

CHAPTER 3

Juvenal

A LOST VOICE FOUND: JUVENAL AND THE POETICS OF TOO MUCH, TOO LATE

The opening lines of *Juvenal 1* picture for us a moment of liberation, the precise point where the satirist, for whatever reason, has decided that he has had enough of listening. It has all been too much, and too awful. A kind of cruel and relentless punishment that has kept him pinned to his seat, braced against an unending assault of meaningless blather, and nervously wrestling with a smile to contain his rage (*Juv. 1.1–21*):

Semper ego auditor tantum? numquamne reponam
uexatus totiens rauci Theseide Cordi?
inpune ergo mihi recitauerit ille togatas,
hic elegos? inpune diem consumpserit ingens
Telephus aut summi plena iam margine libri
scriptus et in tergo necdum finitus Orestes?
nota magis nulli domus est sua quam mihi lucus
Martis et Aeoliis uicinum rupibus antrum
Vulcani; quid agant uenti, quas torqueat umbras
Aeacus, unde alius furtiuae deuehat aurum
pelliculae, quantas iaculetur Monychus ornos,
Frontonis platani conuolsaque marmora clamant
semper et adsiduo ruptae lectore columnae.
expectes eadem a summo minimoque poeta.
et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus, et nos
consilium dedimus Sullae, priuatus ut altum
dormiret. stulta est clementia, cum tot ubique
uatibus occurras, periturae parcere chartae.
cur tamen hoc potius libeat decurrere campo,
per quem magnus equos Auruncae flexit alumnus,
si uacat ac placidi rationem admittitis, edam.

Am I always to be *just* a listener? Am I never to pay back the likes of Cordus for pummeling me so often with that gut-busting *Theseid* of his?¹ That man over there, shall he go unpunished for reciting his comedies to me, and this one here his elegies? And what of that oversized Telephus? Shall he go unpunished for swallowing my entire day? Or what about Orestes? When his book's last margins were crammed full, he was scrawled across its back and still wasn't finished! Nobody knows his own house as well as I know the grove of Mars, and that cave of Vulcan, one door down from Aeolus' crags. Fronto's plane-trees, his overturned statues, and those pillars of his, smashed by one of his too-eager readers, they all continue to clamor with the noise of what the winds are stirring, what ghosts Aeacus has in his dungeon, what place what's-his-name left behind when he carted off the gold of his stolen fleece, and those mammoth ash-trees that Monychus hurled like spears. From top poet to bottom, it's always the same stuff! Sure, I went to school, too, and I gave Sulla the standard advice about his sleeping better by retiring from public life. But, now that everyone you run into anywhere happens to be "blessed" with god's own epic "gift," it's stupid of me to follow that "Take no revenge" advice and to spare pages that are sure to be trashed anyway. But, even so, why should I prefer to race over the same literary plane that mighty Lucilius steered his horses across? If you have a minute, and listen calmly to my reasoning, I will tell you.

How is it that recitations here constitute such an extreme form of torture? Could the poetry of Cordus really have been that bad? We have no way of knowing, unfortunately. Cordus is just a name to us, so commentators on these lines have generally let Juvenal have his way: Cordus, they concede, was a disastrous poet. That is good enough for Cordus, whoever he may have been, but what about the bigger target of lines 7 and following? The grove of Mars, the crags of Aeolus next to Vulcan's cave, the golden fleece, and Monychus hurling tree-sized javelins: these point not to anyone as irrelevant as Cordus, but to Valerius Flaccus, and they do so, as John Henderson has recently shown, in a way that parades Juvenal's deep and impressive intimacy with the very projects that he has set up as the foil to his work.² He writes: "*this* disclaimer undertakes to show that he knows poetry and poetics so expertly that he can present a telling skeleton-parody of its grandest genre. And to produce a bad take-off on purpose is to know how a good

¹ A certain "Theseid" is marked as an inept epic already by Aristotle at *Poetics* 1451a20.

² Henderson (1999) 266: "the Argonautic association of 'Mars' Grove', 'Vulcan's Cave cheek-by-jowl with Aeolus' cliffs', with 'what the Winds get up to', stems specifically from reading Valerius rather than any other Latin epic."

model worked.”³ So we ask, does the satirist-critic get his way here too? Is Valerius an exemplary hack? Does his *Argonautica* rank among the worst, most ill-starred attempts at epic of all time? Clearly, this is a road we may not want to go down. Too many pitfalls. Too many chances that the joke may be on “us” instead of “them.”

Valerius is not, by any standard reckoning, a “bad” poet. Nor is that necessarily Juvenal’s point in alluding to him here, so perhaps the better question to ask of his mistreatment in *Juv. 1* is not “Was Valerius, or Cordus, or whoever, a bad poet?” – a question we cannot really answer anyway. Rather, “What makes his poetry so bad *here*, in *Juv. 1*, where overstatements and bigotry color and unhinge critical judgments at every turn?” Put this way, the question takes a different turn. For within the figurative economy of this poem, epic poetry rates as a type of disengaged, self-indulgent, and above all, “safe” literary enterprise. It is non-satire, or anti-satire, a noise made to keep the disgruntled poet silent and seething. For him, it is the hole one can speak into without saying anything, and a place to hide from the totalitarian monster. “Write about Tigillinus” the interlocutor warns at line 155, “and you’ll go up in flames, a human torch with a nail right through your throat.” “It is safe and sanctioned (*securus licet*)” he adds at line 162, “to send Aeneas into battle against savage Turnus. And nobody gets upset when Achilles gets shot down, or when the search party goes looking for Hylas once he has tumbled in after his jug.” The point is clear. The only ones who get hurt in epic are the heroes of the story: Achilles with an arrow in his foot, and Hylas at the bottom of the pool.⁴

And yet, listening to epic is far from carefree. It is purchased, this poet says, at a fairly large and painful price. For, to listen to epic is, at the same time, to listen to yourself not speak; to listen to

³ Henderson (1999) 258.

⁴ The Hylas story is mentioned as an overdone epic theme already by Virgil at *G. 3.6: cui non dictus Hylas puer?* For Juvenal’s processing of the proem to *G. book 3* in his first satire, see Henderson (1999) 256–7 and 271. According to Suetonius, even the most distant of “innocent” mythological themes could be construed as subversive by Domitian. For example, at *Dom. 10.4* he asserts that Helvidius Priscus (the Younger) was put to death for having written a farcical version of the tale of Paris and Oenone, subsequently taken by the emperor to refer to the affair between Paris, the actor, and his wife, Domitia, in the early days of Domitian’s reign. But the assertion that literature was the cause of Helvidius’ death merits due suspicion (see below).

yourself not do satire, and to be reminded, again and again, of just how irrelevant and docile poetry has become. And so epic, no matter how “good” it is, even if it is the stunning finale of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, let alone the worst abuses of Cordus’ *Theseid*, begins to grate on the nerves and to sound like so much irritating blather. So much of the same old, self-indulgent, “safe” noise. Thus, the question of line 1, “Am I always to be *just* a listener?,” is not, as it is usually taken, simply the complaint of a disgruntled poet-client, dragged off to an afternoon, or two, or three, of bad recitations. Rather, it is figured as the complaint of a satirist, or better, of satire herself, who has for so many months, years, even decades, been forced to sit on her hands and keep silent while listening to (what she hears as) the meaningless, toadying sounds of sanctioned verse. The time has come, Juvenal announces, for satire to find her voice again, and in the first line of his first poem he pictures the decisive moment. The next selection on today’s epic program, he says, has been canceled. The droning epic performer has been kicked from the podium, and someone we have not heard from before has pushed his way forward. Juvenal, saturated with frustration, makes his way to center-stage and, for the first time in anyone’s memory, he finally begins to speak.

The tirade begins. And as it proceeds, we slowly come to sense just how long this satirist has been sitting on his hands. Valerius was awful, he tells us. No matter that Valerius has been dead for some time now. Perhaps ten years. Perhaps much longer.⁵ Still, this is the first time that this poet has had the chance to say just how awful he thinks Valerius was. And saying it out loud, after so much long-suffering silence, obviously feels very good. And so he goes on (and on). He finds it hard to hold back: *difficile est saturam non scribere* (“it is a hard thing not writing satire”) he says in line 30. He should know, for *not* writing satire is exactly what he and everyone else active in the recitation scene he tells of belonging to had been doing for decades. Satire has been in hiding since Persius! The point here, I think, is not just that he finds it difficult

⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90 (c. 95 CE) remarks on the “recent” death of Valerius Flaccus. Feeney (*OCD*³ (1996) s.v. Valerius, p. 1578) points out that “since Quintilian can use ‘recent’ of Caesius Bassus’ death in AD 79 (10.1.96), the conventional dating of Valerius’ death to the early 90s is without foundation.”

to keep silent, and therefore he writes – though that is precisely the way this, Juvenal’s most famous programmatic line, is normally taken. Rather, it is that “*not* writing” is an excruciating reality he knows all too well.

The point is well made by the strong Domitianic coloring of the lines that directly precede and follow the claim, lines that draw us into a past that is Juvenal’s present tense (1.22–36):

cum tener uxorem ducat spado, Mevia Tuscum
 figat aprum et nuda teneat uenabula mamma,
 patricios omnis opibus cum prouocet unus
 quo tondente grauis iuueni mihi barba sonabat,
 cum pars Niliacae plebis, cum uerna Canopi
 Crispinus Tyrias umero reuocante lacernas
 uentilet aestiuum digitis sudantibus aurum
 nec sufferre queat maioris pondera gemmae,
 difficile est saturam non scribere. nam quis iniquae
 tam patiens Urbis, tam ferreus, ut teneat se,
 causidici noua cum ueniat lectica Mathonis
 plena ipso, post hunc magni delator amici
 et cito rapturus de nobilitate comesa
 quod superest, quem Massa timet, quem munere palpat
 Carus et a trepido Thymele summissa Latino.

When a eunuch, lacking “hardware,” takes a wife, and Mevia stabs a Tuscan boar, bare-breasted and a spear in each hand, and when one man, all by himself, the very man who used to clip my beard when I was young, provokes with his wealth all of Rome’s oldest families, and when some piece of Nile-river dregs, a home-born slave of Canopus by the name of Crispinus, drapes Tyrian purple off his shoulders and, now that it’s summer, fans a ring of solid gold on sweaty fingers – unable, you understand, to sustain the weight of his “heavier” jewelry – it’s hard to not write satire. For who is so long-suffering towards this lopsided city, who is so iron-hard that he can hold himself back when that brand new litter of Matho, the prosecutor, comes along, stuffed with the man himself, and right behind him follows the man who informed on his influential friend and is about to make off quickly with what’s left of Rome’s half-eaten nobility, a man whom Massa fears, whom Carus strokes with presents, and whom Thymele goes to “visit” in secret, sent by her leading-man, Latinus.

Bartsch, following Townend, notes that the names listed are of prominent figures from the previous two decades: “The satirist has located himself with some consistency in a Domitianic context,

and ‘Mevia, Crispinus, Matho are all Flavian figures from Martial, as Massa and Carus are informers from Domitian’s last years.’⁶ Therein lies a crucial problem: the issue of Juvenal’s timing. When Crispinus waves a gold ring in your face, *that*, the poet tells us, is when it is hard to not write satire. But that is exactly what Juvenal, and all other would-be satirists of his day, did when Crispinus waved the gold ring in his face, now fifteen (or so) years before: *not* write satire. How painful that was, he says; *difficile est saturam non scribere*.

Crispinus, in retrospect, one of the most hated members of Domitian’s court and, according to Juvenal, a man bloated with vice and ripe for satire, never got what was coming to him when he was alive. Along with that bigger monster, Domitian himself, he managed somehow to slip off into the night unsatirized. Baebius Massa and Mettius Carus in lines 35–6 were notorious informers under Domitian. Latinus was Domitian’s favorite actor, possibly a member of his court, and Thymele was Latinus’ leading lady. While most of these figures received favorable mention, even praise, in the *Epigrams* of Martial and in Statius’ *Silvae*, none made the pages of satire while Domitian was alive. They were his favorites, and satire of a Lucilian stamp was nowhere to be seen then.⁷ So Juvenal, now that the terror has passed, seizes the moment. He flies at them in a foaming rage, as if they were still out there, right before his eyes. Never mind that they are no longer alive, or no longer a factor in Roman politics, or both. It is payback time, he says: *reponam* (line 1), *impune* (lines 3 and 4), and so on. Juvenal is not about to let this opportunity pass. Domitian’s reign, still so vivid in everyone’s memory, is simply too rich in the stuff of satire, too stuffed with vanity and vice, to let slip away without his first having at it with satire’s punishing cudgel.

And so it is no wonder that this satirist has so much to say, too much, we often complain, and in such fulsome, aggressive tones. This is satire in a time-warp, making up for all the satires never

⁶ Bartsch (1994) 92, quoting Townend (1973) 149.

⁷ Of the three satirists thought to have been active during the Flavian period (Manilius Vopiscus, Silius, and Turnus) only Turnus was remembered as a satirist of some small note by writers of late antiquity. The two-line fragment that survives of his work (*Fr. Poet. Lat.*, p. 134, Morel) suggests that his satires looked back to the cruel follies of Nero’s court rather than to the persons and activities of the contemporary Roman scene. This may explain why Turnus, though of humble birth, was held in high esteem by the emperors Titus and Domitian. For these issues, see Coffey (1976) 119.

written in the last twenty years or more. Actually the project is much bigger than even that. For as the satirist proceeds with his vendetta in the course of book 1, he consistently reaches back beyond the cruel follies of Domitian's court, to Nero, to Claudius, Sejanus, and Tiberius, and to all the notorious criminals and imperial favorites of the first century CE. This poet, it turns out, has an exceptionally large memory, an enormous vendetta, with an equally expansive, browbeating style, that is just the right vehicle to carry his vendetta off.

REMEMBERED MONSTERS: TIME WARP AND
MARTYR TALES IN TRAJAN'S ROME

Seen in these terms, Juvenal's project looks rather familiar. It bears an uncanny resemblance to several of the most famous literary productions of the Trajanic age, especially to Tacitus' *Agricola*, and to his *Histories* and *Annales*. Although these works belong to genres that claim to be above giving in to wrath and partisanship, as Juvenal so unabashedly does in his first satire, Tacitus (and slightly later, Suetonius) is clearly about the business of remembering these same monsters and cutting them down to size. His memory, like that of Juvenal, is powerfully engaged by the emperors from Tiberius to Domitian. Augustus interests him not quite as much, and least of all does he have anything to say about the "better" times of Nerva and Trajan, the period in which he wrote all of the works that he is known to have published. For Tacitus, history reaches its acme with Domitian, whose reign he featured in the last books of the *Histories*, now lost. After that there is simply not much left to say, and so he does not – even though he specifically promises that he will.⁸

Strangely, the letters of Pliny show these same tendencies. Though they all date from the decade-and-a-half immediately

⁸ At *Histories* 1.1 Tacitus makes a promise that he ultimately fails to deliver: *quod si uita suppeditet, principatum diui Neruae et imperium Traiani, uberiorem securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui*. After finishing his *Histories*, instead of moving ahead to treat the reigns of Nerva and Trajan, Tacitus goes back to cover the period from Augustus to Nero in his *Annales*. As I hope to demonstrate in the pages that follow, the demand for books condemning the Julio-Claudians, especially Nero, was especially intense in the first fifteen years or so of the second century CE. This demand fueled the success of Tacitus' monster-hating *Histories*. It was likely a factor in keeping him fixed on the past, rather than moving ahead to the present, in his *Annales*.

following the death of Domitian, the very period of Juvenal book 1, Pliny's letters repeatedly turn from the day-to-day affairs of a consular senator in early second-century Rome to the world of the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians. Often they introduce matters of topical relevance only as a handy means of referring us back to the recent "traumatic" past, to dwell on that trauma in luscious detail. Emperors are painted as monsters, cruel and insatiable. Tragic heroes are immortalized in clean little narratives, miniature epics that show them standing up to the beast, only to be cruelly slaughtered. The eleventh letter of Pliny's fourth book, one example of the type, tells the story of Valerius Licinianus, once a famous senator and advocate, now a mere schoolmaster in Sicily. "Would you like to know how that transformation came about?" he asks his addressee, Cornelius Minicianus. And so quickly the topic turns to Domitian, the monster behind Licinianus' demise.

Domitian, the story goes, charged Licinianus with violating Cornelia, a Vestal Virgin. As Chief Priest, Domitian took his tyrant's cruelty to new heights, declaring Cornelia guilty without a hearing, and reviving the ancient custom of live burial to make hers a stunning and exemplary punishment.⁹ And this from the man who as Chief Priest, Pliny reminds us, impregnated his own niece and forced her to undergo an abortion that took her life. Juvenal tells an exceptionally grotesque version of that story at *Satires* 2.29–33. Suetonius closes his *Life of Domitian* with the same story, and there can be little doubt that Tacitus worked it up in some detail in the final pages of his *Histories*.¹⁰ Each writer, it seems, needs to tell that story, to establish a clear relation to those events through narrative. Pliny, in his version of the tale, goes on to describe Cornelia's death march; how she remained defiant to the end, refusing under pressure to grovel at the emperor's feet or to admit that she was, in any way, responsible for her untimely fall. "Like Polyxena," Pliny adds, "she took great care to fall in

⁹ The trial of the Vestal Cornelia is commonly dated to the middle of Domitian's reign. Gsell (1894) 80–1, n. 9 puts it between March 87 and March 90. Jones (1992) 102 points out that "it was perfectly clear that they were guilty and no criticism should be levelled at Domitian on that score. What apparently horrified Pliny was the thought that someone of his status should have to face the same penalty as any other malefactor."

¹⁰ At *Hist.* 1.2 Tacitus indicates that, among the many topics to be covered by his work are *pollutae caerimoniae, magna adulteria*. According to *Hist.* 1.3, he also intends to describe numerous noble and horrific death scenes, to which category Cornelia's death certainly belongs: *ipsa necessitas fortiter tolerata et laudatis antiquorum mortibus pares exitus*.

decent fashion.” Licinianus, on the other hand, managed to stay alive. He confessed to the affair with Cornelia, and begged for mercy. Pliny cautions us against believing his confession. It too conveniently let Domitian off the hook for convicting and executing Cornelia without a trial. Domitian was so pleased with the confession that he gave Licinianus easy conditions of exile as his reward. And thus was the senator reconstituted as a schoolteacher in Sicily. End of story.

Stories of this type are common in the major authors of the Trajanic age. That is obvious enough. But it is only in reading the letters of Pliny that the mantra-like quality of these stories, and the obsessive, competitive nature of their telling, shows itself not just as a hallmark of early second-century literature, but as an urgent cultural obsession that keeps writers of that age nailed to the past, researching famous deaths, writing about them, and finding ever new, grander ways to tell the same dead-men's tales. These letters indicate that, when it comes to telling stories of Rome's first-century trauma, Pliny was just as much in the thick of that urgent cultural enterprise as were his friends, Tacitus and Suetonius. The works of all three writers happen to have survived from the period, and little else. But Pliny's letters themselves indicate that these works, seen for their shared obsession with remembering, and remarking on, the same “traumatic” past, were by no means without precedent in their own day. They are just the tip of the iceberg, and Pliny's letters help us imagine just how large that iceberg was.

For example, at *Ep.* 5.5 Pliny tells of his grief over the recent death of Gaius Fannius.¹¹ “This is hard but not unbearable,” he says. “Much more serious is the fact that he has left his finest work unfinished . . . he was bringing out a history of the various fates of the people put to death or banished by Nero.” Pliny goes on to tell us that Fannius had already finished three volumes of that work, and he still had much more to say. “He was all the more anxious to complete the series,” Pliny adds, “when he saw how eagerly the first books were read by a large public.” Nero's victims, it seems, were the stuff of best-sellers, and the reading public Pliny has in mind just couldn't get enough of it.

¹¹ Unless otherwise marked, translations of Pliny's *Letters* are from Radice's Penguin edition.

Such stories of defiant heroes standing up to tyrants, and suffering for it, took many forms in Trajan's Rome. We know these tales, most famously, from the last two books of Tacitus' *Annales*, where he relates the bloodletting that followed the exposure of the so-called "Pisonian Conspiracy."¹² Similar martyr tales, he tells us at *Hist.* 1.3, were written into the later books of his *Historiae* as well, so his practice in writing these stories extends to at least twenty years. Given the foreboding with which he describes Baebius Massa at *Hist.* 4.50 as "the deadly enemy of good men, and a character destined to figure more than once in our story among the causes of the sufferings we were later to endure," we can be sure that the noble deaths of Massa's victims in the bloodletting of autumn 93 CE down to the last days of Domitian's reign were a prominent feature of his *Historiae*' last book, just as the Pisonian suicides would subsequently be featured in the last extant books of his *Annales*. These bloodbaths, followed by the deaths of Nero and Domitian, are the respective *tele* of these works, and they may thus be thought to have exercised some influence upon one another.¹³ Still, despite our now associating these martyr tales primarily with Tacitus, it is likely that Tacitus worked them into his historical narratives not in an effort to make obscure tales known, but in a calculated response to their already burgeoning popularity in Rome. For stories of the same type, as Fannius' eager readership for his "Victims of Nero" books shows, were widespread in the Trajanic age. They could take on many forms and reside comfortably in genres as far-flung as eulogy, rhetorical *controversiae*, and anonymous pamphlets.¹⁴ Already we have seen that these stories are not foreign to the letters of Pliny, a selected sampling of business letters and private correspondence where they would not necessarily seem to matter, or even "belong." In fact, they occur with enough frequency in Pliny's letters to suggest

¹² These books may date from as late as the first years of Hadrian's reign. See Syme (1958) vol. II, 471–4.

¹³ For example, Nero's behavior might be thought to foreshadow, perhaps to comment upon by analogy, or even be shaped by, popular stories of Domitian's cruel last days, stories frantically traded in Trajan's Rome. The reverse may also be true. For Domitian as a Nero type (e.g. later taunted by Juvenal as a "bald Nero"), see Bartsch (1994) 93, esp. n. 66.

¹⁴ On the existence of a vast martyr literature already in Nero's day, works known generally as the *exitus illustrium uirorum*, see Conte (1994) 542. The writer(s) of Persius' *Vita* record the satirist's youthful endeavor in this vein (*Vita* 44–7): *scripserat in pueritia Flaccus . . . paucos [satorum Thraxae] in Arriam matrem uersus, quae se ante uirum occiderat.*

that they are anything but incidental to his personal, political, and cultural aims in publishing this, his so-called “private” correspondence. At the very least, they play some role in shaping an idea of Pliny as an author always on the right side of a bloody ideological rift, on good terms with, and properly impressed by, those who stood up to Domitian and suffered for it. For example, at *Ep.* 7.19 Pliny tells the story of Fannia’s defiance towards Domitian and his favorite prosecutor, Mettius Carus, in 93 CE, and letter 3.16 relates a number of her grandmother Arria’s acts of bravery and defiance towards Claudius, tales less well known than her famous suicide (“It does not hurt, Paetus”), Pliny tells us, but told to him, personally, and exclusively, in the course of one of his many visits with Fannia herself. That is the important point. He has a better Arria story to tell, something that the other Arria tellers of his day have missed, because he is that tight with the noble Arria’s tyrant-defying family.¹⁵

Although martyr literature of the “freedom-fighting noble versus glowering tyrant” variety seems to have gained new life in the immediate aftermath of Domitian’s death, stories of this type had been circulating in Rome, and raising imperial eyebrows, according to Tacitus, for the better part of a century. The first instance of the type he cites is the eulogizing histories of Aulus Cremutius Cordus. At *Ann.* 4.34–5 he relates that, under Tiberius, Cremutius Cordus was tried and condemned on what Tacitus describes as “a new and previously unheard-of charge: praise of Brutus in his *History*, and the description of Cassius as ‘the last of the Romans.’” Tacitus goes on to relate Cordus’ speech in his own defense, closing the speech with these words (*Ann.* 4.35):

num enim armatis Cassio et Bruto ac Philippensis campos optinentibus belli ciuilis causa populum per contiones incendo? an illi quidem septuagesimum ante annum perempti, quo modo imaginibus suis noscuntur, quas ne uictor quidem aboleuit, sic partem memoriae apud scriptores retinent? suum cuique decus posteritas rependit; nec deerunt, si damnatio ingruit, qui non modo Cassii et Bruti set etiam mei meminerint.

¹⁵ But cf. Syme (1958) vol. 1, 92: “Pliny’s relations with the circle of Helvidius Priscus were not perhaps as close and continuous as his professions imply.” These “professions” are frequent in his letters, often hiding in such “innocent” forms as a letter to Junius Mauricus (2.18), exiled brother of Arulenus Rusticus, agreeing to find a tutor for his dead brother’s children. Why should Pliny think we need to know this? What he clearly gains by publishing such a letter (among other things) is a subtle means of advertising his close connections with Helvidius’ relatives.

Are Cassius and Brutus armed for battle, positioned in the plains of Philippi? Am I at the head of an assembly, inciting the people to civil war? Those very men, dead now for seventy years – how is it that they are recognized by the images that belonged to them, which even their conqueror did not efface, and that they are still remembered this way among writers? Posterity gives to each the glory that was his. If I am condemned, there will there be no lack of those who will remember not just Cassius and Brutus, but me as well.

Tacitus makes a prophet of the condemned Cordus. For, by recording his story, he has established the truth of the condemned historian's final words, remembering him in his *Annales*, just as Cordus said he would be remembered, not merely as someone who wrote a history that happened to praise two famous tyrannicides, but as someone classed in their same league; someone who took similar risks, and was destined to suffer an equally undeserved fate under a dangerous tyrant, Tiberius.¹⁶

Death, Tacitus would have us believe, was a common result of telling a freedom-fighter's story in the first century CE. In his *Annales*, *Dialogus*, and *Agricola*, he relates numerous cases where the telling of stories *about* freedom-fighters itself plays a significant role in securing the story-teller's demise. In other words, the making of martyrs *in stories*, according to Tacitus, in the first century CE became a sure and regular means for the making of new martyrs *in fact*. Those who tell such stories are put to death, and their deaths, in turn, become the source of new martyr tales, equally dangerous, and so on, and so on. An air of risk is thereby attached to Tacitus' own telling of martyr-tales in his several published works. But in his case, given when he wrote, there is good reason to suspect that the risk he hints at is all air, and no risk.

Among later examples of martyr tales making martyrs (if Tacitus can be believed, see below) is the case of Arulenus Rusticus, consul in 92 and a member of the Stoic opposition of 93. Rusticus was put to death on the charge of having written "eulogies" (*laudes*) of Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus.¹⁷ The former had

¹⁶ Cordus' *Histories* somehow survived to be re-published under Gaius. See Griffin (1976) 33.

¹⁷ See Suet. *Dom.* 10.3 and Tac. *Ag.* 2.1. On the inconsistency of the ancient sources in their treatment of the events of 93, see Jones (1992) 123; cf. Mart. 1.8 addressing a certain Decianus who is commended for following the teachings of Thrasea and Cato without being drawn into their suicidal fanaticism.

been put to death under Nero, the latter under Vespasian. In telling their stories, Suetonius says, Rusticus “had called them the holiest of men” (*appellassetque eos sanctissimos uiros*).¹⁸ Thrasea, one of the “saints” in Rusticus’ story, had himself, nearly three decades earlier, written a life of Cato of Utica, the archetype of a Stoic freedom-fighter, and this is generally thought to have contributed to his own demise. Maternus, the central “defiant” figure in Tacitus’ *Dialogus*, wrote a historical tragedy known as the *Cato* under Vespasian. As the parties in the dialogue frequently assert, this put him at significant risk, and scholars have thus generally assumed that his writing this play and refusing to emend it secured his untimely demise.¹⁹ A second “martyr” of 93 CE, Herennius Senecio, Tacitus questionably maintains, was put to death for having written a laudatory biography of Helvidius Priscus, who had been put to death under Vespasian.²⁰ According to the *Histories*, Helvidius Priscus was a leader of the Stoic opposition, known to have “classed himself with Cato, Brutus, and their like.” He was the husband of Fannia (Pliny’s Fannia, above) and grandfather of the Helvidius who headed the foiled conspiracy of 93.²¹

At the beginning of his *Agricola*, Tacitus posits a connection between the story that he is about to relate and the eulogies of the Stoic martyrs written by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio in 93 CE, stories that, he would have us believe, secured their authors’ deaths. The primary difference between himself and them, he asserts, is one of timing: they wrote then, under Domitian, when praise of virtuous men was a capital offence (*capitale fuisse*). He writes now, under Nerva and Trajan, when tales of “the works and ways of famous men” (*clarorum uirorum facta moresque*, *Ag.* 1.1) are no longer suspect. At *Ag.* 3.1 he says:

¹⁸ See Suet. *Dom.* 10.3.

¹⁹ See esp. Bartsch (1994) 104–7.

²⁰ In contrast, Plin. *Ep.* 7.33.4ff. urges that the real cause of Senecio’s demise was his prosecution of Baebius Massa on behalf of the province of Baetica. Thus, both Tacitus and Pliny explain Senecio’s demise in terms that happen to give them, individually, some claim to his defiance, Tacitus as a fellow writer of a risk-taking “martyr’s” eulogy, the *Agricola*, and Pliny as a fellow prosecutor with Senecio against Massa. Pliny’s explanation, though it perhaps seems the more plausible, is hardly untainted by his own self-interest. Dio 67.13.2 gives the cause of Senecio’s demise as his biography of Helvidius Priscus, and his refusing to stand for any office beyond the quaestorship.

²¹ For Helvidius Priscus’ being classed with Cato and Brutus, see Tac. *Hist.* 4.8. On his downfall in 74 or 75 CE, see Dio 65.12.2–3, and Suet. *Vesp.* 15.

Nunc demum redit animus; et quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu Nerua Caesar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem, augeatque cotidie felicitatem temporum Nerua Traianus . . . natura tamen infirmitatis humanae tardiora sunt remedia quam mala.

Now at last our courage/morale is returning. And although from the very first moment of this most blessed age, Nerva Caesar has combined things that were once incompatible, the principate and freedom/free speech, and Trajan is daily increasing the happiness of the times . . . because of the nature of our human weakness, the cure is slower than the disease.

A moment of liberation is staged. The “disease” that ravaged Rome, Tacitus says, has abated, though its effects still linger. A long-lost will to speak has been recovered. At *Ag.* 3.1–3 Tacitus goes on to say that he, too, spent fifteen years “in silence” (*per silentium*), infected by the widespread “lack of spirit” (*inertia*) and “inactivity” (*desidia*) that Domitian’s “savagery” (*saevitia*) inflicted upon Rome. Referring to his *Histories*, apparently soon to be begun, he promises to write an account of those fifteen silent years that will constitute a “record of our past enslavement, and a testimony to our current blessings.”²² The past as he will write it, Tacitus admits, is very much about the present. Meanwhile, he says, “this book, written to honor my father-in-law, Agricola, will be either praised or excused by its profession of filial duty” (*professione pietatis*).

The eulogy proper commences in the next paragraph. Tacitus’ first order of business is to set out Agricola’s family background. His account could well have included many figures from the near and distant past. And it could have been shaped in many different ways. Tacitus, however, aggressively trims Agricola’s family tree in order to make two basic points about what kind of inherited familial stuff went into the making of Agricola: (1) from his father’s side he derived a penchant for running afoul of tyrants and refusing to do their dirty work.²³ And (2) from his mother’s side he learned to keep a cool head and check his high-flying, philosophical ideals.²⁴ These two traits, taken together, are the

²² For this as a reference to his forthcoming *Histories*, see Syme (1958) vol. 1, 19.

²³ *Ag.* 4.1: *Pater illi Iulius Graecinus senatorii ordinis, studio eloquentiae sapientiaeque notus, iisque ipsis uirtutibus iram Gaii Caesaris meritis: namque M. Silanum accusare iussus et, quia abnuerat, interfectus est.*

²⁴ *Ag.* 4.3: *memoria teneo solitum ipsum narrare se prima in iuuenta studium philosophiae acrius, ultra quam concessum Romano ac senatori, hausisse, ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coercuisset.*

ironic and unlikely sum of Agricola, and the unrelenting mantra of his son-in-law's eulogy from beginning to end. Agricola, Tacitus says, was a man of high principles, driven to stand up for what is good and right, no matter what the consequences. Still, he had an uncanny knack for surviving these ideological encounters, and for keeping on the good side of even the worst of emperors. Because of this, his high ideals did not result in his "timely" demise.

But that is the most difficult obstacle Tacitus faces in telling Agricola's story, and having us believe that the man he praises here, now three or more years after his death, really was a freedom-fighter in anything like the same way that Senecio and Rusticus were. Their stories were much purer versions of the martyr's tale, clean narratives with lots of showy defiance and blood. These men stood up to the monster and were destroyed for it. Agricola, on the other hand, seems to have repeatedly dodged any direct conflict with Domitian. In fact, he seems to have done quite well for himself not just under Domitian, but because of him. In that he resembles Tacitus himself, who is both teller and subject of this tale of high principles, moderation, and good sense.²⁵ But that Agricola prospered under Domitian is only the way things look from the outside, Tacitus would have us believe. For, throughout his eulogy he assures us that Domitian was not just suspicious of Agricola, but passionately hated him for his illustrious successes in the field of battle. Near the end of the work he even hints that Agricola may have been poisoned by one of Domitian's agents – a charge so insubstantial that even Tacitus must balk at embracing it.²⁶

Still, despite these vigorous protests of unseen enmity between Domitian and Agricola, Agricola, taken as the sum of his illustrious achievements – including a consulship, triumphal ornaments, and the amassing of a reasonable fortune²⁷ – retains the look of someone who prospered under Domitian rather than suffered under him. And that is a problem that Tacitus himself shares in full with his father-in-law, giving one to suspect that this is his story as much as it is Agricola's. From the best evidence we have, Agricola died a natural death on August 23 of 93 CE, just weeks

²⁵ For Tacitus' political career under Domitian, see Syme (1958) vol. 1, 59–74.

²⁶ *Ag.* 43.2: *augebat miserationem constans rumor ueneno interceptum: nobis nihil comperti adfirmare ausim.* In contrast, Dio takes a much more aggressive line, insisting that Agricola was poverty-stricken, "disgraced" and "murdered" by Domitian; see Dio 66.20.3.

²⁷ See *Ag.* 44.3–4.

before the bloodletting began, so his story, despite Tacitus' skillful telling of it, can never quite have the bold and noble look of the martyr tales that were being frantically traded in Trajan's Rome, such as the stories of Senecio, Rusticus, and Thrasea. His is a much more problematic case. His freedom-fighting cannot be demonstrated from any obvious facts of his career, such as a famous tirade inveighing against the emperor, or an attempt on Domitian's life, or a trial, or condemnation, or suicide. Thus, Tacitus is forced to find other ways, well off the beaten path, to fashion Agricola's story as a version of the freedom-fighter's tale, that noblest of eulogies so worth having in Trajan's Rome. But, despite these efforts, near the end of his tribute to Agricola, Tacitus lets us know that not everyone in his audience is likely to credit his version of the tale.²⁸ He writes (*Ag.* 42.3-4):

Domitiani uero natura praeceps in iram, et quo obscurior, eo irruentior, moderatione tamen prudentiaque Agricolae leniebatur, quia non contumacia neque inani iactatione libertatis famam fatumque prouocabat. sciant, quibus moris est illicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos uiros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac uigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta sed in nulum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt.

Indeed Domitian was by nature quick to anger, and all the more secretive in what he was determined. Still, he was calmed by Agricola's moderation and foresight, because Agricola did not provoke renown and ruin by being stubborn and making a pointless show of his independence. For let them know, those who are in the habit of admiring forbidden acts, that good men can exist even under bad leaders, and that submission and modesty, if coupled with hard work and energy, exceed the height of praise that some reach by a steeper course. But their fame is achieved by a popularity-garnering death that is of no use to the state.

Some martyrs may have showier tales told of them, Tacitus says, but they are wrongly admired. Their deaths he figures as a kind of political pandering, more in the business of gaining popularity from the masses (*ambitiosa morte*), like a politician canvassing for votes, than about benefiting the state in any measurable way. Thus, he says, even though his story is not as flashy and hotly

²⁸ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 25 comments on the unexpected outburst (the emphasis is mine): "Tacitus proclaims his scorn for the brave enemies of dead tyrants, the noisy advocates of the heroes and the martyrs. They had not confined their reprobation to evil men, the willing agents of despotism, but had gone much further . . . Attacking those who admired the martyrs unduly, Tacitus defends his father-in-law – *and shields his own conduct under the tyranny of Domitian.*"

traded as those eulogies of the Stoic martyrs who died violently in the same year, Agricola can be credited with making a difference in Rome when it really mattered. His moderation and foresight kept Domitian's wrath in check. After his death, the outright defiance of the Helvidian idealists baited the beast, and a "bloodbath" (much exaggerated by the historians) ensued.²⁹ This is an attractive line to take in the early days after Domitian's death, perhaps the only tack Tacitus had available to him given the compromising facts of Agricola's long and successful political career. But clearly this story is not of the standard "Stoic martyr" variety that traded so deliriously in the streets and salons. Thus, as Tacitus himself admits near the end of his work, it is not so easily sold to those who like their monster narratives straight, bold, and bloody.

Venues for praising freedom-fighters were many and varied in Tacitus' day. At *Ep.* 1.17 Pliny praises the recent efforts of a certain Titinius Capito in obtaining permission from the emperor to set up a statue in the forum to Lucius Silanus, one of Nero's victims in 65 CE.³⁰ This request, at an earlier time, might have been construed as an act of defiance. Historians of the first century CE record several instances of men put to death by suspicious emperors for displaying the statues of martyrs and/or tyrannicides in their homes.³¹ Thus, setting up a statue to Silanus in the early days of Trajan's reign, just as writing a martyr's eulogy, had a distinct air of risk-taking connected to it, even though the risk that these activities once suggested had substantially disappeared with the accession of Nerva. Here again, we get a sense of just how frenetic

²⁹ Though Pliny and Tacitus would have us believe that Domitian's wrath knew no bounds, the reprisals of autumn 93 CE seem to have been much more limited in scale than those of his counterpart, Nero, in 65–6 CE. Those put to death in the autumn of 93 were Helvidius Priscus (the younger), Arulenus Rusticus, and Herennius Senecio. Junius Mauricus, Rusticus' brother, was sent into exile along with certain women of his family. Soon after, the professional philosophers were banished from Rome. Dio 67.13.3 asserts that "others" perished at this time under the charge of philosophizing, but he gives no names. For the limited scope of these reprisals, see Jones (1992) 119–25; cf. the class-coded bloodbath that befell Sejanus' supporters after his demise. Griffin (1976) 49: "Everyone had courted Sejanus when he was in favour, but it was the little men – obscure knights and *novi homines* – who perished when he fell. Even the noblest of his relatives survived."

³⁰ For the details of Silanus' demise, see Tac. *Ann.* 16.9.

³¹ For example, Dio 62.27.1–2 records that Nero put to death an anonymous "conspirator" on the grounds that he possessed an image of Cassius, one of the slayers of Julius Caesar. At *Ann.* 3.76 Tacitus notes that, at the funeral of Junia Tertulla, niece of Cato, wife of Cassius and sister of Brutus, sixty-three years after Philippi, the effigies of Cassius and Brutus, which one might expect to head the procession, were conspicuous for their absence. Cf. *Ann.* 11.35 where Narcissus stirs up Claudius' indignation against Gaius Silius by opening his home and pointing to a statue of Silius' condemned father.

and repetitive this trade in the (first century's) symbols of defiance was in Pliny's day. Standing up to tyrants and memorializing their victims, were themes writ large in this man Capito's life. Later in the same letter Pliny tells us that he kept the family busts of Brutus, Cassius, and Cato on display in his own home, and that he celebrated their lives in what, Pliny assures us, was "excellent verse." Especially telling is the last line of Pliny's letter, where Capito's own stake in all of this is made patently clear: in recognizing Lucius Silanus with a statue, now almost fifty years after his death(!), Pliny writes, "Capito has won immortality for himself as well, for to erect a statue in the forum of Rome *is as great an honour as having one's own statue there.*"

Like the made-to-order hero-stories of Pliny, Tacitus, and so many others, Capito's statue-work is instrumental not only in defining Lucius Silanus, whom the statue portrays, as a hero who dared to stand up to Nero. More importantly, it says something about who Capito is, what he values and, most importantly, how he relates to the events of Rome's recent, traumatic past. He takes a "risk," such as it is, in approaching the emperor with his request. By erecting the statue, and putting his name on it, he claims some small share in Silanus' defiance. Pliny, like the last link on a perilously long chain, gets in on this defiance by publishing the letter. His aggressive approval of Capito's act writes him into the story in a small, but important, supporting role.

We hear of Capito again at Plin. *Ep.* 8.12.1–2 where the topic turns from statues to Capito's recent literary enterprises, activities that are an uncanny match for his statue-work. Pliny begins by telling his addressee, Cornelius Minicianus (same as above), that he plans to take the entire day off from work in order to attend a recitation at Capito's house. Capito, he says, is an ardent promoter of literary pursuits. "He cultivates literary studies, and he patronizes, encourages and promotes men of letters. To many writers, he is a safe harbor and a haven, as well as an example to them all. In short, he is the restorer and refashioner of literature itself that has recently been in decline" (*ipsarum denique litterarum iam senescentium reductor ac reformator*).³² Corroborating evidence for this claim can be derived from an earlier letter to Capito, *Ep.* 5.8, where Pliny indicates that Capito has for some time been trying to convince him to refocus his literary talents from oratory to the

³² My translation.

writing of Roman history. No indication is given of what kind of history Capito has in mind for Pliny, nor the period he wishes him to cover, but that can perhaps be surmised from the last lines of his letter to Minicianus. There Pliny tells his addressee why he feels obliged to take an entire day off to attend Capito's recitation (Plin. *Ep.* 8.12.4–5):

quod si illi nullam uicem nulla quasi mutua officia deberem, sollicitarer tamen uel ingenio hominis pulcherrimo et maximo et in summa seueritate dulcissimo, uel honestate materiae. scribit exitus inlustrium uirorum, in his quorundam mihi carissimorum. uideor ergo fungi pio munere, quorumque exsequias celebrare non licuit, horum quasi funebribus laudationibus seris quidem sed tanto magis ueris interesse. uale.

But even if I didn't owe the man any return, no services, as it were, proffered in exchange, still I would be pressured (to attend) either by his talent, which is most attractive, and both greatest and sweetest in the utmost seriousness, or by the honorable nature of his material. He is writing the deaths of famous men, some of whom were very dear to me. And so I seem to be paying them the tribute they are owed, and to be present at what amounts to the funeral orations of men whose funerals it was illegal to celebrate, orations that are late in coming, but all the more sincere. Farewell.³³

“Late but sincere/unbiased.” This is not just a catchy rhyme (*seris* . . . *sed* . . . *ueris*) but the mantra of Capito's backwards-looking life, and of the age in which he lives and writes. Better as a catch-phrase than as a means of logical debate, the antithesis does not bear up well under serious scrutiny. Can funeral orations delivered fifteen years too late really be thought to rate as sincere and “true”? By whose reckoning are these speeches the real thing, a *professio pietatis*, as Tacitus calls his woefully late eulogy of Agricola?³⁴ Or are they perhaps more about redeeming the living than honoring the dead? Always more about Pliny, Tacitus, and Capito, their tellers, than about Helvidius, and Agricola, etc., their incidental subjects?

Capito's eulogies, we see, are an uncanny match for his statue-work, and for the poems of “excellent verse” described in *Ep.* 1.17. Taken together, the evidence from Pliny's letters strongly suggests

³³ My translation.

³⁴ At *Ann.* 16.16 Tacitus will again use the metaphor of history as funerary monument to describe his accounts of the deaths of famous aristocrats under Nero: *detur hoc inlustrium uirorum posteritati, ut quo modo exequiis a promisca sepultura separantur, ita in traditione supremorum accipiant habeantque propriam memoriam*. For the proliferation of the “text as epitaph” metaphor under Nero, see Connors (1994).

that Capito was an active promoter of literature and the arts, “the Maecenas of Trajan’s Rome,” Syme calls him, but with a very narrow focus and political purpose to all the works he is known to have both written and promoted.³⁵ A man of deep Republican sentiments, it seems, he vigorously exploited every means at his disposal to make his disapproval of bloodthirsty emperors known to the general public. But that picture, however attractive and elaborately fashioned it may be, falls apart with the chance survival of an inscription recording Capito’s earlier career under Domitian. *ILS* 1448 names him (Cn. Octavius Titinius Capito) as a man whose military service under Domitian merited not only military decorations from the emperor, but a new career as well, as Domitian’s confidential secretary *ab epistulis*.³⁶ That office assumes a fairly high degree of intimacy and trust shared between Domitian and Capito, so his holding it hardly fits the portrait of the freedom-fighter that he was later so anxious to paint for himself. That earlier success as a man of “letters,” *Domitian’s* letters, is conveniently left unmentioned by Pliny. The inscription further relates that Capito went on to hold the same office under Nerva, then a third time under Trajan, thus proving that he, much like Nerva himself, was remarkably adept at shifting with the changing political winds of the late first century CE. And thus, despite treating his friends, and even the emperor Trajan himself, to so many elaborately performed gestures of his sharing in the old Republican cause and of his deeply regretting the reprisals of the “tyrant” in the autumn of 93 CE, there is good reason to believe that Capito himself was anything but the freedom-fighter that his symbolic gestures make him out to be. Noting the striking incongruity between the public record and Capito’s later Republican protestations, Syme concludes, “no suspicion of Republican sentiments incriminates the life of Titinius Capito, nor does any link of propinquity with the aristocratic houses explain or extenuate his behaviour. Not a noble, not even a senator, but merely a Roman knight, Titinius is a document of social mimicry.”³⁷

³⁵ For the comparison with Maecenas, see Syme (1958) vol. 1, 93.

³⁶ Dessau notes in his commentary on *ILS* 1448 that Domitian’s name has been deliberately suppressed. The inscription reads: Cn. Octavius Titinius Capito|praef. cohortis, trib. milit., donat.|hasta pura corona vallari, proc. ab|epistulis et a patrimonio, iterum ab|epistulis divi Nervae, eodem auctore|ex s. c. praetoriis ornamentis, ab epistul.|tertio imp. Nervae Caesar. Traiani Aug. Ger.,|praef. vigilum, Volcano d. d.

³⁷ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 92.

How do you relate to Rome's traumatic past? Where were you when Domitian was assassinated? What role did you play in bringing him down? Though never stated in such blunt, and potentially embarrassing terms, these questions dog poor Capito's every move, just as they haunt the pages of Pliny's correspondence at every turn. These letters, it should by now be clear, do much more than simply provide information *about* Roman social and political history of the period. They are themselves active agents *in* that history. They represent Pliny at his most intense and competitive, struggling to contain the damage, and to define himself as a certain kind of highly valued subject within a world of competing, and sometimes potentially damaging, selves. Making villains and heroes; accessing the stories that everyone else is telling; reacting to them, and telling them again: all are major parts of this project.

Just where *was* Pliny when Domitian went down? What role, if any, did he play in bringing him down? Although his letters clearly and consistently urge us to believe that Pliny was an active member of the opposition, and that he took many risks in making his antagonism known, in the end, they can never tell us anything other than the story that Pliny wants us to hear. That is, the story that he urgently *needs* his second-century audience to hear in order to protect his political career after Domitian's fall. All of his letters were written conveniently after the fact, when the winners and losers of the last century's struggle were irrevocably set. It would be all too easy, in retrospect, to write oneself in on the winning side. Thus, we are left with no reliable means of checking whether these letters exaggerate Pliny's past antagonism towards Domitian or even tell outright lies. Still, it can be noted that Pliny did manage to do quite well for himself under Domitian, and this despite his well-known claim to have been held back by him.³⁸ Especially surprising is his singular advancement in the immediate aftermath

³⁸ At *Pan.* 95.3 Pliny writes: *uos modo fauete huic proposito et credite, si cursu quodam prouectus ab illo insidiosissimo principe, ante quam profiteretur odium bonorum, postquam professus est substiti, cum uiderem quae ad honores compendia paterent longius iter malui.* Regarding the claim Syme (1958) vol. 1, 82 writes: "The chance survival of authentic evidence, disclosing the prefecture of the *aerarium militare*, blows away the orator's assertion that he called a halt in his career. No more tangible is the notion that Pliny would infallibly have been prosecuted but for the providential assassination of the tyrant, even though he supports it by alleging that a notorious 'delator' had laid an information." At *Ep.* 4.24.4–5 Pliny summarizes the ups and downs of his career as an advocate this way: *studiis processimus, studiis periclitati sumus, rursusque processimus: profuerunt nobis bonorum amicitiae, bonorum obfuerunt iterumque prosunt.*

of the prosecutions of the autumn of 93, events in which he repeatedly claims to have run significant risks. In fact, he advanced up every major rung of the *cursus honorum*, except for the consulship, with remarkable speed. And there is no reason to suspect that he would not have attained that office too under Domitian, had Domitian managed to stay alive.³⁹ Perhaps the most questionable post occupied by Pliny in his earlier career was the quaestorship he held in the late eighties. Coloring in a few of the missing details, Syme notes, “he was one of the two quaestors attached to the Emperor with the duty of reading out the ruler’s communications to the high assembly . . . when the quaestor recited the imperial dispatches to the sad submissive senators, they endured the hollow phrases of deference, the dishonest asseveration of their collective loyalty and patriotism; and they heard the authentic language of anger, of irony, of exultation. Pliny has not chosen to tell how he fared during his uncomfortable apprenticeship in the arts and hypocrisies of public life. It was no bad training for one who hoped in due course to compose and deliver his own speech of thanksgiving to Caesar.”⁴⁰ Would Pliny have written a panegyric for Domitian upon taking up his consulship just as he did later for Trajan? Strange that all correspondence from that earlier period, the one place we might expect to find an answer to the question, should have disappeared so completely. Are we to believe that Pliny wrote no letters at all in the early years of his career?

It is at this point, perhaps, that we should rehearse our regret for having lost Tacitus’ account of Domitian’s reign. At *Hist.* 1.1 Tacitus admits that Domitian played a direct and decisive role in forwarding his political career, and at *Ag.* 45.1, Syme indicates, he “goes out of his way to make a passionate confession of collective guilt . . . Tacitus puts himself among the majority that witnessed

³⁹ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 77 notes the incongruity of Pliny’s published hatred of Domitian, and his remarkable advancement under him: “Pliny is not reticent about his own courage – and his own peril. All around him fell the thunderbolts, striking down his friends. Yet Pliny was serene and unscathed. In fact, he prospered. With scarcely any delay, Pliny is discovered in possession of a fresh office, as one of the three prefects in charge of the *aerarium militare* (not a word about this anywhere in his letters) . . . In the last years of Domitian Pliny bounded forward in his official career.” Later Syme notes (p. 83) that if any emperor can be thought to have held Pliny back or slowed his career, it is Trajan rather than Domitian.

⁴⁰ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 75–6.

and condoned the worst acts of tyranny.”⁴¹ Thus, his approach to relating a general impression of his political success under Domitian, even a sense of his own shared complicity in some of Domitian’s worst abuses, is remarkably more direct than the “always the tyrant’s worst enemy” line taken by Pliny. So perhaps we should assume that the lost pages of Tacitus’ *Histories* were the place to track the day-to-day dealings of Tacitus, Pliny, Capito, and so many others who outlasted the “monster” under whom they once prospered.

I rather doubt it. At *Ep.* 7.33 Pliny actually suggests to Tacitus, his close friend, that he write him into his histories as a kind of undersung freedom-fighter; namely, as the man who prosecuted Baebius Massa (the same Massa we saw in Juvenal 1) and made his conviction stick. The story, told this way, would make Pliny a champion of the Senate, someone who dared to stand up to Domitian when it really counted. Whether or not Tacitus actually complied with this request is unknown. Still, the letter gives clear indication of the tremendous personal and social pressures put upon the historian to write his histories in a certain way, and of just how terribly relevant his stories were thought to be (and certainly were) in the making of identities for the elite of post-Domitianic Rome.⁴²

One last letter of Pliny before I return to Juvenal. *Ep.* 9.13 is the letter that, I think, best captures the mood of urgency that surrounds Rome’s early-second-century obsession with continually rehearsing, and thereby defining itself against, its traumatic first-century past. Ummidius Quadratus has written to Pliny asking him to provide a historical introduction to the speeches he recently published in vindication of Helvidius Priscus (the younger), executed by Domitian in 93. Although Helvidius has been dead now for at least fifteen years, his story is still being pored over and retold. Pliny’s speeches vindicating him are making the rounds, and further details are in demand. Here again I think of Capito,

⁴¹ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 25.

⁴² On this letter, see especially Woodman (1988) 158: “Pliny evidently takes it for granted that Tacitus will share his own estimation of his role (namely, that it was ‘honourable’) . . . both Cicero and Pliny leave no doubt that when they speak of ‘truth’ they mean ‘impartiality’; the likelihood that their friends’ rhetorical narratives would scarcely accord with the recollections of other contemporaries does not seem to have been an issue. This is some measure of how different classical historiography is from its modern counterpart, and how different the expectations of its readers.”

the statue-man, and his vigorous attempts to write tyrant-killing into his own life. Pliny's speeches vindicating Helvidius can be seen in much the same way. They arise from the same cultural obsession, and they compete for the same prize.

Quadratus wants the details, so Pliny obliges. He writes (*Ep.* 9.13.2): "Once Domitian was dead, I decided on reflection that this was a truly splendid opportunity for attacking the guilty, avenging the injured, and making oneself known." *Occiso Domitiano*, "once Domitian was dead." That was the decisive moment. That, Pliny indicates, was what sent him racing to his study to find his lost paper and pen. The race was on to "make oneself known" (*se proferendi*), to invent yourself as a subject after the fall, to define yourself as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem. And the way you did this, Pliny indicates, was to mark off a clear distance between yourself and the enemy: to "attack the guilty" and to "avenge the injured." His speeches directed against Publicius Certus, the praetorian senator who prosecuted Helvidius in the autumn of 93, are part of this project. And we may note with some slight discomfort that they are written not "in defense of" Helvidius, but "to vindicate" him (*de Helvidi ultione*).⁴³ Pliny, when it really mattered, three years before when he could have "defended" the man, said nothing. But now that Domitian has died, when it really matters to him, he has plenty to say. It is payback time. Time to start writing those speeches that have welled up inside him for the past fifteen years or more, the ones he found so very difficult to *not write*. It all sounds terribly familiar.

But the actual attack against Certus lagged well behind Pliny's initial decision to act, a decision made, Pliny says, in the immediate aftermath of Domitian's death.⁴⁴ At *Ep.* 9.13.4 he explains the delay as a matter of sober judgment: "I myself thought it a more

⁴³ Pliny was fully aware of the problem of publishing speeches too "conveniently" long after the fact. Earlier in the same book, at *Ep.* 9.1, he urges a friend (Novius Maximus?) to publish immediately the speeches he made in his own defense against Pompeius Planta, lest he be thought to have waited for Planta's death to publish them. A side-effect (and perhaps a hidden purpose) of the letter's identity work is to mark Pliny as someone who knows better, and thus to establish his own suspiciously late speeches as politically un-suspicious and well-timed.

⁴⁴ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 77 notes that "[Pliny] did not go into action until some months had elapsed. It would be valuable to know the reasons for the delay, what turn of events now made Certus seem vulnerable. Pliny was not a rash man."

moderate and steadier course to attack a most brutal defendant not with the general hatred of the times, but with a specific criminal charge, after the initial outburst had died down, and rage, which was daily subsiding, had returned to justice." The immediate flurry of reprisals to which Pliny refers targeted only minor officials, freedmen, and slaves rather than men of high standing.⁴⁵ As if by prior agreement, no member of the Senate is known to have incurred the Senate's elaborately performed wrath. And thus, the attack Pliny intended to level against Certus was of a different kind, against a much more "ferocious" and influential opponent (*immanissimum reum*). Certus was a praetorian senator whose treasury position as prefect of the *aerarium Saturni* put him next in line for the consulship. But, by the time Pliny gets around to making his charge against him in the Senate, the time for reprisals has largely slipped away.

The Senate's willingness to punish its own members was never there to begin with, so one may reasonably question what Pliny thought he could achieve by accusing Certus. Because Nerva wished to slow down the pace of reprisals against Domitian's henchmen rather than stir them up, Pliny's attack against Certus, sometime in 97, resulted in no formal motion against him.⁴⁶ No conviction or punishment followed – so why carry through with publishing the speeches against him? Still, Pliny asserts that it was because he dared speak up against him that Certus was subsequently removed from his treasury post, a post to which Pliny himself was then appointed, thus putting him in line for the consulship of 100. But Pliny's own personal windfall from these events is wisely left out of the letter. Instead he claims that the real beneficiary was the Senate, now given new resolve to take action against its own members. In closing the long letter describing these events, at *Ep.* 19.13.24–5 Pliny says that Certus fell ill a few days after the speech and died, harried by an image that floated

⁴⁵ For these reprisals, see especially Dio 68.1.2–3. Syme (1958) vol. 1, 7: "Of the agents of despotism, only minor officials perished or men of low degree. The more important were saved by wealth and influence, by protection alertly contrived against any change of fortune."

⁴⁶ Dio 68.1.3 relates that after Domitian's death there was an "uproar ... that came of everyone's accusing everyone else." Nerva put a halt to that furor at the urging of the consul, Fronto, i.e. *Juvenal's* Fronto (above).

before his eyes, of Pliny attacking him with a sword. Thus the letter ends. And thus Pliny's vindication of Helvidius is rendered unassailable and complete. The tyrant's lackey is dead, killed off by a sword-wielding hero. Pliny himself.

GHOST-ASSAULT IN JUV. I

By now it is clear that the time-warp problem of Juvenal's first book is something much bigger than one man's private literary game, an illusion that he and only he creates and neatly controls within the margins of a book. It is, rather, a central cultural obsession that bears upon and colors not just this poetry, but every significant literary enterprise of the Trajanic and early Hadrianic periods. What makes Juvenal's version of the time-warp so unique and challenging in book 1 of his *Satires* is that he handles it with nothing like the finesse of a Pliny or a Tacitus. With them, obsessing over the past makes a certain generic sense. Tacitus, after all, writes histories and eulogies, so he is generically set up to dwell in the past and to say little, if anything, about the present in which he lives.⁴⁷ As a result, his readers, like those of Pliny and Suetonius, are inclined to refrain from asking embarrassing questions about his sometimes-too-tidy narratives, such as "Where were you when it mattered?" With Juvenal, on the other hand, the cracks in the stated program are simply too wide to gloss over or ignore. What happens when he, a satirist, tries to play the same game? Is there really such a thing as retroactive satire? Can a satirist play the same retroactive game, writing years after the fact, and still expect to qualify as a satirist?

Generic expectations get in the way here, making Juvenal's program a problematic, if not absurd proposition. And yet this is precisely the problem he tosses our way at the end of his first satire. There the interlocutor warns the satirist (Juv. 1.168–70): "Consider this privately to yourself before the trumpet sounds: once your helmet is on it is too late to have second thoughts about

⁴⁷ Still, there are certain features of his historical works, such as the heavy infusion of formulaic, eulogistic death-scenes, which cannot be explained in terms of generic expectations. These, I believe, are much better handled as the result of certain politically "urgent" (read "correct") demands being applied pan-generically to literature (and to various other symbolic media, e.g. Capito's statues) in the Trajanic age.

the war" (*galeatum sero duelli paenitet*). And so he backs off in lines 170–1: "I'll see what I can get away with against the dead who lie beneath the Flaminian and Latin roads." Domitian himself was buried along the Flaminian Way. Paris, once his favorite actor, was buried along the Latin Way.⁴⁸ That is where the poem ends: satire, stuck in the graveyard, outside the city walls rather than taken to its bustling streets, where the poet had boldly announced he would take it.

What do we make of the contradiction? How do we react to being told that the satirist will reclaim that Old Republican freedom to attack his enemies only to be told a moment later that the would-be Lucilius has changed his mind and decided to play it safe? It is, by all accounts, a troubling moment. Why bring in all of these high-flying generic expectations only to defeat yourself, and to show how your satire does not really measure up? Scholars commenting on the lines have often taken this as their cue to rescue Juvenal; to show how, from a certain angle, he really *does* measure up. For example, some have insisted that Juvenal is drawn into the past either because the past has produced the worst of Rome's contemporary evils, or because the biggest threat to Rome in the early days of Trajan's reign is that the past should repeat itself by not having been thoroughly beaten to death.⁴⁹ Thus his satire qualifies as relevant and socially useful. Even crucial.

Perhaps a more profitable line to take would be to see Juvenal as a risk-taker along the lines of the programmatic *apologia* of Tac. *Ann.* 4.33; that is, as one whose abuse of the long-dead brings with it the danger of offending relatives who are still alive. That excuse

⁴⁸ See Anderson (1982) 207.

⁴⁹ For these options, see especially Anderson (1982) 207–8. To Highet's suggestion that the past, for Juvenal, figures as the source of current evils, Anderson adds that "the past, to a certain extent, promises objectivity on the part of the satirist." Courtney (1980) 82, attempts a biographical explanation: "We must infer that the grim past had so ingrained itself in Juvenal's mind that to some extent he failed to recognise contemporary realities." Most recently Braund (1996) and Bartsch (1994) have been less anxious to rescue Juvenal from himself, even ready to let the contradiction stand and "mean." For Braund (pp. 119–21) the contradiction is explained in terms of the author's persona, taken as further evidence that Juvenal is an extreme and addled critic who cannot be taken at face value. Bartsch (pp. 91–7) argues that Juvenal's disclaimer at the end of *Satires 1* is, by design, self-defeating, a hallmark of double-speak, thus spurring readers to suspect that the past is really, by analogy, about the present.

is face-saving, but by no means indisputable, especially in Tacitus' own case. Tacitus gains much by making it.⁵⁰ But this is a strategy that Juvenal does not even bother to hint at. And even if this "solution," externally supplied, is true, it hardly makes the gap between generic expectations and the delivered product any less obvious or troubling. For even with apologies in place, we feel strongly that barricades are being set up around these last lines, like yellow tape around a crime scene. Standing outside the scene, commentators predictably attempt to hurry us along with "Nothing to see here, folks – just keep moving." But these helpful disclaimers do not really convince us that there is nothing to see. Quite the opposite. The presence of hermeneutical SWAT-teams and the blaring of their sirens makes us all the more curious and convinced that there really *is* a problem behind the tape.

My point here is not to insist that scholars are deluded in their attempts to make sense of these last lines, or that in solving the problem they have always got it wrong – as if I actually believed that, or could convince my readers of it. Rather, I contend that their attempts to get it right are both necessary and meaningful, perhaps even more meaningful than any of the individual solutions they have posited. Put in another way, the problem we face at the end of Juvenal 1 is not just an obstacle we grapple with and do our best to dislodge in order to discover what the poem finally means – as if its meaning were some fixed and stable thing "out there" just waiting to be located. Instead, the act of dislodging that obstacle (and we do have to try!) is itself central to the experience of reading and the *very stuff of meaning*. Barbara Johnson put it well: "The poem is not *about* something *separate* from the activity required to decipher it."⁵¹

⁵⁰ The claim merits strong suspicion, especially given the cachet it adds to the writing of the *Annales* by intimating that Tacitus himself runs a significant risk in daring to pass judgment on Rome's first-century past. It serves Tacitus' programmatic aims, even his political purposes, in a fashion that seems terribly convenient, and much too highly crafted, to merit uncritical acceptance. Because the *apologia* is set immediately ahead of the account of Cremutius Cordus' demise (see above), one cannot help reading Cordus' story as somehow analogous to that of Tacitus himself, and vice versa. Both are described as victims of potential misreadings, running similar risks, even death-defying risks, in the writing of their respective histories. By means of this clever, ostensibly casual *iunctura*, Tacitus adds to his own work a needed air of defiance, figuring himself as a risk-taker along the lines of the much lionized Cordus. That, we have seen, carries huge social value in Trajanic Rome.

⁵¹ Johnson (1985) 144. I owe the observation (and citation) to Henderson (1992) 137.

The problem with Juvenal's first book of satires, I have argued, is that these poems come too late.⁵² They make a deliberate point of their coming too late. They bluster on about being relevant and risk-taking when, in fact, they are all too flaunting of their failure to address the present. That failure is felt most keenly at the end of the first satire, and no amount of scholarly patchwork has been able to fill the cracks completely. Thus, maybe the better question to ask of these lines is not "How do we keep Juvenal from defeating himself?," but "What do we make of his defeating himself?" Why *does* he defeat himself, and do it so decisively, opening cracks that are too big for us to plaster over? Cast this way, the problem of Juvenal's "hypocrisy" is not an obstacle to meaning, but a meaningful obstacle. Making up for lost time *in satire* is an unlikely, if not irredeemable, notion. No one has ever used satire to do this before. The genre is not set up to work that way. Satire is a genre that must engage with the present, and any attempt to make it seem that it can work as a kind of retroactive payback has got to come off as just a little absurd. Why, then, should Juvenal so openly dwell on his late-coming? Wouldn't he have been better off covering that up? Couldn't he have been more like Pliny and kept us from noticing?

But maybe that is the point. Maybe it is precisely where Juvenal's "failure" spills off his page and contrasts the parallel "success" of, say, a Tacitus, or a Pliny, or a Capito, or whomever, that his hypocritical late-coming finally ceases to be just *his* problem, a problem we seek to solve to understand Juvenal, and becomes a problem of general cultural relevance, with an active potential to offend (something that readers of satire generally demand of the genre). For it is clear by now that Juvenal's fixation with Rome's first-century past is not just his problem. The retroactive game that he plays in his first book is precisely the same game that so many members of his society were engaged in and made such a grand show of playing in the early years after Domitian's death. Tacitus, Pliny, Titinius Capito, Gaius Fannius, we have seen, were driven by the same impulse in their histories, statues, correspondence, and so on, to invent themselves after-the-fall, and to say what they conveniently managed to *not say* a decade or two before. Though very much alive, they are buried in the Domitianic past

⁵² The same problem is easily traced in books 2 and 3 as well. See Bartsch (1994) 130.

with the likes of Domitian and Paris, deep under the Flaminian and Latin Ways. All are drawn into the same traumatic past in an attempt to make up for lost time. At the end of his first satire, Juvenal tries his hand at the same game and gets it wrong. And in getting it wrong, he lets us see some of the cracks that threaten to bring down one of the main cultural enterprises of his day: the race to “make oneself known” after the fall.

This I take as a kind of “diagnostic” parody; parody that presents extreme challenges to readers by riding the edge of respectability and almost working as the genuine article. For Juvenal has the basic trappings of someone who suffered under Domitian: “pummeled” (*uexatus*, 2) and disgraced in Fronto’s torture chamber, he saw a rag-wearing Telephus sent into exile, and poor Orestes with letters scrawled across his back (*scriptus et in tergo*, 6). Then, as if in exile himself, Juvenal tells of his deep, personal knowledge of Aeolus’ cave, a prison-house of the winds, and of the agonies meted out in Aeacus’ torture chamber. The man orchestrating this ghastly “punishment,” he says, was Fronto, no obscure man of letters, but suffect consul with Nerva in 96, perhaps appointed to that post by Domitian himself.⁵³ Thus, Juvenal would have us believe that he, too, suffered under the tyrant and his lackeys, but his account is clearly off-base and overdone. His “tortures” in Fronto’s recitation hall, though done up in the trappings of freedom-fighting respectability, are comical. They can never rate as the genuine article.

But if this is parody, what is it a parody of? The story of Juvenal’s finding a long-lost voice, staged in the first poem of his first book, is an uncanny match for Tacitus’ *nunc redit animus*, Pliny’s *occiso Domitiano*, and Capito’s *seris . . . sed . . . ueris*. His story runs parallel to the epic-styled “tyrant versus hero” stories that rang out so loudly in the recitation halls of early second-century Rome, but Juvenal has turned up the volume so loud on his particular version

⁵³ Most significantly, Fronto is known to have played an active role in slowing reprisals against Domitian’s favorites after the emperor’s death (see above n. 46). In that role, he is best known as the co-defendant, with Salvius Liberalis, in the case of Marius Priscus, the wine-sipping exile of Juv. 1.49–50. As Juvenal’s comments on Marius’ exile indicate, not everyone was pleased with the outcome of this trial in which the Senate undertook to punish one of its own. The prosecutors assigned to the case were none other than Pliny and Tacitus, and Pliny goes to great lengths in *Ep.* 2.11, one of his longest letters, to demonstrate that he had argued for a harsher punishment than the one that Marius eventually received.

of the abuse-and-liberation tale that the sounds of that tale have become comically distorted and disorienting. We are left to wonder whether what we hear in Juvenal's first poem are the sounds of honorable indignation, the genuine article, or a parodic shake-down of the whole indignation industry. That is, the raging against past abuses that was the hallmark of literature in the Trajanic age, sounds playing in every bookshop, portico, and pub.

But that is where Juvenal leaves us at the end of his first satire, wondering where we stand, and not quite sure how to hear what he has to say. He tosses us a live grenade and promptly exits the scene. What we are to do with it he leaves entirely to us. But deal with it we must. And so, what we usually think of as his problem, in the end, becomes our problem. Our hermeneutical crisis. And the way we choose to deal with that crisis says an awful lot about who we are as readers, what we put up with, the hoops we are willing to jump through in order to make sense of Juvenal and "rescue" his fractured, retroactive programme.

How do we come to terms with the poet's inconsistencies? Do we even admit that they are there? If so, do we try to rescue Juvenal and to insist that, despite initial impressions, his program really does make sense? And how do we feel about having to save him? Do we resent all the work that has gone into preventing his self-destruction? If so, does that resentment spill over into the way we read his contemporaries, Tacitus or Pliny? Did we allow ourselves to think of them along the way? Or maybe we just decided that Juvenal is beyond redemption, that his inconsistencies make him a second-rate poet, not up to the task he has set for himself. Several scholars have gone in that direction, content to insist that Juvenal is mere silver to Lucilius' gold. Still, that decision itself requires that we turn a blind eye to any possible analogies with Pliny or Tacitus. Otherwise, disparaging Juvenal brings with it the uncomfortable side-effect of implicating them as well. Or is it precisely because we are anxious to distance Pliny and Tacitus from any hint of hypocrisy that we are so quick to draw a hard, black line between their "success" and his more obvious "failure"?

These are the kinds of questions that the poet's diagnostic work poses. The principal diagnosis, in the end, is not on Juvenal, his society, or the literary personalities of his day, but on us, readers centrally engaged in the experience of making sense of those personalities and of this difficult, pushy, and extreme author. In

reading Juvenal, this sense-making work is a full-time struggle, for his failure to address his own age is just one of many hard-to-reconcile ironies that threaten to sabotage his stated programme. Among the more famous of these threatening ironies is the poet's clear failure to extricate his *Satires* from the very tragic and epic modes of thought and expression that they so aggressively despise. He begins his work by telling us of the long abuse he suffered listening to Cordus (oddly, a man with a freedom-fighter's famous name) ramble on about Theseus, the Minotaur, the hero's sad return to Athens, and so on. Valerius, it seems, was just as bad, maybe worse: Lapiths fighting centaurs, tree-sized javelins, and so on. And yet, when he finally gets his chance to break free and say something new and relevant, Juvenal ends up bombarding us with the same stuff. He is just as much a part of the myth-making industry, just as fixated on a distant, heavily mythologized past as Valerius was. One of the more ironic and challenging features of lines 22–9, the book's first catalogue of vice, is that the villains they attack are all imagined in the colors and motifs of epic: there is Mevia, the spear-wielding amazon, in line 22; line 23 features a great boar-hunt; *prouocet unus* in 24 sounds like a hero's challenge to single combat. And Crispinus, in lines 27–9, works up a terrible sweat by hoisting a giant stone. Epic, it seems, is built into the poet's imagination. It shapes the way he sees the world.

And yet, if listening to epic is that extreme form of torture that he describes in the book's opening lines, then what do we imagine he is doing *to us* when he subjects us to the same stuff? How do we justify his racing straight back to those same inane fantasies to formulate his satiric vision? The whole project threatens to collapse from the start as the speaker's criticism turns on itself and gets figured into the very mess he is trying to purge away. Thus, the urge to toss Juvenal aside, once again, is very strong. But as before, I think the problem is less an obstacle to meaning than it is the point. It probes the way we read and make sense of Juvenal. And that activity, the *experience* of removing the obstacle, is his satire's diagnostic work, inseparable from what it means.

Semper ego auditor tantum? (“Am I always to be just a listener?”) If you read that first line aloud, as most Romans probably did, you have answered the question by asking it. You have ceased to be just a listener and begun, finally, to speak. If you read it silently, though, you remain a listener and, according to this poem, a

victim. The torture, in this case, is not meted out by Cordus or Valerius, but by Juvenal, their counterpart in satire. Now it is his turn to abuse us. In keeping silent, we listen dutifully as he rambles on in grand epic tones, not about Theseus or Jason this time, but about the various monsters and sadistic villains that stalked the Roman landscape of the first century CE.

That is the bind we are put in by the poem's first lines. We are given a dubious choice between silent resentment, on the one hand, and letting the satirist's scripted *ego* become ours on the other. The trouble with that is that his *ego* is so notoriously pushy, loud, and self-defeating. Is it really the *ego* we would choose to speak for us in our moment of liberation, and to represent our experience of finally having the chance to speak? Does being set free after such a long silence really mean we have to talk like *that*? But maybe that is the point. Maybe the resentment we feel in being given such meager options is a central function of this poem's getting us inside ourselves. Being set free to speak should mean something else. And yet here we are forced to see that freedom as a version of the same old slavish abuse: the freedom to keep silent, or to say only what someone else is saying; to follow his script, and in the same, overdone epic mode.

That insight, I suspect, may have been especially troubling to certain members of Juvenal's second-century audience, some of whom may have felt a similar resentment towards their new-found, much-vaunted "freedom." After the fall, the race was on to come to terms with the past and to retell the story of Rome's first-century "trauma," i.e. by constructing it *as* trauma. But as I hope by now to have shown, the choices available in that so-called "free-speaking" enterprise were actually quite limited: you could either keep quiet about the emperors, by damning their memory altogether, or you could write them up as monsters, absurd, easy-to-read, and extreme. Treating them as complex, human characters, or with anything other than outright scorn, does not seem to have been an option. Not one you would want to explore too far, anyway. For, whatever you said about them would be closely scrutinized, so the pressure was on to watch what everyone else was doing, and to say what everyone else was saying, no matter how overdone and unreal that might seem.

With Juvenal it all seems especially unreal. That is the problem he presents to us, and to the various audiences that he addressed

in his own day. He takes a sledgehammer to what others have handled with discretion, refined generic sensibilities, and a very fine brush. That kind of clumsiness and bluster is funny, of course, and we are certainly right to laugh at it. But, I suspect, there is an uncomfortable edge to that laughter as well. For, if I am right in drawing some of the analogies I have drawn in this chapter, Juvenal's flawed, hypocritical program touches on one of the main cultural enterprises of his day. His is a louder, sleazier version of that enterprise: the panic-driven search for monsters, and for an easy narrative-fix, one "box" at a time, on an impossibly complicated past. Setting Juvenal's project beside that one has some potentially disturbing effects. Yet it is precisely there, I think, in the poetry's potential to disturb and to perform its diagnostic work, that it finally emerges as the one thing we never quite imagined that Juvenal's *Satires* could be: satire. The real thing. Satire that measures up, needing no apologies, because it is really not as late and irrelevant as it seems. It has in it a very real potential to disrupt, offend, and tear into the most deeply-felt anxieties of the Trajanic age.

THE POOR MAN'S LUCILIUS

Juvenal has precious little to say against specific, named members of the social and political elite of his day, and he keeps the precise details of his private life to himself.⁵⁴ Thus, despite his elaborate protestations to the contrary, he can never be counted as the *Lucilius redux* he claims to be. Nor does he resemble Horace, a friendly ironist, in any obvious way, or Persius, a riddling Stoic ideologue. Instead, scholars have long seen that Juvenal's hallmark, and his chief contribution to modern expectations of the genre, is anger.⁵⁵ His *indignatio* "moral outrage" is so all-encompassing that it leaves no room for the genre's more understated registers of ironic play, introspection, and philosophical calm. His preferred mode in books 1 and 2 is a grand-style, declamatory rage. The satirists who went before him all had their moments in that register. Juvenal apparently knows no other.

⁵⁴ Though he tells of general frustrations in abundance.

⁵⁵ Rudd-Barr (1991) ix: "there is no surviving Roman satirist whose approach more nearly matches readers' expectations of the genre."

In his first poem, we have seen, Juvenal figures his work as an outburst of rage, pent up by decades of pressurized seething. His pen he compares to a long neglected Lucilian sword that he wields against the vicious and the vain. But that Lucilian act quickly falters when he comes to consider the price he may be forced to pay for freely speaking his mind. A worried friend steps in at line 150 to remind him that the “frankness” he intends to use is a throwback to another age (*illa priorum . . . simplicitas*, 151–3), and that such high ideals are no longer safely pursued. But Juvenal makes a strong Lucilian objection to his interlocutor’s warning at Juv. 1.153–7:

“cuius non audeo dicere nomen?
quid refert dictis ignoscat Mucius an non?”
“pone Tigillinum, taeda lucebis in illa
qua stantes ardent qui fixo gutture fumant,
et latum media sulcum deducit harena.”

Whose name am I not daring enough to mention? What difference to me if Mucius overlooks my words or not? “Write about Tigillinus and you will blaze on the same torch that burns men alive, leaving them to smoulder with a nail through their throats. He/it [sc. when dragged away] draws a broad trough from the middle of the sand.”

The sword-wielding *Lucilius ardens* (165) becomes just that in these lines, a non-metaphor, a “burning Lucilius.” Tigillinus likes such metaphorical bravado, the poet’s friend warns him, because he can make the would-be Lucilius’ every figurative pretension come literally true, even driving a pen-like weapon straight through the satirist’s voicebox to show him wielding his vaunted “sword of free speech.” Juvenal’s stated program will become the script for his torturer’s satire-killing show.

But there is a second, less obvious side to this retort that makes it much more than a general warning about the dangers of free speech in first-century Rome. For the abrupt change of satiric targets from the poet’s Mucius to the cautious friend’s Tigillinus brings with it a strong sense of the passing of time, and of Juvenal’s being hopelessly out of date and naïve. He is trying to revive satiric ideals that are a throwback to an age long past, when Mucius and his like were still interesting as satire’s principal targets, and when they could be counted as any satirist’s most fearsome threat. Juvenal refers to P. Mucius Scaevola, the same Mucius that Perseus works into his “shutting down” of the genre as a free-speaking

enterprise at P. 1.115.⁵⁶ This Mucius was an eminent politician of the second century BCE whose impeccable pedigree, high political connections, and illustrious official career made him someone not to be taunted. And yet Lucilius taunted him. That is the point. That is how fearless Lucilius was, how powerful *that* satirist's own high birth, his enormous wealth, and the security of his having powerful friends, made him. He could boast of having nothing to fear from Mucius. And what an impressive boast that was!

But no longer. His wary advisor is not impressed. For Juvenal has naïvely assumed that Mucius and his like still matter in Rome, that they are still the ones whom satirists need to target and to fear, the ones from whom severe reprisals must be expected. Mucius' reputation as a threatening figure not to be taunted harks back to a different age, when power actually belonged to senators of noble birth in Rome, when membership in the Senate, especially for a former tribune of the plebs and consul, as Mucius was, brought with it real, menacing power. But the mere mention of Tigillinus, set within a two-line sample of the power he wields, hurls the Lucilian throwback into a (past) present tense that he can by no means understand.

Tigillinus, in clear contrast to Mucius, was a man of remarkably low birth, and yet he attained a degree of power and political influence over Nero that no Republican senator, not even the most powerful enemy of the Scipios, could match.⁵⁷ Tacitus relates that Tigillinus attained his inordinate power by catering to Nero's every cruel whim, and by his stylish innovations in the fields of feasting, whoring, and torture – often innovating by combining all three. Thus, whereas Lucilius used his old Roman nobility and political influence to attack vice, Tigillinus is said to have used vice to attain political influence and to attack the old Roman nobility. The world of Lucilius, the world his would-be imitator understands and intends to work within, has been turned completely upside down by the likes of Tigillinus and Nero. And that is what makes Juvenal's reprise of Lucilius so utterly unthinkable in a first-century, totalitarian context.

But the particular brand of torture described in these lines speaks not just to a change in times that Juvenal has failed to take

⁵⁶ See above, chapter 2.

⁵⁷ For Tigillinus' low birth, see Tac. *Hist.* 1.72 and the Scholiasts on Juv. 1.155.

into account, it is a subtle but firm reminder of Juvenal's dubious standing within the elaborate hierarchy of Roman *Herkunft*. For the punishment his interlocutor describes to him would never have been suffered by any real Lucilius, not even one who happened to hurl insults, live, and die an unnatural death in Tigillinus' day. It was reserved for the slaves and urban poor of Rome, having been tailor-made, it seems, for those who professed to being Christians under Nero. Tac. *Ann.* 15.44 tells us that the making of human lamps to light up the emperor's late-night orgies was a cruel innovation for which Tigillinus may well have been responsible. It has his signature (i.e. "demetaphorizing") design, making Christ's low-life "lights (lit. "lamps") of the world" into the lamps they boasted to be.

Nobles, on the other hand, were not normally subjected to this kind of extreme punishment, degrading by design. Their recalcitrance might be punished by exile or an enforced suicide, punishment leisurely pursued, often elaborately orchestrated by the victim himself/herself as a final show of defiance and free agency, and performed with a distinct and ennobling stylistic flair, *the victim's own* personalized design. But no such attractive and ennobling punishments could be expected by the likes of Juvenal. His death, his interlocutor reminds him, would be a spectacle of his powerlessness and his utter disgrace. For whereas Rome's first-century "monsters" were wont to leave traces of the noble heroes they consumed, in hero tales that lived beyond the grave, common folk and fake heroes they consumed completely. The only trace they left of themselves, literary or otherwise, was a signature line drawn in the arena sand, a charred trough for the grounds-keepers to rake smooth before "processing" the next batch of nameless condemned.⁵⁸ Such is the "menace" posed by a second-rate, poor man's Lucilius in Tigillinus' Rome. Like a second-tier hero in epic, he takes up a fallen hero's weapons and tries to wield them as his own. But the principal threat he poses in using them is to himself. Lucilius' pen-sword in hand, Juvenal will end up impaling himself right through the throat.

⁵⁸ The literary dimension of the victim's "broad trench" is suggested by *deducere*, the word of choice among poets who wished to identify their writing as refined both in and by the Callimachean tradition. For *deducere* referring to the removal of corpses from the arena, cf. Tert. *Apol.* 15.5 *uidimus et louis fratrem gladiatorum cadauera cum malleo deducentem*.

Juvenal brandishes an impressive epic sword once owned by Lucilius, but he cannot use it as its former owner so famously did. So he wields it against the long dead, and against living targets of no account. The sphere in which these targets operate and offend, he tells us, and thus the place where Juvenal routinely takes us to see them, is not the Senate house, nor the Palatine hill, nor a noble friend's well appointed villa, but the bustling crossroads of downtown Rome, the *quadriuium* (the "four roads"), an intersection that rates as one notch more trivial than the *triuuium* (the "three roads"). At Juv. 1.63–8 he says:

nonne libet medio ceras inplere capaces
quadriuiio, cum iam sexta ceruice feratur
hinc atque inde patens ac nuda paena cathedra
et multum referens de Maecenate supino
signator falsi, qui se lautum atque beatum
exiguus tabulis et gemma fecerit uda?

Wouldn't you like to fill large notebooks at/with the intersection of the four-roads whenever some forger sweeps past in a litter that's wide open, carried by six slaves, looking just like some lounging Maecenas now that he has made himself elegant and rich by means of his niggling codicils and ever-ready sealing ring?

Here we are treated to a sample of the highways to be traveled along, and the sights to be seen in these poems. For named targets of any real political and social significance he takes us outside the city walls, to the attractive graveyards of the Flaminian and Latin Roads. Live targets, such as the one described here, and others in the lines that follow, will be spied along the dusty *quadriuium*, by a would-be horseman who cannot afford a horse.

Despite this lowering of perspective and locale, the grand proportions of this man's rage are not reduced. The point is well made by the enormity of the wax tablets he tells of filling in these lines, tablets crammed so full, he says, that they contain the entire *quadriuium*, as if the pages he writes on were as wide and full as the four converging roads they describe. Impossible. But that is what he intends to deliver, a bustling scene of scrappings and goings-about, the poor man's eye-view of *his* Rome, the city at its seediest and least elegant. This view, he makes clear, is observed by someone travelling on foot, at street-level, specifically not from a sedan chair high above the bustle, or from a quiet, suburban hillside overlooking the scene. What happens in those higher places, he admits, is generally hidden from his view, blocked off by crowds of

gawkers and retainers and screens that keep him from getting a clear view of the city's power brokers and their negotiations of high import. And thus our view of these same higher matters is blocked off as well, screened by the poet's failure to rate as the Lucilius he aimed to be, and severely skewed by his jaundiced and outraged way of seeing his world, a world that he can neither rise above nor master. Still, at lines 85–8 he makes grand, comprehensive claims for his work that his limited eye-view can never manage to deliver:

quidquid agunt homines, uotum, timor, ira, uoluptas,
 gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est.
 et quando uberior uitiorum copia? quando
 maior auaritia patuit sinus?

Whatever people do, their desires, fears, wrath, pleasure, passions, and runnings-about, that is the fodder of my little book. And when has the harvest of vice ever been more abundant? When has Greed's pocket ever gaped wider?

The enterprise is massive, beyond all bounds, impossible. No less than *quidquid agunt homines* ("whatever people do"). In the lines that follow he gives yet another sample of the places he will take us, and of how he will paint the scenes he sees, telling of "what huge battles you will see" (*proelia quanta . . . uidebis*, 91) in the gaming parlors of Rome. The metaphor is typical of Juvenal, and telling: for this satirist, the squabbles of greedy gamblers are on a par with the grandest battles of Roman epic. The one scene, no matter how seedy and trivial, and no matter where it is spied, he can only conceive through the other. And that is the way he intends to tell it to us: "Sing, Muse, the wrath of Corax, when he lost ten thousand to the scar-faced juggler of Scuffle Street."

That is the ironic sum of Juvenal's stated program. He fixes his eyes on what happens at street-level in Rome, in the brothels, taverns and alleyways where no satirist has taken us before, and he describes what he sees there in the fulsome tones and tropes of Rome's grandest poetic enterprise, as if the two could really be made to work together. He enters these places armed in Lucilian battle gear, failing to notice how overdressed he is, and paying no mind to the snickers rising above the beer. There he puts up a spectacular, Quixotic fight against the denizens of his daily routine, railing against all the various nobodies and the long dead who have shown him no respect and, as he tells it, made his life a

series of labors to rival any epic hero's worst travails. His railing is constant. Overdone. Self-defeating.

Perhaps the most obvious problem he faces in getting us to take him seriously is his chosen rhetorical mode, a high-flying declamatory rage. Roman theorists of rhetoric had long insisted that such a showy display was precarious and had to be used with great care, sparingly fitted to certain parts of a well made speech, and worked up to in certain well defined ways. The grand show of *indignatio* in Roman oratory was heavily restricted by those who knew its self-destructive potentials, but Juvenal does not seem to have learned the rules of compositional theory restricting its use, especially the rule of "variation" (*uariatio*). His first poem he begins in a full-blown rage, and he stays in that mode with little variation throughout his first three books. Steady, reasoned arguments are momentary and few in Juvenal, displaced by a barrage of grand-style devices, commonly considered the mechanisms of a good speech, not the thing itself.

Special effects overshadow argument, leaving us to wonder what to make of the poet's stated moral and punitive aims. Are they completely undermined by rhetorical incompetence? Can anything he says be taken seriously as the truth about the way things are? His show of self-defeat makes for a good, comic gag, an ancient version of a standup comic's "I don't get no respect" routine. But does it rate as satire? That is, does it deliver on any significant generic expectations as received from Lucilius and remade by Horace and Persius? Most importantly, what of the genre's well advertised penchant for telling *the truth* with a smile, whether delivering that as raw Lucilian mockery, or hiding the bitter inside the sweet, by "cooking it down" in schoolboy cookies, or in plebeian beets and plates of grain that nourish, annoy, expose, and teach? Does Juvenal's low-grade *farrago* ("horse-feed," contrasting Persius' pious "grain-pile") have any nutritional value at all? Or is our laughter his only point?

LIFE ON THE EDGE: FROM EXAGGERATION TO
SELF-DEFEAT

Juvenal's second and third poems tell of vice so widespread and overwhelming that it pushes the last of the city's "real Romans," such as the poet and his alter-ego, Umbricius, claim to be, clear

off the map of Rome's ever expanding world, to the frozen Sea of Azov in the far north, and to the Sibyl's gateway to hell in the south. That is how far one has to run from Rome to escape her rampant depravity. That is how far this satirist is forced to go to describe it to us: off the map of commonplace and carefully delimited modes of censure, into the frigid, uncharted realms of grand, Asianist hyperbole. Just how wild and overdone that exaggeration can be he demonstrates in all the poems of books 1 and 2, neatly fitting the mode to the vice these poems decry, with *descriptio* pushed to reality's edge, defying belief, in order to demonstrate just how monstrous and extreme Roman moral habits have become. These habits, like a disease, have spread to the farthest reaches of an empire that is now, under Trajan, as huge and unwieldy as it will ever become. With a Rome so big and preternaturally extreme, the satire that claims to censure it must be equally vast and unbounded.

Thus we hear outlandish tales in these poems, of vice always expanding and ever reaching new, record-setting extremes, like the empire itself, only to be outdone by new extremes in the descriptions that immediately follow. The second poem begins with a description of Cleanthean sodomites, moral censors who screw one another amid the trappings of their high moral ideals. Later in the same poem we hear of drag-queen statesmen who celebrate the rites of "The Great Goddess," in a *Bona Dea* scandal several degrees more scandalous than Cicero's. His tales are so outlandish that they constantly invite the suspicion of informed listeners who might otherwise, given the stated moral aims of satire and the speaker's own self-assured earnestness, be tempted to take them, and him, seriously. That suspicion regularly extends to unbelief, and elicits a knowing laugh.

And yet, these tall tales do more than simply entertain with their outlandishness. For they resemble certain other moral/didactic shows that played in Juvenal's Rome, and that sounded, at times, nearly as extreme and comically grim as his own. Thus, the laughter that these tales elicit has a catch, a hidden "satiric" barb that lingers and chafes long after the show has closed and the laughter faded. For this show has the potential to take in others as well, and to drag them down in Juvenal's own, brilliantly idiotic self-defeat.

Near the beginning of his second poem, Juvenal cues us to the

existence of rival performances of moral censure that played in higher places in Rome, and that traded among those who claimed to be much more philosophically directed and informed. These moralists, not effeminate, transvestites, and homosexuals *per se*, but those who made a grand, philosophical show of berating them, only to bugger one another right in front of the philosopher's busts that peered out at them from the couch's rear shelf, are the targets of this poem's shabby but colorful attack. Their stern efforts *de moribus*, Juvenal insinuates, were employed as a means of sexual arousal, a peep show in the guise of serious moral philosophy. His counter-tirade, in turn, is itself explicit and titillating. Its ability to arouse is thus one of the problems it presents, a hidden triggering device for its own self-defeat.

Juvenal would have us believe that such hypocritical shows of moral outrage played in very high places in Rome. In the time-warped vignette of lines 29–35, where the poet's *nuper* ("recently") means "at least fifteen years ago, if not more," the moral reforms of Domitian himself are addressed:

qualis erat nuper tragico pollutus adulter
 concubitu, qui tunc leges reuocabat amaras
 omnibus atque ipsis Veneri Martique timendas,
 cum tot abortiuis fecundam Iulia uulvam
 solueret et patruo similes effunderet offas.
 nonne igitur iure ac merito uitia ultima fictos
 contemnunt Scauros et castigata remordent?

And so it was, recently, when that adulterer, stained by an affair of a "tragic" kind, set about to revive stern adultery laws to be feared by all, even Mars and Venus. But while he was doing this, Julia would wash her fertile womb with one abortive-rinse after another, discharging hunks that looked like her uncle. Given all this, isn't it right and deserved for even the most depraved to despise these fake preachers, and to bite them back when they chide?

From the Late Republican figures of the Gracchi, Verres, Milo, Clodius, and Catiline in the lines immediately preceding, all popular type-villains of Roman declamation, the poet makes a precipitous plunge into the (relatively) "recent" remembered past. But in making that move he has not left his suasorial, declamatory imagination behind. Domitian's notorious affair with his niece, Julia, he colors as a titillating and disgusting "tragic" scene, blurring the line between history and myth by making us see one

through the other. The adultery laws revived by Domitian, he says, were bitter enough to send a shudder of fear through the gods themselves, Venus and Mars, the most famous adulterous lovers of Greek and Roman myth. The hyperbole is thick. The fictionalizing of fact is obvious, even though that is precisely the danger that the lines themselves urge us to be wary of. Those hideous, “look-alike hunks” of Julia’s aborted fetuses are just the most obvious detail of the poet’s paint-by-numbers routine, his following rhetoric’s rules for *descriptio* that is tailor-made to disgust and enrage.⁵⁹

This is Juvenal’s revenge, he claims, the punishment he metes out for having been forced to sit and watch a scene of such outlandish, even “tragic” hypocrisy, with an incestuous emperor acting the part of an outraged Cato in charge of Rome’s moral improvement. But the punishment he delivers gets lost in its own unreality and late-coming, and thus it threatens to punish the punisher himself. For Juvenal’s tortures, in the end, are every bit as wild and spectacular as those invented by Tigellinus, torturer extraordinaire under Nero, and thus they can be seen as rebounding against the satirist-torturer himself. His “extreme depravities” (*vitia ultima*) bite back, just as he said they would. But this rebounding of the blows he inflicts can be taken in several ways, most obviously as a sign of the poet’s ineptitude, intended or not, or of his putting on an act that is more clownish than Catonian, i.e. mistakenly, and hilariously, set on a tragic stage, but with nothing terribly serious to say. Perhaps this is the inevitable price one pays for waiting too long, and letting the pressure to revenge oneself build too high. If, in fact, that is what he is really about. Given the long gap that separates crime from punishment in these poems, the poet is bound to overlay his part, and to appear, if not a hypocrite, a buffoon. At best, a “lovable” buffoon.

And that is precisely where his performance catches others as well. Juvenal’s abuse is outrageous, but he is not alone in his outrage. He begins his second poem by complaining that displays of moral severity cannot be trusted, especially when dressed in philosophical garb. But he then gives us every reason not to trust his own moral show, certainly not as a true account of “the way things were” under Domitian. But that may be the point. His own

⁵⁹ On rhetorical *descriptions* in Juvenal, see especially Braund (1988) 1–23.

rage, outrageous as it is, is set up in this poem as the unsophisticated foil to another, more philosophically informed and astute philosophical enterprise. Juvenal, as we have seen, wrote in an age that styled itself “post-traumatic.” Its literature was dominated by symbolic performances of moral censure in many forms, many of which performances could easily be judged expedient, if not openly hypocritical. That self-assured, moral-talking-head industry, targeting the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors, is thus swept into the offense of this poem’s failure to stay within bounds, taken down, if only a notch, by the poet’s overdoing of what many had done extremely well.

But one moral censor stands out in *Juv.* 2 as its unlikely hero and lone teller of the truth. Laronia, the inset speaker of lines 38–63, is given sole credit for speaking up against Domitian’s hypocritical moral reforms when they were first being promoted by his supporters. One reformer, wearing a dour expression on his face, calls out “where are you sleeping, O Julian Law?” (*ubi nunc, lex Iulia, dormis?*) in line 37. We have just been given a clear idea of where Julia, the law’s latter-day namesake, was sleeping, so it is easy to see why Laronia takes this man’s hypocritical expostulation as her point of departure, the precise point where she can hold back no more. Her response is scornful, but carefully fitted to its historical setting by being understated, ironic, and thick with figurative double-meanings. Such defiance, however indirectly turned, is impressive, especially for a woman who has perhaps been accused of adultery herself. Here she takes up the satirist’s role. For a time, she becomes Rome’s unlikely moral censor, the real censor that Domitian could never be, and the censor-satirist that Juvenal, under Domitian, never was, but perhaps wishes he had been. She actually said something when it counted!

But impressions are false in this poem, just as the poet has warned from the start: *frontis nulla fides* (“appearances are not to be trusted,” 8). That applies to Laronia as well, for as Susanna Braund has clearly shown, Laronia cannot completely hide the fact that she is herself a *ficta Scaura*, Juvenal’s invention, a Diotima to his Socrates, and his like-minded and highly stylized mirror image.⁶⁰ And that poses a problem for our assenting to what she has to say, especially given the larger moral tale in which she is made

⁶⁰ See Braund (1995).

to speak. For she, allegedly the poem's only non-hypocrite, is exposed as none other than Juvenal himself, the censor-satirist, in drag! Ferreted out by us, readers who already know this poet too well, Juvenal is thus centrally implicated in his own self-defeat. We have found him parading in Laronia's clothes, engaging in rites of free speech, right before Domitian's face, where no satirist can claim to have spoken the truth she speaks, openly, ironically, or otherwise. Juvenal took no such risk. He never said anything of the sort. And yet, here, (s)he does. Thus, he is exposed as a fraud, yet another dour-faced moralist in a frilly dress, posing in front of a mirror. In the end, the chiding, rhetorical dress he sports is as showy, tartish, and see-through as that of the rhetor Creticus, the "harsh and indomitable teacher of free speech" he lampoons for dressing so provocatively in the lines that directly follow (65–81).

Perhaps the most obvious sign of Juvenal's turning tricks in Laronia's dress is the figuring of her response as a categorical matter of women versus men, *nos* ("us") versus *uos* ("you"). Instead of demonstrating that the accused are free from blame, she simply claims that men, as a group, are worse, and she proffers several *exempla*, thick with innuendo, to prove her point. Such a grand sweep of disgust, targeting an entire gender, has its most obvious parallel in the sweeping, mock-Catonian attack of Juv. 6, an apotroptic against marriage that quickly turns into a categorical disparagement of women. That poem begins with a mock anthropology in the spirit of Hor. *S.* 1.3.99–112, telling of a time far back in the reign of Saturn when a chaste wife, however shaggy, could still be found. But that was terribly long ago, he says, in an age of myth that this speaker regards as perfectly real. His addressee he thus aptly names Postumus ("Born After"), a man who seems to want a good wife, but is, regrettably, too late.

The poet cites dozens of instances of feminine immorality, mythical, historical, and contemporary, in the course of Juv. 6. None of these is clearly detached from the exemplary scandals of Roman declamation, historical myth, epic, and tragedy, through which they are figured. After more than 600 lines of fuming, the poet recalls the murderous intrigues of the Julio-Claudian women, and that leads him to lose his bearings completely. The poem ends with the poet's free fall into the world of myth. We watch him rail against the husband-killers and child-killers he claims to see on every Roman street, women far worse than the

Danaids, Procnes, and Clytemnestras known from the Greek tragic stage. He urgently wants us to believe that they are really there, right before our eyes, chopping children for their husbands' stew. Just look anywhere, he says, and you will see them. Don't you see them?

But we don't. What we are looking at, at this point, is Juvenal himself, the madman satirist. He is the show. We watch as he loses control, at last swept into the world of myth so completely that he himself becomes the principal spectacle of uncontrolled *ira* (647) and *rabies* (648) that he claims to deplore in "this sex" (*hunc sexum*, 648). And there, in that complete loss of control, he again becomes his satire's chief target. For the failure to distinguish myth from reality has been earmarked by him as a deplorable feminine vice since early on in this poem. The most memorable scene both deploring this loss of control, and showing its effects on the poet himself, we see at lines 60–6, Juvenal's version of the orgasmic recitation scene of P. 1.15–21. The poet asks Postumus:

porticibusne tibi monstratur femina uoto
 digna tuo? cuneis an habent spectacula totis
 quod securus ames quodque inde excerpere possis?
 chironomon Ledam molli saltante Bathyllo
 Tuccia uesicae non imperat, Apula gannit,
 sicut in amplexu, subito et miserabile longum.
 attendit Thymele: Thymele tunc rustica discit.

Is there any woman you can point to in the arcades who lives up to your wish? Or do the spectacles/seats in the theater's every tier offer anything for you to pluck out and love free from care? Bathyllus nimbly dances the part of a gesturing Leda. Tuccia loses control of her bladder. Apula lets out a sudden and sustained yelp, as if she is the one being embraced [by the swan]. Thymele pays close attention. She is still a country girl, so she is taking notes.

Here the real spectacle, as in the orgasmatron of P. 1, is the critical reaction playing in the seats. Watching Bathyllus dance the part of Leda, at a point of high emotion in the play – presumably at the point where "the swan," Zeus, gets amorous – the women in the audience lose control. The boundary separating the "show" (*OLD spectaculum* 2) from the "seats" (*OLD spectaculum* 3) is completely erased. Thus, the spectators become the players, the show itself, in an exuberant, overdone, and utterly unbelievable loss of

control. And that is where they seem most like Juvenal himself. Like them, he watches. He reacts. Failing to separate myth from lived experience, he loses control.

Outlandish pictures, often said to represent vice at its worst, are Juvenal's specialty. But scenes even more garish routinely follow. New vicious extremes are continuously being reached. At Juv. 2.83 the poet claims that "no one has become filthiest of the foul in an instant" (*nemo repente fuit turpissimus*), and yet that is exactly the way he presents vice, "filthiest of the foul," to us, in an instant, precipitous, downward slide, with each successive *descriptio* purporting to reach a new low. He follows his taunting of Creticus' rhetorical peep show, described in the lines immediately preceding this claim, with a description of male transvestites profaning the rites of the Bona Dea, a festival from which men were normally excluded. This festival, like that of the goddess Cybele, described later in lines 110–16, was marked by a loosening of certain moral restrictions normally observed by the sect's devotees, such as limits on heavy drinking and free speech, the hand-in-glove symbols of satire herself.⁶¹ Juvenal's pumped-up version of Cicero's most famous and spectacular scandal is thus suitably unbounded. It features not just a single male infiltrator who tries to keep his identity a secret, but an entire sorority of noble Roman "pathics," each trying to outdo one another in modish dress-up and debauchery. One applies eye-liner to his brows and eyes with a pin. Another fellates a glass Priapus, while yet another primps in front of a mirror wearing a golden hair-net and paper-thin garments of yellow and sky blue. Creticus' see-through business suit seems chaste by comparison.

This is Juvenal's outdoing of Cicero, and of himself, precisely where, one might have thought, neither could be credibly outdone. And they cannot. The performance is grand and incredible, reminiscent in tone and detail of one of Greek Old Comedy's most shocking plays, the *Baptae* of Eupolis.⁶² And, like the Old Comic play it resembles, the scene hides a striking, satiric sting in its tail. For at the end of the description of an all-male Bona Dea, Juvenal adds (Juv. 2.99–103):

⁶¹ For the loosening of social restrictions at these festivals, see Braund (1992) 73 with notes.

⁶² For strong connections with Eupolis' *Baptae*, see Braund (1996) 148.

ille tenet speculum, pathici gestamen Othonis,
 Actoris Aurunci spoliū, quo se ille uidebat
 armatum, cum iam tolli uexilla iuberet.
 res memoranda nouis annalibus atque recenti
 historia, speculum ciuilis sarcina belli.

That man there is holding a mirror, the battle-gear of Otho the pathic, “stripped from Actor who hails from Aurunca.” In it he [Otho] used to look at himself dressed for battle, even as he was issuing orders for an attack. Here is a theme worth recalling in annals of recent events and in history that is fresh: a mirror inside a civil war battle kit!

Otho died nearly four decades before these lines were published, in the civil conflict of 69 CE. Still he is described here as the subject of history that is emphatically “new” and “recent.” But perhaps the point of the emphasis is less the relative temporal proximity of the events described, i.e. “annals of recent history as opposed to ancient,” than it is what it takes for historical narratives, in Juvenal’s day, or in his unique reckoning, to rate as “modern” and “up-to-date.” Thus the basic sense may be: “If you don’t believe me” (and, of course, how can we!) “you can consult Otho’s tale as it is told in any of the historical annals that are just now hitting the shelves, the hottest tales on the market today. There you will see the truth of what I am saying. After all, histories are unbiased by design. They never exaggerate. Just consult one of them and you will see for yourself: Otho was a primping, mirror-packing pathic.”

Given the close coupling of *annales* with *historia* in lines 102–3, scholars have generally taken the line as a reference to Tacitus’ *Histories* which, as Courtney notes, “record the instruments of luxury brought by some of Otho’s army” without mentioning the mirror *per se*.⁶³ Thus, Juvenal can be seen in these lines in the act of applying a dab of glossy eye-liner to Tacitus’ account of Otho’s reign soon after the *Histories* were first published, with *res memoranda* referring to a “topic that should have been recalled” by Tacitus, but was not. Either that, or he is providing an editorial suggestion for their final improvement: “a topic that *should be* recalled.” But if the reference is to some work already published and circulating in its final form, a work in which Otho actually does look into his mirror before entering battle, then the reference

⁶³ Courtney (1980) 139.

must be to some version of Rome's civil wars of 69 CE now lost to us, and about which we can know nothing other than that it featured an emperor primping before battle.

In whatever scenario we imagine the reference working, its damaging effects on the historical-moral work it refers to are clear to see. For, much as Juvenal may (pretend to) want to flatter the historian(s) he has in mind, he is not capable of doing that without involving them in his own self-defeat. Is this poet the sort of critic that any serious historian would seek the approval of? Would any writer of history in Juvenal's day really want his reliability taken for granted, in writing, and seconded by him? Even if the reference is not to Tacitus, it involves him, for it sends his readers, both ancient and modern, back to their *Histories* in a vain search for Otho's missing mirror. They will not find it there, but they will find plenty of other descriptive touches that resemble it in their power to drag history-telling down to the level of mirrors and mushrooms and descriptive props. That mirror, for Juvenal, is an accoutrement of civil war when the telling of that war rates, in his tabloid imagination, as "modern" and "fresh." In other words, it is not just something that "pathic Otho" pulled from his bag in someone's telling of his tale, whether he really did anything of the sort or not. It is something that the history writer himself pulls from his civil war writing kit, a descriptive touch tailor-made to insult Roman sensibilities and to enrage, like that needle-sharp pen Domitian is said, by several historians, to have used to stab flies at his Alban estate; a pen that Dio, nearly a century later, must apologize for pulling out, even openly admitting that the detail is perhaps beneath his history's dignity. But he insists that it is useful, all the same, for sketching Domitian's "true character."⁶⁴ Thus, that pen, like Otho's mirror, is less important as a demonstrable "fact" of history, than it is as a tool of history writing. And that leaves us to wonder who the real hypocrite is in this scene: is it Otho, primping before his mirror? Or is it the history writer who pulls that mirror from his bag of history writing tricks, a kit normally packed with the instruments of war?

Juvenal looks at the "mythically" troubled world that surrounds him, and he reacts to what he sees by gesturing wildly, and with little evident control, like the orgasmic women he spies in the

⁶⁴ See Dio 65.9.4; cf. Suet. *Dom.* 3.1.

audience of a pantomime show. His reaction is outlandish, even titillating, far more interesting than anything that takes place in Rome, the stage on which his eyes are fixed. Thus, his reaction is a terrible gauge for determining “what actually happened” in Rome in his day, in the lived experience he claims to respond to. But that is perhaps the scandal of his hailing contemporary moral writers and historians into his cause, if only to favor his own work over theirs, or to claim that he actually likes what they have to say. For, in doing that, he invites us to compare his work to theirs. And so we imagine, if only for a moment, that they really may have something to do with one another, as if part of the same cultural, restorative project, and stemming from the same desire to say what needed to be said after “the trauma” had passed. Juvenal does not hide the rage and the desire for revenge that drive him to write. They do. And thus, he cannot avoid the inevitable self-defeat that goes with shouting so loudly. Even so, he gives us to believe that his performance is really not so different from theirs. It is simply louder and more direct. The joke is on Juvenal, that is clear enough. But others, his rivals in what seems to have been a much larger industry of contemporary moral criticism, are implicated as well.

BEATING A DEAD FISH: THE EMPEROR-SATIRIST OF JUV. 4

The fourth satire tells of a time not long ago (*nuper*, 9) when Rome was brooded over by an outsized beast that “mangled the world when it was already half-dead” (37). No one dared raise a finger, let alone a thunderbolt, to stop him. The tale features an epic prelude with no hard-fighting payoff: muses are hailed, forces rallied and catalogued, a summit held on high, and a divine weapon is crafted. But no battle ensues. Instead, Domitian, the titan in this story, is left to brood over the world he tortures, and to smother it, like an enormous flatfish on a plate, attended by his minions in miniature, the shrimp-monsters that swim in his sauce. No noble hero arrives on the scene to do battle against the beast, and thus, set up for a titanic “clash,” we are given no battle, no cosmoscrator, no epic satisfaction. Instead, the best Rome can muster in this poem is a skittish, late-coming “cash-laborer” (*cerdo*, 153), an embezzler in Domitian’s palace who kills the emperor because he fears being caught with his hand in the till.

The final complaint of this poor man's titanomachy is that the monster robbed the city of her most illustrious souls "without being punished, and with no one attempting to avenge them" (*inpune et uindice nullo*, 152). But that is precisely where Juvenal himself steps in to fill the gap, with this poem, a late-arriving thunderbolt. Punitive work, after all, is his declared programmatic aim. But the end result leaves us to wonder how he, as a self-declared agent of punishment, figures in his own story. Does he resemble the skittish palace servant, an underclass hero who at last delivers the blow that no noble Roman was willing to attempt? Or is he more in line with the titan himself, Domitian, torturing a world that he keeps well stocked with monsters now that it is "half alive," and serving up monster-fish that he expects us, his readerly minions, to stand in awe of and scramble to make a plate for, a satiric *lanx* big enough to hold this man's overblown notion of "satire," and his fish stories that defy both generic confines and all good sense?

The first big fish in the story is Crispinus, "a monster of vice without a redeeming virtue" (2–3).⁶⁵ Juvenal explains that this creature had a taste for illicit sex that was both extreme and discriminating, so much so that he made a rule of "spurning" unmarried girls, as if chastely bound and committed to sex within (someone else's) marriage. But he once made an exception to his "no virgins" rule for a Vestal Virgin, the most illicit sexual target of all in Rome. That affair was subsequently found out, and the Vestal was punished by a stern, Catonian censor and chief priest, Domitian, by being buried alive. Crispinus, the seducer, went unpunished.

To further pique our disgust and desire for revenge, Juvenal adds the descriptive brushstroke that the two slept together while the Vestal was "wearing her ribbons" (*vittata*, 9). In her nun's habit, as it were. Crispinus had a fetish for dress-up that was both criminal and sacrilegious. Her sacred ribbons turned him on. Hard to believe. Surely he exaggerates(?). "Did she really wear her sacred ribbons to bed, and nothing else?" Imagine it (you just did!). Now who is being turned on? Who is becoming Crispinus? This is revenge with a reverse sting.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ The translation of Rudd–Barr.

⁶⁶ Braund (1996) 168, quoting Henderson, comments on the moral crusading of *Satire* 2: "his language [is] full of the marks of indignation . . . and too suspiciously 'lurid and lip-smacking' to sustain his pose of moralistic preaching."

Juvenal asks (14–15): “What do you do when the person [on trial] is dreadful and more obscene than any criminal charge?” His next word is *mullum* “mullet,” in what seems to be a shift of topic from greater crimes to lesser, and from punishment to fish. He writes (Juv. 4.15–17):

mullum sex milibus emit,
aequantem sane paribus sestertia libris,
ut perhibent qui de magnis maiora locuntur.

He bought a red mullet for six thousand, actually paying out one thousand sesterces per pound. Those who tell of big things in even bigger tales insist that it's true.

By the satirist's own admission, the fish defies belief. His authorities exaggerate, Juvenal says, but their exaggeration simply becomes what he leaves us to take for granted in his telling of the tale: one thousand sesterces per pound. That is the exact selling price of mullet in this story, for those who are buying it (are we?). Take it or leave it. That is the image he leaves us to seethe over. Again, this is a case of an unpunished crime. Such prodigality was a criminal offense in Rome, deserving the censor's *nota* and the disgrace that went with it. But the censor at this time was Domitian, Crispinus' promoter, defender, and friend. Thus, the unspoken question inside the question of lines 14–15 is: “What do you do when the censor himself has a taste for monster fish, and for little monsters, like Crispinus?” Answer: “Nothing.”

But the fish is not just the crime in this story, it is the punishment. For the (apparently) rhetorical question of lines 14–15, “What do you do with a monster like this?” really does have an answer, and it happens to be the very answer that follows the question in the text: *mullum* “The mullet.” At Juv. 10.316–17, Juvenal describes the punishments that await adulterers caught in the act: “this man cuts him down with a knife, that one with bloody lashes of the whip. And still others get a mullet inside.” Courtney annotates *mugilis* (“grey mullet”) with the following: “This was a fish with a large head tapering into a small tail . . . It was inserted in the adulterer's anus as a substitute for humiliating him by homosexual rape . . . and also to inflict pain with its spines.”⁶⁷ Crispinus was a monster of vice, Juvenal says. His

⁶⁷ Courtney (1980) 484.

crimes earned him no ordinary mullet. The one he bought, a record-setting six pounder, the biggest on ancient record, is the perfect fish to both fit, and punish, the crime. Juvenal lets him have it, the fish he so ostentatiously bought, returned as the one he never got. The crime is the fish. The fish the punishment. The punishment the poem.⁶⁸

But not only do fish and fiend deserve one another in this poem, they resemble one another in very specific ways.⁶⁹ By the time Juvenal finishes his “fish-insertion” of Crispinus, the lines separating man and fish, criminal and punishment, have been substantially erased: in line 24 we see Crispinus wrapped in paper, like a fish sold at market, a phenomenon expressed in the very layout of the line (*succinctus* . . . *Crispine, papyro*). In line 33 he is berated as a seller of Nile-river *siluri* (“catfish”), small fry that are said to be his *municipes* (“fellow townsmen”). Domitian himself will be similarly fish-figured later in the poem, shown taking bait, sporting fin-like crests, and smothering his world like a monstrous, overfed *rhombus* (“turbot”) on a plate.⁷⁰

That is where this story has been leading: to Domitian, and his big fish; that is, to the big, overstuffed monster that, Juvenal insists, he was. At the transition point of lines 28–33, Juvenal insists that Crispinus’ fish, huge as it was, counts as little more than a side dish served up “on the margins of a modest feast” (*modicae* . . . *de margine cenae*, 30) at Domitian’s regal table. And so Crispinus and his fish become just that in the poem: an introductory, “marginal” footnote to the bigger fish story he is about to tell.

For that story Juvenal needs a full measure of inspiration. At lines 34–6 he calls on the muses of epic:

incipi Calliope. licet et considerare: non est
cantandum, res uera agitur. narrate, puellae
Pierides, prosit mihi uos dixisse puellas.

⁶⁸ The idea may derive from the “gourding” of Claudius that is the *Apocolocyntosis*; cf. Coffey (1976) 167–8: “A very different view has been accepted by a number of modern critics, that in form and meaning ἀποκολοκύντωσις is based on ἀποραφανίδωσις, the Greek punishment for adultery in which a horseradish was thrust into the adulterer’s body *per anum* and that, as the gourd is the largest of vegetables and the shape of some species suited to the action, the title is an indecent joke depending on comic exaggeration.”

⁶⁹ As the empty-headed Claudius resembles his punitive gourd.

⁷⁰ For the resemblance of Domitian to the turbot, see Gowers (1993a) 207–8, and Deroux (1983).

Begin, Calliope. And feel free to sit down. No singing needed. The case we are considering is true! Relate the story, maidens of Pieria. And may it help me to have called you “maidens.”

Juvenal hints that his muses are not as young and pure as they would like us to believe. Like all the other “once-chaste” women in this poem, they have been seduced by Domitian and/or his fellow monsters. That defilement is both told of in the poem, and punished by it. For, in the fish summit that follows, Juvenal treats us to a parodic version of one of the epic muses’ most notorious love affairs under Domitian, the *De Bello Germanico* of Statius, a panegyric epic on the emperor’s military campaigns against the Chatti in 89 CE.⁷¹ They allowed themselves to be seduced in that work, Juvenal insinuates. Statius, their pimp, was rewarded handsomely for getting “maidens” so noble and chaste to turn tricks in the emperor’s bed.⁷² Not to be outdone by Crispinus, Domitian had a fetish for sacrilege as well.

Four lines of the *De Bello Germanico* survive. They describe the summoning of a council of war at a precarious moment in the campaign. The list of those summoned is partial, broken at the front and back, but it mentions Crispus, Veiento, Acilius, and, less certainly, Catullus, all of whom are summoned to the fish summit of Juv. 4. Thus, scholars generally concede that the parodic direction of Juvenal’s attack is evident. Not surprisingly, Statius won a prize at Domitian’s Alban games of 90 CE, presumably for his *De Bello Germanico*.⁷³ Here, in Juv. 4, he gets the satirist’s booby prize. He has his glorious panegyric handed back to him holding something it did not hold before: a gigantic fish. His poem has become Juvenal’s fish-wrap, and thus it has suffered the common fate of bad, voluminous writing since Volusius’ “shitty sheets.”⁷⁴

The bigger the crime in this poem, the bigger the fish. Accordingly, the fish netted for Domitian’s *Apomullosis* is a beast of primordial girth, perfectly suited to this *Flavius ultimus* (“the last /

⁷¹ On the influence of Statius’ *De Bello Germanico* on Juv. 4, see Braund (1996) 271–2.

⁷² Statius is specifically named only once in Juvenal, at 7.82–7, where he is described as a once-popular poet who hits on hard times and is thus forced to pimp one of his poem-girls for cash, selling his “virgin Agave” (*intactam . . . Agauen*, 87) to Domitian’s favorite pantomime actor, Paris.

⁷³ See Courtney (1980) 195.

⁷⁴ For references to the “poetry as fish-wrap” metaphor, and a discussion of the metaphor’s relevance to Juv. 4, see Gowers (1993a) 205, with n. 332.

most extreme of the Flavians,” 37–8). Gowers notes the incredible size of the beast: “The fish swims into view with its astonishing bulk (*spatium admirabile rhombi*, 39), prize specimen of the world that is Domitian’s personal safari-park (*uiuaria*, 51) . . . the ambiguous words *impleuit sinus* (41), literally “it filled the fold,” begin the fishy distortion of scales in the poem. The fish either filled the fisherman’s net, or it filled an entire gulf: we can magnify or telescope it at will, tell our own tall story.”⁷⁵

Given the size of the fish, fully as big as we make it, the summit’s principal agenda is to find a dish large enough to hold it. That search, Gowers has argued, is the perfect symbol for the satirist’s own struggle to contain Domitian’s enormity on satire’s relatively small *lanx*, especially since that plate has been radically scaled down by his immediate, more “philosophical,” predecessors, Horace and Persius. A huge, new plate is called for, one specially made to take in the enormity that is Domitian, Juvenal’s big fish. Gowers writes: “The search for a container big enough for the fish, *sed derat pisci patinae mensura* (72), rephrases Juvenal’s rhetorical question in *Satire I*: *unde|ingenium par materiae?* . . . Juvenal needs to rise to the occasion. But he also wants to suggest that Domitian’s monstrosity is out of his range . . . Juvenal “fills out” this satire with epic bombast.”⁷⁶

Juvenal stretches his plate to fit the beast. His satire is more enraged and effusive than satire has ever been before. Clear enough. But just how hungry does he imagine we are? How large a fish can he reasonably expect us to swallow, especially when a six-pound red mullet is, by his own admission, a red herring, done up by those given to telling tall tales? His Domitianic turbot, by comparison, is the biggest fish story of all time, and terribly hard to take seriously. Can any emperor’s “reign of terror” really have been that bad, horrid enough to deserve a punitive fish of that size, shoved so far up the offender’s anus so long after his death? Or did the fish Juvenal “remembers” in this poem just get bigger with time, as fish, when they slip off the hook, tend to get, all the while that he sat brooding over the punishment that he intended to mete out?

The answers to these questions will depend, in large part, on the listener’s own appetite for revenge, credibility always being a con-

⁷⁵ Gowers (1993a) 206–7. ⁷⁶ Gowers (1993a) 210.

dition of desire. That, ultimately, is what will determine whether we swallow this dish whole, impossible as that may seem, or whether we simply brush it aside as a fish story and only that, i.e. not revenge *per se*, but an overdone, unbelievable gorging on revenge.

But there exists a third way of hearing this tale, not simply as one or the other, but as a “revenge-performance” that straddles the poles of credible and incredible, thus leaving us poised, uncomfortably, in between. Taken this way, the fish story of Juv. 4 invites circumspection as its way of getting us inside ourselves, forcing us to consider some of the more overdone, hypocritical, and laughable extremes not just of Rome’s post-traumatic feeding frenzy in the years just after Domitian’s death, but of our own desire for those extremes. Appetites for revenge, at that time, we have seen, were generally quite large. Juvenal’s appetite, seen in the measure of the rage he doles out to us, is the most voracious of them all. Thus, his primordial fish is not simply a dish once served up to a tyrant, if it ever really was. It is something that he, as satirist and dealer in plates and paper-wrapped fish, serves up to us, inviting us to “open wide,” and thus to test the measure of our own desire for revenge, especially our desire to believe that Rome’s “recent” past was really as recent, horrid, monstrous, and simple as so many in Rome were actively, and impossibly, claiming it was. Juvenal, with this poem, is out to find that point *in us* where revenge becomes tyrannical. Where we become Domitian, with an appetite (for *his* fish) that huge.

SATIRES 3 AND 5: THE POOR MAN’S LUNCH OF UMBRICIUS
AND TREBIUS

Juvenal’s fifth poem, the last in the book, lets us experience a rich man’s feast to the book’s bitter end, with no hasty, Horatian exit to save us, this time, from the host’s sadistic abuse. For our dinner, a rotten apple and sewer-fed fish, all reeking of Canidia’s cookshop. Still, we force it down with a grimace on our face, teeth tightly clenched, struggling to maintain our composure in the hopes of someday being considered “worthy” (*dignus*) of the real thing. The feast is described from the perspective of a tag-along client, the lowest man on the low couch. He is free-born, we are told, but poor, jaded, and tattered, barely “in” this feast at all.

If the feast-story is told from a higher perspective, he disappears altogether. Still, he clings to that last “free” seat as his last, desperate hold on freedom itself. It is his one last chance to count as a “free man” (*liber homo*, 161) in Rome, even though that seat entitles him to nothing more than bad food and abuse, along with the expectation that he play the comic, simian role that he has been invited to play. For his is the seat of parasites and buffoons, those washed-out Romans of free birth who were left to gossip, wheedle and jest for their evening meal.⁷⁷ Their gruff, tall tales of life in the streets, the stories behind their tattered clothes, black eyes, and ruptured shoes, become the evening’s entertainment. The loser sings the blues. His sorrow, another man’s comic show, earns him a crust of rock-hard bread, and a full portion of disgrace.

That is the main course at this feast. Not foods that entice and satisfy, but shame. The guest leaves the book a pale, poor man’s shade of Horace’s “stuffed dinner-guest” (*conuiuia satur*), i.e. stuffed, but not satisfied, up to his eyes with rage and bile. “Still hungry?” the poet asks Trebius in this poem. “That bile welling up inside you any good?” But Trebius is not the expert on parasitism here. Juvenal is. He speaks to him as teacher to novice, telling him what it is like to have lived the life he knows so well, the very life that he has performed for us so entertainingly in the course of his first book. In the first poem we watched him take the top seat at Lucilius’ grand, satiric feast, only to be told to move down two spaces, to the low seat on the low couch. He is not entitled to the same seat Lucilius had.⁷⁸ He is not the host at this feast, nor a guest of any distinction. He is a last-minute tag-along, here to keep things lively and entertaining, but not terribly meaningful. Like Trebius in *Juv. 5*, the poet himself hungers for the full, rich fare of satire, but he is not entitled to it. Thus, he cannot provide it to us. Instead, he is stuck with leavings and scraps that are a pale, parodic “shade” of satire’s rich Lucilian feast. That, at least, is the scenario he paints, and the source of his famous *indignatio*.

⁷⁷ In contrast, *Hor. S. 2.8* is told from the perspective not of the host’s lowly client, but a friend of the guest of honor. Juvenal tells his story from the perspective of a Porcius or Nomentanus rather than a Fundanius.

⁷⁸ Henderson (1999) 270–1: “he will show why he must and, for the same reasons that he must, dare *not* attempt to play the Italian-Warrior-Hero-Staunch-Republican-Absolutely-Free-Blazing-Swash-Buckling-Sword-Wielding *Lucilius rediuius*. Yet *that* was the act he tried to conjure up for himself. How over-ambitious could you get?”

Thus he seethes, and his indignation becomes the show, the scraps of satire he leaves to us.

Scraps? Or are these poems the real feast, as full, rich, and meaningful as Roman satire ever got? Answer the question too quickly, or too decisively, and you will have stripped Juvenal's *Satires* of much of their power to question, trouble, and satirize. For it is a question that the poems themselves ask repeatedly without giving much purchase on a single, credible solution. That puts the onus on us. We answer the question. And our answers, inevitably, tell on us. Most obviously, they reveal the place we presume to take at the feast of Juvenal's *Satires*, and the seat cushion we set aside for Juvenal himself as satire's "host," "parasite," or "man in the middle" (e.g. "noble guest," or "ignoble host"). That activity of embedding ourselves, and Juvenal, into the feast he serves ultimately determines how we rate his satiric fare as either sumptuous, sickening, or just so-so.

The poems repeatedly pose the question of their own value, but they make us pay a price for answering it. For they let us see just how highly conditional, artificial, and unstable, the answers we give to it are, always uncannily "right" from one perspective, and "dead wrong" from another. For the fare served in Juvenal's first book, just as in the feast that concludes it, changes drastically from one seat to the next, ranging from "a poor man's hilarious griping" seen from the top seat, to "honest rage" seen from the bottom. We have all been invited to this feast. Question is, where do we presume to sit?

The question of the "feast or famine" of these poems is one that the poet leaves us to consider as we depart his first book. The questions he puts to Trebius ("Aren't you ashamed yet?" "Still haven't had enough?") might well be asked of us, his scrap-fed readers; or put, by us, to him. For these are questions that we have been forced to ask ourselves all along in reading his book, a work of dead serious rage that borders on idiotic bluster. Sometimes Juvenal even invites us to sample ways of seeing his performance and judging it, by embedding scenes that picture audiences looking upon and judging inset performances of the poor man's plight in Rome. And thus we are given one pauper's show inside another. The poor man's epic ephrasis.

The most obvious case of this, outside of the fifth poem, comes

at the midway point of Umbricius' tirade in Juv. 3, the middle poem of the book. This poem, whether centerpiece, or main course (as you like it), is the most elaborate performance of the poor man's woes in all of Juvenal. Thus, it is commonly regarded as his signature piece, "a classic and archetype."⁷⁹ Umbricius takes center stage in the poem. His name suggests both native, Italian rusticity (Umbria) and tag-along status (*umbra*), so he has the nominal look of someone who tried to make it in the big city, but failed. And that is exactly the story he tells of his washed-out life in the poem, making him the perfect stand-in for the poet himself.

Umbricius seethes over the scrappy life he has been forced to live in Rome. He claims to have been squeezed out onto the margins of a "free" existence by a massive influx of Greek freedmen and slaves. In his grand, epic imagination, Rome, like Priam's Troy, has been raided and plundered by an army of nefarious Greeks. He is a refugee of war, a poor man's Aeneas, setting off to find a new home for gods and family. Fittingly, his destination is Cumae, gateway to the underworld and home of Aeneas' Sibyl. Thus, the scenario he paints for his life is familiar, a parody of Rome's most patriotic myth.⁸⁰ But the emphasis here is not on the haggard warrior's trip to the south, his *Odyssey*, but on the battle he fought, and lost before setting out, his *Iliad*.

In Rome, he says in lines 147–51, the poor man's woes, evident in his stained toga, and shoes, split and stitched, are the "cause and substance of jokes" (*materiam . . . causasque iocorum*, 147). The pauper is a comic spectacle, not that he ever intended to become an actor or play for laughs. And that, he says, is the harshest aspect of his life in the city (Juv. 3.152–3):

⁷⁹ Braund (1996) 230.

⁸⁰ The poem is also set up as a parody of Virgil's first Eclogue, where one friend is displaced from his rustic home, and another stays behind. On the poem as an urban eclogue, see Witke (1970) 128–34; and Braund (1996) 235–6. Cf. Calpurnius, *Eclogues* 4, for which Sullivan (1985) 52 provides the following précis: "Calpurnius begins by complaining that the Muses had been niggardly toward him and he had been about to emigrate (or return) to Spain when he had attracted the notice of 'Meliboeus' . . . Whoever he was, 'Meliboeus' had helped him, and perhaps got him an official job in Rome." No Meliboeus steps in in Umbricius' case. Does that perhaps say something about imperial stinginess (the lack of the expected "Meliboeus," an Augustus or Nero) in the early days of Trajan's reign?

nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

There is nothing in luckless poverty harder to bear than that it makes men into buffoons.

Not only does the poor man suffer. His sufferings are ridiculed! Cruel and wrong as he makes that seem, we should be wary of placing blame with him, where he places it, too quickly. For that is what we have been doing all along in these poems: laughing at the loser. His failures and frustrations have been staged throughout the first book as a comic show playing on a tragic stage. The performance is extreme and parodic. But that “performance,” he says, is his life. That is the way that he, a pauper, “plays” in downtown Rome: a hopeless parody of a “real Roman.” He is someone who strives to become the real thing, but cannot, a spectacle of “poverty on the make” (*ambitiosa* | *paupertate*, 182–3).

The man kicked from the theater’s best seats in lines 154–8 thus symbolizes life for Umbricius in Rome. Like him, he has presumed to take a seat, and “belong” there, in Rome, only to be told that he is in the wrong spot, sitting in a seat of honor to which he is not entitled. Thus, he is summarily removed, shoved off to Cumae, as it were, and his red-faced removal becomes the show, the poem. That embarrassing little scuffle in the stands, Umbricius indicates, is where Rome’s real drama plays, tragedy to the victim, but a comedy to everyone watching in the stands, especially to heartless snobs (like us).

But there are other places, Umbricius continues, where the same poor man’s show plays very differently, not as an uproarious parody of a “real life,” but as the thing itself, and a serious show of frugality, contentment, and shared equality (Juv. 3.168–78):

ficilibus cenare pudet, quod turpe negabis
translatus subito ad Marsos mensamque Sabellam
contentusque illic ueneto duroque cucullo.
pars magna Italiae est, si uerum admittimus, in qua
nemo togam sumit nisi mortuus. ipsa dierum
festorum herboso colitur si quando theatro
maiestas tandemque redit ad pulpita notum
exodium, cum personae pallentis hiatum
in gremio matris formidat rusticus infans,
aequales habitus illic similesque uidebis
orchestram et populum.

Feasting from clay dishes is embarrassing [in Rome]. But you will deny that it's shameful if suddenly transported among the Marsians or to a Sabine table. There you will be happy in a dark-blue hood. Truth be told, there is a huge part of Italy in which no one dons a toga unless he is dead. Even if a holiday's pomp is being observed in a grassy theater, and a well-known farce at last returns to the stage, when the peasant baby cowers in its mother's lap, afraid of the white mask's gaping mouth, you will notice that there everyone's dress is of the same status and alike, from front to back.

As in the feast of Juv. 5, here the value one assigns to the performance (again, less on the stage than it is in the stands) is a condition of the quality of one's seat. From the distant, cheap seats of the Italian countryside, the poor man's show looks admirable and pure. His dark-blue, hooded cloak, as Braund notes, was the outfit of a poor man on the Roman comic stage.⁸¹ Thus, transported to the Italian countryside, he is all dressed up for pratfalls and laughs. But no one is laughing. This time no one notices "the show" in the seats. For this is a place where no one has money and everyone is poor and dresses alike, even on the most ceremonial of rustic holidays, when country folk crowd into the theater, taking whatever grassy seat they can find, in order to watch some hackneyed Italian farce. This is where Umbricius is headed: to his Shangri-la, a dreamworld that he is not likely to find. The Rome he runs from is equally extreme and unreal, the product of an enraged imagination.

But, if a note of cruelty is sounded by the urban spectator's laughter in taking the poor man's tragedy for comedy, a note of gullibility is sounded by the rustic audience's packing the theater for the most outmoded and hackneyed of slapstick routines, the local Italian farce, featuring Manducus, with his huge, clattering jaws.⁸² The babe in arms watches the show and blanches with fear. For this, the most naïve member of the speaker's utopian audience, where everyone belongs and is eligible for whatever seat they can find (even young mothers and their children!), the reaction to slapstick is horror. Comedy is taken for tragedy.

Where do we place ourselves in these scenes? That is, how do we see ourselves watching *in* them, with one poor man's show, that

⁸¹ Braund (1996) 203.

⁸² On the *exodium* of line 175 referring to an Atellan farce, see Courtney (1980) 178–9.

of rustic farmers, playing inside another, Juvenal's own, the one we have been watching all along? Do we laugh at his failures and frustrations in the first book as if viewing a comic show, making his pain into our entertainment? Dare we take such a cruel, comical view of the poor man's plight in Rome, and thus risk being caught reclining in Virro's high seat, hosting his sadistic feast? Or do we see his show as tragic and true, an honest man's honest complaint about the way things "really are" in Juvenal's Rome? That puts us in the cheap seats, back with the speaker himself, dressed in his bumpkin blue, and sporting his ruptured shoes. Dare we let ourselves slip that far down the social scale and become, ourselves, that comically low and naïve?

In either case we, Juvenal's spectators, become the show. His embedded scenes of spectation push us to consider our watching of him. But these inset, diagnostic tools do not solve the problem of who he is for us, or how we "should" react to him. They simply put the question again, the same nagging question that we have been forced to ask ourselves all along. And they invite us to embed ourselves as either one kind of watcher or another, and thus both to see and feel the drawbacks of choosing too glibly. For Juvenal's *Satires* show the ugly extremes of the several most obvious roles (cultural icons/caricatures, discursively encoded) that "we Romans" are most likely to play in reading these poems, whether with him, by making him a tragic Cato and one of "us," or against him, a comic parasite and the butt of our joke.

But the question that the fifth poem seems to ask more forcefully, and problematically, than the third is not where do we place ourselves at this culturally encoded feast, but where do we place Juvenal, the second half of the same question. Is he really as abused and indignant as he lets on? Or has he perhaps taken us for fools by slipping into the high seat at this feast, that of the cruel host whose greatest pleasure comes from watching *us* seethe over the miserable dishes he serves to us in this, his five-course, poor man's satire? The steady series of resemblances that connect the poor man's fare in *Juv.* 5 to what Juvenal himself has served to us in the poems that precede (and all that follow in books 2–3) are uncanny enough (if we choose to take such things seriously) to cause us to reconsider our place at his feast.

Trouble lurks, for example, in the wine that Trebius complains of receiving as the feast commences. For that wine, we are told,

has a strange, transfigurative quality, the power to turn dinner guests into fanatics and figures of myth (*de conuiuia Corybanta*, 25). The drunken haze it “inspires” blurs the lines between myth and reality, making the world look not just any way, but exactly the way *we* have been made to see it in the first book, through Juvenal’s fanatical haze. Fittingly, this low-grade wine inspires a mock epic battle in lines 26–9. Meanwhile, Virro drinks deeply of a fine vintage from a far corner of his cellar, wine such as that drunk by the freedom-fighters, Thrasea and Helvidius on the respective birthdays of their tyrant-killing heroes, the Brutuses and Cassius. This is wine to inspire uncompromised, republican “freedom,” and thus a very different kind of fight. But Juvenal is not entitled to it. He tells of desiring it, satire’s pure nectar, but not being allowed to drink it. So he seethes, indignant. He deserves better. But, perhaps, so do we.

Symbols for satire, both teasing and obvious, are abundant in the poem. The most prominent and suggestive of these include the bejewelled cup from which Juvenal would love to drink, and perhaps to steal an epic stone or two (hasn’t he been doing just that throughout the book?) in lines 37–45; the reference to his “riding” through the tombs of the Latin Way, thus matching his journey to our dead-man’s tour in his out-of-date poems, in line 55; and the stale, rock-hard crusts of lines 67–9 that keep the complainer’s Lucilian “molar” (*genuinus*) busy, without allowing any genuine “bite” (*quae genuinum agitent, non admittentia morsum*, 69).⁸³ All mouthwork, no bite. Is that just Juvenal’s complaint? Or are we not perhaps justified to make the same complaint concerning our experience of reading him?

But the most potent symbol of *our* being served a substandard feast in these poems lurks in the rival fish courses of lines 80–106. The giant “lobster” (*squilla*) of line 81 is served on a large, ceremonial *lanx*, satire’s most prominent symbol in the ancient world. Held aloft in the hands of Virro’s fish-ministers, it looks down on the rest of the crowd, snubbing them with a swish of its glorious tail, more peacock than fish (*qua despiciat conuiuia cauda*, 82). Desired from below, it is simply too glorious, costly, and noble to be eaten

⁸³ Besides remembering the cynic beggar of line 11 (*sordes farris mordere canini*), the image recalls programmatic descriptions of Lucilius as an “attacking dog” at P. 1.114–15 and Hor. *S.* 2.1.68–9. Here the image is used to symbolize not ferocity, but vain frustration. The poet’s gnawing keeps his mouth busy, but he is unable to bite.

by the likes of the satirist. Seen from his angle, the fish is utterly unattainable, “walled off on all sides” (*undique saepta*, 81) by a veritable palisade of asparagus. That is the way it looks from his low seat, the seat he forces us to share with him: luscious, hotly desired, unattainable. The speaker cannot have the full plate he desires, so he seethes, indignant. To compound the insult, he is served a “crayfish” (*cammarus*) squeezed onto a dish with half an egg, “a funeral feast served on a puny plate” (*ponitur exigua feralis cena patella*, 85). His plate is crammed full, in other words, but miniscule, holding a second-rate, dead man’s feast that is, by design, a deliberate parody of the rich man’s impressive *lanx*.

This last set of images poses the question of what we ourselves presume to have been served in these poems. Have we been given satire’s full, rich plate, or a lowly, crammed saucer, a pale, parodic shadow of what our Lucilian desires demand? Are these poems fit for the living, or for the dead, a late-arriving “funeral feast” to complement Capito’s self-serving eulogies, *seris sed ueris*? Here again, what we think we have been served by these poems depends on the seat we have presumed to take, the culturally encoded space from which we view the scene. Which fish is ours? Virro’s lobster? Or the low complainer’s crayfish? Did we desire the big plate in these poems and not receive it? Or did we get it? Like the expandable fish of Juv. 4, the book itself is fully as big, or as pathetically small, as we make it. We get exactly what we deserve.

The meal’s final fish course, third for Virro, second for his low guest, is equally suggestive of the poet’s cruelty *to us*. Virro is served a magnificent “moray eel” (*muraena*), reminding us again that this parting feast is, in fact, remade from Horace’s final satire, S. 2.8, the dinner party of Nasidienus which featured the same epic fish. Virro’s moray, like his jewel-encrusted cup in lines 37–45, and the boar of lines 115–116, has an epic pedigree. A giant “from Sicily’s whirlpool” (*gurgite de Siculo*, 100), it was caught by an adventurous fisherman who sailed straight into “the middle of Charybdis” (*mediam . . . Charybdim*, 102). The low guest, in his turn, is served an eel more viper than fish, or a blotched Tiber river bass, “home-bred slave of the river banks, fed fat on the city’s gushing sewer, and accustomed to go as far as the vault underneath the middle of the Subura” (105–6).

The guest desires the impressive, epic fish. His filthy bass parodies it, mocking that desire. Both feed in swirling waters, one in

epic Charybdis (*mediam . . . Charybdim*), the other under the streets of Rome's **lowest** district (*mediae . . . Suburæ*), and thus a very low feeder. As Gowers points out, its foraging takes this fish not just anywhere, but to "a favourite seedy haunt of Roman satire," under the very streets where the satirist himself forages for vice.⁸⁴ It is thus an apt symbol for the book itself, a work fed fat on crime and urban corruption. Thus, the fish that the satirist complains of being served at the feast is a clever match for what he has served us all along. Unless, of course, we consider this book the real thing and not its pale, parodic shade, a noble, epic fish worthy of its plate, straight from the waters of Charybdis.

Braund notes at lines 107–13 that "The speaker interrupts the menu to attack the patron with increasing directness and rising indignation."⁸⁵ Just as in the dinner party of Nasidienus, the client's bile level rises as the feast nears its conclusion.⁸⁶ By line 159 it spills from his eyeballs – thus another "wrong humor" issuing from the eyes, this time in reference to the poet's own critical performance, his satire's "teary bile." With the pressure rising, we expect something to give. But it does not. In lines 120–4, Petronius' "carver" (*structor*) arrives to cut up Horace's fury-inducing "hares" (*lepores*).⁸⁷ His swashbuckling performance is the client's last straw, a spectacle orchestrated on his behalf "lest any cause of rage be lacking" (*ne qua indignatio desit*, 120). That *indignatio*, the anger that comes from his being treated "unworthily," is the energy behind the poet's voice, his muse. It makes him break out in a rage, he says in his first poem, but that is not what happens here at Virro's feast, and right at the point of highest pressure where we most expect it. For he follows his description of the "indignity" of the carver's show with a cautionary note to Trebius concerning his need to keep silent and not say what he wants so desperately to say (Juv. 5.125–31):

duceris planta uelut ictus ab Hercule Cacus
 et ponere foris, si quid temptaueris umquam
 hiscere tamquam habeas tria nomina . . .
 . . . plurima sunt quae
 non audent homines pertusa dicere laena.

⁸⁴ Gowers (1993a) 215 and 219. ⁸⁵ Braund (1996) 293.

⁸⁶ See above, chapter 1. ⁸⁷ See Petr. 36.2, and Hor. *S.* 2.8.89.

You'll be dragged by the heel and set outside, like Cacus after Hercules clubbed him, if you ever attempt to open wide like someone with three names . . . there are plenty of things that men in moth-eaten cloaks dare not say.

Poor men in rags dare not "open wide" (*hiscere*) either to eat or to talk. Their meager food does not require it for eating. A nibble will do. Their low status does not allow it for speaking. Clearly, food and speech figure one another in these lines. The poet tells Trebius, "You are what you eat. You speak, and eat, whatever you are." It is a nasty, frustrating cycle, but one he is wrapped tightly inside as well, just as we are, because of him.

In good Roman fashion, apples end the feast. Virro's are suitably magnificent and pedigreed, like those grown in Homer's Phaeacia, or stolen from the Hesperides as Hercules' twelfth and final labor. But this is Juvenal's final labor as well, the last of his twelve epic dishes served to Virro in the course of the poem.⁸⁸ But the party is not over for the client. His apple is not to be taken home. It is to be consumed on-site as the last scene of the evening's comic show (Juv. 5.153–60):

tu scabie frueris mali, quod in aggere rodit
 qui tegitur parma et galea metuensque flagelli
 discit ab hirsuta iaculum torquere capella.
 forsitan impensae Virronem parcere credas.
 hoc agit, ut doleas; nam quae comoedia, mimus
 quis melior plorante gula? ergo omnia fiunt,
 si nescis, ut per lacrimas effundere bilem
 cogaris pressoque diu stridere molari.

You "enjoy" a blighted bit of apple like that gnawed atop a waste-pile by some creature in a shield and helmet, learning through fear of the whip to hurl a spear from a goat's hairy back. Perhaps you believe that Virro is holding back on his expenses. No, he does it to make you suffer! For what comedy or mime is better than your whining gullet? Therefore, just so you know, the whole thing has been set up to make bile gush from your tear-filled eyes, and to keep you clenching your teeth, and loudly seething.

Trebius' dessert is a rotted bit of trash, an apple fit for a performing monkey. That monkey, like the fish served as Trebius' main

⁸⁸ The count is that of Braund (1996) 307. Another note of finality is sounded in the same line with the phrase *sororibus Afris* (152), recalling the last line of Hor. *S.* 2.8 *serpentibus Afris*. As Gowers (1993a) 216 notes, Virro's fine dishes are thus (intertextually) "tainted under the surface."

teeth-clenching end? For, if we came to these poems expecting a veritable feast of open, uncompromised, “noble” Lucilian rage, generously apportioned on satire’s stuffed plate, then we really were duped, deceived by our own high hopes. Those hopes were fed fat in *Juv. 1*, only to be deflated by the poem’s end. And yet here we are, still holding our breadsticks at the ready, unsheathed, as if still expecting the main course, the big plate, to be passed our way. But the feast is over. The apples have been handed out. Our bread-swords, a pathetic parody of the sword wielded by “burning” Lucilius at *Juv. 1.165* (*ense . . . **stricto** Lucilius ardens*) remain “untouched,” that is, “unbloodied.”⁸⁹ The fight is over before it started, and those who came expecting that fight, with bread-swords drawn to indulge in that kind of noble feast, have seen their gravy trains pass them by. They are left to seethe in silence.

Now who resembles a monkey on a goat? Our wanting Juvenal to play Lucilius for us, waiting for him to deliver the goods, turns out to say as much about us as it does about him. Treated to the best he could manage, a sideshow routine, we end up looking like monkeys ourselves, compliant parasites on the bottom couch, still waiting for some real food to sink our teeth into. Why are we still here? Why did we allow ourselves to be treated this way? Dare we let this book, now that it is over, count as “satire,” the full, rich feast, so as to leave contented, and full? Or do we admit that we are still hungry, and not at all pleased, enraged at what Juvenal has fobbed off on us in the course(s) of this sham-epic book and deigned to name “satire.” Now who is indignant, and ready to burst out? Now who is *becoming Juvenal*?!

Whatever our reaction to the feast just served, Juvenal is quite sure that “someday” (*quandoque*) we will return for more of the same. And in coming back for more, we will have shown that we fully “deserve” the friend who treats us so shabbily (*tali dignus amico*, 173). The phrasing is ironic, deprogramming the book’s signature *indignatio* in its very last line. For here, for the first and only time in the book, we are told that, despite our being abused so flagrantly, we have no just cause for feeling indignant. We are

⁸⁹ Braund (1996) 303 comments: “‘bread’ is the surprise final word where ‘sword’ (e.g. *ensis*) might be expected, after the three participles. *Intacto* is especially witty: a sword would be “untouched”, i.e. unbloodied, before the fighting commenced; the bread is “untouched” because the clients have no gravy into which to dip it. The clients are like soldiers waiting to fight: this *cena* is a battle-field.”

complicit in our own abuse, thus deserving what we get, as masochists to sadist. Thus, our seething must stop. And so it does. The book is over. Like it or not, “feast or famine,” we have been perfectly matched to the friend, and the book, we deserve. For if we leave this feast feeling indignant, quite sure that “we Romans” deserve better from our satire than this, something up-to-date, Lucilian, and expressive of *his* uncompromised freedom, then we have a soul-mate in Juvenal, a companion in our frustration. We seethe at him for serving us scraps. If, however, we feel that his monkey-on-a-goat routine is damn funny and good enough to count for satire, fully up to the level of *libertas* that suits us; or, even worse, if we somehow failed to notice that the fighter in Lucilius’ battle gear was a monkey and not a real knight, and that his “noble steed” had stubby horns and a beard, then we got what we deserved. We have no dignity left to insult. No cause for *indignatio*. In either case, we get precisely the Juvenal we deserve. And he is right. We will return for more *of him*, just as he says, in book 2.