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Cynic and Epicurean Parrhesia in Horace's Epodes 5 & 6: Appropriating a Parallel Philosophical Debate For Poetic Purposes

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CYNIC AND EPICUREAN *PARRHESIA* IN HORACE'S *EPODES* 5 & 6: APPROPRIATING A
PARALLEL PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE FOR POETIC PURPOSES

by

KENT KLYMENKO

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Classics in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Classics in satisfaction
of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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Advisor: Professor Philip Thibodeau

Within Horace's fifth and sixth *Epodes* there is a juxtaposition of canine imagery. This imagery parallels two different interpretations of the philosophical concept of *parrhesia* or frank speech. Horace examines the *parrhesia* of Cynicism and contrasts it with the *parrhesia* of Epicureanism. After establishing Horace's philosophical influences, I engage in a close reading of the two poems through the lens of these competing philosophical interpretations of the same concept. I make the argument that Horace is using his knowledge of philosophy to make a larger poetic point. Although Horace's own stance on *parrhesia* favors Epicureanism, to the extent that one can ascertain any philosophical allegiance within Horace's poetry, his philosophical stance is not central for this reading. Horace intentionally makes use of the philosophical debate so that he may make a meta-argument about the function and role of poetry. The competing philosophies act as poetic metaphors regarding the style and function of poetry. The metaphor of the dog acts as a symbol for the philosophical debate, which in turn is aligned with two different goals-- vapid and vindictive invective versus poetry as a socially therapeutic art.

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Cynic and Epicurean *parrhesia* in Horace's *Epodes* 5 & 6: Appropriating a Parallel Philosophical Debate for Poetic Purposes

Introduction:

Horace frequently and adeptly manipulates philosophical concepts for his own poetic purposes throughout his oeuvre. Horace is a poet, and not a philosopher, but he has a significant philosophical background and education, and one can see that philosophy suffuses his poetry. Horace does not employ philosophy with the rigor of a philosopher, but for different purposes as a poet.

One such philosophical concept at the service of Horace's larger poetic project is *parrhesia*. In the *Epodes*, Horace uses the Epicurean concept of *parrhesia* in opposition to and apparent dislike of the more violent Cynic form of the same doctrine. This culminates in a paradoxical centerpiece of conflicting canine imagery, where in the sequential *Epodes* 5 and 6, Horace vacillates between condemning the Cynic *parrhesia* represented by the witch Canidia, and then in the very next poem, he seemingly embraces the Cynic *parrhesia* when the poet transforms himself into a dog. Why the sudden and intentional shift in canine imagery pregnant with philosophical reference? Horace, a poet well educated in the philosophical debates of the age would be capable of using his poetry to comment on the discussion, not exclusively as a matter of philosophical allegiance, but as a poetic statement. The inconsistent canine imagery highlights not simply Horace's wavering philosophical commitments, but a larger poetic point. Horace uses philosophy in these two poems, and their conflicts, as a tool to develop an evaluation of two different functions of poetry in society, and to create *aporia* for the audience in the face of a witch's *nefas*.

Before I can answer the previously mentioned questions, I will first discuss the preliminary matters of the philosophical systems of Cynicism and Epicureanism, and I will further discuss the subtly different meanings of *parrhesia* for Epicureanism and Cynicism, and especially Philodemus' version of Epicurean *parrhesia* of which Horace would have been most familiar.

As well, I will discuss the existence or non-existence of Horace's philosophical affiliation and Horace's philosophical influences, and what that means for my interpretation of the poems. I will then quote the relevant sections of the *Epodes* under discussion and provide translations, after which I will engage in a close reading of the poems linking the themes and symbolism within the poems to the philosophical topics discussed. Finally, I will synthesize that close reading with a larger poetic point of Horace's, in which the meta-debate of the competing philosophical interpretations acts as an aesthetic set piece for Horace's poetic argument.

Before any fruitful exploration of philosophy within Horace's poetry, I must first examine the historical and philosophical background of Horace's ideological inheritance. As previously stated, within Horace's fifth and sixth *Epodes*, there are two dominant philosophical schools of thought which form the background of my argument: Cynicism (especially the thought and action of Diogenes of Sinope) and Epicureanism (particularly that of Philodemus).

Chapter 1: Cynicism

1.1. The Features of Cynicism Relevant to the Fifth and Sixth *Epodes*

The dominant preliminary matters for Horace's fifth and sixth *Epodes* in relation to the influence of Cynic thought are understanding the link of Cynicism to dogs, the tradition and role of *parrhesia* for Diogenes and his followers, and later, the parts of Diogenes' biography relevant

to our discussion. The imagery of the dog is central to my reading of the fifth and sixth *Epodes* and it is therefore important as a preliminary matter to establish the strong connection between Cynicism and the symbol of the dog. The Cynics famously were associated with and named for dogs.

1.2. Origin of the “Dog” Symbolism

The origin of the name “dog” for the Cynics (κυνικός) has several competing explanations. One explanation argues that the name derives from the place of teaching of Antisthenes (one of the earliest and debatably first of the Cynics), which was called the Cynosarges, translatable as potentially either “White Dog,” “Quick Dog,” or “Dog's Meat.”¹ This is a weak derivation as it seems to be contaminated by an analogy to the term “Stoic” so named for the Stoa in which Zeno of Citium taught. As Piering notes in his investigation, there are no incontrovertible pieces of evidence which suggest that Antisthenes, or Crates or Diogenes, or any other Cynic, made use of the Cynosarges, with the only connection to Cynicism being its use as a sanctuary of Hercules (the ultimate Cynic hero). Since the Cynics had no set space where they met and discussed, such as the Garden of the Epicureans, or the Lyceum of the Peripatetics, or the Academy of the Platonists, for Diogenes and the other Cynics, the everyday streets of Athens provided the necessary setting for philosophical teaching and cultivation of virtue.²

As Navia notes, before Diogenes there are no references to the terms Cynic or Cynicism, but with Diogenes and after the term Cynic was used to designate a specific form of philosophy and a specific style of philosopher.³ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the “dog-ness” of

¹ Piering, “1. History of the Name”

² Ibid., “1. History of the Name”; for further discussion regarding the paucity of evidence of the name “dog” originating from Antisthenes' disciples see Dudley 1937, pp. 1-6

³ Navia 1996, pp. 14-15

Cynicism was popularized as a result of Diogenes' behavior. Antisthenes had the nickname of “pure and simple dog” potentially in reference to his lifestyle, but Antisthenes' contemporaries, including Plato and Xenophon, never refer to him by this name, which suggests that in the historical writings, the name of dog was applied posthumously to Antisthenes only after and in reference to Diogenes of Sinope, who was described as a more solidly “dog-like” philosopher in the doxographical tradition.⁴

In Piering's investigation, he notes that the precise origin of the name is uncertain, but most likely the term “dog” began as an insult by the opponents of Cynicism in reference to Diogenes' style of life. This style of life involves the performance of all his activities in public, the use of any public space for any purpose, and his outrageous spurning of all Athenian etiquette. Diogenes and later Cynics appropriated this insult and embraced the symbolism of dog-like behavior as ideal for their style of philosophy and the kind of lifestyle which according to Cynicism best facilitates the practice of virtue.⁵

Ultimately, the derivation of the name “Cynic” is drawn from behavioral similarities between the adherents of the movement and dogs. The rudeness and public shamelessness (*ἀναίδεια*) of the Cynics recalled canine traits. As Navia notes in his cataloging of the primary features of Cynicism, Cynics rejected money and power, they had no interest in the traditional family unit, they neglected basic hygiene, refused to participate in public life or society by rejecting all custom and tradition. As Navia cites, the Cynics endeavored to behave like dogs. Cynics ate whenever and wherever they pleased and similarly relieved themselves of waste wherever and whenever they pleased. Also in the manner of dogs, they would bite and bark at

⁴ Piering, “1. History of the Name”

⁵ Ibid.

whomever they did not like, they slept wherever they desired without consideration of property or foot traffic, they were open and sincere about voicing their feelings and opinions without reservation, and they had no allegiance to any tribe, political group, or nation. Thus Cynicism, as Navia argues, “derives its name from a theriomorphic linguistic transformation, as the Cynics became universally known as the dog-like philosophers.”⁶ Additionally, there is a convenient summary of the attributes linking Cynics with canine behavior and an early explanation for the name in a literal and allegorical sense preserved in a scholium on Aristotle⁷,

“There are four reasons why the 'Cynics' are so named. First because of the 'indifference' of their way of life (διὰ τὸ ἀδιάφορον τῆς ζωῆς), for they make a cult of ἀδιαφορία and, like dogs, eat and make love in public, go barefoot, and sleep in tubs and at crossroads . . . The second reason is that the dog is a shameless animal, and they make a cult of shamelessness, not as being beneath modesty (αἰδώς), but as superior to it . . . The third reason is that the dog is a good guard, and they guard the tenets of their philosophy . . . The fourth reason is that the dog is a discriminating animal which can distinguish between its friends and enemies . . . So do they recognize as friends those who are suited to philosophy, and receive them kindly, while those unfitted they drive away, like dogs, by barking at them.”⁸

Thus, dogs have a strong symbolic connection with Cynicism, and a poet such as Horace, who was philosophically educated and familiar with the traditions and movements of Greek philosophy, would have been aware of such symbolism when he referenced dogs in his own poetry.

1.3. Cynicism's Core Beliefs

⁶ Navia 1996, p. 17

⁷ Schol. Aristot. Ed. Brandis, p. 23

⁸ Dudley 1937, p. 5

Regarding the core beliefs of Cynicism, there is never any clearly explicated and comprehensive Cynic doctrine. Here Cynicism differs strikingly with the other major branches of Hellenistic philosophy, which endeavored to create complete metaphysical systems rooted in a carefully derived cosmology, from which they derived ethical systems as a culmination and extension of the systems' metaphysical underpinnings.

Cynics were not concerned with lucubrations on the metaphysical, and they derided all highly theoretical and abstract philosophy. Cynicism was a movement concerned chiefly with the ethical and practical. Their tenets are embodied through the stories of their actions, their asceticism, their lives, and their practice of virtue.

Cynicism was less a philosophical system of argumentation and careful reasoning, and more a lifestyle and way of being. The philosophy placed particular emphasis on practice and realization of its goals more through virtuous deeds than adherence to dogma. It is not an organized philosophical or rhetorical institution, school, or system, but rather a philosophy of action.⁹ As Kennedy argues, Cynicism was thought of as a “shortcut to philosophy”-- one could sidestep careful analysis of doctrine, dodge the need for continuous dialectic, and evade the introspection of more formal philosophical systems by simply living the philosophy.¹⁰

This does not mean that Cynicism as a philosophy was directionless and nihilistic. There are certain core attributes that form the primary principles of Cynic thought. There are consistently and clearly repeated objectives which can be broadly classified as the goals of the Cynic way of living: freedom from the demands of social niceties and the restrictions of tradition (ἀναίδεια); self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια); indifference to downturns or windfalls in life

⁹ Kennedy 1999, p. 27

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 29

(ἀδιαφορία); self-control and frugality (ἀπαθεία); discipline, endurance, physical resistance to the elements (such as Diogenes habit of living in a tub or going barefoot) and abstention from indulgence (ἄσκησις); virtuous character (ἀρετή); and truth-telling or *parrhesia* (παρρησία).¹¹

Of these previously listed goals of Cynicism, it is the freedom of *parrhesia* that gives life to and completes the actions by giving them a voice and interpretation, and therefore *parrhesia* is an overriding feature of the Cynic system. *Parrhesia* is also the Cynic virtue of particular interest to this paper for the subsequent discussion of Horace's fifth and sixth *Epodes* in which the Cynic version will be contrasted with the Epicurean interpretation of the same philosophical concept through the lens of Horace's poetry.

1.4. Cynic *Parrhesia*

Parrhesia (παρρησία) may be translated as truth-telling, freedom of speech, or frankness, but all fail to capture the specific philosophical sense of the word. It is a word that is intimately bound with connotations that are central to the Cynic virtues of (like a barking guard dog) social correction and (like a dog living and behaving as it wishes) social freedom.

The function of *parrhesia* as a social corrective is to cure people from τῦφος (a clouded mind-- a state of ignorance, arrogance, insolence) and free the target of the *parrhesia* from perceived ὕβρις. The Cynics believed that through their method of carefully choosing their words in such an attack, they could cure their target of intellectual insolence and bring about an enlightenment and lucidity of mind or ἀτυφία, which allows one to achieve all the above listed goods and virtues of human existence which Cynicism strives to achieve.¹²

Although the aim of *parrhesia* was curative and purgative, the experience of the

¹¹ Navia 1996, pp. 139-140; for further discussion of the core of Cynic's beliefs see Dudley 1937, p. 5

¹² Ibid., p. 140

individual as a target of *parrhesia* was unpleasant (and intentionally so) due to the bluntness of expression and its delight in puncturing pride and speaking the truth, however painful it may be.

The *parrhesia* of Diogenes of Sinope is always done to confute the opposition, and to expose the pretentiousness of the interlocutor (and life in general). Stylistically, the barbs of his *parrhesia* are always paired with trenchant and acerbic humor. *Parrhesia* allows the Cynic philosophers to engage in blatant disregard for social decorum as a “rhetoric of confrontation,” as opposed to an Aristotelian rhetoric that presupposes order, civility, reason, and law as necessary goods of discourse; the Cynic *parrhesia* adopts incivility to speak out to an unwilling audience about unexamined topics.¹³

The function of *parrhesia* as an expression of social freedom is found in its lack of regard for the relative social status of its targets. Its attacks are delivered fearlessly without regard for risk of bodily harm or damage to reputation. By practicing *parrhesia*, a Cynic philosopher can practice a form of “benevolent anarchy” which frees the practitioner from the realities of the political climate and the complexities of everyday social life.¹⁴

A legendary example (and although legendary, it nonetheless accurately communicates the goals of Cynic *parrhesia* regardless of the events' historicity) which encapsulates *parrhesia* is Diogenes of Sinope's encounter with Alexander the Great: “When he was sunning himself in the Craneum, Alexander came and stood over him and said, ‘Ask of me any boon you like.’ To which he replied, ‘Stand out of my light’” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book 6, Chapter 28).¹⁵

¹³ Kennedy 1999, p. 26

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 31

¹⁵ Piering 3.i. “Freedom and Parrhesia”

This story exemplifies both functions of *parrhesia*, as Diogenes pierces the pomposity of Alexander with his rude honesty, and simultaneously exercises complete freedom. Another example drawn from an encounter between Alexander and Diogenes is the story in which Alexander declares, “I am Alexander the Great King,” to which Diogenes responds “I am Diogenes the Dog [i.e. the 'Cynic']” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book 6, Chapter 60).¹⁶ Here Diogenes punctures Alexander the Great's pride and deflates his self-importance and title by exposing the absurdity and almost tautological nature of such self-description.

Furthermore, regarding the curative and socially corrective effect of *parrhesia*, as shown in other accounts, Alexander achieved the aforementioned enlightenment of ἀτυφία and a dispelling of his earlier ὕβρις: “Alexander was so struck at this answer, and was so surprised at the greatness of the man who had taken so little notice of him, that as he went away he told his followers, who were laughing at the philosopher, that if he were not Alexander, he would choose to be Diogenes.” (Plutarch, *Alexander*. xiv).¹⁷

Here we have Diogenes elevated to the level of a great sage and great conqueror through his honesty. His courage to speak freely represents the absolute freedom of the man, and it is a freedom that even eclipses the liberties of the most powerful man in the world. Once again, this expresses the essential features of Cynic *parrhesia* succinctly and shows the highest manifestation of its capabilities. Diogenes is able to conquer the mighty conqueror Alexander solely with the biting powers of audacious truth telling and humor.

These examples also encapsulate the general idea that Cynic *parrhesia* allows Cynics,

¹⁶ Ibid., 3.i. “Freedom and Parrhesia”

¹⁷ Navia 1996, pp. 98-99

unlike other contemporary philosophers, to avoid the necessity of ingratiating themselves with rulers and tyrants.¹⁸ Diogenes Laertius writes (here I more liberally translate this passage to capture the equivalent rough and biting rudeness and humor of Diogenes), “Plato saw [Diogenes of Sinope] washing lettuces, came up to him and quietly said to him, ‘Had you merely kissed Dionysius' ass, you wouldn't now be washing lettuces,’ and [Diogenes] with equal calmness answered, ‘If you had merely washed lettuces, you wouldn't have to kiss Dionysius' ass.’” (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book 6, Chapter 58).¹⁹

This account again displays that, for the Cynic, the power of *parrhesia* is the ultimate freedom which, through mordant and caustic wit, can conquer even the unconquerable, and allows one to be a slave to no one, no matter how powerful. “It is no surprise, then, that when asked what is 'the most beautiful thing in the world,' Diogenes replied, '*Parrhesia*.'” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book 6, Chapter 69.).²⁰

Although the Cynics seem to have invented the concept, the Greek concept of *parrhesia* began long before any schools of thought had appropriated and mutated the term for specific philosophical ends. Initially *parrhesia* referred simply to the power of free speech, particularly within assemblies and courts, granted to citizens as an essential component of democracy in Periclean Athens.²¹

As time went on, and as Athens started to move away from democracy, *parrhesia*'s emphasis on freedom of speech and equality began to shift from free speech to personal candor.²²

¹⁸ Piering 3.i. “Freedom and Parrhesia”

¹⁹ Piering 3.i. “Freedom and Parrhesia”; translation modified by me to capture the equivalent spirit of Cynic *parrhesia*'s harsh tone and humor

²⁰ Ibid., 3.i. “Freedom and Parrhesia”

²¹ Navia 2005, p. 179

²² Konstan 1998, p. 4

Different philosophical approaches developed which each had different interpretations of how and why one should make use of this new *parrhesia* of personal candor. Diogenes assumed the name, behavior, and symbol of a dog to reject human failings, and used the tool of *parrhesia* as a barking indictment and fierce condemnation of all unthinking human activity (such as matters of arbitrary custom or etiquette).²³

Diogenes' motivation and goal, and by extension the major goal of any practicing Cynic, is described in the likely apocryphal story, in which the Pythia tells Diogenes to “deface the coinage.” Diogenes then proceeds to literally deface coin currency. Only later does he realize the double meaning, that by coinage (*nomisma*), he is meant to deface society's accepted customs and laws. The word “coinage” or “currency” in Greek, *nomisma*, literally means “those things accepted by custom”, from *nomos*, meaning law, usage, or custom. Thus, the Cynic *parrhesia*'s goal is to viciously bark at those social conventions, which humans have mindlessly accepted by custom alone. The coin currency is a representation of such a thing, as its value is determined exclusively by social consensus that it possesses such a monetary value, even though there is no intrinsic value to the coins themselves. It is the same way with many customs and traditions that Diogenes and other Cynics would censure. Greek society, like any complex society, was full of customs and ideas given reverence by generations of consensus, even if those customs often had little logical backing and no intrinsic value, and so they were prime targets of *parrhesic* abuse for the Cynics, who would find the weakest links in society's unthinking traditions and bark at them in the manner of a vigilant watchdog. The practicing Cynic should act as an ethical watch dog

²³ Branham 1996, p. 35

and bark, snarl, and bite against the cultural and political “currency”.²⁴²⁵

Chapter 2: Epicureanism

2.1. The Influence of Epicureanism on Horace's Fifth and Sixth *Epodes*

Now that we have explored Cynicism, it is necessary that we explore Epicureanism to understand its influence on Horace's poetry. The Epicureans form their worldview from their atomistic cosmology and physics. All initial principals of Epicureanism descend from the first axiom (of the first atomist, Democritus) that all things are composed of indivisible particles (atoms) and that all phenomena emerge from the relations, unique configurations, and interactions between the differently shaped atoms traveling through the void.

Where this is of particular interest for this thesis' analysis of Horace's *Epodes*, is the philosophy's unique approach to the concept of *parrhesia*. The *parrhesia* of the Cynics is related but distinct from the *parrhesia* of the Epicureans in both its methods and goals. This subtle distinction between the two philosophical concepts is the theme that Horace plays with in the contrast between his fifth and sixth *Epodes*. Before one can understand the distinction, one must first understand Epicurean ethics, the importance of friendship in Epicureanism, and the specific variety of Epicureanism of the philosopher Philodemus, to which Horace would have been exposed.

2.2. Epicurean Ethics

Given his atomistic worldview and removal of gods from direct influence on human affairs, Epicurus' ethics is essentially hedonistic in nature, in that personal pleasure or happiness is considered the highest good. Epicurus' conception and interpretation of the nature of pleasure

²⁴ Ibid., p. 90

²⁵ Navia 2005, p. 25

gives his philosophy a subtle view of pleasure which advocates a virtuous and ascetic life. Epicurus' ethical system requires moral discipline, and emphasizes the avoidance of pain over the pursuit of self-indulgence or coarse and trivial pleasures.²⁶ Thus, Epicurus view of pleasure should not be misconstrued as the libertine or sybaritic unrestrained indulgence of the Cyrenaic philosophical school, which is more similar to hedonism in the modern sense of the word.²⁷ In Epicurus' ethics, all human activity is done for the sake of pleasure, and in fact, pleasure is the only human end which is pursued for its own sake. The opposing conclusion he draws from this is that likewise, if humans do not act in pursuit of pleasure, then they act in avoidance of pain.

Epicurus is careful to define different types of pleasure. There is pleasure which is achieved by fulfilling some existing desire, such as the pleasure of eating when hungry or gratifying a sexual appetite, but these sorts of pleasures are contrasted with the superior pleasure of satiety, which is the state of not desiring or wanting.²⁸

Epicurus draws another distinction between pleasures and pains of the mind and pleasures and pains of the body. Physical pleasure or pain is placed on a lower tier than mental pleasure or pain, as the physical sensation is ephemeral and impacts only the exact present, while mental pleasure and pain can involve both remembrance of things past, whether that which is remembered is treasured and enriching or a source of regret, and things yet to be, such as the delight of dreams, ambitions, and confidence, or the pains of fear and anxiety.²⁹

Therefore, in Epicurus' taxonomy of pleasure and pain in the Epicurean ethic, he defines his highest pleasure as mental pleasure, as opposed to physical, and as produced from satiety, as

²⁶ Simpson, "iii. Ethics"

²⁷ O'Keefe, "5. Ethics"

²⁸ Ibid., "b. Types of Pleasure"

²⁹ Ibid., "b. Types of Pleasure"

opposed to being drawn from the moment of fulfilling a hunger. For this reason, anxiety over the future is the greatest evil in his ethics, as it is the most profound destroyer of his defined highest pleasure (mental satiety).

Of the causes of anxiety, the most deleterious form is fear of death and the gods, which Epicureanism attempts to cure. If one can remove these anxieties and other anxieties of the future, one can achieve the highest goal of Epicureanism, which is *ataraxia*, or freedom from all mental anxiety, and thus achieve a state of mental satiety, where the individual pleasure or hedonism that Epicurus posits as the highest good in his ethics is best understood as achieving absolute tranquility of mind.³⁰ The atomic cosmology from which Epicurus constructed this whole system was simply a means to the end of tranquility of mind.³¹

2.3. The Importance of Friendship in Epicureanism

If the highest pleasure in Epicurean ethics is mental satiety, which allows one to achieve the highest good of tranquility of mind, then one of the best means of achieving this state is through the virtue of friendship. Friendship and good relations are a potent process by which one can achieve *ataraxia*.

The emphasis on friendship seems initially to contradict Epicurean urging to avoid social entanglements or making oneself too conspicuous and thus prone to anxiety or other things which may damage mental tranquility. Epicureanism prescribes withdrawal from public life, and its inevitable enmity and anxieties, and instead embracing a quiet and unnoticed life.³² This recommendation does not mean that Epicureanism supports the life of a hermit or a Cynic.

³⁰ Ibid., “b. Types of Pleasure”

³¹ Turner 1947, p. 351

³² Rist 1980, p. 121

Epicurus proclaims that self-imposed isolation leads to a solitary life beset with perils.³³

Epicureanism supports removal from public affairs, politics, and careerist ambition, but does not support social isolation, for just as the goal of *ataraxia* requires freedom from fear of death, and of the gods, so too does it need freedom from fear of fellow humans, and for all these ills friendship is a panacea.³⁴

The power of human companionship grants mental security and a “complete life.”³⁵ Epicurus speaks of friendship with exultant praise. In the only surviving manuscript of Epicurus' *Sententiae Vaticanae* he states, “πᾶσα φιλία δι' ἑαυτὴν ἀρετή” (*Sent. Vat.* 23). Several scholars have translated this as “every friendship is by itself a virtue.”³⁶ Friendship itself is a virtue as, like all Epicurean virtues, it is a powerful means of achieving pleasure (as understood as mental satiety which leads to tranquility). Epicurus argues that friendship is the best defense and source of safety against the evils one faces in one's limited lifespan.³⁷ Even when Epicurus lists the greatest virtues of a noble human, wisdom and friendship, he states that friendship is superior even to wisdom, and that is an “immortal good,” or an unvarying and blessed good shared by humans with the gods.³⁸

This is in accord with the interpretation of friendship as the best means of achieving the highest good as each friendship would help the Epicurean devotee perfect their mental processes in their personal quest to achieve *ataraxia*. Friendship, as a process, helps the Epicurean purge oneself of evils while cultivating goods. Friendship arises in Epicureanism for its tangible and

³³ O'Keefe, “f. Friendship”

³⁴ Rist 1980, p. 121

³⁵ Turner 1947, p. 353

³⁶ Brown 2002, p. 68

³⁷ Rist 1980, p. 122

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122

specific benefits.³⁹

Friendship partakes of Epicureanism's highest pleasures by creating fond memories of the past and happy goals of the future, while simultaneously providing a friend who may help remove regrets of the past and anxieties about the future. These are all benefits which allow the Epicurean to achieve *ataraxia*. Thus, the virtue of friendship acts as the strongest link between all of the main goals in the Epicurean method to an ideal life.

There is still the question of what exactly *parrhesia* does in Epicurean ethics, how it operates, and how is it a good thing, especially given that being too honest can actually impair friendship, which is so central to Epicurean ethics. The Epicurean *parrhesia* places special emphasis on friendship as a filter removing any venom from honest correction. There is special emphasis on the necessity of such honest speech for one's own moral improvement. Epicurean *parrhesia* operates more like a tool for improvement among those dedicated to the mutual seeking of virtue than as a weapon for verbal assault.

Although there is always the threat that candor and overly honest truths can damage a friendship or drive groups apart, the Epicureans noted that overcoming such feelings in response to criticism was all part of one's moral strengthening. As Konstan notes in his analysis of the Epicurean *parrhesia*, when a disciple becomes angry with overly honest criticism from a friend, they block their own moral development, and halt their reformation of character, and ability to correct errors, all of which is necessary for progress in wisdom.⁴⁰ This shows the role and importance of *parrhesia* in Epicurean ethics. It is essentially a good thing in their ethical system, for in its operation and method, it is the very process by which one develops morally and

³⁹ Ibid., p. 123

⁴⁰ Konstan 1998, p. 6

deepens one's wisdom. As well, despite the risks of candor damaging a friendship, in its proper application it actually strengthens the intimacy of the relationship between friends, and thus strengthens the potential for moral progress.

2.4. Differences Between Cynic and Epicurean *Parrhesia*

Here enters the role of *parrhesia* in the Epicurean ethic. The “free-speech” of *parrhesia* is used for a different corrective goal in Epicureanism. This is not the Cynic *parrhesia* of social demolition, but a *parrhesia* of individual improvement and self-actualization. The Epicurean version of *parrhesia* not only has different goals, but also different methods. Rather than harshly excoriating those around you in the manner of a Cynic philosopher, the Epicurean gently corrects the friend with the truthfulness of a close companion. This softer Epicurean variety of *parrhesia* (softer in comparison to the Cynic variety) allows an Epicurean to correct friends through personal candor, in only the way friends can through their intimacy, and thus help each other in the gradual purging of their anxieties, and help solidify their state of mental satiety. It is understandable therefore that Epicureanism in its earliest practice is built around a sort of communal life in the Epicurean “garden,” as it is a place in which friendship and close relations, and the *parrhesia* which strengthens it, can flourish.

The Cynic *parrhesia* was significantly altered and softened by the Epicurean reinterpretation. Cynicism influenced Epicurean ethics.⁴¹ Epicureans, however, gave the *parrhesia* of the Cynics a new interpretive spin. Under Epicureanism, *parrhesia* is much more about friendship, one of the highest virtues of their philosophical program. The Epicurean *parrhesia* is now tinted by the Aristotelian ethics of the golden mean, in which *parrhesia* is the

⁴¹ Moles 2007, p. 168

virtue of candor in friendship, with its excess being flattery, and its deficiency being enmity.⁴²

Thus, under the Epicurean reinterpretation of *parrhesia* the older Cynic form may be viewed as closer to the deficiency and vice end of true *parrhesia*, and farther from the mean of friendly correction. If Horace was a student of, or heavily influenced by, Philodemus' teachings regarding Epicureanism, he may have regarded the Cynic *parrhesia* as closer to a form of vice. This would explain Horace's more hostile attitude towards Cynic *parrhesia* in his poetry.

Cynic *parrhesia* is different in both goal and style from the Epicurean form. Cynic *parrhesia's* goal is to skewer and ridicule social convention in order that it may reveal the underlying absurdities, while Epicurean *parrhesia's* goal is to offer kind correction among friends for mutual improvement and development. Cynic *parrhesia's* style is purposefully vicious and cruel so that it may be as shocking as possible, but Epicurean *parrhesia*, especially that as described by Philodemus, rejects an inconsiderate or abusive approach for fear that excessive harshness will cause students to disassociate themselves from the community.⁴³

2.5. Philodemus and Epicurean *Parrhesia*

The specific sub-type of Epicurean *parrhesia* which Horace would have been exposed to was that of the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus. Philodemus attracted students and influential patrons at Herculaneum, near the Epicurean community at Naples under the leadership of the philosopher Siro. I will explore Horace's connection with these philosophers later in this paper, which shows evidence for philosophical influence on his poetry.

Philodemus was born in Gadara, probably of Greek parentage, in Syria c. 110 BCE and died c. 40/35 BCE; he may have arrived in Italy around the year 80 BCE and opened an

⁴² Konstan 1998, p. 6

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 11-12

Epicurean school which attracted many students, and Calpurnius Piso, father-in-law of Julius Caesar, who became Philodemus' patron.⁴⁴ Philodemus wrote an entire handbook on *parrhesia*, called *Περὶ παρρησίας* (the only known work in antiquity with this title).⁴⁵ Of the fragments of it which remain, one may form a fairly clear picture of the variety of Epicurean *parrhesia* which influence Horace's poetry.

The *parrhesia* of Philodemus is closely linked with the Epicurean emphasis on friendship discussed *supra*. Through friendship, an Epicurean disciple can have the courage to criticize other disciples' failings without fear, motivated by a spirit of goodwill without the Cynic style spitefulness. Frank speech or *parrhesia* is the language of friendship and the most potent medicine in friendship for mutual moral reform among friends.⁴⁶ As Konstan argues, “the topic of frank speech is thus integral to the theme of moral education, or the correction of faults among friends to effect an improvement of character.”⁴⁷ As Philodemus writes in fr. 28: “Even if we demonstrate logically that, although many fine things result from friendship, there is nothing so grand as having one to whom one will say what is in one's heart and who will listen when one speaks. For our nature strongly desires to reveal to some people what it thinks.”⁴⁸

Built into the practice of *parrhesia* for Philodemus is the Epicurean mutual aid of friendship as such honesty between friends helps both in realizing the ultimate goals of Epicureanism. When friends correct one another with honesty, they each allow the other to grow. Thus, friendship creates ideal circumstances for mutual improvement through honesty. *Parrhesia*

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 1

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 2

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 5

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 5

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 6

is there to help a friend improve and remove obstacles, much like the Cynic *parrhesia*, but unlike the Cynic *parrhesia* which does not care about causing anger or humiliation in the target of censure. The Epicurean *parrhesia* of Philodemus emphasizes friendship as balm to remove anger from reproach. When a disciple becomes angry with constructive criticism from their peers or teachers, they are unable to grow morally, reform their character, and correct errors, all of which is necessary for progress in wisdom.⁴⁹

The *parrhesia* of Philodemus also had the purpose of propagating Epicureanism's theoretical knowledge. The atomistic cosmology of Epicureanism was a truth that was hard to swallow for many, and one often received with hostility. Like the Cynic *parrhesia*, here the purpose of frank speech is that the truth of one's philosophy can be spread without the limiting fear of damaging an interlocutor's sensibility. This is not done exclusively as a barking dog to poke holes in custom as the Cynics do. Rather, *parrhesia* is used here to free the listener from all the anxieties that Epicureanism tries to purge, thereby raising the listener up to a higher state of being.

The Epicurean *parrhesia* of Philodemus was again not meant to humiliate, but meant to “form character and to counter psychological disturbance.”⁵⁰ According to Philodemus, only through this variety of *parrhesia*, and the constant openness to criticism and mutual correction of friendship, could one purge one's mind of fear of death, fear of the gods, the fear of the unpredictability of the universe, and all other anxieties that destroy human happiness.⁵¹ Only then can one achieve the ultimate goal of Epicurean philosophy and reach a state of *ataraxia*.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 6

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 7

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 8

Chapter 3: Horace's Philosophical Influences

3.1. Horace as Potentially a Student of Epicureanism

Regarding the matter of Horace's philosophical background, I must first establish if dogmatic adherence to a philosophical school would be natural for his poetry, as well as what that means for the interpretation of these poems. There's some evidence, with respect to Horace's background, which suggests that Horace was influenced by the Epicurean school of Philodemus. One source of evidence which suggests Horace studied under Philodemus comes from ancient testimonia. However, the only testimonium which mentions Horace as part of this group of Epicurean students in Naples under Siro or Philodemus (one such student being Vergil) comes from the late antique writings of St. Jerome. All earlier writings, which reference these students, by Servius, Donatus, and Probus, exclude Horace from Vergil's friends while he studied Epicureanism, thus contradicting the later writings of Jerome.⁵²

3.2. Connection to Philodemus and Epicureanism

Another source would be Horace's own writing, such as when he directly references Philodemus by paraphrasing an amusing poem, "*illam 'post paulo,' 'sed pluris,' 'si exierit vir' / Gallis, hanc Philodemus ait sibi quae neque magno / stet pretio neque cunctetur cum est iussa venire*" (Hor. Sat. I 2. 120-122). While this suggests Horace admired Philodemus, Cicero tells us that Philodemus was a well respected poet, and thus many educated Romans would read his poetry even if they were not necessarily Epicureans.⁵³ Thus, this evidence does not suggest that Horace received any direct Epicurean influence from Philodemus himself. In general there is

⁵² Tsakirpoulou-Summers 1998, p. 22

⁵³ Ibid., p. 24

very little strong evidence suggesting that Horace studied under Philodemus in his youth.⁵⁴

Regardless of whether Horace necessarily studied for a prolonged period under Philodemus, or at all, it is still evident from Horace's own writings that he was influenced by Epicurean teachings, and certainly at least acquainted with Philodemus. Even if Horace was not a student of Philodemus, Horace was certainly well acquainted with Philodemus' students.

In the charred papyrus scrolls of the Villa Dei Papiri, scholars found many of Philodemus' lost works. Earlier scholarship reconstructed Horace's name in the dedication to *Περὶ κολακείας* (On Flattery), as well as the dedication to *Περὶ φιλαργυρίας* ("On Love of Money").⁵⁵ These mentions in the dedications would suggest that Horace was studying under Philodemus in his youth with Vergil and others. However, there was much scholarly criticism and disagreement regarding these papyrological reconstructions.⁵⁶

Eventually in 1989, Marcello Gigante and Mario Capasso identified a more complete dedication in a third work of Philodemus, *Περὶ κακιῶν*.⁵⁷ The actual names in the dedication of the work did not include Horace, and were Vergil, Quintilius, Plotius, and Varius.⁵⁸ The inclusion of these men in the dedication suggests that these four had a deep philosophical interest in friendship and *parrhesia* as opposed to its debased form of flattery.⁵⁹

Although Horace is not included with these men in the dedications, Horace certainly knew them well. Horace describes some of these men as joining him on a trip to Tarentum in (*Sat.* 1.5.39-42): "*namque/ Plotius et Varius Sinuessae Vergiliusque/ occurunt, animae qualis*

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 21

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 21

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 21

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 27

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 27

⁵⁹ Thibodeau 2003, p. 251

neque candidores terra tulit, neque quis me sit devinctior alter.” Horace likely had frequent contact with these men as part of Maecenas' circle, and he uses the word *candidores* to underscore their charm and frankness with each other.⁶⁰ This frankness reflects their Epicurean *parrhesia*, and thus, Horace must have had close contact with these men, and the ideas of Epicureanism.

In general, Epicureanism can be found throughout Horace's poetry. Horace's *Odes* 1.24 can be read as a parrhesic and Epicurean consolation.⁶¹ Although there is no extant and complete systematic Epicurean philosophy, one can find throughout Horace's poems relatively clear doctrines regarding Epicurean cosmology, death, mourning, choice, prayer, pleasure, friendship, humor, ethics, and many other clearly Epicurean teachings in several other of his poems.⁶²

3.3 Horace's Philosophical Eclecticism

However, Horace also embraces and manifests other eclectic philosophical interests in his later poetry. In Horace's *Odes* 2.10.5-8 he writes, “*Auream quisquis mediocritatem / diligit, tutus caret obsoleti / sordibus tecti, caret invidenda / sobrius aula*” advocating the golden-mean of Peripatetic ethics. Horace's *Odes* 1.28, a bizarre poem with a corpse as a speaker, has undoubtedly Pythagorean themes.⁶³ Horace even models Cynicism's sharp wit, when in *Satires* 1.6 he imitates Bion of Borysthenes.⁶⁴ Surrounding all these diverse philosophical influences, is the clear evidence in *Satires* 2.6.73-76 that Horace was actively engaged in philosophical discussion of wide scope at his dinner parties-- “*utrumne divitiis homines an sint virtute beati; /*

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 251

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 248-249

⁶² Dewitt 1939, pp. 128-134

⁶³ D'Angour 2003, p. 206

⁶⁴ Frischer 1984, p. 71

⁶⁵ Moles 2007, p. 166

quidve ad amicitias, usus rectumne, trahat nos; / et quae sit natura boni summumque quid eius.”

⁶⁶ Horace therefore did not write in an Epicurean echo chamber, in which only the Epicurean worldview was discussed and reaffirmed, but rather Horace had a diverse range of philosophical interests that he could make use of as tools for his poetry.

In one poem Horace even rejects abstract philosophizing (and particularly his old Epicureanism) entirely in favor of folk religion and the state cult. Horace writes in *Odes* 1.34.1-5, “*Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens, / insanientis dum sapientiae / consultus erro, nunc retrorsum / vela dare atque iterare cursus / cogor relictos*” “Once I wandered as someone skilled in insane wisdom, and as a frugal and infrequent worshiper of the gods, but now I am compelled back to set sail and renew again my abandoned course.” The insane knowledge (*insanientis sapientiae*) in which Horace was skilled (*consultus*) is referring to abstract philosophizing. Here, Horace once again shifts his ideological allegiance for the sake of his poetry.

Although, there is plenty of good evidence that Horace was greatly influenced by Epicurean friends, that does not mean he was dogmatically Epicurean, or for that matter, dogmatically *any* philosophy. The purpose of establishing the eclecticism of Horace in my argument, in which Horace makes use of any philosophy which is necessary for his art, or rejects dialectic and theorizing entirely for the sake of ancestral knowledge and folk tradition, is to establish that Horace makes use of his philosophical influences for artistic ends.

Horace uses different philosophies as ready toolboxes of sophisticated themes and symbols. Horace may have his own opinions on philosophy, but to decide what those were is not the purpose of this paper. My argument rests on Horace using the debate between two very

⁶⁶ Maguinness 1938, p. 29

specific interpretations of the same concept within two philosophical systems to make an aesthetic point, and not a philosophical one.

There is a fascination within Horace's poetry of philosophical systems as aesthetic phenomena just as any other topic within Horace's poetry. Horace explores these aesthetic phenomena whether they be a social interaction, history, emotion, or the natural world; all are investigated not in the manner of a technical writer or antiquarian but for the sake of creating poetry and art.

Horace is foremost a poet, and even if there are frequent somewhat Epicurean influences in his poetry, they are not an attempt to fulfill the same poetic function as a didactic poem such as Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. Horace himself even denies strict adherence to any philosophical doctrine in Hor. *Epist.* 1.1.14, stating, “*nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri*,” which can be interpreted as saying that Horace follows no specific philosophical school's precepts, and that he maintains a healthy skepticism towards all formal and comprehensive philosophical systems.⁶⁷

Chapter 4: Cynic and Epicurean Parrhesia in Epodes 5 and 6

4.1. The Relevant Sections of the Poems Quoted and Translated

Before we continue onto an analysis of the poems, I will quote here the sections of *Epodes* five and six at length which are most relevant to this discussion. All translations given are my own.

“hic inresectum saeva dente livido

Canidia rodens pollicem

quid dixit aut quid tacuit? 'o rebus meis

⁶⁷ Bovie 2002, p. 161

*non infideles arbitrae,
Nox et Diana, quae silentium regis,
arcana cum fiunt sacra,
nunc, nunc adeste, nunc in hostilis domos
iram atque numen vertite.
formidulosis cum latent silvis ferae
dulci sopore languidae,
senem, quod omnes rideant, adulterum
latrent Suburanae canes
nardo perunctum, quale non perfectius
meae laborarint manus.
quid accidit? cur dira barbarae minus
venena Medae valent,
quibus Superbam fugit ultra paelicem,
magni Creontis filiam,
cum palla, tabo munus imbutum, novam
incendio nuptam abstulit?
atqui nec herba nec latens in asperis
radix fefellit me locis.
indormit unctis omnium cubilibus
oblivione paelicum?
a, a, solutus ambulat veneficae*

scientioris carmine.
non usitatis, Vare, potionibus,
o multa fleturum caput,
ad me recurre nec vocata mens tua
Marsis redibit vocibus.
maius parabo, maius infundam tibi
fastidienti poculum
priusque caelum sidet inferius mari
tellure porrecta super
quam non amore sic meo flagres uti
bitumen atris ignibus.'
sub haec puer iam non, ut ante, mollibus
lenire verbis inpias,
sed dubius unde rumperet silentium,
misit Thyesteas preces:
'venena magnum fas nefasque, non valent
convertere humanam vicem.'
diris agam vos: dira detestatio
nulla expiatur victima.
quin, ubi perire iussus exspiravero,
nocturnus occurram Furor
petamque voltus umbra curvis unguibus,

*quae vis deorum est Manium,
 et inquietis adsidens praecordiis
 pavore somnos auferam.
 vos turba vicitim hinc et hinc saxis petens
 contundet obscaenas anus;
 post insepulta membra different lupi
 et Esquilinae alites
 neque hoc parentes, heu mihi superstites,
 effugerit spectaculum.'* (Hor. *Epod.* 5)

“Here cruel Canidia gnawing her untrimmed thumbnail with her spiteful tooth,
 what did she say or what was left unsaid?
 ‘Oh, faithful witnesses of my deeds,
 Night and Diana, you who rules silence,
 when the holy mysteries occur,
 now, now be in attendance,
 now turn your anger and divine will against the houses of my enemies.
 When the wild beasts, listless with sweet sleep, lie in the dangerous woods,
 Let the dogs of Subura bark at the old pervert,
 at whom everyone may laugh,
 thoroughly greasy with unguent that my hands did not produce more perfectly.
 What happened? Why are the dreadful poisons

of barbarous Medea less powerful,
those with which she got revenge on that arrogant mistress,
the daughter of great Creon, Medea fled
when the shawl, a gift soaked in poison,
swept away the new bride in flames?
And yet neither herb nor root
lurking in savage places
slipped by me.
He sleeps in anointed beds
forgetful of mistresses.
Ah! Ah! He walks unbound by the incantation
of a more knowledgeable sorceress.
Not with customary potions, Varus,
O your life is about to be full of weeping,
will you hasten back to me, nor will your mind summoned
return by Marsian voices.
I will prepare something more powerful,
I will pour out a more powerful love potion
for you disdainful,
and sooner the sky will sink down deeper beneath the sea
with the earth stretched out above,
than you not blaze with love for me,

just as bitumen does with black flames.'

At these words the boy no longer tried, as before,
to mollify the impious women with gentle words,
but uncertain whence he would break the silence,
he hurled Thyestean curses:

Your poisons alter right and wrong,
but cannot change human fate.

I will pursue you with curses:

my hateful curse is not atoned for by any sacrifice,
Even when I will have breathed out my last breath, commanded to die,
I will oppose you as a nocturnal rage,
and as a shade I will attack your face with curved claws,
which is the power of the divine ghosts of the dead,
and sitting down on your restless chest,
I will steal upon you in your sleep as a panic,
the mob will crush you, you repulsive hags,
attacking you with rocks street by street;
after the wolves and birds of the Esquiline,
will scatter your unburied limbs,
And my parents, who alas will outlive me,
will have not escaped notice of this spectacle."

(Horace, *Epode* 5)

“Quis inmerentis hospites vexas, canis

ignavos adversum lupos?

quin huc inanis, si potes, vertis minas

et me remorsurum petis?

nam qualis aut Molossus aut fulvos Lacon,

amica vis pastoribus,

agam per altas aure sublata nivis

quaecumque praecedet fera;

tu, cum timenda voce complesti nemus,

proiectum odoraris cibum.

cave, cave, namque in malos asperrimus

parata tollo cornua,

qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener

aut acer hostis Bupalos.

an si quis atro dente me petiverit,

inultus ut flebo puer?” (Hor. *Epod.* 6)

“Why do you harass strangers undeserving of ill treatment,

you cowardly cur against wolves?

Why don't you, if you can, turn your empty barks to here,

and why don't you aim at me, someone who will bite you back?

For like either a Molossian breed, or a Laconian dog,
 friendly power to shepherds,
 I will chase with my ears pricked up through deep snow
 whatever beast will precede me;
 You, when you have filled the forest with your nervous bark,
 smell at the food thrown down to you.
 Watch out! Be on the lookout! For indeed, I am most savage against evil men,
 I lift my readied horns,
 Like the spurned son-in-law of untrustworthy Lycambes,
 or the bitter enemy of Bupalus.
 Do you seriously believe that if any dog attacks me with a spiteful tooth,
 that I'll cry, without revenge, like a little boy?"

(Horace, *Epode* 6)

4.2. Philosophical Symbolism and Poetic Metaphor

Now that I have established Horace's plausible philosophical background, I will investigate it within the context of the fifth and sixth *Epodes*, due to Horace's unique use of the two subtly different interpretations of the same philosophical concept employed for a greater poetic point.

This interplay of Cynic and Epicurean *parrhesia* mirrors the conflicting symbolism of canine imagery in *Epodes* 5 and 6. *Epode* 5 relates the scene of a “dramatic dialogue between the witch Canidia and a boy she is about to kill to make a magic potion”⁶⁸ and all the gruesome

⁶⁸ Garrison 1998, p. 177

details involved in this process. In *Epode 6*, Horace, taking up the Archilochian style of boastful and abusive poetry, “threatens an unknown bully, comparing himself to a spirited hound and his adversary to a cowardly cur.”⁶⁹

The problem of the ambiguous symbolism of the canine imagery raises the question of why Horace appears to alternate in these two poems between condemning the Cynic *parrhesia* represented by the witch Canidia, and then in the very next poem, embrace the Cynic *parrhesia*, in which the poet himself transforms into a dog. What then, as well, of the cowardly cur who is now the target of Horace's attack? Why the sudden and intentional shift in canine imagery of such a philosophical connection?

Horace, given his background in Epicureanism, writes against the Cynic *parrhesia* in favor of the friendlier Epicurean variety in the poetic pair of *Epodes 5* and *6*. The malicious witch Canidia, performing a human sacrifice to create a love potion, is a less obvious metaphor and embodiment of the Cynic style of *parrhesia*.

Canidia does not precisely represent a Diogenes style Cynic, especially given her larger actions of the human sacrifice, but few philosophical concepts are represented with a philosopher's precision in Horace's poetry. Additionally, Horace is purposefully exaggerating the evils of Canidia as part of his assault on Cynic *parrhesia*, and to develop the target of the cur in *Epodes 6*. Regardless, there is sufficient evidence that Canidia reflects the spirit and style of Cynic *parrhesia* in subtler areas of the narrative.

4.3. Analysis of the Cynic *Parrhesia* Symbolism

Regarding immediately apparent canine imagery is Canidia's name. Horace has Canidia's

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 180

name itself as an allusion to her Cynic *parrhesia*, as she has *canis* built into her name.⁷⁰ In *Epod.5.57-58* Horace has Canidia state in her spell, “*senem, quod omnes rideant, adulterum / latrent Suburanae canes*” “May Subura's dogs bark at and may all men ridicule the old adulterer.” Again, dogs, the most quintessential of Cynic symbols, are invoked by Canidia. The dogs do the job of the Cynic barker, here literally being ordered to bark, by loudly identifying a social ill, the old adulterer. However, unlike an Epicurean *parrhesia*, where a fault would be dealt with in a friendly manner, it is done with excessive cruelty and derision characteristic of Cynicism, specifically with the intention of causing all to ridicule (*omnes rideant*) the old lecher. Later, in the same poem, at *Epod.5.87-88* Horace has the boy utter in his Thyestean curses, “*venena magnum fas nefasque, non valent / convertere humanam vicem.*” This reading accepts the “*magnum*” of the transmitted texts *pace* Haupt's conjecture of “*maga non.*”⁷² If one takes this reading, it is not that Canidia is incapable of exchanging right and wrong, but rather that, although she is capable of such a thing, she cannot change human fate. The *non* is positionally closer to the contrary part of the concession, and thus seems to negate only those words after the comma.

The important point here concerns her capability of changing right and wrong-- of inverting the lawful and unlawful. This relates to Cynic rejection of social convention. The Cynic *parrhesia* was meant to deflate all things accepted by custom, even the most sacred things, and thus the acceptable could become taboo, or the taboo could become acceptable. For example,

⁷⁰ Moles 2007, p. 167

⁷¹ The most obvious etymology of Canidia's name is from *canus* “white, hoary.” Canidia's name at the most literal level is therefore “the grizzled one” making use of the common tropes of invective against elderly women. The other etymological associations in this thesis of *canis* and later *canere* evoke a metaphorical and metapoetic level which are important to the different modes of reading central to this thesis. Thanks to Dr. David Petrain for this informative suggestion.

⁷² Garrison 1998, p. 180

consider Diogenes' public masturbation or public defecation.⁷³ Horace hyperbolically represents his distaste for this Cynic *parrhesia* by framing it in terms of the especially unspeakable and taboo act of Canidia's child sacrifice.

Horace notes again the difference in philosophical approach from the gentle and friendly *parrhesia* of Philodemus to the fierce barking of Cynic *parrhesia* as stated at the end of the fifth *Epode* “*sub haec puer iam non, ut ante, mollibus / lenire verbis inpias, / sed dubius unde rumperet silentium, / misit Thyesteas preces*” (5.83-5.86). “At these words the boy no longer tried, as before, / to mollify the impious women with gentle words, / but uncertain whence he would break the silence, / he hurled Thyestean curses.” The gentle words used to mollify representing the Epicurean *parrhesia*, while the Thyestean curses represent the Cynic *parrhesia*. The boy here is showing both types of *parrhesia* and builds a philosophical bridge between the fifth and sixth *Epodes*.

4.4. The Epicurean Parrhesia Symbolism

Once Horace has thoroughly established negative canine imagery (and by extension Epicurean rejection of Cynic *parrhesia*) for the reader with *Epod.5*, he transforms himself into a dog in the following poem. Horace threatens an unknown bully as a spirited hound against his adversary, who is represented as a cowardly cur.⁷⁴ Canidia and canine imagery as metaphors for Cynic *parrhesia* were framed very negatively in the previous poem.

Why then does the poet choose to become a dog now? The dog connection seems too purposeful for this poem to be unconnected to the poem dealing with dogs, which came directly before it. Why the sudden shift in canine imagery from highly negative to positive? The

⁷³ Navia 2005, p. 68

⁷⁴ Garrison 1998, p. 180

inconsistency is somewhat cleared up by considering the fact that there are two dogs in this poem. Horace becomes a Molossian or Laconian dog-- two of the best hunting breeds.⁷⁵ Who then is the cowardly cur?

Given this poem's placement following the canine imagery of *Epod.5*, it seems reasonable to assume that the negatively represented dog, the cowardly cur, is the symbol of Cynic *parrhesia*, which Horace has been criticizing. There's evidence for this interpretation from the first line, “*Quis inmerentis hospites vexas, canis / ignavos adversum lupos?*” “Who are you to harass passersby, dog, though you are cowardly against wolves?”⁷⁶

The Cynics, especially Diogenes, were famous for harassing passersby. Like a dog running to bark at every new person to walk by its lawn, the Cynics would bark at anyone nearby. Diogenes would even insult those passersby offering him charity. In one story a man asks Diogenes to persuade him to give, to which Diogenes replied “If I could have persuaded you of anything, it would have been to kill yourself.”⁷⁷

Horace then continues the point that while the Cynic *parrhesia* is ready to cruelly assault any passersby, it is ultimately impotent against real enemies. Despite all of a Cynic's violent and aggressive *parrhesia*, all it serves to do is alienate, rather than edify. If it is admired, it is only from a distance, and vicariously, but it does not persuade others to take it up in practice.⁷⁸ As well, against true ills, it can do little to change human fate (cf. “*non valent / convertere humanam vicem*” from the previous poem). Against those true wolves, what can the old style of Cynic *parrhesia* do?

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 181

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 181

⁷⁷ Navia 2005, p. 46

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 61

From this comes the new *parrhesia*-- the Epicurean *parrhesia* explicated by Philodemus, here represented with Horace as a dog. The dog is the symbol of the Cynic, but Horace takes on this form as a new dog, not the negatively represented dogs of the previous poem, which are here represented not by Horace, but by the cowardly cur. Horace himself is a dog here, because he is symbolizing the Cynic heritage of *parrhesia*. However, the newer Epicurean *parrhesia*, especially as articulated by Philodemus, supplants and overpowers what Horace considers the distasteful Cynic type.

This parallelism between the two separate poems with respect to dog imagery was almost certainly intentional. Horace was part of a larger poetic tradition that made ready use of the arrangement of poems within a collection to make a larger point or for the purpose of greater artistry. As Conte notes, “the arrangement of the poems within the collection deserves attention. The impetus had come from Alexandrian editions of the Greek lyric poets. In Alexandrian poetry and then, by imitation, in Roman poetry, poetry books were organized artistically, in a significant architectural structure.” (Conte 1999, 294-295)

Horace as a dog is an “*amica vis pastoribus*” “friendly force for shepherds.” That is, Epicurean *parrhesia* is characterized by its friendliness, as opposed to cruel Cynic *parrhesia*, and thus is an ally of those guiding a flock viz. teachers of philosophy. This is contrasted with the cowardly cur: “*tu, cum timenda voce complesti nemus, / proiectum odoraris cibum.*” “You filled up the woods with a fearful voice / you smelled out the downcast food.”

The Cynics bark constantly and “with a fearful voice.” They fill up the land with their terrifying rantings and derision. Horace then mocks the lifestyle of the Cynic. The Cynic purposefully rejected employment, living as an ascetic in poverty, and thus, despite abusing

everyone, also paradoxically relied on the generosity of everyone for sustenance.⁷⁹ The Cynic's only means of acquiring food, like the dog's, was by begging, hence in their mendicant lifestyle they are “smelling out the cast aside food.”

This joke is emphasized by Horace's choice of the word *proiectum* and its multivalent definitions. *Proiectum* means both literally thrown aside, referring to food given to the begging Cynics, and abject or groveling, referring to the method by which Cynics acquired food. This gives the joke a double jab. Horace continues by telling the cur to “*cave, cave*” as his friendlier form of *parrhesia* is ultimately more useful for persuading, converting, and eliminating evils (*malos*). Horace is asserting that the friendship based *parrhesia* of Philodemus trumps the powers of Cynic style *parrhesia*.

Chapter 5: The Poetic Purpose of the Philosophical Metaphor

5.1. The Use of Philosophical Disagreements as Poetic Metaphors

There is still the problem that Horace is primarily a poet, and not a philosopher. Is there something more to the inconsistency and sudden shift in canine imagery between these two sequential poems in relation to the philosophical underpinnings? This is, of course, beyond the more readily available surface readings of these poems. As established *supra*, dogmatic adherence to a particular philosophical school would be unnatural for Horace's poetry. If Horace's rejection of the Cynic *parrhesia* is not a result of Horace's own strong philosophical allegiance, then why is Horace using these philosophical concepts and metaphors? Why use philosophy if not for a philosophical purpose? One must look to the two poems more closely now.

⁷⁹ Navia 2005, 45-46

5.2. Different Functions of Poetry and Aporia

Horace is using this philosophical debate for a larger poetic purpose. Canidia's name may have a built in *canis*, but as Oliensis notes, her name also echoes *canere*.⁸⁰ Horace may not be arguing about these philosophical schools as a philosopher. Horace is a poet, and is using the clash of the philosophically opposed concepts as an overriding concept and metaphor for the clash of different functions of poetry. Horace may have no actual stake in the philosophical debate, but he uses the existing contention and reinterpretive shift from Cynic *parrhesia* to Epicurean *parrhesia* as the larger metaphor for a poetic end.

The dog, like poetry, can be useful, or destructive, friendly and loyal helping one grow, or cruel and frightening scaring away evils. As Oliensis reveals in her study of Canidia, Horace and his poetry act as a community watchdog, keeping away undesirables as an irreproachable hound. Horace with his well-aimed bark is defined by implicit contrast with those malignant biters-- Canidia with her *dente livido* (*Epod.* 5.47) and the cur with his *atro dente* (*Epod.* 6.15), who, motivated by *invidia*, attack the undeserving. Two kinds of dogs, two kinds of poetry: Canidia's venomous music provides a foil for Horace's socially useful art.⁸¹

The dogs meant to represent Cynic *parrhesia* (Canidia and the cowardly cur) are both linked by color words. *Lividus* is a dull blue leaden color, but its semantic sense also extends figuratively to invidious, spiteful, or malicious, cf. in an earlier Horace *Epode* his use of *lividus* “*nos nostraque lividus odit*” (Hor. *Ep.* 2, 1, 89.) a sense that is not strictly poetic but occurs in prose as well, cf. “*invidi et malevoli et lividi*” (Cic. *Tusc.* 4, 12, 28). Like *lividus*, the initial sense of *ater* is a color word meaning black.

⁸⁰ Oliensis 1991, p. 110

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118

As well, like *lividus*, *atrus* can be used poetically to refer to the psychological states of spitefulness or a malicious attitude, cf. similar words such as *niger* in “*Phormio, nec minus niger, nec minus confidens, quam ille Terentianus est Phormio*” (Cic. *Caecin.* 10, 27) or in Greek μέλας (*Sol.*42.4; *Pi.Fr.*123.4) which have a similar sense of character and psychological state. Therefore, when Horace references the spiteful dog tooth, *atro dente*, at the end of the sixth *Epode* (6.15) he is almost certainly referring back to Canidia's spiteful dog tooth, *dente livido*, in the middle of the fifth *Epode* (5.47). Horace uses canine imagery, and a parallelism of philosophical debate, to examine different functions of art, specifically poetry.

Horace likely recognized that this imagery and metaphor involving dogs as poetry, a literary point, dovetailed nicely with his knowledge of the existing debate regarding different forms and uses of *parrhesia*, which he was well acquainted with from his contact with members of Maecenas' circle. Horace, recognizing this, layered the philosophical with the more straightforwardly poetic, not because of a philosophical point, but to strengthen the message of the poetry about poetry.

As well, the contradiction in canine imagery creates a sort of Heraclitan unity of opposites in Horace's poetry, which then creates *aporia* for the reader. This feeling of *aporia* itself ties in with the point of different poetic functions. As well, in terms of content, it also reflects the *nefas*, literally unspeakable or ineffable nature, of a witch like Canidia, witchcraft, and magic in general, which is ultimately the dark commandeering of a poet's power of song for malevolent purposes.

Of course, most flatly and bluntly, Canidia may not be an elaborate philosophical metaphor at all, but Horace's very real concerns with witchcraft going on in the backstreets of

Rome.⁸² Alternatively, the poem may simply be a revenge poem against a Neapolitan perfume maker named Gratidia.⁸³ In the same way, flatly and bluntly *Epodes* 6 is most easily and literally read as a piece of Archilochian style invective and boast poetry, especially given the reference to Lycambes.⁸⁴

If one believes in the arguments of New Criticism, what Horace's intentions were regarding these matters of interpretation may bear no significance at all. However, if one does still wish to understand what Horace himself may have intended, even if the most basic reading is Horace's initial and primary intention, the philosophical metaphor of it only makes the reading of the poem richer. As well, it is reasonably believable that Horace, given his deep philosophical influences, would draw from that ready toolkit for an additional poetic punch and extra dimension. Perhaps he even had his larger points influenced unconsciously from many years of being surrounded by and conversing with trained Epicureans.

Conclusion:

Cynicism makes use of the image of the dog to parallel the dog-like behavior and ideals of their philosophical system. They use *parrhesia* as a violent barking and a fierce invective used to attack those around them. This style of *parrhesia* gleefully points out the flaws and failings of society without necessarily offering any solutions or suggestions for improvement. This form of the concept of candor harmonizes with the “watch dog” style of the Cynic ethic.

Epicureanism makes use of *parrhesia* as well, but although it holds an equally central

⁸² Manning 1970, p. 394; See Garrison 1998, p.177 for the mention of a grave inscription (CIL. 6. 19747) purporting to record the death of a child at the hands of a witch, which shows that fear of witchcraft was not a silly and distant superstition in the ancient Roman imagination, but rather an ever-present, real, and insidious existential threat.

⁸³ Garrison 1998, p. 177

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181

position in Epicurean ethics as it does in Cynic ethics, the Epicureans use *parrhesia* both differently and for different ends. The Epicurean *parrhesia* is used for moral development among friends. The candor, although it always possesses the risk of damaging friendships, is meant to strengthen the intimacy and bond of friendship, which is one of the highest Epicurean virtues. The honesty of the criticisms is meant to help the friend correct flaws and deepen one's wisdom on the path of moral progress and pursuit of *ataraxia*.

Horace is a poet who likely studied Epicureanism. If not, he was, at the very least, surrounded by highly philosophically literate friends who would have constantly steeped their discussions in these contemporary philosophical debates. Therefore Horace was a poet who was acutely aware of the antagonistic interplay between different philosophical schools' subtly diverging interpretations of the same philosophical concepts.

Horace, being a poet who was aware of the philosophical argument over how to interpret and employ *parrhesia* within Cynicism and Epicureanism, uses this debate within his poetry to make a broader meta-poetic point. Given Horace's own eclectic philosophical poems, he may not have cared about the answer philosophically, but being foremost and principally a poet, he likely held strong opinions about the function of poetry itself.

Horace therefore uses the metaphor of the dog in his fifth and sixth *Epodes* to recall Cynicism, and the content of the poems as a broader metaphor for the existing philosophical debate regarding *parrhesia*. However, all of that is itself a broader metaphor for the argument over the function and goal of two different styles of poetry. One style is venomous and vindictive invective (represented by the metaphor of Cynic *parrhesia*) which he parallels with poetry not only as a form of humorous attack, but as a genuinely socially therapeutic art (represented by the

metaphor of Epicurean *parrhesia*).

Thus, Horace uses philosophy not because of philosophical allegiance, but at the service of and subordinate to his poetry, in which philosophy is just another learned tool to enrich his poetry. One should hesitate to consider Horace's Epicureanism and Cynicism as just simply literary decoration, since the philosophies are clearly closely bound, even if subordinate to, his poetic points.

However, as well, one should be perhaps even more hesitant to describe these poems as about primarily a philosophical point, simply because they are using philosophies as their poetic tools. The philosophical debate was an existing and handy set-piece within which Horace could explore and amplify a broader debate of poetic and aesthetic, rather than philosophical interest.

Horace enhanced his discussion of art by grafting an undercurrent of a rich parallel philosophical debate, which echoed his thoughts regarding different poetic functions and complemented his canine imagery. Horace used his philosophical knowledge as a tool to enhance, echo, enrich, and support his poetic points. Horace takes directly from the larger meta-debate of Epicurean *parrhesia* transformed from the very different Cynic *parrhesia*. Horace appropriated the debate itself as an overriding educated metaphor, not to comment on the philosophy, but in the service of adding another supportive layer to his greater poetic and aesthetic project.

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