PHILOSOPHERS AND CANNIBALS: JUVENAL'S FIFTEENTH SATIRE

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JUVENAL'S FIFTEENTH SATIRE,[1] built around a purported incident of cannibalism in Egypt, has traditionally been an object of distaste and neglect.[2] There have been a couple of recent efforts to argue that it deserves a better fate,[3] and I shall attempt to further this just cause. However, I want to do so by arguing that both the detractors and the promoters of the poem have rested their cases on a mistaken assumption—namely, that Juvenal wrote it as an expression of his own views in his own voice.

All Juvenal's Satires have traditionally been read as if there were no distinction to be drawn between the satirist himself and the persona which he adopts in them. Their hot-headed outbursts, irrational harangues, and sentimental moralizing have therefore been read as self-expression on Juvenal's part.[4] Now in Satire 15 the ostensible objects of attack are the Egyptians. Its tirade against them is a tissue of hysterical racism, stupid morbidity, and smug self-congratulation, taking a single incident of alleged cannibalism as proof of how repulsive all Egyptians are and of the moral superiority of Graeco-Roman culture. Hence, on the traditional assumption of identity between the Satire's first-person bigot and its author, it seems merely another unpleasant document in the history of bigotry.

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[1] I shall be referring to the following works by author's surname: W. S. Anderson, (1) "The Programs of Juvenal's Later Books," *CP* 57 (1962) 145–160, and (2) "Anger in Juvenal and Seneca," *UCPCPh* 19 (1964) 127–196; E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London 1980); J. D. Duff, *Juvenal. Satires* (rev. ed., Cambridge 1976); S. C. Fredericks, "Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire," *ICS* 1 (1976) 174–189; G. Highet, (1) "The Philosophy of Juvenal," *TAPA* 80 (1949) 254–270, and (2) *Juvenal the Satirist* (New York 1961); U. Knoche, *Roman Satire*, tr. E. Ramage (Bloomington, Indiana 1975); J. E. B. Mayor, *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal* (London 1893); A. Scobie, "Juvenal XV and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*," in *More Essays on the Ancient Romance and its Heritage*, ed. A. Scobie (Meisenheim am Glan 1973, Beitrage zur klassischen Philologie 46) 53–63; D. Singleton, "Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire: A Reading," *G&R* 30 (1983) 198–207.

[2] See Scobie 53 for a sampling of negative verdicts on the poem.

[3] See Fredericks and Singleton.

[4] For a general defence of Juvenal's "sincerity" in this and other respects, see Knoche 150–152. One notable exception to the general rule is Anderson. He draws a distinction between author and speaker in the *early* Satires in order to suggest that the *ira* which marks the speaker there is implicitly presented by Juvenal for the reader's moral criticism, and then is explicitly criticized and abandoned by Juvenal in later Satires (see esp. [2] 176–194). However, this thesis tends to identify author and speaker in later Satires like the 15th (see notes below for Anderson's interpretation here) since it is supposed to be the later Juvenal himself who rejects *ira* in favor of a more mature moral attitude.

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I want to challenge this identity-assumption by interpreting the poem as a dramatic monologue. Rather than addressing us in his own voice, Juvenal assumes the voice of a character whom he creates to deliver the monologue, and from whom he maintains, as his creator and speechwriter, a satiric detachment that he expects his readers to share. The views expressed in the Satire are not the satirist's own; rather, the satirist is as it were impersonating the sort of man who would hold such views, and the Satire serves to present this character to the reader for critical inspection. Let us call this character Juvenal's "speaker" to distinguish him from the author or satirist himself. Two levels of communication must then be distinguished in reading any Satire as a dramatic monologue. First there is the explicit discourse delivered by the speaker to his addressee, who goes in Satire 15 by the unknown and perhaps fictitious name of Volusius Bithynius. This constitutes the poem's explicit or surface content. But, secondly, there is an implicit channel of communication between satirist and reader which Juvenal opens up by keeping his distance from his speaker, manipulating the latter's discourse so as to create satirical effects of which he presents his speaker as unconscious. In Satire 15 I suggest that Juvenal exploits this implicit channel to direct his readers' scorn not against the Egyptians whom his speaker is attacking but against the speaker himself for his delusion that Roman society is superior.

Previous efforts to salvage our Satire's reputation have attempted to counter the distastefulness of the speaker's bigotry by finding merit in the supposedly more edifying passages where he abominates cannibalism and proclaims his faith in "civilized" values—as if Juvenal's own higher purpose were to promote such sentiments.[5] However, the poem contains many evident ironies which make an implicit mockery of them. The commentators have duly noted a number of these ironies before, but no one has asked what sense such a self-defeating strategy would make if, in accord with the identity-assumption, Juvenal is writing to promote the same sentiments on his own behalf.[6] On the hypothesis that the Satire is a dramatic monologue, by contrast, we shall find that these ironies fall naturally into place. For the sentiments which they undercut are part and parcel of the cultural and racial arrogance in his speaker which it is Juvenal's aim not to espouse but to debunk. In addition, certain more fundamental (though previously unnoticed) ironies should emerge which will serve to reinforce our hypothesis.

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[5] Cf. Anderson (1) 151 and (2) 191; Fredericks 175 with his citations in n. 3; Singleton 204–206; J. Gerard, *Juvenal et la réalité contemporaine* (Paris 1976) 385–387.

[6] Scobie succeeds in accounting for a few of the ironies by elaborating on the suggestion of R. Reitzenstein in *Hellenistische Wundererzahlungen* (Leipzig 1906) 27–29 that the poem is a parody of aretalogy or the "wonder-tale" as exemplified by Odysseus' wanderings. (See esp. Scobie 55 and 60.) This thesis is, I think, true so far as it goes and does grant Juvenal a measure of detachment from the surface content, since the Satire then becomes a spoof of the genre of which it purports to be a specimen. But Scobie remains essentially wedded to the identity-assumption: Juvenal is pulling the reader's leg, but in his own voice. For other limitations of the theory see Fredericks, who rejects it outright (175, n. 5).

Before beginning a detailed analysis,it will be helpful to divide the speaker's argument into five sections.

(A) Egyptians worship animals and vegetables, eating people instead (lines 1–32).
(B) This perversion is exemplified in a recent incident of Egyptian cannibalism, sparked by tribal enmity over which animals should be worshipped (33–92).
(C) Incidents of cannibalism in Roman history are by contrast excusable on account of extenuating circumstances (93–131).
(D) Compassion distinguishes men from beasts, and civilized men from barbarians (131–158).
(E) But men today kill and eat each other, which no beast does to its own kind (159–174).

We can begin with the main theme of section A, the depravity of Egyptian religion, and watch how Juvenal proceeds to sabotage his speaker's indignation by satirizing the latter's smug regard for Graeco-Roman gods. The first complaint in A is that the Egyptians worship animals instead of Diana, mistress of animals (1–8). Commentators are quick to assume that Juvenal himself is urging upon us Diana's claim to be more worthy of worship. But in section C the poet makes his speaker invoke Diana again, this time in her Greek guise as Tauric Artemis, who, as the speaker reminds us, once forced Agamemnon to kill Iphigeneia as a sacrifice in her honour (115–119). Now in section E the speaker will condemn man's killing of fellow human beings as the worst possible violation of the greatest of virtues, compassion, while portraying animals as our moral superiors insofar as they never kill other members of their own species (159–164). Thus, in condemning the Egyptians in A for worshipping animals rather than their anthropomorphic mistress, the speaker is by his own subsequent account condemning them for worshipping divinities who behave in accord with the greatest virtue rather than the one who forced a man to violate it so cruelly as to kill his own daughter.[7] The speaker is oblivious to the fact that his reference to Artemis in C thus undermines his elevation of Diana in A, but Juvenal is playing his speaker's prejudices for laughs and plants the irony there for us to seize on.

The same religious prejudice is further caricatured in section B, where the speaker introduces the two Egyptian tribes involved in the cannibalism, the Omboi and the Tentyrites, and tells us that the "immortal hatred" behind the incident stems from a religious dispute. Each tribe hates the gods of the other and holds its own gods to be the only ones worthy of worship (35–37). The commentators assume that the disdain expressed here for this fanaticism exemplifies a contrasting attitude of religious tolerance supposedly characteristic of Romans. Our speaker would no doubt concur in this compliment to himself; but Juvenal mocks that superiority complex by making him exemplify the same sort of *in*tolerance toward the religions of both tribes as they exhibit toward one another's. For the speaker too thinks only his own gods worthy of worship, and he too detests those who worship different ones—with the added satirical twist from Juvenal that the goddess whom the speaker reveres seems, to judge from the incident at Taurus, to be of even lower moral stature than the gods whom he rejects.[8] Needless to say, Juvenal is not trying to convert us to animal-worship. His consistent objective is to suggest, not that "barbarians" are superior to "civilized people," but rather that at bottom there is little to choose between the two.

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[7] For examples of the sort of attitude Juvenal is satirizing—Roman contempt for the Egyptian veneration of animals—see Mayor 2.363–364. Singleton sees that the killings in honor of Tauric Artemis symbolize "the cruelty of men in general" (205–206) and thus ironically suggest that Egyptian cruelty is not so exceptional; but he fails to see how they undercut the earlier invocation of Diana.

Moving on in Section A we next find the speaker warning Volusius that, although what he is about to hear will strain his credulity, he should not reject it as fictitious (13–31). How does the speaker support this claim that cannibalism is incredible, which has been taken so seriously as Juvenal's own?[9] He cites Odysseus' after-dinner speech in Phaeacia with its tales of the Cyclops and Laestrygonians. Any sober Phaeacian, he assures us, would have dismissed Odysseus as a liar (*mendax aretalogus* 16) since cannibalism is even more incredible than Circe changing men into pigs or Aeolus tying the winds up in a bag (13–26). Commentators on line 13 remark that it is "hard to see why" these other tales should seem easier to believe (Courtney), and they assume that Juvenal is merely being "whimsical" (Duff). But once we distinguish the satirist from his speaker we can see that Juvenal has deliberately contrived the comparison so as to make its effect the reverse of his speaker's intention. By having him remind us of stories that are *really* incredible, Juvenal provokes in his readers the reflection that cannibalism may not be so incredible after all.[10]

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[8] Singleton (203) evinces precisely the superior attitude toward Egyptian religion which I take Juvenal to be satirizing in his speaker: "there is of course a world of difference between the educated Roman's contempt for the bizarre and fanatical, and the frenzied exclusiveness of these two Egyptian peoples."

[9] Cf. Anderson (1) 151: Juvenal characterizes the tribesmen's act as "extraordinary," "unusual and alien," and "incredible." So too Courtney 590: Juvenal "emphasizes the horror of the event by insisting on its incredibility as well as its truth."

[10] Fredericks, by contrast, takes the description of Alcinous as "thunderstruck" (*attonito*) to indicate that Juvenal presents him as a "prototype" of *humanitas*, properly appalled at the thought of cannibalism (178). On my reading, Fredericks takes Alcinous as Juvenal's speaker would like him to, while Juvenal intends us to find the king's reaction comically overdrawn.

Similarly, when the speaker next claims that the Egyptians' crime (*scelus*) is worse than any in tragic drama, since it was perpetrated by a "whole people" (*populus*) and not just by an individual (29–32), he evokes above all Atreus, who served up his brother's children to their father in a stew. To say the least, it is "hard to see why" Atreus' single-handedness makes his cold-blooded domestic atrocity any less appalling than the tribesmen's impersonal fit of mob violence. Why not more so? The speaker wants Volusius to feel that Egyptian depravity exceeds the limits of the "civilized" imagination. But already in section A Juvenal has taken several ironical steps toward suggesting to his readers that it is not even so far removed from "civilized" *behavior* as his speaker would like to think.[11]

Further, Juvenal implicitly raises doubts as to the truth about the incident which is supposed to prove the charge of incredible baseness. For the speaker never tells us how he found out about the purported cannibalism, or gives us any reason to suppose that his report rests on first-hand authority. In fact, Juvenal implicitly directs our attention to the absence of any such claim. First he has the speaker impugn Odysseus' veracity in A on the ground that there were no witnesses to corroborate his stories (26). This sets up in the reader an expectation that the speaker will go on to defend his own story by asserting that it is based on eyewitness reports. And yet all he can say is that the event (a) took place recently instead of long ago (27), (b) took place at a real, as opposed to an imaginary, location (28), and (c) involved a common mob (*vulgi scelus*) instead of mythical monsters (29).[12] Not only does he lack eyewitnesses, like Odysseus; he cannot even claim, as that "liar" had done, to have been one himself.[13] In what follows Juvenal will reinforce in several ways our natural suspicion that his speaker's only sources are hearsay and an overheated imagination.

Nevertheless, the speaker leaps from this one alleged incident to a blanket condemnation of Egyptian society in general. While its perverse religion forbids the eating of any animals, and even of some vegetables (9–12), the ingestion of people-meat is perfectly acceptable, or so he flatly declares (*carnibus humanis vesci licet*, 13). Our commentators complain that it is "not fair" for *Juvenal* to infer that cannibalism was, as *licet* suggests, generally condoned in Egypt.[14] However, if we read the poem as a dramatic monologue, we open up the possibility that Juvenal is satirizing the irrationality of his speaker's prejudiced mind rather than merely indulging a prejudice of his own.[15]

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[11] Contrast Courtney 590: "Juvenal is horrified that these things could happen in modern times" and so on.

[12] Courtney explains *vulgi scelus* mistakenly, as if it were making the same point as *populus* in line 31 (see preceding paragraph).

[13] Scobie thinks Juvenal is parodying the use by aretalogists of "stock authenticating devices" to secure belief (55 f.). But he fails to note the absence of an eyewitness claim. Cf. Courtney, who paraphrases Juvenal as claiming that his report is "well-attested" (590), which is precisely what Juvenal's speaker does *not* say.

[14] Fredericks 176 and Courtney ad loc., respectively. On the force of *licet*, see Singleton 201 with n. 19, quoting Cic. *Phil.* 13.6.14.

The speaker's passion for jumping to conclusions about Egyptians is evident also as the narrative now begins in section B. One tribe attacks the other while the latter is celebrating a religious feast which, the speaker assures us, was an example of Egyptian *luxuria.* "Unkempt as they are," he huffs, "yet when it comes to *luxuria*, I've found in my experience (*quantum ipse notavi*) that this bunch of barbarians is right up there with Canopus" (44–46). The phrase *quantum ipse notavi* is sometimes translated "as I myself have observed" and taken as clinching evidence that Juvenal had visited Egypt.[16] But if the Satire is a dramatic monologue, the question whether the *author* ever visited Egypt is irrelevant to its interpretation. We must ask instead how the phrase serves to characterize the *speaker.*[17] The expression with which he began his discourse, *Quis nescit* (1)—"everybody knows," as we would say, how revolting those Egyptians are—is characteristic of those who do not know what they are talking about, whose opinions are more likely to be based on half-baked rumor and prejudice than on first-hand knowledge. Add to this the fact that the speaker did not witness the cannibalism, and we will be inclined to take *quantum* here in its ordinary limiting sense, so that I have translated "in my experience."[18] Juvenal's dramatic point is thus not merely that the speaker has never been to Egypt, but that he has not had much experience with Egyptians elsewhere either. Canopus, moreover, though near Alexandria, was notorious as a resort not for rich Egyptians but for Greeks and Romans (Courtney *ad* 44–46). Thus by having his speaker contend that the *luxuria* of the tribesmen is *just as bad as* that found at Canopus (*non cedit . . . Canopo,* 46), Juvenal has him unintentionally suggest the corollary that the "civilized" reprobates of Canopus are *no better than* the tribesmen.[19]

The two tribes begin their battle by fighting hand-to-hand, without weapons (51–58). The speaker tries to fill Volusius with revulsion at the barbaric spectacle of cheek-gouging, nose-breaking, and eye-poking. He then claims that the lust for violence mounted to the point where maiming with fingernails could no longer sate it; the tribesmen began throwing rocks at one another with intent to kill (59–64). He sneers at them because the stones they threw were much smaller than those which the heroes of the Trojan War could lift (64–70)—such as the one with which "Diomedes smashed Aeneas' hip-bone" (*coxam / Aeneae* 66–67). Juvenal is, of course, adapting Homer's and Virgil's claims that the men of the heroic age were bigger and stronger than their latter-day descendants. However, once again he makes his speaker's comparison self-defeating. Instead of belittling the Egyptians as barbarians by contrast to the heroes, the effect for the reader is to portray the heroes as barbarians themselves, and rather clownish ones. Granted the heroes were bigger than the tribesmen, and this allowed them to throw bigger stones at each other; but they were stone-throwers all the same, bashing each other's backsides—for this is the unheroic part of their anatomy that *coxam* conjures up. Thus, just as the reference to Canopus, contrary to the speaker's intentions, portrayed contemporary Graeco-Romans as the tribesmen's equals in *luxuria*, so here, despite himself, he portrays the Homeric heroes as being just as laughable in war.[20] The third stage of the battle, after the scratching and the stone-throwing, is the resort to the man-made weapons spear and arrow (72–74).[21] The Omboi rout the Tentyrites; in the panic of retreat a stumbling Tentyrite is captured and cannibalized by the Omboi (75–78). The speaker attempts with gusto to turn Volusius' stomach by his description of the finger-licking *voluptas* displayed in the feast (78–92). To emphasize its barbarity he expresses relief that the flesh was eaten raw so that fire, Prometheus' gift to man, was spared the job of barbecuing the Tentyrite. Prometheus' gift is of course symbolic of the acquisition by man of the crafts that make civilization possible. Thus the speaker would again stress the moral gulf between civilized values and the Egyptians' passion for raw people-meat. However, though the speaker means to be pious in congratulating Prometheus on fire's good fortune, Juvenal makes his speaker here sound even more pompous and fatuous than usual,[22] and we will shortly find in sections D and E that, for the author, Prometheus with his crafts is no more an emblem of the superiority of Graeco-Roman culture than is Artemis-Diana.

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[15] On the poem as proof of prejudice in Juvenal, see Highet (2) 29 ("That Juvenal despised and detested the Egyptians there is no possible doubt"); Courtney 591; M. Coffey, *Roman Satire* (London 1976) 135. But Juvenal's own attitude to Egyptians is irrelevant to the interpretation of the Satire as a dramatic monologue. What satirist is always (or even pretends to be) free of the vices which he castigates in others? My interpretation does not require Juvenal to be free of prejudice, merely capable of taking a detached view of prejudice, his own included, at least while he is writing satire. This is hardly a superhuman capacity.

[16] E.g., Highet (2) 28; Duff xviii. For the use of the poem as evidence for this biographical question in general, see Highet (2) 27–31, and Fredericks 174, n. 1.

[17] Cf. the issue of Juvenal's personal prejudice (above, n. 15).

[18] Cf. Scobie 54; Courtney 8; Fredericks 181–182.

[19] Contrast this interpretation with the one produced by the identity-assumption: Juvenal is simply expressing "his own personal attitude" of moral condemnation toward the tribesmen (Fredericks 180).

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[20] See Fredericks 183 for a sample "straight" reading of the passage as "comparing the Egyptians of [Juvenal's] day to the heroes of the *Iliad* in an unfavorable light" in order to show that "mankind has degenerated a long way from Homer's own time."

[21] Juvenal returns to his narrative from his digression on the heroes with the phrase *a deverticulo repetatur fabula* (72)—"But back to my tale"—thus dramatizing the speaker's characteristic garrulity. See Scobie 59 for the perception that this is a satirical turn, meant to cast a comical light both on the digression and on the *fabula* (an odd word for a supposedly "well-attested" news report: see Singleton 202 and above, n. 12). Others (e.g., Duff and Courtney *ad loc.*) take line 72 as Juvenal's own straight-faced and clumsy device. See L. Friedlander, *Friedlander's Essay on Juvenal*, tr. J. R. C. Martin (London 1969) 44–45, for a general criticism of the style of the late Satires as diffuse and awkward—features which I would take, in the 15th at least, to be deliberate effects by which Juvenal attempts to characterize his speaker.

First, however, the speaker admits in C that cannibalism is not unknown elsewhere, for Spaniards were said to have resorted to it under siege by Roman troops. But he urges upon Volusius that the duress of siege excuses them (93–106), while the Egyptians had no motivation but barbarous *ira* (120–131). Moreover, the Spaniards lacked the benefits of philosophy. Nowadays we know thanks to Zeno, founder of Stoicism, that it is better to die than to commit certain wrongs (106–108); and the speaker supposes that Zeno would number cannibalism among them. He is mistaken: it was widely remarked that, on the contrary, the Stoics sanctioned cannibalizing the dead—and not merely as a last resort for the starving. Zeno and his successor Chrysippus were both accused of recommending that we eat our parents' corpses provided only that the meat has not gone bad.[23] These charges are no doubt ludicrous exaggerations, but given the notoriety of Stoic permissiveness on the subject we are bount to suppose not, as the commentators do, that Juvenal is mistaken, but that he presents his speaker as mistaken. The poet expects us to get the implicit joke that Zeno, whom his speaker submits as a paragon of Graeco-Roman superiority to cannibals, was in fact in the business of justifying them.

But where, the speaker now asks, could a Stoic be found to propound anti-cannibalistic precepts back in the age of Metellus (108–109)? His absurd assumption is that the famished citizens would have refrained from their cannibalism in deference to the Stoic's armchair moralizing, and that nowadays, thanks to philosophy, *we* would never stoop to cannibalism even under the conditions that drove those Spaniards to it. A glance at the end of Petronius' *Satyricon* may sharpen our sensitivity to Juvenal's irony. For Eumolpus in his will cites the same Spaniards, not in order to excuse them for normally inexcusable behavior, but rather to persuade his heirs that they have even better justification for complying with his demand that they eat his corpse to earn their money. The Spaniards merely filled their stomachs,

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[22] Courtney criticizes Juvenal for a lapse of artistry here, as if Juvenal were seriously congratulating Prometheus in his own voice: "a piece of artificially introduced and vapid rhetoric" —true enough, but the vapidity is the speaker's, not Juvenal's (cf. previous note).

[23] Cf., e.g., Sextus Empiricus *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 3.207 and 248–249; Diogenes Laertius 6.73, 7.188; and other texts cited *ad loc.* by Mayor and by H. D. Rankin, "Eating People Is Right: Petronius 141 and a Topos," in *Petronius the Artist* (The Hague 1971) 100–101. Sextus (*loc. cit.* 249) complains that this Stoic principle is worthy only of the Cyclopes or Laestrygonians (whom our speaker has, of course, lumped with the Egyptians as uncivilized monsters).

Eumolpus argues, but *you* have a legacy to gain![24] Through Eumolpus' words Petronius caricatures his society as a place where people would stoop to cannibalism for mercenary motives, in contrast to the Spaniards who only committed it out of starvation.[25] Similarly, behind our speaker's words to Volusius lies Juvenal's implication to his readers that the speaker is a fool to think that Romans would not commit it *even* out of starvation.

Juvenal heightens the absurdity when his speaker next illustrates this contrast between the benighted Metellan era and his own by pointing out that, thanks to philosophers as purveyors of rhetorical education, the Gauls are now teaching the Britons how to be lawyers *(causidici)*, while even in Iceland there is talk of hiring orators (110–112).[26] Clearly Juvenal here satirizes his speaker's faith that the presence of philosophers somehow elevates contemporary Roman society above those that have had to get by without them.[27] And shortly he will give us further occasion to laugh at the idea that law-courts are hot-beds of high civilization.

Cannibalism, the speaker continues, proves the Egyptians to be worse, not just than the Spaniards, but even than the most warlike barbarians. But he immediately deflates this contrast even as he tries to pump it up, scorning the Egyptians as a "useless mob unfit for war," with their little painted boats and short oars (124–128). Since he is soon to inveigh against war as proof of the barbarity of all mankind, it is hardly consistent for him to denigrate Egyptians here for being singularly unwarlike in spirit and sailcraft. Non-belligerence should by rights be to the cannibals' *credit*, modifying their barbarism, just as non-cannibalism is to the credit of belligerent barbarians![28]

Our speaker's conclusion in C is that no punishment or torture would be harsh enough for Egyptians (129–131). His lust to make them suffer rather spoils his opening gambit in D, which immediately follows with its declaration that compassion (*mollissima corda,* 131) represents the highest virtue of human nature (*haec nostri pars optima,* 133).[29] In order to prove that Graeco-Roman culture exhibits this quality, he adduces examples: we weep when a friend presents himself before the court in *squalor* to plead a case; we weep at the tears of a boy prosecuting his guardian for fraud; we weep at the funerals of nubile virgins and infants (133–140). This is the point at which, on the assumption of author-speaker identity, we are to suppose that Juvenal shifts from his efforts to "expose" cannibalism as "incredibly vile," in order to advocate "Stoic humanitarianism" as a better way of life (Anderson [1] 151; cf Fredericks 175). Now, *prima facie* it seems implausible that cannibalism should be high on Juvenal's list of vices that need "exposing" —anyway, Rome had enough vices of her own to keep him busy. But it is even more implausible that a Juvenalian Satire should portray Rome as abounding in virtue, or that one of Rome's greatest misanthropes should suddenly suffer a conversion to Stoic humanitarianism. Nevertheless, the commentators are at one in taking Juvenal to be seriously citing evidence of compassion in everyday Roman life.[30]

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[24] *Satyricon* 141.9–11. Petronius also invests Eumolpus with a similar bent for ignorantly misrepresenting philosophers. See *Satyricon* 88 and the commentary by P. G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge 1970) 96.

[25] My interpretation of Petronius here should not be confused with old-fashioned efforts to excuse his hard-core blue streak by portraying him as a moralist who condemns what he depicts. I concur in the rejection of that view typified by J. P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius: A Literary Study* (London 1968) 193–213 and 254–269, and by Walsh (above, n. 24) 81—with the difference that I read him not just as a non-moralist but as a satirizer of moralists. See further below.

[26] Juvenal uses *causidici* elsewhere as symbols of corruption: cf. 1.30–33, 7.135–138, 7.147–149, and Courtney on 7.106 for the word's connotations. Scobie suggests that the reference to Iceland (Thule) is a swipe at an aretalogical work by one Antonius Diogenes, *Wonders beyond Thule* (on which see W. Schmid, *RE* 1.2615–2616).

[27] Highet (1) contends that Juvenal admired philosophy and even "converted" to Epicureanism. But he relies largely on cliches of dubious biographical value concerning frugal living and *sapientia*, which is anyway contrasted unfavorably with experience at 13.187–189. Cf. Knoche 151.

[28] Contrast Fredericks 185: in his own voice Juvenal is here "scornfully characterizing the pettiness of the Egyptians." Similarly, Courtney on 127–128.

What then are we to make of that curious list of examples? The phrase used to describe the friend in court, *causam dicentis* (134), recalls for the reader the *causidici* with whom philosophers have filled the world—hardly the types for whom Juvenal would ever be caught shedding tears.[31] And when the speaker attempts to intensify the pathos by reference to the case-pleader's *squalor,* Juvenal could only expect his reader to recall that such melodramatic efforts to milk sympathy from the court had been an object of derision since the *Apology* of Socrates (cf. Mayor's citations on line 135). Further, the speaker's feelings for the weeping boy become equally suspect as he lingers over the boy's "girlish" locks and sexually ambiguous beauty (*ora incerta* 137), and thus unwittingly reveals that his "compassion" is at bottom libidinous. As for the funerals of *adultae virgines* and infants, the speaker's old-fashioned sentimentality should not induce us to forget Satire 6, where Roman society is characterized as devoid of any *adultae* who are still *virgines* (6.45–51) and assailed for the prevalence of contraception, abortion, and mothers who will murder their offspring for cash (6.592–598, 634–647). Juvenal would expect his readers to be familiar with his cynical caricature of contemporary Rome, in which there could be no funerals for non-existent virgins and in which every effort was made to prevent or cut off the lives of children. He presents his speaker as blind to the maudlin ineptitude of his examples, but expects us to recognize it and to share his authorial amusement at the speaker's grand illusion of a morally elevated Rome.

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[29] For serious Roman treatments of this theme, which I take Juvenal here to be spoofing, see Mayor 389–390 and A. Serafini, *Studio sulla Satira di Giovenale* (Florence 1957) 144.

[30] Cf. above, n. 5; also Fredericks 186, and Serafini, *op. cit.* 143 (who says of my sections D and E that they are Juvenal's "testamento spirituale").

[31] See n. 26 above. Courtney on 133–135 sees that weeping for a friend is not a good example of compassion for a *malum alienum* as required by 142 (see below).

The speaker next avers, in another of his effusions of fatuous piety (140–142), that the only man pure enough for initiation at Eleusis is the one who exhibits unrestricted compassion for all his fellow men—for *any* victim of *any* misfortune, no matter how "alien" the victim may be to himself (*ulla aliena sibi . . . mala*). Now it is obvious that the speaker has signally failed to qualify for the mysteries himself, with his failure to feel compassion for the "alien" Egyptians—even for the poor cannibalized Tentyrite, in whose fate he seems rather to take a grim relish (cf. Singleton 204). It next turns out in section D that the rest of mankind likewise fails, and "civilized" men above all.

Compassion is supposed to be what makes man superior to the beasts (*separat hoc nos / a grege mutorum,* 142–143); moreover, it is on account of our compassion (*ideo,* 143) that we have been granted our other heaven-sent gifts, in particular our aptitude for the arts of civilization (143–158). Indeed, God gave us compassion to be the driving force behind our progress in these arts (*mutuus ut nos / adfectus . . . iuberet,* 149–150). But our speaker's evidence works against him yet again. His first example of *mutuus adfectus* as a civilizing power is that we left the forest and established cities, seeking and offering protection so that we might sleep soundly in the knowledge that other people live close by (149–155). Obviously, under this description, the social contract is attributable not to compassion for others, as the speaker naively supposes, but rather to self-interest. We only look after the interests of others so that they will look after ours in return, which otherwise they would not. This theory was familiar to Juvenal's contemporaries from Lucretius (5.1019–1023), Horace (*Sat.* 1.3.99–114), and Epicurean teaching generally (e.g., *Kyriai Doxai* 31–38), which makes the speaker's naiveté all the more striking. And the rest of his examples are still more laughably inapposite, for they come from that least compassionate of social phenomena, warfare. We tend to stricken comrades-in-arms, we signal the moment for our army to attack by a blast on the trumpet, we protect our towers and lock our gates against attack by others (155–158). Clearly the speaker is once again shooting himself in the foot. For, although in war we try to look after those on our own side, we are out to kill the enemy. The battlefield is the worst place to look for the compassion which embraces all sufferings, even those alien to ourselves (the *ulla aliena mala* of 142). Thus in section E the speaker himself points out, sinking ever deeper into muddle as his discourse draws to a close, that warfare makes evident man's *lack* of compassion, the virtue which he presented in D as elevating men above the animals (142–143). It now turns out that, since animals never kill members of their own species (159–164), man actually ranks below them in compassion. Juvenal, we are told, accuses the Egyptians of being "bestial" (Anderson [1] 151). But clearly the satirist's implicit ironical point is that, according to his speaker's self-defeating logic, *all* men, and not just the Egyptians, are *sub*-bestial.

Compassion was supposed to distinguish not just men from beasts, but also civilized man, especially Roman society with its tear-jerking courtroom scenes, from barbarians. However, by having his speaker now deplore how man has turned from forging tools for the farm to forging weapons (165–168), Juvenal implies to us that the more civilized we become the more proficient we get at killing, that is, at violating compassion. It is Prometheus' gift of fire which makes these weapons possible, as the evocation of the forge reminds us (*incude nefanda* [165], *coquere* [167], *gladios extendere fabri* [168]). In section B Prometheus was a symbol of civilized man's superiority to barbarians; but here his gift merely enables man to become more sophisticated at barbarism. Indeed, the three stages of the tribal battle in B can be seen as a kind of capsule history of man's progress in warfare, as the tribes go from scratching and biting to stone-throwing and finally to forged weapons (*ferrum* [72], *sagittis* [73]). At this last stage the tribesmen resemble the soldiers of the speaker's own day just as they resembled Homeric heroes when throwing stones.

The barbarism of warfare is, then, universal to mankind, and this is because it has its roots in human nature. There was a time when men did not manufacture weapons, but only because they were too tired out from farming and had not yet figured out how (*lassi / nesci erint*, 167–168). Thus the reader's final picture of mankind, despite the speaker's intentions, is that he is by nature prone, not to compassion, but to the sub-bestial slaughter of his own species, and that only exhaustion and ignorance can prevent men from indulging their innate proclivity for mutual bloodshed. And when the speaker reverts in the end to Egyptian cannibalism as being especially vile (169–171), Juvenal would have us react in the same way as to the plea that Tauric Artemis, though she demands that we kill each other, at least does not demand that we *eat* each other as well (118–119). That is, our reaction should be that the speaker's distinction between cannibalism and non-cannibalism pales in face of the universality of mankind's bloody-mindedness.

We saw in C that, while the speaker holds philosophers up as paragons of civilization, Juvenal implicitly holds them up to our ridicule. This irony is consummated in the last three lines of the poem as the speaker returns to philosophy in the person of Pythagoras. How appalled Pythagoras would be by Egyptian cannibalism, he intones, since he refrained not only from animal-meat, but even from some vegetables (*et ventri indulsit non omne legumen*, 174). However, in praising Pythagoras for his selective vegetarianism, he forgetfully aligns him not with Roman but with Egyptian values. Recall what we learned of the Egyptians in section A: on account of their animal- and vegetable-worship, they eat neither any flesh nor even leeks or onions (9–12)—"not every vegetable," just like the great Greek philosopher in his famous abstinence from beans.[32] The commentators have all either failed or refused to see Juvenal's implicit joke here, attributing to the satirist his speaker's failure to remember that the Egyptians too were selective vegetarians.[33] But we can now see that Juvenal wants his readers to remember, and deliberately makes his speaker commit this climactic blunder. He no doubt expects us to view selective vegetarianism as equally idiotic in both cases, and this final authorial irony serves to knock the props from under the speaker's exaltation of philosophy by implying that all it did for Pythagoras was to make him eat like an Egyptian.[34] The reference to Pythagoras, then, is the final stroke by which the author closes the supposed gap between barbarism and civilization even as his speaker is trying to make it appear widest. Juvenal suggests that we cannot find in philosophy any more than in that other signal feature of civilization, warfare, the superiority which the speaker assumes to be there.

When read as a dramatic monologue, then, the poem implies despite its speaker's intentions that civilization and barbarism are pretty much on a par. But it is a satire not just on the pretensions of civilization but on those of human nature as well. The speaker presents philosophers as paradigmatic of civilization because they supposedly exemplify his ideal of human nature, and he presents the cannibals as contemptible for being sub-human. Juvenal, on the other hand, manipulates his speaker's dim-witted discourse so as to make it suggest to us that human nature is itself contemptible and the cannibals paradigmatic of all mankind, philosophers included. We may want to dismiss these misanthropic implications as merely a joke, but Juvenal, like the rest of us, is never *merely* joking. A parallel from the end of the *Satyricon* may once again be instructive. Eumolpus there declares that there are societies where cannibalism is legal. Far from damning them for it, as Juvenal's speaker would, he cites their example to suggest that there is nothing outlandish about requiring cannibalism of his heirs (141.2–3). But Eumolpus' blasé injunction to emulate cannibals serves the same satirical end as our speaker's outrage against them. Just as Juvenal pokes fun at the sort of moralizing in which his speaker indulges by making it constantly backfire, so Petronius has Eumolpus parody it by turning it on its head. Both authors, as I read them, are more concerned to satirize human nature and those who moralize about it than to indulge in any moralizing of their own.[35]

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[32] It is worth savoring ***non omne legumen*** as perhaps the most lumbering and bathetic closing phrase in the history of hexameter poetry (another of Juvenal's efforts to satirize his speaker stylistically—cf. above, n. 21).

[33] For example, Courtney assumes an oversight on Juvenal's part even though he has noted on line 9 that the phrase *porrum et caepe* (describing Egyptian dietary restrictions) echoes Horace *Ep.* 1.12.21, "where it is a joke against Pythagoreanism" (for another such joke in Horace see *Sat.* 2.6.63). Courtney prefers to think that Juvenal nodded off here rather than that the poem might end on a "purely destructive irony," though he has to admit that Pythagoras' resemblance to the Egyptians makes the closing lines "lose some of their point." Singleton describes Pythagoras' "dietary eccentricities" as being "so different from those of the Ombites," presumably referring to their cannibalism (206). This is the *speaker's* point, of course, but misses the satirist's irony about Egyptian vegetarianism.

[34] Courtney, who thinks that Juvenal is trying to "whip up the reader's feelings" in Pythagoras' favor, can only conclude that "Juvenal's declamation is not concerned to arrive at a consistent moral evaluation of abstinence from meat and vegetables" (612). Fredericks is more sensitive to Juvenal's irony, but just as unhelpful: "as a moral statement the poem is anything but explicit, concluding as it does in witty self-effacement" (189).

I hope that my study of the 15th will suggest the possibility that other Juvenalian Satires may also be dramatic monologues in the same sense as the 15th, and that we have been misunderstanding them by not recognizing this. For example, Satire 16 is a clear case in point. Juvenal's speaker encourages his addressee to join the army by illustrating how soldiers can profit from abusing their position and exploiting various inequities in the legal system. But obviously Juvenal is not trying to persuade his readers to rush out and enlist. Rather, the Satire implicitly attacks the abuses and inequities which its speaker sees as selling points, and is written in the persona of a pitchman much as a modern-day Juvenal might satirize those ubiquitous television commercials for the armed forces. And the dramatic monologue may not be a form of Satire restricted to Juvenal's late phase. For example, to what extent might the notorious Satire 6 be a spoof not just on women but also on the male hostility, insecurity, and hypocrisy concerning women which its speaker exemplifies?[36] My reading of Satire 15 cannot, of course, be "proven" correct by any explicit evidence on the surface of the text, for *ex hypothesi* the ironies of a dramatic monologue operate under that surface. However, if we have discovered that Satire 15 responds consistently and in sufficient detail to our hypothesis, then perhaps the traditional portrait of the satirist in the image of his speaker may loosen its grip on Juvenalian studies.[37]

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[35] Cannibalism was, of course, a topos with a history of service to moral relativists, starting from Herodotus' account of the shock of the Kallatiai at the Greek custom of burning rather than eating their dead (Hdt. 3.38). See Rankin (above, n. 23) 100–105.

[36] A forthcoming monograph, unavailable to me as I write, looks from the publisher's notice as if it may raise just such questions about Satires 2, 6, and 9: M. M. Winkler, *The Persona in Three Satires of Juvenal* (Hildesheim).

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