit behind the book is balanced by an implicit allusion to Callimachus’ more recent iambi.” This debate is far from settled, with scholars positioned on the spectrum between Mankin who sees few or no poetic models other than Archilochus for the Epodes, and Watson who highlight the importance of Callimachean poetics for Horace’s iambi.
*iambi* are by and large impersonal insofar as they avoid the persistent attacks characteristic of Archilochean invective. Horace, then, by adopting a Callimachean aesthetic to temper the excesses of invective *rabies*, mirrors his own advice to the Pisones in the *Ars Poetica* to balance *ingenium* with *ars*.

Horace on three occasions specifically names Archilochus as his model and inspiration for his book of epodes (*Epod. 6.13, Ep. 1.19.23-25, AP 79*). Horace, then, is conscious of the generic assumptions that he is adopting, as he would later write in the *Ars Poetica* (79): *Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo*. Clearly, rage is seen as a weapon (*armavit*) to be used in the medium of *iambi*, which would presumably lead Horace’s audience to expect iambic *rabies* in his collection. The first specific reference to Archilochus does not disappoint: it appears in *Epode 6*, one of the most virulent invectives in the collection:

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Quid immerentis hospites vexas canis
ignavus adversum lupos?
quin huc inanis, si potes, vertis minas,
et me remorsurum petis?
nam qualis aut Molossus aut fulvus Lacon,
amica vis pastoribus,
ageam per altas aure sublata nives,
quaececumque praecebet fera:
tu, cum timenda voce complesti nemus,
proiectum odoraris cibum. (10)
cave, cave: namque in malos asperrimus
parata tollo cornua,
qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener,
aut acer hostis Bupalo.
an si quis atro dente me petiverit,
imitus ut flebo puer?
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[Why do you harass innocent strangers, you, a cowardly dog when confronting wolves? Why not, if you have the guts, turn your empty threats my way, and attack me, who will bite back? For just as either a Molossian or tawny Laconian, the strong friends of shepherds, I will pursue through tall snow with ear upraised, whatever beast goes before. You, when with terrified yelps you have filled the groves, will sniff out left over garbage. Beware, beware: for, most savagely do I raise readied horns against the wicked, just as the slighted son-in-law of faithless Lycambes or the harsh enemy of Bupalus. Or, if someone]
with a black tooth should assault me, shall I weep as an unavenged child?]

The iambist very deliberately places himself in the iambic tradition of Archilochus and Hipponax. It is plain that this epode contains potent invective anger, and the speaker is ‘of the same sort’ (qualis) as Archilochus, the spurned son-in-law of Lycambe, who, as tradition relates, betrothed his daughter Neobule to Archilochus, only to renege on the agreement. This humiliation inspired Archilochus to compose verses so hateful that they drove Lycambe and his daughter(s) to hang themselves out of shame. A similar story is told concerning the fate of Hipponax’ victims. According to Pliny, Hipponax was notoriously ugly, which led the sculptors Bupalus and Athenis, the sons of Achermus, to make statues in his likeness for public display and mockery. In retaliation, Hipponax ‘unsheathed’ (destrinxit) such stinging invective that tradition claims it drove the sculptors to hang themselves. Whether factual or not, the stories of the Lycambe and the sculptors serve as a paradigm for the cycle of iambic injury and retaliation. The iambist assumes a defensive position, asserting that, as the wronged party, he is fully justified in retaliating. He, in fact, even becomes the instrument of divine vengeance against the perpetrator who has violated religious obligations, as Lycambe did. The iambist very specifically adopts this defensive posture for himself in Epode 6, as he does in the roughly contemporaneous S. 2.1.39-46:

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5 Hipponax is only specifically referred to once in the Epodes, at 6.14. 
6 Plin. NH 36.4.12. Pliny states that he himself denies this account, since the sculptors made statues for neighboring islands after their disputes with Hipponax. 
7 For the defensive posture of the iambist, see Cat. C. 40 and Arch. fr. 172 W. The iambist is frequently concerned with creating a way to distance himself from the responsibility of the invective. Ravidus’ and Lycambe’s actions give the poets no choice but to respond with iambi. 
8 See in particular fr. 173 W: ὃρκον δ᾿ ἐνοσφίσθης μέγαν / ἅλας τε καὶ τράπεζαν. 
9 The second book of Satires was published in 30 BC while the Epodes was published around 29 BC.
sed hic stilus haud petet ultro
quemquam animantem et me veluti custodiet ensis (40)
vagina tectus; quem cur destringere coner
ut pereat positum robigine telum,
tutus ab infestis latronibus? o pater et rex Luppiter, ut
nec quisquam noceat cupido mihi pacis! at ille qui me commorit (melius non tangere, clamo), flebit et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.

[But this stylus will never on its own search out a living person, and it will guard me, just as a sword covered in its sheath. Why should I attempt to unsheathe it so long as I am safe from hostile brigands? O father and king Jupiter, may the discarded weapon perish with rust; let no man harm me, desirous for peace! But he who rouses me (better not to touch me, I shout), will regret it and will be made infamous throughout the whole town by my singing.]

Horace depicts his stilus as a weapon (ensis) that has the potential for righteous vengeance. He protests that he is a man of peace, and it is only through the fault of another that he must grudgingly unsheathe (destringere) the sword (stilus). Horace’s language is identical to Pliny’s description of Hipponax unsheathing his invective. It is this cycle of retaliation and vengeance that drives Horace in Epode 6 and that drives the warring factions of Rome in Epodes 7, 9, and 16. Both Epodes seven and sixteen are remarkable for Horace’s stance as a social instructor. Epode 7 is not so much an exhortation to the Romans as it is a pessimistic invective against Horace’s fellow citizens for their inability to solve the crises that have led to civil war. In its pessimism, it foreshadows the futile exhortation to flee Rome in Epode 16 and, as Watson rightly points out, echoes the harangues of Solon. Horace in Epode 16 exhorts the Romans to abandon Rome since it has been cursed by endless civil war and is on the brink of destroying itself. The only reasonable course of action, Horace hopelessly claims, is to seek the “blessed fields” and “rich islands” (arva, beata | petamus arva, divites et insulas, 41-42).

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10 Watson (2003), 9-10; cf. Solon fr. 4 West: ἡμετέρη δὲ πόλις κατὰ μὲν Διὸς οὕποτ’ ὀλεῖται | αἰσαν...αὐτοὶ δὲ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἀφραδήσων | ἀστοί βούλονται.
Satires 2.1 draws us further into comparison with the Epodes through images that appear in both books. Nature, Horace tells us, has equipped each creature with a means to express anger. Canidia (who appears in S. 1.8, 2.1, 2.8 as well as in Epodes 3, 5, 17) resorts to the poison of Albucius when angry (48-49). Animals, too, have their defenses and each one has been provided by nature with a means of frightening their enemies so that the wolf attacks with its fangs and the bull with its horns: *ut quo quisque valet suspectos terreat, utque | imperet hoc natura potens, sic collige mecum: | dente lupus, cornu taurus petit* (S. 2.1.50-52). This animal imagery again invites comparison to Epode 6, where Horace plays the shape-shifter, at one time a sheepdog, (who, unlike the *immerentes hospites* will bite back, *remorsurum*), at another a bull with readied horns, prepared to take on those who threaten him or his ‘flock.’

The language of retaliation prevalent in Epode 6 is, paradoxically, also the kind of verse that Horace professes to deny in Ep. 1.19.23-25, the second passage in which Horace specifically refers to Archilochus as a model for the Epodes:

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Parios ego primus iambos
ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus
Archilochi, non res et *agentia* verba Lycamben. (25)
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[I was the first to show Parian iambi to Latium; I followed the meter and spirit of Archilochus, not his content and language that took action against Lycambes.]

Horace specifically states that he shuns the language that drove (*agentia*) Lycambes to suicide. Yet Horace uses the same language in Epode 6 (*agam per alas aure sublata nives*) to describe the pursuit of his enemies. One way in which it is possible to chart the

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11 Animal allegories are especially associated with Archilochus (esp. frs. 223 τέττιγος ἐδράξω πτεροῦ and 23.14-16 ἐπὶ σταμμαί του των φιλ.ἐσω[τε] μὲν θηλ[ε] ριον ἐχθραίρειν τε [καὶ] κακ[α] μύρης. Watson (1983b), argues convincingly that lines 7-8 do not refer to Horace as a hunting dog. Viewing him as such would, Watson argues, ruin the unity of the sheepdog imagery of 1-10, violate the sequence of thought proceeding from 5-8, and would imply that Horace “envisages the writing of *iambi* as not just a response to provocation, but the aggressive seeking out of targets for his pen” (158).
iambic tenor of the *Epodes* is to note the various forms of the verb *ago* that occur six times throughout the collection. In five of these six occurrences, the verb is used to describe the “driving force” of invective in the same sense that Horace uses the verb to describe Archilochean *verba* in *Ep.* 1.19.25. 12 Four of these five instances occur in the middle of the collection, right when the invective tone of the *Epodes* is at its height. The last instance is reserved for the final epode in the collection, and in fact occurs in its final verse, leaving the reader without a clear resolution to the iambic conflict. The *Epodes*, one is forced to conclude, does not completely omit Archilochean rage.

*Epode* 5 introduces Canidia, accompanied by her cohort of witches who have kidnapped a Roman youth and intend to use his liver so that the witches may prepare a potent love potion to use against a wayward lover, Varus. Horace draws a pathetic picture of the lad, quivering in fright (*trementi questus ore*) and the boy immediately draws the reader’s sympathy, an *impube corpus, quale posset impia | mollire Thracum pectora* (13-14). But by the conclusion of the epode, the whimpering boy is transformed through iambic *rabies* into a terrible fury, spewing invective back at his kidnappers:

```
sub haec puer iam non ut ante mollibus
lenire verbis impias,
sed dubius unde rumperet silentium,
misit Thyestae preces:
‘venena magnum fas nefasque, non valent
convertere humanam vicem;
diris *agam* vos; dira detestatio
nulla expiatur victima.’ (90)
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[At these incantations the boy no longer, as before, attempted to mollify the impious women with soft words, but, hesitant as to how to break his silence, he sent forth Thyestean curses: “Your powerful potions do not have the power to change right and wrong nor to turn human vengeance. I will hound you with curses; my fearful solemn curse will not be atoned by any offering.”]

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12 *Epod.* 5.89, 6.7, 7.17, 12.13, 15.9, 17.81. The only occurrence which does not pertain to the “driving force” of iambic *verba* is 15.9 (a poem still containing plenty of invective).
In this drama, Horace has enacted the cycle of vengeance that takes a small child as innocent as the *immentes hospites* of *Epode* 6 and stains him in the black bile of invective. We are confronted with the unpleasant reality that no one, however innocent, in the invective game is free from guilt, and the distinction between the abuser and abused becomes as confused as in the civil war raging in *Epode* 7.

Before Horace returns in *Epode* 7 to the theme of the civil wars with which he began the collection, the closing rhetorical question of *Epode* 6 calls to mind Canidia, with her *dens lividus*, and her defenseless victim: *an, si quis atro dente me petiverit, inultus ut flebo puer?* As *Epode* 6 concludes, we are left with the depressing realization that the poet has not offered a remedy for the iambic cycle of retaliatory anger but has seemingly admitted its continuation. This failure to escape such vengeance sets the stage for the stagnant downward spiral into civil war described in *Epode* 7:

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Quo, quo scelestit ruitis? aut cur dexteris
aptantur enses conditi?
parumne campis atque Neptuno super
fusum est Latini sanguinis,
non, ut superbas invidae Carthaginis
Romanus arces ureret,
intactus aut Britannus ut descenderet
Sacra catenatus via,
sed ut secundum vota Parthorum sua
urbs haec periret dextra?
neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus,
umquam nisi in dispar feris.
furorne caecus, an rapit vis acrior,
an culpa? responsum date!
tacent et albus ora pallor inficit,
mentesque percusae stupent.
sic est: acerba fata Romanos *agunt*
sceusque fraternal necis,
ut immerentis fluxit in terram Remi
sacer nepotibus cruer.
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[“Where, where are you rushing, accursed ones? Or why are your swords, once sheathed, grasped by your hands? Has not enough Roman blood been spilt on fields and the sea--not so that the Roman can burn the proud citadels of jealous Carthage, or the Briton, untouched, may descend the Sacred Way in chains, but so that this city perish by its own right hand in accordance with the Parthians’ prayers?”]
There was never such a habit among wolves nor lions, unless against beasts of another sort. Has a blind madness or a keener force or guilt seized us? Give answer!” They are silent, and a white pallor overspreads their faces, and, minds overthrown, they are stupefied. Thus it is, a harsh fate and the crime of fratricide drives Romans, ever since the blood of innocent Remus flowed onto the earth, a curse upon future generations.]

Horace appears as bewildered as the Romans he harangues. The poem is filled with Horace’s angry questions as the poet seeks a rational explanation for the irrational madness that has overtaken his fellow citizens. This time, it is not an individual, but bitter fate and fraternal murder that drives (agunt) the Romans on to further madness. Rome itself has been cursed from its very foundation and, just as there is no victima that Canidia can offer that would expiate the curses leveled against her by the ill-fortuned lad of Epode 5, so there seems to be no amount of sacrifice that is capable of appeasing the curse of Remus’ blood. The only answer to the hopelessness that pervades Epode 7 is not presented until Epode 16 where Horace proposes an escape plan.

After the invective tone gradually builds in intensity throughout the middle of the book, there is a distinctive change in the direction of the Epodes after poem 10, a change reflected in the shifting metrics that Horace employs.13 Whereas poem 11 introduces a sequence, persistent through 16, of dactyls and iambics (pure dactyls in 12), the first ten poems are consistently iambic couplets.14 After the metrical variety of 11-16, Epode 17 with its unique iambic trimeter brings the book back to the pure iambics with which the collection began. Epode 17 is also the only poem that has an uneven number of lines in

13 Oliensis (1998), 92-93, notes that with the close of Epode 10, Horace’s book of iambi “achieves a plausible ending…The closural effect is enhanced by the polar opposition between enemy Maevius setting out on his ship (exit, I. 10.1) and friend Maecenas setting out on his (Ibis, I. 1.1). Maevius’ ill-fated exit would thus form Horace’s happy ending.”

14 For meter as the most obvious unifying principle in the Epodes, see Carrubba (1969), 18-21.
all of the *Odes* and *Epodes*. These idiosyncrasies alert us that Canidia, far from being “a peg on which to hang a couple of poems,” is a major figure in the *Epodes*. She is a main character in two extensive poems (5 and 17), totaling 183 lines, which feature potent invective that has important thematic connections with Horace’s iambic persona. Furthermore, it goes without saying that as the final poem, *Epode* 17 occupies an important position within the collection.

As we have seen, Horace narrates the abduction and transformation of an innocent Roman youth into a *nocturnus Furor* in *Epode* 5. Horace in this epode only narrates events, but in 17 he casts himself as one of the main characters. However, in his depictions of Canidia in 5, he has in a sense played an active role (as Canidia understands it) by instigating the cycle of invective against her. In retaliation, she (perhaps with a backward glance to her humiliation in *S.* 1.8, where Horace again plays the narrator) condemns him for the mockery of her sacred rites and his poems that have made her the talk of the town:

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inultus ut tu riseris Cotyttia
vulgata, sacrum liberi Cupidinis,
et Esquilini pontifex venefici
impune ut Urbem nomine impleris meo?
(Epod. 17.56-59)
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[Will you, without penalty, laugh at divulged Cotynian rites, the sacred rite of unrestrained Cupid, and as priest of Esquiline magic will you go unpunished for filling the city with my name?]

As noted above, the iambist links himself to the doomed youth of *Epode* 5 via the final line of *Epode* 6 when he adopts his voice (*inultus ut flebo puer*?). This defiant

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16 Griffin (1993), 10.
17 Porter (1995), 120, notes that the second half of the *Epodes* “focuses on Horace himself and turns against him his own words.” This can be seen in the change from the matter-of-fact narrator of *Epode* 5 to the painfully subjective *Epode* 17 where Horace is a starring character.
stance, by the end of the book, becomes a point of self-mockery (part of the iambist’s arsenal), which is especially heightened by the poet’s stance in *Epode* 16 as a *vates* who, however unrealistically, suggests an escape plan from the poisoned earth upon which Rome is founded.\(^{18}\) Horace’s iambic persona, in the very next epode, gives way to the power of Canidia’s *atra carmina.*

So many of the themes of the *Epodes* hinge on the tension between illusions, dreams, and deflated hopes.\(^{19}\) As soon as Horace promises an end to civil strife in 16.15-16 (*forte quid expediat communiter aut melior pars / malis carere quaeritis laboribus*), Canidia dooms him to new conflicts: *ingrata misero vita ducenda est in hoc, / novis usque suppetas laboribus* (17.63-64). Horace’s appeal to mythological exempla tries to end the iambic cycle, while Canidia’s emphasize the continued suffering of those figures whose “past will always be their future.”\(^{20}\) The end of the *Epodes* takes its audience from the lofty declaration of the *vates* in the last line of 16 (*piis secunda vate me datur fuga*) to his abject desperation in 17: *iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae, / supplex et oro...Canidia, parce vocibus tandem sacris, / citumque retro solve, solve turbinem.*

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\(^{18}\) For discussion of the “impotent” iambist, see: Fitzgerald (1988), Oliensis (1991;1998), Watson (1995). These scholars have seen Horace’s self-deprecation as programmatic; cf. *Epod.* 1.15-16: *roges, tuum labore quid iuvem meo | imbellis ac firmus parum?* Furthermore, Horace in this epode likens himself to a mother bird who watches over her chicks but is unable to offer assistance should they be attacked by snakes. Cp. *Ep.* 2.1.124-5 where Horace speaks of the benefits that the poet offers the State: *militiae quamquam piger et malus, utilis urbi, / si das hoc, parvis quoque rebus magna iuvari.*

\(^{19}\) See in particular *Epod.* 17.65-69. The repetition of *optat* (three times) only points to the illusions that Horace, Tantalus, Prometheus and Sisyphus are under. They delude themselves by hoping at all, since their fate is to suffer perpetual torment. Porter, (1995) 113, sees these themes played out in Canidia’s rejection of Horace’s pleas and especially in *Epode* 9 where Horace asks when he will drink Caecuban with Maecenas in celebration of Caesar’s victory; a question that is left unanswered in the *Epodes.*

\(^{20}\) Porter (1995) 118. Horace’s *exempla* all demonstrate atonement in some way, most notably Castor and Pollux’ blinding of Stesichorus in retaliation for his slander against their sister Helen. Stesichorus, following Homer’s account, had claimed that she abscended to Troy with Paris and thus caused the Trojan war. As a result of his slander, Stesichorus was blinded until the brothers heeded his prayers (*victi prece*) and restored his sight (*adempta vati reddidere lumina, Epod.*17.43-44). Horace, in calling Stesichorus *vates,* also identifies himself as such by extension (cf. *Epod.* 16.66). Canidia’s *exempla* all stress unending torment for an offender.
bard, intent upon constructing a poetic vision in the great crisis of his times, does not present a coherent response to Canidia’s dominance at the conclusion of the *Epodes*.21

What are we to make of this Archilochean sounding Horace? At the heart of the *Epodes* we find identical language used to express the violent aggression of abusive invective (*Epodes* 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12)—the very language Horace professes to deny in *Ep.* 1.19.25. No one has been willing yet to conclude that the Horace in the *Epistles* is rejecting or rewriting his earlier poetry. Horace speaks of his iambics with the same pride as his grand accomplishments of the *Odes*. David Mankin attempts to remove the contradiction by claiming that Horace’s iambics are usually impersonal. While Horace’s *Epodes* can be said to avoid the *persistent* attacks on individuals that characterize the iambics of Archilochus in his infamous pursuit of the Lycambides (which won him the approbation of future generations, recorded in the *testimonia*), thirteen of his epodes either name addressees or specific personages.22 Others have relied on the change in Horace’s political/social circumstances to explain any discrepancy between the *Epodes* and Horace’s later critical works so that Horace, who did not enjoy the liberties of expression of the aristocratic Catullus but was bound by the dynamics of a patron/client relationship, avoids personal attacks.23 We really do not need to excuse Horace this much by minimizing or excusing his iambic anger to allow for his reworking of Archilochean invective.

However much Horace expresses distaste elsewhere at the excesses of invective (*Ep.* 1.19.23-25, 30-31; *Ep.* 2.1.145-155), it is certain that there is real anger in the

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21 Cf. *Epod.* 17.74, where Canidia is the speaker: *vectabor umeris tunc ego inimicis eques*.

22 *Epod.* 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Epodes, and it is quite probable that, as Nisbet remarked, “His ambition to write epodes in the manner of Archilochus had its origins in the bitterness of defeat…” Horace, following Brutus, the doomed champion of the republican cause, relates later how he had his wings clipped after the battle of Philippi in 42 BC. He returned to Italy to find his land confiscated and his father dead. He became a clerk (scriba) and says that he began writing to make a living (paupertas impulit audax / ut versus facerem, Ep. 2.2.51-52). It is not unreasonable to suppose that, as a result of the failure at Philippi, Horace would seek an appropriate Greek model to express frustrations about the destructive retaliatory anger that is the essence of civil conflict.

Throughout the Ars Poetica, Horace is continually focused on decorum, stressing that the form of poetry should match its function. According to this aesthetic principle, Horace consciously selected the iambic genre and its meter because it provided the themes he wished to present in the Epodes:

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hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni,  
alternis aptum sermonibus et popularis  
v Vincentem strepitus et natum rebus agendis.  
(AP 80-82)
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[The comic sock and the high boot adopted this foot (iambus) suited for alternate speech and overcoming the din of the crowd and born for action.]


25 Ep. 2.2.49-51: unde simul primum me dimisere Philippi, / decisis humilem pennis inopemque paterni / et laris et fundi.

26 Horace’s misfortunes and subsequent anger serve as his poetic inspiration, as indicated in the story of the soldier Lucullus at Ep. 2.2.26-40. Lucullus’ possessions are stolen, and his anger (at himself as well as the thief) transforms him into a furious wolf (post hoc vehemens lupus, et sibi et hosti / iratus pariter, ieiunis dentibus acer (Ep. 2.2.28-9). The loss inspires him to plunder in order to regain his wealth. By likening himself to Lucullus, Horace states that ill fortune and anger drove him to compose verses for a living.

27 Cf. Nisbet (1984), 2: “Poets do not choose their personae at random, but to match something that they would like to see in themselves.”
Again we see Horace fully cognizant of the assumed aggressive language of the iambic genre that he adopts. However, there are clear indications that Horace, in adopting Archilochus, has tempered his model with Callimachean aesthetics. True, Horace does not directly quote Callimachus, or specifically name him as an influence in the *Epodes*, unless we assume that “Ibis,” the first word in the *Epodes*, is a reference to the work of the self-same title by Callimachus. Even if the link is not intentional, the *doctus* reader would certainly have been reminded of Callimachus. But if we revisit *Epode 6* we may see a parallel to Callimachus’ *Iambus* 13.52-53: ἀοιδὸς ὑς κέρας τεθύμωται | κοτέων ἀοιδῳ. It is certainly tempting to take the bull imagery as a point of contact between the two poems, especially since the context of Callimachus’ iamb bears a striking resemblance to the situation in *Epode 6*. Whereas Horace “undertakes to repel with vigorous verbal assaults the attacks of a cowardly slanderer, whom he may well intend us to think of as another iambist,” Callimachus similarly addresses poets who have taken to fighting amongst themselves and have attacked Callimachus in particular for *polyeideia*.

As Watson notes, the distinction between “Archilochean” and “Callimachean” is arbitrary and Horace, “while flagging his allegiance to Archilochus and Hipponax as the progenitors of the iambic genre, is careful also to encode a bow to a more recent exponent.” Even if Horace did not specifically name Callimachus as an influence for the *Epodes*, he shares the same view that invective, specifically Archilochean invective,  

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28 Watson (2003), 5, n.34.
29 Watson (2003), 5.
30 In the sole fragment we have from Callimachus’ *Grapheion*, he makes clear his distaste for Archilochean harshness: εἶλκος δὲ δριμῶν τε χόλων κυνὸς ὑς τε κέντρον σφηκός, ἀπ᾿ ἀμφοτέρων δ᾿ ἱὸν ἔχει στόματος (fr. 380 Pf.).
can become so fierce that iambic rabies refuses to be satiated and transgresses the boundaries of society, resulting in civil strife and death (Ep. 2.1.145-155):

Fescinnina per hunc inventa licentia morem
versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit,
libertasque recurrentis accepta per annos
lusit amabiliter, donec iam saevus apertam
in rabiem coepit verti iocus et per honestas
ire domos impune minax. doluere cruento
dente lacesstiti; fuit intactis quoque cura
condicione super communi; quin etiam lex
poenaque lata, malo quae nollet carmine quemquam
descrivi: vertere modum, formidine fustis
ad bene dicendum delectandumque redacti.

[Through this custom [rustic festivals of sacrifice and offering that took place after the grain was harvested], Fescennine license was invented and in alternate verses poured out rustic taunts, and the freedom, received throughout successive years was playfully innocent until the sport, now growing cruel, began to change into open frenzy and invade the homes of honest people, unchecked in its threats. Those attacked by the bloody tooth were hurt; even among those unharmed there was a concern for the common good. Finally there was a law bearing a penalty that forbid portraying anyone in abusive song. Men changed their manner, through fear of the club, and were brought back to clean and pleasing language.]

It may be argued that the second book of Epistles was not written until around 12 BC and that Horace’s disposition is different than when he composed the Epodes (written in the 30s BC). Horace, however, speaks in a similar vein in Ep. 1.19 when he specifically rejects the slanders against Lycambes that produced the same results as described in Ep. 2.1. Horace’s resistance to retaliatory rage, he claims in Ep. 1.19, was operative in the composition of the Epodes.

In addition to disavowing the excessive harshness of Archilochean invective, Ep. 1.19 specifically links Horace with the Callimachean ethos of Iambus 1 (fr. 191). In Ep. 1.19, Horace is intent on showing that his iambi have a claim to originality, and that he did not compose the black verses that a protégé of Archilochus would be expected to
write. In doing so, Horace is deliberately echoing Callimachus, who, in his *Iambi*, also makes it clear from the beginning of his book that he will deviate from the expected content of the genre (fr. 191, 1-4, Pf.):

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Ἀκούσαθ᾿ Ἱππώνακτος· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾿ ἢκω
ἐκ τῶν ἐκου ὕδων κολλύβου πιπρήσκουσιν,
φέρων ἰαμβόν οὐ μάχην ἀείδοντα
τὴν βουπάλειον[...]
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[Listen to Hipponax; for I have come from where they sell an ox for a coin, bearing an iamb not singing the Boupallean quarrel...]

Callimachus attempts to temper the violence that an audience would expect from the iambic genre. At the same time that he explicitly acknowledges Hipponax, he also distinguishes himself from his invective. This is exactly what we find Horace doing in *Ep.* 1.19 where he names Archilochus as his model while simultaneously distancing himself from him. Horace’s use of a Callimachean aesthetic symbolically signals his desire to restrain Archilochean invective.

For Catullus, Horace’s predecessor and fellow composer of *nugae*, the unification of the Callimachean aesthetic with Archilochean invective is not contradictory. Unlike Callimachus and Horace, Catullus makes no declaration that he is restraining iambic invective, and is therefore free to join Callimachean wit and style with the biting invective of Archilochus. Catullus tells us in *C.* 16 that a poet is separate from his poems and is therefore free to draw on the iambic spirit to create abuse poetry. Catullus reaches back to the pre-Alexandrian invective that the Callimachean filter has failed to

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31 Watson (2003), 5-6: (Callimachus’) “iambus [is] of a novel type, stripped of the unbridled violence which had stamped the poet’s vendetta against...Bupalus...just as Callimachus revived Hipponactean iambus but radically altered its subject-matter, so Horace, in going back to the authorial *fons et origo* of the genre, adopted Archilochus’ metrical form and content, but fundamentally transmuted the latter.”


33 See MacLeod (1973), 305: “The juxtaposition of Callimachean and vituperative writing is not a casual one; rather the two are deliberately contrasted alternatives. On the one hand, there is the elegant and cultivated ‘Alexandrian’ author; on the other, the purveyor of blunt, even coarse, invective.”
remove. Catullus’ C. 40, 56 and 116 are clear instances where he is influenced by pre-Alexandrian invective against the advice of Callimachean aesthetics. This tension between Archilochean invective and its Callimachean modification is felt nowhere more explicitly than in C. 116, where Catullus purposefully juxtaposes the translation of Callimachus’ poems with his abuse of Gellius and concludes that Callimachean verses do not have the power to heal invective wounds:

Saepe tibi studioso animo venante requirens
carmina uti possem mittere Battiadae
qui te lenirem nobis, neu conarere
tela infesta mihi mittere in usque caput,
hunc video mihi nunc frustra sumptum esse laborem
Gelli, nec nostras hic valuisse preces.
contra nos tela ista tua evitamus amictu:
at fixus nostris tu dabis supplicium.

[Often seeking with my mind, hunting for how I might send to studious you the songs of Battiades by which I might mollify you towards me, so that you would not attempt to send hostile missiles continuously at my head. This task, I now see, I have undertaken in vain, Gellius, nor are my prayers of any avail in this matter. I avoid with my cloak your arrows that are directed against me: but you will pay the penalty, shot through by my arrows.]

Catullus’ collection, at least in the order of arrangement that has come down to us, concludes with the triumph of the iambic voice, just as the Epodes concludes with the victory of Canidia’s atra carmina. Perhaps Horace is influenced by the Catullan adaptation of Archilochean bile and refuses to entirely deprive Archilochean invective of its sting.

There is no question that Horace’s Epodes contain a great deal of iambic anger. But when Horace consistently uses the language of invective throughout the Epodes and then states in retrospect that he disavows agentia verba Lycamen, the reader must look more closely at the Epodes to see in what way Horace employs this ethos. Unless we are

34 For Catullus’ numerous slanders against Gellius, see C. 74, 80, 88, 89, 90, 91, and 116.
to conclude by saying that Horace was disingenuous in *Ep.* 1.19, we must look for another explanation. As I have shown, Horace concentrates his most invective epodes in the middle of the collection, demonstrated by his diction which is the very language he claims to disavow. However, his *iambi* differ from the Archilochean in that they are not persistent attacks on single individuals. Furthermore, the very fact that Horace wrestles with the guilt of the invective cycle, seeking a way out, stands in stark contrast to Archilochus, who displays (at least in the extant fragments) no inclination that iambic rage should be mollified. Such guilt, in fact, is evidence that Horace wishes to temper the *rabies* that has led to civil war among his fellow citizens, whereas Archilochus’ individualistic stance does not ever look back in regret.

In both the *Epodes* and *Odes*, Horace’s *iambi* and *carmina* reflect a conscious attempt to discover and end the cycle of guilt that is an essential part of iambic anger. In *Epode* 7, Horace identifies the source of the civil wars as stemming from the curse of Remus’ murder. That initial act of fratricide only serves to perpetuate further civil conflicts down to Horace’s own time. The poem leaves the reader with a sense of utter hopelessness that, as stated above, reaches its apex in the unrealistic solution of abandoning the cursed land proposed in *Epode* 16.

In the *Odes*, the guilt that drives the Romans is again revisited and its importance for the first book of odes is highlighted by its position at the forefront of the collection. *C.* 1.2 addresses the need for the reconstruction of Roman society after civil war. Before this process may begin, the great sin (*scelus*) of civil war must be expiated. Horace declares that it is Jupiter himself who has assigned Octavian (*Caesaris ultor*) the task of
expiating the guilt of fratricide: *cui dabit partis scelus expiandi* | *Iuppiter?*, (C. 1.2.29-30). Guilt will be expiated by turning the sword from civil conflict to foreign wars.\(^{35}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{eheu, cicatricum et sceleris pudet} \\
\text{fratrumque. quid nos dura refugimus} \\
\text{aetas? quid intactum nefasti} \\
\text{liquimus? unde manum iuventus} \\
\text{metu deorum continuat? quibus} \\
\text{pepercit aris? o utinam nova} \\
\text{incude diffingas retusum in} \\
\text{Massagetas Arabasque ferrum!}
\end{align*}
\]

(35) (C. 1.35.33-40)

[Alas, the shame of our wounds, crimes, and slain brothers. What has this harsh generation shunned? What sacrilege have we left untouched? From what have our youth restrained their hand through fear of the gods? What altars did they spare? O may you, on a new anvil, reshape the blunted sword against the Massagetae and Arabs!]

Caesar must not only turn Rome’s attention to foreign wars, but he must also address the social reconstruction of Rome. By book four of the *Odes*, Horace is able to proclaim that the rule of law has abolished sexual licentiousness and sacrilege at home while peace is preserved on the frontiers (*nullis polluitur casta domus stupris, | mos et lex maculosum edomuit nefas, | laudantur simili prole puerperae, | culpan poena premit comes*, C. 4.5.21-24).\(^{36}\) This picture of Roman chastity stands in marked contrast to *Epodes* 8 and 12 that serve as a microcosm of iambic conflict and offers a nice parallel to the libidinous Cleopatra of *Epode* 9 and C. 1.37. This newfound sexual harmony (real or desired) can also be glimpsed in C. 1.16. This palinode is the very opposite of the

\(^{35}\) N-H (1970), 29. See C. 3.6 where guilt is expiated through an increased attention to the gods: *Delicta maiorum immeritus lues, | Romane, donec tempa refeceris | aedes-labentis deorum et | foeda nigro simulacra fumo*.

\(^{36}\) This is a far different picture of the Roman household than Horace presents in C. 3.6 where the Roman matron is licentious: *fecunda culpae saecula rupitias | primum inquinavere et genus et domos... mox iuniores quiferet adulteros | inter mariti vina, neque eligit | cui donet impermissa raptim | gaudia luminibus remotis, | sed iussa coram non sine conscio | surgit marito, seu vocat institor | seu navis Hispaeae magister, | dedecorum pretiosus emptor*. 
scathing attacks on women found in Horace’s iambs. Horace had concluded his collection of iambs with a feigned palinode to Canidia that failed to quench her anger and it is she who speaks the concluding lines in the *Epodes*, leaving the reader with no end to the invective cycle. In *C. 1.16*, however, Horace’s concluding call for his young lover to restrain her anger is prefaced by an account of his own youthful, destructive anger. Horace openly admits that his anger inspired him, in madness, to compose his swift iambics (*me quoque pectoris | temptavit in dulci iuventa | fervor et in celeris iambos | misit furentem, C. 1.16.22-25*).

Horace, by offering his iambs to the fire or to the Adriatic, makes an earnest attempt to end the iambic cycle, and he invites his young lover to do the same, knowing that anger only leads to destruction (*O matre pulchra filia pulchrior, | quem criminosis cumque voles modum | pones iambis, sive flamma | sive mari libet Hadriano, C. 1.16.1-4*). We are encouraged by the optimistic tone of the *Odes* with its images of expiated guilt to hope that, unlike Canidia, Horace’s unnamed lover will accept the retraction of his harsh words and will restrain her own anger. Of all the destructive forces, Horace claims, it is anger that threatens to upset the mind and destroy the harmony of both private (*Epodes* 8, 12, 15) and public life (*Epodes* 7, 16). Anger, Horace claims, is more

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37 Cp. N-H (1970), 202-3: “The poem is not a palinode, but for the most part a little discourse *de ira.*” N-H argue that *C. 1.16* is not a palinode because it’s main objective, visible at its conclusion, is to dissuade a young girl from her anger. While this is true, I retain the term because Horace plainly retracts his slanders: *nunc ego mitibus | mutare quaero tristia, dum mihi | fias recantatis amica | opprobriis animumque reddas.*

38 Horace, like Catullus in *C. 36*, speaks of throwing his iambs away, but unlike Catullus, Horace actually does. *Epode* 14 already shows Horace to be weary of his iambic persona, and like *C. 1.16*, also signals his interest in other genres. However, it should be noted that Horace’s iambic anger is never successfully repressed completely. Consider the iambic tone of *Ep. 1.19* where he responds to the critics of his *carmina*. He feels he has been wrongly injured through misguided criticism and, following the iambic ethos, feels he is justified in retaliating with harsh language.
powerful than the destructive sea, and disturbs the senses even more than Bacchus who is an important source of inspiration in Horace’s *Odes*. 
CHAPTER 4
THE MADNESS OF BACCHIC INSPIRATION

In the *Ars Poetica* and in the *Epodes* we have seen Horace’s tendency to balance the creative impulse with *ars*, whether it derives from *ingenium* or iambic *rabies*. This pattern of modifying potentially destructive forces continues with Horace’s encounters with Bacchus and in his sympotic poetry. While Horace rejects reliance on *ingenium* alone, he nevertheless presents his readers with the image of himself as a Bacchic reveler, divinely inspired by Bacchus, who elicits Horace’s *ingenium* for creative purposes. Even if the two odes in which Horace professes to be in the grip of Bacchic frenzy (*C.* 2.19, 3.25) are “remarkably calculated,”¹ the attention to *ars* in these two odes does not diminish the poet’s insistence on the power of an irrational force in the construction of his poetry. Horace’s claims to have traveled lesser-known paths and to have followed Bacchus through unfrequented groves (*vacuum nemus*, *C.* 3.25), all signal his adherence to Hellenistic poetics. His claims to originality, expressed most especially in *C.* 3.25 and *Ep.* 1.19, indicate his incorporation of Bacchus into his Callimachean aesthetic, which is in turn most evident in his praise poetry.

As previously noted, Horace, in contrast to Chrysippus and Carneades, does not view hellebore as a valid means of inducing creativity.² Horace, however, does not completely disavow intoxication as a means of inspiration. Horace writes in the *Ars*

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¹ Commager (1962), 31.
² See *supra*.
Poetica that he would rather rid himself of excess bile with hellebore and be sane, though no other would write better poems (non alius faceret meliorea poemata, AP 303). Horace disavows the madness associated with poetic composition, yet in the Odes he professes to have been divinely inspired through Bacchic intoxication:

[Where, Bacchus, are you taking me, full of your strength? Into what groves or what grottoes am I swiftly led with mind changed? In what caves will I be heard planning to place among the stars and the council of Jove the eternal glory of excellent Caesar? I will sing a noble deed, recent, as yet untold by any other lips. Just as upon mountain ranges the sleepless Bacchante is stunned, beholding Hebrus and Thrace, white with snow and Rhodope traversed by barbarian feet, just so, it is pleasing for me to stray and gaze at the streams and untrodden forest. O master of Naiads and Bacchanals, who have the power to tear out the tall ash-trees with their hands, I will speak nothing slight or in a humble measure, nothing mortal. It is a sweet danger, O Lenaeus, to follow the god, wreathing my temples with the green vine tendril.]

In C. 2.19 and 3.25, more than in any other odes, Horace makes clear his reliance on Bacchic inspiration. In these two odes, he purports to describe authentic divine

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3 Batinsky (1990-91), 366, comments on this passage from the AP: “…Horace reminds himself, as well as his reader, that without this element of the poetic process (ingenium) he could never have written the odes…”
experiences in which he is possessed by Bacchus. 4 These odes seek to depict the psychological effects of these divine encounters by bringing the audience inside the experience and making them feel the dread and joy of divine possession. Both odes speak of the fear that the god inspires, but fear of what? 5 First, Horace fears an immortal who is capable of inspiring both destruction and creativity in his followers. 6 Secondly, as Fraenkel notes, “...he is all the time aware of what awaits him if he fails: ridicule, disgrace, perdition.” 7 Horace fears that he will not succeed in his role as vates, that is, of fulfilling his vision of immortality for himself and for his subject, Caesar (Caesaris...deces). 8 It would be very easy for the envy that surrounds Horace to turn to ridicule, since his critics are all too willing to mock his lofty poetic aspirations. 9 Again, we are reminded of the mad poet, who is the target even of children’s ridicule: agitant pueri incautique sequuntur (AP 456). By rescuing Bacchus from the camp of the

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4 C. 2.19.6: plenoque Bacchi pectore; C. 3.25.1-2: Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui | plenum?
5 Cf. C. 2.19.5-8: Euhoe, recenti mens trepidat metu | plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum | laetatur: Euhoe, parce Liber, | parce gravi metuende thyrso!; C. 3.25.18: dulce periculum est, O Lenaee, sequi deum.
6 Nisbet and Rudd (2004), 307: “Bacchic ecstasy is both thrilling and dangerous, not because of snowfields and precipices (Fraenkel), but because meeting a god and submitting one’s mind to him is a terrifying experience...” Horace in C. 2.19 shows that Bacchus’ destructive nature is not far from his mind when he recounts the fates of those who would not submit to the god: fas et beatae coniugis additum | stellis honorem tectaque Penthei | disiecta non leni ruin | Thracis et exitium Lycurgi. Cf. C. 1.18.11-13: non ego te, candide Bassareu, | invivum quatiam, nec variis obsita frondibus | sub divum rapiam; see N-H (1970), 234, on this passage: “…it does not seem to be understood that this is a deprecation, expressed paratactically; Horace says ‘I shall not offend you, so do not hurt me’.” Horace in C. 1.18 describes the ill fate of those who abuse the gifts of Bacchus and he wishes to distance himself from them.
7 Fraenkel (1957), 258; cf. Williams (1968), 70: “Why does Horace claim that it is dangerous to follow this inspiration? It is because the subject-matter which he proposes is new and peculiarly difficult.”
8 Commager (1962), 347, stresses the poet’s role in the apotheosis of his subjects: “Although Horace claims that it is his new attempt to immortalize Caesar that inflames him, he seems captivated less by Caesar’s “immortal glory” than by his own power to create it.” Also see Johnson (1993), 169: “He (Horace) is an active creative agent who holds the power of memory, who secures immortal fame for himself by his role as interpreter of his own society to future generations.”
9 This, in fact, is exactly what Horace responds to in Ep. 1.19.35 ff.: scire velis mea cur ingratus opuscula lector | laudet ametque domi, premat extra limen iniquus: | non ego ventosae plebis suffragia venor | impensis cenarum et tritae munere vestis. Williams (1968), 27: “If there is a core of fact in this lively piece [Ep. 1.19], it is that Horace is envied by the less fortunate, and they therefore criticize him in public.” For envy in Horace’s works, see also S. 2.47-8, C. 2.20.4 and C. 4.3
defeated Antony (who had adopted Dionysus as his patron deity\textsuperscript{10}), and depicting Bacchus as the source of inspiration behind his praise poems, Horace reincorporates Bacchus into Caesar’s political regime and demonstrates his primacy in using Latin lyric for political songs.\textsuperscript{11} While C. 2.19 describes a general enthusiasm for the power of Bacchus, C. 3.25 specifically places Bacchic inspiration in the service of praise poetry.

Horace in C. 3.25 is already intent on praising Caesar but it is Bacchus, also Lyaeus (C. 3.21, C. 1.7.22, Epod. 9.38) and Liber (C. 1.12, 1.16, 1.18, 2.19), who has the power to reveal what is already present in Horace, his own unique \textit{ingenium}.\textsuperscript{12} In the Odes, Horace boldly proclaims his own unique talent: \textit{at fides et ingeni | benigna vena est, pauperemque dives | me petit}, C. 2.18.9-11.\textsuperscript{13} Here Horace proudly declares that his \textit{ingenium} has made him more powerful than the rich man, who is put in the unflattering position of seeking Horace out. This “rich vein of talent” is, in Horace’s epistle to Florus, linked with the creative inspiration that only the countryside can afford:

\textit{ingenium sibi quod vacuas desumpsit Athenas,}

\textsuperscript{10} See Cass. Dio. 50.25.2-5 where Octavian ridicules Antony’s subservience to Cleopatra and his appropriation of the title of Dionysus-Osiris: τις δ’ οὐκ ἢν ἀρρημέσσει καὶ ἀκούων καὶ ὅρων αὐτῶν τῶν Ἀντώνιου τῶν διὰ ὑπάτου, τῶν πολλάκις αὐτοκράτορα, τῶν τὴν προστασίαν μετ’ ἐμοῦ τῶν κοινῶν ἐπιτραπέντα, τῶν τοσαύτης μὲν πόλεις ποσαῦτα δὲ στρατόπεδα ἐγχειρισθέντα, νῦν πάντα μὲν τὰ πάτρια τοῦ βίου ἡδῆς ἐκλελοιπότα, πάντα δὲ τάλλοτρα καὶ βαρβαρικὰ ἔξηγοκότα, καὶ ἔμμεν μὲν ἢ τῶν νόμων ἢ τῶν θεῶν τῶν προγονίων μηδὲν προτιμῶντα, τὴν δ’ ἀνθρωπον ἐκείνην καθάπερ τινὰ Ἰσίν ή Σελήνην προσκυνοῦντα, καὶ τοὺς τε παιδὰς αὐτῆς Ἡλίου καὶ Σελήνην ὑμομαζοῦντα, καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον καὶ ἑαυτὸν Ὀσιρὶ καὶ Διόνυσῳ ἐπικεκληκότα, κάκ τούτων, καθάπερ πάσης μὲν τῆς γῆς πάσης δὲ τῆς βαλάσσας κυριεύοντα, καὶ νήσους ὅλας καὶ τῶν ἡπείρων τινὰ κεχαρισμένον.

That there was a propaganda war between Octavian and Antony is evident from Suetonius’ Aug. 70 where Antony accuses Octavian and his friends of holding a banquet dressed as gods and goddesses. See Scott (1929), 133: “Connection of the ruler with Dionysus meant identification with the typical god of world-conquest, the god who had swept through the East conquering nations, founding cities, and bearing in his train the blessings of civilization. The association of Antony with this god was no doubt propaganda intended to impress the people of the East with the divinity of the triumvir, who was ambitious of conquests in the Orient.”

\textsuperscript{11} Commager (1962), 16.

\textsuperscript{12} N-H (1970), 232, point out that Bacchus was originally identified with Liber, an Italian god of fruitfulness, and that “The Romans connected Liber with \textit{libertas}.”

\textsuperscript{13} Cf. \textit{AP} 408-410 where Horace uses identical language to describe \textit{ingenium: natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte | quaesitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena | nec rude quid prosit video ingenium.}
et studiis annos septem dedit insenuitque
libris et curis, statua taciturnius exit
plerumque et risu populum quatit; hic ego rerum
fluctibus in medis et tempestatibus urbis (85)
verba lyrae motura somum conectere digner?
(Ep. 2.2.81-86)

[A talented man, who has selected leisurely Athens for himself, and has
given seven years to studies and has grown old amidst books and cares,
goes about more silent than a statue and makes many people shake with
laughter; here, am I to condescend to weave words to stir the sound of
the lyre among the waves of business and in the midst of the storms of
the city?]

Certainly it became traditional for a Roman poet who wished to declare his
allegiance to Hellenistic poetry to write of mountains, untrodden paths, and secluded
groves to signal his priority or adherence to a given poetic type, and we need not always
take them literally. Yet, Horace appears to be speaking quite literally about the adverse
effects that urban-centers—here represented by Athens and most especially Rome (hic in
line 84 refers to Rome)—have on his ability to tap into his ingenium for creative
purposes. Horace speaks of his own ingenium, always present but not always
accessible, and admits that in order to use it for creative purposes, he must seek the
secluded groves: he must follow the god (dulce periculum est | o Lenaee, sequi deum).

The location of Horace’s encounters with Bacchus plays a crucial role in poetic
inspiration; Bacchic inspiration must take place in seclusion, which comes dangerously
close to the secreta loca that Democritus’ poets seek and for which Horace criticizes

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14 For similar declarations not only of the poet’s primacy, but also of the poet’s need to seek out deserted
mountains and wildernesses, see Lucr., 1.926-27: avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante | trita solo;
Verg., G. 3.291-93: sed me Parnasi deserta per ardua dulcis | raptat amor; iuvat ire iugis qua nulla
priorum | Castalian molis devertitur orbita clivo. Commager (1962), 12, in his discussion of these
passages states: “The adjectives, like those commonly used of the holy mountain-deserta, vacuum, loca
nullius ante trita solo, avia, intacta—proclaim not so much the poet’s necessary isolation in nature as his
literary uniqueness.”

15 Batinsky (1990-91), 366.
Horace, however, in his escape from the city, which may at first appear as an escape from society, is attempting to compose public poetry. As a *vates*, he does not intend that his poetry, written in solitude and quiet, will remain in obscurity, but, as he indicates in *C.* 3.25, he will be heard (*audiar*). This intimate communion with Bacchus is not to be sought in the city, as Horace writes to Florus in *Ep.* 2.2.77-80:

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scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus et fugit urbem,
rite cliens Bacchi somno gaudentis et umbra:
tu me inter strepitus nocturnos atque diurnos
vis canere et contracta sequi vestigia vatum?
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[The whole band of authors loves the forest and flees the city, duly observant votaries of Bacchus who delights in sleep and shade. Do you wish that I amid the nocturnal and daily din should sing and follow the narrow pathways of the bards?]

Again, Horace insists that he does not compose amid the hustle and bustle of Rome, but instead his encounters with Bacchus take place away from society on the “narrow pathways” (*contracta vestigium*) that he as a *vates* treads. As Batinsky notes, the Callimachean image of the poet taking the paths less traveled have, in Horace’s work, been appropriated by Bacchus in both *Ep.* 2.2 and *C.* 3.25: “Bacchus, who had swept Horace off to these isolated places, has encroached on Apollo’s domain.”

16 *AP* 297-8: *bona pars non ungis ponere curat, | non barbam, secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.*

17 Commager (1962), 345: “Horace withdraws from the world, but only to re-create it in his own terms. If politics are left behind, it is only so that the greatest of political figures may become the subject of his verse.”

18 Cf. *C.* 1.1.29-32: *me doctarum hederae praemia frontium | dis miscent superis, me gelidum nemus | nympharumque leves cum Satyris Chori | secernunt populo.* See also Batinsky (1990-91), 366, “…Horace suggests that *ingenium* is part of a poet’s nature, but that it is not always operative. He complains that, while living in Athens, he was unable to employ *ingenium*. If a poet is to write, he must escape the city and follow Bacchus.”

19 Cf. *Ep.* 1.19.21-23: *libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps, | non aliena meo pressi pede. qui sibi fidet | dux reget examen.*

20 Batinsky (1990-91), 373; see also Callimachus’ *Aetia* 1.1-29 and the *Hymn to Apollo* (105-13); also Freudenburg (1993), 107, speaking on *S.* 1.10: “In lines 31-35, Horace converts the Apollo of Callimachus’ *Aetia* prologue into Quirinus, who warns him in a dream not to compose Greek verses. This conversion of Greek to Roman…is very clever, for by it the satirist drives home his point about independent poetic *mimesis*: the slavish imitator of Callimachus-his critics, in other words-would have
not merely managed to modify Bacchus/ingenium with a Callimachean aesthetic, he has succeeded in incorporating Bacchus into his literary program while maintaining Apollo also as a source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{21}

The image of Horace as a participant in Bacchus’ rites amidst lonely groves (C. 3.25.8-14) serves not only to bring the audience into what the poet professes to be an actual ecstatic state, but it also serves to announce Horace’s claim to originality (\textit{dicam insigne recens adhuc | indictum ore alio}). Horace takes up a defense of this originality in his later critical works. In \textit{Ep.} 1.19, Horace begins his defense of his recently published collection of odes by addressing the charge that he is a mere imitator of Greek models without a claim to originality. Horace answers back that, in fact, it is he who is imitated by a “slavish herd” (\textit{servum pecus}) who believes that through Bacchic intoxication, they are able to compose poems like Horace.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{quote}
Prisco si credis, Maecenas docte, Cratino, 
nulla placere diu nec vivere carmina possunt 
quae scribuntur aquae potoribus. ut male sanos 
adscripsit Liber Satyris Faunisque poetas, 
vina fere dulces oluerunt mane Camenae. 
laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus; 
Ennius ipse pater numquam nisi potus ad arma 
prosiluit dicenda. ‘forum putealque Libonis 
mandabo siccis, adimam cantare severis’: 
hoc simul edixi, non cessavere poetae 
nocturno certare mero, putere diurno…
o imitatores, servum pecus, ut mihi saepe 
bilem, saepe iocum vestri movere tumultus!
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{5} [If you believe, learned Maecenas, old Cratinus, no songs are able to please or to live for very long, which are composed by water drinkers. Since Liber enrolled mad poets with the Satyrs and Fauns, the sweet Muses have generally reeked of wine by morning. Homer is said to be a made Apollo give the warning.” In a similar manner, Horace has Bacchus adopt the role of Apollo in guiding his devotee along unfrequented paths.

\textsuperscript{21} C. 1.21, 1.31, 3.30, 4.6, 4.15.

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. Johnson (1993), 50: “When Horace responds to his critics and their attacks on Odes I-III and the Epodes, he first defends himself against attacks that make him to be nothing more than a winebibber, and in doing so, he creates room for the use of wine in poetic inspiration.”
wine drinker and to praise wine; father Ennius himself never leapt forth to sing of arms unless intoxicated. “I entrust the Forum and Libo’s well to the abstemious, I will ban the stern from singing.” As soon as I declared this, the poets did not cease to contend by night with wine, and to stink of it by day…O imitators, pack of slaves, how often your commotion has roused my wrath and laughter!]

The attitude to the poetic process that the *imitatores* display is exactly what Horace condemns Democritus’ poets for in the *Ars Poetica* (295-301). These poets that rely solely on *ingenium* believe that by merely imitating the appearance of an inspired *demens poeta* they may themselves win the title of poet.

Commager contends that “Horace’s own indulgence (in wine) was at most an accident of his life, not an essential element of his creativity.” But it is not an accident that Horace depicts himself as inspired by Bacchus in C. 2.19 and 3.25 and that Bacchus plays a consistent role throughout Horace’s many sympotic poems. Commager’s contention that Horace’s citation of Cratinus in *Ep*. 1.19 is “satirizing a popular attitude, not endorsing it” ignores that Horace does not deplore the consumption of wine, but reliance on it alone for writing poetry. Bacchus serves as Horace’s inspiration for his unique talent, and one can not help but see a reflection of Horace in the “brain-sick poets” whom Horace satirizes as Commager contends (*ut male sanos adscriptis Liber Satyris Faunisque poetas, vina fere dulces oluerunt mane Camenae*). Yet Horace is not

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23 Commager (1962), 30.
24 *C*. I. 4, 7, 9, 11, 17, 18, 20, 27, 36, 37, 38; II. 3, 7, 11, 14; III. 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 28, 29; IV. 1, 5, 11, 12, 13, 15.
26 Williams (1968), 25.
27 See Horace’s biting self-mockery in *S*. 2.7.114-117 where he has his slave Davus first ridicule him for his sloth (*iam vino quaerens, iam somno fallere curam, S*. 2.7.114), then confuse Horace’s verse-making with madness: ‘*aut insanit homo aut versus facit.*’ *Cp. S*.2.3.1-4 where Damasippus is the speaker: ‘*Sic raro scribis, ut toto non quater anno | membranam poscas, scriptorum quaeque retexens, | iratus tibi quod vini somnique benignus | nil dignum sermone canas.*’ No matter how much Horace tempts the muse with wine, his writer’s block remains.
the same as the *male sanos poetas* (here associated with the *imitatores*), but is instead, through his unique talent, the leader of the herd (*qui sibi fidet | dux reget examen*). As in Horace’s sympotic poems, Bacchus’ gifts play an important, if moderated, role. The sympotic odes are themselves the fruits of those gifts.

Perhaps the most clearly drawn distinction between the benefits and dangers of Bacchic intoxication comes in *C. 1.18*, which compresses both aspects of the god within a sixteen line poem. Life is hard, Horace warns, for those who abstain entirely from Bacchus’ gifts, and, (a commonplace found in Horace’s sympotic poetry),

E.g. *Epod. 9*, 13; *C. 1.7*, 2.7, 2.11, 3.8, 3.21, 3.29, 4.12.

29 Horace was not unique in depicting the positive and negative influences of wine in sympotic literature. See Theognis 211-212, 497-498, 499-510 (W.). See Johnson (2004), 10-14 for a discussion of Horace’s Greek sympotic models.

Harsh cares (*mordaces sollicitudines*) are cured only by Bacchus. Horace further develops his praises of wine in *Ep. 1.5.16* ff., addressed to Torquatus. Wine is here praised for its almost miraculous multiplicity of uses, capable of inspiring a soldier to battle (contrasted with the negative *rixia* at *C. 1.18.8*) and teaching new arts.

*quid non ebrietatis discernat? operta recludit, spes iubet esse ratus, ad proelia tradit inertem; sollicitis animis onus eximit, addocet artis. fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum? contracta quem non in paupertate solutum? (Ep. 1.5.16-20)*

[What does intoxication not reveal? It opens up secrets, it bids hopes to be fulfilled, it drives the sluggish to battle; it takes away the burden from worried hearts, it teaches new arts. Whom from restricting poverty has it not freed?]

Such praises for wine are almost always accompanied and limited by some kind of warning about the dangers of overindulgence, and this is what we find in *C. 1.18*. What begins as an exhortation to Varus to plant the sacred vine in the soil along the Tibur and Catilus’ walls ends with images of Bacchus-inspired excess, which Horace rejects:
Horace draws on the example provided by the Centaurs to remind Varus that intemperate disregard for the powers of Bacchus leads to self-destruction *(ac ne quis modici transiliat munera Liberi, | Centaurea monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero | debellata, C. 1.18.7-9).*

Horace asserts in *C. 1.27* that Bacchus in fact hates the excesses that result from the abuse of his gifts. Bacchus is a god of inspiration, but also of moderation *(verecundum)*, and Horace accordingly chastises violent symposiasts:

\[
\text{Natis in usum laetitiae scyphis}
\]
\[
pugnare Thracum est: tollite barbarum
\]
\[
morem, verecundumque Bacchum
\]
\[
sanguineis prohibete rixis.
\]
\[
(\text{Odes 1.27.1-4})
\]

[To fight with cups made for the use of pleasure is for the Thracians. Put away barbaric manners, and keep bloody quarrels away from modest Bacchus.]

For Horace there are appropriate occasions for unrestrained drinking, such as the return of a friend from war *(C. 1.36, 2.7, 3.14)*, victory over a foreign enemy *(1.37)*, and

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30 N-H (1970), 234: “As the poem grows more tempestuous Horace no longer uses the kindly names of *Bacche pater* and *Liber*, but the orgiastic cult-titles *Euhius* and *Bassareus.*” *Mero* is unmixed wine. Horace uses this term to denote wine before it is served *(1.9.8, 3.29.2)*, wine used in sacrifice *(1.19.15)*, and where there is heavy drinking *(1.13.10, 1.36.13, 2.12.5)*; see N-H (1970), 233. Horace usually uses an adjective of moderation in conjunction with his suggested consumption of *merum*. See Johnson (2004), 220 n.28.

31 In *C. 1.13* a jealous Horace speaks of the violence that can accompany wine: *uror, seu tibi candidos | turparunt umeros immodicae mero | rixae, sive puer furens | impressit memorem dente labris notam.*
Horace’s annual sacrifice to Liber in commemoration of his encounter with a tree that nearly fell on him. Furthermore, Horace encourages his friend Vergilius to mingle brief folly and his wisdom with wine (misce stultitiam consiliis brevem, 4.12.27), which echos Horace’s exhortation to lay siege to the fortification of wisdom with wine in 3.28 (prome reconditum, | Lyde, strenua Caecubum | munitaeque adhibe vim sapientiae). Again, Horace’s invitation to the banquet in C. 4.12 suggests a limited intoxication (brevem), and Vergilius is encouraged to return to sanity.

Horace specifically links his own creative impulse with Bacchic inspiration in his odes and in his later critical discussions of his poetic achievement. Odes 2.19 and 3.25 are unique insofar as they profess to be an account of Bacchic inspiration that invites the audience inside the ecstatic experience. Horace risks the dangers associated with following the god through unknown paths in order to establish his own ingenuity.

Horace’s stance as the magister bibendi and the overarching carpe diem theme that links together the sympotic odes of books 1-4 establishes Bacchus as a major inspiration in Horace’s poetic program. The unrestrained revelry that is advocated in the return odes (1.36, 2.7, 3.14), the Cleopatra ode (1.37), and 3.19 is a short-lived madness that is moderated by other sympotic pieces in the collection (C. 1.18, 1.27, 2.11, 4.12).

32 Johnson (2004), 13-14. Nunc est bibendum seems to fulfill Horace’s desire in Epod. 9 to celebrate with heavy drinking since Caesar is victorious at Actium (victore laetus Caesare). The Caecuban had been stored away for festal banquets (Epod. 9.1) and only in C. 1.37 is it proper to bring it forth for celebration (antehac nefas depromere Caecubum | cellis avitis, dum Capitolio | regina dementis ruinas, | funus et imperio parabat). Horace depicts Cleopatra as drunk with fortune (quidlibet impotens | sperare fortunaque dulci | ebria) and she serves as an exemplum of the power that Bacchus has to drive his followers mad with wild delusions (mentemque lymphatam Mareotico | redegit in veros timores | Caesar).

33 See C. 3.8.13-15 where Horace tells Maecenas to celebrate the Martian Kalends by drinking: sume, Maecenas, cyathos amici | sospitis centum et vigiles lucernas | perfer in lucem.

34 Johnson (2004), provides a thorough treatment of the symposion with particular regard for the carpe diem theme and praise poetry.

35 Cf. C. 2.3 and 2.10 which do not specifically call for moderation in drinking, but life in general.
Horace’s sympotic pieces are themselves the result of his inspiration to compose poems that explore both the gifts and the dangers of Bacchic intoxication.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Throughout his poetry Horace persistently advocates moderating the creative forces whose powers have the ability to destroy the poet and his society. This is most clearly seen in the power of iambic rabies to serve simultaneously as a fount of poetic inspiration that Horace draws from to compose his collection of epodes, and as a means by which society commits suicide in civil war. But this moderating ethic is also present in Horace’s unification of ingenium and ars in his poetic theory and in his interactions with Bacchus throughout the Odes.

Horace’s overarching concern in the Ars Poetica is not simply to present a guidebook on the mechanics of composing poetry, but to offer a more detailed and intricate look at the poet’s vocation. This vocation has a venerable history and includes such poets as Orpheus, Amphion, and Homer (AP 391-407). An integral part of the poet’s occupation is a proper understanding of the relationship between ingenium and ars. Horace throughout the entire body of his work persistently advocates a unification of the two creative elements so that Horace chastises his model Lucilus in the Satires not for his ingenium, but for his inability to temper it with an art-filled aesthetic. Horace boasts of his own unique ingenium (C. 2.18) and admits that it is an essential part of the creative process (AP 408-11). In fact, Horace claims, if Lucilus was writing in Augustan Rome and was attentive to tempering his ingenium, he would have superceded Horace in the quality of his poetry since his ingenium surpassed Horace’s (S. 1.10).
It is the dominance of *ingenium* over *ars* that Horace disavows. The faults of Democritus’ band of mad poets and the concluding image of the *vesanus poeta* in the *Ars Poetica* serve as a warning to the Pisones to avoid excessive reliance on *ingenium*. In the lines preceding the frightening picture of the *vesanus poeta* at the conclusion to the *Ars Poetica*, Horace begins his most direct treatment of the question of the relationship between *ingenium* and *ars* (*AP* 408-452). The *vesanus poeta*, then, serves as an example of the poet who shuns a harsh critic who, as a tempering influence, is an essential element in the creative process. Horace frequently stresses the importance of laboring over his poems before they are published, a process that he likens to forging iron on an anvil. This aesthetic is at work not only in his satires, but also in his *carmina*—even those that purport to be actual accounts of the divine madness of Bacchic inspiration.

Horace has left us two odes in which he specifically speaks of his possession by Bacchus and the direct influence this possession has on his creative process. To follow Bacchus is dangerous (*dulce periculum est, | o Lenaee, sequi deum*) but like the Bacchantes in C. 3.25 who are filled with the god’s power to do incredible deeds (*o Naiadum potens | Baccharumque valentium | proceras manibus vertere fraxinos*), so Horace is likewise filled with the inspiring power of Bacchus to create poetry.¹ The importance of this declaration must not be mitigated for fear that Horace may be viewed as little more than an immoderate, raving follower of Bacchus.

Unlike C. 2.19, however, which highlights Bacchic inspiration generally, C. 3.25 specifies that praise poetry will be the fruits of his inspiration. Not only will Horace sing the praises of Caesar, but his *carmina* will be unlike any heard before (*dicam insigne*

¹ Fraenkel (1957), 258.
recens adhuc | indictum ore alio). Bacchic inspiration, then, also serves to announce Horace’s originality, a concern reiterated in the very setting of the two odes and in Horace’s later critical writings such as Ep. 1.19. The geographical location of Horace’s visions of Bacchus serves almost as technical language, signaling that Horace’s poetic talents are moving into new territory with Bacchus as guide.

The gifts of Bacchus must be respected, and although there are in Horace’s sympotic pieces instances of excessive drinking that Horace, as magister bibendi, fully endorses, these occasional odes of exuberant intoxication are tempered by the more restrained sympotic pieces in the collection. In his sympotic poetry, Horace uses very strong language in his condemnation of those who have violated the sanctity of the symposium through violence. The symposium is the space designated above all for peace and for relief from the dangers of everyday (most often aristocratic) life. To violate that peace is not only to transgress the decorum of the symposium, but also to offend a modest god (tollite barbarum | morem, verecundumque Bacchum | sanguineis prohibete rixis, C. 1.27). The symposium is a space in which social ties are forged and reinforced, and it thus plays an important role in the way society is (re)fashioned. Through his sympotic odes, Horace treats the various gifts of wine and the negative effects of its abuse, thus emphasizing moderate drinking as part of an ideal moderate lifestyle. Through this presentation of the benefits and dangers of wine, Bacchus serves as Horace’s inspiration throughout his odes, an inspiration dedicated to unity of ingenium and ars.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael Ritter was born in Sagerton, Texas, on January 27, 1980. In 1998 he graduated from West Holmes High School in Holmes County, Ohio. He graduated from Ohio University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts in classics. He will receive his Master of Arts in classical philology from the University of Florida in 2006.