

This paper will analyze a series of fragments in which Lucilius situates the masculine body as the site of truth. That body is at once constituted by an interior, which is separate from its appearance and hence the site of the body's truth, and yet that interior can only be read through the surface of the body. This Lucilian body is both impenetrable—the inviolable body of the civis Romanus, that is neither to be scourged like a slave's nor to suffer womanly things (pati muliebria)—and yet at the same time open to the gaze of the other. It is the site of contested truth in which one's assertion of virtus, aristocratic manhood, is both made and tested by the body's subjection to the scrutiny of others.

The Lucilian body is not the Platonic fetter of the Phaedo that prevents the soul from realizing its true nature, nor the Christian flesh with its necessary relation to sin and the fall. Rather it is a surface that is constituted—i.e., made an individual's body—through its discontinuous yet indexical relation to an interior realm of truth. Thus in Book 26, fragment 662 (Krenkel) we read, “*animo qui aegrotet, videmus corpore nunc signum dare.*” This statement at first seems to establish a one-to-one correspondence between body and soul. But there are a number of complicating factors. Thus in fragment 659, which Krenkel argues is part of the same satire, we are told that “a body overcome with pains resists the soul.” Where in our first fragment the causal movement is from soul to body, here the body in its imperfection becomes an opacity, a moment of resistance to the soul. The duality is affirmed in fragment 660-61, “in principle all physicians say that man is made from body and an animating spirit (anima).” Thus the body reveals the truth of the soul, even as it resists it and yet is constituted as a living presence by it.

The body as a site of truth in Lucilius is, thus, subject to probing and manipulation by the satirist and physician who seeks to determine the health of body and soul: “never before had he taken the pulse of a man and felt his heart” (frg. 664). The interior must be brought to the surface and made to speak. The remaining fragments of the satire discuss the relation between clothes and the man who wears them, practices of purgation, the benefits of exercise, and general health. In each case, there is the constitution of an inside and an outside, which are separate from one another and yet mutually implicated. The body is both materialized and associated with a certain depth of truth. It is subject to particular technologies, and it is the object of display.

The Lucilian body, then, is the site of a truth that, while not immaterial, is nonetheless subject to being cloaked by the very opacity that constitutes the body qua body. For the satirist and physician to feel a man's heart and thus address the sickness of his soul is, then, to violate the integrity of his body in the name of a more fundamental truth. Such an image is implicitly sexual as the satiric tradition recognizes. Thus our initial fragment (662) is best known because it is alluded to by Juvenal at 9.18 when he questions the bisexual gigolo, Naevolus, about his relation to his pathic patron. Similarly, the body that is overcome (confectum) with pains in fragment 659 is also one that has been sexually finished off, orgasmically overcome (Adams 159, 196). The body as the site of truth in satire, then, is not the ideal classical body of Roman masculinity (Bakhtin, Habinek), but one that is sexually and socially subjected to the gaze of the masculine satirist.

In so far as Lucilius stands at the head of the Roman satiric tradition and that tradition in turn locates the body as a site of contest and truth (Larmour, Freudenberg, Miller), then his depiction of the body stands as a topic of first importance in the study of Roman discourses on the construction of aristocratic masculinity or virtus.