

The Inward Turn: Writing, Voice and the Imperial Author in Petronius

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Becoming a novel

The episode at *Satyricon* 80, where Encolpius and Ascyltos cat-fight over pretty-boy Giton, who eventually chooses Ascyltos, ends with one (or two) of Encolpius' thirteen short elegiac poems: we read four lines on the fickleness of friendship and *fortuna*, onto which is tagged the following fascinating epigram:¹

*grex agit in scaena mimum: pater ille vocatur,
filius hic, nomen divitis ille tenet.
mox ubi ridendas inclusit pagina partes,
vera redit facies, assimilata perit.*

A company acts a farce on the stage: one is called the father,
one the son, and one is labelled the Rich Man.
Soon the comic parts are shut in a book,
real faces return, and the made-up disappear.

The farcical 'Theban duel' (80.3), in which both 'brothers' draw swords and Ascyltos threatens to carve off his share of Giton's flesh (*partem meam abscindam*, 80.1) suddenly collapses, as our narrator faces the harsh reality of spending the night without his lover, just as mime actors return to their real life roles off-stage. This poem has been the focus of much discussion in Petronian criticism. Slater suggests that it 'might stand as an epigraph for the

¹ Here and throughout I have used Müller's 1995 edition of the *Satyricon*.

whole *Satyricon*,² and it is a key passage for Panayotakis' argument that mime situations and plots are present throughout Petronius' novel.³ It certainly, as Connors puts it, 'calls attention to the artful deceptions of the *Satyricon* as a whole and indicates the *Satyricon*'s self-conscious awareness of its own fictionality'.⁴ The word *pagina* in line 3 (the reading of L and O manuscripts) has proved problematic: while it is accepted by Müller, Bücheler emends it to *machina*,⁵ and Nisbet argues that the word should remain obelized because he objects to mixing a reference to a text with references to actors (he considers *pergula* instead, which would mean the actors' dressing room).⁶ Watt also obelizes *pagina* because, he reasons, 'Petronius is talking about actors on the stage, not characters in a book.'⁷ For Slater, the word indicates that the *Satyricon* was written in order to be read and not to be heard from a *recitator*, while for Panayotakis (as for Vogt-Spira) it proves precisely the opposite.⁸ Yet the odd disjunction that critics attempt to resolve here, between live, public theatre and solid, 'private' written representation, between an audience watching and listening to a performance and individual readers (or between the wild vagaries of *fortuna*, a *mobile opus* at 80.9, and the apparent cruel intransigence of fate) lies at the heart of the *Satyricon*'s parading of its hybrid, novelistic energies. Encolpius' poem miniaturizes a (process of) transformation which is replayed at many points throughout this fiction and becomes a defining feature of its modernity.⁹

Like many of the ancient novels, this paper will argue, the *Satyricon* is a text in which different modes of representation, written and oral, commingle, jar, and jostle for position. Its chaotic mixture of genres and registers gives the impression of an 'untidy spontaneity',¹⁰ and it blends obvious artifice and awareness of artistic invention with a naturalistic style and appearance of theatrical improvisation. It is both a flamboyant, radically anti-classical ex-

² Slater 1990, 89.

³ Panayotakis 1995, 113–115.

⁴ Connors 1998, 13.

⁵ Bücheler 1862.

⁶ Nisbet 1962, 231. *Pergula* is a conjecture first made by Strelitz 1879, 836. Slater 1990, 13, 89, and 1987 retains *pagina* and suggests it refers to book illustrations, while Courtney 1991 *ad loc.* argues that it might refer to the prompter's script of the mime.

⁷ Watt 1986.

⁸ See Slater 1990, 13–14, Panayotakis 1995, 115, and Vogt-Spira 1990, 184–192.

⁹ Whitmarsh 2001, 80 and Kahane 2002 among others refer to the paradoxical hybridity that is a defining feature of novelistic discourse as a 'modernist invention'.

¹⁰ Connors 1998, 50.

periment that messes irreverently with the notional fixity of canonic literature, making everything in its universe prey to the whims of flux and fortune (as I have argued elsewhere, metaphors of flowing, flooding, sinking, outpouring, infiltrate the whole of our *Satyricon*),¹¹ and at the same time a self-consciously crafted novel that pays homage to its position in Greek and especially Roman literary history. So, as Panayotakis has explored in depth, Petronius continually incorporates and pays homage to the ‘live performances’ of Greek and Roman comedy, tragedy and mime.¹² Jensson has recently stressed the orality of Encolpius’ narrative, which makes for a ‘clamorous’ text.¹³ Like many of the Greek novels, as well as Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, the *Satyricon* makes mischief with the model of Homeric orality: Encolpius is a [failed] Odyssean storyteller, recounting events from memory, hounded by Priapus in the place of Homer’s Poseidon. We might note the (ostensible) contrast between Petronius’ narrator and Apuleius’ Lucius, who wants, at least, to take notes on his adventures, and at crucial points highlights his self-perception as writer of a *book*.¹⁴ The characterisation of Encolpius often supports Ong’s point that knowledge in oral cultures, once acquired, must be continually repeated or forever lost.¹⁵ Encolpius reminds us at *Sat*.56.10, for example, that his memory is imperfect, that there are many nuances he cannot now recall, having not recorded them. This approach is also typical of the freedmen in the *Cena*, who frequently rate gift of the gab over literary skill, which they perceive as a means to status and wealth rather than useful or valuable in itself.

Yet while the *Satyricon* in many ways mimics the free-flowing ephemerality of oral culture, so that orality comes to stand for the novelistic liberality embodied by the ‘freed-men’ of the *Cena Trimalchionis* and celebrated in

¹¹ See Rimell 2002, *passim*.

¹² Panayotakis 1995.

¹³ Jensson 2004. In his interesting chapter on the ‘desultory voice of Encolpius’, Jensson argues for a modification of the model of the voice in modern narratology, which in its classic form (i.e. the work of Genette) does not sufficiently account for the oral performance of ancient written texts. His discussion of the *Satyricon* revolves around the idea that although Encolpius ostensibly denies the writtleness of his narrating voice, that voice is often explicitly textual.

¹⁴ See e.g. *Met*.6.25.1 (‘I was disappointed not to have tablets and stilus to write down such a pretty tale’); 9.30.1 (‘But perhaps as a careful reader you will find fault with my story...’); 10.2.1 (‘an outrageous and terrible crime was perpetrated here, which I am adding to my book so that you can read it too.’).

¹⁵ Ong 1982, 23–24.

Bakhtin's anti-Stalinist concept of the carnivalesque, at the same time it is a curiously claustrophobic novel, imagining a succession of closed, entombing spaces, right down to the mysterious insides of real and metaphorical bodies (stomachs, bowels, throats, wombs). While it is infected throughout with Encolpius' determined *joie-de-vivre*, the ambiance throughout our fragmented text is one of Persian concentration, and we often get a quasi-Juvenalian sense, especially in the *Cena*, of the world getting smaller and more confining even as empire expands. Moreover, what seems 'missing' in Petronius, *vis à vis* many of the other ancient novels, is the idea that oral, performing voices are pleasurable, and imbued with unpredictable, enchanting magic (in this sense the *Satyricon* is most unlike Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, whose readers are to be lulled or physically *caressed* by a *lepidus susurrus*). Singing and reciting voices almost invariably grate on the ears in the *Satyricon*:¹⁶ there are many examples to choose from,¹⁷ but perhaps the most striking comes at *Sat.*68, when a slave who starts declaiming *Aeneid* 5 in a sing-song voice is told to shut up,¹⁸ and Encolpius comments, '*nullus sonus umquam acidior percussit aures meas*' ('No sharper sound ever pierced my ears' 68.5), the phrase *aures percutere* satirically reversing the novelistic topos of *aures permulcere*. The figure who perhaps most represents the spell-like seductiveness of voice, the witch-goddess Circe, proves a dud Siren in Petronius: Encolpius is suddenly inflicted with impotence as soon as he starts kissing her (*Sat.*128), and the witches who are convinced at *Sat.*134 that their magic *carmina* can cure him only succeed in terrifying their victim, so that after a course of treatment at the hands of Oenothea and

¹⁶ The obvious exceptions to this, one might argue, are the tale of the widow of Ephesus, told by Eumolpus at *Sat.*111–112, ostensibly in an attempt to extend the jolly atmosphere on board ship after the mini 'civil war' that has just been fought, and the titillating tale of the Pergamene boy, at *Sat.*85–87. However, the simple pleasure and straightforwardly entertaining content of these tales is much complicated by their context: Eumolpus' first tale looks back to the gallery image of the rape of Ganymede in 83 and forward to the *Troiae Halosis* (the fall of Troy being a consequence and revenge for the 'honours given ravished Ganymede', as Virgil puts it in *Aeneid* 1); the widow of Ephesus tale is met with a range of reactions, from laughter to embarrassment to anger (113.1), and it too plays out the tensions and conflicts of its framing narrative. On both tales see Rimell 2002, 63–4 and 123–139.

¹⁷ E.g. Trimalchio's hideous performances at *Sat.*35 (leaving the guests depressed, *tristiores* 35.7), or Eumolpus' recitation of the *Troiae Halosis*, which causes the crowd to throw stones at him to try to get him to stop (*Sat.*90).

¹⁸ On this passage, and on how it places a canonical written text on the same level as a slave's impersonation of a nightingale, also see Cucchiarelli in this volume.

Proselenos at *Sat.* 138, which looks more tortuous than erotic, he flees for his life. Another implication of what has often been noted as the obvious disparity between the *Satyricon* and the classic Greek novel plot (frustrated sexual relationships between men replace the heterosexual love story), is that the beguiling sensuality of voice, regularly gendered *female* in these texts, is lost.¹⁹

Likewise, as this paper will explore, there is something recognisably Roman or Romanizing about the *Satyricon*'s fraught enactment of the intensifying discourses of monumentality and interiority we see in the Latin literature of the early empire, from Horace and Ovid to Pliny and Martial. Petronius is perhaps especially inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where, as Farrell argues, a tussle and blurring between orality and writing seems to conclude with the triumph of voice over text,²⁰ and also by the exilic poetry, in which the idea and ambition of *perpetua carmina* transcending the mortal corporeality of text and body is more thoroughly deconstructed and perhaps breaks down completely. I will argue that these two forms of representation, oral and written, and the enacted shift and dialogue between them which may be said to characterize the ancient novel in general, are more strongly loaded, politicised and to some extent violently opposed in the *Satyricon* than in most of the other surviving novels. Petronius' Neronian fiction, written, we have every reason to suspect, within the emperor's very walls, exploits the complex history in the ancient world of associating writing with tyranny, as well as the Platonic idea of writing as treacherous and deceptive, and reflects the centrality of 'writing the self' in Roman imperial literature, as explored above all by Foucault. That is, the representational tensions this paper will highlight are both an index of the *Satyricon*'s insertion into a Greco-Roman novelistic tradition, and a fascinating aspect of its cultural and political specificity. In what follows, I will explore in detail how these ten-

¹⁹ In Apuleius' *Met.*, see for example Meroe at 1.8, the sexy witch who embodies oral magic, the lustful Pamphile at 2.5, an 'expert in every variety of incantation', or Photis at 2.7, Pamphile's 'needle-sharp' (*argutula*), witty (*lepida*) and honey-tongued maid who incarnates the paradoxical seductiveness of the prologue, a *lepidus susurrus* inscribed with the sharpness (*argutia*) of a reed. In Achilles Tatius, see e.g. 2.7.5, where Leucippe's incantation is transformed into a sweet stream of kisses, and more indirectly at 2.13, where Callisthenes falls in love with Leucippe just by hearing tales about her beauty; in Heliodorus see e.g. the siren-spell of Charikleia's words at 1.23, or the enchanting hymn sung by maidens at 3.2. Also see discussion in the introduction to this volume.

²⁰ Farrell 1999.

sions evolve and spark in the course of our fragmented text, beginning with an analysis of Trimalchio's *Cena* and culminating in a discussion of Eumolpus' *Bellum Civile* and the scenes in cannibalistic Croton, where literature is forgotten and the oral pleasures of rhetoric and eating run riot.

Dining and dying

As Andrea Cucchiarelli reminds us in this volume, the dialectic between orality and writtenness is perhaps most overt in the *Cena Trimalchionis*, where *scholastici*, with their bookish knowledge and ready quotations, rub shoulders with the fast-talking, mostly illiterate freedmen. The dinner party itself sandwiches folkloric tales, bitchy tongue-wagging, and live musical accompaniment between regimented, ordering inscription that often spells out the host's quasi-imperial authority and power to punish, constrain and trick. Interestingly, written representation marks off the episode of the *Cena* as we have it, as well as delineating the various, threatening thresholds of Trimalchio's domestic domain, the doors of his house and dining room.²¹ At *Sat.*28.7, Encolpius and Agamemnon see a notice fixed to the doorpost, announcing, '*quisquis servus sine dominico iussu foras exierit, accipiet plagas centum*'. As they enter, they notice a large dog painted on the wall, with '*Cave canem*' written over it in block capitals. There is also a mural depicting a slave-market in which each slave for sale is tagged with his or her name, together with a visual representation of Trimalchio's entire career, *cum inscriptione* (29.4), at the end of which Fortuna and the three Fates are paralysed in motion on the wall (*praesto erat Fortuna <cum> cornu abundantanti [copiosa] et tres Parcae aurea pensa torquentes* 29.6). As Encolpius walks through to the dining room, he pauses again at the entrance, 'astonished' to see rods and axes fixed on the doorposts, one part of them finished off with the bronze prow of a ship, inscribed, '*C.Pompeio Trimalchioni, seviro Augustali, Cinnamus dispensator*' (30.2). Illuminated by a double-lamp, two calendars are attached to the doorposts, and our narrator recalls the following entry: '*III. et pridie kalendas Ianuarias C. noster foras cenat*'. Lucky and unlucky days are also recorded (*notabantur* 30.4).

²¹ Horsfall 1989, esp. 202–205, also gives an account of the use of written representation in the *Cena*, as part of his quite different discussion of how the text 'portrays a world of first-generation literates or semi-literates' (203).

The notion that these heavily marked and symbolic entrances not only lead into the *Cena* in a literal sense but also function as metaphoric preludes to the (interpretative) feast that follows is hinted at in Encolpius' comment, at 30.5, that they were already 'full' of these pleasures when they attempted to enter the dining room (*his repleti voluptatibus cum conaremur in triclinium entrare*). Getting inside proves to be a complicated and nerve-wracking activity: the guests are fearful of breaking the rule, barked by a patrolling slave, of always stepping over the threshold with their right feet first, and just as they are obeying the command, a slave stripped for a beating falls at their feet and begs to be saved – another trailer for the dinner, this time for the scene at *Sat.*54, when a slave trips and falls against Trimalchio, and then crawls before the guests' feet crying for mercy (compare 30.7, *servus nobis despoliatus procubuit ad pedes ac rogare coepit, ut se poenae eriperemus*, with 54.3, *nam puer quidem qui ceciderat circumibat iam dudum pedes nostros et missionem rogabat*). At the end of the *Cena* (or at the point at which Encolpius and his friends are thoroughly sickened by Trimalchio's antics and attempt to slip away, at *Sat.*72), the men retrace their steps through the gallery to the door, only to be sucked into an even more hellish, menacing scene when the dog which had at *Sat.*29 warned them off with an inscription now appears to come alive and guard the door as effectively as Cerberus in Vergil's underworld.²² The porter warns them that, like Aeneas, they cannot leave by the same door, and the guests find themselves trapped (*inclusi* 73.1) in what Encolpius calls a 'new labyrinth', an even scarier macro-version of the intricately crafted structures dreamt up for the guests' amusement by head-chef Daedalus in the *Cena* itself.

During the dinner, Trimalchio (with Daedalus' help) constructs himself as master writer/reader. He presents his guests with a series of visual and/or written challenges, jokes and riddles that befuddle the eye: for example, there are the glass jars, brought in at 34.6, with labels tied to their necks inscribed '*Falernum Opimianum annorum centum*', which the guests survey thoroughly (*perlegimus* 34.7: being at this dinner means performing as a *reader*), wondering, we assume, whether this is simply a mistake, or a joke, and if so whether or not they are its victims (Opimius was consul in 121B.C., not one hundred years before Nero's reign, when we think the *Cena* is set, so the wine would be even more rancid than first appears). Or later on, at 56.8,

²² On the possible correspondences between the painted and 'real' dogs at the beginning and end of the *Cena*, see Rimell (forthcoming).

labels for *apophoreta* are drawn from a cup, and a slave reads out each ticket, on which is inscribed a riddle or punning description of the gift, before the actual item is brought in. In fact, these two-stage offerings encapsulate to perfection the sense in which all Trimalchio's dishes fuse orality and writtenness, demanding both readerly interpretation and oral sampling (always the proof of the pudding).²³ many of them combine foodstuffs with something inedible which 'translates' the written riddle first proffered, and/or transform comestibles into their opposites and vice versa – thus a ham under some vinegar bowls is '*argentum sceleratum*', 'tainted silver', and '*porri et persica*' becomes a whip and a knife (punning on *perseco*, to cut). Two of the *apophoreta*, in particular, overtly twin a food with either writing materials (in the case of '*cenatoria et forensia*', which turns out to be a piece of meat and note-books, '*offla et tabulae*'), or with an item which represents a visualized word or letter ('*muraena et littera*' appears as a *mus*, 'mouse', which once actively accepted by the guest becomes its accusative *murem*, tied to a *rana*, 'frog', thus making mur(r)a(e)na, together with a bunch of beetroot, *betae*, which also means 'lots of letter Bs'). Throughout the *Cena*, the tasting of cryptic crossword-puzzle recipes goes hand in hand with the oral/intellectual pleasures of discussion and debate. We can see a similar collapsing of categories in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, especially in the first two books, in which fiction, like food, is received via the throat (fantastic tales are 'swallowed' by a believing audience), so that speech exits and is received by the same orifice.²⁴

Yet the guests most revel in the oral pleasures of talking, drinking and eating when their host temporarily leaves the dining room to attend to his troublesome bowels at the end of *Sat.*41: Encolpius comments, '*nos libertatem sine tyranno nacti coepimus invitare [convivarum sermones]*' / 'without the tyrant, we found our freedom and began to initiate conversation with

²³ The most obviously 'oral' of these dishes being the Priapic pastries at *Sat.*60, which when touched ejaculate sticky, luxurious saffron juice into the mouths/faces of the guests. On this passage see Rimell 2002, 99–101. Also see Cucchiarelli's discussion of the metaphors of food in the *Cena*, in this volume.

²⁴ See *Met.* 1.3ff, after Lucius 'thirst' for gossip leads him to interrupt two chattering travelers, and to offer his experience of choking on cheese but witnessing someone swallow a sword as analogies for the difficulty people have swallowing strange but true stories. See Keulen (2003) on this metaphor. The analogy between swallowing tales and food continues for much of Books 1 and 2 (it is perhaps most overt at 1.26, in which Lucius has to endure a banquet of talk instead of a proper dinner).

our neighbours', and the freedmen's *fabulae* last a full six chapters before Trimalchio's return. In the course of the dinner, which apart from this interlude is carefully stagemanaged by Trimalchio, the 'tyrant' gradually 'converts' the occasion into a written text or texts, and finally into a stone monument, which will memorialise the event and Trimalchio's own life for all time. After boasting that he has two libraries, one Latin and one Greek, at *Sat.*48.4, a clerk 'interrupts' (*interpellavit*) a pantomime at *Sat.*53.1 in order to read as if from the city's daily gazette, cataloguing the yields of the estate, including slaves born and punished. This is followed by the recitation of police reports, and some foresters' wills, 'in which Trimalchio was cut out in a codicil', plus the names of various people, presumably among Trimalchio's staff, caught or prosecuted for various crimes (53.9–10). The whole passage is reminiscent of, and an extended version of, the calendars fixed to the dining room doorposts at *Sat.*30. Then at *Sat.*55, after another round of acrobats (53.11) and a mini-drama in which Trimalchio pretends to be about to punish a slave who falls against his arm, only to liberate him on the spot, the host proceeds to mark the garrulous small-talk of the freedmen on 'the uncertainty of men's affairs' (an uncertainty 'proven' by Trimalchio's 'random' behaviour in the previous scene), with an *inscriptio*. He calls at once for writing tablets (*codicilli* 55.2), and presumably after scribbling something down (*non diu cogitatione distorta*), recites an epigram about *Fortuna*, paradoxically fixing her inconstancy on the enduring page.

From this arises a discussion about poets, the excuse for Trimalchio's grating poem at *Sat.*55.6, after which he attempts to initiate a curious debate on the profession of writing in general, asking '*quod autem putamus secundum litteras difficillimum esse artificium?*' (56.1) The answer, he gives himself, is a doctor's or a money changer's, as both see the 'insides' of things, either people's guts, or the copper hidden under 'silver' coins. As I have discussed elsewhere, Trimalchio implies here that writers also have a privileged knowledge of interiors,²⁵ and this passage helps us to understand more fully how the host is constructing himself as (powerful, elite, canny) writer in the *Cena*. As symposiarch, he alone (together with his side-kick slave-artist Daedalus) knows what his complicated layered dishes contain before they are cut open before the awestruck diners, or what will be revealed to represent the opaque and clever riddles read out in the same chapter (56.7–10). In other words, Trimalchio is just about to unveil another performance

²⁵ Rimell 2002, 193.

of that writerly *artificium* which he has just prefaced as being so ‘difficult’. Later on, he will reveal how he employs a series of professionals, from astrologers to doctors, who will lend him further insight into the closed chapters of the future, as well as into his own intestines (he says comically at 76.11 that a little Greek called Serapa ‘*intestinas meas noverat*’, so that he could almost look at his stomach, as if with X-ray vision, and tell him what he had for dinner the day before).

Continuing in the same vein, at *Sat.59* Trimalchio reads a Latin version from a book and also proffers a side-commentary in Latin while his slaves act out stories from Homer in Greek (*ille canora voce Latine legebat librum* 59.3), providing a hybrid performance that merges (or stamps) Homeric orality with Roman textual authority.²⁶ Niceros’ ghost story at *Sat.61–2* provides a lead-in into the stonemason Habinnas’ entrance at *Sat.65* and Trimalchio’s staging of his own funeral and tomb design at *Sat.71ff.* Niceros tells the tale of his mission, accompanied by a soldier friend, to win the hand of the recently widowed Melissa of Tarentum. When it is still dark in early morning, they stop at some gravestones (*venimus inter monimenta* 62.4), and when Niceros’ friend suddenly strips naked, pisses around his clothes and turns into a wolf, he looks on aghast *tanquam mortuus* (62.6, compare *tamquam mortuum* at 71.3). The clothes themselves, on further inspection, had turned into stone (*lapidea facta sunt* 62.8), and Niceros later discovers that the same wolf-man had butchered Melissa’s flock of sheep that same night. The themes of entering the world of monuments, of petrification, and of live men appearing to be dead, all introduce the funereal games that get going as soon as Habinnas makes his drunken entrance three chapters later. Habinnas, who will be hired to carve Trimalchio’s mausoleum, is fresh from a(nother) funeral feast, and as a key character from Plato’s dialogue *Symposium*²⁷ imported into Petronius’ fiction, he exemplifies the way in which this text (and/or Trimalchio) seems often to want to transform and pin down live

²⁶ Ironically, though, the more ‘fixed’, written Latin version potentially wreaks havoc with canonic Homer (see Trimalchio’s ‘errors’ at *Sat.59*), although we cannot tell whether this is just a literal description of the Greek version being acted out here, or whether it is a rival narrative. See Rimell 2002, 45–48.

²⁷ On the idea that Habinnas is modelled on Alcibiades in Plato’s *Symposium*, and that both the *Cena* and the tale of the Pergamene boy told at 85f. touch on scenes or narratives from the *Symposium*, see Cameron 1969.

(Greek) *sermones* as concrete documents for the assessment of educated (Roman) readers.²⁸

At 71.4, Trimalchio begins his mock funeral by reading out a copy of his will from beginning to end, and then instructs Habinnas to build the tomb (*aedificas monumentum meum* 71.5), which will feature several inscriptions and a representation of a dinner party that looks just like the one in which the guests are participating. They are to imagine themselves petrified as they stand, even ‘random’ events, like the scene of a boy weeping over a broken urn, preserved in stone as if in a photograph. The house Encolpius will shortly describe as a labyrinth (a deadly structure out of which only intrepid heroes emerge alive) has become a house of the dead (Trimalchio compares the two when he says at 71.7, ‘*valde enim falsum est vivo quidem domos cultas esse, non curari eas, ubi diutius nobis habitandum est*’). As Bodel recognises, Trimalchio’s palace was always tomb-like (there is a close association between biographical narratives in Roman art, of the kind Encolpius sees in the entrance hall at *Sat.*29, and the commemoration of the dead).²⁹

In parallel with the *Cena*’s ‘monumentalisation’, then, Trimalchio’s dining room is not only framed by inscriptions but gradually transformed from (what seems to be) a liberal arena in which wine and conversation flows and anything can happen, into a dark prison where monsters, live and edible, lurk around every corner. Indeed, as the host’s fantasies of entombment take shape, the spaces described by Encolpius become more and more narrow and claustrophobic: just after Encolpius comment about the guests being *novi generis labyrintho inclusi*, he and his friends having failed to escape via the front door, they resign themselves to a bath, but contrary to expectations the room is a tiny place, like a cold water cistern (*balneum intravimus, angustum scilicet et cisternae frigidariae simile* 73.2), which echoes horribly with Trimalchio’s songs.

²⁸ This mirrors one of the central shifts in philosophical pedagogy noted by Foucault in his discussion of the relationship between writing and imperial subjectivity: as he puts it, ‘The Platonic culture of the dialogue cede[d] its place to a culture of silence and the art of listening’ (Foucault 1994b, 796). In Petronius, as Wytse Keulen reminds me, things are not quite this simple: whilst Trimalchio is often bent on Romanising Greek literature/references, and connects writing and inscription with (his) Roman imperial power and status, the ‘live’ conversations of the *Cena* also evoke, and owe much to, the written ‘*sermones*’ of Roman satire: see e.g. *Sat.*4–5, where Agamemnon improvises in the style of Lucilius. On the relationship between the *Satyricon* and Roman verse satire, see e.g. Rimell 2005.

²⁹ Bodel 1994.

Writing, confinement and tyranny

But to what extent is this monumentalising impulse to be felt in the text as a whole? To begin with, we can trace the relationship between writing, or writers' performance, and enclosed, inside spaces throughout the surviving parts of the *Satyricon*. In the epigram I began by discussing, the written page *inclusit*, 'shut in', the *ridendas partes* of the live mime, and Trimalchio's speech at *Sat.*56, as we saw, identified writing with inside-bodies and darkened, arcane cavities. The other important writer in our text is the poet Eumolpus (not a figure critics usually discuss in connection with Trimalchio) whose two works performed in the *Satyricon*, the *Troiae Halosis* and the *Bellum Civile*, are both connected in different ways with entrapment and the retreat to inner, intimate spaces. At 115, it appears that Eumolpus is composing the *Bellum Civile* in a flurry of intense scribbling while he is locked inside the master's cabin in the hold of Lichas' ship during the storm, just as the vessel is about to sink. The reminiscence of Horace's *Ars Poetica* 457–9, in which the poet gets caught in a frenzy of composition and plunges into a well or pit, raging like a bear trying to get out of its cage, spotlights further this sense that writerly creativity is associated here with confinement, and also with death: *in vicinia mortis* (115.3), Eumolpus' cabin very nearly becomes his watery tomb, an idea that links this passage with the poet's preface to the *Bellum Civile* at *Sat.*118, in which he claims that the writer's mind must be 'steeped in the vast flood of literature' (*ingenti flumine litterarum inundata* 118.3), and that anyone attempting the huge theme of civil war will 'sink' unless he is 'full of literary learning' (*nisi plenus litteris, sub onere labetur* 118.6).³⁰ Poets these days, he says earlier on in his speech, are 'taking refuge' (*refugerunt* 118.2) from the open spaces of the forum, but are wrong if they presume that they are sneaking away to a calm harbour. As in Persius, who defines Neronian satire as *sermones* scratched out in dark, quasi-chthonic studies, concerned not with life on the street but with the sickness breeding within man's guts and heart, the more enclosed the writing space, the more intense and concentrated the poetic product.³¹ Thus Trimalchio's singing at 73.3 is (further) distorted by being crammed into the kind

³⁰ On the link between Eumolpus' *Bellum Civile* and the shipwreck, see Cucchiarelli 1998, esp.131–34, Connors 1998, 141–46

³¹ *scribimus inclusi*, as Persius puts it at *Sat.*1.13. He'll bury his thoughts in some hole at 1.120 (*hic tamen infodiam*).

of space normally associated in Neronian poetry with silent writing rather than with recitation.³²

Meanwhile, the Trojan horse in Eumolpus' first mini-epic, the *Troiae Halosis*, may be conceived of as another version of the layered, live-dead oral-written dishes presented by Trimalchio in the *Cena*. Like the puzzling labelled *amphorae* at 34 (*pittacia erant affixa cum hoc titulo* 34.6), or the *apophoreta* at 56, Eumolpus' horse comes with an inscription 'composed' by mercurial Sinon (*hoc titulus fero / incisus TH* vv.12–13), which turns out to be another misleading riddle of the kind we saw again and again in the *Cena* (*hoc ad furta...firmabat* vv.13–14). The naïve, optimistic Trojans, who end the night of celebrations drunk and stuffed with food, become a trapped, duped audience analogous to Trimalchio's dinner guests. And like the wild boar cut open to release live birds at *Sat.*40.5, this gift-horse pours forth live fighting men at *TH.v.57* (*effundunt viros*) after Laocoon becomes a failed version of Carpus the carver at *TH.vv.21–2* when his spear gashes the beast's belly but does not carve it open. As I have argued elsewhere, this effusion of Greek soldiers becomes, in the scheme of the *Satyricon*'s metaphors, a quasi-poetic act in itself (as well as marking the beginning of Troy's fall, inspiration for generations of epic poems), mirroring the several instances in which characters in the novel 'eject' verse from mouths or bellies (Eumolpus himself 'pours out' the *Bellum Civile* for example, *effudisset* 124.2, just as Agamemnon describes the writer's physical outpouring of words onto his *pagina* at 5.v.22, another instance in the *Satyricon* which seems to fuse oral performance and the 'private' practice of writing).³³ Eumolpus also plays the role of writer constructed by Trimalchio in the *Cena* in that he commands the skill to 'open up' the gallery painting in/with this poem (*itaque conabor opus versibus pandere* 89.1)³⁴ just as Trimalchio, as we've seen, has privileged knowledge of the insides of his culinary creations. Both are verbally canny Sinon figures, while Eumolpus also plays

³² We might also tentatively note that Philomela, one of the most important writer figures in ancient myth who appears in a different incarnation at *Sat.*140 but nevertheless inevitably carries with her connotations of the Tereus myth, also famously writes in a 'prison', *clausa silvis*, as Ovid puts it in *Met.*6.546.

³³ See Rimell 2002, 60–76.

³⁴ This line, as critics have noted, echoes *Aen.*2.27 (*panduntur portae*) and 2.234 (*dividimus muros et moenia pandimus urbis*), metaphorically replaying the act of both drawing the horse inside the city walls and opening it up for an audience.

Aeneas as Odyssean storyteller in *Aeneid* 2: they are oral performers as well as crafty writers/readers.

Finally, Eumolpus' other performance, not a poem this time but the tale of the Widow of Ephesus, told on board Lichas' ship, could also be seen to encompass similar themes, but to different effect. The central scene of the story shows the woman being seduced by the soldier inside the closed tomb of her dead husband: the soldier's speech is an overtly literary and poetic performance, mingling elegiac persuasion with snippets from Anna's speech to Dido in *Aeneid* 4. Both the performance of poetry in a closed, dark, underworld-like vault, and the disturbing, carnivalesque enfolding of death with life in the husband's tomb, connect this episode with the *Cena* and with Eumolpus' composition of the *Bellum Civile*. As in the ghost story that precludes Trimalchio's fake funeral, we go again *inter monumenta* (111.6), although the tale is in many ways a *reversal* of the move towards monumentalisation in the *Cena*: in defiance of the *imperator provinciae*, just as the dinner guests gabble freely in the absence of their 'tyrant', the widow and the soldier resist the inevitability of death so that the tomb now becomes a site of the oral pleasures of recitation, eating and kissing, of creative re-birth.

As in the *Cena*, then, orality comes to be framed in this tale as a defiance of imperial authority. Indeed, we might say that, throughout our text, writing is strongly associated with *Roman* literature and with quasi-imperial power, or elite status in general. We first encounter the idea that written Latin literature rises above and beyond Greek (oral) performance in Agamemnon's didactic ditty at *Sat.*5, where he advises the pupil first to absorb Greek poetry, then to dedicate himself to rhetorical training, and finally, as a mature orator, to immerse himself in *Roman* writers, withdraw from the courts, and let his *pages* run free, composing verse in secret (*furtiva*) about feasts and wars.³⁵ We have already seen how being a writer and reader is an important aspect of Trimalchio's self-conception as elite Roman and 'emperor' of his

³⁵ We might be tempted to compare this passage to Apuleius' prologue, where, as Keulen discusses in this volume, the speaker's concern with rhetoric is packaged in terms of a cultural clash between Greece and Rome, where Greece stands for the enchanting rhetoric of poetry, and Rome for the rhetorical and literary pursuits of Latin. In both texts, the novel's hybridity, discussed here in terms of its constant straddling of oral and written forms of representation, finds parallel expression in the rehearsal of a transition from Greece to Rome. One might argue that Apuleius' *Met*, more than the *Satyricon*, seems to associate (its own) pleasures with an orality that is in turn more Greek than Roman.

own dominion (especially at *Sat.*59, when he reads the Latin from a book whilst slaves act the story in Greek). Writing also marks the social ascent of the freedmen guests: at *Sat.*38.10, for example, Encolpius' neighbour points out that the man at the bottom of the end couch has a fine opinion of himself and so therefore (*itaque*) has erected a notice next to his cottage declaring that it will be up for rent from the first of July, 'its owner having purchased a house'. Writing indicates ownership, wealth and status (as in *Sat.*31, where two dishes are engraved with Trimalchio's name and their weight in silver), and it is a skill that counts even when discussion turns to the uselessness and pomposity of higher education more generally (Hermeros says at 58.7, '*non didici geometrias, critica et alogas menias, sed lapidarias litteras scio*'! 'No, I never learnt your geometries, criticism, non-logics, Wraths, but I know my block capitals').³⁶ The poet Eumolpus, meanwhile, uses writing (metaphorically, and almost literally) to enslave and to mark what is conceived, albeit in 'make-believe', as his superior status: the first time we see him using his writer's ink is on Lichas' ship, when he tattoos Encolpius, Ascyrtos and Giton's foreheads with large letters that will appear to be the branding marks found on slaves ('*sequar ego frontes notans inscriptione sollerti, ut videamini stigmatate esse puniti*' 103.2). As he scratches out his *epigramma*, he works *liberali manu* (103.5), in contrast to the oppressed bodies of his companions. Similarly, in the mime enacted on the journey by foot to Croton, Eumolpus asks to be appointed 'master', while the others take an oath to obey him, and 'to endure bondage, flogging, death by the sword, or anything else that Eumolpus ordered' (117.5). In the *Satyricon* writing, and writers, frequently make victims of their subjects.

Living bodies, dead authors

On one hand, then, the associations of writing in the *Satyricon* seem to echo Foucault's and Dupont's analyses, which link a loss of *libertas* in the early empire with the rise of the monumental text, once political oratory, the traditional Republican arena for the acquisition of glory, is lost.³⁷ The Augustan poets Ovid and Horace,³⁸ in particular, trigger a new focus in Latin literature

³⁶ See also, again, Horsfall 1989, esp 202–203.

³⁷ Dupont 1997, Foucault 1994a, 711; also see summary of Foucault 1994a in Miller 2003, 220–1.

³⁸ In Horace, see especially *Odes* 3.30.1, *exegi monumentum aere perennius...*

on (the paradoxes) of poetic/imperial monumentality which culminates in Pliny, Statius and Martial – the latter managing to carve out an entire career on the basis of an overtly written genre originally created for funerary monuments that beg to be read aloud. Thus at Ovid *Met.* 15.807–15, the future of Rome is secure because, like Augustus' *Res Gestae*, it has been etched into bronze. As the imperial writer loses his 'presence' as performer, he becomes mute, a 'dead author' who transcends his obvious, bodily mortality by various degrees of association with both the monumental text, and with the potentially infinite oral circulation of his poetry and poetic reputation (he lives on not only in material books but, as Ennius writes in the much echoed phrase, *per ora virum*, 'in/on the mouths of men'). As Miller puts it, commenting on and summarising Foucault, what we see especially in the philosophers of the early empire, but also perhaps even more conspicuously in Ovidian and post-Ovidian literature, is 'a kind of scripting or writing of the self', the goal of which is 'the establishment of *inner* freedom'.³⁹ For Foucault, as Miller stresses even further, this discourse of composed interiority is core to the shaping of a distinctive aristocratic, imperial subjectivity, helping to sculpt a self 'that is able to exist as a detached object, separate from the sphere of public life and yet continuing to function within it', an absent-present self that is 'textual and intertextual rather than natural'.⁴⁰

It might not come as a surprise, then, that (already-)dead authors and bookish bodies are much in evidence in the *Satyricon*: In the *Cena*, of course, Trimalchio paradoxically cheats death by rehearsing his funeral. He is obsessed with his own bodily processes, as if he were a soothsayer inspecting his own entrails (at *Sat.* 47, moreover, a relaxed, open attitude towards one's bowels seems to represent the essence of freedom in the face of oppressive authority: *hoc solum vetare ne Iovis potest*. / 'the one thing Jupiter himself cannot forbid (is that we should have relief)', 47.4). Yet at the same time he constructs himself as a non-body, a corpse that has already been transformed into image, inscription, pure reputation to be scratched into the history books. Within the dinner party, skilled storyteller Niceros describes himself in the graveyard scene as 'a mere ghost' (*in larvam intravi, paene animam ebullivi*', 62.10, cf. '*qui mori timore nisi ego?*' 62.9): the more 'dead with terror' the narrator says he was, the more captivating the tale. Eumolpus, meanwhile, as Connors suggests, 'enters the narrative and

³⁹ Miller 2003, 220, on Foucault 1994a and b. My italics.

⁴⁰ Miller 2003, 221, 224.

begins his acquaintance with Encolpius as if he were being read like a poetry book': at 83.7, he poses self-consciously as a writer and poet, almost as if it were stamped on his forehead – the phrase *ut facile appareret eum <ex> hac nota litteratorum esse* suggests precisely this, *nota* indicating a written mark, and *litteratus* meaning both learned and 'marked on the forehead'.⁴¹ Similarly, on Lichas's ship Eumolpus turns the tables and writes directly onto the bodies of Encolpius, Ascyltos and Giton, turning them into slaves and living texts in a larger improvised narrative: at *Sat.*109, when the mini-civil war has blown over, he composes a little elegy satirising the bald heads of his companions, in which they are compared to smooth bronzes (*at nunc levior aere* v.11). The loss of their hair (itself, the poem hints, both attached to the living body and in fact 'dead' apart from its soft roots) shall remind them that they themselves are always already half-dead, wretched bodies that have been appropriated by the poet as material texts (*ut mortem citius venire credas, / scito iam capitibus perisse partem* vv.14–15).

Yet this is an instance where the notion that the scripted body cultivates a space for *libertas* fades completely (the 'slaves', like *elegiac puellae*, are not in control of their writtenness, but give themselves passively to the poet) – that is, when that body is scripted by someone else. But the near-death in shipwreck provides Encolpius with an opportunity to play the writer himself (here, the Roman epigrammatist) and fantasize about his own burial in a sort of romanticised flash-back to the end of the dinner party: he tells Giton, 'Whatever happens to us, at least for a long while a common death will carry us along or if the sea has pity and will cast us up on the same shore, some one may come by and put stones over us out of ordinary human kindness, or the last work of the waves even in their wrath will be to cover us with the unconscious sand.' He adds, 'I submitted thus to a final bond, and then waited, like a man dressed for his death bed [*veluti lecto funebri aptatus*], for an end that had lost its bitterness'. (114.12). At *Sat.*127, in the scene in which he proves immune to the oral/aural pleasures of Circe's kisses and voice, which is reported to be as enchanting as that of the Sirens, the two lovers are captured in the text as written objects, *compositi*, 'composed' on the grass of the meadow. Circe has already predicted that she and Polyaeus will first and foremost hit it off as textual signifiers ('when these two names meet, there are always fireworks' 127.7), and Chrysis has described Encolpius as perfectly *compositus*, with not a foot (real or metrical) out of place, at

⁴¹ See Connors 1998, 63.

126.2. When Encolpius discovers he is impotent, he feels that part of his body is already dead and buried (*funerata est illa pars corporis, qua quondam Achilles eram* 129.1). In the next part of the narrative in our fragmented text, our narrator and Circe have jettisoned all physical contact and communicate by letter, with Circe playing the ‘abandoned’ Ovidian heroine, Chrysis in role as the novel’s equivalent of Nape in *Amores* 1.11 and 1.12, and Encolpius himself as the failed *miles amator* in the mould of *Amores* 3.7: in her missive, which Encolpius reads silently, Circe declares him ‘as good as dead’ (*medius [fidius] iam peristi* 129.7) and says that if the same mortal chill should begin to affect his other limbs, he might as well ‘send for the funeral trumpeters’ (*quod si idem frigus genua manusque temptaverit tuas, licet ad tubicines mittas* 129.7). The Circe episode in the *Satyricon* may be said to predict or inspire the postmodern treatment of the Sirens in the 20th century by Joyce and Kafka: while Petronius reduces *polyaenos* Encolpius’ relationship with Siren-like Circe to an epistolary exchange, in Kafka, the Sirens are silent – his posthumous work is entitled *Das Schweigen der Sirenen*, reflecting a society which, contrary to the Platonic model, now privileges the written over the spoken word (it’s now writing not singing which constantly entices and endangers men). In *Ulysses*, Joyce combines classical and modern ideas, making his Sirens exercise influence both through their voices and through writing (like Petronius’ Circe, Martha writes letters).⁴²

As Rosenmeyer reminds us, ‘letters exemplify and illustrate a whole culture of writing in the novel,’⁴³ and they make emphatic the absence or ‘death’ of the imperial author even while they attempt desperately to conjure presence and enchant with images of union and flesh. Transcending the written word, the deadness of representation, is always a (the?) means for a text to seduce, as we see also, for example, in Apuleius, where sexy women and stories are continually associated with orality, with honeyed tongues and smooching lips, or in Achilles Tatius, where at 1.6.6 looking at Leucippe distracts Clitophon from the book he is reading, as there is ultimately no contest between the actual sight of a alluring woman and the seductiveness

⁴² See further discussion in Erzgräber 2002.

⁴³ Rosenmeyer 2001, 136. At 168, her discussion of the Sophistic Greek novel could well apply also to the Roman: ‘the novel’s enjoyment of the textuality of the letter is connected with the overall fascination with intertextuality and allusiveness, and its dialogues with other genres and time periods.’

of a written account, despite the point this passage clearly makes about their analogousness.⁴⁴

Finally, the text we have ends with the gory scene of Eumolpus' self-sacrifice to the legacy hunters of Croton, an illiterate city in which orality and oral pleasures (together with the magic songs of various witch figures)⁴⁵ are given free rein and are totally out of control. Although these final scenes are frustratingly elliptical due to the state of our text, it is clear that the *Satyricon's* poet figure, already a walking book who turns his friends into fellow, subordinate texts, has completely distanced himself from his fleshy body, which is itself utterly material, the equivalent of a pile of cash. Like the *Cena*, this episode will also end, it seems, with a (fake?) funeral (*Gorgias paratus erat exsequi...* 141.5). Whether or not, in the full version of the story, this turned out to be a clever trick or trap, it is certainly reminiscent of, and potentially a sardonic take on, the (especially) Ovidian ambition to transcend the physical body and live instead 'on/in the mouths of men'. Eumolpus can think of many a *exemplum* for the act of cannibalism, and doubtless wants to make history and be remembered in the same way (141.9–11).

The *Satyricon* might be said, then, to play an important role in imagining the 'retreat into oneself' and textual self-fashioning that seems to define the imperial writing career and perhaps finds its fullest expression, as Miller suggests, in Ovid's exile poetry.⁴⁶ There are many parallels in this regard to be drawn with the narrator's 'Book-like self' in Apuleius, as Graverini explores in a recent article.⁴⁷ Yet the *Satyricon*, we might argue, also displays this characteristic (self-)monumentalising ambition on the verge of collapse, exposing, even more than Ovid, the charged and deeply uncomfortable, contradictory opposition between textual materiality and the transcendent immateriality of poetic voice. Perhaps the best illustration of this is Eumolpus' epic *tour de force*, the *Bellum Civile*, to which I want to turn in the final part of this paper.

⁴⁴ Cf. Morales 2004, 80: 'it may be that *logoi erotikoi* encourage desire, but it is also evident that desire disrupts reading and storytelling.'

⁴⁵ Note especially Oenoe's poem at 134, in which *tantum dicta valent* (v.11).

⁴⁶ Miller 2003, 210–236.

⁴⁷ Graverini forthcoming.

Crumbling tombs

For the third or fourth time in this novel, the *Bellum Civile* takes us ‘among the tombs’ (*inter tumulos* v.137). This time, however, the entire globe is depressed by graves (*et quasi non posset tot tellus ferre sepulchra* / ‘and it was as though the whole earth could not bear the burden of so many tombs’ v.65). The poem depicts Rome’s obsessive, hubristic desire to build and carve an empire in and onto stone, and the fatal consequences of that ambition. At lines 80ff, *Fors* (Chance) which like the embodiment of oral storytelling, *Fama*, is the essence of random mutation and the arch enemy of monumental constancy, is asked by Dis whether she feels her spirit crushed under Rome’s weight: ‘do you not feel that you can’t raise up any higher a mass that is doomed to fall?’ (v.83) Civil war (poetry), the revenge of such chthonic, metamorphic energies, is seen to be the direct result of an unstoppable imperialistic hunger for ‘homes raised to the stars, *ad sidera*’ (v.87),⁴⁸ the gouging of the earth’s surface to lay foundations, and the hollowing out of mountains for stone to build and inscribe (vv.91–3). It is precisely this ‘unnatural’ piercing of the earth which arouses the hellish demons of civil war, and offers the most exciting challenge for the contemporary poet, as Eumolpus implies. Petronius draws much from Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15 (our text ends, as Ovid’s final book begins, at Croton), which famously makes a direct parallel between imperial and poetic power in monumental text-making: The use of *molis* in the first line of *Met.*15, *quaeritur interea qui tantae pondera molis / sustineat*, is echoed by *BC.* 83 (*ulterius extollere molem*). But crucially, whereas at the beginning of *Met.*15, the capricious forces associated with oral poetry are vital in building and sustaining Rome’s monumental project, *tantae pondera molis* (it is *Fama* who chooses Numa to bear the ‘great burden’ of Rome’s future at 15.3–4), in Eumolpus’ poem they are to be its downfall, and *molis* rouses disturbing echoes of the Trojan horse and the self-destruction at the heart of the Roman historical imagination (see *Aeneid* 2.32, 185, where *molis* is used of the Trojan horse). Winged Fortune now hates all the ‘gifts’ she has made to ‘towering Rome’ (*Romanis arcibus BC.*107), declaring ‘The god that raised up those high palaces shall also destroy them’ (*destruet istas / idem, qui posuit, moles deus* vv.108–9). Her close cousin, winged *Fama*, attacks the ‘lofty top of the Palatine hill’ (*sum-*

⁴⁸ As Connors points out (1998, 118), the Roman architectural assault on the heavens is set in parallel here to the mythical aggression of the giants against Olympus.

mique petit iuga celsa Palati v.211), and in the chaos personified throughout the poem by the forces of chance, Romans flee their homes ‘at a rumour’s breath’ (*rumoris sonitu* v.225).

In the *Bellum Civile*, then, we see Trimalchio’s (and Eumolpus’) monumentalising imagination take more victims, yet also at the same time itself crack and founder under its own ponderous momentum. Trimalchio’s dinner guests, like their greedy host who boasts of Corinthian bronze (cf. *BC.9*), are now the crowd of conquering Romans ‘drowned in drink’ (*BC.31*), doomed to suicidal civil war. As in the scenes at Croton which follow (Eumolpus’ epic is recited on the road there), violent orality dominates, in direct and aggressive competition with the oppressive and regulating forces of writing: the omens of civil war are strange, echoing voices (*insolitae voces flamma sonuere sequenti* / ‘weird voices sounded followed by the flashing of fire’ *BC.180*). And the goddess *Furor*, roused when the hall of Erebus gapes open at line 254, is immediately reminiscent of the performing orator in Agamemnon’s poem at *Sat.5*, before he retires from the forum to write Roman epic. Compare the two passages:

*quas inter Furor, abruptis ceu liber habenis,
sanguineum late tollit caput oraque mille
vulneribus confossa cruenta casside velat;*
BC.258–260.

And among them Madness, a horse let loose from broken reins,
tosses up her bloody head and covers her face, scarred
by a thousand wounds, with a gore-stained shield.

*mox et Socratico plenus grege mittat habenas
liber et ingentis quatiat Demosthenis arma.*
Sat.5.vv.13–14

Then, full of Socratic learning, let him loosen the reins,
and shake the arms of great Demosthenes like a free man.

Meanwhile *Furor*’s wounds are also the defining feature of the orator parodied, it seems, by Agamemnon at *Sat.1.1* (*haec vulnera pro libertate publica excepi* / ‘These scars I earned in the struggle for popular rights’). Also

compare Discordia, who ‘waves a blood-red torch in her shaking hand’ (*tremula quatiebat lampada dextra* v.277) with *ingentis quatiat Demosthenis arma* (*Sat.*5, above). While in *Sat.*5, Agamemnon advocates the taming and refinement of rhetorical talent as developed in the schools (the student must later ‘transform his taste’ and withdraw from the courts to write poetry), in the *Bellum Civile* this raw rhetorical skill, which Agamemnon associates with Greek orators, is let loose and allowed to destroy the world in the form of *Furor* herself. And while the *Bellum Civile* is on one hand just the kind of poem about war ‘recorded in fierce chant’ which will according to Agamemnon be the product of this ‘transformed taste’ (it comes pouring from Eumolpus, *effudisset* 124.2, just as Agamemnon envisages, *defundes pectore verba*, 5 v.22), on the other it describes and enacts the more Greekish, performed voices that belong to an ‘earlier’ stage of education. It is both a polished, written poem and an improvised performance which prepares characters and readers for the chaos that is Croton. Likewise, it would be more accurate to say that rather than simply liquefying all that once seemed solid, secure and everlasting, and associating orality with flux, the capricious forces of civil war alternately loosen and paralyze the landscape, so that Caesar’s troops face melting snows and new-born rivers which then stiffen, breaking the legs of men and horses (*et vincta fluctus stupuere ruina, / et paulo ante lues iam concidenda iacebat* / ‘and the waves stopped numb, the floods enchained, and the water that ran a moment before now solidified, hard enough to cut’ vv.191–2). Lines 199–200 capture the disturbing paradox of civil war, which confounds even the categories of representation. Caesar’s troops are overwhelmed by a shower of hard ice that at the same time is felt as a liquid wave of water:

*ipsae iam nubes ruptae super arma cadebant,
et concreta gelu ponti velut unda ruebat.*

Now the clouds themselves burst and fell upon the soldiers,
and a mass of ice engulfed them like a sea-wave.

Meanwhile, writing in the *Satyricon* often looks unstable and betrays its monumental fixity as a weak illusion, proving ultimately to be as metamorphic, fluid, and untouchable as disembodied voices: the *Bellum Civile* itself is unfinished (118.6 – although this is of course a familiar trope) and has

apparently been written in a rough notebook, *membrana*, on board the ship at *Sat.* 115.2; at *Sat.* 103, Eumolpus' enslaving inscriptions on the bodies of his friends are easily erased with a wet sponge, blotting out their every feature (*omnia lineamenta confudit* 108.2), and neither argument nor brute force on the part of the master poet can salvage the text, or the situation (at this point the scenes on board ship descend into 'civil war', a fitting prelude to the collapse of categories and concrete structures described and encapsulated in Eumolpus' *Bellum Civile*). More generally, such a visceral text, with its all-penetrating images and metaphors of food, ingestion, oral outpourings, marks corporeality in such a way and to such an extent as to make it indivisible from the non-material. The written in the *Satyricon* seems to encompass, become and transcend the oral, and vice versa: the familiar Ennian image of surviving 'in/on the mouths of men', which entails that the poet's voice be released from the fetters of corporeal existence, as one might argue it is, potentially at least, at the end of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is made a mockery of and taken literally. Now fleshy texts (*corpora*) are eaten, for example in the *Cena*, where all the dishes are to be read and interpreted like, or are labelled with, written puzzles, so that the move from textuality to orality is construed as a re-immersion into rather than escape from corporeality and mortality. This is also precisely what happens at the end of the *Satyricon* as we have it, where Eumolpus debases philosophical and poetic discourses on the soul's ability to survive the death of the body: instead of the soul outliving the body, cannibalism ensures that the body can 'survive' in the soul's absence by being assimilated into the flesh of the legacy hunters (he instructs them to eat his body as heartily as they damned his soul: *sed quibus animis devoverint spiritum meum, eisdem etiam corpus consumant*. 141.4)

What we see in the *Satyricon*, then, is an extreme and, in Bakhtinian terms, quintessentially novelistic elaboration of the Ovidian paradox which collapses monumental and fleshy text, authorial/textual body and disembodied song. We can situate the *Satyricon* very clearly in the context of late- and post-Augustan deconstructions of imperial monumentality, and this in part is what makes it such a distinctively Roman novel. I have argued that the novelistic polyphony sustained by the continual juxtaposition, clash and even fusion of oral and written voices explodes as socio-cultural crisis in the poetics of civil war. In the *Bellum Civile*, the gossiping voices that chattered in Trimalchio's dining room in the host's absence, or the lustful persuasion and oral pleasures of the defiant entombed couple in the widow of Ephesus tale,

become the screaming, iconoclastic blood-cries of the Furies, who wage war on the arrogant monumentalising impetus we saw dramatised in the *Cena*. As I have suggested, there are some hints that the devilish, counter-cultural forces that rouse civil war in Eumolpus' poem hark back to some idea of pre-imperial, Greek, oratorical freedom, or even to the submerged oral origins of the novel itself. But just as ideas of writerly freedom are chained with contradiction in the *Satyricon*, inseparable from the shadow of constraint and slavery, so civil war in this text seems to regurgitate 'Greek' orality, and novelistic liberality more generally, as destructive, vicious, unforgiving, cannibalistic. Nostalgia for some Republican, free-speaking, more authentic past comes soiled, not for the first time in imperial Latin literature, with the related demons of civil strife and Troy's fall. As we have seen, this is the only ancient novel in which, despite appearances, as Encolpius discovers at *Sat.*128, Circe's siren-song proves to be such an unpleasant turn-off. Despite its greedy incorporation of ancient literature, and of the Greek novel especially, the *Satyricon*'s voices remain jarring, provocative and new, its written *carmina* worlds apart from the apparently soothing, seductive storytelling of an Achilles Tatius, Chariton, or Apuleius.

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