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Nancy Shumate, *Nation, Empire, Decline: Studies in Rhetorical Continuity from the Romans to the Modern Era*, ser. Classical Inter/Faces (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 2006), 191 pp.

In this thought-provoking book, Shumate (S.) examines works by Juvenal, Horace and Tacitus, and explores the ways in which they incorporate elements of colonial or imperialist discourse. From the perspective of the Classical Tradition, these elements are relevant because (as S. notes) modern historians have often viewed the manipulation of nationalistic propaganda as a distinctly recent phenomenon, dependent primarily on the development of mass media. S. demonstrates, however, that many of the common rhetorical strategies deployed in these modern contexts can be discerned also in her chosen Roman authors (hence the "rhetorical continuity" of the book's title). S. does not try to argue that these later uses draw consciously from their Roman predecessors (so, to this extent, there is no direct "tradition"); but the parallels identified do provide worthwhile insights both into the texts themselves and the ways in which humans typically react to other races and peoples.

The book's critical framework is based on a cluster of concepts now well established in modern literary and political theory. S. draws in particular on Said's *Orientalism* for the concepts of "otherness" / "alterity", and the role of gendered discourse in shaping colonialist attitudes; on Hobsbawm's *Invention of Tradition* for typical forms of nationalist propaganda; and on Spurr's *Rhetoric of Empire* for the rhetorical strategies regularly used in imperialist literature. This kind of approach inevitably involves some conceptual jargon, but generally S. does not allow this to intrude or obscure. The four main chapters follow essentially the same approach: a discussion of the relevant theoretical concepts; an examination of the ways these manifest themselves in the Latin texts; and finally a comparison with modern examples where similar elements occur. At times, the concepts do not map all that neatly on to the ancient texts (see further below); but the modern parallels successfully present a fresh perspective from which to view the Roman content.

The first chapter, entitled "Them and Us: Constructing Romanness in the *Satires* of Juvenal" (pp. 19-54), addresses the ways in which Roman national identity is presented in Juvenal's poems. S. argues that the speakers in the Satires tend to define their identity as Romans - and so too their accompanying superiority - via a recognisable set of rhetorical strategies. These strategies exploit in particular the Roman male's anxiety regarding gender and sexuality. Undesirable foreigners are typically depicted as sexual deviants who demonstrate inappropriately "feminine" characteristics. This mode of stereotyping is thus similar to that identified in Said's *Orientalism*, which explores the ways in which modern "eastern" peoples have been categorized by westerners as an alien group (or "other") primarily by being characterized as feminine. S., however, finds further parallels in less highbrow locations. These same strategies can be discerned (S. notes) in the adventure stories for boys written during the heyday of the British empire, which featured a "standard cast of villains" comprising "German homosexuals, effeminate men from Southern Europe, and Jewish thieves" (p. 39). Likewise, the witch hunt for "perverts" in the USA during the Cold War exploited the Juvenalian demons of sexual deviance, foreigners, and "the feminine" (p. 40).

The second part of the chapter addresses the pastoral ideal placed in Umbricius' mouth in the course of Satire 3. As S. notes, this opposition between city and countryside was a common trope in ancient thought, and to this extent it is perfectly reasonable to interpret the poem within this closed cultural framework. Nevertheless, S.'s discussion opens up a profitable new interpretative approach (p. 46): "Whatever their formal antecedents, the Juvenalian speaker's nostalgia for the Golden Age and his horror at city ways, linked as they are with his pervasive concerns about Romanness, anticipate later nationalist uses of city and country as emblems of larger ideological conflicts." These later uses include Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892), the propaganda film *Hans Westmar* (1933) and representations of the "true" (i.e. rural) England in British works from the start of the nineteenth century through to the Great War.

The claim here is not that Juvenal, via Umbricius, is earnestly pushing some kind of nationalist agenda; rather, S. sets out to highlight the rhetorical power of the "pastoral ideal" trope and the various ways in which it has been exploited over the years. Likewise, the aim of the first part of her discussion is to uncover the prejudices of Juvenal's speakers, and the ways in which these are expressed through a suite of distinctive rhetorical strategies. This approach still leaves some room for Juvenalian irony. Thus S. acknowledges, for example, that the figure of Umbricius in Satire 3 may function as a parody of "redneck" attitudes. But the more frequently these strategies turn up in other poems as well, the narrower the gap becomes between Juvenal the poet and Juvenal the man - a gap insisted upon by advocates of *persona*-theory in recent studies of the satirist (see, for example, the comments of S. on p. 158). Certainly, it would be unwise to jettison *persona*-theory entirely: it provides a valuable corrective to the biographical interpretation of Juvenal's poems, and places a welcome attention instead on his literary technique. But at times *persona*-theory can take on an exculpatory and protreptic function, serving to reassure modern readers that Juvenal the man did not himself hold the unpleasantly bigoted attitudes that appear at times in his poems. S.'s analy-

sis presents a useful warning against such overly anodyne appraisals. There may well have existed beneath the literary artifice a bedrock of culturally conditioned prejudice.

The second chapter ("Augustan Nation-Building and Horace's 'Roman' Odes [3.2, 3.5, 3.6]" [pp. 55-79]) examines a text in which a more explicit and serious didactic purpose seems to be at work: Horace's "Roman Odes" (with particular reference to *Odes* 3.2, 3.5 and 3.6). In these poems too, pastoral fantasy plays its part, although S. in this chapter invokes Hobsbawm's concept of the "invention of tradition" in order to understand its purpose. According to this view, Horace contributes here to the formation of an Augustan ideology that equates traditional Romanness with the rural peasant family. This idealized unit, consisting of a hardworking patriarch of manly virtue in the company of a dutiful wife and children, is in turn linked with the favour of the gods and its resulting national security. Horace thus "anticipates later nationalism's identification of country people and their values with the genuine nation and its practice of making them stand metonymically for the nation as a whole" (p. 72). Modern parallels include Eamon de Valera's vision of a regenerated Ireland, featuring (in his words) "the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths, [and] the laughter of comely maidens", as well as the images purveyed by English "trench literature" in the Great War, which presented images of "chaste sweethearts and wives patiently waiting on the homefront for the return of the nation's defenders" (p. 61).

As S. acknowledges, this line of interpretation leaves to one side the "reading against the grain" critical approach favoured by a number of modern scholars of Augustan literature, who discern behind ostensible expressions of support for Octavian's ideology a more ambivalent and pessimistic view of the new regime. In my view, there is considerable merit in sidestepping this trend. The "surface" imperialistic elements of these texts cannot simply be ignored, and, whatever our view of Horace's (or Virgil's) personal commitment to the ideas presented in their poems, S.'s approach offers valuable insights into the rhetorical techniques of their imagery. On the other hand, at times S.'s line of argument shows some strain when it comes to detail. Horace's apparent valorization of manly self-control in his *Odes*, for example, sits awkwardly with Aeneas' *furor* at the climax of the *Aeneid*. S. attempts to address this problem on p. 70, but the brief comments offered do not really explain the contradiction satisfactorily or do justice to Virgil's complex presentation of these issues.

Similar reservations apply when we turn to chapter three ("Tacitus and the Rhetoric of Empire" [pp. 81-127]). In this discussion, S. focuses on Tacitus' depictions of Britons, Gauls and Germans across various works, in order to highlight their "sustained narrative of imperial self-assertion" (p. 83). The chapter builds much of its argument on Spurr's *Rhetoric of Empire* (1993), which identifies specific rhetorical tropes that are repeatedly found in "modern Western colonial discourse" (p. 84). In the course of examining Tacitus' works, S. (again following Spurr) draws comparisons with writers from the British Imperialist era such as Kipling.

Overall, the results of the analysis are rather mixed. S. is right, for example, to acknowledge Tacitus' complexity as a writer. She notes well that one common strategy in colonial discourse is to depict a conquered people as

"Noble Savages", a strategy that serves as a foil for Tacitus' moralizing on contemporary Rome. These "primitive" peoples manifest an admirable cultural simplicity that contrasts sharply with the corrupting effects of *luxuria* in the empire's capital (pp. 86-9). S. also notes, however, that at other times these same savages are shown to lack good old Roman discipline (p. 97) - a device that functions as a "mechanism of self-legitimation" (p. 100). S. suggests that we view these apparent contradictions as typical of colonial discourse as a whole, which, according to Spurr, "alternately idealizes and reviles the savage" (p. 104). But there are other factors to consider as well. In the first place, we may question whether the *Germania* can be treated as having the same aims and perspectives as Tacitus' historical works. Arguably it contains far less explicit moralizing than his later, more ambitious tracts. Tacitus here is perhaps more the neutral ethnographer (following the precedents of Pliny the Elder and Seneca the Younger [writing about India according to Pliny, *n.h.* 6.21.60]) than the caustic commentator. This is not to deny the possibility of unconscious imperialistic attitudes filtering into the work; but the complexities evident in Tacitus' presentation of the Germans may not *just* be a typical reflection of colonizing discourse.

A second complicating factor is Tacitus' deeply entrenched rhetorical education, which would have trained him to argue both sides of an argument. It is this training that is responsible in part for his renowned ability to present the perspective of Rome's oppressed enemies in powerful and sympathetic language (see e.g. the words of Arminius [*Ann*. 1.59] and Calgacus [*Ag*. 30-32]). Finally, as S. to her credit notes, Tacitus' distinctive "cultural pessimism" often cuts across any straightforward moral patterning that starts to emerge. The historian finds it difficult to resist giving a morose, bitter twist to ostensibly positive events (see e.g. p. 94). Taken together, these factors render Tacitus' texts very slippery indeed, and it is perhaps not surprising if they fail to align themselves neatly with literary critical models. S. concludes her discussion by acknowledging these difficulties (p. 121) - but not before suggesting that Tacitus "never, in his own voice, explicitly questions the Roman right to rule others" (p. 121), and that this is one of the "less complicated default settings of colonial discourse" to which he often recurs.

In the final chapter (4. "'Crazy Egypt' and Colonial Discourse in Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire" [pp. 129-158]), S. explores one of Juvenal's least studied poems, Satire 15. Again, the critical perspective is one of colonial discourse, and S. argues that Juvenal's depiction of the cannibalistic Egyptians frames them "as abject colonial subjects of a sort that would have been at home in the imperialist literature of Victorian England" (p. 131). Rhetorical strategies discussed in earlier chapters appear in this context too: the "undisciplined and transgressive behaviour" of the deranged Egyptian party-goers helps in the poet's goal of categorizing these foreigners as "essentially feminine" (p. 135). And later, the peoples of this land are represented as "developmentally arrested primitives stuck in evolutionary times, still slaves to bestial impulses" (p. 137). Juvenal himself, by contrast, indulges in a "humanitarian posturing" that acts "as cover for a subtle rhetorical strategy of exclusion and dehumanization" (p. 141). Following Spurr, S. then draws parallels with similar techniques in Churchill's reports on colonized India, in which a "rhetorical sleight of hand ... equates those who subscribe to his own practices with the human

race as a whole and consigns those who do not to a non-human status" (p. 149).

This line of approach is useful for identifying Juvenal's typical strategies of racial stereotyping, an element that pervades his oeuvre as a whole. It does not, however, throw much light on the wider artistic aims of this rather curious satire in particular; we are no closer to appreciating why Juvenal bothered to write the poem or how successfully it achieves its literary goals. Nevertheless, there is value in being encouraged to contemplate the similarities in cultural prejudice and rhetorical technique that seem to stretch across different eras and cultures.

Overall, then, S. meets admirably the aims of the Duckworth *Classical Inter/Faces* series. The book provides a readable introduction to several critical theories prominent in other academic disciplines and applies them intelligently to Latin texts. The result is not a series of new, neatly packaged interpretations of specific poems or passages; rather, S. directs our attention to the often unsettling ways in which Roman writers conceptualised and depicted foreign peoples, and to their manipulation of specific ideologies for political ends. S. also invites us to reflect on the reproduction of these attitudes in various modern settings, and in doing so not only identifies intriguing continuities in rhetorical strategy, but also raises some disturbing questions about human nature.

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