COMEDIES OF TRANSGRESSION IN GANGSTA RAP AND ANCIENT CLASSICAL POETRY

Ralph M. Rosen and Donald R. Marks

The history of literature and art offers no shortage of works created to offend or shock an audience, but few have been as incendiary as gangsta rap. Apologists cannot deny the problematic content of this form of rap—the misogynistic posturing, themes of intense violence, freewheeling and gratuitous obscenity—and some detractors hold that even the attempt to analyze the genre bestows undeserved legitimacy on its practitioners. The transgressive and counter-hegemonic stance of gangsta rap has become so threatening, in fact, that its origins as a complex poetic form with deep roots in a variety of literary and ritual traditions have, for the most part, been neglected or obscured. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any poetic form in the contemporary West in which politics, race and ideology have dictated so completely the terms of "acceptable" criticism. This is all the more remarkable for gangsta rap, insofar as so much foundational scholarship, some even decades old, already exists within fields such as folklore, psychology and anthropology which can articulate the nexus of literary and cultural forces that gave rise to it. As such approaches make clear, far from being an unprecedented art form that can only reflect the social pathologies idiosyncratic to American ghetto life, gangsta rap operates within a well-documented poetic tradition within African-American culture that ritualizes invective, satire, obscenity, and other verbal phenomena with transgressive aims.

Many critics have indeed noted that gangsta rap has, for example, links with African-American rituals of abuse, such as "the dozens" or "toasting," and a very few have even suggested that this background might be relevant to a contemporary understanding of gangsta rap. But there has been no detailed study of the genre as an example of a poetic mode operating according to principles that are conceptually prior to an author's lived reality. Ironically, the genre itself has probably been the biggest obstacle to any serious investigation of its poetic provenance. Like many forms of subjective poetry, after all, gangsta rap insists on the pretense that the "I" of its lyrics is the actual poet; and when this pretense is combined with transgressive

content, it becomes even more difficult for an audience to distinguish the markers of poetic discourse and to separate an author's autobiographical reality from the fiction of the work.

We are faced, therefore, with a dilemma: gangsta rap itself resists hegemonic appropriation or any movement that might denature its pretense of urgency and contemporaneity or threaten to legitimize its transgressive impulses.[1] Yet at the same time, gangsta rappers so routinely call attention to their participation in a tradition, through formal devices, poetic tropes, and the construction of elaborate relationships with rival or antecedent poets, that there can be no question about their desire to confound their alleged autobiographical pretenses and to play to a sophisticated audience that understands the dynamics of poetic fictionality. For many critics of gangsta rap, however, it matters little whether the form is "traditional" or not: large audiences of vulnerable youth, it is often claimed, take the music at face value and proceed to adopt its socially disruptive attitudes. The high-profile exempla of Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G., self-styled gangsta rappers whose own lives came to mimic fatally the dangerous world of their poetic imaginations, have further focused attention on the genre as an acute social problem and made literary analysis seem inconsequential and effete. Yet many of the most crucial questions surrounding gangsta rap as a social phenomenon, such as the nature of its "influence" on an audience or the problem of artistic accountability, can only be adequately addressed with the fullest understanding of the genre as a verbal and musical art form governed, at least in part, by forces that transcend its immediate context of performance.

A few scholars have alluded to the larger cultural and literary traditions in which gangsta rap operates, but this usually does little to mollify those who are offended by its content. When Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in an editorial for the New York Times (6/19/90) on the group 2 Live Crew, (at that time arrested on obscenity charges), tried to explain the posturing of the band and its lyrics in terms of African-American traditions of verbal abuse and mockery, some mistook his analysis for tacit approval of the band's behavior. At the time, Gates had recently published his important book The Signifying Monkey, in which he formulated his theory of a distinctly African-American mode of literary criticism by developing the implications of a large body of

folkloric and anthropological research on "Signifying."[2] Gates tried in his editorial to set some of the more unsavory aspects of gangsta rap in the context of Signifying and other traditions of ritual abuse, implying, at the very least, that perhaps there was more going on in 2 Live Crew's performance than the unqualified promotion of dysfunctional behavior. In a newspaper editorial, however, Gates could only be suggestive, and a more substantial and systematic analysis of gangsta rap as an African-American poetic form still remains to be done.

A few studies have appeared which focus on some of the specifically literary aspects of the genre, but three crucial topics have been largely neglected: 1) a systematic examination of the antecedents of gangsta rap in the vernacular poetic system of Signifying, itself clearly differentiated from non-poetic discourse; 2) the relationship between the tropes and artistic strategies of this vernacular tradition and more abstractly conceived poetic categories, such as satire and comedy; and, by extension, 3) situating gangsta rap, through careful consideration of its diction, form and authorial posturings, in a broader cross-cultural and trans-historical poetic tradition of comic transgression. We propose in this study to investigate not only the more direct literary and cultural antecedents of gangsta rap, but to describe some of its remarkable affinities with a historically unrelated tradition, namely the genres of poetic satire and mockery in Greco-Roman classical antiquity.

While Classical poetry is certainly not the only western literary tradition to which gangsta rap could profitably be compared, there are several reasons why this body of literature serves as an especially valuable comparandum to rap. First, because the history and culture of ancient Greece and Italy were interconnected for such a long, uninterrupted span of time, their respective literary traditions eventually became similarly intertwined, and we may therefore observe the evolution of literary forms over more than a millenium within a generally monolithic cultural context. Next, within this literary history, transgressive poetic modes, while they occur in a spectrum of diverse literary genres and sub-genres, form a reasonably coherent nexus of affiliated traditions, and virtually all poets working within them attempted at some point to situate themselves in relation to past models or contemporary rivals. This is especially apparent

later in the history of Greco-Roman literature, as the sense of a literary past grew more profound. But even in the earliest periods of Greek literature when poets of satire and abuse had not yet fetishized an extensive literary past, they remained conscious of antecedent and contemporary rivals and construed their own interaction with them in the context of poetic genre. In fifth-century Athenian comic drama, for example, Aristophanes frequently claimed for himself a poetic superiority by denigrating his competitors, and his competitors (e.g., Cratinus, Eupolis), certainly did the same in turn. Moreover, there is ample evidence that these comic dramatists, in their abuse of each other, were conscious of earlier traditions of mockery and personal attack, such as the iambographic poetry of Archilochus and Hipponax (seventh and sixth centuries BCE, respectively). In short, Classical poets of satire and mockery share with gangsta rap a propensity to articulate their generic self-consciousness as well as their place within a literary history.

Similarly, the African-American poetic tradition of which gangsta rap partakes extends across a considerable history—at least 150 years and possibly significantly longer, although it is difficult to date with precision the earliest use of signifying practices by African-American slaves. Like the Greco-Roman aesthetic tradition, African-American literary history encompasses a vast terrain of interconnected modes and genres—contributing several unique narrative, dramatic, and musical forms, as well as numerous hybrids. Gangsta rap, however, appears to belong squarely within a single sub-category, or generic tendency within this larger tradition, one which consists of several related strains of comic or satiric invective poetry. Perhaps the first definable genre in this series of historically related forms were certain early slave songs, particularly the lyrics, or "shouts," used to rile opponents and set the pace of work during corn-shucking contests. These work songs made use of jesting and even a species of satiric abuse, often directed at the slave-holder.[3] Moreover, they frequently—and usually with considerable self-conscious irony—identified the singer with conjure men, runaway slaves or other "transgressive" figures, including the archetypal trickster, the "Signifying Monkey."[4]

As in the Greco-Roman tradition, transformations in the social and historical context of African-American culture brought about significant variations in the forms and styles of its

aesthetic productions, yet throughout these changes the practice of satiric oral poetry continued to thrive. After slavery and particularly during the Jim Crow years, as John Roberts aptly demonstrates, the trickster heroes of slave songs evolved into representations of resistance to oppressive white authority. Outlaws of quasi-mythic stature populate the broad spectrum of African-American aesthetic productions, from the novel (e.g., Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas in Native Son) to the blues (e.g., Muddy Waters, "I'm Ready," George Hannah, "Gutter Man Blues") to the infamous Shine and Stagolee narratives that proliferated through the long-standing folk practices of performing "toasts" or "playing the dozens." These transgressive heroes typically were represented not only as fearless opponents of white authority, but also as the embodiment of masculine power—charismatic, sexually voracious, and flush with freshly seized wealth. As Gates has noted, it is this last practice that provides the most readily identifiable literary antecedent for gangsta rap and related products of hip-hop culture. Yet there are also at least two crucially influential evolutionary stages between the oral poetics of toasts and those of contemporary rap, namely, various ribald elements within the musical genres of rhythm-and-blues, soul, and especially, funk—a genre that boldly uses the rhetorical strategies of the Signifying tradition to underscore its sexual content.[5]

The verbal humor of the blues and the toasts, complete with its rhetoric of misogyny and sexual self-aggrandizement, inspired countless rhythm and blues, soul, and early funk performers, most notably James Brown. These acts, in turn, influenced an even more outrageous generation of funk artists, including such personae-creating parodists as George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, and other members of Parliament-Funkadelic—an oft-sampled musical reservoir, from which many of gangsta rap's most infectious beats have flowed. In addition, the Ohio Players—hugely popular as a funk group in the 1970s and another favorite of gangsta rap mix masters—costumed themselves as pimps and gun-toting gangsters—their very name offering a musician's pun on "player," a common alternate term for "pimp" or "hustler" in West Coast toasts and oral narratives.[6] These developmental precursors, as our analyses will show, serve as foundational

texts that sustain multiple layers of allusion and intertextual play within the intensely traditional and self-referential poetics of gangsta rap.

We have no illusions that our comparative approach will resolve the perennial socio-political problem of art forms that purvey negative values. We do believe, however, that in the debates about the social ramifications of gangsta rap, understanding the ways in which it participates in a vast and ancient poetic tradition may serve as a useful reminder that the etiology of transgressive poetry is highly overdetermined, not merely ascribable to historically and culturally localized conditions. Despite all the obvious contingencies that influence the production of transgressive poetry at a given moment in time, it is curious that so often individual, even profoundly isolated, reflexes in widely disparate cultures are not only formally homologous, but often functionally analogous. Such cases result, as we argue, not from serendipitous coincidence, but rather from various discursive strategies that have evolved across cultures to express some of the most troubling human impulses, such as aggression, narcissism and the territorial violence between groups.

At this point, a few words are in order about our use of the term “transgressive.” We use this term of gangsta rap and certain works of Classical literature in a broad sense to describe either entire genres, sub-genres, or even discursive tropes within genres that might themselves not be considered transgressive. Much of the poetry that we will be considering can also be described in more conventional terms, such as satire, parody, and comedy. But none of these terms conveys adequately by themselves the elements that unify all the poetic forms we are interested in, whereas the notion of “transgression” comes closest to providing a general critical model which can account for certain analogous poetic modes across historical periods and varied literary forms and styles. Transgression implies a crossing of boundaries, and in the case of transgressive literature we mean those works which exist explicitly to overstep the line that demarcates an area of conventional social decorum. In some cases transgressive literature may affect a counter-hegemonic political and social posture, constructing itself as radical and subversive; elsewhere it may be more concerned with a cultural critique less overtly charged with politics, such as we

find in certain forms of parody which burlesque other artistic or cultural productions for aesthetic or self-aggrandizing reasons.[7] Complicating matters even further is the fact that literature, because it occupies a fictional, ontologically ambiguous, space, can be transgressive in its diction or content without necessarily assuming transgressive status within its culture. Literature, in other words, may "transgress" certain cultural norms and conventions even as it is being consumed heartily by an audience that relies upon them for its sense of social order.[8] This is particularly the case with extant ancient poetry, most of which was composed for a dominant élite audience, who could revel in the representation of transgression in poetry without necessarily being scandalized. But even in the case of gangsta rap, the audience that embraces it most enthusiastically and knowingly likewise appreciates its transgressive qualities without themselves feeling threatened by its breaches of convention. In both cases, ancient and modern, groups of people who take offense at poetry that transgresses can always be found; but, as we argue in detail below, such groups can rarely, if ever, be considered the poet's primary audience. On the other hand, a scandalized audience, even an imaginary or assumed one, remains an essential component of the relationship a transgressive poet constructs with his or her "real" audience.[9]

The concept of "transgression," therefore, allows for the comparison of a diverse range of literary genres which in other respects may seem discontinuous. The specific cultural milieu of Juvenal in Imperial Rome, for example, is vastly different from the fifth-century Athens that produced Aristophanes, and the highly epichoric flavor of Los Angeles gangsta rap insists that it is wedded to a particular place and time. Yet the most fundamental and problematic aspects of such poetry (persona construction, diction, generic self-consciousness, to name a few) are most cogently explained by situating specific, contingent cultural realities—e.g., the sociology and politics of poetry at Rome, at Athens, in Los Angeles—within a cross-cultural poetic system of transgressive typologies. Our project, then, is to focus on exactly those points where the local and contingent interact with the typological to produce the particularized forms that are transmitted to us on papyrus, parchment, or the compact disc.

Just as the Classical tradition exhibits a great variety of transgressive poetry across several genres, so is the transgressive tradition in rap hardly monolithic. Gangsta rap is so called mainly because a group of rappers themselves adopted the term and the attitudes appropriate to it. But not all rappers who have produced transgressive rhymes are necessarily "gangstas," and even among the self-styled gangstas we encounter, in addition to a diversity of strictly musical styles, many different authorial poses and dictional strategies. Although in this study we will only be able to examine a small portion of a remarkably large area of rap, we will focus on a few key texts that represent most fully the poetics of satirical, comedic transgression. These texts are generally classified as "gangsta rap," although, as we shall see, they all foreground so insistently their generic hybridity that the tag of "gangsta" often becomes little more than a convenient marker of a much more sophisticated aesthetic of historical and literary self-consciousness.

I. Poet, Audience and Genre

Within the Classical tradition, the originary transgressive poets were known as iambographers, named for their predilection for the iambic meter.[10] Only two iambographic poets, Archilochus and Hipponax, have left us any substantial fragments, largely because, as literary canons developed in antiquity, these two became the primary exemplars of the genre. Archilochus and Hipponax composed in the earliest centuries of recorded Greek literature, 7th and 6th C. BCE respectively, and we have little indication of how their own audiences responded to their work, but each of them had an enormous influence on nearly all subsequent forms of Greek and Latin transgressive poetry. Aristotle distilled their basic poetics into the term *iambike idea*, i.e., the iambic form or approach, which included lampooning, personal abuse, obscene diction (*aischrologia*) and other elements that the iambographers were famous for.[11] Aristotle used the term in fact to describe certain features of the Old Comedy of fifth-century Athens (best represented to us by Aristophanes) thereby articulating a generic link between the poetics of the iambographers and the Athenian comic dramatists.[12]

Within the eleven extant plays of Aristophanes we find many moments where the playwright comments on that problematic gulf between the poet and his audience, specifically the misunderstandings that the iambike idea—the transgressive poetic—can cause in an audience inattentive to generic signposting. One of the formal elements of Old Comedy, in fact, known as the parabasis, afforded the playwright a forum for constructing a subjective voice and addressing the audience about literary-critical matters. The parabasis was generally a choral interlude separating dramatic episodes, in which the chorus leader "stepped aside" (parabainein) from the chorus and spoke on behalf of the playwright himself. In the early plays of Aristophanes, in fact, the parabases were highly intertextual, often referring to topics discussed in earlier parabases.[13] Classicists have been quick to plunder the parabases for (auto)biographical information about the poet, despite many indications that much of the authorial posturing in them was conventional and hyperbolic. But whether or not the "autobiographical" details of the Aristophanic parabases are "real," they certainly reflect the typically troubled relationship between the transgressive poet and his audience.

One of the best examples in Aristophanes of the poet's indignation at an audience unappreciative of comic satire and abuse can be found in the debacle over his ridicule of the demagogue Cleon in a play from 427 BCE, known as Babylonians. In Acharnians, produced in 425, Aristophanes himself leads us to believe that after the performance of Babylonians Cleon prosecuted the poet for slandering him "in the presence of foreigners" (line 502; cf. also 377-84). At Acharnians 630-32, Aristophanes's chorus leader speaks on his behalf in the parabasis:

> But slandered by his enemies among the swift-counseling Athenians,
> On grounds of laughing at our city and insulting the people,
> He asks now to reply to the counsel-changing Athenians.
>
> (Tr. Hubbard, p.48)

The speaker then proceeds to claim not only that comedy is beneficial to the city, but that Aristophanes in particular has achieved international status as the best representative of the genre. The passage appears simultaneously serious and lighthearted, as it defends the practice of comic abuse while obliquely abusing the audience of Athenians:

> The poet says that he is worthy of many good things from you,
> Stopping you from being too deceived by foreign discourses,
> From taking pleasure in flattery, from being gape citizens
> ……
> Therefore, they [the allies] will come, bearing tribute to you from the various cities,
> Desiring to see the best poet,
> Who among the Athenians took the risk of saying what is just.
> Fame concerning his daring has already reached so far that,
> When the Great King tested the Spartan embassy,
> He first asked which side prevailed with ships,
> And then which side this poet rebukes
> For he said that these men have become much better,
> And would triumph in war, possessing this counselor.
> For this reason the Spartans offer you peace,
> And demand the return of Aegina. they think not of that island,
> But that they may take away this poet.
> But may you never release him, since he will write comedy about what is just;
> He says that he will teach you many good things, so that you can be happy,
> Neither flattering you nor presenting bribes nor cheating you,
> Nor committing all knavery nor sprinkling you with praise, but teaching the best.
> Let Cleon plot against these things,

And contrive every plan against me.

660

For the good and just will be

Allied with me, and never shall I be found

To be, like that man, a wretch and a butt-fucker

In matters of state.

Come hither, O flaming Muse, 665

Intense Acharnian,

Having the strength of fire.

Just as when from oak-wood coals

A spark leaps up aroused by a favoring breeze

When the fish are ready, 670

And others stir the Thasian pickle “of shining rim,”

And others knead bread,

Even so, come as a

Rousing, harmonious song of the country,

Taking me as your fellow demesman. 675

(Tr. Hubbard, 48-49; 53-54)

The apologetics of this passage are echoed repeatedly not only in Aristophanes, but in nearly all Greek and Latin poets who write poetry that Aristotle might describe as “iambic” in the broadest sense. Throughout the Greek and Latin tradition, poets constantly felt compelled to adopt a didactic explanation of the more offensive elements of their work. What seems like gratuitous abuse or obscenity, for example, is argued actually to serve a higher moral purpose. Aristophanes certainly adopts such a pretense in the passage from Acharnians quoted above, but he humorously undermines his own claims to moral seriousness by the ironically hyperbolic

claims of his global fame, his irreverent and gratuitously obscene abuse of Cleon (line 663)[14] and, as we shall see, the skillfully veiled program of the last stanza (lines 665-75).

These lines form the first strophe of a lyrical ode sung by the full chorus and conclude the first part of the parabasis, in which the chorus leader spoke in propria persona as the old men of Acharnae. In form, it begins as if it is a cultic hymn invoking a deity, and requesting his or her presence. It is immediately clear that the passage is a parody, invoking as it does a contrived local muse of Acharnae. But this muse—this source of poetic inspiration—has revealing qualities, all of which have associations with iambographic poetics: she is "fiery," "strong," "intense"; she is compared to a spark that can be fanned into a full-blown flame that can fry fish. The Acharnian muse, in other words, inspires the kind of intense and fiery poetry that was associated with the iambike idea. As if to assure this interpretation, the chorus mention those who "stir up the Thasian pickle 'of shining rim', while others knead bread." The "Thasian pickle" probably alludes to a line from a play by Aristophanes' older contemporary, Cratinus, called Archilochoi, which referred to Archilochus as "Thasian brine," (fr. 6 Kassel-Austin), a reference explained by the fact that the iambographer was known to have migrated to Thasos during his lifetime (and to have written poetry directed toward and against its citizens).[15] "Brine" in this passage refers to the salty, acerbic qualities of the Archilochean iambus. In the Acharnians passage, a similar link between Thasos and Archilochus is assured by the surrounding literary context, and this link, in turn, suggests the metaphorical reading of the word for "kneading dough" (mattosin), which in other comic contexts is used to describe verbal abuse. As if to emphasize the purely irreverent and comical (as opposed to the didactic) aspects of the poetic program, the chorus ends by referring to their song as agroikoteron ("a rustic country song"), a term clearly chosen for its connotations of simple boorishness. In this passage, then, the chorus invokes the spirit of the famously transgressive Archilochus, hardly as a paradigm of methodical, moral satire, but rather of unbridled, aggressive verbal attack.

Four centuries later in another country, another culture, and another literary form, the Roman poet Horace situated his Satires explicitly in the Greek iambographic and comic tradition that

Aristophanes embodied in the passage discussed above. The Satires were relatively short poems composed in dactylic hexameters for recitation or reading rather than stage production, but they were self-consciously suffused with a diverse background of Greek and Roman poetry, literary theory and philosophy that seemed to heighten Horace's anxiety about the relationship between the satirist and his audience.[16] Like most poets of satire, Horace felt compelled to defend his satirical work, especially those aspects which we have been calling transgressive, such as personal ridicule, obscene or otherwise indecorous diction. Horace's defense, however, was highly nuanced and complex, and attempted to synthesize the many traditions that informed his Satires into his own idiosyncratic theory of satire.

Horace opens Satires 1.4 with the well known verses (1-7) that link the iambike idea of Old Comedy with the satire of his more immediate Roman predecessor, Lucilius (3rd C. BCE), and, by implication, with his own. Horace criticizes Lucilius for his rough compositional style (he "flowed like a muddy river," he was "prolix and too lazy to expend much effort on his writing,"), but the bulk of the poem confronts the specific problems of the satirist who adopts the iambographic, and in Romanized form, Lucilian stance in his work. At lines 24-5, Horace registers fear of reciting his poetry in public, "because there are those who hardly take pleasure in this sort of poetry [hoc genus], most of whom are worthy of blame." He proceeds then to enumerate a variety of vices, such as greed, adultery, and pederasty (26-31), and concludes:

> All of these are afraid of poetry and hate poets.
> "He's got hay in his horns! Keep away! As long as he shakes out a laugh,
> He'll spare neither himself nor a friend.

Horace's first response to this is devilishly beside the point and disingenuous: he claims that he really cannot be considered a poet in the first place: "first of all I would exempt myself from those to whom I would give the name 'poets'." (39) Horace writes things that are, as he puts it, "closer to ordinary conversation" (sermoni propriora, 42). The audience of the Satires of course will recognize this is as a tautologous red herring, since the word Sermones [Conversations] itself was the title given to his satires in antiquity and probably by Horace himself.[17] Horace,

then, is here essentially saying, "My work, which is called 'Conversations,' is actually made up of 'conversations'." As for the moral censure of these "conversations," Horace claims that they are no different from the sort of indignation a father would register at a delinquent son (48-52) and surely *poetry* must offer more than this. Up to line 62, then, Horace dodges the issue of whether his satires are in fact like Old Comedy or whether they deserve to be feared by the public by denying that they can be considered a literary form. But Horace's disingenuousness surfaces at 65, where he has no qualms about referring to his work as a genus scribendi ("a genre of writing"). The real issue, he now realizes, is not whether *hoc genus* is poetry or not, but whether people ought to be afraid of it (…quaeram, meritone tibi sit || suspectum genus hoc scribendi). Horace answers this question in lines 65-74 by insisting that his poetry is for his intimate friends, not for indiscriminate public consumption ("I recite to no one but friends, and then only when forced, || not just anywhere and or in front of just anyone," 73-4). It is curious indeed that the implied audience whose approbation Horace seeks is explicitly not an audience of people who need to be censured, and even if they were, he claims, he would not be the one to do it. Horace's ideal audience is extremely limited, composed as it is only of friends[18] who must coerce the poet into performing. Clearly, any sweeping didactic claims Horace might make for his satires are ironized by his desire to please only a small group of literary cognoscenti. This is the audience that will understand the poetics of the Satires, and will be able to contextualize the transgressive aspects of the genre more readily than the kind of undiscriminating crowd that lays sweaty hands on the books of Hermogenes Tigellius (72).

This emphasis on a private, sophisticated audience occurs at the midpoint of the poem, and thus controls our perspective on the second half, in which Horace continues his attempt to define his idea of satire. If we are to believe Horace that he composes only for a select group of friends, who exactly are we to imagine are his putative detractors here? And why should he even care about them enough to spend the rest of the poem defending his satiric activity? Clearly, Horace's critics are constructed as a device that enables him to highlight, and then undermine, the self-righteous, often didactic pretense that we have found so pervasive in transgressive literature. In

much the same way as we saw in the Acharnians passage above, Horace takes great pains to establish a moral purpose to his Satires, only to deflate it through inconsistency, hyperbole and, ultimately, bathos.

In order to support this reading, we must examine carefully Horace's delineation of satire in the second half of the poem specifically in the light of his earlier claims that his satire was not really poetry, and his audience was private and sophisticated. Horace's imaginary critic exclaims at line 78:

> …"You love to cause pain,"
> he says, " and you do this perversely on purpose."

Horace's indignant response begins with a reference to his ideal audience: "Where are you getting that charge from? Is any one of my intimates the authority for this?" (80-1). Once again, Horace implies that if anyone has charged him with malicious abuse, it surely would not be one of his friends, who would understand his poetry better than to take his "iambographic" leanings as mere *Schadenfreude*. Horace then proceeds to distinguish between real malice and what he does:

> The one who attacks a friend when he's not present,
> Or who doesn't defend him against someone else's blame,
> Who tries to elicit wild laughter from men and be known as a wit;
> The one who can fictionalize things he's never seen, who can't keep secrets,
> That one has a black mark on him; Watch out for him, Roman! (81-5)

At this point Horace seems to saying that friendship (amicitia) should never be violated for the sake of humor or abuse. Amicitia must allow one to overlook even questionable behavior, since friends, so the argument goes, must defend friends tout court. This again recalls Horace's earlier remarks about his ideal audience, namely his "friends" (73). The straw man he attacks in 81-5 as niger differs from Horace only in that he will attack a friend even when he is not present.

Horace, on the other hand, has no problem attacking his friends in principle, as long as they are there to experience the abuse. Of course there is a central paradox in these lines, for if they imply that "iambic" abuse is sanctioned among friends as an activity that is non-malicious, then of course, the point of engaging in it in the first place would be to demonstrate verbal and poetic skill, that is, to achieve what Horace claims to repudiate: laughter from an audience, and the reputation for being a wit. As if to highlight the paradox (and disingenuousness) of the passage, Horace's niger turns out to be one who acts like a poet, that is, he can "fictionalize things he has never seen." (84). Among friends, of course—Horace's ideal audience—fictionalized abuse and ridicule is appropriately contextualized and is not supposed to cause offense. But this can only refer to the performative moment of recitation, when friends are physically in a room. Beyond that moment, when a poem is published, disseminated and read by an audience beyond the control of the author, the poet will remain open to the very charge that Horace levels at his negative counterpart, namely the fictional abuse of an absent friend. Horace's satiric program has clearly become confusing and contradictory by the second half of the poem, largely because of the tension that he himself notes between his two imagined audiences, one that understands transgressive poetics, and so will not actually experience transgression, and one that is destined to misunderstand his work and mistake the personal voice of the poem for that of the poet himself.

This dichotomy, and the poetic gamesmanship that it led to in Aristophanes and Horace, seems to manifest itself in all poetry that employs satire for allegedly didactic purposes: the poet offers continual cues to the audience already "in the know" about the work's fictionality and generic morphology, while simultaneously boasting of the effectiveness of its transgressive qualities. It remains nearly impossible, therefore, for a poet to "succeed" with genuine transgression, because if an audience is truly scandalized it will end up censuring and abandoning, instead of supporting, the offending poet. As we will presently see, the examples from the Classical period of this complex relationship between the satirist and his audience have functionally analogous counterparts in gangsta rap that help explain why the central poetic

principles of that genre, and its reception by the public, remain as ambivalent and elusive as they do today.

II. Parody, Obscenity and Violence

To many, the most disturbing aspect of gangsta rap is its often deliberate effacement of the line between fiction and reality. When the late Tupac Shakur tattooed "Thug Life" on his stomach as a means of assuring that his artistic stance as a "gangsta" would not become tainted by his growing celebrity,[19] or when other self-styled gangsta rappers from Los Angeles became implicated in various real-world criminal events, it is easy to conclude that the artistic form depicting the life of the urban outlaw exists in order to reflect and endorse the autobiographies of its authors. But whatever personal and psychological shortcomings we may wish to invoke to explain the controversial or unsavory behavior of some gangsta rappers, the fact remains that the transgressive poetic tradition in which they work is remarkably consistent in its construction of an explicitly fictional, comedic world coded as such for an audience "in the know." And as in the case of the Classical poets we examined, the continual misreadings of this fiction by audiences over whom the poet has little actual control, is a constant source of both delight and frustration to the author—delight when his transgressive posture has managed to scandalize, yet frustration when poetic artistry is not apprehended.

Many examples can be cited of how gangsta rappers code their work to several distinct audiences, how they taunt them with a comically hollow didacticism, and problematize their authorial postures through self-mockery and picaresque narrative. One work in particular, however, provides the clearest and most sophisticated illustration of this poetic dynamic, namely Snoop Doggy Dogg's controversial 1993 release, *Doggystyle* (Death Row Records 7-92279-2). This recording attempts to sustain a comedic tone throughout by exploiting the humorous shock value of obscenity, offering lyrics that traduce classic popular songs and explicit parodies of earlier musical styles. In these areas, Snoop self-consciously drew on models from the formative

years of gangsta rap in the 1980's, such as Too $hort, Slick Rick and Biz Markie, all of whom established a certain rudimentary taxonomy of generic parody and satire directed at themselves as well as others.

Doggystyle is suffused with musical and verbal parody of every sort. One might argue, in fact, that the entire work is a continuous parody, one uninterrupted event of Signifying on the traditions of 1970's funk, soul, and reggae. From the cover art to the final programmatic song on the record (Pump, Pump), there are indications at every turn that the stance of the "gangsta," the so-called "G," the hedonistic, narcissistic life of the urban outlaw is constructed as a transgressive inversion of the conceits and tropes that emerged from the funk music of such collectives as Parliament or Funkadelic. When gangsta rap is experienced with little or no appreciation of its parodic Signifying, an audience can easily succumb to the pretense that a given work is autobiographical and didactic. From this, of course, arises a sense of scandal and offense that gangsta rap explicitly claims to desire. But as soon as an audience grasps the parody, any claim to autobiographical "truth" that a gangsta rapper might make must be evaluated in the light of this humorous poetic contrivance.

A few examples of the parody in Doggystyle will suffice to show that the work has been conceived as a transgressive game for the sole purpose of humorously inverting the very traditions it assimilates. The cover art of the compact disc is an ideal case in point: a cartoon depicts a woman in a doghouse, with a stylishly dressed male dog—evidently Snoop himself—on top of the house about to grab her, and three male dogs watching over a fence offering commentary on the action. The bricks of a wall behind these figures are arranged so as to spell out the title of the album, "Doggystyle."[20] Three exegetical dogs, whose comic strip balloons offer what looks to be little more than sophomoric locker-room patter (Dog 1: "Why must I feel like dat?" Dog 2: Why must I chase the cat?" Dog 3: "Nuttin' but da Dogg in me!!!") are in fact quoting verbatim the chorus from a 1982 song, "Atomic Dog," by George Clinton, the patriarch of 1970's funk music. Moreover, Snoop's signature song, "Who Am I? (What's My Name?)" derives its entire melody line and some of its words from this Clinton composition. Clinton

himself was a master parodist whose own music and lyrics often Signified on antecedent traditions of popular culture, and Snoop Doggy Dogg's particular fetishizing of "Atomic Dog" nearly qualifies as one level of a parodic mise en abysme, i.e., a text Signifying on a text Signifying on a text Signifying… The primacy of parody in *Doggystyle* complicates its misogynistic thrust, and undermines its attempt to seduce the audience into understanding it as the expression of "serious" autobiography.

That Doggystyle was composed as a tour de force of transgressive parody is signaled at all the critical junctures of the work where, in more legitimized literary forms, one comes to expect programmatic self-consciousness. The title of the work itself, for example, *Doggy-style* simultaneously conjures up the obvious obscene images of outré sexuality and calls attention to the stylistic inversions that await the audience. Further, both the "doggystyle" poetics and the "doggystyle" sexual metaphor of the work imply the existence of an aggressive, male agent who tries (however vainly) to represent a hedonistic life that all, he assumes, would envy.

Such a poetic is programmatically explicit on the opening tracks of Doggystyle, in which the audience is introduced to the narcissistic *auctor* of the work, his pose as the leader of metaphorical "gang" not unlike a literary guild, and the concept of "gangsta shit" as a generic category of music and lyric that implies transgressive style and content. The first song of the record (G-Funk Intro)[21] employs two main dramatic voices: a male narrator and one of the "gang" or "crew" named "Rage" (or "The Lady of Rage"); another male voice punctuates Rage's monologue as a kind of chorus, and the voice of Snoop himself can be heard for one line exhorting Rage to "please drop some gangsta shit." The song confidently announces all the hallmarks of the work at hand, such as the parodic transformation of P-funk (the funk of 1970's groups Parliament and Funkadelic) into G-funk ("G" for "gangsta"), making obscenely explicit the sexual innuendo of funk, and adopting an authorial pretense of adolescent nihilism and self-absorption. In and of themselves, to be sure, these represent a deliberately subversive and socially unsettling ethos, and the misogynistic opening lines of the narrator are clearly provocative:

(Narrator):

This is another story about Dogs;

For the Dog that don't pee on trees, is a bitch.

So says Snoop Dogg.

So get your pooper scooper, 'cause the niggaz talkin' shit.

(Woof…woof…)

The first line, however, situates the work in a pre-existing tradition of Dog fictions—"This is another story about Dogs"—and what distinguishes this variation will be the extremity of, and self-consciousness about, its transgressiveness. Anyone who expects to be unable to handle the work's *aischrologia* is advised to have a "pooper scooper" handy. Later in the song, the narrator develops the programmatic thrust of the dog metaphor:

We travel in packs and we do it from the back,

How else can we get to the booty?

We do it doggystyle!

All the while we do it doggystyle!

Dogs and related canine motifs have figured prominently in the history of African-American popular genres, and within funk and rap in particular, they are consistently used to connote masculinity and sexual power.[22] Pushed to an extreme in these lines, metaphor is even used to highlight an ethos of explicit bestiality. But the graphic, scurrilous nature of these lines threatens to obscure the fact that they clearly address the work's generic identity: "We travel in packs" refers to groups of like-minded poets whose transgressive program inspires them to "do it from the back," that is, to invert all that is regarded as normative. The humorously rhetorical question, "How else can we get to the booty?" reveals the extent of their self-avowed incorrigibility: of *course* there are other ways to "get to the booty," but the narrator implies that anything other than an inverted method would be unthinkable to such poets.

At the same time, these verses are a direct parody of a 1979 song by Parliament, "Theme from the Black Hole," which itself refers to a tradition of toasting, authorial naming and self-aggrandizement, and sexual double entendre. This song begins with the same style of deep bass narration that opens Doggystyle's "G-Funk Intro," and provides the target text for the later parody:

> (Narrator):
>
> A toast to the booty, feel dat, do dat.
>
> (Singer):
>
> For how else can you capture a boogie,
>
> If you don't attack from the back?
>
> To the rear…March!
>
> My name is the one, some people call me the funk…
>
> (W. Collins, G. Clinton, J. S. Theracon, Polygram Records, 1979)

These lines, along with the rest of the song, are replete with salacious innuendo masquerading as musical commentary, but always stop short of obscenity.[23] But in transforming P-funk into G-funk, however, Doggystyle offers, in a sense, an exegesis of the earlier style by offering its own scandalous variations on it,[24] and in using funk to forge a new, transgressive style, it humorously imputes to funk a full range of obscenity underlying its notoriously indirect rhetorical strategies.

The enigmatic intonation of "another" in the opening lines of "G-Funk Intro" ("…another story about Dogs…"), then, prefigures the particular intertextual strategy that guides the entire work. In describing the work as "another" Dog story, the line implies the existence of a specific antecedent to be distinguished from the present one. This is, in effect, a riddle that asks, "what was the earlier Dog story that the narrator alludes to?" The answer to the question is delayed until half way through the work, and then becomes clear only if the audience has some knowledge of the tradition. For there, in track 10, itself with the riddling title "Who am I? (What's My Name?)," the melody, borrowed (as we noted earlier) directly and unambiguously

from George Clinton's Atomic Dog, clarifies the entire project as an act of Signifying on a earlier funk tradition.[25]

Riddling speech, of course, appears as a device in several of the Signifying tradition's oldest documented texts.[26] One of its most central leitmotifs, in fact, is the wily animal trickster, akin to Snoop Doggy Dogg's canine persona, such as Bre'r Rabbit and the Signifyin' Monkey himself, who play the role of the fast-talking figure that can outwit seemingly more powerful opponents by means of sheer verbal skill.[27] The trope of riddling, of course, is demonstrably ubiquitous, occurring in countless forms from ancient wisdom literature to modern popular culture. But it is noteworthy that riddling is particularly suited to competitive contexts, in which a speaker vies for supremacy over a rival or wishes to impress an audience. For the telling of a riddle assumes that the teller has a privileged understanding of it, and that only a select group of the audience, if any, will be able to penetrate the enigma. Parody too is essentially a riddling mode, challenging the audience implicitly to guess the object of the poet's verbal gamesmanship.[28] It is not surprising, therefore, that riddling and parody come to be used so effectively in satirical and vituperative genres, in which it is critical to maintain a pretense of authorial supremacy.[29] Riddling discourse, moreover, maintains this pretense by deflecting the audience's attention from the claims of the poet's subjectivity to the artifice of the work itself, and thus complicating the act of interpretation. Doggystyle, for example, can shock and scandalize an audience with its obscenity and violent themes, but if the same audience comes to see the poetic gamesmanship that underlies these elements of the work in the first place, reflexive shock soon turns into basic confusion. Two voices whisper into the ears of the audience; the one says: "what you hear from the poet is the truth: he's nasty, he hates, he attacks;" the other counters: "see how cleverly the poet has crafted this attack; see if you can guess why this turn of phrase or metaphor was used; see it, and laugh at the inconcinnity between base aggression and poetic craft!"

Obscene mockery appears in Aristophanes often at the most unexpected moments. Many of his plots satirize prominent men (e.g., Socrates in Clouds) or issues of the time (e.g., war with Sparta in Acharnians and Lysistrata), but the most intensely obscene moments in Aristophanes in

fact occur in choral passages within the plays featuring humorous commentary disconnected from the main plot. The plot of Knights (424 BCE), for example, is primarily directed against the demagogue Cleon, but in a passage that occurs late in the play, the chorus singles out several prominent Athenians for abuse, and prefaces its abuse with an appeal to its didactic role. One Ariphrades particularly captures the chorus' attention[30]:

> There's nothing wrong with abusing wicked people [ponerous],
> And in fact, good people—anyone with any sense—regard it as honorable.
> If the guy who really deserves to get a bad reputation
> were well known, I would hesitate to implicate the name of a friend.[31]
> I know everyone knows Arignotus, well at least anyone who
> knows white from black, or fast music from slow.
> He's got a brother whose behavior is completely different from his own,
> that wicked fellow [poneros] Ariphrades. And that's the just the way he likes it:
> Not only is he wicked, for I'd hardly have noticed that,
> or even super-wicked [pamponeros], but he's also invented something:
> for he defiles his tongue with shameful pleasures,
> licking up foul secretions in the brothels,
> and staining his beard as he stirs up the nether-lips.
> What's more, he writes poetry like Polymnestos, and hangs out with Oionichos![32]
> Now, whoever doesn't really hate a man such as this,
> Can surely not share a drink from our cup!

This passage is replete with all the tensions and paradoxes that we have located in transgressive comic satire. On the one hand, the chorus[33] claims that it engages in such mockery because "wickedness" (poneria) must be censured, at least among good and sensible people (1275). In the opening lines, the chorus, with its obvious captatio benevolentiae, aligns itself and its imminent

obscenity with a like-minded audience who will share a similar moral outlook. The last line of the selection (1289), by contrast, implies the possibility of an audience who will not in fact understand the "function" of the chorus' graphic obscenity. The logic of the passage, then, proceeds as follows: (a) it is good to abuse bad people; (b) anyone with an ounce of sense would recognize Ariphrades as a bad person; (c) therefore, our abuse of Ariphrades will be appreciated by an audience of "good" people. Further, by implication, (d) if someone does not approve of the graphic obscenity deemed necessary in abusing Ariphrades, that person must not think Ariphrades deserves abuse, and so such a person cannot be sensible or "good"; conversely, (e) we must assume that anyone who does not think Ariphrades is bad disapproves of our abuse of him and should have nothing to do with the poet.

With brilliant economy, therefore, this passage achieves several effects at once: it illustrates the way in which obscenity and abuse can polarize the audience—some will approve because of its "moral" function, others will take offense—but makes it clear that the poet ultimately desires to enlist its sympathies. On the other hand, the poet of graphic abuse seems to thrive on the tension that transgressive diction can create in an audience. For without at least the potential for shocking an audience, obscenity would cease to be transgressive. It would cease, in other words, to be any longer obscene. Even if every single member of an audience were not in the least offended by obscenity, they collectively must feel that it could be offensive to someone, somewhere. Paradoxically, the language must remain hypothetically transgressive, even for those whose sensibilities are not "transgressed," in order for it to attain its desired comic effect. After all, what makes the chorus' description of Ariphrades' sexual proclivities so amusing is precisely the recognition that it is unmistakably obscene.

The chorus makes it clear, moreover, that exploiting the humorous potential of obscenity is their primary goal, and that its initial didactic claims are soon exposed as a comical sham. For in line 1282, the chorus slips in the statement that if Ariphrades had just been a wicked man, or even worse than that, it would hardly be noteworthy ("Not only is he wicked [poneros], for I'd hardly have noticed that, || or even super-wicked [pamponeros]…"). In other words, the chorus,

and by extension the poet, here admits essentially that Ariphrades' poneria, "wickedness," is far less significant than the mere phenomenon of his unconventional, and therefore risible, obsession with oral sex. By undermining its own earlier indignation at such behavior, and all but admitting that its members are as poneroi as the people they like to attack in their songs, the chorus humorously calls attention to its hypocritical didactic posture and the ultimate futility of any attempt to justify obscenity on moral grounds.

In a later play, Frogs (405 BCE), Aristophanes even has the chorus clarify for the audience that the tropes of his comedy—mockery, abuse, obscenity—belong to an activity that exists ultimately in a fictive realm that bears little or no actual connection to a lived reality. The chorus of this play exploits its role as initiates into Athenian mystery cults, which themselves featured reenactments of mythical scenes of abuse,[34] and treats the mockery and invective of comic drama as similarly sacrosanct and ritualized. In lines 354-66 the chorus begins listing the kinds of people who have no business participating in their peculiar amalgamation of cult and comedy. Completing this "excluded" audience is a certain orator who has worked to decrease funding for poets simply because he had been ridiculed in some dramatic performance:

> …on the grounds that he has been satirized (komoidetheis) in our ancestral
> celebrations of Dionysus.
> To such as these, I say it once, twice, and even a third time, that
> they should stand back from our mystic dances. Now everyone wake up our song
> and our all-night dances, which are fitting for this festival.

The excluded audience clearly consists of those who fail to grasp the markers in comedy which signal the aesthetic "necessity" for transgressive mimesis. The orator, in other words, made the mistake of taking personally the mockery against him which the poet claims (however disingenuously) served generic, rather than hostile, purposes. A similar point is made on Doggystyle, where several songs imply that once the transgressive ethos is adopted, everything

else simply follows along generic lines. Snoop Doggy Dogg's alter ego, Kurupt, a formidable rapper in his own right, exclaims on Doggystyle's "Doggy Dogg World":

> I'm dishin' out blues, I'm upsettin' like bad news,
> cut-off khakis, french braids, and house shoes.
> Kurupt's the name, so I'm also catchin' slugs;
> and I smoke weed for the fuck of it—
> rough and rugged shit—
> It's unexplanatory how I gets wicked
> but it's mandatory that I kick it…

And the producer of Doggystyle himself, Dr. Dre, makes a brief cameo in the signature song (Track 10; "Who Am I (What's My Name)") to note:

> …so peep out the manuscript
> you see that it's a must we drop gangsta shit.
> Dre's metaphor for the work as a "manuscript" implies an established set of generic rules and patterns that guide the entire project, and the next line identifies the genre as transgressive gangsta rap.

Early in Doggystyle, on a track called "Tha Shiznit" (Track 5),[35] Snoop warns against those who fail to understand the nature of his transgressive work:

> … see, ya know I'm not European bein' all I can
> When I put the motherfuckin' mic in my hand.
> And you don't understand what I'm kickin',
> 'cause Snoop is on the mic and I gets so wicked—
> Follow me…Listen to me…

> ’cause I do you like you wanna be done,
> Snoop Doggy Dogg on this three, two, one, um,
> Diddy dum, here I come, with the gat and the guitar we’ll strum…

The first line of this quotation implies the existence of an audience that insists on evaluating his work according to principles established by white, Eurocentric culture. While we have seen that many distinctly African-American elements in gangsta rap are in fact not unparalleled in European literary history, Snoop’s use of “European” here is shorthand to describe the common response of mainstream culture (white or black) to the transgressive poetics of gangsta rap—Snoop’s counter-response to an audience he would exclude. Just as Aristophanes concludes his warnings to the uninitiated with a call to the converted, so Snoop turns to his sympathetic audience, the in-group, urging them to submit to his authorial control (“…Follow me…Listen to me… || ’cause I do you like you wanna be done…”), and again like Aristophanes, he concludes by highlighting the generic principles regulating his work: “…here I come, with the gat and the guitar we’ll strum.” Guitars are not, in fact, prominently used in rap, and the dainty, off-key guitar strum that is inserted in the background at the moment when the instrument is mentioned humorously calls attention to its use here as a metaphor one would hardly expect to be associated with a “gat” (a “Gatling” gun, a favorite token of the gangsta rapper). The phrase “gat and the guitar,” in other words, emblematizes the ultimate artificiality of a poetic genre that intermingles violence and music, and the peculiarity of this collocation signals that the rhetoric of violence is as much a transgressive trope as obscenity.

III. “Kynes kai Pornai”: Women as Targets of Abuse

One violent motif common to both the African-American and Greco-Roman traditions of transgressive poetics—and one that requires separate consideration—is the pervasive deployment of exceedingly misogynistic rhetoric and imagery. Although this misogyny, like representations of violence and aggression in general, is delivered in highly self-conscious,

typically self-parodic ways, its prevalence and intensity within both traditions continually obfuscate generic markings and suggest instead a literal and unmediated hostility. From Juvenal's gratuitously degrading portraits of Roman society matrons masquerading as prostitutes to Snoop Doggy Dogg's formulaic refrain, "We don't love dem ho's," which punctuates several songs on Doggystyle having nothing otherwise to do with women, poets in both of these traditions rely on provocative, often pornographic and sadistic, characterizations of the female Other to achieve their rhetorical ends. Moreover, the denigration of women is by no means an isolated or sporadic phenomenon in either tradition. In African-American culture, misogyny as a thematic concern can be traced with relative ease from gangsta rap through jazz and blues all the way back to folk songs of the slave era.

Among the oldest surviving works in the Greek iambographic tradition—and, with the exception of Homer and Hesiod, one of the most extensive works of archaic Greek verse we have extant—is Semonides of Amorgos' so-called "Satire on Women." This 118-line diatribe was composed, most probably, in the latter half of the seventh century BCE. It represents women in a decidedly negative manner, developing a series of jokes predicated on the notion that woman is a curse to man—a common iambographic conceit. Semonides persists at length in his litany of feminine failings, haranguing numerous types and classes of women—moody, unpredictable women, born of ocean; obstinate women born from asses, who are insatiable in both hunger and sexual desire; thieving women, descended from weasels, ugly women born from monkeys, fancy women from fine horses. With the seeming exception of industrious women, descended from the bee, Semonides' women are depicted as appetitive creatures, concerned exclusively with their own interests, primary among which appears to be the debasement or ridicule of men.

As deeply embedded in the poetic idiom and tradition of archaic Greece as Semonides' misogynistic metaphors may be, nearly all of his insulting stereotypes reappear, mutatis mutandis, in the African-American Signifying tradition. Misogynistic humor pervades jazz and blues lyrics, as well as the African-American oral traditions of toasts and jokes. Relatively mild

examples from popular entertainment include such songs as Louis Jordan's "Boy You Better Beware" and Cab Calloway's "Don't Falter at the Altar," both of which are structured as warnings to young men about the wiles of women and the perils of marriage. Folklorist Mimi Clar Melnick, however, gathers several bitterly misogynistic lyrics from the blues idiom, which taken together, describe a taxonomy of woman's faults more extensive and nearly as vituperative as that of Semonides. Jack Dupree's "Mother-in-Law Blues," to cite just one of Melnick's examples, uses animal metaphors not unlike those of Semonides to depict a woman whose ugliness recalls that of the archaic poet's monkey woman:

> My mother-in-law is the ugliest woman I ever seen.
> That woman so skinny she can hide behind a broom.
> She's some skinny.
> Her teeth hang down all over her lips…
> (Dupree, "Mother-in-Law Blues," cited in Melnick, 269-70.)

Countless other misogynistic representations appear throughout the African-American comedic tradition, ranging from impish taunting to explicitly brutal revenge fantasies. Gangsta rappers, in their dual effort to entertain (largely through allusion) those familiar with the transgressive tradition and, at the same time, provoke outrage in at least a segment of their audience, draw upon the full gamut of misogynistic leitmotifs.

Roman invective poets, like their Greek precursors, attributed little psychological interiority to female characters in their erotic verse. On the contrary, they routinely cast women as incorrigible slaves to carnal appetites and sexual desires, as these few representative verses from Juvenal (2nd CE) Satire 6 indicate:

> No, with a yellow wig concealing her raven locks,
> she made for a brothel warm with the stench of a much-used bedspread,

> and entered an empty cell (her own). Undressing, she stood there
> with gilded nipples under the bogus sign of "the She-wolf…"
> (Juvenal 6.120-23; tr. Rudd)

This depiction of women's rapacious desire finds a modern mirror in rap, toasts, and the blues. Perhaps the most glaring example of this is gangsta rap's customary portrayal of women as prostitutes, or "ho's." Instances of this Signifying practice are innumerable, but the lyrics of Slick Rick's early gangsta rap hit, "Treat Her Like a Prostitute," offer what is perhaps a quintessential example:

> …The mailman comes and pays your wife a visit?
> The thought alone makes your temperature boil.
> You say to yourself, she might still be loyal.
> But you open up your door and stand in a trance.
> You see the mailman's bag and the mailman's pants.
> Came home to party. At work had a hard day.
> Look 'round your house and you say:
> "Where the hell are they?"
> Run upstairs to the bedroom.
> You look inside your room
> You almost choke;
> You see the mailman's dick way up your wife's throat.
> Treat 'em like a prostitute
> Don't treat a girlie well until you're sure of the scoop.
> (Slick Rick, The Great Adventures of Slick Rick)

In both of these poems, women appear as mere functions of their sexual appetites, eager to prostitute or otherwise debase themselves in order to obtain satisfaction. They are depicted in humiliating positions and deemed unworthy of male respect or compassion. And this depiction, in turn, serves to rationalize and perpetuate male misogyny.

That said, the use of misogynistic themes in invective poetry, whether the poet belongs to the ancient Greco-Roman or still thriving African-American tradition, seldom is entirely sincere or straightforward. Juvenal's speaker, for instance, decries the licentious ways of women, ostensibly establishing himself in a position of moral authority. Ironically, however, this same persona clearly is familiar enough with the comings and goings of Rome's supposedly maculate matrons to recount their clandestine habits in lurid detail. Likewise, gangsta rappers deliver self-consciously sophisticated explorations of male sexual fantasies and explicitly misogynistic topoi in their efforts to achieve transgressive effects.

The production of irony alone, however, cannot account for the malicious, minatory character of the misogynistic abuse typically encountered in these transgressive genres. What seems significant both formally and thematically about the satirical derision of already marginalized groups—women, homosexuals, racial and ethnic minorities—is the extent to which it distorts and perverts the culture's prevailing ideologies and conventional propriety, taking social prejudices to the most exaggerated extremes. Misogynistic disgust and other forms of aggressive, denigrating mockery typically coincide with the construction of the authorial persona as an abject figure—a victim of ostracizing practices or exclusionary tendencies of a culture's symbolic order. This construction applies in obvious ways to the African-American gangsta persona, who openly presents himself as sociopath oroutcastThe adoption of an abject stance is perhaps less overtly menacing in the Greco-Roman tradition, but ancient invective poets and satirists routinely portrayed themselves as victims of societal abuses, frequently casting themselves as members of an abused class—even if that class is defined merely as the "the decent citizens" suffering at the hands of society's degenerate elements. Even as the comedies of transgression perpetuate a culture's prevailing prejudices, however, their excoriation of abject

minorities entails the recognition of an ambivalent identificatory relationship between the poetic "I" and the disdained Other and results from rage against the symbolic order's exclusionary logic.[36] One might argue, then, that the unbridled misogyny that so pervades Greco-Roman and African-American transgressive poetics highlights the simultaneously subversive and reactionary character of these genres. At the same time, the ambiguity of the poetic persona's abject stance and the complexity of its relationship to larger social processes of exclusion and violence underscore yet again the inadequacy of literalist reading strategies when encountering blatantly transgressive works—however sincere these works profess to be.

IV. Conclusion

Our objective in this study has been to recognize that transgressive literary genres, both ancient and modern, operate according to sophisticated, often subtle, grammars and rhetorical strategies and to acknowledge that what appears to one reader as a crude endorsement of unmitigated sexism or debauchery may to another constitute both an imaginative exercise of satiric forms and a telling challenge to a culture's dominant domain of ideological possibilities. As Wendy Steiner has noted, however, academicians who attempt to rationalize appreciation for controversial works of art quickly fall prey to charges that they are deliberately mystifying—or, worse, promulgating—perverse or antisocial material. Even critics otherwise well-informed about rap and its genealogical roots in the African-American signifying tradition often succumb to the transgressive poet's deliberate effrontery and respond with genuine moral outrage. The problem, however, with simply articulating such indignation at the expense of a more rigorous critical investigation is that it offers little insight into the nature of the works themselves and may, in fact, prevent us from understanding the effects the work is so vehemently purported to have. As Steiner poignantly observes, the critic who *can* find meaning or import in the work struggles helplessly against such out-of-hand condemnations.[37] As she notes, advocacy and representation, for the censorious critic, become fused. This critical misreading, however, as we hope our preceding analyses make clear, reveals the very modus operandi of transgressive verbal art: the attempt to construct a bifurcated audience wherein one segment unconsciously conflates

representation with advocacy while the other knowingly recognizes the crucial difference between the two. It is our hope that this study of the numerous formal features shared by the ancient and contemporary traditions of transgressive poetics will go some way toward illuminating the rich and diverse grammars that operate in these too often misunderstood works of art. For only when we have explored the formal constituents and rhetorical strategies of these works can we begin the task of comprehending their more profound social and ideological functions.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Endnotes

[1]The small, but growing, academic bibliography concerning rap consists primarily of attempts to define relationships between the cultural practice of rap and the social milieu of contemporary urban gangs. Proponents of this essentially sociological approach, with few exceptions, argue that gangsta rap's representations of social violence both reflect and influence the realities of daily life in postindustrial ghetto communities. As a result of this orientation, attempts to understand gangsta rap within the domain of cultural studies have tended to fall loosely into two camps (with some straddling both sides of the debate). The first consists of those who consider the gangsta rapper a knowing spokesperson for the African-American urban poor, a poetic journalist accurately describing the racial and economic inequities of American society. The second includes those who see the rapper as a symptom or warning sign of an aggravated moral and social malaise, a crude and unwitting herald of a social order in decline or disequilibrium. The first group, which represents the dominant strain in current academic research on rap, concentrates attention on the rapper's message—the supposed sincerity of his depictions of the urban gang ethos and contemporary ghetto life "as it is really lived." Examples of recent studies illustrating this perspective include: Tricia Rose, Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America, (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Alan Light, "About a Salary or Reality, Rap's Recurrent Conflict," South Atlantic Quarterly, 90 (1991): 854-70; Josh Kun, "The Sound of Blacknuss: Rapping Master/Counternarratives of the Hip-Hop Imagi-Nation," in Repercussions, Fall (1994): 5-49; and Ernest Allen, Jr., "Making the Strong Survive: The Contours and Contradictions of Message Rap," Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture, ed. William Eric Perkins, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press,

1996) 159-81. The second group, by contrast, sees the gangsta rapper as a kind of safety valve through which larger pent-up social frustrations and aggressions are expressed—more a sign of the times, perhaps, than a producer of significations in his own right. Representatives of this approach include: bell hooks, Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations, (New York: Routledge, 1994); Steven Loza, Milo Alvarez, Josefina Santiago, and Charles Moore, "Los Angeles Gangsta Rap and the Aesthetics of Violence," Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology, 10, (1994): 149-61; and William F. Danaher and Stephen P. Blackwelder, "The Emergence of Blues and Rap: A Comparison and Assessment of the Context, Meaning, and Message, Popular Music and Society, 17.4 (1993): 1-12. While many academics are uncomfortable with the moralizing stance implicit in this approach, most mainstream journalists and editorial writers addressing the subject adopt this position. It is our contention, however, that while individuals pursuing either or both of these general approaches may develop cogent and persuasive arguments concerning gangsta rap's determined relationships to a specific historical context, an adequate understanding of gangsta rap as a cultural mode can only be achieved through exploration of both the African-American literary tradition in which it participates and the generic forms and conventions of satire and transgressive or invective verse of which it partakes. There have been, of course, other critics who have investigated the literary and aesthetic character of both rap in general and gangsta rap in particular. Examples include Tim Brennan, "Off the Gangsta Tip: A Rap Appreciation: Or Forgetting about Los Angeles," Critical Inquiry, 20.4 (1994): 663-93 and Richard Shusterman, "The Fine Art of Rap," New Literary History, 22, (1991): 613-32. Houston A. Baker, Jr., in Black Studies, Rap, and the Academy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), cautiously synthesizes sociological, ideological, and aesthetic criticism, while raising crucial questions concerning the dangers of ethnographic interpretation and academic apologies

for, or appropriations of, rap. Finally, also worthy of significant attention for their efforts to address both the politics and the poetics of gangsta rap are Russell A. Potter, Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism, (State University of New York Press, 1995) and Robin D. G. Kelly, "Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles," in Perkins, 115-57. Although Kelly ultimately—and perhaps naively—gives credence to gangsta rap's didacticism and valorizes the genre as a mode of social protest, he goes to considerable lengths to establish gangsta rap's relationship to other satiric forms within the larger African-American signifying tradition, including the "pimp narratives" of toasts and the blues and the badman ballads of the Jim Crow South.

[2]See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. Also, according to one of the first and most influential documentors of African-American oral narratives, Roger Abrahams, the term "Signifying" is itself a complex, multivalent signifier, which can denote a variety of different speech acts and distinct social and relational contexts. Discussing the meaning of the term as it relates to performing "toasts," or playing "the dozens," two vital forms of African-American oral poetry, Abrahams observes that it "can mean any number of things" pertaining to mockery and abuse. In the case of the famous "Signifying Monkey" tales—oral narratives in which the speaker dons the persona of a wily, and highly anthropomorphized, ape (the epitome of a mythological trickster figure), who torments other jungle animals with fast talking, confidence tricks—Abrahams observes that "signifying" refers to the monkey's "ability to talk with great innuendo, to carp, cajole, needle and lie." Those who excel at "Signifying" are those who develop a compelling acting and performing style. Only they successfully can assume the role of a character—one of the toasts' various fictional personae—in a manner that simultaneously

delights their audience and humiliates their poetic rivals. See Roger D. Abrahams, Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia, Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates Press, 1964, 54-5; Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, "Signifying" in Mother Wit from the Laughing Barrel: Readings in the Interpretation of Afro-American Folklore, Ed., Alan Dundes, Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1973, 310-28, and Bruce Jackson's Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me: Narrative Poetry from the Black Oral Tradition, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.

[3]See Roger D. Abrahams, Singing the Master: The Emergence of African-American Culture in the Plantation South, New York: Pantheon Books, 1992, 23-4, 115-8.

[4]See John W. Roberts, From Trickster to Badman: The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989, 21-3, 44-5. Although the African origin of African-American trickster tales has been hotly debated (some folklorists consider the tales uniquely American phenomena), Roberts suggests that figures resembling the "Signifying Monkey" and other trickster heroes appear to be as central to the folklore of sub-Saharan Africa as they are to the early African American tradition. See Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 5-7, 19-22, and Abrahams, Singing the Master, 83-5, 104-5.

[5]The genre's very name is believed to derive from the African-American slang term, "funk," meaning "smegma, semen; hence filth." See Dennis Wepman, Ronald Newman, and Murry B. Binderman, The Life: The Lore and Folk Poetry of the Black Hustler, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976, et. al., p. 181.

[6]See Wepman, et. al., 2-3.

[7]The foundational theoretical literature on transgressive arts is surveyed in Peter Stallybrass and

Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1986) 1-26.

[8]Variations on this theme have been articulated by many scholars in reaction to M. M. Bakhtin's belief that the "carnivalesque," as a transgressive cultural mode, has transformative social powers. For bibliography, see Stallybrass and White, 13-26. See also Linda Hutcheon, Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 52.

[9]Hutcheon (54-6), in an effort to describe irony's combined divisive and aggregative effects, cites Erving Goffmann's concept of "collusive communication," the use of rhetoric that pits those "in the know" against those explicitly "excolluded" or demonstrably identified as being outside the "knowing" discursive community. In other words, irony typically performs both inclusionary and exclusionary functions, creating feelings of intimacy and cohesion between speaker and audience at the same time as it fosters a sense of arrogant elitism. This view of irony seems particularly *apropos* for gangsta rap, which takes the construction of gang and clique identities as primary thematic preoccupations. A great deal of the humor purveyed by gangsta rappers—and indeed by Greco-Roman invective poets and satirists as well—derives from the exploration of in-group and out-group relationships. Gregory Nagy, The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), has articulated a similar relationship between Archilochus and his audience. Nagy suggests (251) that, while Archilochus' attacks may appear to be directed against an enemy, "they are in all likelihood framed for a general audience of receptive philoi ["friends"]…Whether we view the audience of Archilochus as the immediate philoi or, teleologically, as the social order that helped preserve and propagate Archilochean iamboi, the point remains that such poetry was an affirmation of philotes ["friendly solidarity"] in the

community."

[10]On the term "iambus" as an ancient poetic genre, see M. L. West, Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974) 22-39, and E. Pellizer, "Per una morfologia della poesia giambica arcaica," in I Canoni Letterari; Storia e dinamica (Trieste, 1981) 35-49.

[11]Cf. Aristotle, Poetics, 1449b7. For an excellent discussion of Aristotle on aischrologia and the iambus, see Kirk Freudenburg, The Walking Muse. Horace on the Theory of Satire, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 52-85.

[12]In many ways, Aristotle's iambike idea nearly captures the range of associations that our own term, "transgressive poetics," strives for. Certainly, Aristotle makes clear elsewhere that his main philosophical objections to iambographic poetry stem precisely from those elements that are most transgressive, i.e, those that he perceives to threaten social decorum, and individual behavior within the polis,and his attempt to locate iambographic elements in comic drama implies a desire to isolate literary elements that transcend the confines of a particular genre.

[13]See Thomas K. Hubbard's recent study of the Aristophanic parabasis, The Mask of Comedy. Aristophanes and the Intertextual Parabasis (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[14]In a passage which Aristophanes claims to be defending himself against a lawsuit by Cleon for slander, one wonders how calling Cleon a "butt-fucker" in line 663 might enhance his case! If anything, it is a further example of the kind of poetry that allegedly got him into trouble in the first place.

[15]See Anne Pippin Burnett, Three Archaic Poets: Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983) 22-32.

[16]See Freudenburg, esp. 109-84.

[17]See Michael Coffey, Roman Satire (London and New York: Methuen, 1976) 68-69 on the title of Horace's work

[18]Nagy suggested for Archilochus a similarly "knowing" audience of friends; cf. above, note 00; See also David Mankin, Horace. Epodes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 6-9, on the audience in Rome for Horace's "iambographic" poetry. It should be noted here that two other works by Horace featured mockery and obscenity: the Epodes and Epistles. By contrast, his better known *Odes* are almost entirely free from such elements.

[19]See Connie Bruck, "The Takedown of Tupac," The New Yorker, 7 July 1997: 46-64.

[20]This cover caused quite a controversy when first released because of its obviously sexist, misogynistic and suggestively lewd iconography. Bell hooks, in her Outlaw Culture, recounts the revulsion that a friend of hers, a male music critic, felt when he saw in the cover "an image so offensive in its sexism and misogyny he did not want to take it home." More offensive than Doggystyle's obvious use of misogyny, however, hooks argues, was Time magazine's decision to reproduce the record's "pornographic" cover art without critical comment.

[21]The very first track on the album features a brief extra-musical scene in which Snoop is about to relax in a bathtub with a woman. While crafted to appear as a humorous fleeting moment, it is fact extremely revealing and programmatic. Snoop requests that the woman put on some "gangsta shit" (anticipating the work about to unfold) to create the proper ambience. But as she does this, the doorbell rings and a crowd of friends and groupies arrive. An annoyed Snoop confesses to one of them that he is nearly ready to give up on the whole gangsta scene, when the friend reminds him how the gangsta "game" has allowed Snoop to live the "American Dream," namely, to have unlimited access to marijuana and substantial material wealth. His friend further reminds him that he is at the peak of his poetic form and has the respect of everyone on the

street. This track, therefore, by depicting a "private" Snoop, one who can speak about gangsta rap not, as he routinely does when in full persona, i.e., as the necessary reflection of a lived life, but rather as a poetic genre that demands the assumption of a separate identity, essentially explains the rest of the work as an aesthetic contrivance that accounts for the Snoop's poetic successes.

[22]The anthropomorphized dog, representing a prototypically male viewpoint or that of the "regular guy," is a long-standing motif in African-American folklore. Abrahams records, for example, a mildly obscene parable from the Signifying tradition in which a worldly wise "old dog" teaches a naïve "young dog" the ways of canine life. This story, which dates from the early part of this century, concludes with a "moral" (i.e., punch line) that expresses avaricious and nihilistic sentiments strikingly similar to the ethos routinely represented in present-day gangsta rap: "Well, son, take the advice of an old dog. Anything in this world that you can't smell, eat, kiss or fuck, piss on it." (Abrahams, Deep Down in the Jungle, 235-6.)

[23]Note also Parliament's conflation of "booty" and "boogie," and verses such as "I'm like a camel double-humping to please || I'm up to my hump in the funk…"; "I've got jam in my legs, and I'm ready to spread, || all around the world for the funk…"; "Here's a toast to the boogie, || we'll funk to that… || bottoms up!"

[24]Gangsta rappers have performed numerous similar parodies of funk music and its conventions. On the 1991 record, Niggaz4life (Priority Records, 57126), for example, the rap collective, N.W.A., led by Dr. Dre and the late Ezy-E, performed an exaggeratedly lewd travesty of Bootsy Collins' 1976 pop-funk ballad, "I'd Rather Be With You" (Stretchin' Out in Bootsy's Rubber Band, Warner Brothers, 2920) entitled "I'd Rather Fuck You." In N.W.A.'s rendition, Collins' music and production values are retained largely intact, but the sexual innuendo and light-

hearted male braggadocio common to funk are rendered in the most egregiously explicit and exaggerated terms. Also, Dr. Dre's The Chronic includes several parodic allusions to well-known Parliament tracks. On "The Roach," for example, the chorus "I Wants to Get Fucked Up" parodies Parliament's popular hit "P. Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)" from Mothership Connection (Polygram Records, 1975, 824502-2).

[25]On the larger influence of Clinton's "Atomic Dog," see Rickey Vincent, Funk: The Music, the People, and the Rhythm of the One, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) 249-52. An allusion to "Atomic Dog" also appears on Dr. Dre's The Chronic, in the song "Fuck Wit' Dre Day," which features Snoop Doggy Dogg singing the refrain: "bow wow wow yippee yo yipee yea, Doggy Dogg's in the muthafuckin' house…"

[26]Riddles pointing in allusive, and—for the uninitiated—often elusive, ways to familiar African-American texts and contexts constitute a basic operation of the Signifying tradition. In her essay, "I Can Peep Through Muddy Water and Spy Dry Land: Boasts in the Blues," folklorist Mimi Clar Melnick offers several examples of riddling and allusive lyrics in the blues. (See Melnick in Dundes, 268-70.) Roberts suggests that these riddling motifs, which pervade African-American poetic forms, may have their roots in ancient African Trickster legends. (Roberts, 22.)

[27]See Roberts, 41-2.

[28]Margaret A. Rose, Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 36-9, explains that the success of parody as a rhetorical mode is predicated upon the reader's ability to recognize numerous cues that parody is at work. These cues, which include changes to subject matter, word choice, and syntax, and style, among other things, may be more or less subtle depending upon the author's desired effect. As often happens in a riddle, parodists may construct imagined naïve readers who misrecognize the work's

meaning or intent and fail to perceive its parodic character—usually by reading too literally and overlooking incongruities between the representation and its object. Yet these internal readers, Rose notes, function in effect as an additional cue for the text's external readers. As naïve readers, they offer a mirror in which the external readers can reflect upon their own interpretive tasks.

[29]As we might expect, riddling also features prominently in classical traditions of comic satire and mockery, and there, too, animals are frequently employed enigmatically, often in the form of fables. (The word ainitto, "to speak in a riddle"—from which we get our term, "enigma," is etymologically derived from the word ainos, the technical Greek term for a fable; see Nagy, 238-42).Among many possible examples, we may cite Archilochus, fr. 201, "The fox knows lots of tricks || the hedgehog only one—but it's a winner." (equating the verbal power of the iambographic poet to the weaponry of the hedgehog);

[30]Aristophanes mentions Ariphrades and his famour "invention" in two other plays as well, *Peace* 885, and Wasps 1280. No doubt he was always good for a laugh at Athens.

[31]That is, although the chorus feels it needs to mention Arignotus, Ariphrades' brother, who is himself blameless, it regrets having to associate his name with Ariphrades' reprehensible behavior.

[32]Two lyric poets to whom lewd verses seem to have been attributed. Polymnestos is also known to us from other authors (e.g., Pindar and Alcman), though Oionichos is known only from this passage.

[33]Although the voice of the chorus is never completely identical to the "I" of the poet himself, this passage quoted above comes from a second parabatic section of the play. As we discussed above, the chorus at least claimed to speak on behalf of the poet in the parabases of Old Comedy.

[34]It is significant that the best known ritual of abuse in Athens reenacted a scene from the myth of the goddess Demeter, in which she is mocked by a servant named Iambe. As the story is recounted in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Demeter was wandering through Attica, grieving for her daughter Persephone, whom Hades had recently abducted. When she came, disguised as an old woman, to the house of King Celeus in Eleusis, Iambe managed to lift her mood by mocking and insulting her (in other versions, she exposes herself to the goddess). Clearly the Greek term "iambus" (and cognates such as "iambographic") echoes the overtones of abusive speech that are played out in this myth, though it remains uncertain whether the word "iambus" inspired the invention of a mocking character names Iambe, or whether the character's name in the myth gave rise to a term to describe abusive verse. See N. J. Richardson, The Homeric Hymn to Demeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) 213-15.

[35]"Shiznit" is a playfully expanded form of "Shit," used in a way reminiscent of Juvenal's farrago or "mishmash," a term he applied to his Satires in 1.86. "Shiznit" in this sense refers simply to the "material," the "stuff," of the recording. A verse near the beginning of "Lodi Dodi" uses "shit" in a similarly programmatic, yet colloquial way: "…so listen close to what we have to say || because this type of shit happens every day…" The rationale for the song, in other words, is no more than that it represents a typical scene from everyday life; Cf. Juvenal 1.85-90.

[36]See Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) 16-8.

[37]Steiner, 5.