CATULLUS 97:

AEMILIUS IS A REAL STINKER

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Catullus 97 has received scant attention from scholars. Harrauer's bibliography lists scattered references to the poem in a few general works, but no article on the poem itself (1979:102, 169); during the eleven year period 1979-1990, *L'Année Philologique* lists one paper (to which I shall refer below). Commentaries are generally dismissive (e.g. Merrill 1900:211 "An exceedingly coarse epigram on a certain Aemilius, of whom nothing further is known") or vague (e.g. Quinn 1970:434 "A savage, if genially exuberant, attack on an unknown Don Juan"): Fordyce omits the poem altogether, believing that there were a "few poems which do not lend themselves to comment in English" (1961:preface).

Translations of the poem, predictably, obscure the obscenity in misleading euphemism or exaggerate it with perverse relish; few make any attempt to come to grips with what Catullus actually says. The following selection of four translations illustrates this point and comments, incisively, on changing attitudes to gender and sexuality in the course of the 20th century[1] (see appendix for translations).

There is something repellently "public school" about Cornish's 1913 translation for the Loeb series (1968:169). "Head" and "tail" (for *os* and *culus* (2)) conjure up the beginning of a cricket match (what more could one expect from the Vice-Provost of Eton?); "sniffed" for *olfacerem* (2) suggests the olfactory inquisitiveness of the English canine; "than t'other" is twee and folksy; "gaping like a mule in summer" neatly sidesteps *meientis mulae cunnus* (8) and makes nonsense of the poem - why do mules gape in summer and what on earth has this got to do with the old cart-frame? The ultimate monstrosity is his rendering of *futuit* (9) as "courts". Finally *culum lingere* (12) is glossed over by the totally misleading "fondling".

More than forty years later, Frank Copley's jaunty trans-Atlantic version of the poem, first published in 1957, is no improvement (1973:111-112). The first two stanzas of Copley's version are a masterpiece of euphemistic avoidance: in fact stanza two conveys the topsyturvy world of Alice in Wonderland. The mule's *cunnus* is completely ignored and reduced to a "cess-pool in hot weather"; "loves the gals" for *futuit multas* (9) is downright offensive; "lock him up in jail" is a pale version of the treadmill and the ass (10); "look at him" for *attingere* (11) is simply wrong and the final two lines ("I'd say she'd lick the hangman's running sores and kiss the pus away") are a gross distortion of *aegroti ... carnificis* (12) and completely alter the poem's closing emphasis.

Peter Whigham's 1966 translation for Penguin (ostentatiously dedicated to William Carlos Williams) is closer to the spirit of the original (1971:209), but inverting the order of Catullus's Latin in lines 9-10 and translating this as "And this Being copulates. A fit dolt

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[1] In the ensuing analysis, I have used Quinn's text of poem 97 (1973:81) which is the same as that of Mynors's *OCT* (1976:98). Of the translators selected, Cornish's text is exactly the same as Quinn's, apart from the reading *niloque* (3) which does not affect the meaning of the poem (1968:168). Lee's text (1990:136) is also identical to Quinn's; Whigham has "principally" used Ellis's Oxford text (1971:acknowledgements), but he does not print a copy of the text; Copley (1973) does not indicate which text he uses.

for the treadmill. Considers himself an object of elegance" destroys perhaps the most important line in the poem (see discussion below). "Copulates" for *futuit* (9) is both needlessly clinical and imprecise, whereas "arse-hole" and "leprous" in the last line seem needlessly graphic.

It is with some relief that one turns to the 1990 version of the poem by Guy Lee (1990:137), that masterful translator of Ovid's *Amores* and Tibullus's elegies. It preserves the poetic shape of the original and is accurate and consistent: it has one flaw. The pretentiously Latinate "dehiscent" (8) which, together with "heat-wave", may capture the alliterative venom of *meientis mulae* (8), but is not really an apt translation of *rictum* (7): Gould's "gaping smile like the open slit of a pissing mule" (1983:209) is more successful.

In short, the poem's translators, like its critics, have not done the poem full justice: the remainder of this paper will attempt to redress this injustice by offering an interpretation of poem 97 within the wider context of Catullus's oeuvre. The relationship between ancient literature and social reality is a vexed question which has been fully debated elsewhere (e.g. Griffin 1985:48-64). As far as Catullus is concerned, there are enough contemporary historical figures, both political and literary, in his poetry (Neudling 1955), to suggest that at least in some of the poems a close relationship with social reality exists. The object of the invective in 97, Aemilius, whose name occurs nowhere else in Catullus's verse, could have been a fictional *persona*, but the very name suggests that he could also have been an historical personality. It is with his possible identity that I would like to begin this analysis.

Phyllis Young Forsyth, in support of the argument that Catullus was responsible for the arrangement of the poems, suggests that poems 97-99 can be better understood interpreted together (1979:403-408). All three poems, she argues, are linked by the theme of the foul mouth; in poem 98 Victius' mouth is foul in a literal and metaphorical sense, whereas Juventius, in poem 99, clearly considers Catullus's kiss repulsive. Furthermore the fact that Aemilius and Victius succeed, despite their foulness, in contrast to the rejected Catullus, gives poem 99 an ironic twist which would not be evident without the preceding two poems. In addition, Forsyth attempts to identify the addressees of poems 97 and 98 (1979:406-408). Using Statius's 1566 emendation of *Victi* (which is the reading in all reliable manuscripts) to *Vetti*, Young resurrects the 16th century suggestion and argues, pace Neudling (1955:186), that the most likely candidate for poem 98 is the notorious informer L. Vettius (a foul mouth if ever there was one), who attempted to implicate Julius Caesar in the conspiracy of Catiline and then falsely charged a number of prominent senators with conspiring to assassinate Pompey (1979:408). For this he was apparently put to death in 59 BC. Using this identification in poem 98, Young then suggests that the Aemilius in poem 97 is probably L. Aemilius Paullus who prosecuted Catiline under the *Lex Plautia de vi* and was in turn one of the senators charged by Vettius, the informer (1979:408). Neudling, on the other hand, prefers to identify the Aemilius of poem 97 with M. Aemilius Lepidus, the triumvir, who was "lazy, trifling and vain" and thus an ideal candidate for the Aemilius in poem 97, but he does not rule out the possibility that he might be L. Aemilius Paullus (1955:1).

Whilst it is impossible to identify Catullus's Aemilius precisely, Forsyth's suggestion that he could be L. Aemilius Paullus is very attractive, but it does rest upon an emendation in poem 98 (i.e. of *Victi* to *Vetti*) not attested in the manuscript tradition (Neudling 1955:186). Forsyth, however, does draw one's attention to an alternative form of the name *Vettius* (i.e. *Vectius*) which could account for the occurrence of the strange *Victius*. But the author of the Vettius article in the RE, which Forsyth uses (1979:407 n.14), is not as supportive of the variant *Vectius* as Forsyth suggests. *Vettius* is the form of the name which appears on coins and inscriptions, so the mss variant *Vectius* is, according to the *RE*

(2.16.1843; s.v. Vettius) "bedeutungslos" (meaningless). Precisely. Thomson is thus, in my opinion, right to retain *Victi* in his critical edition (1978:187), although Goold, who boasts, rather hubristically, that his text is "truer to Catullus' words than any yet printed" reads *Vetti* (1983:208), for reasons similar to those offered by Forsyth Young (1983:262).

We really cannot be sure about the identity of the Victius in 98 or of the Aemilius in poem 97. What is surely significant is that Catullus's abuse in poem 97 is directed at a man whose name is associated with the glories of Republican Roman military, political and intellectual achievement,[2] despite the fact that, as Neudling reminds us, there were many *Aemilii* of non-senatorial rank in Republican times (1955:1).

Rather like Clodia's relations (Wiseman 1985:16-17), the connections of the *Aemilii Paulli* and *Lepidi* read like a "who's who" of Republican Roman society. If Catullus's Aemilius were a member of this elite extended family, he would presumably have participated in the complex process of *amicitia*, which characterised social relationships in the Roman upper-classes during the Republic and the Empire (Gelzer 1969:101-110). Oliver Lyne has provided us with a vigorous and interesting analysis of the hallmarks of aristocratic *amicitia*: *fides*, *pietas*, *officium* and *gratia* (1980:24-25). In addition to these qualities, there is the important concept of *foedus*, reserved, as Lyne says, "for occasions when an exceptionally strong or formal degree of commitment is at issue", a treaty often ratified by the solemnity of the oath (1980:33). It was Catullus, claims Lyne, who first used the word *foedus* of marriage (1980:34).

As is well known, marriage for the upper-class Roman of this period was an arranged affair, usually presided over by the dynastic, political or financial interests of a pair of *patresfamiliarum* (Treggiari 1991:83-160). Arranged marriages have the potential to develop into love relationships, but these marriages began in *amicitia*, not *amor*. For this, the freeborn Roman noble turned before (or even during marriage) to a range of alternatives, as Lyne has once again shown: *meretrices* (both local and imported), local *scorta* or *lupae* or even the much-abused *ancillae* (1980:4-13). Sexual encounters with

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2 The *gens Aemilia* was one of the sixteen oldest Roman *tribus* (*RE* 1.1.543; s.v. Aemilius). L. Aemilius Paullus (cos. 219/216 BC) was on the embassy to Carthage at the beginning of the Second Punic War and fell at Cannae (*OCD* s.v. Paullus (1):791); his son L. Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus (cos. 182/168 BC) ended the Third Macedonian War with the defeat of Perseus and was responsible for the settlement of Greece and for the transportation to Rome of Perseus's library (*OCD* s.v. Paullus (2):791-792), the first great Greek library to arrive in Rome (Rawson 1985:40 n.5); Macedonicus' sister, Aemilia, married Scipio Africanus Major and was in turn the mother of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi (*OCD* s.v. Scipio (5) Africanus Major:962); Macedonicus' son was none other than P. Scipio Aemilianus (*OCD* s.v. Scipio (11) Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus:963). The *Aemilii Lepidi* - a related branch of the *gens Aemilia* - were as distinguished and were connected with Catullan territory, Cisalpine Gaul. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (cos. 187/175 BC) was responsible for the construction of the *via Aemilia* (*OCD* s.v. Lepidus (1):596), from Ariminium to Placentia (*RE* 1.1.543; s.v. Aemilia via); his descendant, M. Aemilius Lepidus (cos. 78 BC) amassed a fortune in Sulla's proscriptions, was given Gaul as a province and then tried to oppose the Sullan constitution with Sertorius (*OCD* s.v. Lepidus (2):597); his elder son was the L. Aemilius Paullus Forsyth identifies with the Aemilius of poem 97 (*OCD* s.v. Paullus (3):792); his brother, the triumvir (favoured by Neudling) was married to Brutus's sister, Junia (*OCD* s.v. Lepidus (3):597); the son of the former was married to Cornelia, the daughter of Scribonia, Octavian's first wife (*OCD* s.v. Paullus (4):792); their son was none other than the L. Aemilius Paullus (husband of Augustus's granddaughter Julia) who was consul in AD 1 and then executed in c.AD 8 for conspiracy (*OCD* s.v. Paullus (5):792).

women of his own social class before marriage would have been classed as *stuprum* (Treggiari 1991:264) even before the oppressive Augustan legislation of 18 BC (Treggiari 1991:277-278): it is thus true to say, as Lyne has so eloquently expressed, that "Roman upper-class men (unlike the luckier heroes of comedy) had traditionally to compartmentalise the totality of love" (1980:3). What Lyne means is that Roman upper-class men were socialised into reserving passion and love for professionals, but affection, duty and devotion for marriage.

It is precisely this compartmentalization of sex, passion, love and marriage which Catullus's account of his affair with Lesbia seeks to confront. In the moving poem 76, Catullus, in a revolutionary manner, applies the language of aristocratic *amicitia* to his love affair with an older and possibly married woman of the highest social class.[3] He reflects on his *sancta fides* (3), on the fact that he has not abused the power of the gods in any *foedus* (3-4), on his *pietas* (26, cf. *pius* 2), here his fidelity and loyalty which acquires the legitimacy of religious sanction and the *mos maiorum*. In fact Catullus re-defines *pudicitia* (long before the elegists): this is no longer simple chastity, but fidelity within a relationship which the *senes severiores* of poem 5 would have regarded as decidedly unchaste. This re-definition of the aristocratic value system is nowhere more striking than in poem 109 in which Catullus asks the gods to ensure that his lover's promise of eternal, joyful love endures: in the climactic final line, their love is described as *aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae* (6).

For the Aemilius of poem 97, however, love, sex and marriage were presumably compartmentalised (in the traditional manner). Line 9, which has suffered so badly at the hands of its translators, testifies to this: "he fucks many women and considers himself *venustus*". These women were presumably *meretrices*, or *scorta* or *ancillae* - would anyone else have done it for free? The important word in the line is the emphatically-positioned *venustus*. Of all the Latin love poets, as Susan Wiltshire has shown (1977:319-326), Catullus alone uses derivatives of Venus's name and extends the range of their meaning.[4] *Venustas* is the quintessence of Catullan *urbanitas*: polish, charm, elegance, sensitivity, wit, sophistication and discriminating taste (Seager 1974:892), qualities essential to complete a person's physical attractiveness and a work of art (in this case a poem).

In contrast, Aemilius seems to think that relentless *fututio* is synonymous with *venustas*. That Catullus considers this contemptible is obvious from the savage invective and irony. Where did Aemilius get this idea from? Had he heard or read some of Catullus's poems and misunderstood them? He would not have been the first to have done this, as Furius and

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3 This interpretation is indebted to Lyne 1980:31-38.

4 *Venustus* first occurs early in the Lesbia cycle: *Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque/et quantum est hominum venustiorum* (3.1-2) where it seems to mean persons of refinement and sensitivity and perhaps also, as Quinn has suggested (1973:97-98), those in the service of *Venus*, true lovers, who would perceive that the slightly ironic dirge for Lesbia's pet sparrow is in fact a love poem. In poem 22, Suffenus the poet is apparently *venustus et dicax et urbanus* (2); his poetry is not. However, Caecilius' poem on Cybele, referred to in 35.17-18 is *venuste ... incohata*. Much-loved Sirmio is *venusta* (31.12); Catullus's friend Fabullus (a real friend) is *venuste noster* (13.6); more significantly, in poem 86, in contrast to the *formosa* Quintia, who has the glamorous looks, but not the personality, Lesbia has *venustas* and *sal* (3-4) which complete her beauty. Interestingly, the antonym of *venustus* (*invenustus*) is used of a petty thief who pockets napkins at dinner parties - here *sordida* and *invenusta* are coupled (12.5); in two other instances, *illepidum* and *invenustum* are linked conceptually (10.4; 36.17).

Aurelius discovered in poem 16. Had he (worse still) picked up the trendy jargon of the neoteric set which he decided to bandy around with all the rodomontade of the ignorant and insensitive? Or was he simply a dyed-in-the-wool aristocrat, so steeped in the values of his class that he failed to understand what Catullus was saying about love and confused Catullus's relationship with Lesbia with the kind of dabbling *fututiones* which characterised the passionate sexual involvements of men of his class? Is that why Catullus thought that he ought to be punished like the lowliest slave (97.10)? Whatever the precise background to the poem, speculation of this kind can be fruitful; it suggests that the poem may not simply be a piece of coarse invective or a political lampoon, but a direct attack on a member of the Roman upper classes who had misunderstood what Catullus was saying about love and about *venustas*. This would provide thematic links not only with poems 98 and 99 (the foul mouth poems), but also with the earlier polymetrics.

Misunderstanding Catullus's verse is the theme of poem 16: I would like to consider this poem in more detail now. This poem begins with a direct obscenity more forceful than anything in the Aemilius poem: *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo/Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi*. Furius and Aurelius seem to have heard or read poem 48 (one of the Juventius poems), and perhaps poems 5 and 7 as well, and have concluded that Catullus is *male ... marem* (13), effeminate; they have dared to deduce from Catullus's *versiculi* (which are *molliculi*) that the poet himself is not quite *pudicus* (3-4). Catullus responds by stating that the *pius poeta* (5) should himself be *castus*, his verse not necessarily so: here we have a warning not to commit (what many literary critics earlier this century committed) the biographical fallacy i.e. not to deduce features of the poet's own character from the themes or language of his verse. Has Aemilius in 97 committed this fault? If he had heard or read poem 32, in which the poet tells Ipsitilla to stay at home and prepare *novem continuas fututiones* for the randy poet (7-8) and then had concluded that this was Catullan *venustas*, he probably had! To return to poem 16. *Versiculis* (in line 3) suggests not serious love poems, but light, playful *nugae*, the sort of poems Licinius and Catullus experiment with in poem 50. In this poem Catullus clearly contrasts *versiculi* (4) with a serious poem (16), *ex quo perspiceres meum dolorem* (17). What Furius and Aurelius may thus have done is to confuse the *versiculi* and the *poemata*, the playful and the serious: in similar vein, Aemilius could have confused the playful *nugae* (alluded to in 50.1-6) with the more serious love poems which seem to well up from real love and pain and are not merely flashy neoteric experiments in metre and language.[5]

Furius and Aurelius (the addressees of poem 16) are, of course, the so-called friends (the *comites Catulli*) whom Catullus asks to deliver the final cruel *non bona dicta* (11.16) to his mistress (11.17-20). They are presumably symptomatic of the set (and level) to which Lesbia, in Catullus's estimation, has sunk. In poem 11, she is depicted as a common whore, *nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium ilia rumpens* (19-20); in poem 37 she, the girl loved as no-one will be loved (37.12; cf. 8.5; 87.1-2; 58.1-3), has taken up residence (*consedit* (14)) in a *salax taberna* (1), where the habitués think that they are the only ones with pricks to fuck the girls (3-5). The *boni* and *beati* all love her (14), as well as the common backstreet adulterers (16): prominent amongst these is Egnatius, the eternal smiler of poem 39, who sports a fashionable beard and whose teeth are polished with Iberian urine (37.20). In 39 Catullus is more explicit: Lesbia's lover rubs his teeth and red gums every morning with urine; the whiteness of his teeth is simply in direct proportion to the quantity of urine drunk (17-21).

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5 Although as the *Akroterion* reader remarks, there is no reference to reading poetry in poem 97 and basing this interpretation on the word *venustum* alone is perhaps insufficient support.

I can quite imagine Furius, Aurelius and Aemilius propping up the bar along with Egnatius in the *salax taberna* of poem 37. In fact poem 97 recalls poems 37 and 39 in a number of ways: *gingivas* (97.6) recalls *gingivam* (39.19) (the only other use of *gingiva* in the Catullan *corpus*); Aemilius's *rictus*, his open mouth, perhaps to speak or to laugh (*OLD* s.v.), recalls the ever-grinning Egnatius of poem 39 (2); the comparison between this *rictus* and the *cunnus* of a urinating mule is a surreal variation on the *dens ... defricatus urina* (37.20); Aemilius's *fututiones* (97.9) recall the bar-room boasts of the roués in the *salax taberna* (37.3-5). There is one more suggestive link. At the end of poem 97, Catullus suddenly changes the focus of his poem from Aemilius to his potential mistress: *quem siqua attingit, non illam posse putemus/aegroti culum lingere carnificis*? (11-12). This is a particularly horrible image and the smear (the parting shot) is directed as much at the woman as at Aemilius. Had Aemilius, like Egnatius, become one of Lesbia's lovers as well? Catullus lashes his rivals with scathing invective. We have already met Egnatius; in poem 69, Rufus, perhaps the Caelius of poem 58 and the Rufus of poem 77 (the cruel poison in Catullus's life, the *nostrae pestis amicitiae* 5-6), stinks like a goat under the armpits (69.6). In poem 71, Rufus or (less likely) Rufus's rival is described as *aemulus iste tuus* (71.3), that rival of yours;[6] he not only smells like a goat, but is afflicted with gout (1-2, 6). To conclude this section of the paper: Aemilius in poem 97 could quite easily have been one of Catullus's *aemuli*, a member of the decadent aristocratic set, lambasted by Catullus for his sick values which impel him to consort with Lesbia and for daring to equate these values with Catullan *venustas*, which he may have heard of from the lips of Catullus's former *docta puella*.

The form and expression of poem 97 deserve some consideration as they most aptly reinforce the content. The expression is vigorous and strikingly unusual; the outrageous *sesquipedalis* (5), sprawling at the hexameter's end, *ploxenum* (6), *rictus* and *diffisus* (7), *cunnus* (8), *pistrinum* and *asinus* (10), *aegrotus* and *carnifex* (12) are all "hapax legomena" in the Catullan *corpus*. *Ploxenum* (6) is particularly interesting as, according to Quintilian, *Catullus ploxenum circa Padum invenit* (1.5.8): if Quintilian is right, Catullus is using the probably Celtic-derived patois of his Padane home-territory (Kroll 1960:270). Interestingly, because of the *via Aemilia*, which begins or ends at Placentia, Martial loosely calls this area (i.e. Gallia Cispadana) *Aemilia* (6.85.6; L&S s.v. Aemilius 3): it is thus highly appropriate to use Aemilian slang to lambast an Aemilius. Whilst it is difficult to pin down any of the other words to provincial origin, it is quite clear that Catullus is predominantly using *sermo cotidianus*. The expression *ita me di ament* (1), including the hiatus, is "Umgangssprachlich" (colloquial) and occurs in Plautus and Terence (Kroll 1960:270); *culus* (Adams 1982:110-117), *cunnus* (Adams 1982:80-81) and *futuere* (Adams 1982:118-122) are obscenely vulgar and occur in graffiti and epigrammatic invective; *olfacere* occurs in Plautus and is used by Martial and Juvenal (*OLD* s.v.1); *sesquipedalis* is technical and prosaic, as its occurrence in Cato, Caesar, Vitruvius and Pliny testifies (*OLD* s.v.); *meiere* (8) is clearly colloquial (*TLL* VIII.4.604) and occurs again in the satirists (*OLD* s.v.); the expression *se facere esse* (9) is Plautine (*OLD* s.v. *facio* 19b; Kroll 1960:270); the *pistrinum* (10) is a punishment for a useless slave in the *Mostellaria* (17) (Kroll 1960:270); *venustus* (9) is found in Plautus and Terence (*OLD* s.v. 1) and *aegrotus* (12) (*OLD* s.v. 1) and *carnifex* (12) (*OLD* s.v. 1, 3) also occur in Roman comedy and in satire. In short, Catullus has used particularly unpoetic and colloquial diction to emphasise Aemilius's crudity: this presumably was the language of any Roman *salax taberna*, language which makes Aemilius's delusions about *venustas* even more absurd. Finally,

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6 Again the reader draws attention to the possible word-play (*aemulus/Aemilius*) here, which would provide a neat link with 97 and some support for the idea that Aemilius may well have been one of Lesbia's lovers.

Catullus has a great deal of fun with orifices in this poem - the mouth, the arse, the she-mule's *cunnus*. The two most powerful images are the she-mule in action and the *carnifex cacaturus*, if Ellis is right (Arkins 1982:176 n.88): both are images of waste and evacuation, the torpid viscosity of the former echoed by the coprophagal repulsiveness of the latter. When Aemilius opens his mouth, waste matter pours forth: his gums are rotting and weather-beaten, his teeth Draculesque, the smell repulsive, but, morally, he is symptomatic of the sickness Catullus perceives in the Roman upper-classes. Aemilius, in short, is a real stinker.

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APPENDIX

Non (ita me di ament) quicquam referre putaui,
  utrumne os an culum olfacerem Aemilio.
nilo mundius hoc, nihiloque immundius illud,
  uerum etiam culus mundior et melior:
nam sine dentibus est, os dentis sesquipedalis,
  gingiuas uero ploxeni habet ueteris,
praeterea rictum qualem diffissus in aestu
  meientis mulae cunnus habere solet.
hic futuit multas et se facit esse uenustum,
  et non pistrino traditur atque asino?
quem siqua attingit, non illam posse putemus
  aegroti culum lingere carnificis?

(Quinn 1973:81)

I swear I didn't think it mattered one straw whether I sniffed Aemilius's head or his tail: neither was better worse than t'other; or rather his tail was the better and smarter of the two, for it has no teeth. His mouth has teeth half a yard long, gums, moreover, like an old cart-frame, gaping like a mule in summer. He courts many a woman and makes himself out a charmer, and yet he is not passed over to the grinding-mill and its ass. If any woman touches him, don't we think that she is capable of fondling a sick hangman?

(Cornish 1968:169)

As God is my witness where is the difference between
the smell of Aemilius' mouth and that of his arse?
The cleanness of one equals the filth of the other. Actually
his arse is probably the cleaner and nicer of the two:
there he's without teeth, while the teeth in his mouth
are half a yard long, stuck in the gums like an old wagon
behind them the cleft cunt of a she-mule pissing in summer.
And this Being copulates.
A fit dolt for the treadmill.
Considers himself an object of elegance.
Whatever woman handles this man is equally
capable of licking the arse-hole of a leprous hangman.

(Whigham 1971:209)

you take that guy Aemilius:
he's one of whom you'd say
you couldn't tell which end was up -
a stinker either way

in fact, I am inclined to think
I like him upside down
just slightly more than right side up -
for I can't see his frown,

his ugly mug with foot-long fangs
and gums like rotten leather;
and when he smiles, you'd think it was
a cess-pool in hot weather.

but he's the guy that loves the gals
a Devastating Male -
my God, when will they catch the man
and lock him up in jail?

why, any girl that would so much
as look at him - I'd say
she'd lick the hangman's running sores
and kiss the pus away.

(Copley 1973:111-112)

I thought (so help me Gods!) it made no difference
  Whether I smelt Aemilius' mouth or arsehole,
One being no cleaner, the other no filthier.
  But in fact the arsehole's cleaner and kinder:
It has no teeth. The mouth has teeth half-a-yard long
  And gums like an ancient wagon-chassis.
Moreover when it opens up it's like the cunt
  Of a pissing mule dehiscent in a heat-wave.
And he fucks many girls and fancies himself a charmer
  And isn't sent down to the mill and its moke?
Wouldn't one think that any woman who touched *him*
  Could lick the arsehole of a sick hangman?

(Lee 1990:137)