

Juvenal and the Satiric Genre. By FREDERICK JONES. Classical Literature and Society. London: Duckworth Publishers, 2007. Pp. x + 214. Paper, \$31.00. ISBN 978-0-7156-3686-2.

Frederick Jones (J.) has written many articles on satire and is well qualified to write a book on the subject. But imagine the task at hand: to write a book on the genre of satire when satire is famously a composite genre, and to do so for an audience “with or without knowledge of the Greek or Latin languages and with or without an acquaintance with the civilization of the ancient world” (p. vii)—and to do so concisely. J. got the page-count right—154 pages of text—and in keeping with his aim at a general audience, the presentation of material outweighs scholarly argument and conclusion: of the eight chapters, the longest is only 28 pages, and each chapter is broken into sub-headed sections of no more than 3 pages, some as brief as a paragraph. But J.’s content wavers in his address to a general audience and is more uneven than its subject.

After an initial chapter that reviews programmatic statements of Lucilius, Horace, Persius and Juvenal and surveys what the satirists say about their satiric predecessors and about other literary models, J. presents the interpretive core of his book in the second chapter, “The Generic Landscape.” He is sensitive to the many tensions of satire, especially the satirists’ tendency to pose as “being somehow outside literature” (p. 1) while incorporating many literary forms and functions. J. emphasizes that epic is the dominant genre for Roman poets and the one that satire (and love elegy) most react against. He defines genre (or “kind,” p. 27) as a simultaneously fixed and fluid category that combines distinctive features (e.g. content, style, size, meter) with different or “transgressive” material drawn from other “kinds” of literature. J. proposes “competitive inclusiveness” as the dynamic that governs the desire “to write something new starting from a given framework” (p. 34). He provides examples from Latin poets across genres. Catullus and Ovid, given their generic miscegenation, are frequent examples; Stephen Hinds’ *Allusion and Intertext* is something of an interpretive polestar. J. concludes the chapter with four general principles that constitute an “author-reader contract,” which includes the intriguing claim that generic boundaries create “invisible spaces on a generic grid, spaces which may be activated by a modification or specialisation of prior genre(s)” (p. 46).

So what does this say about satire or Juvenal specifically? J. offers surprisingly little about satire in this chapter, though he presents

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three passages of Juvenal, two from the third satire, to reveal the complexity of generic combination (pp. 40–3). Nor does the first chapter provide much of an introduction to Juvenal, who, as J. notes, “is arguably the most literary ... and yet ... the least inclined to present any other form of literature in the role of model” (p. 19). Presumably J. felt the need to speak broadly for the sake of his putative audience, and is aware of the generalizations of his arguments and marks them: “Crudely...” (p. 30), “At the risk of gross oversimplification” (p. 35), “it is worth setting the question in a very general light” (p. 46), “which is of course simplified here” (p. 103).

Generalizations notwithstanding, this book is *not* for the reader with no knowledge of Latin literature. Poems and works are routinely cited without quotations or details of content (e.g. references to Catullus’ poems on p. 30, to “the two Cynthia poems in book 4” of Propertius at p. 37, to Calpurnius Siculus’ eclogues at p. 124, to Petronius at pp. 135–6). Such examples are not illustrative for the reader who does not already know them, and even those who are generally familiar with the context may have to scurry for the texts to see exactly what J.’s point is. This shorthand extends to the notes (pp. 166–96). The first footnote of Chapter 5, for example, is appended to its title, “The Satirists and Epic,” where one reads: “For another perspective, see Connors (2005).” The second footnote appears after a mention of Lucan as an epic poet whose work contains “subversive elements,” and states: “Passages in Lucan may resemble (in advance) Juvenal, but this is rather part of the general influence of declamatory moralising than Juvenal drawing on the satiric strand in Lucan’s epic...” No examples of Lucan’s “satiric strand” or of resemblances between Lucan and Juvenal are given.

This combination of generalization and relative lack of support is most felt in the fifth chapter, on satire and epic (pp. 95–116). J. notes features of epic, such as war, journeys, divine councils and catalogs, that are parodied in satire, and also notes epic features absent from satirical parody (e.g. love). The individual satirists are cursorily treated. Horace’s view of epic is represented by *Serm.* 1.5. None of Juvenal’s satires is studied in detail, although epic features of *Satires* 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 15 are briefly mentioned (pp. 111–16). J.’s main point seems to be that satire attacks epic as “divorced from reality in terms of content and style,” but reveals epic’s absurdity by appropriating its conventions (pp. 95–7). Similarly, a welter of topics is combined in the seventh chapter, “Juvenal and Performance” (pp. 133–44), including the theatricality of Roman life during certain periods of the Empire, impersonation and “multi-interpretability” (p. 136), the indeterminate authorial voice, the “dramatic” conflict of

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genres and the teasing of Juvenal's readers—each developed in no more than 3 pages. J. detects a particular metatheatricality in Juvenal's later satires, particularly in 11 and 12, which explains the "piquant variety in tone" that undermines "dramatic coherence" (p. 143). All this in a chapter of 12 pages.

Not all the material is of this sort. The third and longest chapter, "Names and Naming in Satire and Other Genres" (pp. 48–75), studies human, topographical, divine and mythological names as "generic indicators" in authors from Catullus to Statius' *Silvae*. This chapter is thick with detail supported by an appendix (pp. 155–6), and apparently distills work J. published previously elsewhere.

Despite the title of the book, Juvenal is not the principal focus. Only the last two chapters are devoted to him, and he is largely studied in terms of how he fits into the genre rather than how he differs from his predecessors. J. notes differences in Juvenal's use of names, his antagonism to epic, his literariness and his variegation of voice, but these are differences of degree.

J.'s work appeared too late to take account of other recent good and cogent work on satire and genre, including M. Plaza, *The Function of Humour in Roman Verse Satire: Laughing and Lying* (2006); R. Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire* (2007); and especially C. Keane, *Figuring Genre in Roman Satire* (2006). The bibliography is somewhat uneven, but a general audience has less need for thoroughness in this area. Every audience, however, needs sources recognized. On the last page, J. suggests that Juvenal's *Satires* constitute a "supergenre" that stands above other genres and presides over them (p. 154). In a footnote to the term "supergenre," he states "I have not seen this term used elsewhere." But it is found in the first paragraph of S.J. Harrison's article on Ovid and genre in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (2002), which appears in J.'s bibliography.

As for what satire essentially is, J. identifies two characteristics that recur throughout the book, namely, a concern for "realism" or ostensible "engagement with real or non-literary life" (p. 46, also pp. 18, 24, 60, 74, 94, 149–50), and the form of an "anarchic patchwork of the literary heritage" (p. 147, also pp. 47, 123, 150, and 136 ["unharmonious patchwork"] and 132 ["unruly chromaticism"]). If one searches for J.'s definition of "realism" in Roman literature, however, one must be content with a list of the "litter and detritus of the real world: cobblestones, gold rings, birds under temples eaves, and so on" (p. 149), examples of "cinematic focus" (p. 150), and a footnote reference to an earlier work by J. himself, on realism in Petronius (p.

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177 n. 19). What does J. conclude about satire's "anarchy"? This is less clear. J. seems to present Juvenal as the most dissonant and variegated of the satirists, but it is not clear what "organizing viewpoint" (p. 47) he sees in Horace and Persius. J. suggests that there are harmonizing factors in Juvenal's "anarchic" satire—the voice, the declamatory web, the tension with epic—but that the anarchy is the point: "We take this discordant material inside us and it tries to resolve itself there, in our hearts, but the resolution is not an easy one" (p. 152). Perhaps the same can be said of J.'s own study.

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