The Reception and Use of Petronius: Petronian Pseudepigraphy and Imitation

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Petronius has, in many ways, survived his suicide nearly two thousand years ago. And, although the remains of his work are in tatters,[1] both the text and its author have had a generative effect on writers, poets, scandalmongers, would-be pornographers, composers, and others who have created something new in and between the extant fragments of text and biography. The broadest modern acquaintance with Petronius and the *Satyrica* perhaps comes through Fellini's 1969 film *Fellini Satyricon*, which interprets many episodes of the *Satyrica* (with some inserted portrayals of scenes from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* adapted to the characters of the *Satyrica*) with no attempt to defragment, as it were, the text as we have it. Perhaps, in the last thirty years, interpretations or appropriations of the text and its title (or at least part of the film's title, *Satyricon*) actually have more to do with a familiarity with the film than with its sources.

But even before Fellini had popularized the novel in the mass media of the twentieth century, acquaintance with Petronius was, if not so widespread, far from unheard of and probably no less detailed at various points in history. John of Salisbury and at least one other person in medieval England (the author of the medieval Petronian collection discussed below) were known to have access to manuscripts of some of the novel, and indeed to the *Cena Trimalchionis*. Others elsewhere in Europe had access to different

[1] For what of the *Satyrica* is known to have been available in the Middle Ages see Reeve 1983, 288–289. Sullivan suggests a total length for the novel of 400,000 words of which we have about 31,000 words (Sullivan 1968, 36). For an overview of Sullivan's and others' reconstructions of the extent of the text, see Harrison 1999, xvii–xviii.

manuscripts as well.[2] His influence on men of letters in seventeenth century England has been well demonstrated by Stuckey in her 1972 article 'Petronius the 'Ancient': his reputation and influence in seventeenth century England.'[3] Among those she discusses, some illustrious some obscure, are Ben Jonson, Robert Burton, and Sir Thomas Browne. Petronius was, at the time, considered suitable educational material, being 'listed as one of the regular schoolbooks of James I.'[4] Since the composition of the *Satyrica* people have known or at least have believed they have known who Petronius was and what he wrote. This presumed knowledge has led to appropriations of both name and text and to adaptations and outright forgeries of the text since the twelfth century at least, and right up to the end of the twentieth. As I have mentioned, later adaptations, such as *Hernandez Satyricon*, a comic book story featuring a comically surreal take on typical science fiction themes with a final twist in which all the characters in the long-running *Love and Rockets* series switch sexes, apparently spontaneously,[5] seem to mirror the impression the viewer gets from Fellini's film, which presents the text as even more disjointed and bizarre than it actually is.[6] The emphasis is on the surface aspects of the film, rather than on the content of film or text.[7] Others who have forged parts of the text clearly must in some way make a very strong connection with the original text, if not necessarily with the author. Authors who have written under the name of Petronius, however, may draw heavily both on the text and on Petronius' biographical tradition. Some uses of both text and author have simply to do with the idea of Petronius as an erotic writer. And some, such as the oil-drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico which bears his name, are completely incomprehensible.[8] Petronian imita-

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[2] Reeve 1983, 288–289; Colker 1975, 182. For John of Salisbury's use of Petronius see Martin 1968.

[3] Stuckey 1972, 145–153.

[4] *ibid.* 149 n.28.

[5] Hernandez 1997.

[6] For a view of the *Satyrica* as anarchic see Zeitlin 1999, 1–49.

[7] Although there are obvious cases of gender reversal in the casting of Fellini's film and one could argue that the homoerotic parody of the ideal Greek novel found in the *Satyrica* constitutes a certain degree of gender reversal, there seems little justification for considering these examples responsible for more than a very small degree of influence on the comic book.

[8] http://www.texaco.com/shared/pr/2000pr/pr7_21b.html. The reference could, of course, be to St. Petronius or another person of the same name. I have not been able to discover the connection and the public relations division of Texaco has not been able to illuminate the matter.

tions whose literary debt can be clearly established are not few, however. In addition to those discussed more fully below, in this century the best known is possibly Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Originally titled *Trimalchio*, the character of Gatsby is modeled on the namesake of the earlier title. Fitzgerald took the view that the *Satyrica*, or at least the *Cena Trimalchionis*, was a moralizing work and imitated that and other aspects of it. He may not have read it in the original,

> but shakiness in Latin…did not keep the mature Fitzgerald from seeing in Trimalchio the symbol of a sick society. So the method (detailed reporting of décor and incident), the aim (social satire), and the experience (progressive disillusion) of Petronius and Fitzgerald are so similar that the parallel between the nouveau riche excess of Long Island under Harding and of Capua – or was it Puteoli – under Nero turns out to be striking, and that between authors more striking still.[9]

Others have used specific episodes in their work. The Widow of Ephesus story, in particular, has had something of a life of its own. At least three complete adaptations have been made, and more are imbedded in other works. George Chapman's *The Widdowes Teares*, Walter Charleton's *The Ephesian Matron*, and Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent* are all based on the story.[10] The last, Fry's play, beyond bearing the singularly amusing dedication 'To My Wife,' gives a note saying that 'the story was got from Jeremy Taylor who had it from Petronius.'[11]

The extant text of the *Satyrica* and the name and identity of its author often have been both used and abused in the years since its composition. Forgers have tried to fill the voids between the extant fragments, often producing work incompatible with the original and completely unconvincing as the work of Petronius. Others with various degrees of understanding of various aspects of both the work and the biographical tradition have taken on the name to write works ranging from the scurrilous to the highly moralizing (though this latter usually by way of contrast with racy content). Schmeling

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[9] MacKendrick 1950, 308. Shakiness in Latin, however, did not afflict one of Petronius' other great admirers among modern authors, T.S. Eliot; see Schmeling and Rebman 1975.

[10] Chapman 1612; Charleton 1659; Fry 1985.

[11] Fry 1985, 49 and 51. For further information on the *Nachleben* of Petronius, including musical and theatrical examples, see Schmeling 1996, particularly pp. 487-490.

makes the acute observation that 'in the 2,000 years since his death Petronius has developed, as it were, a second *persona*, one unattached to the *Satyrica*: he is *the* ancient author of pornography.'[12] He is also the ultimate decadent and aesthete, being known for his laziness and having been employed by Nero as *Arbiter Elegantiae* ("Arbiter of Elegance," Tac. *Annales* 16,18,2).[13] And at times his name and his work have been dangerous, or at least socially unacceptable, things to have associated with one's own. C.K. Scott Moncrieff, in his 'An Open Letter to A Young Gentleman,' found in the 1914 Abbey Classics edition of Burnaby's 1694 translation of the *Satyrica* (which includes the Nodotian forgeries, which are discussed below) tells the imaginary young gentleman that he is, being post-Victorian, free to declare his appreciation of the work, implying that in earlier times one might not admit to having read it at all.[14] And Petronius' reputation has attached itself to various people for reasons unconnected with literature or scholarship.[15]

Works which claim to be by Petronius need not be written with the intention of deceiving readers into believing them to have been composed by Nero's *Arbiter Elegantiae*. It is unclear even whether some of the so-called forgeries were composed with that intention. Some of them, by fact of the period that they describe or in which they claim to take place, could not be accused of deceiving anyone. However all of them must necessarily attempt to be 'Petronian' in some way or another. How each goes about this is largely conditioned by the author's perception of Petronius and usually the *Satyrica* as well. I say 'usually' because the biographical tradition often seems a key factor in the motivation to compose. There are widely varying combinations of ideas about Petronius that reveal themselves from imitation to imitation. As variable, but significantly dependent on these ideas, is the degree to which a forger or imitator succeeds in making his work Petronian.

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[12] Schmeling 1999, 23.

[13] For Tacitus' account of Petronius see Rankin 1965, 233–245.

[14] *The Satyricon of T. Petronius Arbiter Burnaby's Translation. 1694. With an Introduction by C.K. Scott Moncrieff Ornamented by Martin Travers*, 1914, ix–xvi. Moncrieff makes the very interesting suggestion that the *Satyrica* finds a parallel in the Victorian 'School Story,' xii.

[15] In Boroughs' article on the 'Wilde' translation of Petronius, he can not resist connecting Stephen Gaselee's personal library of erotica with the subject. Boroughs 1995, 43 n. 19. Sullivan sums up the situation nicely: 'the scabrous nature of some of the episodes made a scholarly interest in the work eccentric or suspect.' Sullivan 1967, 71. For reasons presumably quite different, Dorothy L. Sayers describes her fictional sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey in his Eton days as 'athlete, scholar, *arbiter elegantiarum*.' Sayers 1970, 442.

Some may have been drawing on an idea of Petronius and his work which is no longer widely held, or may have possessed a different text (or a translation of a different text) from those used today. A Petronian imitation which might have been wholly plausible in the twelfth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, or earlier twentieth century, may seem improbable now to scholars and casual readers alike. By the same token, some of the imitators seem occasionally to have taken note of aspects of Petronius' work which are discussed in more recent scholarship.[16]

It is essentially easier to evaluate the motivations and Petronian aspects of text which claims to be written by the Petronius of the *Satyrica* than it is to make the same judgements about a clearly derivative/imitative text. A forgery will stand or fall based on them. Grafton's criteria for successful forgery are useful here. The forger 'must give his text the appearance – the linguistic appearance as a text and the physical appearance as a document – of something from a period dramatically earlier than and different from his own.' He must also 'explain where his document came from and reveal how it fits into the jigsaw puzzle of other surviving documents that makes up his own period's record of an authoritative or attractive period in the past.' Finally he

> needs to give his work an air of conviction and reality, a sense of authenticity. Just as a man applying for a substantial loan will enter his bank with shined shoes, pressed pants, and a vest with white piping on its edges, so the serious forgery must go out to meet the world with the extra confidence provided by a general air of solidity and prosperity, and must distract the world from the worn spots and defects that might arouse alarm and suspicion.[17]

Pseudepigraphy is by no means confined to Petronius or authors like him. Many classical authors, due to accidents of transmission, were easy names to which to attach spurious work. Reputation and influence have often been determining reasons for the misattributions, for example 'after Terence's death, when few new plays appeared, some of the plays of Plautus were revived on the stage, often in modernized versions, and many suppositious

[16] For a general overview of scholarly opinions on Petronius and the *Satyrica* see Harrison 1999, xvi–xxvi.

[17] Grafton 1990, 49–50.

plays were foisted upon his name because of its renewed prestige.'[18] In the case of Ovid the ban on his poetry after his exile meant that 'without the authority naturally attendant upon a corpus of genuine works accepted and catalogued in the state libraries, Ovid's poems may easily have drawn spurious additions to themselves.'[19] The combination of reputation and state of survival, each a determining factor in the two cases just mentioned, both contribute to a number of Petronian imitations. His reputation, as moralist, scandalmonger, aesthete, critic, satirist, or pornographer, and the skeletal state of his work, fleshed out occasionally by such things as the rediscovery of the *Cena Trimalchionis*,[20] provide both motivation and means for anyone wishing to try their hand at writing as 'Petronius.'

A medieval author, writing in the twelfth or thirteenth century,[21] apparently combining Petronius' title of Arbiter with judicial motifs in the *Satyrica*, created in his time a Petronian text mixing verse and prose and consisting of a number of short tales which depict poor behavior and its punishment. Adultery is a common theme, being central to four of these fourteen sketches, and a general description of the wantonness of women may be taken as a closely allied fifth. The haughtiness and ignorance of the wealthy, and their eventual comeuppance, form the basis of another four, while theft is important to two, for one of which it provides the premise of the story. The author is clearly familiar with Petronius and had access to the *Cena Trimalchionis* at a time when that particular part of the text was virtually unknown.[22] Indeed it is this familiarity with Petronius which seems to dictate for him both form and subject matter. The text is, like the *Satyrica*, prosimetric. Hexameter verses and elegiac couplets are intermingled with the prose of the body of the stories. The content, as can be judged by the overview above, shows an alliance with the social and legal transgressions found in almost every part of the *Satyrica*. There is a good deal of linguistic reliance on Petronius in his medieval literary descendant as well.[23] Further, certain episodes are lifted directly from the *Satyrica* or their affinities with related epi-

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[18] Clift 1945, 10.

[19] *ibid.* 129. For a mention of Greek pseudepigraphy in similar circumstances see Dover 1968, 4n.3. For other classical and later examples see Grafton 1990.

[20] The MS Tragurensis, discovered in 1650. See Reeve 1983, 296.

[21] My examination of this *Petronius Redivivus* relies heavily on Connors' overview of the text's connection with the *Satyrica*. Connors 1999.

[22] Colker 1975, 182.

[23] For which see Colker 1975, 183–184, and Connors 1999, *passim*.

sodes pointed out unambiguously. The sewing of stolen money into clothing, referred to in the *Satyrica* (13,2–3), though not actually accomplished in the extant text, is picked up in *Petronius Redivivus* 5,33, where a dishonest servant digs up the hidden money of his merchant employers and sews it into his clothing to conceal his theft. A story about an adulterous wife describes her in the opening lines as '*pulcram noteque pudicie matronam*.'(1,1). The obvious model is the tale of the Widow of Ephesus in the *Satyrica* which begins at 111,1 '*matrona quaedam Ephesi tam notae erat pudicitiae*' ('There once was a lady of Ephesus so famous for her fidelity') [24] And, indeed, a central part of the later adaptation involves corpses (here of the wife and her lover) on public display (1,12), a clear adaptation from Petronius (112,8) where a crucified body is replaced with that of the mourning widow's husband.

It is in this later author's handling and emphasis that his particular slant on the interpretation of Petronius is clear. Connors argues that 'a previously unacknowledged aspect of the medieval collection's imitative relationship to the *Satyrica* is its playful representation of 'judgment' in legal or extra-legal context.' This 'results from what the medieval author knew of the author of the *Satyrica*.'[25] The identification of Petronius as 'Arbiter' without knowledge of what he was arbiter of[26] led the author to see the *Satyrica* in light of its characters' relationship with the law. Encolpius' brushes with the law, the dispute over the *pallium* (cloak or blanket) in the forum, and the legal language of non-legal situations, which is evident in the Quartilla episode and in the rivalry of Encolpius and Ascyltos over Giton. The Widow of Ephesus provides even more legal language, and, as we have seen, was clearly an influence on the medieval author.[27] He had, due to the tastes which dictated the transmission of Petronius, the 'sentiments and verses more open to a

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[24] Colker views this as part of the evidence for the argument that the author knew Petronius directly from manuscripts and not from excerpts, noting that ''Matrona tam notae erat pudicitiae' would hardly have excited a grammarian.' Colker 1975, 184. The translations of passages from the *Satyrica* are those of J.P. Sullivan in the 1986 edition of his Penguin Classics translation.

[25] Connors 1999, 65.

[26] Manuscripts of Tacitus' *Annales*, which would indicate to the author that Petronius was *Arbiter Elegantiae*, were as or more scarce than those of Petronius. Although there is some evidence of a second tradition, only one manuscript of *Annales* 11–16 is certainly known and this was in Italy. See Winterbottom 1983, 407–409.

[27] For a more detailed enumeration of the legal motifs in the *Satyrica* and *Petronius Redivivus* see Connors 1999.

moralizing interpretation' and used them, rather than in the cause of 'Petronian lawlessness' to produce a 'new text about the exercise of judgment which is at least somewhat more likely to reinforce social norms.'[28]

While the medieval 'Petronius' may have been impressed with what he saw as the moralizing tendencies of the *Satyrica*, it was not necessarily so for later appropriators of the text. Petronius' reputation for pornography, or at least smut, is much more the emphasis in, for example, the forgery of Marchena (early nineteenth century).[29] The forgery connected to François Nodot (late seventeenth century, first published 1691), though almost certainly not composed by him,[30] while filling in erotic episodes perhaps more than is necessary, is tamer. While Marchena only forged a single fragment meant to supplement one of the bawdier sections of the text, the Nodotian fragments claim to restore the work to completeness. It is entirely possible that their original author intended them only as an enjoyable supplement to a frustratingly damaged text, in which case they fall under two categories of appropriation. In one sense they are an innocent reading-aid, designed to allow the reader to move from fragment to fragment without the abrupt changes of scene and situation, which confuse the story as it stands in the extant text.[31] But in another, when they were edited and published they were presented as genuine. It is not clear who exactly is the culprit in this falsification. Nodot almost certainly did not compose the fragments, but it is unclear whether he knew that what he was editing and planning to publish was fake.[32] The fragments, which range in length from a single word or name (fr. 17 in ch. 94,1: 'Eumolpus') in a few to the longest, fr. 6, which is nearly 200 lines long in Laes' text,[33] tend only to fill in the missing plot, with few of the

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[28] Connors 1999, 69.

[29] I have not been able to examine Marchena's text, which can be found in Smarius 1996. However, according to Laes, it was produced with the intention of 'linking the chapters 24 and 25'(Laes 1998, 358), i.e. expanding the Quartilla episode, one of the most sexually explicit sections of the text.

[30] The most likely candidate is Pierre Linage. (Laes 1998, 364–365). For a fuller account of the history of the fragments see Stolz 1987.

[31] Which is how translators well into this century have often justified the inclusion of the Nodotian fragments, despite their clear inauthenticity, in their translations. See Laes 1998, 359. Both the Nodotian and Marchena's forgeries can be found in English translation in W.C. Firebaugh, trans., *The Satyricon*, New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922.

[32] Laes 1998, 364–365.

[33] It should be noted, by way of comparison, that the length of each line of Laes' text is substantially greater than that of a line in Müller's 1995 Teubner edition.

thematic similarities at least attempted by the medieval Petronius. 'No humour occurs, no funny, interesting, or unexpected facts are mentioned.'[34] So Laes' impression of the non-Petronian qualities of the content. The longest fragment, fr. 6, bears some examination, because it provides the largest sample, as it were, for analyzing the fragment.

The fragment fills in the gap between Ascyltos' discovery of Encolpius in bed with Giton in *Sat.* 11 and the trio's arrival in the market and attempt to sell the stolen *pallium* at the opening of *Sat.* 12. The episode described begins with Ascyltos reminding Encolpius of the group's poverty and suggesting a trip to the countryside: '*Tu, inquit, Encolpi, deliciis sepultus, non cogitas nos pecuniam deficere et quae supersunt nullius esse pretii? In aestivis temporibus urbs sterilis est, rus erit fortunatus: eamus ad amicos*' (''And you, Encolpius,' began he, 'are so wrapt in Pleasures, you little consider how short our Money grows, and what we have left will turn to no account: there's nothing to be got in Town this Summertime, we shall have better luck in the country; let's visit our friends.'').[35] What follows is an outing to the villa of Lycurgus, who, it is explained, takes them in because of his former affair with Ascyltos. Here the erotic entanglements which are mentioned, but left more or less unexplained on Lichas' ship later in the genuine *Satyrica* as the root of Lichas and Tryphaena's anger at Encolpius and Giton, are played out confusingly enough to make the reader wonder whether this bridge between the real fragments has made the work easier to read at all. '*Quas in hoc loco gratissimo voluptates hausimus, nulla vox comprehendere potest*' ('The Delight we receiv'd in this place was more than can be exprest': 6,12–13) indeed. In brief: Tryphaena and Encolpius pair off immediately, but Lichas, jealous because she was '*vetus amor illius*' ('his old Amour': 6,17–18), seeks reparation for Encolpius' claim on his former lover by pursuing Encolpius himself. This trio, accompanied by Giton, departs for Lichas' house, each believing that his or her pursuits will be somehow easier there. Ascyltos remains behind as Lycurgus has renewed his claim on him. Tryphaena and Giton pair off on the journey leaving Encolpius to Lichas, whose advances he resists less fervently. In attempting to

[34] Laes 1998, 401.

[35] Unless otherwise noted, translations of the Nodotian forgeries are those in the 1914 Abbey Classics edition of Burnaby's translation. Although they stray to varying degrees from a strictly literal interpretation, they give a sense of another period's style of translating 'Petronius,' in itself an interesting consideration when discussing reception.

please Encolpius with new diversions (‘*Lycas, mihi placere cupidus, quotidie nova excogitabat oblectamenta*,’ ‘Lycas, studying to please me, found me every day some new Diversion,’ 6,43), he succeeds perhaps beyond his expectations, and to his disadvantage, by introducing Encolpius to Doris, ‘ejus formosa uxor’ (‘his lovely wife,’ my translation) (6,44). They, of course, hit it off famously.

By now, Tryphaena has exhausted Giton and tries to return to Encolpius who is unwilling to renew their affair. Disappointed, she betrays his and Doris’ ‘furtivos amores’(6,58) to Lichas, who is enraged. Unsurprisingly Encolpius and Giton choose this time to leave. After stealing the mantle and sistrum of a statuette of Isis found in a shipwrecked boat, they reunite with Ascyltos at Lycurgus’ villa. Lichas and Tryphaena pursue them and they are eventually betrayed to the pair by Lycurgus. Ascyltos rescues them from a makeshift prison and they flee, after burgling the house, of course. Making their way further into the country, they steal some gold in an inn and sew it into a tunic, and make off with a *pallium* as well. They split up, Encolpius loses the tunic, and their journey into the city begins at 12,1 in the genuine text of the *Satyrica*.

Much in this summary will sound familiar to readers of the *Satyrica*. The fragment does essentially accomplish the aim of connecting two contextually distant fragments of the original text. Its full explanation of the entanglements of Encolpius, Giton, and Ascyltos with Lichas, Doris, Tryphaena, and Lycurgus, is perhaps unnecessarily long and involved. Perhaps it represents the forger’s desire to read or write a racier episode into the *Satyrica*. Nonetheless the fragment is, in its own way, fairly sophisticated in that it uses two separate episodes to bridge a single gap and manages to account for several things alluded to, but not fully explained in the text. The erotic escapades at Lycurgus and Lichas’ houses provide the necessary antecedent for Lichas and Tryphaena’s anger and pursuit of Encolpius and Giton, which we hear about first in *Sat.* 100. Indeed the plundering of the statue of Isis is also mentioned later in the text (*Sat.* 114,5). Likewise the episode of the gold sewn into the tunic and the stolen *pallium* appear in the genuine *Satyrica*. The fragment not only conforms to information and details mentioned later, both immediately after its location and quite distant in the dramatic time from it, but attempts to explain them as well. This is in itself fairly effective. At a bare minimum something that is presented as ‘the complete *Satyrica*’ needs to account for quite a few ‘loose ends.’

However, despite its commendable attempts at comprehensiveness the forgery failed to be accepted as genuine. Grafton states as one of the criteria for successful forgery the need to give the fake text the appearance, linguistic and otherwise, of a text produced in a period earlier than his own.[36] In this case it must also appear to be a text by a specific author. The author of the Nodotian fragments fails at these tasks in a number of ways. Linguistic anachronisms and non-Petronian usage and construction are abundant in the fragments. In the commentary on fr. 6, Laes points out at least 20 anachronistic words or usages, Gallicisms, non-Petronian words and constructions, and examples of poor-quality Latin of a sort which is not accounted for by imitation of Petronius' variation of the style and type of Latin used by different characters. Important among these errors and inconsistencies is the use in 6,8 of the word *castellum*. 'Nodot uses it for the French word *château*' when the appropriate word in first century Latin would be *villa*: 'Castellum' is in antiquity only used in a military context.'[37] One could perhaps suggest that the anachronisms and errors crept into the text through a later 'corrector' or careless scribe. But Laes is right to point out the huge quantity 'of errors that occur in a text that is not extensive at all.'[38] The Nodotian fragments are only about 4000 words long, and the density of linguistic inconsistencies is significant. Indeed the total length of the *Satyrica* with the Nodotian fragments is only about 35,000 words, a figure not consistent with any modern theory about the total length of the work.[39]

There are also social anachronisms in the text which betray it as a forgery. The flight of Encolpius and Giton in fr. 6 is undetected by anyone until Doris and Tryphaena wake up. As Encolpius explains, this is because '*nos…ad earum ornamentum matutinum quotidie urbanissime assidebamus*' ('for we daily attended their levy, and waited on them while they were dressing': 6,80–81). This explanation rings false as a product of first century Rome 'since it reminds us of the French court, where the ladies were used to making their toilets every morning assisted by men.'[40] The treatment of the homoeroticism in the *Satyrica* by the author of the forgery is considerably

[36] Grafton 1990, 49. The story of the 'discovery' of these fragments, another necessary component of a forgery in Grafton's analysis, is as hopelessly implausible as the text (Laes 1998, 361).
[37] Laes 1998, 387 n.1,8.
[38] *ibid.* 397.
[39] See n. 1 above.
[40] Stolz 1987, 16 cited in Laes 1998, 388 n. 1,81.

less comfortable than that of Petronius, and, whatever it may say about the relative attitudes toward homosexuality of first century Rome and seventeenth century France, is also something of a warning of inauthenticity.

The very modernity of the Nodotian fragments, their firm placement in the seventeenth century, proves their undoing as a forgery. They also lack the authority, one of Grafton's other criteria, that other imitators gain by focusing on one or more aspects of Petronius' work or reported life and using them as a starting point or a guide. The lack of credibility as a Petronius imitation these forgeries display is due to the author limiting their content to filler and their linguistic imitation to some admirable Petronian turns of phrase and the occasional Petronian *hapax*. Works that are simply 'Petronian' or claim to be written by a 'Petronius' without pretending to be the *Satyrica* have a greater freedom in their interpretation. They need not be so precise in imitating the author, and may in fact have nothing whatsoever to do with the specific content of his work. As long as they employ some aspect of his work or his biographical tradition that will satisfy their audience, they will appear 'Petronian.'

Even further, morally and chronologically, from the medieval Petronius is the 1966 'guide book' *New York Unexpurgated: An Amoral Guide for the Jaded, Tired, Evil, Non-Conforming, Corrupt, Condemned and the Curious – Humans and Otherwise – to Under Underground Manhattan.* The author is given only as Petronius. Perhaps the title, apart from being a mouthful, is explanation enough as to which aspect of Petronius' work and reputation is being adopted for the book. Along with the title, which contains a number of words that often come up in discussion of Petronius' work and his involvement in Nero's court, the chapter headings on the contents page in part read like a checklist of the more low-life, or merely sexual, themes of the *Satyrica*. The list includes: '5 The New York hooker;' '6 The fag world;' '7 The dirty old man;' '8 Women on the prowl;' '9 Staring, peeping, spying.' These are followed by perhaps less relevant but still relatable topics as '11 The New York orgy,' '12 New York in the wee hours,' and '13 Evils of the city.' It is tempting to think that this may have been intentional. Only two years later, the major large-scale study of Petronius produced at the time, Sullivan's *The Satyricon of Petronius*, sees scopophilia as central to the work,[41] and thus has some thematic alliance with chapter 9, about 'staring, peeping, spying.' Eumolpus provides a 'dirty old man' for chapter 7. The

[41] Sullivan 1968, 238–250.

homoeroticism of the *Satyrica* is probably some justification for the inclusion of chapter 6, and chapters 5 and 8 certainly agree with Sullivan's view that the work is populated by many examples of 'the libidinous and aggressive female.'[42] The purpose of the work, to provide a guide to earthly pleasures in a big city, a modern Rome, is certainly compatible with the biographical tradition, and the book's tone seems to derive from some idea as to what a modern Petronius might write about and how in 1966. The first few sentences establish the tone as well as any. While perhaps not up to Petronius' literary standards, they give clues as to some possible motivations for adopting his name:

> Yesterday's hot spot is tomorrow's well of loneliness; today's hangover is tomorrow's shuttered gaiety and the next Miss Teen America's virginity is anyone's guess!
> Everything's moving too fast! Any place, program, person, vogue or thing which we depict here may be nothing but a tired legend by the time you seek it out! Being fashionable or the latest fad is a jinx to people and places alike!'[43]

Crass, certainly. But despite containing a jarring deluge of exclamation marks, the immediate impression is that of someone trying to convey a sense of jaded decadence and of the mutability of fashion. This is hardly out of place for a book claiming to be written by a person called Petronius. The book, in its own way, sets out to guide the reader through the worldly pleasures of what was in 1966 considered 'low-life' New York. It plays *Arbiter Elegantiae* to the reader's jaded and uninformed Nero. Each chapter contains a brief summary of the social background and conventions of the area of life it describes. Thus the first chapter, 'New York mating habits,' provides some information on New Yorkers' propensity for 'making out,' followed by sections headed 'A visitor's chance of scoring,' 'New York girls – briefly,' 'Make out tips, skams [*sic*], pitches,' and 'Essential information.' Other sections, such as Chapter 2 'The New York Bar-hangouts,' provide listings for various establishments catering to the desires of the visitor for whatever it is the particular chapter is discussing. Along the way it manages to send up every identifiable social group it can.

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[42] *ibid.* 119.
[43] *New York Unexpurgated*, 3.

It should be said at this point that I am not suggesting that the author of this book necessarily had detailed scholarly familiarity with the *Satyrica* or with the biographical tradition about Petronius. I am more than happy to allow that many of the affinities with Petronius this book displays may be little more than coincidence. Its publishers, Matrix House ltd. of New York, seem to have specialized in pulpy, low-grade '*exposés*' of various sexual practices considered deviant at the time. The only other books published by the company about which I have been able to find any information fall into this category. The titles *Eros and Evil: the Sexual Psychopathology of Witchcraft*, *Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality: An Objective Re-examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures*, and *Sex Crimes in History: Evolving Concepts of Sadism, Lus-Murder, and Necrophilia from Ancient to Modern Times*, all of which were also published in 1966, represent the bulk of what I have been able to discover in library and internet searches. The pseudo-scholarly pretensions these titles display suggest that the author of *New York Unexpurgated* was probably not above doing some 'research' and I would suggest that he probably had a passing acquaintance with the *Satyrica* and perhaps with the Tacitean account of Petronius, but this would be difficult to prove. I would also suggest that the accounts given in the book of behavior and locations are largely fictitious.

The specific pleasures to which, as I have mentioned, the 1966 Petronius proposes to be a guide, which include casual sex of all varieties, drug use, and late-night drinking, probably take their cue from the low-life narrative of the *Satyrica*, as well as its emphasis on sexual themes. Indeed the emphasis on homosexual relationships found in Petronius is echoed here. Chapter 6 'The fag world,' is not only longer than most, but its content spills out into the other chapters. Its tone is a good deal more hostile and sarcastic than that of the *Satyrica* on the subject. While Petronius certainly does not idealize homosexual love in the *Satyrica* in the way that the authors of the ideal Greek novels idealize heterosexual love in their works,[44] he does not present it, in itself, as something to lampoon. This Petronius is, while presenting a facade of knowing familiarity with the gay world of 1960's New York, quite different. But this sarcastic commentary on the author's perceptions of gay relationships opens up consideration of another side to his perceptions of Petronius. It is clear, given his mocking tone, which is not reserved solely for this chapter, that he perceives Petronius as a social satirist and particu-

[44] For which see Konstan 1994.

larly an aesthetic critic. The whole book is a platform to make snide comments about various aspects of New York life and the people who live it. The following listing is typical and displays an interesting feature of the book and one which may be an imitation of the fragmentary nature of the text of the *Satyrica*, the frequent use of ellipsis, which often connects two apparently unrelated statements:

> **Edward's**[*sic*]**, 132 e. 61st, TE 8–9605.** Original home of the Ivy League loser; calamitous congregate of young-to-fading-to-dead executives; and executive lushes of every type; black sheep residuals (paid almost adequate allowance by family to stay away); heavy shift even after 1:00 until closing. Equally strange diverse staff girls…over 25…occasional highbrow fight; creative contingents among others, heavier with dates on week ends and conventional workers at cocktail hours…earlier for dinner…all ages…Dick Edwards congenial but tough proprietor…. Reminiscent of a perpetual office party that went haywire and never intends to pull out.[45]

Where the genuine Petronius was to some extent a social satirist, his primary concern was with aesthetics. As Sullivan puts it, Petronius 'is not interested in morality in the larger sense, but only in art.'[46] The author of *NYU* has picked up on the aesthetic end of social criticism, but replaced the higher-brow aspects of the *Satyrica* with a discussion that is completely low-brow. The criticism may be an attempt to be perceived as high-brow, but the result is a Petronian imitation which focuses solely on low-life content discussed in low-life terms.

Of Petronian imitations, perhaps the most comprehensive and self-consciously imitative is the *Memoirs of the Present Countess of Derby* written under the name Petronius Arbiter and appearing in several editions in 1797.[47] It purports to correct the errors of other accounts of the life of Eliza-

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[45] *New York Unexpurgated*, 30.

[46] Sullivan 1967, 75.

[47] *Memoirs of the Present Countess of Derby, Late Miss Farren*, 1797. The author is suspected to be John Williamson (Scriptor Veritatis (pseud.). *The Testimony of Truth to Exalted Merit in Refutation of Scandalous Libel*, 1797, 6). Williamson's other satires, including *Advice to Officers of the British Army*, are similar in style to the *Memoirs*.

beth Farren (though it does not say what these accounts are[48]), a popular actress of the late eighteenth century who married the twelfth Earl of Derby, and to provide a definitive single account in place of these contradictory ones. It is essentially a complete libel, attacking Farren's past, her virtue, and her reputation, as well as that of her father and a few other names of the day.[49] But its slanderous nature, as well as the author's own pseudonymous comments, gives a good deal of insight into how the author perceived Petronius. The author explicitly points out the affinity of his work with that of Petronius and, despite contrasting his identity with that of his model, draws some motivation from the biographical tradition surrounding him. This is perhaps best illustrated by the dedication at the beginning of the book:

> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,[50]
>
> MY great Ancestor and Name-sake, *Petronius Arbiter*, though he called his Book a Satire, yet comprehended in it a loose Sketch of the Biography of very many of the most celebrated Characters of his Time. The present Publication, in some respects, resembles his '*Satyricon*;' as it relates some part of the Follies of the Age. In many respects, however, it materially differs: for *Petronius* wrote in the de-bauched and wicked Reign of a *Nero*, while I write under the mild and beneficent reign of GEORGE THE THIRD; and my Ancestor enjoyed all the luxuries of a Palace while I starved in a Garret. But the difference of our condition is no argument against the truth of what either of us may say: For my own

[48] It seems to allude to the *Testimony of Truth to Exalted Merit* published in the same year as a refutation of the *Memoirs* as it mentions the '*various and zealous endeavours* that have been made *to suppress*' the earlier editions of the pamphlet (*Memoirs*, 5).

[49] This is perhaps 'Petronius' parodying the 'virtuous woman' novels of the early part of the century as Fielding parodied Richardson's *Pamela* (1741) in *Shamela* (1741). This would certainly be compatible with the notion of the *Satyrica* as a low-life, homoerotic parody of the ideal, heterosexual, genre of Greek novels, for which see Konstan 1994, 113–125.

[50] In quoting the text of the *Memoirs* I reproduce the author's jarring (to modern readers) use of capitalization and italics in order to convey his particular emphasis. I will, in general, use his typography the first time I cite a given passage but revert to modern convention in subsequent quotations when the particular emphasis is neither relevant nor necessary.

> part, I can solemnly declare, that all I relate is 'NAKED, UNBLUSHING TRUTH.'
>
> Before I committed my Book to the World, I thought of a Dedication, and had at one time determined to dedicate it to the COURT; but when I considered that I only related TRUTH, I was convinced I should not be a welcome guest *there*. I then determined to dedicate it to the Earl of DERBY; but being informed his lordship was not much disposed to encourage Literary Merit, I gave up that determination also; and despairing of making a few Guineas by dedicating it to anyone, the first Edition was sent forth without any Dedication.
>
> Since the Publication, I have experienced the disadvantage of a want of proper Patronage, by the *various and zealous endeavours* that have been made *to suppress it*. But determined that Truth should not be driven from the Field, and sensible that all of you must feel a wish to know a real History of the Life of so conspicuous a Character as the Countess of DERBY, to YOU the following Memoirs are dedicated, by,
>
> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
> Your most Faithful Servant
> PETRONIUS ARBITER
> *From my Garret*.[51]

Here, there are a number of allusions to Petronius. Beginning with the biographical details, it is clear that, as with the Medieval Petronius, the author knows that Petronius was called *Arbiter* but seems to take it as a name, rather than a title. It is possible, however, that he believes himself in some way to be contributing to the taste of society by 'exposing' someone he presents as a vulgar social climber. It seems likely that he was familiar, perhaps indirectly, with the account of Petronius given in Tacitus (*Annales* 16,18–20), though this is impossible to prove, not least because of the inclusion of 'Arbiter' in his pseudonym.[52] Furthermore, despite his allusion to Petronius'

[51] *Memoirs*, 4–5.

[52] It would be a mistake to attach too much importance to this, however, as both Latin texts and translations of the *Satyrica* up to the late eighteenth century and after included 'Arbi-

inclusion in Nero's court circle, 'all the luxuries of a palace' as he puts it, the later exclusion from and persecution by Nero and a rival within that court, Tigellinus, is clearly taken as mutual motivation for both the *Satyrica*, and the *Memoirs*. He seems here to be conflating what he sees as the social-satirical aspects of the *Satyrica* (which he explicitly states he believes to be a satire) and the mention in Tacitus of the account which Petronius drew up before his death of all of Nero's sexual partners (Tac. *Annales* 16,19,3). He clearly sees the *Satyrica*, particularly the *Cena*, as parodying Nero (considering it to be 'a loose sketch of the biography of very many of the most celebrated characters of his time') but also sees his purpose as exposing the 'unknown' faults of a public figure. It is perhaps a possibility that he believed both the novel and the list of Nero's partners to be related works. Nonetheless he also sees a more general social observation at work in Petronius when he refers to it relating 'some part of the follies of the age.' It is also significant that he, of all the Petronian imitators (apart from the forgers, whose aims are necessarily different), takes the most pains within his text to give the reader some explicit indication of *how* his work is Petronian by stating these affinities openly.

Already in this opening section one finds some affinity with the content of the *Satyrica* itself. In the second half of his dedication the author takes on a further role found in the novel, that of Eumolpus. His bemoaning of the rejection of truth and 'literary merit' echo those of the unappreciated poet. And, of course, since he (albeit in jest) includes one of the people who comes under criticism in his work as someone he had in mind as a patron, the Earl of Derby himself, his work is just as unwelcome to members of his audience as that of Eumolpus. At his appearance in the *pinacotheca* (picture gallery) and his introduction to Encolpius the unsuccessful poet voices similar complaints. The complaint is amusing as well as relevant: *'ego' inquit 'poeta sum et spero non humillimi spiritus, si modo coronis aliquid credendus est, quas etiam ad imperitos deferre gratia solet. 'quare ergo' inquis 'tam male vestitus es?' propter hoc ipsum. amor ingenii neminem umquam divitem fecit,'*(''I am a poet,' he said, 'and a poet of no mean ability, I like to think, at least if poetry prizes are to be trusted when favouritism confers them even on mediocrity. 'Why,' you ask, 'are you so badly dressed then?'

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ter' as part of the author's name for which see Schmeling-Stuckey 1977, 57–71 and 80–85.

For this one reason – concern for the intellect never made anyone rich,': *Sat.* 83, 8–9).

Even though the author of the *Memoirs* identifies the *Satyrica* as 'satire,' it is clear that he does not totally intend his own work, at least in the way in which it relates the life of Farren, to operate strictly within that genre. Despite this, though, he shows even greater affinities with Petronius than he perhaps intended. The *Memoirs* is essentially a work of fiction, of that there is little doubt. While the glowing praise heaped upon Farren by the *Testimony of Truth to Exalted Merit* and her most recent biographer[53] is perhaps excessively fulsome at points, there is little reason to believe that the woman was quite as uncouth or calculating as 'Petronius' claims. Thus, although it is fictional, and although it makes social observations and judgements about specific people as well as general groups, its claims of truthfulness keep it from being satirical in the way that, for example, the *Cena Trimalchionis* is. There is no guise of fiction (rather the fiction is disguised) which might elevate this from slander to satire. However, the type of person Farren is portrayed as is quite similar to the type of person portrayed in the aforementioned *Cena* and some of the same socio-critical motivation must have applied to give both Petronii their subject matter. Since a good deal of what he seems to draw from Petronius seems to be from the *Cena*, one might conclude that he was primarily familiar with that part of the text. Farren was an actress who, though apparently of common, but not low, birth and past, became a member of the nobility through marriage. Trimalchio and the other freedmen of the *Satyrica* were born slaves and rose to a social position higher than that to which they were born and an economic position which would have been enviable even to most free-born Romans. Both categories of people, upwardly mobile actresses and upwardly mobile freedmen, were recognizable social groups who in some way upset the traditional social order of their societies and were open to attack because of their backgrounds.[54]

What 'Petronius' says about Farren's background is damning. Dismissing both the claims of other accounts that she was 'allied to Families of the first respectability in Ireland' and 'that the first exertions of her industry were employed in trundling a mop as a house-maid to a tradesman in Bath,' he starts on a moderate note. He says, 'from her Ancestors Miss FARREN,

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[53] Bloxam 1988. Bloxam, however, confirms with independent sources many of the positive assertions made on behalf of Farren by the *Testimony*.

[54] See D'Arms 1981, Ch.6: 121–48 and Crouch 1997, 58–78.

in our opinion (to use the language of the Historian of the Roman Empire) 'derives neither glory nor shame;' though perhaps the fastidious pride of the Countess may blush for the meanness of the origin of the Player.'[55] After the barbed comment at the end of that assessment he begins what amounts to a full frontal attack on Farren's father, which not only labels him as a drunk, but emphasizes all the seedy and unpleasant aspects of the life of a traveling actor in the eighteenth century, presumably to make the 'meanness' of Farren's origin more prominent in the reader's mind. The tone is *faux*-tactful, close to *praeteritio*, and sarcastically sympathetic. Describing Mr. Farren's change of career from apothecary to actor, he says 'an Engagement in a regular Company, with a fixed Salary, however small it might be, was a new life to Mr. FARREN; and his sense of his happiness was so great, that it shewed[*sic*] itself in his copious libations at the shrine of Bacchus.' Apparently 'he, for the most part, however, contrived to walk on soberly in the first act, though he generally staggered off drunk in the fifth.'[56] Of the conditions of life for his acting company he mentions in a note that 'the wretchedness of an Itinerant Corps in Ireland, can hardly be conceived from what we see in this Country.'[57]

It was into this life, the author alleges, that the young Farren was born. In fact, her father was not entirely unsuccessful but on his death, Elizabeth and the rest of the family took acting work to support themselves, but not in a traveling company. She ultimately experienced great success and eventually rose to the height of fame on the London stage, where she caught the eye of the Earl of Derby.[58] She also helped with some amateur theatricals, which were fashionable in the stately homes of the day, including those of the Duke of Richmond.[59] The author of course has some choice comments about this. Referring to the private dramas which she supervised at Richmond House, he says 'her Ladyship was appointed to preside over the Stage Business, an employment for which she expressed great fondness, as it afforded her an opportunity of being introduced to many of the first Nobility in the Kingdom.' As a result,

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[55] *Memoirs*, 7–8.
[56] *ibid.* 9.
[57] *ibid.* 9n.
[58] Bloxam 1988.
[59] *ibid.* 80.

> she began to be noticed, and even caressed, by a very long list of Fashionables; a circumstance which seemed at all times to have been her greatest ambition. She took a house in Green-street, Grosvenor-square, and endeavouring to forget the mean condition of trudging from town to town with the *Drum*, set up her Carriage, and changed the homely fare of a *Shoulder of Mutton* in a *brown dish* for the *luxuries* of an *elegant table*.[60]

The emphasis on food in this last passage is hardly the only recollection in the *Memoirs* of the social climbing and culinary ambition of Trimalchio and his freedmen friends. The obvious objection raised in both works is to the social ambition of their subjects. As I mentioned before, both Farren and Trimalchio belonged to recognizable social groups thought to be 'making their way to the top.' Crouch gives examples of several actresses of the eighteenth century who married into the nobility, had aristocratic lovers or patrons, or were simply often in the company of aristocrats, including Elizabeth Farren and Lavinia Fenton, [61] who is mentioned in this connection at the beginning of the *Memoirs* and was lampooned even more viciously elsewhere.[62] Similarly, in the first century AD, freedmen were a group who were making the transition from low to higher status. Like Trimalchio, who inherited his former master's money and

> multiplied his fortune by shipping goods to Rome and then withdrew to his landed estates, where self-sufficiency allowed him to live the life of a Roman gentleman (Petr. 75.10–77)…many ex-slaves rose to prominence by this route during the first century AD, and our upper-class literary authorities provide ample evidence of the frictions that resulted from their rapid ascension into the upper levels of imperial society.[63]

In neither case, that of Farren nor that of Trimalchio, is the simple transgression of social class boundaries necessarily the main issue. Certainly this change of status is enough to irritate the upper classes to a certain extent, but it is obviously not the whole cause of the resentment, nor the target of the

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[60] *Memoirs*, 22–23.
[61] Crouch 1997.
[62] *Memoirs*, 7.
[63] Bodel 1999, 41–42. See also D'Arms 1981.

criticism. Both Petronius and his imitator single out to different degrees the vulgarity each of their subjects retains after his or her change of status. Part of this aspect of the literary parody of the *Satyrica* is modeled on Plato's *Symposium*.[64] The speeches of the freedmen in this banquet substitute for those in Plato's symposium but instead of being serious are 'the drunken, down-to-earth maunderings of semi-literate ex-slaves, whose intensely self-centered monologues betray the limits of their intellectual horizons.'[65] Only once in the *Memoirs* is Farren's manner of speaking mentioned, but when it is, it is a striking and pointed comment on her ability to assimilate into the upper echelons of society:

> amidst a bevy of high illustrious Dames, she was particularly singled out for the notice of Royalty, and HER MAJESTY conversed with her for some time in the Circle. But here her Ladyship's conversation, like Lenitive's in the *Prize* 'smelt of the shop,' in spite of all her efforts to prevent it.[66]

Like Encolpius faced with Trimalchio and company, the genuinely upper-class members of society are able to recognize Farren's pretensions to their station for what they are. In both works, nobody who has any entitlements to upper-class culture or cultivation is fooled by the attempts of these social upstarts to fit into the social spheres to which they are alleged to pretend.

It is interesting that both social climbers are, to different degrees of explicitness, said to have been in favor with their respective benefactors because of an erotic relationship. Trimalchio himself tells his guests that he was his master's sexual favourite (and his mistress' as well) after an argument with Fortunata over one of his boys. He says '*tamen ad delicias [femina] ipsimi [domini] annos quattuordecim fui. nec turpe est quod dominus iubet. ego tamen et ipsimae [dominae] satis faciebam*,' ('Still, for fourteen years I was the old boy's fancy. And there's nothing wrong if the boss wants it. But I did all right by the old girl too,': *Sat.* 75,11). Farren as we have seen, was alleged to have been 'caressed' by certain notables.[67] The

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[64] See Cameron 1969, 367–370.
[65] Bodel 1999, 40.
[66] *Memoirs*, 29.
[67] Presumably the author meant 'caressed' to carry both metaphorical and literal significance.

nature of Farren's relationship with the Earl was somewhat unusual even if it was not so scandalous as the *Memoirs* suggest. Derby was married when he made her acquaintance and he and Farren were for all intents and purposes a couple for eighteen years, rarely to be seen apart from one another. Most sources agree that for this period, before the death of his wife, the relationship was not sexual.[68] Furthermore it was not he who had abandoned his wife but rather she who was having a similar, actually adulterous, affair with another man. Derby would not divorce his wife and thus could not marry Farren until his wife's death.[69] An incident related by the *Memoirs* relating to this situation is striking, if not solely in connection with it:

> In a Shoreditch Workhouse there was for a long series of years a Pauper who professed to have studied the Stars, and to tell the Decrees of Fate. This Lunatic or Enthusiast has, we believe, been visited by thousands, who wished to know the good or ill that awaited them. Often has the Lover hastened to know whether his Mistress would ever bless his arms; the Gambler to know on what card to stake his Fortune; the Speculator to be told whether his Schemes of Wealth would be successful; and the giddy Girl, who had longed for Grandeur, to inquire whether her golden Dreams would be realized. To this Prophet went her Ladyship; and, we have heard, he gratified her ambition, by telling her that the Coronet which Fate had suspended over her, would some time fall on her head.[70]

This gives the reader a taste of the same combination of immorality and impatience which are staple components of the inserted tale of the Widow of Ephesus, as well as a whiff of the supernatural, perhaps nodding to the ghost stories told during the *Cena*. The Widow of Ephesus is also evoked by the scathing criticism the author levels at Lord Derby's son who, in the short interval between his mother's death and his father's marriage to Farren, escorted the actress to and from her engagements when the Earl was unavailable. As with the Widow, pious mourning is considered to be interrupted for

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[68] One wonders when there might have been an opportunity for anything improper as Farren's mother was a constant chaperone whenever the couple was seen together. (Bloxam 1988, *passim*). The *Memoirs* refers to the Earl throughout as 'the *lusty* EARL' (*Memoirs*, *passim*).

[69] Bloxam 1988, 42–43.

[70] *Memoirs*, 25. This suggests Trimalchio's interest in astrology in the *Cena*, displayed prominently in the astrological dish at *Sat.* 39.

more earthly matters.[71] There is just enough of the bizarre and sordid as well to remind the reader of the cures for impotence inflicted on Encolpius by Proselenus and Oenothea (*Sat.* 131, 134–138).

Indeed, the subject of impotence is raised as well; it is the topic which the *Memoirs* keep to the end, in the 'Post Script Extraordinary!!!':

> IN the preceding part of our Book we have conducted the Countess of DERBY from her Birth to the period of her alliance with the high blood of the STANLEYS. There we had determined to pause, and leave her to enjoy the Honours she had arrived at. The *chaste delights* of the *connubial state*, we thought, opened prospects of Bliss to the new married Pair; but, Gentle Reader, (woud'st thou believe it?) the Lovers, on the Evening of their marriage, set off for the *Oaks* where, alas! they found not in the joys of Love and Solitude, enough to make them forget the dissipations of the Town:-after two days, they returned to Grosvenor-square; and, though *eighteen years* had passed in *Courtship*, for the first Month they could not find their way to the Hymeneal Bed *before Four o'Clock each Morning!!!* In which of the illustrious Couple could this conduct originate? Surely Common Report, in almost every instance a Liar, did not tell Truth, when she talked of his lordship being in certain respects αδυνατος [*sic*], or, in the Phraseology of the Platonic Philosophy, wanting 'Capacities and Energies' for the Prime bliss of the Married State![72]

Although one would hardly argue for the impotence of 'the *lusty* Earl' as a theme throughout the work (it is only mentioned here), its mention is possibly connected with the *Satyrica* in that there were no grounds whatsoever at any stage for suggesting impotence or sterility on his part. He had already had children (though one of them was suspected of being fathered by his wife's lover[73]), albeit nearly twenty years earlier. It is possible, though difficult to confirm because of the uncertainty of the publication date of the edition of the *Memoirs* containing the postscript, that the author did not know that within a few months of the marriage, Farren was expecting her first child by the Earl and gave birth 'in March 1798, ten months after marrying

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[71] *Memoirs*, 26–27. There is also a hint here that the young man's relationship with Farren was romantic.

[72] *ibid.* 31.

[73] Bloxam 1988, 43.

Lord Derby.'[74] If he did know of her pregnancy, or if the post-script was written after the birth of the child, the reference to impotence might have come from his knowledge of Petronius. On the other hand casting aspersions on a man's virility is not, and has never been, an uncommon means of attack, and this may be simple coincidence. Given the general affinity of the *Memoirs* with the *Satyrica*, however, it seems reasonable to think it may have been a deliberate appropriation.

In another instance the attribution of authorship is not the appropriation of Petronius' name by the author, but rather that of a translator of Petronius by the publisher. The translation of the *Satyrica* attributed to Oscar Wilde is an interesting parallel example, which, especially through its direct link with Petronius, perhaps clarifies a bit further the issues surrounding Petronian imitation. In this case, however, there is something of a double-cross. Wilde's name is lent to Petronius because of his reputation for homosexuality, while Petronius is reverse-identified with Wilde because of the misattribution. This is perhaps the ultimate example of Petronius' reputation being attached to someone and, symmetrically, that person's reputation being attached to Petronius. The translation was originally published in 1902 by Charles Carrington, 'the major supplier of pornography to Britain' at the time.'[75] The titles of some of Carrington's publications at the time bear a striking resemblance to the sort of thing Matrix House (publisher of *New York Unexpurgated*) was publishing in 1966. They include '*Human Gorillas: A Study of the Ravishment of Women* by Count Roscaud; *Musk, Hashish, and Blood* by Hector France; *Miss Dorothy Morton* (described as 'The most wonderful Romance of Flagellation in existence')'[76] and others in a similar vein.

It is of course tantalizing for admirers of either author to think that Wilde translated the *Satyrica*. In many ways, what Tacitus says about Petronius provides a character sketch remarkably like the popular image of Wilde. Both are seen as aesthetes, in life and literature, and both were, in different ways, and to varying degrees, brought to premature deaths. Both men, according to tradition, died cleverly, Petronius chatting lightly while opening and binding his slit veins (Tac. *Annales* 16,19), Wilde allegedly producing some of his finest, and least verifiable, one-liners ('I am dying above my

[74] *ibid.* 179.
[75] Boroughs 1995, 13.
[76] *ibid.*

means'). Wilde too was an author who made an easy target for frauds and misattributions. Like Petronius, whose name it seems can be adopted for any piece of social satire, low-life narrative, or pornography that an imitator wishes to write, so Wilde's name has been attributed to many homoerotic works not by him.[77] He, like Petronius, is open to forgery and appropriation, and in the years after his death the two were associated by reputation in the translation attributed to him. The reputation of each caused something of a double-misattribution although the material at the source of the misattribution was, in fact, Petronius.

It is sometimes difficult to sort out what of Petronius is to be found in his imitators. There have been, over time, so many differing scholarly and popular opinions of both the man and his work, that the resulting confusion, to which the fragmentary state of the *Satyrica* contributes significantly, occasionally seems inescapable. He has been to various people pornographer and moralist, jaded aesthete and keen literary critic Arrowsmith perceives this difficulty keenly, saying that

> the classics, simply because they are classics, are particularly susceptible to distortion and stultification. They constantly serve, after all, extraliterary purposes, and these other, 'cultural' uses of the classic frequently interfere with critical judgment, preventing the reassessment, or even the assessment of the work.[78]

This is the very quality Stuckey makes central to her argument, that Petronius as an 'ancient' had quite a different reputation in the seventeenth century from what one might expect given the content of his work. It is possible for the *Satyrica* to exist in the eyes of one scholar, as Arrowsmith, as 'a fundamentally serious and even moral work,'[79] and for Petronius to be for another 'not interested in morality in the larger sense, but only in art.'[80] Likewise for the author of the *Petronius Redivivus* Petronius was a legal-minded moralist, while for Marchena and the author of the Nodotian forgeries his work constituted light erotic fiction. The eighteenth-century

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[77] These include Bloxam, John Francis. *The Priest and the Acolyte*. (1894) and Wilde, Oscar, and others. *Teleny*. (London, 1999).
[78] Arrowsmith 1966, 305.
[79] *ibid.* 305.
[80] Sullivan 1967, 75.

'Petronius' viewed him as a slanderous satirist and small-time dissident. As Connors has demonstrated, examination of imitations can shed light on the imitated text, as the *Petronius Redivivus* illuminates legal motifs in the *Satyrica*.[81] But the examination of imitations is worthy in and of itself. An interesting parallel to Grafton's argument that the development of a scholarly critical repertoire was helped a good deal by the need to determine what texts were forged, is the ability of archaeologists and antiquities experts not only to determine whether a given object is fake, but to be able to apply the same techniques to know which fakes are products of the same workshop.[82] The attitudes to Petronius of different imitators at different times are revealed by inspection of the work, and can perhaps give some indication of more general attitudes of their times. To conclude with the words of G.W. Bowersock in his foreword to Mary Beard's biography (which is also, for all intents and purposes, an apparatus criticus of her, as well as others', biographical process) of Jane Harrison: 'works that reflect antiquity also inevitably reveal their authors and their own age…Antiquity can reveal *us* just as much as it is revealed by us.'[83]

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[81] Connors 1999.
[82] Bagnani 1960, 229.
[83] Bowersock 2000, vii–viii. I would like to thank my teachers Alexander Sens of Georgetown University and Peter Parsons of Christ Church, Oxford for the initial leads and the guidance that led me to this subject. S.J. Harrison of Corpus Christi, Oxford provided invaluable assistance in seeing this paper through to its present form.

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