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*nam si discedas, laqueo tenet ambitiosi
consuetudo mali, tenet insanabile multos
scribendi cacoethes et aegro in corde senescit.*

This “well-known textual crux”¹ has elicited two responses from editors. Jahn and Mayor delete line 51, which is omitted in L², and Jahn emends *ambitiosi* to *ambitosum*, writing “ambitiosi PSω, quod a correctore illatum est, postquam 51, quem spurium iudico, additus est.” The other position is that of Housman, Clausen, and Courtney, who delete *laqueo—mali*.

Housman’s note constitutes a convenient starting-point: “prorsus intolerabiliter primum uniuerse, qui a scribendi opere discedunt, consuetudine mali teneri dicuntur, deinde, quod minus est, *multi* teneri scribendi κακοήθει, hoc est eadem illa consuetudine. uerba *consuetudo mali* unde uenerint demonstrat Σ cacoethes sic interpretatus, *mali mores uel mala consuetudo scribendi*: praeterea interpolatori displicuisse potest numeri, quae uidebatur, in *discedas* et *multos* inaequalitas. ea uero nulla est, cum hoc dicatur: si discedimus (id enim significat secunda subiunctiui persona, sicut x 204 sq. *si coneris* positum est pro *si conatur quicumque senex*), multos e nobis tenet cacoethes scribendi et eo, unde fugimus, reducit.” Housman here makes two objections to these lines as they stand and combats a third objection by asserting the soundness of his own reading. His first objection, which is almost certainly valid, is to the repetition of the same point; it is this weak reiteration which has provoked deletion of either lines 50b–51a or line 51.

The present writer likewise accepts Housman’s second point, that the phrase *consuetudo mali* derives from Σ’s overliteral (and erroneous) explication of *cacoethes*.³ Further objections to 51a can be marshalled: the apparently unparalleled use of *mali* after *consuetudo*,⁴ and the fact

I should like to thank Prof. E. J. Kenney for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper; all responsibility is, of course, my own.

¹C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: The ‘Ars Poetica’* (Cambridge 1971) *ad Ars* 447.

²Neither are any scholia on the words and phrases in 51 recorded.

³Compare Σ’s similar gloss on *trechedipna*, 3.67. The only possible defence of *consuetudo mali* is that it constitutes a kind of word play with *cacoethes*, cf. F. Jacoby, *Hermes* 87 (1959) 456.

⁴The nearest analogues are Publil. B 2 *bonarum rerum consuetudo pessima est*; Sen. *Ep.* 108.18 *crudelitatis consuetudinem*; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.11.1 *ex consuetudine bonitatis tuae*; Suet. *N.* 42.2 *ex consuetudine luxus atque desidia*. For *mala consuetudo* see TLL 4.557.69 ff.

that *malum* is not used in the singular by Juvenal to mean “evil-doing” or “misdeed.”⁵

But on the third point, retention of 51b, the present writer dissents. Whether we follow Housman in referring *discedas* and *multos* to the first person plural or Courtney in referring the words to the third person plural, *multos* does seem to distort, if not conflict with, the indefinite, generalising singular *discedas*.⁶ Moreover, a contrast is apparently created between those who successfully leave off and those who are ensnared, a contrast which does not contribute to the argument. Peter Green’s Penguin version reproduces the correct sense of Juvenal’s argument: “You can’t get out, you’re hooked/By writer’s itch.” The inept *multos* should be viewed as an interpolation, attributable to the mistaken feeling that *tenet* lacked an object, mistaken because *te* may be inferred from *discedas*.

To complete the objections to 51b, *insanabile* is, properly speaking, an inappropriate adjective for *cacoethes* which denotes “a malignant but *not incurable* growth or ulcer” (Courtney;⁷ my italics). Therefore, although at first sight perhaps an apposite adjective to qualify *cacoethes*, *insanabile* may well be an interpolation inspired by the medical metaphor.⁸

Deletion of line 51 has now been argued on several grounds. Retention of 50b may be defended on the ground that *laqueo* suits the image latent in *tenet*, which would otherwise remain undeveloped.⁹ However, deletion

⁵In the singular it denotes an illness at 6.109 and “hardship” at 14.290. In the plural, *mala* usually means “hardships,” “misfortunes” (10.98, 191, 13.13, 14.303, 15.142) and once, in a spurious line, *mali* means “bad men” (13.236); it occurs three times meaning “wickedness,” but qualified by a genitive (*mala nequitiae* 14.216 and *longae pacis mala* 6.292) or in an adjectival phrase (6.336 *intacta malis*).

⁶E. Paratore, *Archaeologia Classica* 25–26 (1973–4) 498, makes this point, although he argues (unconvincingly) for a different reading of these lines. See Madvig, *Lat. Gramm.*³ § 370 for this usage and in particular the significance of the subjunctive; also Munro *ad* Lucr. 1.327 and Mayor *ad* Juv. 10.339–340 for further parallels. Of these Juv. 10.205, 339, and 340 are closely analogous to the present passage in that despite the shift from 2nd to 3rd person verb, the main sentence requires implicit reference to the unexpressed *tu* of the subordinate clause. On the moods of the verbs see J. B. Hofmann in Stolz-Schmalz, *Lateinische Grammatik* (Munich 1928 2.2 p. 774 § 337. For the shift here, cf. lines 39–40.

⁷He cites Celsus 5.28.2, a text quite possibly known to Juvenal. In support of this is the concordance of, e.g., *Sat.* 1.143–144 with Celsus 2.17.2; for other analogues with Celsus see Courtney’s notes on 4.56, 5.24, 5.32, 6.469, and 14.57.

⁸J. G. Griffith, *Festschrift Bruno Snell* (Munich 1956) 104 n. 2, makes points in favour of and against the authenticity of *insanabile*.

⁹For *teneo* + *laqueus* cf. Cic. *Mil.* 40; *De Orat.* 1.43; Ovid *Met.* 11.73–74; Sen. *Ben.* 7.4.1. For the metaphorical use of *laqueus*, cf. Hor. *C.* 3.24.8 *mortis laqueis*; Apul. *Met.* 10.24.2 *crudelissimis laqueis mortis insidiari*; 24.5 *laqueos insidiarum*; 27.3 *laqueis fraudium pessimorum*; with reference to forms of writing and discourse, as here, cf. Cic.

of line 51 creates a problem: the adjective *ambitosi* qualifying the gerund *scribendi* seems problematical.¹⁰ This problem is avoided by Jahn, who emends to *ambitosum* to agree with *cacoethes*. This is a plausible solution, although "the ambitious ulcer of writing holds (you) in a snare" is a more strained and less effective application of *ambitosus* than its other occurrence in Juvenal, at 3.182, *hic uiuimus ambitiosa/paupertate omnes*.

A better solution arises from considering other meanings of *ambitosus*. "Ambitious" seems to relate *via* "importunate" to the literal sense of the adjective, "going around, winding, clinging." The noun most appropriately qualified thus is *laqueo*, the snare which *encircles* the victim. Hence I propose emendation to *ambitoso*. Both "ambitious" and "encircling" are appropriate here and neither meaning should be rejected, this being another case in which Juvenal exploits ambivalence.¹¹ *Ambitoso* qualifies the rather bald *laqueo* and creates a neat ablative phrase in a common disposition of noun + adjective,¹² a disposition, moreover, which encircles the word *tenet*!¹³

The literal meaning of *ambitosus* is recognised in only two places in Latin literature,¹⁴ Plin. *H.N.* 5.71 *Iordanes amnis . . . quatenus locorum situs patitur, ambitosus* and Hor. *C.* 1.36.20 *nec Damalis nouo/diuellit*

Caec. 83 *aequitatem rei uerbi laqueo capi*; *De Orat.* 1.43 *Stoici . . . disputationum suarum atque interrogationum laqueis te inretitum tenerent*; Plin. *Ep.* 1.5.7 *nec me laqueis tam insidiosae interrogationis inuolueram*; Gell. 1.2.4 *sylogismorum captionumque dialecticarum laqueis strepebat*, etc.

¹⁰One would expect an *adverb* to qualify a verbal noun: see E. C. Woodhouse, *A New Latin Syntax* (London 1959) § 201.

¹¹For similar ambivalence cf. *intestata senectus* at 1.144, where *intestata* bears the meaning "unattested" (for argumentation see Housman, *CR* 13 [1899] 432–434 = *Collected Classical Papers* 489–491), an exceedingly rare usage (*TLL* 7,2.4.75–81 cites only Aug. *Civ.* 20.30 p. 480 27 D besides this passage), but nevertheless, I would argue, with just a glance towards the regular meaning "intestate" (Plautus' pun on the word at *Curc.* 622 suggests that the Romans were aware of the multivalence of the word).

Other cases where Juvenal creates ambivalence with rare and regular senses of a word include *farrago* 1.86; *municeps* 4.33, 14.271; *manipli* 8.153; *collega* 8.197. *Attonitae* at 7.67 is multivalent (see Courtney).

There may be a similar ambiguity at Tac. *Hist.* 2.92—*adbitis pecuniis per occultos aut ambitiosos sinus*—where, although *ambitosos sinus* clearly stands for *sinus ambitiosorum* (= "ambitious"), there may be a hint of the sense "winding" in view of the mention of secrecy in *occultos*. (I am grateful to Mr J. D. Cloud for suggesting this line of enquiry and the parallel example of 1.144.)

¹²Cf., e.g., 40, 49, 112, 8.28 *patriae contingis ouanti*, 8.154, 8.235 *tunica punire molesta*, and many examples which feature adjective + noun with the noun second. See further C. Conrad, *HSCP* 69 (1965) 195–258 esp. 203–207; T. E. V. Pearce, *CQ* n.s. 16 (1966) 140–171 and 298–320.

¹³The notion of encircling/clinging is frequently found in association with *laqueus* but expressed by other adjectives such as *artus* and *tenax*: e.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.13, Plin. *Ep.* 2.8.2, Sen. *Phoen.* 148, Quint. 5.10.101, Man. 5.186, Sen. *Phaedr.* 1085–1086, Symph. 252, Ovid *Met.* 11.252.

¹⁴*TLL* 1.1855.15 ff.

adultero/lasciuus hederis ambitiosior. In their note on the latter passage, Nisbet and Hubbard refer to *Ars Poetica* 447 f., a passage which has more relevance to the present context than has formerly been realised. Horace is describing the criticism of poetry by the *uir bonus et prudens* (*Ars* 445): *ambitiosa recidet/ornamenta*. Nisbet and Hubbard write “in view of *recidet* there must be a suggestion of the twining tendril” and Brink *ad loc.*, with more circumspection, “*ambitiosa* perhaps reveals the notion ‘encircling and luxuriant growth,’ once the following word *recidet* opens up the horticultural image,” adducing *C.* 1.36.20 and *D.* West’s elucidation of the sustained metaphor from pruning in lines 445–448.¹⁵ Both Horace and Juvenal use *ambitiosus* ambivalently, in similar contexts of poetic composition, to connote encircling as well as ambition. The possibility that Juvenal is alluding to these two passages of Horace would support the interpretation of *ambitiosus* in its literal sense here.¹⁶ This possibility is in turn supported by the high level of Horatian allusion in this part of the Satire.¹⁷

¹⁵*Reading Horace* (Edinburgh 1967) 59–61. J. D. P. Bolton, mentioned by West in n. 40, would also retain 50b, considering the “image too sophisticated to be the work of an interpolator.” The “image” referred to is apparently that of *ambitiosus*, but it is not clear how he would construe and read the lines.

¹⁶The amatory context of *C.* 1.36.20 seems relevant too: Juvenal’s wording suggests the analogy of poet and lover (cf. Hor. *Serm.* 2.1.10 *amor scribendi*, *Ep.* 2.1.108–109), an analogy made more explicit later when Statius’ *Thebaid* is called his *amica* and he is compelled to prostitute his *Agave* (82–87: for explication see N. Rudd, *Lines of Enquiry* [Cambridge 1976] 101–102; V. Tandoi, “Il ricordo di Stazio ‘dolce poeta’ nella Sat. 7 di Giovenale,” *Maia* 21 [1969] 103–122 = *Omaggio a E. Fraenkel* [Pisa 1968] 248–270). Both lover and poet are completely hooked by the objects of their passions: for this type of expression in the context of love cf., e.g., Lucilius 990 *M sic laqueis, manicis, pedicis, mens inrestita est*; Tib. 1.9.46 *poteram ad laqueos cautior esse tuos*; Ovid *A.A.* 1.646 *in laqueos quos posuere cadant* with A. S. Hollis *ad loc.*, Apul. *Met.* 2.5 *serit blanditias, inuadit spiritum, amoris profundi pedicis aeternis alligat*; for Greek examples see Marx on Lucilius 990.

¹⁷Allusions to the lyrics are especially thick here (Rudd [above, n. 16] 96–97 notices some of them). This is appropriate: it is important for Juvenal’s argument that he evoke Horace at the height of his *lyric* powers, just as he proceeds to evoke Virgil at the height of his *epic* powers in lines 66–67. The most explicit allusions are *uena* 53: 2.18.9 (see Nisbet-Hubbard); *fontibus Aonidum* 59: 3.4.25, the same context of poetic inspiration; *sub antro/Pierio* 59–60: 3.4.40, cf. 2.1.39; *thyrsus* 60: 2.19.8; *euhoe* 62: 2.19.5, 7 (evidently a quotation); for the combination of cave and Bacchic context cf. 3.25 esp. 1–4. Less fixed and exclusive allusions lie in the connotations of *uates* 53; the claim to originality at 53 ff.; *deducere* 54 referring to poetic composition; and the notion that the woods are the poet’s retreat, all of which find analogues in Horace.

The allusion to the close of the *Ars* is also in keeping with other similar allusions here, e.g., 52 recalls *Ars* 453–455 *ut mala quem scabies aut morbus regius urget/aut fanaticus error et iracunda Diana, /uesanum tetigisse timent fugientque poetam* (evocation of the mad poet is not, after all, without ironical point); 53 apparently alludes to *Ars* 409–410, as Nisbet and Hubbard observe on *C.* 2.18.9, in the reference of *uena* to poetic inspiration. The culmination of Juvenal’s allusions to Horace obviously lies in the explicit reference of 62.

Finally, the corruption from *ambitoso* to *ambitosi* is easily accounted for. Scribes often made adjectives agree with whatever substantive was nearest,¹⁸ which would explain the corruption if *scribendi* were the next word (i.e., before interpolation of 51); even *mali* in the spurious line could have affected the ending of *ambitoso*. Failure to appreciate the literal sense of *ambitosus* could also have influenced its corruption into agreement with a noun more likely to be described as “ambitious.”

The reading of lines 50–52 proposed here—

nam si discedas, laqueo tenet ambitioso
scribendi cacoethes et aegro in corde senescit

—not only resolves the textual crux but illustrates Juvenal’s poetic powers, appropriately in this context of poetic inspiration. For along with the rare literal sense of *ambitosus* comes the unparalleled metaphorical use of *cacoethes*; *senesco* too bears an unusual, transferred sense, “to endure to old age,” paralleled in its application to disease only in Seneca (*Ep.* 98.15, of an ulcer, a passage possibly known to Juvenal). Juvenal is in effect showing off in this part of the poem, running through the whole gamut of metaphors and clichés for poetic activity and inspiration: ploughing the dust and/or sand (48–49); the *uena* of metal and/or water (53); weaving (54); and minting coins (55). In lines 50–52 Juvenal describes the impulse to write poetry in an extravagant mixture of metaphors¹⁹ taken from the realms of disease and trapping.

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¹⁸See J. Willis, *Latin Textual Criticism* (Urbana 1972) 217, citing Stat. *Th.* 6.296–297. The ease of corruption of this sort is illustrated by the textual variants at 3.128, the other occurrence of *ambitosus* in Juvenal: *ambitiosa* Φ: *ambitosi* P (U. Knoche, *D. Iunius Iuvenalis Saturae* [Munich 1950] also records *ambitiose* γ¹), *ambitosi* here with *uiuius*, as if the copyist read no further than the end of the line.

¹⁹Courtney’s argument for Housman’s deletion of *laqueo*—*mali* on the grounds that “otherwise we have an intolerable mixed metaphor (*laqueo* and *cacoethes*),” like his attempt to regiment into consistency the *farrago* of metaphors of 53–55, suggests a lack of appreciation of Juvenal’s penchant for playful extravagance in word and image.