I. Bakhtin and the Carnivalesque

A. Bakhtin’s theory of carnival
   a. “The carnivalesque crowd in the marketplace or in the streets is not merely a
      crowd. It is the people as a whole, but organized in their own way, the way of
      the people. It is outside of and contrary to all existing forms of the coercive
      socioeconomic and political organization” (Bakhtin 1984: 255).
   b. Theory developed in 1920s and 30s; not influential until the appearance of the
      first complete English translation of *Rabelais and His World* (1968)
   c. Carnival/Feast of Fools/Saturnalia (brief inversion of social hierarchy)
   d. Origin of popular grotesque: culture of marketplace and its crowds
   e. Temporary undoing of hierarchies to establish equality among individuals
   f. Parodies, travesties, humiliations, profanations = a spectacle incorporating all
      members of the society as participants
   g. Dominated by humor and parody in contrast to rigid daily life
   h. Laughter is a communal laughter that is directed at everyone including the self
      (festive, but also mocking and deriding)
   i. The state and what is serious/official is made comic and brought down to the
      vulgar imagery of the grotesque
   j. Grotesque = images of the body, language, banquets, excrement, beatings,
      laughter, which can overturn the institutions of society with the goal of a
      future “rebirth” into something improved
   k. I.e. contaminating the lofty with the base and crude through “derisive and
      renewing laughter that overthrows authority… and opens the possibility of
      saturnalian freedom and equality” (Branham 29).
   l. “Laughter (in its various expressions) is present in permanent conjunction
      with death, with sexuality and also with food and drink” (Branham 33).

II. Carnivalesque in Juvenal

   “Satire, read Bakhtin’s way, functions as an explosive force routinely applied to a culture’s big,
   regulatory myths, something to stretch those myths, loosen their restraints, and make life
   livable” (Freudenburg 28).

   “The greatest satirists … recognize their own involvement in the folly of human life and willingly
   see themselves as victims, in obscure ways, of their own art” (Elliot 222).

   A. Social inversion
      a. 1. 102ff: ‘prior’ inquit ‘ego adsum.
         cur timeam dubitemur locum defendere …
B. Culture of Marketplace  
a. 3. 243-48: ante tamen ueniet: nobis properantibus obstat  
unda prior, magno populus premit agmine lumbos  
qui sequitur; ferit hic cubito, ferit assere duro  
alter, at hic tignum capiti incutit, ille metretam.  
pingua crura luto, planta mox undique magna  
calcor, et in digito clauus mihi militis haeret.  
(“Moreover he will come first: with us hastening, the wave (of  
people) in front obstructs (us), and the people who follow in a  
great crowd crush our loins; this man strikes with his elbow,  
another strikes with a hard pole, and this man strikes a log on my  
head, another (strikes with) a barrel. My legs (are) fat with mud,  
next I am crushed completely by a powerful foot, and the spike of  
a soldier sticks in my toe.”)

C. Lampooning others  
a. 3.58-61: Quae nunc diuitibus gens acceptissima nostris  
et quos praecipue fugiam, properabo fateri,  
nec pudor obstabit. non possum ferre, Quirites,  
Graecam urbem. quamuis quota portio faecis Achaei?

D. Deriding the state  
a. 2.162-70: sed quae nunc populi fiunt uictoris in urbe  
non faciunt illi quos uicimus. et tamen unus  
Armenius Zalaces cunctis narratur ephebis  
mollior ardenti sese indulsisse tribuno.  
aspice quid faciant commercia: uenerat obses,  
hic fiunt homines. nam si mora longior urbem  
induerit pueris, non.umquam derit amator.  
mittentur bracae, cultelli, frena, flagellum:  
sic praetextatos referunt Artaxata mores.  
(“But those whom we conquered do not do the things  
which happen in the city of the triumphant people. And nevertheless  
one Armenian, Zalaces, who was more effeminate than all the ephes  
is said to have indulged himself on an impassioned tribune.  
Consider what trade produces: he had come as a hostage,  
Here men are made, for if a longer stay  
Will have Romanized the boys, not ever will a lover be lacking.  
Pants, daggers, bridles, and whip will be abandoned:  
Thus they bring the Roman morality back to Artaxata.”)

E. Contaminating the lofty with the crude  
a. 1. 83-84: paulatimque anima calverunt mollia saxa  
et maribus nudas ostendit Pyrrha puellas
F. Laughter at Death  
  a. 1.144-46: hinc subitae mortes atque intestate senectus.  
                        it nova nec tristis per cunctas fabula cenas;  
                        ducitur iratis plaudendum funus amicis.

G. Laughter at Sexuality  
  a. 3.95-97: mulier nempe ipsa videtur,  
                         non persona, loqui: vacua et plana omnia dicas  
                         infra ventriculum et tenui distantia rima.

H. Laughter at Food/Drink  
  a. 5.24-27: qualis cena tamen! uinum quod sucida nolit  
                                lana pati: de conuiua Corybanta uidebis.  
                                iurgia proludunt, sed mox et pocula torques  
                                sauciis et rubra deterges uulnera mappa …

 (“Yet how great a dinner! Wine which juicy wool  
 Would refuse to accept: you will see Corybants instead of guests.  
 Quarrels are a prelude (to battle), but next you hurl drinking cups,  
 Wounded/drunken as you are, you clean your wounds with a (soon to  
 be) red napkin …”)

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