

## ENCOLPIUS AT THE *CENA*<sup>1</sup>

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PETRONIUS WROTE the *Satyricon* in the form of the recollections of a first-person narrator looking back at and reconstructing the adventures and encounters of his own past life. In the account of Trimalchio's banquet this act of recollection and reconstruction is made explicit in a number of places, as for example when the narrator says of the guest-gifts *sexcenta huiusmodi fuerunt quae iam exciderunt memoriae meae* ("there were hundreds of things of this sort that have now slipped my memory" 56.10) or of the savouries *insecutae sunt mattee quarum etiam recordatio me si qua est dicenti fides offendit* ("savouries followed; even their memory—if I'm to be believed when I tell the story—disgusts me" 65.1).<sup>2</sup> Now where we have, as we clearly do here, a narrator who is set at some temporal distance from the events which he relates, we must expect to find that we are dealing not only with two distinct persons but also with two rather different persons: the narrator as he is at the time of the narration and the narrator—or perhaps protagonist would be a better term—as he was at the time of the events narrated. The narrator, looking back in time and freed from the immediacy of contact with things and people, will have a different perspective and a different set of attitudes from the protagonist embroiled in, and reacting to, encounters and events as they occur.

In a previous article I attempted to show that a carefully worked contrast between Encolpius as the sophisticated and dispassionate narrator and Encolpius as the naive and chaotic protagonist is in fact central to Petronius' whole handling of the *Satyricon*.<sup>3</sup> I tried to demonstrate how the presence of the sophisticated narrator is evident not in any explicit commentary on the antics of his younger self, but in the delicate and ironic ordering of the narrative in such a way as to bring out his own former absurdity and pretentiousness. In my article I was concerned in particular with the contrast between narrator and protagonist as seen in the context of the verse passages, many of which (e.g., 79.8, 135.8, 136.6, 139.2), I argued, represent the young Encolpius' poetic musings at the time, humorously re-created by his older self, the narrator, and set in

<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was read at the 1974 meeting of the Classical Association of Canada.

<sup>2</sup>See also 28.1 *longum erat singula excipere*, 30.3 *si bene memini*, 70.8 *pudet referre quae secuntur*.

<sup>3</sup>"Some Observations on the Narrative Technique of Petronius," *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 42–61.

circumstances which often give them the lie for the very purpose of exposing—though without malice—the fantasies and self-deceits of a mediocre literary imagination. In a similar vein, I shall here examine the contrast between narrator and protagonist in the narrative of Trimalchio's banquet. My aim will be to demonstrate how Petronius with great subtlety and effectiveness creates for us a narrator who, in addition to drawing his vivid portrait of Trimalchio and his environment, recaptures and records, with a certain detached and unobtrusive irony, his own immediate reactions to his erstwhile host and his own and his associates' behaviour on the occasion of the banquet.

The first question that must be raised concerns the few explicit judgements that are passed, in the course of the narrative, on Trimalchio, his wife, his friends, and his servants and the somewhat more frequent (though still by no means common) use of pejorative or ironic language in the account of events and the descriptions of things and people.<sup>4</sup> To take a specific example of the use of evaluative language, the narrative at one point says of Trimalchio's singing (35.6): *atque ipse etiam taeterrima voce de Laserpiciario mimo canticum extorsit* ("Trimalchio himself ground out a tune from the musical comedy 'Assafoetida' in a most hideous voice," Loeb. trans.). This not only describes what Trimalchio does; it condemns it. But how should such passages be read? Do they represent the considered opinions of a narrator looking back at, and passing dispassionate and to the best of his ability objective judgement on, a man and his society encountered long ago? Or do they rather reflect the impromptu thoughts and the subjective and highly individual reactions of a participant at the time of the events described? The question is an important one, for it is only by disentangling the narrator from the protagonist in such passages that we will be able to recapture with any precision the actual reactions and behaviour of Encolpius at the time and his subsequent feelings as narrator about the whole episode and its actors (himself included). In what follows I shall suggest that we should for the most part interpret the explicit comments and the implicit criticism in the narrative primarily as immediate reactions of Encolpius the protagonist, echoed perhaps and endorsed by Encolpius the narrator, but not originating as the latter's judgements and evaluations. Though not always

<sup>4</sup>It is interesting to note that no unambiguously favourable judgement is passed on Trimalchio or any member of his circle with the exception of a single aside concerning one of the freedmen guests, an undertaker (78.6): . . . *libitinarii illius qui inter hos honestissimus erat*. In my opinion, the relative clause, which is totally irrelevant to the context (the undertaker's slave sounds his trumpet so vigorously that he rouses the whole neighbourhood and brings in the watch, thereby ending the banquet), should be deleted as an explanatory gloss harking back to an earlier mention of the *libitinarius* in the description of the company by Encolpius' neighbour at table (38.14): *et quam honestam negotiationem exercuit . . . libitinarius fuit*.

apparent in any single example, there are in fact good—and indeed objective—reasons for reading most of the normative passages in this way.

In the first place, the context in some instances makes it certain that the comments reflect the reactions of the protagonist at the time. Consider, for example, the following (50.2 f.): Trimalchio has boasted *solus sum qui vera Corinthea habeam* ("I am the sole owner of genuine Corinthian plate"); the narrative continues: *expectabam ut pro reliqua insolentia diceret sibi vasa Corintho afferri* ("I thought he would declare with his usual effrontery that he had cups imported direct from Corinth," Loeb. trans.). Here we can be certain that the judgement on Trimalchio's "effrontery" (*pro reliqua insolentia*) was made by Encolpius at the time since it is vouched for as part of his thinking then and there (*expectabam . . .*).

Secondly, certain of the judgements are either faulty or in some way out of place. The narrative gives them the lie or else somehow undercuts or invalidates them. They cannot therefore originate with the narrator, unless we impute to him a blindness of vision that his formidable powers of reconstruction and his handling of the narrative as a whole in no way warrant. They issue, then, from the all too fallible protagonist, and are merely echoed by the narrator, largely for ironic reasons. To give some examples, Encolpius and his fellow guests are dismayed at the *insolentia ebriorum* ("the drunken effrontery" 70.6) of the battling water-carriers; but in fact the pair are only serving yet another of the banquet's staged courses and are in reality neither drunk nor insolent. Again, when Encolpius and Ascyltus rejoin the party at the bath, we read (73.2): *ac ne sic quidem putidissimam eius iactationem licuit effugere* ("even there we were not allowed to escape his filthy bragging," Loeb trans.). Yet the "filthy bragging" turns out to be no more than Trimalchio's possibly rude, but scarcely boastful, comment that he prefers to bathe "without a crowd" and the statement that his bathroom stands on the site of a bakery: *nam nihil melius esse dicebat quam sine turba lavari, et eo ipso loco aliquando pistrinum fuisse*.

The third, and most compelling, reason for construing the judgements as by and large the reactions of the protagonist at the time, repeated by the narrator not so much to define Trimalchio and his circle as to characterize Encolpius and his, is their limitation and manifest bias. Whereas the narrator by description and the reconstruction of conversation and monologue draws Trimalchio on the broadest possible canvas, the evaluative comments are restricted to a much narrower field. Almost exclusively they are aesthetic, not moral, and what they concentrate on is the *tastelessness* of Trimalchio, his household, and his friends. Even here there is yet a further narrowing. Almost obsessively, judgement focuses

on the singing poured out relentlessly and incongruously by the staff in the performance of its duties and taken up from time to time by the host himself, his guests, and even by Habinnas' slave boy. It is the performance of this last that draws what is perhaps the harshest—and is certainly the heaviest—condemnation of the whole episode (68.5):

*Nullus sonus umquam acidior percussit aures meas; nam praeter errantis barbariae aut adiectum aut deminutum clamorem immiscebat Atellanicos versus, ut tunc primum me etiam Vergilius offenderit.*

No more cutting sound ever pierced my eardrums. Apart from his barbarous meandering up and down the scale, he mixed in Atellan verses, so that Vergil actually grated on me for the first time in my life.<sup>5</sup>

Why this limitation in the scope of the evaluative language? There are, after all, many aspects of Trimalchio's life and setting that would seem to call for judgement, for example the brutal treatment, in both word and deed, that Trimalchio metes out to Fortunata (74 ff.), and the hollowness of Trimalchio's relationships that his behaviour reveals. The answer is surely that the narrator, for whatever reason, is not himself interested in returning an *explicit* verdict on *any* aspect of Trimalchio's life and character. His method is rather to exhibit the *facts*, and this he does largely by the structuring of his narrative and in particular by ironic contrasts and juxtapositions. For example, Trimalchio's outburst against his wife is preceded, though not quite immediately, by his maudlin commissioning of a funeral monument from Habinnas on which a sentimentalized Fortunata is to appear with dove and puppy (71.11). What we make of this contrast is ours to decide. Encolpius the narrator, having provided the data, tells us no more. Where he does record opinions and judgements, it is to reconstruct the one-sided reactions that his former self, a man of self-conscious aesthetic sensibility but more or less blind to moral considerations, experienced under the sustained barrage of Trimalchio's vulgarity. For the reader, the narrator strikes a delicate balance in the reconstruction of these reactions and *ad hoc* judgements. We see their limitations and we are aware of the inadequacy in Encolpius the protagonist that underlies them, but at the same time we sympathize at the outrage felt at the assault on such genuine good taste as he has and especially at the violence done to the most vulnerable of the senses. That Encolpius the protagonist should react most vigorously to offences against his hearing is understandable, and Encolpius the narrator is surely correct in emphasizing these agonized inner protests in his reconstruction of the protagonist's feelings at the time.

Finally, one should note an element of pique, even of vindictiveness, in many of the comments, and also the fact that apart from Trimalchio

<sup>5</sup>J. P. Sullivan's translation (Harmondsworth 1965).

they are aimed in particular at certain persons against whom, the narrative reveals, Encolpius might well have felt an immediate animosity. A particular target, for example, is Daedalus the illusionist chef. In no fewer than four passages this ephemeral figure, or his works, is the butt of heavily pejorative or ironic language.<sup>6</sup> The narrative reveals, though, that the condemnation of Daedalus results not from an objective and dispassionate assessment made in retrospect but from the affronted Encolpius' personal and petulant reactions at the time. For not only does Daedalus, "reeking of pickles and sauce," dare to crowd Encolpius on his couch and to proffer a rendering of "Ephesus the tragedian" (70.12 f.), but he is also the cause, albeit the innocent cause, of Encolpius' making yet another of his foolish and embarrassing mistakes, namely the assertion, voiced openly to Agamemnon and vouched for by past experience, that the chef's illusory masterpiece is made of wax or clay, when in fact, as Trimalchio crushingly explains, it is made of pork (69.7–70.1). Though the point is never made explicit, much of Encolpius' hostility towards Daedalus surely stems from spite and pique at his own discomfiture. This petulant and unjustified resentment is, of course, the reaction of Encolpius the protagonist, and it is his biased strictures and sarcasm that Encolpius the narrator is reproducing in his narrative.

It is noticeable that the pejorative language becomes more heavily censorious and more frequent the further the banquet progresses. At the outset "wonder" (*admiratio*) is the predominant reaction of Encolpius and his companions, and it is the novelty and lavishness of things—in a word, the *lautitia*e—that most impinges on them, while as if to underscore their interest the narrative emphasizes the acts of observing and questioning.<sup>7</sup> But the mood changes; boredom, disgust, and condemnation gradually take the place of interest and delighted amazement, until the point is reached at which Encolpius can stomach no more (78.5): *ibat res ad summam nauseam* ("things were now getting totally revolting").<sup>8</sup> In all

<sup>6</sup>69.7, 70.7, 70.12 f., 74.5. Incidentally, the sarcastic use of *doctissimo* in 74.5 surely alludes as much to the chef's aesthetic pretensions revealed in his rendering of "Ephesus the tragedian" (70.13) as it does to his professional virtuosity. In their translations, both Sullivan ("that very skilful chef") and Arrowsmith ("that culinary genius") preclude this possibility.

<sup>7</sup>Below are cited the relevant occurrences of *admiratio*, *lautitia*e, *novitas*, and their equivalents, together with expressions of observing and questioning. Though there is, of course, no absolute break-off point, the extent to which occurrences taper off, especially in the last third of the *Cena* after the initial interest in the newly arrived Habinnas, is quite noticeable: 27.2, 27.3, 27.4, 28.6, 29.1, 29.2, 29.7–9, 30.1, 30.5, 31.8, 32.1, 33.2, 34.8, 35.1, 36.2, 3, 7, 36.4, 37.1, 41.2, 49.2, 60.1, 60.2, 63.1, 64.1, 65.6, 68.1, 70.6, 70.7, 73.5, 78.5. In the final references, one detects a note of sarcasm in the use of *lautitias* at 70.7, of weariness in its perfunctory application at 73.5, and of both in the use of the phrase *novum acroama* to describe the trumpeters bidden to enliven the disintegrating party at 78.5.

<sup>8</sup>Prior to ch. 54 the adverse comment is relatively free of malice and acrimony, and,

of this Encolpius the narrator is carefully tracing the changing mood and reactions of Encolpius the protagonist, and it is an index of Petronius' skill as a novelist that he can handle this movement so subtly and in such perfect harmony with the developing portrait of Trimalchio.

We have now seen how the explicit judgements and the evaluative language that appear in the narrative of the *Cena* represent in general the changing reactions and *ad hoc* judgements of Encolpius at the time. We have also seen how the narrator skilfully and realistically re-creates these reactions to suggest a character both limited and biased. From here we may ask what further aspects of the young Encolpius' reactions and behaviour at the banquet his older self, the narrator, is interested in recording. Although he never comments explicitly,<sup>9</sup> it seems that he is

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with the exception of 31.7 (*pantomimi chorum, non patris familiae triclinium crederes*) and 52.11 (*nihil autem tam inaequale erat; nam modo Fortunatam <verebatur>, modo ad naturam suam revertebatur*; see below at end of note), limited to the use of a few pejorative words or phrases in the course of the narration, e.g., 53.11 *baro insulsissimus cum scalis constitit*. The first really spiteful remark comes at 54.1 following Trimalchio's "accident" with the acrobat: *conclamavit familia, nec minus convivae, non propter hominem tam putidum, cuius etiam cervices fractas libenter vidissent, sed propter malum exitum cenae, ne necesse haberent alienum mortuum plorare*. Incidentally, the narrator is here reporting a false assumption on the part of the protagonist; as Hermeros' outburst against Ascyllus shows shortly afterwards (57 ff.), at least some of the *convivae* appreciate Trimalchio and his entertainment. From ch. 65 onwards the condemnations are frequent, explicit, and heartfelt: see esp. 65.1 on the *matteae* (above, 274), 67.6 *eo deinde perventum est ut . . .* (on Fortunata's ostentation), 67.9 *nec melior Scintilla*, 68.5 on Massa's Vergilian recitation (above, 277), 69.6 *nec ullus tot malorum finis fuisset nisi . . .*, 69.7 *et haec quidem tolerabilia erant si non ferculum longe monstrosius effecisset ut vel fame perire mallems* (see also the further sniping at Daedalus and his doings, above, 278 and n. 6), 70.8 *pudet referre quae secunter*, 72.5 "*ego enim si videro balneum statim expirabo*," 73.2 *ac ne sic quidem putidissimam eius iactationem licuit effugere* (above, 276), 73.3 *diduxit usque ad cameram os ebrium et coepit Menecratis cantica lacerare, sicut illi dicebant qui linguam eius intellegebant*, 78.5 *ibat res ad summam nauseam*. At 52.11 Heinsius' emendation, or a variant of it, is accepted by almost all modern editors. I would prefer to read *nam modo Fortunata[m] suam revertebatur [modo] ad naturam* (preserving Heinsius' word order) and to understand the comment *nihil autem tam inaequale erat* as referring to Fortunata who despite her restraint on Trimalchio's dancing is herself a capital *cordax* dancer (52.8) and does indeed "soon enough (*modo*) revert to her own nature," i.e., at 70.10 (*iam coeperat Fortunata velle saltare*).

<sup>9</sup>The two pieces of self-characterization, 49.7 *ego crudelissimae severitatis non potui me tenere* and 69.9 *ego scilicet homo prudentissimus statim intellexi quid esset*, I take as reflecting Encolpius' thinking at the time. At 49.7 he is feeling and expressing indignation at the cook's failure to gut the pig and in no mood to join the others in begging for the remission of the cook's punishment. The phrase *crudelissimae severitatis* thus echoes his feelings and pose of self-conscious severity at the time. It is taken up by the narrator for ironic reasons, ironic because the severity in the present context is totally out of place, as the cook's error was, of course, feigned. Much the same is the case at 69.9. Encolpius is priding himself on the man-of-the-world's knowledge that enables him to guess from past experience the composition of the dish *de uno corpore factum* (above, 278). Again, his confidence is misplaced, and the narrator ironically echoes this flawed self-assessment.

most concerned with demonstrating the foolishness, the callousness, and the boorishness of his former self and his erstwhile associates. Like his fellow guests—Agamemnon in particular is singled out—Encolpius is a sycophant, applauding insincerely Trimalchio's talk and stage effects. For example, with the others he thanks Trimalchio profusely for his advice on the bodily functions and for the provision of appropriate facilities and then buries his laughter in frequent cups.<sup>10</sup> Beneath the superficial interest he is callously unconcerned about the man who is after all providing him—from whatever motives—with lavish food and entertainment. When Trimalchio's arm is apparently injured by the acrobat, Encolpius would quite cheerfully have seen his neck broken too (see above, note 8), and the destruction of Trimalchio's house is for him no more than a "most timely opportunity" (78.8 *occasionem opportunissimam*) for escape. Moreover, he is greedy (35.7, 60.5), he has no compunction about stealing from the table (60.7), and he permits himself a drunkenness which he finds disgusting in others.<sup>11</sup> In most of this behaviour he is associated in the narrative with other guests, though who exactly is covered by the use of the first person plural often remains uncertain, perhaps deliberately so. Only in refraining from overt mockery does Encolpius exhibit somewhat better manners than certain others present, namely his own friends Ascyltus and Giton, both of whose rude outbursts of laughter, it is interesting to note, he condemns.<sup>12</sup>

Where Encolpius stands out from the rest of the company is in the mistakes he makes and in the general foolishness of his reactions to the entertainment. These, indeed, are the aspects of his past behaviour and character that his later self, the narrator, is most eager to emphasize and document. In no fewer than thirteen incidents Encolpius makes a mistake of some sort or somehow manages to make a fool of himself. His entry into Trimalchio's house is marked by his near collapse in terror at the painted watchdog (29.1) and his first attempt at an exit by his subsiding into the fish-pond as he tries to haul Ascyltus out (72.7).<sup>13</sup> These incidents frame

<sup>10</sup>*Gratias agimus liberalitati indulgentiaeque eius et subinde castigamus crebris potiunculis risum.* See also 34.5, 36.4, 40.1, 41.8, 48.5, 48.7, 52.7, 55.1, 72.2.

<sup>11</sup>64.2, 72.7; contrast 78.5 *cum Trimalchio ebrietate turpissima gravis . . .* (also 52.8, 67.11, 70.6, 73.3).

<sup>12</sup>57.1 *ceterum Ascyltos intemperantis licentiae cum omnia sublatiis manibus eluderet et usque ad lacrimas rideret*, 58.1 *post hoc dictum Giton . . . risum iam diu compressum etiam indecenter effudit.*

<sup>13</sup>In this whole episode the narrator is, I suspect, hinting that a subtler mistake at a higher level was also made. At the close he records the deliberative question *quid faciamus homines miserrimi et novi generis labyrintho inclusi* (73.1). Now the point here is surely that the mythological allusion that comes to the mind of Encolpius and his friends is the *wrong* one. As the narrative reveals, their adventures in the preceding chapter parallel not those of Theseus (or some unnamed victim) in the Labyrinth but those of a hero reascending from a *katabasis* to the Underworld. The pointers are too obvious to conclude

a succession of humiliating failures at guessing the point of Trimalchio's elaborately staged jokes. He is deceived by the mock eggs (33.7), he fails to appreciate the fact that the zodiac dish conceals better fare beneath (35.1, 7), he cannot guess why the boar made its entrance in a cap of liberty and has to ask his neighbour, who explicates the joke much to Encolpius' chagrin (41.1-5), he imagines that the three pigs driven into the dining-room are part of an acrobatic turn (47.9), he is completely fooled by the seemingly ungutted pig and as a result is foolishly caught in a pose of misplaced severity (49.2-3, 7, and see above, note 9), he mis-guesses the reason why Trimalchio boasts that he alone has genuine Corinthian bronze (50.3, and see above, 276), he mistakenly imagines that the rumblings from the ceiling herald more acrobats (60.2), with the other guests he mistakes the spouting saffron for part of a *sacrum ferculum* and rises in a patriotic reflex to hail "Augustus, father of his country" (60.7), he incorrectly guesses the composition of Daedalus' illusory masterpiece (69.9, and see above, 278 and note 9), and finally, he is deceived by the "drunken insolence" of the battling water-carriers (70.6, and see above, 276). In addition, he mistakes Habinnas for a magistrate and is only restrained by Agamemnon from bolting barefoot to avoid arrest (65.4). To balance this record, he scores a mere two successes. He rightly suspects that something lies behind Trimalchio's insistent repetition of "*carpe, carpe*" (36.7), and he senses that the accident with the boy acrobat is leading up to some contrived denouement, though his guess as to the actual outcome is widely amiss (54.3-5).<sup>14</sup> It is interesting, moreover, that Encolpius' follies are frequently accompanied by a nervousness and trepidation that make him seem all the more ridiculous.<sup>15</sup> Finally, we should note

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otherwise: the dog who is pacified with food, the separate gates for entry and exit, the passage of a body of water. None of these is a feature of the Labyrinth, all of them recall the Underworld. In particular, one should note the sombre, almost Sibylline rhetoric of the *atriensis* (72.10 *erras si putas te exire hac posse qua ventisi. nemo umquam convivarum per eandem ianuam emissus est; alia intrant, alia exeunt*) and the use of the grandiose word *gurgis* (72.7) of a mere fish-pond. This type of error, in which the protagonist somehow misapplies a literary or mythological allusion and the narrator subtly demonstrates the fact by his handling of the narrative, is found quite often in other parts of the *Satyricon* outside the *Cena*, and especially in the context of the occasional verse: See my article (above, n. 3) 56-59.

<sup>14</sup>Encolpius is on the alert for some *automatum* to emerge from the wall, while the actual denouement is Trimalchio's gesture of freeing the boy "so that no one could say that so great a man had been wounded by a slave" (54.5). Yet this discrepancy is passed off with the thought "my suspicions were not far amiss" (*nec longe aberravit suspicio mea*)!

<sup>15</sup>For example, in the incident of the painted dog (29.1). See also 30.6 *sine dubio paulisper trepidavimus ne contra praeceptum aliquis nostrum limen transiret*, 60.2 *consternatus ego exsurrexi et timui ne per tectum petauristarius aliquis descenderet*, 65.4 *ego maiestate conterritus praetorem putabam venisse*, 65.5 *risit hanc trepidationem Agamemnon*, 70.6 *consternati nos insolentia ebriorum*.



that the narrator, without explicit comment but by using his favourite technique of ironic contrast, emphasizes the stupidity of many of the mistakes. The reaction to Habinnas' entry is a good example (65.3-7). Encolpius is terrified by the *maiestas* of the new arrival. Yet, as Agamemnon immediately explains, the man whom Encolpius mistakes for the praetor is only a *sevir Augustalis* and by profession—the bathos is surely intentional—a monumental mason. As for the impressive appearance (the air of *maiestas*) that first struck terror into Encolpius, a closer inspection reveals that Habinnas is drunk and clinging for support to his wife, that he is festooned in garlands, and that perfumed oil is running down his forehead and into his eyes: *ille autem ebrius uxoris suae umeris imposuerat manus, oneratusque aliquot coronis et unguento per frontem in oculos fluente . . .*

Even the *admiratio* which Encolpius feels at first encounter with Trimalchio, his house, and his entertainment is scarcely a reaction that does him credit, and the narrator may well be poking a certain amount of gentle fun at his past self for having reacted on that occasion like a gaping tourist. It is a reaction that A. Scobie, discussing it in the context of the *Golden Ass*, well describes as a "torpid mental boggling," and he appositely cites Cicero's letter to M. Marius on the lavish stage spectacles and the slaughter of elephants at Pompey's games, where vulgar *admiratio* is contrasted with civilized *delectatio* (*Fam.* 7.1.2 f.):<sup>16</sup> *quae popularem admirationem habuerunt, delectationem tibi nullam attulissent. . . . extremus elephantorum dies fuit, in quo admiratio magna vulgi atque turbae, delectatio nulla exstitit.* In the *Golden Ass* it is the reaction that greets, *inter alia*, the sword swallower's act (1.4), Psyche's unearthly beauty (4.28, 32), and Thrasyleon's spirited performance in the bearskin (4.16).<sup>17</sup> It is found frequently in the Greek romances, especially in the context of the crowd's awe at the appearance of the hero and heroine at some critical juncture in the narrative.<sup>18</sup> In sum, it is essentially a vulgar reaction to the new and unusual, and it is an uncritical one.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup>"The *Golden Ass*: Its Generic Connections and Nature," in *Aspects of the Ancient Romance and its Heritage* (Meisenheim am Glan 1969) 30-54, 40.

<sup>17</sup>Scobie (above, n. 16) 46 and 51.

<sup>18</sup>E.g., in Xenophon of Ephesus (1.2) at the sight of Anthia and Habrocomes at their first encounter at the festival of Artemis, in Heliodorus (10.9) at the sight of Theagenes and Chariclea undergoing the test of purity on the miraculous brazier.

<sup>19</sup>In an aside on the *Satyricon*, Scobie (above, n. 16) speaks of "the naive vision of the narrator [i.e., in expressing *admiratio*] which in the hands of a Petronius could have provided ample scope for sardonic comment" (38). This misses the point. There is a "naive vision" in the *Satyricon*, but it is the vision not of the narrator, but of his younger self, the protagonist, and it *does* provide scope, if not exactly for sardonic comment, at least for a certain wry irony in the narrator's reporting of his youthful gaping.

It is interesting that the only first-person narrator in the extant Greek romances, Clitophon in the novel by Achilles Tatius, also speaks of himself on occasions as having

The naivety and foolishness of Encolpius' reactions and conduct are indeed so remarkable that they have led one scholar to suggest that they result from a deliberately assumed pose. In an article specifically devoted to the problem of the I-narrator in the *Satyricon*, P. Veyne argues that in the *Cena* Encolpius manifests a *fausse naïveté* that is in fact a sophisticated mockery not only of his host but also of his more crudely derisive companions.<sup>20</sup> This pose of *fausse naïveté* differs from Encolpius' real folly in the rest of the *Satyricon*, a folly which is mitigated only by Encolpius' self-awareness and "*auto-ironie*." But to substantiate his claim that Encolpius' stupidity and naivety in the *Cena* are feigned Veyne has no direct and specific evidence from the text. He rests his case first on the manifest discrepancy between Encolpius' stated conduct and reactions on the one side and the tone of cool irony that informs the narrative on the other. But this discrepancy, as we have seen, disappears as a problem when one takes into account the fact that a *later* Encolpius, the narrator, is reporting the adventures of an *earlier* Encolpius, the protagonist. Secondly, Veyne argues from the distinction between the open derision of Ascyllus and Giton (see above, 280 and note 12) and what he sees as Encolpius' more oblique mockery of Trimalchio through feigned impressionability and stupidity, especially in the matter of Trimalchio's elaborate jokes. But as he himself admits, the distinction only goes so far. Although Encolpius is not as overtly and insultingly derisive as Ascyllus and Giton and although most, but by no means all, of the failures to get the point of Trimalchio's jokes are represented as peculiarly Encolpius' failures, none the less, as we have already seen, he does join the others in mockery of his host and he is closely associated with them in sycophancy, greed, and theft, while they are equally associated with him in the expression of that naive *admiratio* which ought, if Veyne is right, to be the mark of Encolpius' individual pose.<sup>21</sup> Thirdly, Veyne uses an argument from the author's presumed purpose. Unlike the burlesque situations in the rest of the *Satyricon*, the *Cena* illustrates a genuine scandal of the age, namely the gross enrichment of certain freedmen. To criticize this abuse Petronius lends Encolpius, for this one episode, his own *persona* and has him act as he himself might have acted:

reacted somewhat in this manner of the impressionable tourist in quest of novelty. See especially his tour of Alexandria at the start of Book 5, where he says of himself (5.1.4) *θεατῆς ἀκόρεστος ἦμην* and of the festival of Serapis (5.2.2) *καὶ τοῦτο μέγιστον ἐθεασάμην*. The term *θέα* ("spectacle") is a favourite one with Achilles Tatius; he uses it (e.g.) of the hippopotamus (4.2.1 and 3.1) and of Melitte taking the test of the miraculous waters of the Styx (8.14.3).

<sup>20</sup>"Le 'je' dans le *Satiricon*," *REL* 42 (1964) 301-324, 303 ff.

<sup>21</sup>The number of passages which describe some joint reaction of Encolpius and others is in fact considerable: 27.4, 28.6, 30.5, 30.6, 31.1, 34.8, 35.1, 35.7, 36.4, 40.1, 40.2, 41.8, 47.7, 47.8, 48.7, 49.2, 54.1, 55.1, 56.10, 60.2, 60.5, 60.7, 60.9, 63.1, 64.1, 69.7, 70.6, 74.8.

"Quant à Encolpe, qui durant toute la *Cena* est le sosie de l'auteur, il se tient à l'écart et se moque en silence des moqueurs et des moqués."<sup>22</sup> Though intriguing, this argument is not really susceptible of proof one way or the other, and in default of any specific evidence from the text it cannot be given much weight.

But what, I feel, makes Veyne's interpretation fundamentally implausible is the actual language of the narrative in passages where we are supposed to imagine that Encolpius is manifesting *fausse naïveté*. Consider, for example, the incident of the boar in the cap of liberty. Encolpius describes his reactions carefully and explicitly (41.1 f.):

*Interim ego, qui privatum habebam secessum, in multas cogitationes diductus sum, quare aper pilleatus intrasset. postquam itaque omnis bacalusias consumpsi, duravi interrogare illum interpretem meum, quod me torqueret.*

Meantime I had got a quiet corner to myself, and had gone off on a long train of speculation,—why the boar had come in with a cap of freedom on. After turning the problem over every way I ventured to put the question which was troubling me to my old informant. (Loeb trans.)

When the explanation has been supplied, the narrative continues (41.5): *damnavi ego stuporem meum et nihil amplius interrogavi ne viderer nunquam inter honestos cenasse* ("I cursed my dullness and asked no more questions, for fear of showing that I had never dined among decent people," Loeb trans.). Now what is stressed in this passage is not Encolpius' overt reactions, but his inner thoughts and feelings. If Veyne is right, the descriptions of Encolpius' mental state and processes are quite simply lies. There is, of course, no *a priori* reason why they should not be, but it does seem singularly pointless that the narrator should carefully fabricate them while intending that his audience should believe the exact opposite.<sup>23</sup> For want of any compelling reason to do otherwise, it is surely simpler and better to take Encolpius' reactions, both outward and inward, more or less at face value and to suppose him the genuinely naive, impressionable, somewhat pretentious, and anxious simpleton that he later, as narrator, depicts himself as having been. In this respect, at least, there is no need for us to postulate any real difference between the *Cena* and the rest of the *Satyricon*.

In a rather different sense what Encolpius the narrator says of Encolpius the protagonist is certainly fictitious (and not just in the trivial sense that, ultimately, it has all been invented by the author). As I have demonstrated elsewhere,<sup>24</sup> the narrator is not concerned with presenting a painstakingly objective record of his past but with shaping his past into

<sup>22</sup> *Art. cit.* (above, n. 20) 304.

<sup>23</sup> See also, for example, 47.9, 49.2 f., 49.7, 60.2, 65.4.

<sup>24</sup> *Art. cit.* (above, n. 3) 45 f. and 61.

an effective and entertaining narrative whose humour and appeal is largely literary. To achieve this, he may be supposed not only to be reconstructing his past adventures and character, but also to be editing them and modifying them to suit his purpose. He is deliberately endowing his past self with a personality that fits the type of story that he is telling and the type of entertainment that he is offering his audience. In the *Cena*, to modify a comment of P. G. Walsh,<sup>25</sup> Encolpius the narrator is "faithful to the convention of self-mockery with which the Milesian story-teller leads the laughter against himself" in that he presents his former self in the comic role of a simpleton who is "deceived by Trimalchio's jokes, credulously aghast at tales of witches and werewolves, terrified by the arrival of authority," and so on. Now this role may or may not bear a fairly close resemblance to the "actual" past of Encolpius (i.e., to the "real" past history that the narrator must logically be assumed to have). It scarcely matters one way or the other. The point is that the narrator asks us to accept, at least for the duration of his narration, that his character, feelings, and actions were as stated. We will be the better entertained if we do. This is very different from Veyne's hypothesis which suggests that the narrator draws for us a character, his thoughts, his emotions, and his actions which he then expects us to reject in favour of a very different character whose motives and "real" thoughts and emotions must be divined entirely on *a priori* grounds from outside the text of the narrative.

To conclude, in the *Cena* Petronius presents us with a narrator who is concerned to develop not only a broad and vivid portrait of a wealthy and vulgar freedman at whose table he had once dined, but also an account of his own reactions at the time to his host and the entertainment provided. In recounting his reactions he takes pains to trace a gradual movement from wonder and interest to eventual disgust and to recreate the evaluative judgements that he made during the course of the banquet, adding little or nothing in the way of explicit condemnation himself. Throughout he emphasizes the naivety, the foolishness, and the generally unadmirable standard of his behaviour on the occasion, though this too is done without overt condemnation. In particular, he emphasizes how, in incident after incident, he was the dupe of Trimalchio's elaborate tricks and puns, exaggerating his youthful folly sometimes even to the point of implausibility.<sup>26</sup> In setting this essentially comic representation of his

<sup>25</sup>*The Roman Novel* (Cambridge 1970) 81. Walsh's perceptive comment is somewhat flawed by his failure to see that the Encolpius who is put in the comic role and whose antics the narrative describes is a distinct and different Encolpius from the story-teller who puts him in that role for our entertainment.

<sup>26</sup>For example, is it really plausible that even a gullible simpleton such as Encolpius, let alone the company at large, should be deceived by the pig's reappearance after an

own inadequacies against his portrait of Trimalchio and Trimalchio's *milieu*, he achieves a balance in the narrative which prevents it lapsing into heavy satire at the expense of the wealthy freedman. One has only to compare the *Cena Trimalchionis* with Horace's *Cena Nasidieni* (*Satires* 2.8) where there is no flaw—or at least none that the author intended his audience to see—to balance the social and gastronomic pretensions of the host.<sup>27</sup> In consequence, the *Cena Nasidieni* reads as a simpler work directed towards more obvious ends. But then, Horace was writing satire, while Petronius—and the complexity and subtlety of the *Cena* goes far to demonstrate it—was writing something more.

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interval that would not even suffice to cook a fowl, especially when there was a discrepancy in size between the living and the processed animal (49.2 f.)? Here is an instance where realism has been sacrificed for comic effect. For other instances of the abandonment of realism for artistic purposes see my article (above, n. 3) 45 f.

<sup>27</sup>On the danger of reacting with modern sympathies and sensibilities to Nasidienus' humiliation at the hands of his guests and of condemning Maecenas, his friends, and the narrator Fundanius as a result, see N. Rudd, *The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge 1966) 222.