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LARONIA DECLAMANS

Abstract: Previous interpreters of Laronia's speech in Juvenal's second Satire have primarily concerned themselves with her 'realness.' This article argues that we should accept the fiction of Laronia as an independent female speaker and re-evaluate the content and efficacy of her performance. In doing so, we see that Laronia's oratory, inveighing against gender transgression, is an intrusion into the forensic arena and the realm of Roman masculinity and thereby an act of gender transgression in and of itself. This cycle of self-defeating hypocrisy in moralizing speech has further implications for the poem as a metapoetic comment about the satiric genre. It exposes the moral austerity in the satiric vision of Rome as illusory and unattainable.

Keywords: Juvenal, satire, gender, rhetoric, performativity

Introduction

After taking aim at pretentious bores, sexual deviants, and insufferable hypocrites (2–35), the narrator of Juvenal's second satire momentarily falls silent as another speaker decries the lax morals of women (36–7).[1] Then, as though waiting in the wings, a woman named Laronia emerges onto the stage to respond:

> *… 'felicia tempora, quae te*
> *moribus opponunt. habeat iam Roma pudorem:*
> *tertius e caelo cecidit Cato. sed tamen unde*
> *haec emis, hirsuto spirant opobalsama collo*
> *quae tibi? ne pudeat dominum monstrare tabernae.*
> *quod si vexantur leges ac iura, citari*
> *ante omnis debet Scantinia. respice primum*
> *et scrutare viros: faciunt peiora, sed illos*
> *defendit numerus iunctaeque umbone phalanges.*

1) The controlling voice of each poem will be referred to as the 'narrator,' since there are several speakers in this satire, and there is also good reason to think of the poems in Juvenal's collection as having multiple narrators rather than one voice. The terms 'poet' and 'Juvenal' will be used interchangeably throughout.

magna inter molles concordia. non erit ullum
exemplum in nostro tam detestabile sexu.
Tedia non lambit Cluviam nec Flora Catullam:
Hispo subit iuvenes et morbo pallet utroque.
numquid nos agimus causas? civilia iura
novimus? aut ullo strepitu fora vestra movemus?
luctantur paucae, comedunt colyphia paucae.
vos lanam trahitis calathisque peracta refertis
vellera, vos tenui praegnantem stamine fusum
Penelope melius, levius torquetis Arachne,
***
horrida quale facit residens in codice paelex.
notum est cur solo tabulas impleverit Hister
liberto, dederit vivus cur multa puellae.
dives erit magno quae dormit tertia lecto.
tu nube atque tace: donant arcana cylindros.
de nobis post haec tristis sententia fertur?
dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.'
fugerunt trepidi vera ac manifesta canentem
Stoicidae; quid enim falsi Laronia?

(Juv. Sat. 2.38–65)

"What happy times, that set you up as the enemy of corrupt morality! Let Rome now develop her sense of shame: a third Cato has tumbled from the sky! But, by the way, where did you buy this balsam perfume which wafts from your shaggy neck? Don't be embarrassed to point out the shop-owner. But if it's a matter of waking up laws and statutes, it's the Scantinian law which should be summoned before all the rest. Look at men first, subject them to scrutiny. They behave worse, but they've got safety in numbers and in their phalanxes, with shield overlapping shield. The solidarity between effeminates is enormous. You won't find any example so revolting in our sex. Tedia doesn't tongue Cluvia, nor Flora Catulla, but Hispo submits to young men and turns pale from both diseases. We women don't plead cases, do we? Or claim expertise in civil law? Or disturb your courts with an uproar? Few women wrestle, few women consume the meat-rich diet. But you tease the wool and you bring the prepared fleeces back in baskets. You turn the spindle that's pregnant with fine thread better than Penelope, more deftly than Arachne, *** the sort of task which a dishevelled mistress does as she sits on the block. It's common knowledge why Hister filled his will with his freedman alone, why in his lifetime he made many gifts to his young, still-virgin wife. She who sleeps third in a large bed will be rich. My advice, young woman? Marry and keep quiet: secrets bestow jewels. After all this, is a verdict of 'guilty' passed on us? That's a

> judgment that acquits the ravens and condemns the doves." As she uttered the obvious truth, the would-be Stoics ran away in a panic. After all, was anything that Laronia said false?[2]

In summary, Laronia argues that the previous speaker's own hypocrisy undermines his claims to moral authority; it is men like him, she contends, that are the real transgressors of sexual norms. From the very outset, she exposes the speaker as a hypocrite: his body hair might give an appearance of masculinity, but the unmistakable scent of balsam perfume calls his adherence to gender roles into question (41). Men, she goes on to assert, are more prone to transgress gender norms than women, to have homosexual relationships at the expense of heterosexual ones (59 et passim),[3] and to participate in activities that are traditionally associated with the performance of femininity such as spinning and weaving (54–5). Women, by contrast, generally refrain from homosexual acts (49), public speaking (51), legal disputes (52), athletic pursuits, and meat-heavy diets (53) – all of these associated with the performance of masculinity. She concludes with a short aside to all women to embrace a spirit of opportunism (Extort their husbands in return for silent acquiescence!) and a reminder that men who make claims to moral superiority should take a hard look at themselves before casting aspersions on women.

Laronia, So Far

The scholarly reception of this poem and of this passage has largely been dominated by interpretations advanced through gender theory. This approach has been fruitful since much of the Satire relates to sexual *mores* and the performance of masculinity in the Roman context, but in interpreting this passage, its full results have not yet been realized. Susanna Braund's article on this episode and her commentary on Juvenal's first book have made some helpful observations,[4] but in assessing the impact of the passage and its re-

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2) The Latin edition and block translations throughout are from Braund 2004. Other translations, unless noted, are my own.

3) His wife is still described as a *puella* at 2.59, implying that she is still a virgin and that he is having sex only with freedmen and not his wife.

4) Braund 1995 and 1996.

lationship to the Satire as a whole, her primary concern is Laronia's 'realness': "Can Laronia … be described as a 'real' woman? Is she an autonomous woman given a free voice to defend womankind?"[5] In short, her answer is 'no':

> The Laronia episode is simply … a fleeting dramatic episode in a many-pronged attack on effeminates and pathics. [She] is subordinate to and manipulated by a speaker who … victimises anyone [he deems to be unacceptable.] … There is no woman in this text, only the construct of the speaker, himself a construct of the man-satirist.[6]

This analysis subsumes Laronia's voice into the inscrutable voice of the Satire's invisible narrator, whose primary focus, Braund argues, is men "who forfeit their claim to masculinity, an essentially active, dominating role, by their effeminate, passive or submissive behavior."[7]

Even as Juvenalian scholarship has moved on to other modes of analysis, Braund's hermeneutic continues to dominate the modern reading of this passage. For example, Gold asks the question, "But is she a real woman?" and Uden is content to call the Laronia episode "an extended impersonation" of one.[8] Dismissing Laronia's voice as distinct however, is more limiting than helpful, and frankly surprising given the interpretative riches bestowed on classical literature from distinguishing speaking voices and focalizations.[9] We should grant the author his fiction and accept Laronia as an autonomous woman. From this perspective a re-evaluation of the content and context of her performance shows that there are elements that have been overlooked or underemphasized.[10] In particular, the speech's rhetorical strategy, legal awareness, diction,

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5) Braund 1995, 213.
6) Braund 1995, 215.
7) Braund 1996, 168.
8) Gold 2012, 107; Uden 2015, 72.
9) At the other end of the spectrum, however, there has been speculation about the name, Laronia, and whether she is modelled off a known individual. Martial refers to a Laronia at 2.32.5, who is a childless, rich, old widow. Courtney 2013, 106 says that she "does not seem to be identical with Juvenal's." While Ferguson 1987, 133 asserts that there "is no real incompatibility" and also links her to the family of the suffect consul of 33 BCE, Q. Laronius. For a comparison of the opening of Satire 2 and Mart. 12.42, see Anderson 1970, 25–8.
10) Braund's scholarship and that of others, e. g. Courtney, make valuable observations that I will not necessarily address here. The points where I do differ will be addressed in the footnotes. In particular, see n. 29 on *strepitu* and *canentem*.

structure, and efficacy, set Laronia's voice apart from the meandering rants of the narrator, and collectively suggest that her character is meant to be largely defined by this oratorical ability. This performance takes on added emphasis when it is contextualized within the litigious landscape of Domitianic Rome and physically situated in adultery courts at the heart of the Roman Forum. When properly understood, her speech act becomes, in and of itself, an act of gender transgression – for successful oratory and control of the forensic arena are the purview – and indeed, stamp – of Roman masculinity. Consequently, Laronia, who has just chided men for their transgressive behavior and hypocrisy, becomes guilty of the very behavior she decries.

Femina Dicendi Perita

Laronia demonstrates all the trappings of a skilled Roman orator in her body language, diction, content, organization, and deployment of rhetorical devices. In fact, the reader is alerted to the possibility that she is rhetorically skilled in manipulating the expectations of her audience even before she speaks as she sets the tone for what follows with a facial expression. So Quintilian remarks:

> *Dominatur autem maxime uultus. Hoc supplices, hoc minaces, hoc blandi, hoc tristes, hoc hilares, hoc erecti, hoc summissi sumus: hoc pendent homines, hunc intuentur, hic spectatur etiam antequam dicimus: hoc quosdam amamus, hoc odimus, hoc plurima intellegimus, hic est saepe pro omnibus uerbis.* (Inst. 11.3.72)
>
> The face is sovereign. It is this that makes us humble, threatening, flattering, sad, cheerful, proud, or submissive; men hang on this; men fix their gaze on this; this is watched even before we start to speak; this makes us love some people and hate others; this makes us understand many things; this often replaces words altogether.[11]

The narrator says that she is *subridens* ('smirking', 2.38). The facial expression leads the reader to anticipate a speaker whose retort will possesses superior and/or corrective knowledge.[12] The following speech will not fail to meet these expectations.

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11) Russell 2001, 123.

12) Cf. Scrofa at Var. R. 1.2.25; Maternus replying to Aper at Tac. Dial. 11.1; Jupiter responding to Venus at Verg. A. 1.254; the personification of Roman tragedy at Ov. Am. 3.1.33.

When she does begin her speech, she starts with an impassioned apostrophe in the grand style, *felicia tempora, quae te / moribus opponunt*. The collocation of *tempora* and *moribus* in the opening lines suggests a parodied adaptation of Cicero's well-worn *o tempora! o mores!*[13] Moreover, she seems to know the typical context of this phrase in Ciceronian oratory. When using this exclamation to appeal to moral conservatism, Cicero typically followed it with an exemplum of old-fashioned morality that contrasted with the contemporary ethos. Accordingly, Laronia, in parroting Cicero and assuming this mantle of moral superiority, sarcastically mentions that paragon of old-fashioned virtue, Cato.[14] This emotive rhetorical figure (*exclamatio*) is used to intensify emotion 'chiefly in pretense' and prepares the audience for a contrast in tone and subject matter as she turns to her opponent's personal attributes.[15]

After this grandiose exclamation Laronia makes an abrupt turn to the mundane when she asks her detractor, "But where did you buy this woody perfume that wafts in the air from your hairy neck?"[16] The telling question points out that although this moralist may possess the outward trappings of masculinity (a hairy neck), the fragrance of his perfume betrays his effeminacy. He is simply another example of *frontis nulla fides*: a feigned outward appearance to disguise one's true proclivities; in short, a hypocrite. The rhetorical quality of Laronia's attack is evident not so much in the allegation of effeminacy (this was a slight common to other genres as well), but in the way she reveals this effeminacy to her audience: she draws attention to his use of perfume – a trope par-

13) Ver. 4.56; Cat. 1.2; Dom. 137; Reg. 31; Quint. Inst. 9.2.26; Sen. Suas. 6.3. This Ciceronian echo also did not escape the notice of Hallett (1989) 217.

14) In fact, using Cato as an example may also suggest the effects of rhetorical training in declamation, in which exercises he was a common subject. See also Braund 1997, 148.

15) Quint. Inst. 9.2.26: *Quae uero sunt augendis adfectibus accommodatae figurae constant maxime simulatione. Namque et irasci nos et gaudere et timere et admirari et dolere et indignari et optare quaeque sunt similia his fingimus. Vnde sunt illa: 'liberatus sum, respiraui', et 'bene habet', et 'quae amentia est haec?' et 'o tempora, o mores!' et 'miserum me! consumptis enim lacrimis infixus tamen pectori haeret dolor', et 'magnae nunc hiscite terrae'.* For *exclamatio*, see Lausberg § 809.

16) The reader gets the impression that Laronia has been present for the entirety of the primary speaker's rant as her description of man's neck as *hirsutus* clearly picks up on the speaker's *hispida membra* (11) as an outward sign of masculinity.

ticularly common in oratory. For example, Cicero says that Chrysogonus flits about with *composito et dilibuto capillo*, that Balbus is the one *qui unguenta sumpserit*, and that Apronius was *unguentis oblitus*.[17] Laronia even goes a step further and identifies the exact sort of perfume, and rather than using the more common *unguentum*, she uses a Latinized form of the Greek word, ὀποβάλσαμον – an eastern attribute that underscores its decadence and effeminacy.[18]

Also conspicuous throughout her dialogue is the awareness of legal statutes and the use of legal terminology. Her opponent is looking for the enforcement of the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, which had originally been enacted by Augustus in 18 BCE but lately renewed by Domitian, to discourage infidelity among Roman women. Laronia counters that it is rather male homosexual activity that needs to be regulated wherein she demonstrates familiarity with the appropriate statute – the *lex Scantinia*, which prohibited pederasty.[19] She also deftly deploys legal turns of phrase such as *agere causam* (to argue a case), an exacting use of *tabula* (will),[20] the juristic euphemism *tristis sententia fertur* (to deliver a guilty verdict),[21] and *venia* (remission of a penalty by way of indulgence).[22] This understanding of Roman law and employment of legal idiom

17) For just a few examples of many: Cic. S. Rosc. 135; Cael. 27; Ver. 3.31; Red. Sen. 12, 16, and Cat. 2.5. See May 2002, 209 on this invective tactic; ORF 21.17 for Scipio Aemilianus' characterization of P. Sulpicius Galbus.

18) Richlin 1997, 98 suggests that in the Roman oratorical mind-set, Greek is a feminine language. Similarly, the speaker of Satire 6 attacks women for using Greek words; 6.184–199. Hallett 1997 has an interesting discussion of the use of Greek words in describing effeminate or homosexual actions or attributes.

19) See Cantarella 1987; Ryan 1994; Berger 1953 s.v. *lex Scatinia* (*Scantinia*).

20) Her discussion of inheritance provisions (58–9) may also suggest knowledge of civil law.

21) Powell 2010, 230–4 goes so far to suggest that Laronia is on trial for adultery based on this phrase and the invocation of the *lex Scantinia*. For the phrase, *tristis sententia*, see OLD s.v. *tristis* 5c; Braund 1996 ad loc.; Ov. Met. 15.43 with Bömer ad loc.

22) On all these terms, Berger 1953 s.v. Additionally, *vexare* (to harass) can denote *calumnia*. Powell 2010, 232 notes that perhaps *respicere* (44) refers to glancing back at the prosecutors' bench; Cic. Clu. 58–9. Although not strictly legal, when she calls on her opponent to point out (*monstrare*) his perfume supplier, the verb suggests the physical motion of pointing and also has connotations of turning informant and identifying a criminal. OLD 5; Tac. Hist. 4.1 *alii ab amicis monstrabantur*.

suggest that she has the grounding in law sufficient for an orator at the Roman bar.[23]

Laronia's imagery and diction are also tailored to befit an oratorical performance and indicate that the poet has carefully conceived of the speech as distinct from the voice of the narrator. Attention to propriety suggests that Laronia's harangue should be seen as a separate oratorical performance. Throughout the speech, she shows an orator's decorum in eschewing lewd words and phrases (otherwise perfectly at home in satire) for more polite or euphemistic ones, e. g. *molles*, *lambit*, *subit*, and *morbo pallet utroque*.[24] This linguistic register is combined with martial imagery in her description of men defending each other in a phalanx formation – a military metaphor commonly used in oratory to describe a forensic defense as physical combat.[25] And when she makes her broad statement that *non erit ullum / exemplum in nostro tam detestabile sexu* (You won't find any example so revolting in our sex! 2.487 f.), she shows an appreciation for apotreptic exempla as proof: Hispo's relationships with young men (50) and men's mastery in the womanly pursuit of weaving (54–7).[26] Other more common and obvious rhetorical figures of language are apparent within these sections as well such as her barrage of rhetorical questions arranged as a tricolon crescens (51–2) and anaphora with emphatic positioning (*paucae … paucae* 53).

All of these rhetorical devices are deftly arranged in a speech that exhibits a clear rhetorical structure and argument. She begins with an invocatory opening (*exordium* 38–40) followed by a digression on her opponent's perfume (*digressio* 41–2). She then proceeds to her main argument (*argumentatio* 43–59): first, that male

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23) Cic. de Orat. 1.166–200.

24) *Mollis* as replacement for *subactus*, *lambo* for *lingo*, *subeo* for *ineo* and *incurro*; Adams 1982, 155, 136, 191, respectively. Sen. Cont. 1.2.23; Braund 1996 ad loc; Hallet 1997, 259.

25) See Landgraf 1914, 81; Sawer 1965, 83; Aßfahl 1932, 83–100.

26) Apotreptic exempla are common to oratory and satire, but their employment here in such a rhetorically tailored passage is worthy of note; see also Braund 1997, 127. For illnesses attributed to gender-transgressive behavior, see Sen. Ep. 95.20–1. Weaving was also an allegation levelled against men in Greek invective. Braund 1996, 135: "This allegation is made against Cleisthenes (Aristoph. *Birds* 831), Sardanapallus (by Ctesias *FGH* III C vol. 1 no. 688 p. 444 Jacoby), Midas (Clearchus in Athenaeus 12.516b.)." Although there is a textual issue here, it does not affect the force of the invective.

sexual practices are worse (*probatio* 43–6); second, as an anticipatory defense, that women respect the boundaries of gender norms (*refutatio* 47–53); third, an example of men trespassing within the female sphere (*probatio* resumed 54–59). Her speech concludes with a final exhortation (*peroratio* 60–3) that contains an emotional appeal, rhetorical question, and a quippy and elegantly arranged *epiphonema* (*dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas* 63).[27] All of these elements come together to contribute to an overall argumentative strategy that amounts to an *anticategoria* – an argument whereby the defense alleges that the prosecution have lost jurisdiction because they are guilty of the same crime or similar.[28]

At the conclusion of her speech, the narrator tells us that her opponents "panic-stricken, run away from her as she proclaimed the obvious truth" (*fugerunt trepidi vera ac manifesta canentem* 64).[29] The adjectives, *vera ac manifesta*, imply that she has not only spoken what is seemingly true but that she has also, in legal par-

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27) On this device see Lausberg § 879; Quint. Inst. 8.5.11. If the poet has some self-awareness of the influence of declamation on his poetry (which he must), then it is also notable that he also reveals a sort of rhetorical training in Laronia.

28) Perhaps the most famous example is Cicero's defense of Roscius, in which the forces for the prosecution are alleged to be the culprits behind the murder of the defendant's father. For a description of *anticategoria* in general, see Quint. Inst. 3.10.4; Lausberg § 197: "As a reply to a prosecutor's *Fecisti*, the defendant thus charges the prosecutor with *Fecisti*." This also lends support for *faciunt peiora* at line 45; argued for by Courtney 1967, 47, and accepted in Willis' 1997 edition.

29) When the narrator describes Laronia as *canentem*, Courtney 2013, 109 rather optimistically suggests that this elevates Laronia to the status of a prophetess, based on the use of *canere* in Hor. Carm. Saec. 25 and Verg. A. 6.98–100. Other commentators have also endorsed this reading; Braund 1995, 218 n. 36. To me, linking her to a prophetess seems out of place. In keeping with the reading proffered in this article, however, it may be a particular manner of inflecting the voice that was common among young orators. For example, see Sen. Suas. 2.10 where Fuscus modulates his voice *velut sua quisque modulatione cantabat*. The propensity to use a sing-songy voice was also attested at Quint. Inst. 11.3.57, and Cicero marks it out as an element of one of the Asiatic styles of oratory at Orat. 27: *cum vero inclinata ululantique voce more Asiatico canere coepisset, quis eum ferret aut potius quis non iuberet auferri?* Consider also the less pejorative 'resonant' voice of old orators at Cic. Sen. 28: *Omnino canorum illud in voce splendescit etiam … in senectute*.

Braund 1995, 214 also points to Laronia's use of the word *strepitu* to confirm the "secondary and subsidiary role played by Laronia in Satire 2." This, however, ignores much of the seething irony that permeates the speech and robs Laronia of some of her rhetorical genius. This characterization of women's voices as *strepitus* is an example of focalized speech, whereby Laronia does not present the perspective of women but lets her audience know that she is fully aware of how men perceive them.

lance, proven her point with evidence.[30] Even more importantly, her oration is successful, and the verb, *fugerunt*, leaves open the possibility that Laronia's detractor and his ilk have fled into self-incriminating exile. Meanwhile Laronia has shown herself to be an adroit speaker that deftly harnesses the power of rhetoric and persuasion in forensic oratory.

Situating the Performance

Figurative and literal space also inform oratorical performances, and Laronia's is no different. In fact, the import of her oratorical performance becomes even clearer once it is placed within a social and physical context – namely the forensic courts of the Roman Forum under Domitianic rule. Recent scholarship has justifiably emphasized that Juvenal's first book of satires responds to the 'cultural trauma' precipitated by the informants and rampant litigation under the reign of Domitian.[31] These profiteering litigators, who had previously sought gain from prosecutions for *maiestas* and from legal battles over inheritance, turned their attention to prosecutions for adultery once Domitian encouraged enforcement of the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*. Seen against this historical backdrop, Powell has argued that Laronia's denouncer in lines 36–7 has the qualities of a prosecutor: his demeanor is harsh (*torvum*),[32] his apostrophe to the Julian Law on adultery (*ubi nunc, lex Iulia, dormis?*) is a prosecutorial commonplace,[33] and the characterization of these detractors as "Stoics" refers to the stern moral and philosophical façade that they would have to assume to avoid suggestions of hypocrisy when levelling these allegations of sexual

30) OLD s. v. 2; Walters 1998, 366. Much of what Laronia says is contradicted elsewhere; Jones 2007, 140 with note: "The claims she makes are sometimes overstated or false." In particular, 2.51 is refuted by 6.242–5, V. Max. 8.3 (see discussion below), and Laronia's speech itself. The fact that she overstates her case or blatantly lies only heightens the perception of this piece as oratory at work; she is successful despite flimsy evidence.

31) Uden 2015, 24–50.

32) Hor. Ep. 1.19.12–15: *quid? siquis voltu torvo ferus et pede nudo / exiguaeque togae simulet textore Catonem, / virtutemne repraesentet moresque Catonis?*

33) The pun on *dormis* suggests that not only does the law needs to be enforced but also that the law, if we can imagine it in a personified form, is itself having an illicit affair.

misconduct. Thus the interlocutors at the outset of Satire 2, Varillus and Laronia, may be understood as defendants responding to allegations of sexual misconduct levelled by opportunistic and hypocritical *delatores*.[34]

Standing trial for adultery would also have placed Laronia in the gendered physical space of the Roman Forum. Criminal trials in the standing courts or those presided over by the emperor were located in heart of the city's Forum complex. The audience of the second Satire is encouraged to imagine this space, especially as the narrator turns seamlessly to Creticus, who is also outside delivering a forensic speech.[35] But placing Laronia in the criminal courts of the Roman Forum also complicates the issues that her speech raises about traditional gender roles. Modesty and virtue should prevent women from appearing in court.[36]

> Women's appearance in the civic life of the Forum – even as depictions – was problematic. … In the late Republic and early Empire women's presence in the Forum for other than religious purposes … was considered anomalous, perhaps even transgressive, … and reports of women [during this time period] repeatedly comment explicitly on the concomitant disruption of normal order.[37]

Laronia's presence in this physical and figurative forensic space may also reflect contemporary changes to the Roman Forum as a gendered space. Archaeological and literary evidence reveals that there were an increasing number of depictions of women in the second and early third centuries CE and that women began to use the space more frequently.[38] But from the conservative moral point

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34) Powell 2010, 225–44 argues that this satire, or at the very least the opening vignette, is aimed at opportunist prosecutors who have started bringing suits under moral legislation; contra Kißel 2013, 213–14. Powell would also extend the punctuation of the speech of Varillus (21–2) to line 33.

35) On the locations of the Roman courts, see Bablitz 2007, 13–50.

36) Cic. Ver. 2.1.94: *cur sodalis uxorem, sodalis socrum, domum denique totam sodalis mortui contra te testimonium dicere? cur pudentissimas lectissimasque feminas in tantum virorum conventum insolitas invitasque prodire cogis?* See also V. Max. citation below.

37) Boatwright 2011, 135 and 108.

38) Depictions of women in the Roman Forum (statues, primarily) were rare in the Republic and early Empire – Cloelia being a notable example. After the Julio-Claudian period and around the second century CE, these depictions as well as the physical presence of women increased; see Boatwright 2011, 132–35. This infringement into gendered spaces is also shown in reverse at lines 83–92.

of view of the satire's narrator, it is another indication of the breakdown of a traditional, heteronormative society.

Making rhetorical prowess her leading characteristic and placing her within the Roman courtroom confounds the image of Laronia as a woman. Pleading and public speaking in Rome's civic spaces are strictly social functions that define and are defined by masculinity; in short, the performance of oratory is the performance of masculinity.[39] Even Laronia herself would seem to validate this notion of gender when she (ironically) asks in the midst of her performance: *numquid nos* [*feminae*] *agimus causas?* When women do plead successfully – even if such occasions for public speeches by women were rare – it upends a traditional understanding of masculinity. Valerius Maximus devotes a section of his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* to women that plead successfully before magistrates, but he is quick to note that these were women whose "innate condition and matronly modesty were not sufficient to keep them quiet before a court" (*condicio naturae et verecundia stolae ut in foro et iudiciis tacerent cohibere non valuit*).[40] About one particular woman, Maesia of Sentinum, Valerius goes on to remark that 'because she bore a man's spirit under the form of a woman, they called her Androgyne' (*quia sub specie feminae virilem animum gerebat, Androgynen appellabant*).[41] Oratory was such a defining mark of masculinity that women who were successful at it would have their claim to womanhood called into question.

Valerius Maximus' examples remind us that the dissonance between female voice and male performance in Laronia's speech should give us pause, for, as we are often reminded by masters of rhetoric, a good orator is a good m a n.[42] Laronia has successfully assumed the traditional, defining role of the male gender and usurped its physical and social position of power, but this performative and physical encroachment into the domain of manhood implicates her character in other masculine activities such as ath-

39) Richlin 1997.

40) V. Max. 8.3.praef.

41) For more on this trial, see Marshall 1990, 46–59; Höbenreich 2005, 177–8. For more females in court, see Bablitz 2007, 223 n. 12.

42) Quint. Inst. 12.1.1 ff.

letics and sex with women.[43] She is right at home, in the "topsy-turvy world of gender inversion" in this poem,[44] but understanding the transgressive nature of Laronia's performance – a staging of masculinity from one who claims the virtues of the feminine – highlights that she too is a hypocrite. Just like the effeminate Creticus in the subsequent vignette and the litany of others that the poem presents, Laronia becomes another exemplum of what the narrator finds so disturbing: an individual that appeals to, but has nevertheless transgressed, the figurative boundaries used to circumscribe his vision of an idealized, moral Rome.

This Message Will Self-Destruct

The themes and issues at stake in Juvenal's second satire are many – gender normativity, masculine culture and speech, passive homosexuality, false appearances, disguise and revelation – and different scholarly approaches have led to informative expositions along these lines.[45] The recognition of Laronia's transgressive behavior in the midst of her moralizing speech fits neatly into all of them, but it should also renew a focus, largely downplayed of late, on hypocrisy.

The issue of hypocrisy is established early in the poem. The narrator offers little absolution to effeminate men, but there is some. Early on, he says that those who do violate traditional norms can be somewhat forgiven provided that they are open and honest about it, particularly as it relates to effeminacy: *hunc ego fatis / imputo, qui vultu morbum incessuque fatetur* ("I will chalk it up to fate, if he confesses his affliction both in appearance and behavior" 16). What really enrages him is the disjunction between moralizing speech and personal comportment, those who do one thing and say another: *peiiores … de virtute locuti / clunem agitant* ("the people that are far worse are those who speak about virtue while wagging their bottoms" 19–21). The narrator demands that those who as-

43) While some commentators will point to passages from Satire 6 to 'disprove' Laronia, I think it is far from certain that we should think of the narrator of each poem as being the same individual.

44) Larmour 2016, 135.

45) Courtney 2013, 99; Braund 1995 passim; Uden 2015, 65–74.

sume stances of moral austerity and normativity embrace it consistently in all aspects of their habitus, so he is constantly on the lookout for inconsistencies and deception; *frontis nulla fides* ("there's no trusting appearances" 8). The only ones who can stand on any moral authority are the unblemished, as he exclaims, *loripedem rectus derideat, Aethiopem albus* ("Let the upright chastise the lame, let the white rebuke the black!" 23).

With this focus on hypocrisy, it is understandable that some have wanted to conflate Laronia with the narrator(s) of the poems, since she and the narrator(s) share this preoccupation and other traits: they both are "fed up" (1.1, 2.36) with listening to others and want to speak for themselves, they both deploy combative moralizing rhetoric, and first and foremost, they are both outraged at hypocrites. Laronia wonders how these men dare critique her when they fail to live up to their own standards of propriety, but, as we have seen, she stands equally guilty herself. When the narrator remarks at the conclusion of Laronia's speech, *quid enim falsi Laronia?* ("What did she say that was false?" 65), the reader is prompted to question the veracity of her claims,[46] but not because they fall short in the face of some unassailable facts to the contrary, but because her oratorical performance suggests that she does not possesses the unblemished moral authority and adherence to traditional norms that the narrator demands of those who make such assertions. Hypocrisy and truth are not incompatible, but for the *delatores* and for those who respond to them in kind, such as Laronia, moralizing invective is self-destructive. The speakers themselves cannot live up to the standards they demand.

With these ubiquitous discrepancies and incongruities of speech and action, Satire 2 goes beyond lambasting hypocrites – it emphasises the inevitability of hypocrisy in a world of severe moral austerity. This exploration and recognition of hypocrisy's inescapability is destabilizing for those who speak in the poem such as the moralizing interlocutors, Laronia and Creticus, but we are also prompted to look with the same cynicism at the narrator, his vision of Rome, and the satiric genre itself. Were the invisible satirist only to show himself completely, his hypocrisy would also

46) Jones 2007, 140: "Juvenal's exaggerated *imprimatur* on the speech must be intended to provoke the audience into disbelief." Uden 2015, 72: Juvenal has created this "character, who actively encourages us to expose his textual conspiracy."

be laid bare, for when we do manage to catch a glimpse, it becomes clear that he too displays the very inconsistencies he derides.[47] The satiric voice, too, is destined to self-destruct.

The poem concludes with a vision of the afterlife: the regions of the underworld that, unlike the hypocritical moralists in his city, should be able to separate the good from the bad, the moral from the immoral, and allot suitable punishments and rewards to each – a place where the clear-cut, absolutist morality of the narrator could be realized (149–152):

> *esse aliquid manes et subterranea regna,*
> *Cocytum et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,*
> *atque una transire vadum tot milia cumba*
> *nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum aere lavantur.*
>
> The existence of ghosts and the underworld realms and Cocytus and the black frogs in the whirling Styx and the idea that all those thousands cross the water in a single boat – not even boys believe in that, except those not yet old enough to pay admission to the baths.

The morally arranged world, the reader comes to discover at the striking conclusion to the sentence, is just an illusion. So too the vision of Roman civilization, defined by an idealized moral austerity, is just a figment of satire's collective cultural memory. It is not so much that "his Rome no longer exists,"[48] as our poet tell us, the Rome of satire never did.[49]

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47) The inconsistencies of the narrator are well-studied. For this poem in particular, Uden 2015, 74: "Although he seems to despise that milieu [of elite, philhellenic, and philosophic imitation], its fondness for imitation, performance, and disguise matches his own."

48) Uden 2015, 23.

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Oklahoma Charles B. Watson