

Juvenal's theme of Rome as a hard selfish city, although perhaps a slight exaggeration of the truth, is shown carefully through language features. One of the features he has used is juxtaposition, placing two contrasting words side by side in a sentence.

*nil habuit Codrus, quis enim negat? et tamen illud perdidit totum nihil (Sat 3. 208-209).*"

① Codrus had nothing, for who can deny it? And nevertheless the poor man lost all that nothing."

The juxtaposition occurs in "totum" (all, whole) and "nihil" (nothing). The two contrasting words, placed side by side for effect, create almost an oxymoron. "All that nothing" seems illogical. It is impossible to lose nothing and so it is obviously an exaggeration of the worthlessness of Codrus' former possessions.

Already in poverty and now homeless because of a fire in a poorly maintained apartment block Codrus literally has nothing. The possessions might have been worthless but they may have nourished his soul and their loss is the final crushing blow to destroy his pathetic existence. This exaggeration emphasises the harshness of Codrus' loss and the harshness of life in Rome.

② Juvenal expands on this harshness a few lines later, this time with a use of repetition.

*nudum et frusta rogantem nemo cibo, nemo hospitio tectoque iuvabit (210-211).* The repetition of nemo ... nemo emphasizes the uncharitable attitude of Roman citizens. Not only will nobody help him with even a crust of food and scrap of clothing but nobody will help with shelter either. They are obviously more concerned with their own affairs and cannot be bothered helping or maybe even noticing a poor naked man. Juvenal makes the reader feel a sense of sympathy for Codrus and we share his disdain for those who will not help.

③

Juvenal portrays Rome as a city in moral decline, a dog-eat-dog world where citizens look out only for themselves in order to survive. Nobody will help you when you are down. He demonstrates the lack of caring for others and effectively evokes a clear image of spiritual bankruptcy in a city which has lost its own soul chasing wealth and ignoring poverty.

④

In his letters Pliny portrays himself as a man of taste who prefers his books and writing to popular events such as the chariot races at the Circus.

"And throughout these days I most gladly spend my time in serious reading and writing, while others waste it in useless pursuits."

He uses chiasmus to express his scathing opinion of race-goers.

*si tamen aut velocitate equorum aut hominum arte traherentur, esset ratio non nulla; nunc favent panno pannum amant.* "If however they were attracted by either the speed of the horses or the skill of the men there would be some sense in it; now they support the charioteer's tunic, they love the tunic." (Ep.9.6).

⑤

In this sentence chiasmus occurs twice.

Set one velocitate equorum ... hominum arte

Set two favent panno pannum amant.

The purpose of the chiasmus in Set one is to draw attention to the fact that Pliny thinks these qualities are worth appreciating. It is then contrasted with Set two which draws attention to what Pliny obviously considers worth nothing. His scathing and snobbish remark that the

race-goers care only about the tunic of the charioteer rather than the skill which he perceives as important, shows that he considers himself a man of sophistication and education and would never lower himself to be interested in something as worthless as a tunic. In fact he later considers those who watch the races to be “even more worthless than the tunics.”

6 *Vulgus ... quod vilis tunica.*

Pliny is clearly critical of others and considers himself a man of standing and superior disposition. His privileged status gives him no empathy with those who do not have his intellectual or financial resources to escape their struggle for survival in any other way than by attending the races. In fact, to the modern reader, Pliny comes across as a snob.

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