"Thus Nature Ordains": Juvenal's Fourteenth Satire

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Satire 14 has long been neglected and misunderstood.¹ At first glance, it seems to be merely a catalog of immoral and avaricious activities in Roman society. Most critics have readily apprehended the surface meaning, but they have rarely understood the ironic and satiric subtext. In an effort to clarify its meaning, I will examine the ironic undertones and structural unities of Satire 14.

Juvenal presents a series of rhetorical examples which focus on the father-son relationship, avarice, and the ordering of nature.² The excesses enumerated progress from the exempla domestica of a simple Roman father to the crimes of the father of the entire Roman people, namely Claudius (330–31). As in Satire 13, Juvenal stands apart from the comic spectacle he describes.³ Not relying upon indignatio as in the earlier satires, he chooses subtle irony and deflation to make his point.⁴ Juvenal takes on the role of a pseudo-moralist whose opinions and arguments are suspect from beginning to end.⁵ In this way Juvenal exposes the bankruptcy of the Roman moral tradition.


² J. Ferguson, Juvenal. The Satires (New York 1979) 315–16, believes that Satire 14 is a unified attack on the family and its headlong search for the acquisition of wealth. The alternative to extreme avarice is a life of simplicity and moderation.

³ S. C. Fredericks, "Calvinus in Juvenal’s Thirteenth Satire," Arethusa 4 (1971) 227, believes that Juvenal is aloof from avaritia and regards the pursuit of money as a comic spectacle.

⁴ M. P. O. Morford, "Juvenal’s Thirteenth Satire," AJPh 94 (1973) 36, suggests that in Satire 13 Juvenal deflates "popular philosophers, the literary genre of consolationes, and the recipient of the consolation himself" through subtle irony. Juvenal uses the same technique in Satire 14.

⁵ S. H. Braund, Beyond Anger: A Study of Juvenal’s Third Book of Satires (Cambridge 1988) 111, recognizes the moralizing speaker in Satires 8 and 14. She states: "The presence of this philosophical or moralising material has tended to obscure the ironic element in Juvenal’s so-called moralist, not least because of the links or overlaps often
Satire 14 is divided into four basic parts. Section one (1–106) gives multiple examples of the proposition, sic natura iubet, and shows how it controls the parent–child relationship in man as well as animal. The elements of “nature” and “ordering” run consistently throughout the satire. In the second section (107–255) Juvenal shows how avarice causes the undermining of the parent–child relationship, and as a result destroys the fabric of Roman society. The movement in the first two parts is from a general presentation of how parents teach their children all kinds of vices (1–106) to a specific examination of how parents by example teach their children avariciousness (107–255). However, the overriding principle in these first two sections remains sic natura iubet.

In the third section (256–316), in order to engage in a short digression on his satiric philosophy, Juvenal momentarily moves away from the parent–child motif. Finally, the epilogue (316–31) combines his statements on the ordering of nature, the absurdity of avarice, and his concern for the father–son relationship in Roman society. The image of the father as philosopher and king is central to this final passage. The mention of Epicurus, Socrates, Croesus, and Claudius points this out. Narcissus symbolically takes on the role of the evil son by willingly carrying out the orders of his emperor, the symbolic father of the entire Roman world. Through his mention of Epicurus, who turned his back on avarice, Socrates, who searched for the truth, Croesus and the Persian kingdoms, which are examples of extreme wealth, and Claudius, who ordered his freedman Narcissus to kill Messalina, Juvenal reinforces the unity of Satire 14 by intertwining and linking all the major themes: (1) father–son, (2) avarice, and (3) sic natura iubet. Thus, Juvenal moves from an exposition of the specific evils of Roman society to a general philosophical comment about the nature of man which is a common structure in Satires 11–15.

perceived between satirists and moralists. But, Juvenal's so-called moralist is, in effect a parody of a moralist.”

6 For comments on the structure of Satire 14 see J. D. Duff (ed.), D. Iunii Juvenalis Saturae XIV, rev. M. Coffey (Cambridge 1970) 413, who saw only a slight connection between the two major parts (1–106 and 107–331); M. Coffey, Roman Satire (London 1976) 134, who believed that the theme of bad parental examples gave a unity of structure until the sensational description of the merchants at sea (265–302); O'Neil (above, note 1) 252, who divided the satire into three parts (1–106, 107–316, and 316–331); Ferguson (above, note 2) 305 broadly follows O'Neil's account of the structure; E. C. Courtney, A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal (London 1980) 561–89, also follows O'Neil's structure; Hight (above, note 1) 283–84 n. 4 was happy with a four-part structure (1–106, 107–255, 256–316, and 316–31). The arrangement chosen in this article borrows and alters structures from O'Neil and Highet in order to achieve a logical flow and movement to the satire.

7 Satires 11–15 consistently end on philosophic generalizations that pose some ironic problem for the critic. If we look at them all together, we can find a satirist who offers his audience a moderate way of living. But it is not simply moderation which must be our guide. Juvenal suggests that we must live a life tempered by sapientia. For further study of this comparison of Satires 11–15, see K. Weisinger, “Irony and Moderation in Juvenal
Satire 14 begins by recalling an idea that Juvenal set forth in Satire 1 (147–49): Posterity can add nothing further to our traditions (nostri moribus); the grandchildren will do the same things that their parents did; and vice is a recurring evil afflicting generation after generation. Satire 14 contains a similar theme (1–3): Parents demonstrate (monstrari) and hand down (tradunty) to their sons many things worthy of notoriety.

The examples which follow (4–30) show the perversion of the parent–child relationship and indicate how that relationship can be used to teach the vices of gambling, gluttony, cruelty, and promiscuity. First, Juvenal parodies epic as he details the consequences of a father who gambles (4–6). His son cannot help but brandish the “arms” (movet arma) his father uses. The tools of gambling are sarcastically referred to as weapons. The dinners which follow (6–14) to illustrate gluttony are a standard Juvenalian motif showing the degeneration of society.

Next, the cruelty of Rutilus is revealed (15–24). These lines contain a wealth of philosophical and epic allusion, and hint at a humane view of slavery. Rutilus does not teach his son to have a gentle mind, or to offer fair treatment for slight faults (15). Juvenal presents Rutilus as a total rejection of rational philosophy. He is motivated by anger and vengeance, just as Calvinus is in Satire 13. Rutilus also rejects Lucretian philosophy, for he does not think that the minds and bodies of his slaves are made of the same elements as his own (16). Like Calvinus, he enjoys feeding his baser emotions and is happy (18 gaudet, 21 felix, and 23 laetus) only when he can brand someone with a burning iron for stealing a towel or two (21–22).

Rutilus is the very embodiment of cruelty and is compared to such epic villains as Antiphates and Polyphemus. By this shocking comparison of mythological to contemporary characters, a horribly stark and bold image is created.

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9 Duff (above, note 6) 126 n. 91; Ferguson (above, note 2) 306 n. 5; and Courtney (above, note 6) 563 n. 4.

10 Cf. 5. 114–19, 146–55, and 11. 1–23.

11 Cf. 6. 474–96; Sen. Ep. 47.

12 Fredericks (above, note 3) 219–31; Morford (above, note 4) 26–36.

13 Ferguson (above, note 2) 306 n. 17.

The effect of a sinful mother upon her daughter is illustrated next (25–30). Juvenal wonders how else than bad is a young girl to turn out who is unable to name the lovers of her mother without taking a breath at least thirty times? The prolific ability of Larga is contained in the obvious pun of her name, which means "generous." Both girls and boys are subject to the wanton example of their parents.

Juvenal now briefly summarizes (31–37) the first thirty lines. The path of old blame pointed out by parents (monstrata veteris orbita culpae 37) brackets Juvenal’s opening statement in which he also used a form of the word monstro (3). The parents are teaching and demonstrating, but it is a perverted example. The idea of monstrata is significant and occurs again later in the satire. While the premise of sic natura iubet seems straightforward, the examples Juvenal uses to make his point undercut the argument through the grotesque and ludicrous images of parents such as Rutilius and Larga. Epic parody, learned philosophical allusions, mythological asides, and rampant promiscuity control the opening lines (1–37). All of this indicates that Juvenal does not want us to accept the literal complaints of his persona. The solemn sic natura iubet juxtaposed to such obvious humor is all the more compelling. The ordering of nature which occurs throughout the satire (31, 108, 212, 306, and 331) supports the notion that nature does order children to follow the example of their parents, but Juvenal deflates this solemn maxim by portraying it as being ridiculous.

Juvenal continues his exempla (38–106) and sets up guidelines for moral reform. The satirist says that it is easy to find a Catiline, an evil individual, in any society. The force of this statement is undercut by the repetition of quocumque. It would appear that it is a hopeless situation, since the presence of Catilinarian evil exists everywhere (quocumque in populo videas, quocumque sub axe 42). The satirist, at this point, grossly overstates his point. Both the repetition and the vague sense of quocumque serve to undercut this statement. The satirist contrasts two examples of Republican virtue (Brutus and Cato the Younger, 41–43) with Catiline, who tried to destroy the Republic. Not only are these examples so hackneyed and overused as to be meaningless, but they are confusing, for Brutus carries a double meaning: the Elder, who began the Republic, and the Younger, who assassinated Caesar, ending all semblance of a Republic. In this way, Juvenal suggests that the old models of traditional Roman morality can no longer be accepted unthinkingly.

Function of Epic in Juvenal’s Satires," *Latomus* 206 (1989) 415, demonstrates that Juvenal is the “inheritor of the epic–vatic tradition.”

15 Winkler (above, note 8) 47 states: “By Juvenal’s time the old, stern mores appear shallow and hollow; they have become meaningless and finally absurd and ridiculous. What significance could the faded picture of an ancestor of hundreds of years ago, of a Brutus, Cato, Scaevola, or anybody else among those mentioned, possibly convey to anyone living in Juvenal’s days?”
The satirist continues: Do not allow foul words or sights to come into a house where there is a father (44). Keep all bad influences away. The use of procul, a procul (45) is particularly apt, since it was a proclamation that occurred before a sacrifice or on other religious occasions in order to keep away unholy persons and evil spirits. The sanctity of a child is surrounded with a religious aura. If a man has an evil deed in mind, Juvenal advises him to let the thought of his infant son stand in the way of the crime’s commission.

As an elaboration of this idea, Juvenal examines parents’ misplaced emphasis on the external appearance of a Roman household (59–73). The household, as far as the master is concerned, is only important with respect to its physical appearance. The master trembles lest his guest may see dog dung in his halls (64–65), yet he does nothing to insure that his son grows up in a house free from vice (sine labe 71) and without fault (carentem vitio 71). Juvenal catches our attention with the phrase ne stercore foeda canino / atria displiceant oculis venientis amici (64–65). We are shocked by the image of the “dog’s dung” befouling the hall. “Dog’s dung” is more important than the moral well-being of the son. The master of the household overlooks the spiritual and moral meaning of domus. Appearance is king. This is a Juvenalian theme which also occurs in Satire 7, where it does not matter what a man says or does, but only what he wears (105–49). The appearance of a man is glorified, and the man of real integrity, although shabbily dressed, is overlooked. Satire 14 contains a similar theme (59–69): Roman society has reached the height of moral turpitude when the appearance of a man’s house is more important than the condition of his family.

Juvenal next presents another aspect of Roman morality which one generation was always passing on to the next (70–72):

gratum est quod patriae civem populoque dedisti,
si facis ut patriae sit idoneus, utilis agris
utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis.17

The overwhelming use of sibilants makes these lines both sinister and comic. This idea, which is the stance of the traditional moralist, dates back to the time of the Elder Cato and before. It harkens back to a time before

16 Cf. V. Aen. 6. 258; Hor. Odes 3. 1. 1. A. Richlin, The Garden of Priapus (New Haven 1983) 8–9, comments on how Ovid uses this clearly religious expression in a complete reversal of its original intention. She states: “Here the warning is applied in reverse, to the emblems of chastity themselves . . .” Juvenal too uses this religious expression to indicate irony, for the vice-ridden Roman father is not capable of keeping evil far away from his son.

17 This was a common sentiment in Roman times. See J. E. B. Mayor (ed.), Thirteen Satires of Juvenal (London 1881) 299, who suggests that we look at Cic. Ver. 3. 161 and Sen. Suas. 2. 21 for the worthiness of giving a citizen to the fatherland.

the Punic Wars, and is advice that was so common and so nebulous as to be meaningless. When Cato the Elder denounced the ills of Roman society around 150 B.C. and offered his conservative view of education, people listened, but when Juvenal’s satiric speaker does the same thing in the 2nd century A.D. it is banal. He makes this point about the Roman family and state trite, so that we may turn away from the glorification of the distant past and deal with the Roman present. The subversion of this idea appears later in the satire (161–72), where Juvenal contrasts the greed of the miser with the gratitude of ancient Romans who received very little for their services in the Pyrrhic and Punic wars.\(^9\) Through the juxtaposition of the pristine virtues of the early Romans with the blatant avariciousness of present-day Rome, Juvenal highlights corruption and decadence.\(^{20}\) It is a common Juvenalian technique to glorify the past and belittle the present.\(^{21}\) However, this contrast is drawn to show that the past was not so glorious, but only a fantasy which exists in the Roman mind. *Turbam* (167) is a word which points to Juvenal’s real intent. The ancients’ life was one of hardship, crowded and uncomfortable, where the standard fare was generally *pullitibus* (171), which was used at sacrifices and as food for the sacred chickens.\(^{22}\) Juvenal wants his audience to concentrate on the present.

Next, Juvenal compares humans to birds (73–85). The placement of *moribus instituas* (74), beside the description of how the stork, the vulture, and eagle care for their young, is a signpost to satire. The very picture of the vulture teaching its offspring to eat dead cattle, dogs, and human beings that have been crucified is grotesque (77–78). But it is even more shocking and ironic when we consider that a few lines before the satirist was exhorting a parent to make sure that he provides a citizen for the Roman state who is both useful in war and peace (70–72). The placement of such supposedly important thoughts next to vultures eating carrion is laughable. This image should shock us into the realization that the entire bird analogy is ironic. The portrayal of the noble eagles (*generosae . . . aves* 81–82) should make us understand that Juvenal’s satirist uses a double standard. It seems normal for birds to follow the example of their parents, but when human children follow the example of their parents it is reprehensible. This

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\(^{19}\) Anderson (previous note) 79 remarks that Juvenal exploits several standard moral antitheses which became popular with rhetoricians long before his time, especially the opposition of present to past.

\(^{20}\) Cf. 6. 286–300; Sallust, *Hist.* frag. 11. 12. *Cat.* 10. 11, *lug.* 41. 1. Sallust points to a period before the Second Punic War when the early Romans were more virtuous than the Romans who followed.

\(^{21}\) J. De Decker, *Juvenalis Declamans* (Ghent 1913) 34–35, gives further examples of this common Juvenalian technique; see Winkler (above, note 8) 23–58 for further discussion of this common Juvenalian motif.

\(^{22}\) Weisinger (above, note 7) 235 says, “when describing the virtue of the early Romans, Juvenal stretches his point until this rustic virtue becomes almost a parody of austerity.”
comparison is certainly ludicrous, for animals function instinctively, repeating their daily patterns, while man through reason may alter his customs and habits.

Next, Juvenal portrays a human parallel (86–95) of his bird story. Not only do children follow the example of their parents, but the sins of the father are increased by the sins of the son. Caetronius’ son improves on his father’s excesses (86–95). The son in his mad rush (amens 94) to outdo his father foreshadows the madness of avarice (136, 284) which Juvenal expounds in the next two major sections. Through the juxtaposition of these two sections (73–85, 86–95) the satirist compares the willingness of a son to ape his father with a bird’s natural instinct to follow his parents’ example.

The last part (96–106) of the first section repeats this argument by illustrating that the son not only follows in his father’s footsteps, but improves on his father’s performance. However, these lines are ironic, for what would seem to be acts of a dutiful son are condemned by the satirist. Words and phrases such as ediscunt et servavit ac metuens ius (101), tradidit (102), and monstrare (103), are praised later in the satire (176–78) as very strong positive moral traits. But when they are juxtaposed with Jewish religious customs, they are condemned as anathema by the satirist. Juvenal is debunking Roman moral tradition, which cannot accept the mores unless they appear only in a Roman setting. Juvenal purposely gives the Jewish son praiseworthy Roman characteristics to highlight the inconsistency of his persona. Why, if the satirist can praise birds for following parental example, can he not praise the Jewish son? Is it all right for a bird to do what a bird does, but not a Jew? This is ludicrous and absurd. Again the ordering of nature is being ridiculed.

Thus, in the first section (1–106) Juvenal shows that the excesses of Roman life should be avoided. He seems to balance what nature should ordain with what nature really does ordain in the grotesqueness of life. Nature should offer una potens ratio (39) and reverentia (47). Instead, we get Catiline and Brutus, a man worried about the appearance of his house, vultures eating cadavers, Caetronius’ son, and the Jew who follows Jewish law better than any Roman follows Roman law.

In the second section (107–255) the emphasis changes from a general discussion of all vices to the specific examination of avaritia (108). The argument of the first section is focused and intensified. Avarice is particularly insidious because it seems to have the appearance of virtue (109). The inversion of the moral order, which we experienced earlier (59–

23 Cf. Hor. Sat. 1. 1. 41–42, who also uses a similar shift in emphasis in order to focus on avarice.
Juvenal draws attention to the conflict between virtue's appearance and reality: specie (appearance) and umbra (semblance) 109; and habitu (attire) and vultu (countenance) 110. He reveals this tension through the exemplum of the miser. Some people praise the miser for his thrift; others praise him because he is skilled in the art of money-making. He guards his fortune more tenaciously than if it were watched by the dragon of the Hesperides (112–14). The father copies the miser and urges his sons to do the same (119–23). He starves his slaves in the name of thrift and causes himself to go hungry (124–28). A meal is described which would turn any man's stomach (129–33). Not even a beggar would accept an invitation to such a meal (134). This reinforced imagery of poverty proves that the frugal man is the poorest man.

Juvenal expands on this theme with examples of the outrages the miser commits to gain more property (138–51). His love of gain grows in direct proportion to the money he has. The more he accumulates, the more he wants. Even the ugly head of rumor does not deter him (152–55). He is unconcerned about what people think of him, if only he is able to keep his farm and land for himself. Juvenal, sarcastically (scilicet 152), states that the greedy man will live a happy life, if only he is the sole possessor of as many acres of land as the Roman people tilled in the days of Tatius (156–60). The land of the entire Roman nation would not be enough for the greedy man. The only alternative would be moderation.

Juvenal continues to explain the causes of evil (173) and shows that the lust for money results in perverse deeds (173–209). The conflict between excess and right living is presented through Juvenal's technique of overstatement. Two alternatives are offered: on the one side, excess (175–76), wickedness (188), sacrilege (188), and on the other, reverence (177), fear (178), and shame (178). These two alternatives are offered so that moderation will seem plausible. This contrast recalls lines 101–02 where the satirist earlier condemned the fear and shame which led a young Jew to practice the rituals learned from his father. The inconsistency of the present praise with the earlier condemnation points strongly to the ironic nature of this passage (173–209).

Continuing to develop this irony, Juvenal's satirist again uses the tension between ancient Roman simplicity and present-day turpitude to

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24 Cf. 12. 111–20, where the legacy-hunter goes to the limits of morality in order to become the rich man's heir. He will even sacrifice his own daughter, for he is mad with greed. As in Satire 14, the moral order is upside down. No crime is too unthinkable.

25 Clausen follows Housman's deletion of 119, but this line seems to make sense as it stands.

26 Juvenal obviously wants us to recall Horace's Satire 1. 1 to closely associate himself with the Roman satiric tradition, but also to demonstrate that he wants the same things that Horace sought; see Hor. Sat. 1. 1. 92, 125, and 179; Winkler (above, note 8) 44 also finds this passage replete with irony. He focuses on the satirist's theme of old-time parvitas.
show the need for moderation. In days of old, fathers gave solid advice to their sons: "Live content with these cottages and hills. Let us seek bread with the plough, which is enough for our table..." (176–82). "The man who is not ashamed to protect himself against the cold and wind with the skins of animals will not be likely to commit a crime. It is the desire for purple raiment (purpura 188) that leads a man to crime and wickedness" (185–88). This is completely ludicrous, since this purpura is unknown to the senex. Martin Winkler supports the ironic nature of these lines when he states: "The fact that the old man warns against something which he has never even laid eyes on divests him of all credibility and reduces him to a state of utter idiocy. A mortal blow has been struck at this point at the stereotypical figures of the maiores." 27 The mention of the Marsian, Hernican, and Vestinian fathers who once fought bravely against the Romans only to lose also points out the misdirection of this entire passage. 28 If these lines were serious, Juvenal would hardly mention the elders of three tribes who rose up against Rome only to be defeated. Juvenal does not want us to look for simple answers in the past, but wishes us to borrow some earthy philosophy of contentment (vivite contenti) and apply it to the present. But even this simple philosophy is questioned by the undercutting alliteration of contenti casulis et collibus. 29

Juvenal next addresses fathers in general and predicts what will happen to them and their sons in the future (210–55). These lines are a further elaboration of Satire 1. 148: eadem facient cupientisque minores. As Juvenal proves his earlier prophecy of Satire 1, he builds a progression of deeds that ends in the destruction of the father. Juvenal warns fathers that the morality of money is a short-sighted rule (211–14). Iubet (212) recalls iubentur (108) and sic natura iubet (31), and foreshadows iussus (331). Juvenal is linking the beginning, middle, and end of his satire through the use of this verb. In this way Juvenal recalls the original motif of lines 1–37. But, whereas Ajax and Achilles surpassed their fathers in heroic deeds, the modern-day son outdoes his father in deeds of wickedness.

Now the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons and finally return to destroy the father (215–55). Care and reverence are necessary, for as soon as a boy begins to grow a beard, he will swear falsely (216–18); the son will kill his wife for her dowry (220–21); the wealth which a father thinks should be found over land and sea a son will acquire by a shorter road (222–23). The son has become worse than his father, fulfilling the earlier prophecy of lines 211–14. The father will deny that he has taught his son to lie and cheat to gain wealth (224–25). And while this may be true, Juvenal insists that the father is the cause of his son’s evil mind, for the

27 Winkler (above, note 8) 46.
28 Courtney (above, note 6) 577 n. 179.
29 Winkler (above, note 8) 46.
father who teaches his son the love of wealth turns him into a greedy individual (226–27).

Lines 235–55 summarize what has occurred in the preceding section (210–34). The momentum that has been building comes to its horrible conclusion: The son will challenge the authority of his father and consider patricide (246–51). The father must protect himself from being poisoned, just as Mithridates protected himself (252–55).30 The progression is now complete. The mention of the pater et rex (255) foreshadows the appearance of Claudius at the end of the satire, and the attempt at poisoning Mithridates reminds us of the death of Claudius by poisoning at the hands of Agrippina.

Thus, in the second section (107–255), Juvenal shows how the parent–child relationship can result in the murder of the parent. At this point in Satire 14 the crimes of society have reached their lowest point, for what could be worse than the murder of a father by a son?

In the third and fourth sections (256–316, 316–31) Juvenal tries to move away from this nadir and suggest some alternatives to the total avarice he has described. He makes a philosophical comment about the nature of his satire (256–67), and then he examines the nature of man’s folly (268–316). He takes on the role of a parent/father with the word monstro (256), but what he teaches is not normal school curriculum. He teaches the folly of man with a touch of voluptatem egregiam (256). This is apparently a sarcastic statement, but there is an element of truth, for it represents the inherent ambivalence of Juvenalian satire.31 Juvenal deals with a love–hate relationship that is unique in satire. He castigates mankind severely, but cannot help laughing, loving, and enjoying its human foolishness. We can see this ambivalence in Satire 15. 71: ergo deus, quicumque aspexit, ridet et odiit. The god who sees the follies of mankind both laughs and hates them.32 In the same way, Satire 14 reveals a similar ironic pleasure which

30 Cf. 12. 111–20 for this typically Juvenalian progression. Just as the father will sacrifice the daughter for gain, so will the son kill the father. While the situation in Satire 12 is a little different, the common denominator is the grotesqueness of it.
31 W. C. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago 1974) 190, makes an interesting comment which relates directly to Juvenalian satire: “Where then do we stop in our search for ironic pleasures? Where the work ‘tells’ us to, wherever it offers us other riches that might be destroyed by irony. It takes a clever reader to detect all the ironies in a Fielding or a Forster. But it takes something beyond cleverness to resist going too far: the measured tempo of the experienced reader, eager for quick reversals and exhilarating turns, but always aware of the demands both of the partner and of the disciplined forms of the dance.” The reader as well as the author walks a tightrope between what is ironic and what is not. In order to understand Juvenal we have to walk this fine line. This is where the meaning of Juvenalian satire lies. This is Juvenal’s point in 14. 256–68. A. B. Kerman, The Plot of Satire (New Haven 1965) 83, asks a very important question: “Why is irony, which is what changes the serious to the ridiculous in satire, witty and amusing?” Again I would point out that lines 256–68 are both witty and amusing, and tinged with ironic delight.
32 Richlin (above, note 16) 209 states: “. . . it seems he [Juvenal’s persona] also thought that God was to man what the satirist was to his victim (15. 69–71).” She goes on
Juvenal gets from observing the strange and magnificent excesses of Roman society. No theatre, no stage of a lavish praetor can compare to the games of life wherein men risk their lives to increase their fortunes (256–62). Real-life situations are far more delightful than the stage curtains of Flora, Ceres, and Cybele (262–64). In Satire 1. 22–80 the satirist also takes ironic delight in observing the foibles of Roman society: “Is it not pleasing to fill up spacious notebooks at the crossroads” when we see corruption and depravity all around (63–64)? Juvenal asks a similar question in Satire 14 (265–67): “Is there more pleasure to be gotten from watching men being hurried from a springboard, or walking down a tightrope, than from yourself?” The parallels between 1. 63–64 and 14. 265 are clear. Libet (1. 63) and oblectant (14. 265) have the same general meaning. They both introduce questions of an ironic nature which indicate some form of entertainment. The same desire that caused Juvenal to complain about always having to be only a listener to the rantings of others has impelled him to fill up notebooks at the crossroads, watch the folly of uncontrolled acquisition, and state that god must simultaneously laugh and hate the misdeeds of mankind. It is an irony which is tinged with a perverse delight.

This irony continues as he suggests that the love of gain is a form of madness. Madness as a cause of folly was already mentioned in conjunction with the accumulation of wealth (136). Now it takes shape in the minds of men who wish to become rich by means of sea trade. Madness (furor) is another standard Juvenalian technique, which appears in Satire 1 (simplexne furor 92), in Satire 13, where madness is a product of this depraved generation (28), and again in Satire 15, where a whole nation is driven to the point of cannibalism. Madness takes various forms. One man is terrified of the Furies, even as Orestes was after the murder of Clytemnestra. Another man strikes down an ox believing it to be Agamemnon or Ulysses, even as Ajax slew a flock of sheep. But the man

to suggest that this is perfectly consistent with Juvenal’s satire. I would take it one step further. I believe it is basic to an understanding of how Juvenal operates; Braund (above, note 5) 192 declares: “The invitation to laugh at the follies of mankind at 256–264—tanto maiores humana negotia ludi (264)—recalls the picture in Satire 10 of Democritus laughing at the crowd instead of watching the spectacles.” Juvenal is laughing at both the crowd and the spectators.

33 Richlin (above, note 16) 200 observes that “Juvenal [in Satire 1] closely unites a second-person address of the audience and/or an imaginary protagonist (agnitus accipies, line 99) with a depiction of himself as present at the scene (nobiscum, line 101). He has brought himself and his addressee physically into the poem together.” This is similar to what he does in Satire 14 at lines 256–68.

34 Cf. 1. 111–16, where the worship of the goddess Money is so strong that the other Roman virtues are neglected. Although not specifically defined as such, this is a precursor of the mad rush for gain.

35 Cf. 8. 215–21, where Juvenal shows that the modern day Nero committed more heinous crimes than Ajax and Orestes.
who is in need of a keeper is the merchant who loads his ship to the
gunwales in the mad search for money. The uniring efforts of the merchant
symbolize the full range of irrelevance and destruction that avaritia
imposes on one's life. To import raisin wine from Crete in jars of local
pottery, to travel far, to risk one's life and one's property, all with the
hope of gain, is the height of folly. His spes lucri (278) will
ultimately leave the mercator destitute in a shipwreck or lead to
paranoia if he becomes wealthy. 36

The madness of the search for profit is similar to Ajax's insanity, but
Juvenal shows that the merchant's lunacy is greater. If only he could have
been satisfied with what he had, the tragedy of his shipwreck would never
have occurred. Suffecerat (298) and sufficient (300) prepare us for the
anticlimax that is about to occur in the epilogue (suffecit 319). This
progression will be played out again in the conclusion of Satire 14.

Lines 303-16 comment on the misery that accompanies the acquisition
of great wealth. The millionaire Licinus orders (iubet 306) a troop of slaves
to stand guard in his house with buckets of water in case of a fire, because
he is worried about all his valuable possessions. 37 Again, iubet recalls the
earlier uses of this verb, and prefigures what is about to occur (331). This
ordering, as we have already seen, is used to achieve some wicked end. It is
not what nature intends, but it seems to be the way humankind employs it.

Licinus is compared to the nude Cynic Diogenes (308-14), who does
not fear that the fire will consume his tub. The satirist observes that when
Alexander the Great saw Diogenes in his tub he realized how much happier a
man was who had very little. Juvenal's concluding comment of this section
sums up his point. "Had we but commonsense wisdom (prudentia), you
would have no divinity, O Fortune; it is we who make you into a goddess"
(315-16). 38 Juvenal's persona uses the exact same words at the end of
Satire 10 (365-66). By recalling Satire 10 Juvenal is trying to end the
satire on a positive note, but an ironic twist occurs at the end of Satire 14.

A similar point is made in Satire 13 (19-20): "Great indeed is wisdom,
the conqueror of Fortune, who gives precepts in her sacred books." Juvenal
is recommending a form of wisdom (sapientia or prudentia) against the
powers of Fortune and madness (furor). He suggests that if man could be

36 Stein (above, note 1) 36.
37 Cf. Hor. Sat. 1. 1. 76-78, where Horace shows how the anxiety of wealth and money
is really not worth the trouble.
38 See 7. 190-98 and 10. 51-58 for Fortune's effect upon the lives of men; Duff (above,
note 6) 437 believed that these lines were decidedly irrelevant. Yet there is really no
reason to think that these lines do not make good sense. They recall Seneca, Ep. 85. 2:
"The man who is prudent is also temperate. The man who is temperate is also constant and
calm. The man who is calm is without sadness. The man who is without sadness is happy;
therefore, the prudent man is happy and prudence is enough for a happy life." Juvenal
follows this line of reasoning in the conclusion of 14. 316-31, when he asks, "How much
is enough?"
wise and sensible, then the troubles portrayed in his satires would cease; but he knows that is not possible. At the close of Satire 14 Juvenal offers his last bit of advice.

In this final section (316–31) he moves from generalization of the problem to a summation of the advice that has been inserted as the poem progressed. Juvenal suggests that moderation is the key to living, and attempts to define moderation by showing that the measure of wealth which is sufficient for man is "as much as thirst and hunger and cold demand, as much as sustained Epicurus in his little garden, as much as the followers of Socrates had in their homes" (318–20). Both Nature and Wisdom (sapientia) agree upon the course of action one's life should take (321). Juvenal now addresses those people who are not satisfied with what he has just offered them: "Do I seem to enclose you within limits?" (322). The interjection of the first person, much as at line 256 (monstro), should be our guide to understanding the appearance of the author at this point. He lays down the mask of his persona and speaks directly to his audience. This refrain is similar to advice which Horace gave in Satire 1. 1: est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines / quos ultra citraque nequirit consistere rectum (106–07). Horace states it simply and does not cloud the issue with extended examples.

If Juvenal confines his reader too greatly, he suggests mixing in something from our own Roman customs (nostris moribus 323) and making up a sum as big as that worthy of an eques, i.e. 400,000 sesterces. The phrase nostris moribus recalls 1. 147 (moribus addat) and 14. 74 (moribus instituas). Juvenal is still concerned with Roman mores and is still trying to teach by example. But, if we cannot learn from a good example, he then offers, facetiously, a bad example (327–31):

If I have not yet filled up your lap, if it is open further, neither the fortune of Croesus, nor the Persian kingdoms, nor the riches of Narcissus will ever be enough for you. This is the Narcissus whom Claudius Caesar greatly indulged, the one who killed the emperor's wife, bidden to slay her by imperial command.

Through the comparison of Croesus and Narcissus, the scope of satire is expanded and the importance of what is being said about Roman society and its vices is enlarged. While the reference to Narcissus is actually anticlimactic, especially in relation to Croesus, it is significant by itself, for it points to the ultimate corruption of the Roman state, when a Greek can rise to such power and wealth. And it is doubly ironic, because Juvenal has just glorified the Greek moderation of Epicurus and Socrates. Juvenal inverts the order of society by having his satire end with the act of uxoricide committed by a Greek who was formerly a slave.

With this ironic and anticlimactic conclusion Juvenal draws Satire 14 to a close. He has rolled all the motifs of his satire into one clever finale. Yet, this epilogue (316–31) is entirely consistent with the themes of Satire
14. It completes and solidifies the unity by mention of the father (Claudius), the symbolic son (Narcissus), nature (321), and the need for moderation in the face of avarice which ultimately leads to murder by poisoning (317–31). Juvenal has examined Roman society and, as always, has found it wanting; but, in the process, he has shocked, entertained, and delighted his audience. We are amazed at his satiric virtuosity. Indeed, he treads the satiric tightrope more gracefully and subtly than any author before or since.

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