

order to link to Plato's reference to Homer, and more. Petronius seems to have written quite rapidly (the sheer size of his work suggests this, and another indication will be discussed on p. 217 below), but such careful preparation shows that speed did not drive out refined literary artistry. Quintilian 10.1.20-1 shows that the Romans were well acquainted with such anticipatory placing of subject matter and the need to look back in order to appreciate it.

V

Eumolpus replaces Ascyltos

(i) 79-82, Another Quarrel

Having escaped from the *Cena*, the trio again (cf. chs. 6-8) find themselves in the difficulty, this time compounded by the dark and their drunkenness, that they do not know their way around Puteoli. After lacerating their feet (they would be wearing open sandals; cf. 138.4) on sharp stones and potsherds for almost an hour, they finally find one of the chalk-marks with which Giton (Ariadne again! Cf. 72.7) had blazed a trail to the inn where they are staying. But their troubles are not over; the old concierge has been imbibing with the lodgers and is now dead drunk. They might have been shut out all night, but a courier¹ turns up, breaks down the door and lets them in.

Encolpius and Giton go to bed and enjoy superlative love-making which evokes an ecstatic poem from Encolpius; then an immediate let-down, 'I congratulated' [see above, p. 34] 'myself for no reason' (this very clearly shows Encolpius the narrator looking back on Encolpius the actor). For when Encolpius falls into a drunken sleep, Ascyltos transfers Giton to his own bed and 'wallows'² with a brother not his own' (*fratre non suo*). Giton, says Encolpius the narrator, either remained unconscious or pretended to be so; the second alternative is a dash of realism (of course Giton can hardly have been unaware of changing beds), the first is one of Encolpius' attempts to

¹ The manuscripts say that he is one of Trimalchio's couriers, but Delz is probably right to delete *Trimalchionis*. It is no doubt due to recollection of the *cursor*es of Trimalchio (28.8, 29.8).

² Adams 193-4, on the basis of a verbal resemblance to Cic. *Har. Resp.* 59 (Clodius and Clodia), suggests that the phrase *uolutare cum sorore* | *fratre* was originally applied to non-sexual play, which I cannot believe. Rather Petronius reminds his readers of the Ciceronian phrase with a significant alteration of sex, what we now call *oppositio in imitando*. Cf. Herodas 5.30 with Headlam (the Callimachus there referred to being *Iamb.* 1.42).

decorous in language (see Ch. II n. 16 and VIII(ii)) and generally restrained in detail. When Nodot produced his forged supplements in 1688, he felt compelled to spice up the author in this regard.

Nowadays most people would probably opt to class Petronius as amoral, a perfectly sensible judgement but not, I think, the whole truth. Of course one could not call him a moralist in the sense that he explicitly issues moral judgements; had he wanted to do so, he would not have chosen the technique of a first-person narrative from the mouth of a rascal. This technique enables him to detach himself from conveying moral judgements on the events narrated, though his narrator can look back with humour and irony. Yet a deeper reading reveals a coherent interpretation of contemporary life and society to which one can justly apply the epithet 'moralistic'. Life as presented by him in the *Cena* resembles nothing so much as a dance of the damned; in the midst of all Trimalchio's extravagance death keeps intruding, and it becomes a dominant theme in the climax of the episode.

Another impression that we constantly receive is a sense of unreality. Things, especially foods, are often not what they seem, and this effect is regularly achieved by trickery and deceit. In the rest of the novel this trickery and deceit is palpable in the narrative; in the *Cena*, where its presence is less self-evident, it is conveyed largely by symbolism. One notes too that the sense of unreality is enhanced by occurrence of the terminology of theatre and spectacle at 33.5 *scaena*, 54.3 *catastrophæ*, 50.1 *automatum*, 36.8, 68.3-4 *ludus*, a feature which will become strikingly prominent in the rest of the work (see below, p. 162); it has been remarked that Trimalchio, like Quartilla, puts on a show. One naturally links this with the fact that, from the emperor down, the Neronian age was notoriously stage-struck (see Ch. VIII(i)). This, and the fact that, as has already been pointed out, Trimalchio in some of his more bizarre and extravagant follies is merely carrying farther things which can be demonstrated to have taken place in historical reality, show that Petronius' novel must be understood to have relevance to contemporary life and society. From a historical point of view the early empire shows the beginnings of a growing dominance of

literary culture, which indeed is what is criticized in ch. 1 and which becomes very apparent in the late empire, when high office could be won by the ability to write flowery prose rather than practical experience. Throughout the novel Petronius mocks those whose pretensions make them lose sight of reality; I have remarked how 47.6 *dum nolunt sibi uerum dicere* is based on a moralizing phrase by Seneca and can be extended beyond its immediate context, and more will be said about this in Ch. VIII(iii).

It is always dangerous to bring the novel into too close a relationship to the little that we know about the character of its author, but with all reservations we will note how Tacitus remarks on his *simplicitas* (a word significant in 132.15; see below, p. 200), which in the Loeb translation given in Ch. I is rendered 'native simplicity', but might better be represented by 'frankness'; the context there concerns his absence of dissimulation and pretension. His death too was arranged to be *fortuitae similis*, as if spontaneous, free from the posturing of Seneca's (so at least Tacitus presents it). The novel shows an author conscious of the unnaturalness of contemporary life; Tacitus shows us a man living by night, that is, one who did not choose to exert himself to free himself from this unnaturalness. In talking about such *lucifugae* Seneca (*Ep.* 122.3) draws the parallel that such a way of life offers with death. One can remark in dandies of many ages a sense of the artificiality of the society to which they conform. Hegel in his *Philosophy of History* calls the comic frame of mind 'a hale condition of soul which, fully aware of itself, can suffer the dissolution of its aims and realizations'.

On the literary art of the *Cena*, one point, already in some cases remarked in passing, deserves stress. That is the care taken to introduce in advance hints which eventually lead up to a point but the significance of which can be grasped only with hindsight once that point has been reached. Such hints are the clock in 26.9, the introduction of the dog (29.1; at this stage still painted), the slaves who prefigure characteristics of their owner (30.7-11), the various linkages between feasting and death which lead up to the mock funeral in 78, the way in which reminiscences of Horace and Plato are gradually introduced and the choice of the names Agamemnon and Menelaus in

has here taken a hint from Sen. *Ep.* 12.8,⁶⁸ where Seneca describes how Pacuvius (known as the stand-in governor of Syria in AD 19) used to mimic this festival of the dead with wine and have himself carried from *cena* to bedroom in funeral procession with funeral music (which shows the link between feasting and death that we have remarked in Petronius). The difference is that Pacuvius did this from a bad conscience, continually expecting condign punishment from Tiberius for his malpractices.

The noise is so loud that it wakens the whole neighbourhood, and the fire-brigade breaks in, thinking that the house is on fire. The cock-crow at 74.2 had been taken to foretell a fire or a death; now in a way we have both. This cock-crow was there called a trumpet-blast;⁶⁹ though one must note that funeral-trumpets are always called *tubae*, not the military and pastoral *bucinae*, the foreshadowing of the horn-players here is clear (for the distinction between all these instruments see my note on *Juv.* 14.199); cf. my remarks above on 26.9 (pp. 72–3).

The upshot is that amid the tumult the trio give the slip to Agamemnon and run off as if from a real fire. The diction here clearly indicates the oppressive feelings which they have been experiencing, prevented as they have been in 72–3 from getting out and having been forced into the situation, as it seems, of reliving the experience of the *Cena*, and also indicates the sense of relief in escaping. The end of Horace's *Cena Nasidieni* showed the same sense of escape with the same verb *fugimus* (93), but note the difference; in Horace the flight shows the contempt of the guests for the host, but in Petronius it is

⁶⁸ Smith 211, stating that there is no verbal similarity between Seneca and Petronius, argues that Petronius could equally well have been prompted by personal knowledge; but *cum uino . . . sibi parentauerat* ('when he had performed the funeral rites for himself with wine') in Seneca and the mention of wine and *parentalia* in Petron. 78.4 may count as a verbal similarity, even if dictated by the ritual (Blümner 510 n. 4).

⁶⁹ The word *bucinus* (not found elsewhere in a context) there is usually taken to mean *bucinator*, trumpeter, but it is much more likely to be the vulgar masculine for the neuter *bucinum*, trumpet-blast (like *fatus* etc.); and in fact Caper, *GLK* 7.99.16, declares this to be the meaning of the word. It is necessarily used because neither *tuba* nor *cornu* forms a noun meaning 'blast'. Deonna-Renard fig. 7 (cf. Grondona 61) show a bronze of a cock blowing a trumpet. In the army a trumpet gave the sign for ending dinner (Tac. *Ann.* 15.30.1).

Trimalchio who has dominated and Encolpius and company, having failed to get away earlier, are running away in defeat. We are also to think of the end of Plato's *Symposium*, where revellers, *κωμωσται*, burst in and break up the party.

(vii) Overview of the *Cena*

As we look back over the *Cena* as a whole certain features become apparent. The most striking is that it can be read on either of two levels, which is in fact true of Petronius overall. One can treat it just as glorious comedy, which is indeed how it has very often been read, but if one looks more closely at the recurring themes and symbols to which attention has been drawn in the preceding sections, with a great debt to Cameron (1970), it becomes apparent that a deeper meaning is being conveyed (the significance of such themes and symbols in the *Satyricon* overall will be discussed in Ch. VIII (iii)). I do not doubt that Petronius himself intended these two options to be available to his readers, and this raises the often-discussed question whether Petronius is to be regarded as amoral, immoral, or moralistic. So long as morality was interpreted as based largely on strict Christian views of sexual morality, the omnipresence of sex in the novel imposed the second answer; if the patriarch Photius thought Achilles Tatius immoral, what would he have thought of Petronius? A judgement is also implied by the excision of all pederastic episodes in the compilation of the O-excerpts (Ch. II n. 56). In modern times, one may recall that when Franz Bücheler, the great editor of Petronius, began his career at the University of Freiburg i. B., he was attacked in the local newspaper for lecturing on such a filthy author. Though Greek and Roman religion imposed no code of sexual morality, even ancient readers would have had to consider as immoral some of the sexual episodes in Petronius—that is if they had felt obliged to submit them to moral evaluation. Of course intelligent readers would have known better than to apply this irrelevant criterion to creative literature and thereby hamstringing one of the great sources of humour and comedy. Petronius may be bawdy, but he can hardly be called pornographic (ch. 140 is the most extreme in this respect); his sexual episodes are notably

strong, trustworthy' 71.12 also recalled the lapidary style; cf. *CLE* 488.2 *acri homini adque alacri forti fido adque uenusto*). One may remark, first, that he slips into his old slave-outlook by referring to Habinnas' *peculium* (and also to his own at 76.7; cf. p. 78 above); second, that when he recalls the presence of his guests, as at 34.7 he inadvertently insults them ('Please, friends, enjoy yourselves, for I too was once like you, but because of my talent I have reached this status' 75.8; this leads into his boasting).

The final stage of his bragging autobiography comes with his retirement, urged on him by an astrologer (superstition again); Trimalchio's report of this man's intimate knowledge of him shows how the astrologer played on his insecurity ('You are unlucky in your friends, nobody ever repays you properly . . . you nurture a viper in your bosom'). Trimalchio of course is picking out the parts of the consultation which correspond to his present mood; in a moment (77.4) he calls Fortunata a viper. He then reports the astrologer's prophecy about his length of life. He would still, he says, like to extend his estates to Apulia (he had expressed a similar wish at 48.3; even Pliny, *Ep.* 3.19.2, speaks of *ipsa pulchritudo iugendi*, the actual amenity of linking the properties in question); however, pending that he has built his magnificent house. The lesson of his career is that one is valued in proportion to one's wealth, that's how yours truly (*amicus uester*) changed from frog to prince (obviously a reference to a folk-tale; also yet another reference to social mobility; and perhaps even a pun on his name 'King').

Then, with an abrupt mood-swing, he gives orders for the shroud, which (like the tomb) he has prepared in advance for himself, the funeral perfumes, and a sample of the wine for washing his bones to be brought out; this goes beyond the common practice of erecting one's tomb while still alive (as e.g. in my *Musa Lapidaria* 175, which, like Trimalchio's tomb, 71.7, is to be a garden tomb, *cepotaphium*, and 199A, where the tomb is spoken of as the eternal home, *aeterna domus* (67; cf. Petron. 71. 7)). Of the two robes that are fetched one is a *toga praetexta*, the robe in which he was to appear on his tomb.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The *praetextae* here and in 71.9 seem not to be attributes of his sevirate (there appears to be no other evidence that sevirs were allowed to wear this). He would have been allowed to wear it at the games which he would have

The guests are invited to test the quality of the cloth, as they had had to be assured of the weight of the jewellery (67.7-8). They are also anointed with the nard,⁶⁷ and Trimalchio expresses the hope that it may delight him as much in death as it does in life, thus implying (like Hermeros in 57.7, who has been manifesting pride in his achievements as Trimalchio here does) a continuum between life and death (see above, p. 96), at least in his hopes.

Now Trimalchio goes farther as his theatricality finally overwhelms him and takes control; he orders wine to be poured into a bowl and asks his guests to imagine that they are celebrating the commemoration of the dead in his honour, again to Encolpius' disgust. Finally he summons the horn-players (his favourite *acroama*: 53.12), which to Encolpius is a *nouum acroama*, a party-diversion of novel (and hence objectionable; see above, n. 5) type; then he stretches himself out on the couch, and tells them to imagine that he is dead and to play a nice funeral tune, which they do, particularly the slave of the undertaker Julius Proculus who is one of the guests (38.14-16; presumably he borrows an instrument and joins in); for such funeral music see Blümner 490-1, Marquardt 351-2. Petronius given on entrance into the sevirate (cf. Mommsen, *Röm. Staatsrecht* 1 (ed. 3, Leipzig 1887) 422, quoting *CIL* 9.4208), and perhaps a distribution of largesse at a public meal counted as equivalent. Of course he might have usurped this as much as the gold ring (see above, n. 23). For the privilege of being cremated in the *praetexta* see Livy 34.7.3, where he is talking about lowly municipal officials.

⁶⁷ The crowing of the cock (74.1) and the pouring of the nard, both leading up to a mock death, have been compared with two episodes in the Gospel of Mark ch. 14 which lead up to the crucifixion of Jesus. This Gospel was perhaps being composed in Rome in the circle of St Peter around the very time when Petronius was writing, but it is usually put a little later (see below, pp. 211-12), and there is little indication that the author was using pre-existing writings. Moreover the purport of the first episode is very different (in Mark the crowing of the cock is nothing more than a time-marker), so I do not think that there is any significance in the comparison. Nor do I think that there is any force in the comparison made between Petron. 131.4 and John 9: 6 by Setioli; see below, p. 196, on that passage. Ramelli 76 elaborates the parallel between 77.7-78.4 and Mark 14: 3-9 (see also John 12: 3-7) where a woman brings a jar of nard and pours it on Christ's head; His reaction is that 'she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying'. This seems to me to be the strongest parallel between Petronius and the Gospels, but I still cannot see it as compelling.

goes to the public baths (27-8), he otherwise likes to bathe in private, *sine turba lauari* (according to Heinsius' emendation at 73.2 he boasts about this), and can achieve this by having a small bath which leaves little room for anyone else. Seneca asks (§5) 'Who would nowadays tolerate bathing so?', remarks on the luxury of baths of freedmen (§7), and criticizes the blazing temperatures now fashionable (§10 *temperatura . . . similis incendio*, cf. Petron. 72.3 *sic calet tamquam furnus*, 'it is as hot as a furnace'). Petronius apparently is answering the question put by Seneca in §5 by pointing to the trait of 'inverted snobbery' (the phrase from Walsh's note; I have also used it above, p. 78, in connection with 71.12).

Around the bath the other guests are running with linked hands and screeching loudly, or picking up rings (with their teeth?) while their hands are tied behind their backs, or kneeling and bending back to touch their toes. The point of this is obscure. Sometimes it has been related to the athletic exercises of the spirits in Elysium (*Aen.* 6.642 sqq.), which would be most inappropriate. More suitable would be a reference to acrobats in Roman funeral processions, but our only authority for such seems to be the obscure note of Festus (334b M) on *Simpludiarea funera* (references to actors and dancers are a different matter, though of course they belong to the same order of being).

After the bath the guests, somewhat sobered, are brought back into another dining-room, where more food and drink are laid out. The bath has marked the end of the elaborate symmetrical scheme which Bodel 45 has laid out for the main part of the *Cena* (this scheme invites a few minor reservations, but substantially stands up); now it is as if the whole *Cena*, which began in the baths (26.10-28), is going to start all over again, *de una die duas facere*, 'to make two days out of one', as Habinnas puts it (72.4; the phrase was perhaps suggested by Herodotus 2.133.5). Trimalchio invites them to carouse until dawn to celebrate the first beard-clipping of one of his slaves (as his own may have been celebrated; 29.8). As he is speaking a cock crows, which Trimalchio takes to be a bad omen⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Grondona 58 compares Ter. *Ph.* 708 *gallina cecinit* ('a cock crowed'), which according to Donatus is an omen of the death of a husband before his wife.

predicting either a fire or a death in the neighbourhood; he has wine poured under the table (a libation to the spirit of the neighbour who will die) and on to the lamp (to make it blaze up, a symbol of continuing life), transfers his ring to his right hand, and gives orders for the cock to be fetched. Daedalus then cuts it up and cooks it, another link between death and eating. This cock-crow looks not only back (since the *bucinus*, on which see below, n. 69, recalls the probably mechanical *bucinator* which in 26.9 tolled out the hours of Trimalchio's life), as in Bodel's scheme all the episodes since ch. 47 have done, but also foreshadows what is to come; we are commenting what is to be the coda of the *Cena* leading up to the mock funeral.

Trimalchio, with his fellow-feeling for slaves (which he tries to disguise), realizes that those in attendance have not yet dined, and replaces them with another shift, among which is a handsome boy whom he begins to kiss. Fortunata, like Scintilla previously, becomes annoyed at this and starts to abuse him, over-confident in the control which in a sober state he allows her to exercise over him (37.2-7, 52.9-11). In response to this Trimalchio hurls a cup in her face, a feature of the brawls which are often described as breaking out at symposia (e.g. Lucil. 223-7 M; see Nisbet-Hubbard on Horace, *Odes* 1.27.1). He himself bursts into a torrent of abuse, finally instructing Habinnas not to place her statue on his tomb. After this 'thunderbolt' Habinnas tries to soothe him. In this we again seem to catch a hint of imperial pretensions; the prohibition of the statue is like *damnatio memoriae*, obliteration from the official record, and 'thunderbolt', though it can be used quite generally in a metaphorical sense (cf. *fulminatus* 80.7), is often a metaphor for imperial punishments implying a flattering comparison of the emperor to Jupiter (see my note on Juv. 8.92 and J. R. Fears, *Princeps a Dis Electus* (Rome 1977), index p. 349 s.v. Thunderbolt). Scintilla too tries to soothe Trimalchio, but again he delivers a long speech which is a mixture of abuse, maudlin self-pity, and boasting about what he has achieved in life (autobiographical information given here has been discussed in (i) above); it is like a funeral eulogy, *laudatio funebris*, delivered by the corpse itself (in his previous speech *pius fortis fidelis* 'loyal,

part of the culture of the class to which he aspires, he has no use for philosophy (cf. 56.7) which is not an integral part of that culture. A boast that one never succumbed to some fault or other is often found in epitaphs; here Trimalchio's achievement is to be untainted by philosophy!⁶⁴

After this Trimalchio himself and everyone else begin to weep (narrated by Encolpius in mock-elevated style), even Encolpius. But Trimalchio puts an end to this with a sudden mood-swing: 'We know that we shall die, so let's enjoy life' (this recalls his poem in 34.10), and he takes everyone off for a hot bath (we cannot but be reminded of the funereal commonplace *balnea uina Venus* 'baths, wine, and love'; see e.g. my *Musa Lapidaria* nos. 170-1). Such hot baths, intended to promote digestion and therefore renewal of appetite, were by now quite common, and a favourite target of moralists; see my note on Juvenal 1.143. Encolpius cannot bear the thought of this, so he and Ascyrtos agree to abscond. Giton guides them (this function of guide is one that has to be presumed between 9.1 and 9.2, and he will be seen exercising it again in 79.4; its thematic significance will become plain in Ch. VIII(iii)). When they reach the door, the chained dog Scylax, which they have encountered in 64.7, barks so loudly that Ascyrtos falls into the pool; note the significant contrasts that Ascyrtos is afraid of a real dog, whereas the naive Encolpius had feared a painted one (29.1), and that here the dog prevents exit from the house whereas the painted one had discouraged entry. In attempting to rescue him, Encolpius too, now thoroughly drunk, is pulled into the same 'flood', *gurges*, as he calls it (a deliberately grandiose word, elsewhere employed by Petronius only in verse except for the equally grandiose 114.6). While the porter extracts them, Giton has protected himself from the dog by throwing to it the food which Encolpius (60.7) and Ascyrtos had taken for him. They ask the porter to let them out, but he replies that no guest of this house ever leaves by the same door as he entered (so the watchdog not only keeps out intruders but

⁶⁴ There seems to be a curious parallel to this in *CIL* 6.9709 = *ILS* 7509, the otherwise perfectly orthodox epitaph of a money-changer which unexpectedly ends *hic in IIII stabul(is) agitatai numq(uam)*, 'he never spent his time in the stables of the four circus-factions'.

also keeps visitors in); this makes the trio feel that they are shut inside a novel type of labyrinth.

Now the symbolism of this chapter becomes plain. The labyrinth will recall its constructor Daedalus, a name which has several times emerged in significant contexts, particularly 52.2, where there is a muddled recollection of the story of Pasiphae and the bull. Giton is Ariadne or Daedalus himself, who showed Ariadne how to find the way through the labyrinth (Verg. *Aen.* 6.28). The labyrinth is associated in Vergil's narrative with the underworld by its appearance on the temple-doors made by Daedalus at Cumae, in the vicinity of which Aeneas descends to the underworld; it suggests the difficulty of emerging again (*Aen.* 6.128), and in fact Aeneas does finally emerge by a different exit. The *gurges* is how the Styx is referred to at *Aen.* 6.296; the porter is Charon; Giton's stratagem is throwing a sop to Cerberus (ibid. 417 sqq.); the dog has the function of Cerberus in preventing egress (not in Vergil but in other authors cited by Leary, *CQ* 50 (2000), 313). The implication of all this is plain. All the luxury in Trimalchio's house is just a way of disguising the fact that its inhabitants and guests are experiencing a kind of living death; now we appreciate to the full the proximity of the banquet and the grave which has been kept in our consciousness by continual occurrence of the theme of death in the *Cena* (note especially the Sibyl in 48.8). This profound symbolism may have been suggested to Petronius by the kind of funeral monuments investigated by Dunbabin, or by references to the *mekua* (Book XI) of the *Odyssey* in Plato's *Protagoras*, as I proposed (*AJP* 108 (1987), 408), or, very likely, by both. In any case the extra resonance given by the Vergilian intertextual allusions is a masterstroke.

Encolpius and Ascyrtos now want nothing more than a warm bath. They find Trimalchio in a small bath like a cold-water cistern. This is very unexpected in view of the luxury of the rest of his house, and appears to have some relationship to Seneca's description of the villa of Scipio at Liternum (*Ep.* 86.4 *balneolum angustum*, a narrow little bath). The point seems to be that Trimalchio has bought and expanded his house (77.4), not built it from the ground up; its small bath shows that it had belonged to a traditionalist family. Whereas for exercise he

recall his feasts,⁶⁰ and all the combats of the gladiator Petraites (already referred to at 52.3), so that Habinnas may provide Trimalchio with posthumous life.⁶¹ He is also to show the ships that carried Trimalchio's merchandise (76.4 sqq.⁶²) and Trimalchio wearing his official robe, *toga praetexta* (see below, n. 66), and five gold rings, sitting on a platform and scattering coins to the populace, plus a representation of a public meal laid on by him (like that of Mammea, 45.10; see further Donahue, *CP* 94 (1999), 68). All these prescriptions find a close parallel in *CIL* 13.5708 = *ILS* 8379, which clearly consists of instructions given in a will but copied on to the actual tomb, which was to be surrounded by orchards, *pomaria* (cf. Petron. 71.7). Trimalchio's monument itself has long been compared with those of C. Lusius Storax from Chieti and M. Valerius Anteros Asiaticus (*CIL* 5.4482) from Brescia,⁶³ the former showing gladiatorial games and Storax on a platform (he wears three rings in contrast to Trimalchio's five), the latter

P. J. Holliday, *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art* (Cambridge 1993), 299. For dogs represented on tombstones see there 303, and J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (London 1973) 109 sqq.; there is one on the tombstone which gives us the name Ascylos (Priuli tav. 1-2).

⁶⁰ Cf. 60.3, 65.7. But again we have the convergence of feast and grave, for garlands and perfumes are common offerings at graves (see my *Musa Lapidaria* 183.45), and garlands and perfume vessels are often shown on funeral monuments (Whitehead 305).

⁶¹ For representations of gladiators on tombs see Dentzer, *MEFR* 74 (1962), 554, and T. Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London 1992) 17.

⁶² Whitehead 309 points out that while Trimalchio knows the significance of the ships in his biography, the reader does not yet, and will for the moment understand the ships as those frequently shown on funeral monuments with symbolic significance; they link with such topics as 'the haven of eternal rest'. The funeral altar of C. Munatius Faustus at Pompeii has a ship under full sail on its side.

⁶³ For the monument of Storax see Whitehead 306, 310, and fig. 91; B. Andrae, *The Art of Rome* (New York 1977) 62 and fig. 195; D. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven 1992) 148; *Cambridge Ancient History* (ed. 1) plates 4 (1934) 190d; for that of Asiaticus Whitehead 310 and fig. 93; for both J. Ronke, *Magistratische Repräsentation im röm. Relief* (Oxford 1987) 109, 140, and Abb. 3-9. There are illustrations of both in *Dial. Arch.* 1 (1967), figs. 1-4, and in *Studi Misc.* 10 (*Sculture municipali dell' area abellina*) tav. xxx-xxxix (Storax) and iv (Anteros). For Storax (the name of an aromatic gum, like Cinnamus in 30.3) as a slave-name see Solin (1996) 161.

Valerius on a platform scattering largesse and a procession of *seviri* escorted by lictors.

As well as these official representations, there are to be private ones: Fortunata holding a dove and leading a puppy on a leash, Trimalchio's *deliciae* Croesus (referred to as *cicaro*; cf. 46.3), wine-jars, one of them broken with a boy weeping over it (obvious symbols of mortality), and a sun-dial, consultation of which will oblige the public to read Trimalchio's name. Such a sun-dial is also of course a reminder of the passage of time and hence of mortality (see above, pp. 72-3, on 26.9). Dunbabin 206-8 draws attention to a sarcophagus which shows a skeleton, a meal, and a sun-dial, and remarks 'The allusion to what is to come serves as a reminder . . . to enjoy the pleasures of this life . . . Such a merging of the imagery of the banquet with that of the grave is a familiar feature of the funerary iconography in many other respects also; similar parallels exist between the epigraphy of the grave and the epigrams of the feast.' These remarks are of wide applicability to the *Cena* (the ambiguous message of the garlands and perfume at 71.6 has just been mentioned); for funerary epigrams in particular see my comments above (p. 85) on Trimalchio's verses at 34.10.

Finally Trimalchio dictates his inscription, which begins by inflating his name (see above, pp. 77-8), records his official career, his virtues and wealth, and ends 'and he never attended philosophy lectures'. There are two points of interest here. First, Trimalchio was not alone in having his wealth recorded on his tomb; editors quote *CIL* 11.5400 = *ILS* 7812 and Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.84 sqq. We always have to remember that while in many respects Trimalchio is surreal, in others he is simply social reality writ large, and beneath the exaggeration Petronius intends us to see him as representative of a certain stratum in society with a soulless outlook. The actual amount mentioned, 30 million sesterces, is not particularly large; he lost this much in a shipwreck (76.4). If we bear in mind that at the moment he cannot possibly foretell his bank-balance at his death, we will understand that he is just filling in a temporary blank with the amount which in general terms makes one a 'millionaire' (it is specified in this sense at 88.8). Secondly, whereas Trimalchio in his way respects 'philology', which is

slave has had no formal instruction, but that he had trained him by sending him to the street performers, so that he can now imitate muleteers or street performers (what a qualification for reciting Vergil!). He can also turn his hand to many occupations, but has two flaws, that he is circumcised and snores. This indicates that Habinnas has experience of him in bed; the circumcision would be a flaw because Greek homoerotic vase-paintings show a preference for elongated foreskins.⁵⁷ Scintilla's jealousy is aroused by this (cf. already 67.11), but Trimalchio retorts that Habinnas is right to enjoy himself while he is alive, for no one will give this to him when he is dead (cf. 43.8 in the context of a funeral); that women too are not paragons of fidelity, and he himself used to 'bang' his mistress (he again refers to this at 75.11) until his owner became suspicious and sent him off to supervise a country estate. The slave, as if he had been praised, took a clay lamp out of his 'pocket' and used it to imitate a trumpet (as Trimalchio had done at 64.5), with Habinnas chiming in, then employing broken reeds he imitated an oboe-player, finally in costume mimicked muleteers until Habinnas called him over and kissed him.

All this afflicts Encolpius, but finally the dessert, ordered by Trimalchio at 68.1, is served, consisting entirely of foods which imitate other foods, pastry thrushes, quinces with thorns stuck in them to look like sea-urchins, a goose surrounded by fish and gamebirds, at which Trimalchio remarks that everything the guests see is made of one substance. Encolpius, referring to himself with ironical hindsight as *scilicet homo prudentissimus* ('being of course quick on the uptake'), and declaring that he at once realized what was happening, presumes this substance to be wax (? this is a textual supplement) or clay, like fake foods which he had seen at Rome at the Saturnalia. Wrong again! Trimalchio explains that they are all made of pork; his cook has the knack of turning any food into any other,⁵⁸ and therefore has been given the name of the supreme trickster Daedalus,

⁵⁷ See Dover 125-9, Henderson 111 n. 17, T. Hopfner, *Das Sexualleben der Griechen und Römer* (Prague 1938) 219.

⁵⁸ Cf. (ii) above. He was not unique in this; see Livy 35.49.6-7, Horace's *Cena Nasidieni* 28 with Muecke's note, Kay on Mart. 11.31, and Rosati in Harrison 95; add Cic. *Ad Fam.* 9.20.2 as emended.

whose trick of presenting a wooden figure as a bull has been alluded to in the garbled account of 52.2.

A brawl between two slaves follows, but it is all a pantomime; despite all that Encolpius and the other guests have seen, they still fail to realize this. The point is double: first to stress the grandeur of Trimalchio, who issues a formal judgment between the slaves (cf. 53.10); second, to motivate the breakage of the jars which the slaves carry, out of which spill oysters and scallops. Then comes the anointing of the feet discussed on p. 8 above. By now the women, already tipsy at 67.11, are thoroughly inebriated, so that Fortunata is willing to perform the dance which she had declined at 52.8-10. Trimalchio too now abandons his dignity towards his slaves and in Saturnalian fashion invites them to recline at table, which they do, almost pushing the guests off the couches; the cook even challenges Trimalchio to a bet on the next circus races. Trimalchio, becoming expansive with this rivalry, says to the company 'Slaves too are human beings' (*homines*, taking up *humanitas* in 65.1), 'yet while I'm still alive they will soon taste freedom, for I free them all in my will' (a comic self-contradiction). 'I proclaim this so that my household may love me now as if I were dead' (a remark whose implications he might have avoided had he been sober). All this is clearly written in relation to Seneca, *Ep.* 47, in which Seneca commends Lucilius for his treatment of his slaves: '*serui sunt, immo homines* (§1) . . . *rideo istos qui turpe existimant cum seruo suo cenare* (§2) . . . (*seruum*) *admitte . . . in conuiuium* (§13) ["They are slaves", on the contrary human beings . . . I laugh at those who think it disgraceful to dine with their slave . . . admit a slave to a convivial occasion']. Seneca goes on to say (§15) that only slaves whose good character merits this should share the meal. As Smith states, Petronius is not here parodying Seneca, who of course is talking about occasions when Lucilius is dining alone; the point in Petronius is to show Trimalchio reducing this *ad absurdum*.

Prompted by all this, Trimalchio sends for his will and reads it out. Then he turns to Habinnas (now we see why Petronius made him a stone-mason) to discuss his tomb and its sculptures, which are to include his dog,⁵⁹ garlands and perfumes to

⁵⁹ The monument and its representations are discussed by Whitehead in

role has likewise been shifted at 65.8, where it is the host Trimalchio who calls for larger cups, whereas in Plato (213e-214a) Alcibiades does this.⁵³ Later the host Trimalchio's impulses to versify (34.10, 55.3) correspond to that of the host Agathon (197c). Another reminiscence has been remarked at 61.4 (p. 104 above), and there will be another striking one at the end of the party.

Habinnas bears an otherwise unattested name which appears to be Cappadocian (69.2; though it may be that we have there a semi-proverbial expression not meaning literally that he is from Cappadocia); he is certainly not, as has sometimes been supposed, Jewish, since he dislikes circumcision (68.2). He explains that he has come from a memorial feast, *cena nouendialis*, laid on by Scissa (another unattested name) in honour of a dead slave (death again!); in response to the enquiry of Trimalchio, who is naturally interested in food, in the style of Old and Middle Comedy⁵⁴ he reels off the gargantuan menu, with some difficulty in remembering it all. It emerges that he too has a pet slave-boy, for whom he has stolen two apples in his napkin (66.4), because otherwise the petulant boy will give him a hard time. Encolpius has done the same for Giton (60.7), to whom he is in the same sort of semi-subjection. Now we can see the thematic function of the Platonic recall, the refinement of which casts a lurid light on these proceedings. The aristocratic Alcibiades is one of those people who become more charming as they become more tipsy, in all respects the opposite of Habinnas. The view of love, the central theme of the *Symposium*, represented by Habinnas and the boy-slave, and for that matter by Encolpius and Giton, could not be farther from that represented by Alcibiades and Socrates, which Giton later (128.7) uses as a reproach against abstinence by Encolpius.

After Habinnas' report of the menu, he asks why Fortunata is not present. Trimalchio replies that she is characteristically keeping an eagle eye on the serving, but at Habinnas' insistence has her summoned. She arrives, naturally in polychromatic attire, and goes over beside Habinnas' wife Scintilla; thus

⁵³ For another role-shift see above, p. 63 on 9.3.

⁵⁴ We may compare also the dithyramb *Δέσπνοις* of Philoxenus (Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* 836).

Petronius, having previously shown Trimalchio in relation to his cronies, now fills out the picture of him and Habinnas by turning attention to the wives. Fortunata shows her jewellery to Scintilla, and Trimalchio insists on having it weighed to validate its value, while pretending to complain about its expense. Scintilla too takes earrings from her locket⁵⁵ for Fortunata's admiration, and Habinnas, like Trimalchio, pretends to grudge the expense. Connors 59-60 (making some other far-fetched connections) has related this passage to the 'Pubilius' poem in 55 and its criticism of pearls. Scintilla's earrings are called *crotalia*, castanets; Pliny (*NH* 9.114) says that earrings have this name because the pearls rattle against each other. I add that 'Pubilius' describes emeralds as 'expensive glass', and that Scintilla has pestered her husband to buy a 'glass bean' for her. So we here see the high sentiments of which Trimalchio had approved in 55 given the lie by the realities of his life. The women are by now tipsy and kissing each other. Habinnas quietly rises, grabs Fortunata's ankles and flings her legs up on the couch, so that her petticoat (her dress is tucked up, 67.4) flies up over her knees; she hides her blushes in her scarf. The crassness of this vulgar horseplay, which shows the emptiness of Habinnas' 'courtesy' at 67.1-3, does not need to be underlined.

Trimalchio then (68.1) orders *mensae secundae*, which in ordinary parlance would mean 'dessert'; instead the slaves bring in a second set of tables. All this too has obviously been pre-arranged to give Trimalchio the opportunity for another feeble pun, which he draws to the attention of his guests. The slaves scatter sawdust tinted with saffron (see Sallust quoted on p. 100 above), vermillion, and powdered mica, a blend which will put the reader in mind of circus spectacle (see Smith's note). A slave of Habinnas, prompted, as Encolpius guesses, by his owner, begins an unmelodious recital from Vergil, with verses from Atellan farces (cf. 53.13) interspersed; this and the preceding imitation of animal noises⁵⁶ are called *ludi*, stage performances. Habinnas remarks that the

⁵⁵ She calls this Felicio 'Lucky Boy' (cf. 60.8), as if the jewel-box had personality for her.

⁵⁶ Cf. Phaedrus 5.5 and Plut., *Quaest. Symp.* 5.1.674b-c, the story of Parmeno's pig.

guests; thus the recitation is followed by a sort of performance of the same episode.

At the end of this episode, when Encolpius reports that his head was starting to swim with the wine (64.2), Trimalchio begins to lose control (64.8 sqq.). Two pups fight, breaking expensive crystal, he gives his *deliciae* Croesus, whom we first met in 28.5 and whose name again emphasizes the importance of material wealth in this household, a ride on his back, at the same time playing a game like morra,⁴⁸ and he orders a drink for the slaves of his guests (see Friedlaender on 64.13), which Encolpius sarcastically calls *humanitas* (65.1). Dramatically this means that his attempts to keep his distance from slaves are breaking down as he becomes drunker; this will be taken up in 71.1.

Finally *matteae*, sweetmeats, are served (65.1-2). This would normally happen at the end of a meal, and presumably offered some hope to the disgusted Encolpius that the ordeal of the meal is nearly over, or, to put it in his language of 47.8, they have reached the top of the hill. Not a bit of it; more food arrives in the next section, and there are more antics to come.

(vi) 65.3-78.8

Now comes the climax of the *Cena*, for which it will be necessary to return to sequential exposition.

A lictor knocks at the door of the dining room, and a reveller (*commissator*, that is *κωμωσστής*) with a great train of followers enters. Encolpius is terrified by his lordly appearance (*maiestas*), takes him for the 'praetor' (a name sometimes used to dignify the office of municipal *duovir*⁴⁹), and is on the point of rising (whether as a gesture of respect or because he has a guilty conscience and wants to get away) when Agamemnon stops him and says it is just a *seuір*,⁵⁰ the stone-mason Habinnas.

⁴⁸ See Smith on 64.12. This game is of great interest to South African scholars because of a similar one played there; see e.g. Hewitt, *Acta Classica* 3 (1960), 90. For other countries see Ullman (cited by Smith), and Collin in *Studier tillegnade E. Tegnér* (Lund 1918) 369, Winstedt, *Folk-Lore* 60 (1949), 395.

⁴⁹ See *RE*, *municipium* 617.37; for Puteoli specifically see *CIL* 10 p. 183b.

⁵⁰ For his lictor see p. 79 above on the fasces at 30.1.

(vi) 65.3-78.8

Now relieved, Encolpius contemplates him more closely; he is drunk, leans on his wife's shoulder, wears garlands, and perfume is flowing down into his eyes; a queer kind of *maiestas*! He sits in the *praetorius locus*⁵¹ and immediately asks for wine and warm water.

All this is an elaborate recall of the arrival of Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*, best discussed by Averil Cameron (1969). Some features derive from traditional precedents; the arrival of an uninvited (*ἀκλῆτος*) guest who turns up late goes back to the arrival of Menelaus (*Il.* 2.408) after Agamemnon has invited other Greek leaders to the sacrifice, which in Greek religious practice would be followed by a meal; the fact that this is a stock motif does not justify Smith 181 in casting doubt on the relationship to Plato.⁵² Plato's *Symposium*, the dinner of Nasidienus in Horace, and the *Cena* are all recounted by a guest (in the case of Plato at second hand), as is common in the mini-genre of the symposium. When we cast our minds back, we can see earlier foreshadowings. With the narrative of 26.8-10 we can compare how Socrates after his bath meets Aristodemus and says that he is going to dine at Agathon's house, hence (unusually for him) he has dressed up (cf. 26.10 *amicimur ergo diligenter*, 'So we dressed carefully'); he then invites Aristodemus to accompany him as *ἀκλῆτος* (174b-c), like Menelaus at the sacrifice and meal of Agamemnon. Petronius in fact has probably chosen the names Agamemnon and Menelaus to prepare for the Platonic setting, though those who bear them do not play roles corresponding to their Homeric namesakes; a

⁵¹ This name is found also at Sen. *Contr.* 9.2.2; both here and there it is an adaptation to circumstances of the usual *locus consularis*, since Flamininus, the subject of the *controuersia* reported by Seneca, is consistently referred to by the speakers as praetor, for reasons which I do not understand, though the episode in fact is supposed to have taken place while he was consul in Cisalpine Gaul in 192 BC.

⁵² In Xenophon's *Symposium* the buffoon Philippus is such an uninvited guest (1.11-13). Plut. *Brut.* 34.8 reports that Favonius, the crude imitator of Cato, after his bath forced his way uninvited into a dinner-party of Brutus. Brutus ordered the slaves to bring him to the *lectus summus* but he insisted on the more honorific *medius* (the *locus consularis* was *imius in medio*). There followed *παύα οὐκ* ἀφλόοςος, mirth and jest in philosophical vein. I wonder if Petronius knew of this incident. Another anecdote about a meal from Roman history was mentioned on p. 100 above. Perhaps the *elegantiae arbiter* had made a study of banquets for his use in setting up those of Nero.

examination of a dish of Corinthian bronze, for Trimalchio to claim that he alone possesses real Corinthian bronze. Encolpius looks for Trimalchio to boast that he imports his bronze from Corinth (which, since the real Corinthian bronze was no longer made there, would show his gullibility), but the explanation lies in Trimalchio's third pun on a name, that he buys it from a bronzeworker called Corinthus. Then, so that his guests may not consider him an ignoramus, he explains the origin of Corinthian bronze as due to the mixing of metal objects burnt by Hannibal after the capture of Troy⁴⁴ (an episode about which a listener called Agamemnon should surely know something!). He continues by describing vessels which he has, one showing Cassandra (!) killing her children: 'the boys lie dead so that you would think that they were alive', a phrase which comically misuses a commonplace of art criticism.⁴⁵ Another has Daedalus shutting Niobe inside the Trojan horse (a mixture of three separate stories), others the gladiatorial fights of Hermeros and Petraites (a let-down here; cf. the conjunction in 29.9 of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with the gladiatorial games of Laenas). His final comment is 'I wouldn't sell my connoisseurship for any money'!

In 55, after Trimalchio has improvised some verse (probably a pretence; see above, p. 99), the conversation, in which the guests (?) confuse Mopsus⁴⁶ with Musaeus or Orpheus, turns to poets in general, and Trimalchio asks Agamemnon what he sees as the difference between Pubilius Syrus and Cicero. This is of course a ridiculous pairing, and we have to do with a

⁴⁴ Isidore, *Et.* 16.20.4 (quoted by Müller (Teubner) p. xxxi), takes this seriously! To Trimalchio heroic Greece, historical Greece (since he has in mind the capture of Corinth by Mummius in 146 BC), and Magna Graecia (since in 59.4 he has the Trojans fight the Tarentines, the latter name a certain correction) all merge into one. He also seems to be vaguely conscious that Carthage and Corinth were sacked in the same year. The mention of Hannibal is due to a confused recollection of the pyre in which the Saguntines immolated themselves and their valuables.

⁴⁵ See my note on Juv. 6.436, and Kay on Mart. 11.9. Petronius probably has in mind particularly Ovid, *Met.* 10.250 *uiuere credas* ('you would think it was alive'; the statue made by Pygmalion), with more references in Bömer's note.

⁴⁶ Most of the guests probably, like Trimalchio himself, come from Asia Minor, and they would know the name of Mopsus as founder of the famous oracle at Klaros, and also from the Cilician town Mopsuestia.

parody of such comparisons in literary discussions (see my note on Juv. 6.436). Without waiting for an answer Trimalchio gives his own, which is that Pubilius expresses finer sentiments, and he then quotes a moralizing passage, which he claims to be by Pubilius, against expensive imported fowl and jewellery. His admiration of such verses contrasts as ill with his own luxury as Agamemnon's praise of frugality and independence in ch. 5. This poem poses a problem discussed in my *Poems of Petronius* 19-20, where I reject the views that it is actually by Pubilius, that Trimalchio has composed it himself, or that it is a real quotation from someone other than Pubilius misattributed by Trimalchio. I reached the conclusion, now accepted by Walsh, that Petronius composed the piece himself and, while he linked it to themes of the work, did not intend it as a literary composition to be related to the characterization of Trimalchio. Instead, I suggested, he is taking the opportunity to parody the quite frequent use of quotations from Pubilius by Seneca to illustrate his moral teaching, and the piece is itself a parody of such moral tirades. There is a subtle recall of it in 67.9-10 (see below, p. 111). To a certain extent the description of the house of Oenothra (135.8) as I understand the point of that (see below, pp. 203-4) is comparable.

Then in 59 we have the entry of the Homeristae, a profession which gave theatrical performances of scenes from Homer⁴⁷ (Artemidorus 4.2; one is described in Ach. Tat. 3.20). While they are conducting their dialogue in Greek, Trimalchio reads out aloud a Latin translation for the guests and then, assuming that they have not followed the story, despite his claim to have read Homer as a boy (49.7), gives another of his mythologically garbled accounts of the narrative, in which Dio-medes appears as one of the Dio-scuri and has Gany-medes as his brother. The climax of this is that Ajax goes mad (because of the marriage of Achilles and Iphigenia!), and he, says Trimalchio, will complete the story. A boiled calf wearing a helmet (as if it were Odysseus, whom Ajax wished to kill) is brought in, and a carver dressed as Ajax cuts up the beast and serves it to the

⁴⁷ The material on these Homeristae is collected in full by Heraeus, *Rh. Mus.* 79 (1930), 397-402; see also *RE* suppl. 3.1158, C. P. Jones 189, and Starr, *Latomus* 46 (1987), 199. They are of course another theatrical element.

which will emerge in (vi) below), detected by Citroni, *Maia* 27 (1975), 301, in 61.4, where Niceros, about to recount his werewolf story, says 'I am afraid that these schoolmen' (i.e. Agamemnon, Encolpius, and Ascylos) 'may laugh at me . . . better to be laughed at than laughed down' (this is Sullivan's translation of the play on words in the Latin). This recalls the remark of Aristophanes prior to his comical account of the origin of love in Plato, *Symp.* 189b, that he is afraid his words may be considered not γελοία but κατὰ γέλαστος, not laughter-provoking but laughable. In Petronius the debasement of the context is underlined by the following epic tag *haec ubi dicta dedit* to introduce the far from sublime story. In 56.7 Trimalchio is by now even putting the philosophers out of business, a clear hint to us of the parody of the philosophical symposium; this is the sequel to a series of questions of the 'what is the most x?' type, such as were often discussed in the symposium (see *RE, Rätsel* 110-11), and a gnomic reflection on the mingling of bitter with the sweet. At this point I suggest that we are intended to recall that those speakers who address the whole company at the *Cena* are Trimalchio, Dama (he is too drunk to say more than a little, 41.10-12), Seleucus, Phileros, Ganymedes, Echion, and Niceros, seven in number if we leave out those who speak on a one-to-one basis; and there are exactly seven speeches in Plato's *Symposium*. B. Snell, *Leben und Meinungen der Sieben Weisen* (edn. 4, Munich 1971) 62 (see also his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Göttingen 1966) 115), suggests that Plato may have been influenced by a 'Dinner-Party of the Seven Sages'; he sees traces of the existence of this in the fifth century in skolia and a hexameter fragment preserved on papyrus. For other indications of the existence (not necessarily pre-Platonic) of such a work see *RE, Sieben Weisen* 2252-4. Controversial though the growth of the traditions about the Seven Sages is, at any rate we will note the discussion of such riddles in Plutarch's work of that name, 152f sqq.; a collection of riddles is associated with Cleobulus, one of the Seven, by Diog. Laert. 1.89.

In one respect the *Cena* resembles Plato more than Horace. In Petronius as in Plato each guest makes a speech and then falls silent (Trimalchio of course excepted); on an individual basis Hermeros interacts with each of the trio Encolpius,

Ascylos, and Giton, but there is no general conversation round the table as there is in Horace. This is of course because Trimalchio imposes his dominance more than Nasidienus can do.

There are some other links to the tradition of symposium-literature, which has regularly appearing generic episodes just as do the novel (see Ch. II (i)), the epic (e.g. description of decorations of a shield), New Comedy, and most genres of ancient literature. Such motifs are the quarrel in 57-8, the *θεύματα* in 53.11 (discussed above), and the *ἀκροαύματα* (the word in 53.12, 78.5) in 59.3 (discussed below); these Greek words were taken into Latin to indicate visual and oral entertainments at Roman dinner-parties.

Sixth, we have the intermittent attempts to keep up culture. In 48.4 Trimalchio asks Agamemnon what controversy he declaimed today, backing up his request with his claim to an interest in literature; and indeed he does know the technical term *peristasis*, the circumstances presumed as background of a declamation. Agamemnon starts off 'A rich man and a poor man were enemies', which gives Trimalchio a chance to enquire in pretended naivety 'What is a poor man?' This is a parody of a declamatory play found in Sen. *Contr.* 9.6.10-12, where a young girl accused of complicity in poisoning her half-brother asks 'Mother, what is poison?' and 'Father, what is a defendant?' 'A witty remark', replies Agamemnon; given his acceptance of the role (52.7) of praising Trimalchio's jokes, it is likely that this is to be understood as having been rehearsed. But, more than that, this role reproduces that of Philip in Xenophon's *Symposium* (1.14; he 'immediately tried to say something witty, so that he might discharge the function for which he regularly used to be invited to banquets'). After Agamemnon has expounded the *controversia*, Trimalchio dismisses it with a crude dilemma: 'if this happened, it can't be a *controversia*' (because *controversiae* were based on fictions); 'if it didn't happen, it's nonsense'. This sally meets with the usual obsequious praise from the guests, which encourages Trimalchio to ask if Agamemnon knows about the Twelve Labours of Hercules, or how, as he says he used to read as a boy in Homer, the Cyclops tore off Ulysses' thumb!

In the same vein Agamemnon gives a cue (50.1), by careful

cursing Trimalchio's *genius*, which is like an act of *maiestas*, treason, towards an emperor, the banishment (*relegatio*) of a porter to Baiae⁴² (which is as much a punishment as banishment to e.g. Acapulco), and judicial proceedings (cf. 70.5) involving other slaves. What has caused the desperate attempt to see the Gazette as covering six months is Trimalchio's surprise at hearing that he owns a park at Pompeii, the reader's explanation that it was bought last year and has therefore not yet been entered in the books, and Trimalchio's reply that such purchases must be reported to him within six months. But this again is all pre-rehearsed playacting to impress the guests with the magnitude of Trimalchio's properties, and is not to be taken literally any more than the statistics. Likewise in 47.11-13 he pretends not to know the cook, whom he actually knows very well (70.1), just in order to show that he has *decuriae* of slaves.

One episode which is hard to interpret because of a gap in the text comes in 60.8-9. Here three slaves enter, of whom two place images of the Lares on the table; the gap follows, after which Trimalchio says that one is called Cerdo, the second Felicio, the third Lucio. These are materialistic names (the first is common, for the second and third see Solin (1996) 93 and 66); we may compare the name of Trimalchio's *deliciae* Croesus, and indeed Fortunata herself, as well as the invocations of *Lucrum* and *Felicitas*, Gain and Prosperity, in Roman houses, for which see my notes on Juv. 14.204 and my *Musa Lapidaria* no. 135. Then the guests kiss an accurate likeness, *uera imago*, of Trimalchio. The three names are usually taken to belong to the Lares, but there would only be two Lares; these are clearly the names of the three slaves. The *uera imago* of Trimalchio would be a statuette of his *genius* with his own features; such a statuette is often found placed between two Lares (Wissowa 173). The kiss then would be that regularly given to an effigy of a god as a sign of respect (the *locus classicus* is Cic. 2 *Verr.* 4.94; see further Miller [above, n. 40] 203 n. 48); but the fact that the statuette has the features of Trimalchio clearly elevates his status.

Fourth are Encolpius' reactions to the proceedings and an ⁴² Patrons at Rome could banish (the same verb) their freedmen to Campania (Tac. *Ann.* 13.26.2).

increasing sense of oppression; the latter comes through in the statement (47.8) *nec adhuc sciebamus nos in medio, quod aiunt, cliuo laborare* ('We did not yet know that we were toiling halfway up the hill, as the proverb has it'). Similarly the theatrical carving of 59, described in 60.1 as *tam elegantes* (this of course ironical) *strophas* ('tricks', originally a wrestling term but by now a dead metaphor), is followed by the resonant opening of the ceiling panels and the trembling of the whole room as if in an earthquake, which scares Encolpius;⁴³ the other guests, as Encolpius interprets their reaction, look up in expectation of a celestial omen. In fact a huge hoop with little perfume-jars to take away is lowered. Then the saffron of 60.6, already mentioned, is referred to as *molestus umor*, annoying liquid; Trimalchio's ostentation has misfired, because the saffron becomes unpleasant when it is squirted in the face. Finally in 65.1 Encolpius states that even the recollection of the savouries disgusts him.

Fifth come recalls of Horace's dinner-party of Nasidienus, one of which has already been mentioned. In 47.7 the guests stifle their laughter with swigs of wine, as Varius in Horace (63) does with his napkin; in 58.1 Giton is unable to stifle his. In 48.1 Trimalchio, like Nasidienus (16), offers to change the wine if the guests so desire. At 52.4 a servant drops a cup; Petronius is taking a hint from Horace, who envisages such a mishap (72). There will be one more striking recall at the end of the *Cena*. More generally, the *Cena Nasidieni* is also recounted by a participant playing little part in the action, which the host attempts to dominate.

A reminiscence of another *Symposion*, that of Xenophon, will be discussed in a moment. Here one may remark that the acrobats in 53.11 recall the acrobat girl in Xenophon 2.7-22, but that Socrates enjoys the music (2.2) more than Encolpius. More significant is one of Plato's *Symposion* (the importance of

⁴³ The manuscript specifies his fear as *et timui ne per tectum petauristarius aliquis descenderet* ('and I was afraid that some acrobat would come down through the ceiling'). This is so feeble that I think it must have been interpolated by someone who had 53.11 sqq. in mind. The passage reads excellently without it: *consternatus ego surrexi, nec minus reliqui conuiuae mirantes erexere uultus* ('In consternation I rose, and likewise the other guests in amazement lifted up their countenances').

noua ludorum commissio [the last word a likely emendation]⁴⁰) and at sacrifices. This is not without precedent in Roman luxury. Sallust, *Hist.* 2.70 Maurenbrecher (= 2.59 McGushin) describes a meal *scenis ad ostentationem histrionum fabricatis, simul croco sparsa humus et alia in modum templi celeberrimi. praeterea tum sedenti* (sc. Metello, whose victory over Sertorius is being celebrated) *transenna demissum Victoriae simulacrum cum machinato strepitu tonitruum* (compare with this the preceding narrative in Petron. 60.1-3, discussed below); McGushin's translation is 'Stages were erected for the shows of the actors, the floor was strewn with saffron, and other features recalled the magnificence of a temple. In addition to that, when he was seated, a statue of Victory, let down by a rope and accompanied by the artificially produced sound of thunder . . . ' It looks to me as if Petronius, who knew his Sallust, is thinking of that actual occasion (cf. below, n. 52). The actors for whom a stage was constructed would very likely be performers of comedies, which refined hosts favoured, but not Trimalchio, who prefers Atellan farces (cf. 68.5); Hadrian 'according to circumstances' put on either (*Historia Augusta* 1.26.4). Here the guests misunderstand the saffron and rush to show their loyalty to the emperor; their misunderstanding is due to Trimalchio's status as an Augustalis. The very phrase *noua ludorum commissio* implicitly compares Trimalchio to the magistrate presiding over the games, and thus introduces the next heading.

Third comes the theme of the continuing attempts by Trimalchio to assimilate himself to the high and mighty. His 'decree' in 54.5 has just been mentioned. In 47.1-7 on his return to table he explains that he has recently been suffering from constipation; he gives permission to the guests to fart at table (that, he says, is what doctors advise) or to leave the table for his well-furnished lavatory. He claims to know many who died attempting to hold themselves in, because they 'refused to

⁴⁰ The Acta of the Secular Games of Septimius Severus (*Ann. Epigr.* 1932.70 p. 21; I (= G). B. Pighi, *De Ludis Saecularibus* (edn. 2, Amsterdam 1964) 161) after the heading *ordo ludorum honorariorum* (programme of the games) list first a *commissio noua* consisting of pantomimes, so we probably have another theatrical metaphor here. The whole episode is carefully analysed by Miller, *Hermes* 117 (1989), 192.

face the facts' (this is Walsh's translation of *dum nolunt sibi uerum dicere*). The point of this is double-edged. First, he is assimilating himself to the imperial precedent of Claudius (again Smith is characteristically sceptical about this), who is said (Suet. 32) to have contemplated issuing an edict permitting farting at banquets, because he found that someone had been endangered by holding himself in (*continentia*, cf. *continere* twice in Petronius). Secondly, it is a comic distortion of Seneca, *Tranq. An.* 1.16 *quis sibi uerum dicere ausus est?* 'Who has dared to tell himself the truth?' (in the context Seneca is talking about people who flatter themselves into believing that they have attained wisdom and into overlooking their faults, a matter which has a wider relevance to Trimalchio); physical in place of moral introspection, as Maiuri wittily puts it. One may compare the transference from vulcanology to physiology in fr. 39 B = 35 M = *AL* 473 (see Courtney (1991) 57).

Then in 47.13 Trimalchio threatens his cook, who is thus reminded of Trimalchio's *potentia*, with demotion to the company (*decuria*⁴¹) of the *uiatores* if he fails to perform satisfactorily. By this he means the couriers of 28.4 and 29.7; by calling them *uiatores* he suggests the official attendants on lesser magistrates (cf. *CIL* 12.4448 = *ILS* 6973 *exs decuria lictorum uiatorum*, 'from the company of lictors and couriers', and *OLD*, *uiatorius* 2). Again in 48.4 we are told about his twin Latin and Greek libraries, which mimic the set-up of the imperial public libraries of Rome (Starr, *Hermes* 115 (1987), 252). The most striking instance comes in 53 with the reading of the Daily Gazette of Trimalchio's estates; however much this has been disputed, and however unrealistically the numbers, which are all suspiciously round, are exaggerated, this must be taken to cover only one day (see Rose, *CP* 62 (1967), 258, and Smith 142; the criticism of Rose by R. Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire* (edn. 2, Cambridge 1982) 239, is niggling in some points). We are reminded of Pompey's freedman Demetrius (*RE* no. 50), who had the number of his slaves reported to him daily (Sen. *Tranq. An.* 8.6). This Gazette records the alleged crucifixion of a slave Mithridates for

⁴¹ For such *decuriae* Baldwin, *Acta Classica* 21 (1978), 93, compares *CIL* 4.1604 = E. Diehl, *Pompeianische Wandinschriften* 496; see other instances in *TLL* 5.223-84.

been disembowelled, and the cook is stripped for a whipping. Most of the guests intercede in his favour; clearly they understand that they are to play their regular role in a pantomime of begging off slaves from punishment so that Trimalchio can display his magnanimity. The same thing happens in 52.6 and 54.3, by which time Encolpius has learned his lesson, and as we look back to 30.9 (where we meet the same verb *despoliare*, 'strip') we can see how the slaves have learned to take advantage of this feature of the household and how the paymaster has adopted the lordly ways of his master. On this occasion, however, Encolpius is not disposed to mercy; he characterizes himself as *crudelissimae severitatis*, showing ruthless severity, which is how he sees his actions at the time from his subsequent viewpoint as narrator, when he can perceive how he was taken in. It should be remembered that such requests by slaves for the intercession of friends or guests of the owner were apparently not unusual; 'since the master's treatment of his slaves was part of his public image, the slave might acquire some leverage on his master through the guests; not only that, but the etiquette of hospitality included deference to a guest who urged leniency for a slave threatened with punishment' (W. Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge 2000) 55). The jurist Paulus, *Dig.* 21.1.43.1 speaks of *qui ad amicum domini deprecaturus confugit* ('A slave who takes refuge with a friend of his owner in order to seek pardon'; *deprecatur* appears in this context in Petron. 30.9, 49.6), and the comic poets use the word *precator* (*TLL* s.v. 1150.57), intercessor; with 49.6 *postea si fecerit, nemo nostrum pro illo rogabit* ('if he does this again none of us will intercede for him') compare Ter. *Ph.* 142 *posthac si quicquam, nil precor* ('if after this (he does) anything, I do not intercede'). Here, as is remarked below (p. 115) on 71.12, we have to see Trimalchio as social reality writ large.

Anyway on this occasion when the 'forgiven' slave goes to 'disembowel' the pig, out pour sausages, a display that is called an *automatum* (50.1, cf. 54.4; not to be taken as an adjective with *plausum*), a conjuring trick (this too a word relating to spectacle, cf. Suet. *Claud.* 34.3). The cook now has a silver crown presented to him, as if he had been victor in some theatrical contest.

In 54, which has just been referred to twice, an acrobat falls on Trimalchio, an event which Encolpius, remembering ch. 49, suspects to be leading up to a pre-arranged *catastrophā*, a 'coup de théâtre'.³⁸ He feels that his suspicion is justified when Trimalchio issues a 'decree' that the acrobat be freed ('Trimalchio can do this, since 53.12-13 imply that he owns the acrobats), so that nobody can say that such a great man was injured by a slave. The 'decree' is not the only way in which Trimalchio here accentuates his greatness; a slave is beaten for applying a white bandage, not one of imperial purple (cf. 38.5). The reflections of the guests on the instability of Fortune again invite Trimalchio to three lines (unfortunately textually defective³⁹) of subliterary verse which end with an injunction of the funereal type to 'eat, drink, and be merry'; this recalls 34.7-10, leading up to the first specimen of Trimalchio's subliterary verse (there the moral is introduced with *ergo*, as here with *quare*, both meaning 'therefore'). Trimalchio represents this as improvisatory. He says that the event (*casus*, a pun, since it also means 'fall'; the same pun in Hor. *Sat.* 2.8.71, see below, p. 103) must not pass without *inscriptio*, that is *ἐπιγραμματα* (55.4), and this is intended as a parody of the mini-genre of epigrams on non-fatal accidents (see Citroni on Mart. 1.12). The whole episode seems like a metatextual (see above, n. 10) recall of a mishap at the dinner-party of Nasidienus (Hor. *Sat.* 2.8.54 sqq.), when the hangings fall down and the host is comforted by reflections, which we might think disproportionate to the occasion, on the role of Fortune in human affairs. Was Encolpius right in his suspicion that all this has been staged? Looking back on the incident as narrator he certainly thinks so, and we cannot go against this.

In 60.4 a pastry Priapus holds fruit in his bosom *more uulgato*, in the common style, but when this fruit is touched it squirts saffron, which was regularly so squirted in the Roman theatre (hence this is described as a new opening of the games,

³⁸ Theatrical metaphors in Petronius will be discussed below, p. 162. Plut. *De Cupid. Divit.* 528b applies *πομπή* ('parade', cf. Petron. 60.5), *θῆαρρον*, *δράμα* to dinner-parties of the rich.

³⁹ Others think that their metrical defect may be due to improvisation, as Trimalchio represents it; this would imply that the accident was not staged. If it was staged, then he has composed the verse in advance.

to follow the method of sequential exposition employed so far. Instead the occurrences of these themes and motifs will be noted grouped together; note that sometimes two are combined and cannot be neatly sorted into separate compartments.

First is the theme of death, which was unobtrusively introduced at 26.9 (Trimalchio's clock which tolls out the hours of his life) and followed up at 34.10 with the skeleton and at 42-3 (a funeral which Seleucus has just attended). One of the guests, Julius Proculus, is an undertaker (and of course later Habinnas, who makes funeral monuments, appears). At this point we may review the attitudes to death revealed by the characters. In the *Cena* the word *mors*, the primary word for 'death', is found only at 71.6 (though the verb *morior* is quite common), and the euphemisms *uitali* [*lecto*] ('bed of life', i.e. bier; cf. *uitalia* 'grave-clothes' 77.15) and *abiit ad plures* ('he has gone to join the majority') appear at 42.5-6. Yet death is in the thoughts of the characters; Echion's praise of his boy has to be tempered by *si uixerit* ('if he lives') 46.3, and only Orcus, the god of death, can take away his accomplishments (§7, cf. 34.10). Short life-expectation in antiquity would make such thoughts spring naturally to mind, but what is significant in the *Cena* is their quantity. The commonest reaction is that we must enjoy life while we can (34.7 and 10, 43.1 [provoked by the preceding talk about a funeral], 72.2 [similarly], 75.7), i.e. by sensual pleasure (69.2), which is the only thing that one can bring with one into death (43.8; for this conception see my *Musa Lapidaria* no. 169 with the notes). For there is a sort of continuum between life and death (57.6, 74.17, 78.3), hence it is important to have a fine funeral and tomb (42.6-43.1, 58.12, 71.7, 78.2). One may observe also that a soldier is 'as strong as Orcus' (62.2), with which Otto 1306 and Friedlaender compared the Song of Solomon 8: 6 'Love is as strong as death', perhaps one of the Semitisms which have been detected in the speech of the freedmen.

It is noteworthy that there are direct links between thoughts of mortality and luxurious feasting. For this compare the words of Seneca to the glutton, *Ep.* 77.18 *mortem times: at quomodo illam media boletatione contemnis! uiuere uis: scis enim? mori times: quid porro? ista uita non mors est?* ('You fear death; but how you despise it in the act of savouring mushrooms! You

wish to live; is that because you know how to? You are afraid to die; well then, is this life of yours not death?'). See too *ibid.* 60.4. The clock that tolls out the hours of Trimalchio's life is placed in the dining-room (26.9); the cock whose crow foretells a death ends up in a saucepan (ch. 74). Note too the observations of Dunbabin quoted on p. 115 below.

Within the section that concerns us in this chapter death and fear come out strongly in the stories about the werewolf and the witches (61-3); the former is the party-piece of Niceros (Sandy, *ANRW* 2.34.2.1547, points out a subtle recall of Vergil's eighth and ninth Bucolics), and Trimalchio, who has previously heard it, persuades him to repeat it, as ever managing the entertainment (61.2, cf. 64.2). The same theme appears in Trimalchio's story of seeing the Sibyl in a bottle at Cumae; when boys ask her what she wants, her reply is 'I want to die' (48.8; question and answer are naturally in Greek, since the Sibyl did not know Latin). This builds on the account of Ovid, *Met.* 14.129-53 (see Bömer's note on 147), where the Sibyl reveals that in extreme old age she is doomed to be reduced to an invisible particle with only the voice remaining recognizable. Pausanias 10.12.8 says that her bones were preserved in an urn at Cumae, and [Justin] *Cohort. ad Graecos* 37 p. 35E says that her 'relics' (*leipsana*) were there kept in a bronze flask. All this of course belongs to the familiar pattern of 'the imp in the bottle'.³⁶ In rationalistic terms Petronius probably wants us to understand that Trimalchio has been taken in by an illusionist tourist attraction, the proprietors of which will have dictated the question to be put to the Sibyl.

If we do so understand this, that introduces the next theme, that of trickery and deception. In 47.8 Encolpius, by now conditioned to look for tricks, expects the pigs which have been brought in (with harnesses, as if they were equine; for the bells cf. Phaedr. 2.7.5, Apul. *Met.* 10.18) and the men who bring them to be performing animals³⁷ and acrobats (acrobats eventually arrive in 53.11), but is disappointed in this; here we have a double bluff. In 49 a pig served up appears not to have

³⁶ See Campbell Bonner in *Quantulacumque, Studies presented to Kirkcopp Lake* (London 1937) 1; Stuth Thompson, index s.v. Bottle; G. Anderson, *Fairytales in the Ancient World* (London 2000) 136.

³⁷ The *portenta* which he expects the pigs to do are *θαιμάρα* (cf. LSJ s.v. 1 2), tricks.

It is not central to the theme of this book to analyse this in detail; useful starting-points for its study can be found in Smith's appendix ii and in Boyce; see too Müller-Ehlers (ed. 3) 497, and N. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore 1990) 147–51. I should, however, like to stress that modern linguistic perspectives demonstrate the accuracy of Petronius' observation of vulgar language, in that he makes his characters conform to linguistic trends which were not recognized as such until modern times, and which can be seen establishing themselves as the Latin of the lower orders turns into the Romance languages. I mention in particular, since Smith and Boyce do not draw special attention to this, that there seem to be some expressions which have analogues in the Romance languages but not in classical Latin, not only (if rightly emended) *disparpallauit* (46.2; see A. Stefanelli, *Die Volks-sprache im Werk des Petron* (Vienna 1962) 97), but also (admittedly of uncertain interpretation) *tantum auri uides* (37.7), which has been compared (Zucchelli, *WS* 28 (1906), 167) with Italian *tant' oro*. By contrast Heliodorus 8.15 comments on the bad Greek of Bagoas, but reports it in perfectly good Greek; this is a sign of the difference of approach between the serious novel and Petronius' comic version.

Overall the speeches are marked by an abundance of Grecisms (and hybrid words produced by combining Greek and Latin elements), slang expressions and clichés (including more or less proverbial phrases), expressions that reveal the impress of a slave past (such as appeal to a superior's *genius*), morphological and syntactical vulgarisms (the former in particular often paralleled by Pompeian graffiti). Boyce (48–9, 52, 83) remarks that Trimalchio and Echion are particularly prone to hyperurbanisms, the type of error which makes so many people nowadays say 'between you and I'; that is, errors due to over-correction in one direction of what is vaguely recognized as a tendency to err in the opposite direction. In Trimalchio this chimes perfectly with his attempts at culture; in Echion it is a mark of his love-hate relationship towards education. Finally we must note in these speeches a tangy, pungent quality which comes from a sense of vivid feelings and engagement in the topics, trivial though they may seem to outsiders; these feelings, expressed in vigorous phrases and lively ellipses,

contrast with the trite clichés in a way strikingly true to life. When J. B. Hofmann was writing his classic book on conversational Latin, he began by seeking a criterion which could define conversational language in general, and found this in 'Affekt'; that is exactly the quality which we see in these speeches.

There is one more notable speech by a freedman in 57–8, where Hermeros bursts into a tirade against Ascylos and Giton for their bad manners in openly deriding Trimalchio's arrangements. Tension between the freedmen and those regarded by them as *scholastici* has been apparent at 46.1 and will reappear at 61.4. Encolpius himself indicates that Hermeros is quite justified (57.1 *intemperantis licentiae*, 'unrestrained and ill-behaved', 58.1 *indecenter*, 'inappropriately'); the modern reader, however, will feel that a wider question is raised both here and in Horace's *Cena Nasidieni*. That is because we have developed the concept of 'snobbery', for which Latin does not even have a word (*fastidium* is probably nearest). The amused superiority which I have remarked in Horace is the attitude of insiders to an outsider (in Horace this attitude is present throughout, in Petronius Encolpius comes to it only gradually); Trimalchio and his guests are such outsiders who do their best to boost their status until they come up against its boundaries. It is easy to mock the language and attitudes of such men and allow this mockery to obscure their qualities and achievements, but nowadays one can hardly admire the mocker. Was Petronius such a mocker? It seems quite likely that the *arbiter elegantiae* as a historical person was, but the question is irrelevant; what we have in his novel are the attitudes of his narrator. The mockery has to be seen against the background of the cultural pretensions of Encolpius; he can look down on these people, but equally they would be entitled to dismiss him as an underachiever. As far as Trimalchio is concerned, he aspires to a certain extent to the cultural values of the narrator, but only as a decoration; essentially he is stuck in the freedman values of wealth, luxury, and status.

Most of the central themes and motifs of the *Cena* have now been introduced, so for chs. 47.1–65.2 it will not be necessary

Finally (46.1) Echion realizes that Agamemnon is becoming bored with this chatter and feels himself of a different social class, entitled to mock the words of his inferiors; this shows his own insecurity about the way he talks. His retort is that they all know that Agamemnon has been crazed by learning, and that Agamemnon should visit his modest (a diminutive in the Latin) place, where Echion will scratch together a meal;³⁴ this mock-modesty about his material prosperity is his answer to his cultural insecurity. He also states that Agamemnon will have Echion's own *cicaro* attending on him. This word at 71.11 appears to mean Trimalchio's slave-born foster-child, and it pretty certainly means the same here, as Booth, *TAPA* 109 (1979), 16, argues. This has the advantage of accounting for the typical slave-name Primigenius and Echion's statement *habebis ad latus servulum*, 'You'll have a little slave at your side' (if Echion's own son were meant this would have to be taken as figurative); Booth compares the boy in Stat. *Silv.* 5.5, but this 'parallel' turns round and bites him, since Statius emancipated that boy in infancy (73). Anyway this is a studious boy (cf. the slave-boy at 75.4), whose studies, however, Echion wishes to direct to practical ends, not literature but law, to help run the family business (*domusio*; just as Trimalchio learnt *in domusione litteras* 48.4 according to a pretty certain emendation); failing an inclination for that, he will be trained for a good trade as a barber or auctioneer or in the last resort (*certe*) an attorney. Romans with conventional views would have thought no more of the first two professions than of that of undertaker, which Hermeros, reflecting much the same values as Echion, had regarded as an honourable trade, *honesta negotiatio* (38.14). To such Romans the profession of attorney (which is why he will need Agamemnon's instruction, if that is what is meant) would have seemed a step up the social scale, not a second-best as it is to Echion, who evidently regards it as likely to bring in less money; Juvenal agrees with this view (7.106 sqq., where see my note), and we all have heard about plumbers who make more than some lawyers. Nevertheless

³⁴ He adds 'even if stormy weather has ruined everything this year'; if Petronius was writing this towards the end of his life, as he very likely was, this could be a reference to the great storm of AD 65 in Campania (Tac. *Ann.* 16.13.1).

Echion tells the boy 'whatever you learn, you learn for yourself' (a parody of Sen. *Ep.* 7.9) and holds up the attorney Phileros (not the Phileros who spoke ch. 43) for a model as one who has risen in the world because of his profession (here we see the same sense of social mobility as in the speech of Hermeros); the climax of his exhortation is 'learning's a treasure, and a trade stays with you for life'.

The point of all this small-town talk is clearly that the absent Trimalchio, who has been portrayed mainly in his own right up to this point, should now be set against a social background of the municipal society within which he circulates, and that, as with Hermeros, this society should come across through the mouths of its members. The first speakers show how their world is dominated by trivialities. Echion deepens the picture by his more explicit value-judgements and his belief that education derives its value from the income which it produces; as he says in strikingly concrete fashion, 'law brings in the bread, and he's tainted enough by literature'. This could not be said in the presence of Trimalchio, who has recently (39.2-4) stressed culture and whose tone towards Agamemnon in ch. 49 after his return is quite different from that of Echion here. Echion is acting in what he sees as the best interests of the boy and feels pride in him (even if it is absurd to be proud that he can divide by four; Trimalchio's pet slave-boy can divide by ten, 75.4, which is less easy with Roman numerals than in our decimal system); however, his resultant actions come over as stifling to any attempt at creativity and independence. That is exactly how Petronius wishes us to see Trimalchio and his society, often well-meaning but with inevitably Philistine values. One may add that suppressed hostility to Agamemnon breaks out again from Hermeros, who in 57.8 is quite polite about him, but as he gets angrier abuses him as Ascylos' teacher at 58.13 (by now his rage has been diverted from Giton to Ascylos; this happened at 58.7, where Friedlaender was perhaps right to suppose a gap in the text).³⁵

The Latinity of these speeches has naturally aroused much interest, and indeed its comic quality has sometimes been allowed to overshadow more significant aspects of the *Cena*.

³⁵ There is a discussion of the characterization of all the guests in R. J. Ball (ed.), *The Unpublished Lectures of Gilbert Highet* (New York 1998) 126.

which naturally is something that has significance for the host and most of the guests. Encolpius' reaction to this explanation is to curse his own stupidity and resolve to make no more enquiries; already he has had to force himself (*duraui* 41.2), whereas he had felt no shame in asking for the first time (36.7). Petronius emphasizes the parallelism of these two episodes by *etiam hoc* ('this too') in the answer of Hermeros, and by the repetition of *interrogare* and *at ille*. Encolpius therefore is afraid that he may seem never to have dined in respectable company. This is of course ironical; Trimalchio had spoken of having had 'respectable company' to dinner yesterday (34.7), but it is an odd kind of 'respectable company' which can be expected to key into such 'freedman-humour'. This line of humour is continued when a handsome boy enters dressed as Bacchus and assuming his aspects as 'the Uproarious', 'the Loosener', 'the Clamorous'; he carries grapes around and in a high-pitched voice delivers Trimalchio's poems. Trimalchio says to him '*Dionyse, liber (Liber) esto*', of which the most obvious sense is 'be free' (cf. 54.5), as if he were being freed like the boar, the less obvious one is 'be Liber', in contrast to the other aspects of the god already portrayed by him. The boy acts out this pre-rehearsed charade by snatching the cap from the boar and putting it on his own head. Trimalchio then points out that he has *Liberum (liberum) patrem*, which on the surface means that he owns *Liber Pater*, the slave Dionysus, but also slyly insinuates that he has now acquired a free father and has therefore become of free birth (of course he and the company enjoy the complicity in knowing this to be untrue). These elaborate puns elicit the usual eulogy (*laudamus*) from the guests.

(iv) 41.9-46.8, *Conuiuiarum Sermones*

The phrase quoted at the head of this section is pretty clearly a reader's marginal heading which has been incorporated into the text to mark the intermezzo 41.9-46.8. Trimalchio leaves the table to attend to a call of nature; the guests feel that they have gained 'liberty without a tyrant', a phrase which indicates the control that so far Trimalchio has exercised over the proceedings, but also continues the preceding puns by laying claim to the same freedom as the slave Dionysus. The first symptom of

this freedom is that Dama requests more to drink (apparently; unfortunately the text is corrupt), whereas this previously was only done with Trimalchio's permission (34.1). Here we catch an echo of another dinner with an obnoxious host, namely Nasidienus in Horace, *Satires* 2.8.77-83, where the host leaves the room, a buzz of whispered conversation breaks out, and Vibidius' requests for more wine are ignored by the slaves. On looking back we can pick up more echoes. In Horace 92-4 the host explains the origins and nature of all the food, so that in disgust the guests refuse to eat; likewise in 37.1 Encolpius is so disgusted by Trimalchio's feeble punning that with the same verb (*gusto*) he too refuses to eat anything more. The dish of Petronius 36.3, which has fish as if swimming in gravy (*ius*, previously introduced by Trimalchio in a pun; see above, p. 86, on 35.7-36.4) and soaked with peppered *garum*, fish-sauce, is suggested by that at Horace 42-50, which has an eel surrounded by scampi 'swimming' in a *ius* of which *garum* and pepper are ingredients. In Horace too the events of the party are related by a participant in the tone, a mixture of disgust and amused superiority, to which Encolpius eventually comes; one of the guests, Maecenas, like Agamemnon brings along two *umbrae*; and dishes are served with comparable ceremonial pomp. There will be more.

Five guests now give a speech each on topics such as a funeral that has taken place today, the character of the deceased, the high price of bread, the general deterioration in the state of the town and the inferiority of present-day officials to their predecessors, the upcoming gladiatorial show which will put a miserable previous one in the shade,³³ a public meal which will win electoral favour for its donor, and some scandalous gossip. These speeches constitute a structurally important element in the elaborately symmetrical scheme which Bodel 45, adjusting Hubbard, has laid out for the *Cena*, as they form the hinge or turning-point after which earlier episodes are recalled in reverse order; and this repetition is functional in that it contributes to the increasing sense of tedium and satiety communicated by Encolpius.

³³ Echion remarks on *familia non lanistica, sed plurimi liberti*, 'not just a hack troupe of gladiators but freedmen for the most part' (Sullivan), as if he were not a freedman himself.

course does not intend to deny the larger than life traits in the personality of Trimalchio himself.

Fortunata, reports Hermeros, has risen from the gutter and now exercises control over Trimalchio, whose wealth is so great that he can aim at self-sufficiency in which everything will be home-grown (Trimalchio himself makes this point at 48.2); for example, he fetches bees from Athens so that he will not have to buy Attic honey, and (a surrealistic climax) he has sent a message to have mushroom-seed imported from India. All this is summarized, from Hermeros' viewpoint, as bliss of mind, *animi beatitudo*! At this point we will recollect that Nasidienus was given the epithet *beatus*, which can refer either to mental or material happiness, in the very first line of Horace's poem discussed below (pp. 91 and 103). As far as Encolpius is concerned, he sarcastically designates Hermeros' information as *tam dulces fabulas*, pleasant gossip (39.1).

By now the last course has been removed, and Trimalchio reminds the guests that they should know him better than to suppose that he is concerned only with the food which he serves; '*sic notus Ulixes*?' ('Don't you know Ulysses any better?'), a Vergilian tag coming from the context in which Laocoon warns against the tricks of Ulysses, specifically the Trojan horse. 'One must' he says 'even while dining pay attention to culture (*philologia*); thank God for my ex-owner who made me a man of the world, au fait with everything'. 'Man of the world' is *hominem inter homines*, here with the point of suggesting a novel interpretation of the cultural ideal of *humanitas*, Trimalchio's mastery of which has enabled him to produce the Vergilian quotation. The remark alerts us to various recurrent themes, the most important one for the moment being the parody of the learned discussions recounted by many writers as having taken place at symposia; prominent surviving representatives of the sub-genre 'Symposion-literatur' (see *RE* esp. 1278, *OCD*, and *Der Kleine Pauly* s.v.) are the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus, the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, and the *Quaestiones Symposiacae* of Plutarch (the last of these in fact emphasizes *φιλολογία* (Courtney 1962) 97; for *φιλόλογα*, cultural conversation, at dinner cf. *Cic. ad Att.* 13.52.2). Trimalchio's immediate purpose is to explain the Zodiac dish of 35.1-5. He starts with Aries, a sign under which are born

men with hard heads and countenances that know no shame; it is the sign of *scholastici*, a joke at Agamemnon and his *umbrae* which they take in good part. The other signs and the corresponding foods are similarly explained, with another shot at Agamemnon when *rhetores* are said to be born under Pisces; it is as if Trimalchio has heard Agamemnon's metaphor of fishing for students at 3.4 (one might to some extent compare the metatextual reference to Seneca discussed in n. 10 above), though he has astrological justification (Grondona 24(-25) n. 61 adduces Firm. Mat. *Math.* 8.30.7 for orators and Pisces). As far as Trimalchio's own sign Cancer is concerned, Connors 113 adduces an observation by T. Barton, *Power and Knowledge* (Ann Arbor 1994) 193 n. 79, that his placing only of a garland, not an item of food, over it carries imperial overtones. At the end the guests again shout 'bravo' (*sophōs*, a form of acclamation used in the theatre) and proclaim Trimalchio the king of astronomers.

Now the slaves bring in coverlets showing hunting scenes, hunting dogs rush into the dining room,³² and a tray with a huge boar wearing a cap is carried in; it is surrounded by pastry piglets placed as if they were suckling, another illusion but not really meant to deceive since the guests see clearly that the boar is not a sow. A burly, bearded man dressed as a hunter cuts open its side, and out fly thrushes, which are captured by bird-catchers with limed rods and brought to the guests. Presumably when each guest has inspected his bird, they are to be taken away and cooked, but later (65.2) capons are served instead. Here the theme introduced in subtle fashion at 39.3 is picked up; this theatrical course was known as a Trojan Pig, *porcus Troianus* (Macrobius. *Sat.* 3.13.13, quoting the orator Titius of the second century BC). Encolpius tries in vain to deduce why the boar is wearing a cap. Hermeros again has to explain; yesterday the main course had laid claim to the boar (*uindicasset*, in two senses, one suggesting that the boar is being claimed as a slave), but it had been sent back by the guests (*dimissus est* meaning also that it had been let go free, cf. 66.7 *pernae missionem dedimus* 'We gave its discharge to the ham'), so today it returns to the feast wearing the cap of a freedman,

³² C. P. Jones sees this as intended to recall an animal-hunt (*uenatio*) in the amphitheatre.

in 56.8-9. The guests are disappointed by the mediocre food,²⁸ but Trimalchio urges them to eat; '*hoc est ius cenae*'. When the lid is lifted delicacies are disclosed, some of them again in deceptive form (a hare with feathers attached to look like Pegasus, fishes in sauce as if swimming). Now the guests grasp the point of Trimalchio's feeble pun on *ius*, 'law' and 'sauce'. So the slaves break into applause (cf. 50.1; they have been trained to do this like the claqueurs often organized for theatrical performances), and the guests with laughter take the hint and do the same, to Trimalchio's delight.²⁹ Applause too is something which will put us in mind of the theatre; so also at 50.1, where it is coupled with the specifically theatrical term *automatum*, conjuring trick. At this point we will recall that Agamemnon (5.7) had advised against becoming a hired applauder in the theatre, which is exactly the role that he himself plays in the *Cena*!

Trimalchio calls out a slave, who carves up these delicacies, needless to say, to musical accompaniment, which is compared to that at a gladiatorial show, so that the display of art takes precedence over the function of carving. This slave is named Carpus (quite a common name), so that the vocative *Carpe* is identical with the imperative *carpe* of the verb *carpo* 'carve', and this provides Trimalchio with the material for another feeble pun. Encolpius is so dim-witted that he has to have this explained to him by a veteran guest (cf. 33.8; 'veteran' is *qui saepius eiusmodi ludos spectauerat*, 'who had often watched shows of this type', which takes up the gladiatorial comparison); he is so disgusted that he cannot touch a morsel more. This then is the critical point at which he begins to find it hard to stomach Trimalchio. Note the implication that Trimalchio has perfected his tricks at feast after feast, so that the veteran guests are perfectly familiar with them.

(iii) 37.1-41.8

Turning to his neighbour (Hermeros, as the combination of 57.1 and 59.1 indicates,³⁰ Encolpius enquires about the woman

²⁸ There are some problems about this, very likely caused by a gap in the text; see Smith on 35.6-7.

²⁹ The point of all this was explained by Avery, *CP* 55 (1960), 116.

[See opposite page for n. 30]

(iii) 37.1-41.8

running around hither and thither. In the first of the *Cena*'s long freedmen speeches, the character of which will be analysed in (iv) below, Hermeros identifies her as Trimalchio's wife Fortunata. What is remarkable in this speech is that it is a description of one character from the mouth of another who by his words also reveals himself; it was brilliantly analysed in these terms by E. Auerbach (*Mimesis*, Berne 1946, Eng. tr. Princeton 1953, ch. 2), who points out that the nature of Trimalchio's circle is thus illuminated from within and its vulgarity is made apparent by the standard which it itself sets, namely that wealth is the greatest good, and that any means of obtaining it is respectable, even the generally despised profession of undertaker (38.14); Stöcker 150 remarks how many of the characters in the *Cena* are introduced by a statement of their wealth. We may note that Hermeros hopes even in death to find pride in the material acquisitions of his life (57.6).

Auerbach's second point is the impression that is conveyed of dynamic social mobility (he might have remarked the pride that Hermeros takes in his rise at 57.11); all four characters mentioned by Hermeros have their past contrasted with their present, and bank-balances can go up (Trimalchio, Fortunata, C. Pompeius Diogenes, whose name shows that he is literally a fellow-freedman, *colibertus* (38.6), of C. Pompeius Trimalchio) or down (Iulius Proculus). In particular we may note the phrase 38.7 *de nihilo crevit* ('He started out with nothing') compared with 43.1 *ab asse crevit* ('He started out with a penny'), 71.12 *ex paruo crevit* ('He started from small beginnings'); we also note the craving for assimilation betrayed by the phrase *hominem inter homines*, a man of the world, 39.4 (here with a special point; see below) compared with 57.5, 74.13.³¹ The reservation must be entered that this social mobility has its limits; as a freedman Hermeros can rise so far and no farther. Auerbach concluded that in the presentation of the guests at the *Cena* Petronius 'is closer to our modern conception of a realistic presentation than anything else that has come down to us from antiquity', a statement which of

³⁰ The identification is confirmed by the recurrence of some turns of speech, particularly *in rutae folium conicere* 37.10, 58.5 ('to throw into a leaf of rue', an obscure expression).

³¹ For the Greek equivalent see Herodas 5.15 and Ch. VII n. 9.

height later in the cook Daedalus (70.1-2), who can make any food into any other; of course he derives his name (sometimes given to slaves; Solin (1996) 328) from the mythical Daedalus, also a master of deception, who in Trimalchio's muddled brain (52.2) shut Niobe inside the Trojan Horse, another symbol of deception which will again play its part in the *Cena* (ch. 49).

While the hors d'oeuvre are being removed, a silver dish is dropped, a slave is pummelled for picking it up, and it is swept away with the trash. This is meant to show Trimalchio's lordly indifference to valuable property once it has been damaged; we are reminded how his steward's suit of Tyrian purple lost value in his eyes (though not so much as the silver in Trimalchio's eyes) once it had been cleaned, and indeed how balls which had hit the ground were not picked up (27.2). Then two 'long-haired Ethiopians' enter and before the next course instead of water pour wine over the hands of the guests from wineskins like those used for sprinkling the sand in the amphitheatre, a comparison which reinforces the feeling that Trimalchio is making a spectacle out of the meal. 'Long-haired Ethiopians' is a contradiction in terms; these are the long-haired pages common in Roman households (27.1, 57.9, 70.8; Trimalchio himself 29.3, 63.3) with blackened faces (cf. 102.13), another case of things which are not what they seem. Actual Ethiopian slaves were a popular form of ostentation (see Barsby on Ter. *Eun.* 165). The guests praise Trimalchio for his *elegantiae*, but right away this is exposed as empty. For wine-jars are brought in with labels stating that this is 100-year old wine dating from the consulship of Opimius in 121 BC (i.e. the labels claim to have been affixed in 21 BC). This famous vintage was already undrinkable in Cicero's day (*Brut.* 287), and in Petronius' time could only be used to fortify younger wines (Pliny, *NH* 14.55). Since this wine is not undrinkable, and since Trimalchio later (48.2) specifically claims that he never buys wine but produces all that he serves on his own estates, one must infer that all this is empty ostentation, despite his give-away remark 'I serve up REAL Opimian wine'. It has also been pointed out that at the date of Opimius local designations of wine were not yet applied (Pliny, *NH* 14.94; Bicknell, *AJP* 89 (1968), 347), so the originator of the labels (i.e. Trimalchio) has betrayed himself with *Falernum*. Trimalchio adds 'I served up less good wine

yesterday, though the guests were of a much better class', again a piece of social ineptitude which simultaneously compliments and insults the company. They, however, discharge their social obligation by conscientiously (*accuratissime*) praising the lavishness (*lautitia*, a word which Encolpius used without sarcasm in 32.1; cf. *lauta* 31.8).

Anyway the wine provokes gloomy comments from Trimalchio: 'Wine lives longer than man, so let's drink heartily, wine is the stuff of life.' This will immediately put the readers in mind of some tomb inscriptions, such as *CLE* 243 'While I lived, I enjoyed drinking; drink up, you who are alive' (see also my *Musa Lapidaria* nos. 169-71 with my notes). The funeral atmosphere is heightened when a jointed silver skeleton is brought in and thrown on the central table several times to produce grotesque shapes. This is the famous 'skeleton at the feast', a reminder of mortality deriving ultimately from Egypt²⁶ though, unlike the Egyptian mummy, this has something of the puppet-show about it. It elicits from Trimalchio a mournful three-line epigram, in the sub-literary form (as at 55.2) of two hexameters and one pentameter, which has obviously been composed in advance—another instance of staging. Trimalchio is so proud of his ability as a poet (others would with more justice call him a poetaster) that he later has a slave recite some of his compositions (41.6). There has been a hint of dark undertones in 26.9; now they are brought out much more clearly.

After the guests have praised (cf. 39.6, 41.8, 52.7-8) this mediocre epigram, the next dish to arrive seems disappointingly small, though novel. It resumes from 30.4 the theme of astrological superstition, consisting as it does of a round platter displaying the signs of the Zodiac, with an appropriate food placed by each, e.g. a slice of beef by Taurus.²⁷ Most of the items take the form of a rebus, which Trimalchio again adopts

²⁶ See Dunbabin 186 sqq., esp. 196 sqq. and (for Egypt) 208; Wöhrlé, *Hermes* 118 (1990), 292 sqq. (esp. 297). See also Polemon, *AP* 11.38 = Gow-Page, *Garland of Philip* 3350, where again we find the link between death and drinking.

²⁷ This is not quite so novel as the guests think; a similar dish with a partial Zodiac is described by Alexis fr. 263 Arnott, and see also *AP* 9.822 (late and anonymous).

transgressions on the intercession of guests (49.6, 54.3); this will be discussed below (pp. 97-8).

Finally they get to recline (sit down, in modern terms). Young slaves pour refrigerated water on their hands, chiropodists (*ad pedes*) remove their hangnails (not something that they enjoy). All the time they sing; Encolpius, wishing to find out if the whole household sings, asks for an aperitif, which is duly served with song which Encolpius compares to the chorus which would accompany a pantomime. This brings to our attention the strong element of theatricality in Trimalchio's presentation of his meal, which has been excellently discussed by C. P. Jones 185. Then come very nice hors d'oeuvre, still in the absence of Trimalchio, for whom an unconventional (*nouveau*; cf. 27.3 and n. 5 above) place is reserved, apparently *summus in summo* rather than the usual *summus in imo*.²⁰ One of the hors d'oeuvre introduces the theme of deceptive foods which will become prominent in the *Cena*. Sizzling sausages are served on a silver dish, beneath which are damsons and pomegranate grains; the idea is that they should look like hot coals.²¹

(ii) 32.1-36.8

At last Trimalchio himself appears to a fanfare, but his appearance is so absurd that the unwary among the guests are surprised into laughter. He is wearing a scarlet coat, a scarf with a broad purple stripe and a fringe of tassels,²² a gilt ring on the little finger of his left hand and on the next finger a smaller gold ring studded with iron stars.²³ Most of this is meant to

²⁰ Smith 66 gives a diagram of the seating arrangements. Bauer 19 compares *πρωτοκλῶτα* in Matthew 23: 6, Mark 12: 39, Luke 20: 46.

²¹ As Avery, *Hermes* 107 (1979), 120, points out, *prunum* means 'plum', *pruna* 'live coal'; there is no etymological connection, nor did the Romans make one.

²² Marmorale quotes Suet. *Iul.* 45.3 *ferunt usum lato clauo ad manus fimbriato* ('They say that he used a broad-striped tunic with fringes down to the hands'); perhaps another case of Trimalchio modelling himself on a (nearly) imperial precedent. See also Mart. 4.46.17 *lato uariata mappa clauo* ('a napkin marked with a broad stripe').

²³ For his rings see also 71.9. I have encountered the statement that he would have been entitled to wear a gold ring during his tenure of the sevirate, an office held for a limited term (annual?), though renewable; but I have not

(ii) 32.1-36.8

hint at, without actually claiming, the status of a senator (the purple stripe, which he does not venture to have on a toga) or an *eques* (pure gold rings were the mark of free-born *equites*). After using a silver toothpick, he says that he did not yet feel like coming to table, but he had done so so that his guests would not be kept waiting any longer. This is of course a social gaffe in that, while professing to oblige his guests, he actually puts them in an awkward position. He asks indulgence to finish his solitaire game, played on a board of expensive materials and (which really impresses Encolpius; *rem omnium delicatissimam*, the height of refinement) with gold and silver coins instead of black and white counters, and swears heartily when the dice do not fall as desired.

Meanwhile a dish is brought in with a nest in which a wooden hen lies as if hatching her eggs; two slaves (to musical accompaniment, naturally) search through the straw and find not hen eggs (which were sometimes presented at table in this manner; Juv. 11.70) but peahen eggs,²⁴ which they serve up. Trimalchio diverts his attention from his game to this piece of theatre, *scaena*, as Encolpius sees it; we infer that Trimalchio is the impresario, and as the *Cena* progresses it will become more and more apparent how he has tried (not always with success) to plan it to impress. Trimalchio pretends to fear that the eggs, which are actually made of pastry,²⁵ have already hatched, and Encolpius is about to reject his in disgust when he hears a guest who is an old hand (cf. 36.8) say 'there must be some goody here', and finds inside a plump fig-pecker (a little bird which is still a favourite Italian delicacy) coated in real egg-yolk with pepper. This is the second, more elaborate and more explicitly drawn to our attention, instance of foods which are not what they seem to be (a feature recurring with pastries in 40.4, 69.6). This recurrent theme of unreality and deception reaches its

been able to find any evidence for this. The iron stars are a diluted reminder of the iron ring ordinarily worn by freedmen (58.11) among others (see my note on Juv. 11.129).

²⁴ Avery [above, n. 21] 120-1 points out that peahens' eggs, which are larger than hens' eggs (Colum. 8.11.12), were regularly hatched by hens (Colum. loc. cit. etc.).

²⁵ At the moment (33.6) when the narrator Encolpius conveys to us that the eggs were of pastry the actor Encolpius did not yet know this. This feature of Petronius' narrative technique has been discussed on p. 38 above.