Turning Tables: Juno’s Lyric Reconciliation in Horace *C*.III.3

Horace’s *C.*III.3 represents a lesson in Epicurean therapy: Juno resolves her anger according to the precepts of ‘natural’ anger in Philodemus’ *Peri Orges*. This interpretation of the poem as therapeutic brings together the seemingly disparate parts of the poem, which have previously defied cohesive interpretation.

This poem appears to have four parts: an opening exemplum about a steadfast man (*C.*III.3.1-8), a divine banquet with apotheosized attendees (*C.*III.3.9-18a), Juno’s speech accepting Romulus on the condition that Troy remain buried in the past (*C.*III.3.18b-68), and a final strophe in which Horace rebukes the lyric muse for attempting to suit epic ideas into lyric (*C.*III.3.69-72). In order to reconcile these varied vignettes, critics have chosen either to interpret the ode broadly with little attention to details (Plüss, 1882; Reckford, 1969; Williams, 1969), or to focus entirely upon Augustus’ appearance in line 11, coloring the ode as political panegyric. These approaches tend to divorce Juno’s speech and the *recusatio* at the end from the whole of the poem.

An overlooked detail is Horace’s use of demonstratives to form a structured argument, unifying the poem and teaching readers how to assuage anger through Epicurean therapy. The opening exemplum represents an ideal (*hac arte*, v.13) through which mortals, namely Pollux and Hercules, become divine. Horace subtly enforces his argument by repeating *hac* in the subsequent lines, applied to Bacchus and Quirinus (*C.*III.3.13 and 15). Near the end of Juno’s speech, Horace revives *hac*, which modifies *lege* (*C.*III.3.58). A later use of *hoc* sums up not only Juno’s speech, but the entire poem, as Horace claims this subject will not suit a jovial lyre (*C.*III.3.69). This small demonstrative links the poem into a whole, allowing all four disparate parts to flow together in a structured argument.

Through this argument, Horace in *C*. III.3 presents the precepts in Philodemus’ *Peri Orges* concerning “good” or “legitimate” anger and how to resolve it. To overcome anger, according to Philodemus, one must view and understand the consequences of the emotion (*Peri Orges* col. i.21-24). Horace’s choice of Juno as speaker and her diction prompt the reader to recall epic anger in the *Aeneid* (Nisbet and Rudd, 2004). Horace corrects Juno’s anger here in *C.* III.3 in such a way that he promotes the Roman state and allows her to come to release her resentment. She calls the war settled (*C*. III.3.30a) and promises to forget her weighty anger and forgive Romulus (*C*. III.3.30b-33a).

Thus, the ode becomes an exemplum of how to overcome anger, which in turn allows the “steadfast man” at the beginning of the lyric to achieve Epicurean *ataraxia*. *C*. III.3 then rewrites Juno’s anger of the *Aeneid* in the lyric mode as an exemplum, a representation of the process described in the *Peri Orges*. Horace’s *recusatio* in the final stanza, instead of being a poorly attached appendage, reinforces the whole.

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