

Juvenal's Odysseus: The "Correct" Way to Satirize Stoics

This paper will offer a new reading of Juvenal's 9th Satire as a parody which uses an Odysseus-like character to parody Greek philosophical beliefs. This is not Juvenal's first attack on the Greek philosophers, he made one in Book 1, Satire 2. Unlike Satire 2, however, in Satire 9, and Book 3 in general, "anger is no longer the main feature of the *persona*...the angry man... has been superseded by an ironical man who is detached enough to see two aspects of any affair" (Braund, 1988). This is further built on by Dr. Catherine Keane noting that "Book 3, the "transitional" book, manages to have it both ways," i.e. the indignant and ironical persona. (Keane, 2015). In Satire 2, Juvenal's *persona* lashes out relentlessly with all the hallmarks of *indignatio* (i.e. apostrophe, rhetorical questions, frequent elision, etc.) against the Greek philosophers "pervading" Rome. In Satire 9 we instead find a different approach: clever and intertextual parody with occasional *indignatio*. Building primarily on Dr. Braund and Keane's works, I will argue that it is through parody that Juvenal mocks the Stoic philosophers.

In Satire 9, Juvenal creates his own Odysseus in Naevolus, a male gigolo. Naevolus is enduring his stingy bottom patron, Virro, who according to him is the source of many of his troubles. Naevolus then tries to liken these troubles to Odysseus'. First, Naevolus says this *αὐτός γὰρ ἐφέλκεται ἄνδρα σιδήροσ* (*Od. 19.14*), changing the *σιδήροσ* to *κιναιδος*. Grammatically and contextually, then, the *κιναιδος* draws for himself the *ἄνδρα*. The second trouble is his lack of wealth. He is so poor that he has merely *puer unicus ut Polyphemi | lata acies per quam sollers evasit Ulixes* (*Sat. 9.64-65*). Then Naevolus pleads almost-nostalgically for a rather pricey new home which he expects his patron to pay for (*140-147*). Finally, the satire ends with a lament that Fortune does not heed Naevolus' prayers. She has filled her ears with wax *illa de nave... | quae*

Siculos cantus effugit remige surdo (147-150). Despite his best attempts, however, he fails to be Odysseus.

The paraprokdokian is perhaps the closest Naevolus gets to being Odysseus. He assigns himself the role of *ἀνὴρ*, the first word of the *Odyssey* itself, in a clever reference to Odysseus' ultimate victory over the suitors. The *ἀνὴρ*, however, is entirely subservient to his *κιναιίδος*, Virro's, unnatural requests. Such as penetrating him (*Sat.* 9.43-44), saving his marriage and simultaneously fathering his children (9.76-86). It adds to the irony that the character, Virro (literally *vir*) has a such a passive role, while the *ἀνὴρ* performs such acts, all culminating in a preverted inversion of the patron-client relationship. Second, Naevolus has only one boy like Polyphemus has only one eye. He, therefore, has aligned himself with Polyphemus, not Odysseus. His plea for his home is certainly reminiscent of Odysseus' long struggle to get home, but Naevolus does not have a home to return to. Finally, his lament that Fortune has plugged her ears and refuses his call places Naevolus among the Sirens.

Juvenal has created his own Odysseus, but what to end? What function does this serve in a heavily parodical satire?

Although in Satire 2 the speaker alludes to Stoic philosophers in particular in the beginning lines, *plena omnia gypso | Chrysippi* (4-5) and *perfectissimus horum | si quis Aristotelen similem...emit | et iubet archetypos pluteum servare Cleanthas* (6-7), it quickly attacks philosophers under the label: *Socraticos ... cinaedos* (10). In Satire 9, however, this mock Odysseus is a subtle attack on Stoic philosophers. In the 1st and 2nd c. CE, Stoics like Seneca (*Ep.* 66) and fragmentary philosophers, like Musonius, Epictetus, Favorinus, and Dio Chrysotom, comment how Stoics can benefit from the example of the hero, Odysseus, namely his ability to be "an obedient citizen of the cosmos, willing to go wherever he is told" (Montiglio, 2011).

Naevolus even references the predeterminism of Stoic philosophy. *Sat. 9.33-4*, he cries “*nam si tibi sidera cessant | nil faciet longa mensura incognita nervi.*” This is the end result, Juvenal’s Naevolus is a failed Odysseus one that can wear many hats but gains nothing from it. Since Odysseus is a Stoic ideal, it is reasonable to say that Naevolus is a failed Stoic as well. This paper shows how Satire 2 and Satire 9 are in dialogue with one another, and as a result Juvenal’s ability to work within a longstanding Homeric tradition. It will show these parallels that have been hitherto overlooked.

Bibliography

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