

THE SATYRICON: THE SENSE OF AN ENDING¹⁾

I

Since the fragmentary *Satyricon* lacks an ending as well as a beginning, it may appear rash to propose to discuss endings in Petronius' novel. There are, however, discrete sections in the *Satyricon* which survive self-subsistent, complete in themselves.

There have been attempts to reconstruct both the lost beginning and end of the *Satyricon*. Basing his views on three lines in Sidonius Apollinaris²⁾, the fifth-century Bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, and on the *gravis ira Priapi* (Sat. 139.2), Cichorius speculated that the beginning of the *Satyricon* was set in Massilia (Marseille) and that Encolpius, the first-person narrator of the *Satyricon*, possibly committed some sacrilegious act there against Priapus. Daviault has turned his attention to the conclusion of the *Satyricon*³⁾. An understanding of the way in which Petronius handled the endings of self-subsistent sections may give us clues to his intentions in writing the novel.

1) The title for this paper is taken from Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York 1967). J. P. Sullivan, Roger Beck, Barry Baldwin, Gerald Sandy, and Nicholas Horsfall kindly read an earlier version of this paper, suggested interesting parallels, and attempted to save the writer from serious sins.

2) *et te Massiliensium per hortos / sacri stipitis, Arbiter, colonum / Hellespontiaco parem Priapo* Carm. 23.155–157. These lines are regularly now attached to all Latin texts of the *Satyricon* as Fragmentum IV.

3) C. Cichorius, *Petronius und Massilia, Römische Studien* (Leipzig 1922) 438–442; E. Klebs, *Zur Composition von Petronius Satirae*, *Philologus* 47 (1889) 623–635, compares Poseidon's wrath for Odysseus and Priapus' for Encolpius. The second chapter of J. P. Sullivan's *The Satyricon of Petronius: A Literary Study* (London 1968), is entitled "A Reconstruction of the *Satyricon*". A. Daviault, *La destination d'Encolpe et la structure du Satiricon: Conjectures*, *Cahiers des Études Anciennes* 15 (1983) 29–46, speculates that the *Satyricon* began at Massilia and ended at Lampsacus, the birth place of Priapus. B. Baldwin, *Ira Priapi*, *CP* 68 (1973) 294–296, ever the Missouri sceptic, adds: "Petronian scholars cleave with extraordinary devotion to the idea that the wrath of Priapus was one of the basic motifs of the *Satyricon*; perhaps *the* motif. Now the very notion that there was a precise structure and recurrent theme in the *Satyricon* is more a matter of faith than of evidence . . . It is still valid to believe that the *Satyricon* may have been a series of self-contained adventures; characters recurred, not a running motif".

Though we must be satisfied with a very much reduced *Satyricon*⁴), enough fragments survive to allow us to make some tentative judgments about the feelings with which Petronius approached his novel. For example: the distances covered from Massilia (Frag. 4) to Puteoli (26–78) to Croton (124–141) indicate that the *Satyricon* is painted on a large canvas, a comic prose epic stroked across the Mediterranean Sea. Petronius sets up parallels between his *Satyricon* and the *Odyssey*⁵) or the *Aeneid* and between his novel and the ancient Greek novel⁶). These parallels appear to be arranged for purposes of parody and humor and consist of recurring motifs, many of which are hackneyed, from literary works or parts of them which also help to thicken the literary texture of the *Satyricon*⁷). Petronius parodies or otherwise plays with parallels from several genres for longer or shorter spaces but does not seem to have one parody or parallel before himself at all times.

II

At Sat. 111–112 we have a complete version of the Widow of Ephesus tale. The opening words contain the seeds from which the story will spring: *matrona quaedam Ephesi tam*⁸) *notae erat pudicitiae*. A woman of widely famous virtue will in the hands of Petronius, we all know, yield⁹) in the end to *impudicitia*. A woman

4) Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 36, calculates that we may have only 10% of the original.

5) Klebs (*supra* n. 3).

6) R. Heinze, *Petron und der griechische Roman*, *Hermes* 34 (1899) 494–519.

7) P. G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge 1970) 32 ff. T. Hubbard, *The Narrative Architecture of Petronius' Satyricon*, *AC* 55 (1986) 190–192, gives a short list of “perceived various strands of unity in the novel”.

8) The result clause which begins here and has its syntactical conclusion a few words later has its efficient result only when the widow's husband's body is affixed to the cross.

9) The high-minded rhetorician Agamemnon cadges for meals (3.3; 26.9), and the sophisticated aesthete Eumolpus grabs for money and boys as soon as he concludes his speech of platitudes (83.9–10; 85–87). Each is introduced as someone of special virtue, only to be proved a subject with physical appetites. The reference here to *pudicitia* would remind the listener that in Rome's distant past there had been not only an *aedes* to *Pudicitia Patricia* but also one to *Pudicitia Plebeia*, where women could demonstrate that they sought after *pudicitia* as fervently as the men after *virtus* (Livy 10.23). Sadly Livy concludes *religio ... postremo in oblivionem venit*. If the *hypogaemum* of the husband can be seen as an *aedes Pudicitiae Plebeiae* because of the widow's devotion, the dead husband's relatives like Livy would

of absolute *pudicitia* is a myth (Petronius knows that his reader knows Ovid Am. 1. 8. 43 *ludunt formosae: casta est quam nemo rogavit*), and the reader familiar with myths knows or feels that myths follow a largely predetermined (and un-Petronian) path. Like the *puella nubilis* pursued by the determined young man, the *matrona* will follow a kind of ritual which leads in familiar ways to a predictable end. In the same way that ancient Greek novelists unflinchingly connect the young woman of *unbelievable* beauty to the young man of *unsurpassed* handsomeness¹⁰), Petronius marks the *matrona* for a future *peripeteia* by endowing or encoding her with *tam notae pudicitiae*¹¹). The opening words foreshadow the end for the very observant reader only; the rest of us pick up the clues when we read it the second time¹²). The tale of the Widow of Ephesus is a love story the beginning of which Petronius delays by his description of a husband's funeral. A few lines into the story the reader becomes apprehensive that the widow, bursting with Roman virtue, might join her husband in Hades through suicide¹³). Since the widow is alone with her *ancilla* in the tomb, the

mourn that *religionem in oblivionem venisse*. According to Juvenal (6), *Pudicitia*, long since departed, had once reigned on earth and chaste women lived simply in caves (or in a *hypogaeum*?). Now only the *laudatores temporis acti* (like the *Catonnes* of Sat. 132.15) mention *pudicitia*. Even the *eromenos* of long ago had a kind of modesty and was satisfied with a quail or a ball or knuckle bones (Anthol. Pal. 12.44), but the contemporary *eromenos* has no shame and demands gifts like a *asturco Macedonicus* (Sat. 86.7).

10) The opening pages of Chariton and Xenophon Ephesus are all that is needed to establish this as a topos in (roughly) contemporary ancient novels.

11) The use of *tam* here may be related to the use of *tam . . . tam* at 85.2. *tam* may signal to the reader that he can expect the result clause eventually to be overturned. It is also possible that Petronius is using *tam* to signal to his reader that a joke or humorous story is about to follow and that there is a certain stylization or formula attached to a joke in Petronius which the reader can decipher. S. Freud (Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious, trans. by J. Strachey [New York 1963] 119, 120, 124 ff.) holds that the reader derives considerable pleasure from recognizing the stylization which indicates that a joke is coming.

12) This subject as it applies to Apuleius is dealt with by J. Winkler in his provocative *Auctor et Actor* (Berkeley 1985) 12 ff.

13) The suicide of a wife over her husband's body might be a literary topos. It seems to be a topos in "tragic history"; cf. Tacitus Ann. 6.29; Xenophon Cyropaedia 7.3.14. R. Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs (Urbana 1962) lists as common theme, "Unwillingness to Survive the Dead", pp. 203–205. The literary topos of the suicide of an *uxor* or *amatrix* because of her beloved's death is in reality one of intended or threatened suicide: Xenophon Ephesus 2.11; 3.5–6; 3.8 suicide by starvation, and also Apuleius Met. 8.7.

reader is discouraged from thinking about a love story¹⁴). From the burial of the dead husband and the widow determined to die, the reader's response to the announcement that the *imperator provinciae* had ordered thieves crucified next to the tomb must surely be one of intensified gloom fixed on death¹⁵). This opening section (111.1–5) serves as an outer shell and a disguise for the love story which follows. The reader remains thrown off track even when he reads that a *miles* has been ordered to guard the crucifixion site. An observant reader, suspicious always of a *narrator ludens* and wary of rapid shifts in mood in the *Satyricon*, might be expected to connect the *miles* on guard with the *miles amans*, a topos from amatory poetry and New Comedy¹⁶). This is the second clue for the observant.

Beginning with the arrival of the *miles* at 111.6 we have all the ingredients of a love story, which ends when the *miles* announces he will commit suicide and asks the widow to prepare a burial place for him which he can share with her husband. How ingenious to suggest having the husband and the lover buried by the widow in the same tomb! What an original reversal leading finally (we are being encouraged to conclude) to the death of the widow herself, which had been postponed since 111.13. This could be a tragedy worthy of great playwrights.

Though the love narrative is finished, the story is not. The love section is an excuse to introduce an even more important story, one about zest for life and a clever woman who possesses it. While the expected *peripeteia* occurred at 112.3 (*qua nuptias fecerunt*), the unexpected one takes place at 112.6 where the *miles* announces his suicide. With the impending death of the *miles* the reader is convinced that the widow will bury her lover with her husband and then return to her original intent to die in her husband's *hypogaeum* (*mortem inedia*, 111.3). But the final, the efficient, *peripeteia* occurs just seventeen words from the end: (*matrona*) *iubet . . . corpus mariti sui . . . cruci affigi*. This *peripeteia* is daring and swift; it is also the dénouement.

The reader is jolted several times in this relatively short story.

14) B. P. Reardon, *Aspects of the Greek Novel*, G&R 23 (1976) 123, points out a basic problem for ancient novelists who try to develop a love theme while the lovers are separated.

15) This is the kind of symbol used by William Arrowsmith, *Luxury and Death in the Satyricon*, *Arion* 5 (1966) 304–331.

16) A. Spies, *Militat omnis amans*. Ein Beitrag zur Bildersprache der antiken Erotik (Tübingen 1930).

After just a few lines at the beginning he becomes confident that he senses the end of the story: the death of a faithful widow over her husband's body. He has confidence that he recognizes the paradigmatic structure and what the end will be; in fact the success of the sudden change of fortune rests on his sense of and confidence in that ending. The entrance and conquest of the *miles* is the first surprise; it changes the story from a *laudatio uxoris* to a *fabula amatoria* and disconfirms the ending. Kermode notes that "in assimilating the peripeteia we are enacting [a] readjustment of expectations"¹⁷).

New Comedy and Greek novels taught the reader to expect that love stories have a certain rigidity leading to happy endings. The third reversal (the proposed suicide of the *miles*) ruins the expected happy ending and forces the reader again to readjust his expectations of the end. As the reader digests the changes, he effects a reconciliation of the new evidence with the old and alters his expectations accordingly. The fourth *peripeteia* (*iubet . . . corpus mariti sui . . . cruci affigi*) is the most daring of all, disconfirms the sad ending, and opens an unexpected passage to the conclusion. Putting the husband's body on the cross is not the conclusion to the inner love story but to the outer shell, in the opening scene of which the widow tries to starve herself to death on her husband's sarcophagus.

The usual love story is one in which the young man meets and falls in love immediately with the young woman, and after a number of difficulties they consummate the union. Petronius brackets this traditional love story at the beginning with a burial (of the husband) and at the end with a crucifixion (of the husband). The story is comprised of at least three sections and four reversals, each designed to disappoint established expectations and keep the reader off balance. The final *peripeteia* is so audacious and original that no statement such as "And they lived happily everafter" is needed: *malo mortuum impendere quam vivum occidere* is a strong affirmation of life, "Lust am Leben"¹⁸). Such a venturesome shift shows such great respect for our sense of reality (thus the

17) Kermode (*supra* n. 1) 18.

18) C. W. Müller, Die Witwe von Ephesus – Petrons Novelle und die 'Milesiaka' des Aristeides, A&A 26 (1980) 111. There is a pun in the word *impendere* which means that the widow is ready to "pay out" her husband's body in order to keep from killing her lover. Under *impendere* the reader should see *suspenderere*, "to hoist on the cross", R. Beck, *Eumolpus poeta, Eumolpus fabulator*. A Study of Characterization in the Satyricon, Phoenix 33 (1979) 251.

Satyricon has just claim to be termed a novel) that a fairy tale ending would be out of place. Petronius ends with a pun: *populus miratus est qua ratione mortuus isset in crucem*. The crowd takes it to mean “how a dead man had mounted the cross”, but the good ear also heard *isset in (malam) crucem*, “how a man already dead could have come to a bad end”¹⁹).

A schematic outline of Sat. 111–112 might be something like this:

- | | | | |
|------------------|--|---|-------------------------|
| c. | Widow marvelled at for fidelity to dead husband | } | widow
and
husband |
| b. | Widow buries husband | | |
| a. | Widow is determined to kill herself | } | widow
and
soldier |
| D. | <i>Miles</i> is set to guard crucified men (first <i>peripeteia</i>) | | |
| C. | <i>Miles</i> deserts guardpost at cross | | |
| B. | Five days without food | | |
| A. | Virgil Aen. 4.34 <i>id cinerem . . . sepultos</i>
<i>te iacentis corpus admonere debet ut vivas</i> | | |
| A ¹ . | Virgil Aen. 4.38 <i>placitone etiam pugnabis amori</i> | | |
| B ¹ . | Three days of love in the tomb (second <i>peripeteia</i>) | | |
| C ¹ . | Parents remove unguarded body from cross | | |
| D ¹ . | Soldier threatens suicide for dereliction of duty (third <i>peripeteia</i>) | | |
| a ¹ . | Widow would rather crucify the dead than kill the living | | |
| b ¹ . | Widow orders husband to the cross (fourth <i>peripeteia</i>) | | |
| c ¹ . | Crowd marvels at how husband got on cross. | | |

We can see the outer shell (cba – a¹b¹c¹) of incidents involving the widow and her husband and the inner incidents (DCBA – A¹B¹C¹D¹) with the *miles*. The enclosing frames also show that the core of the story is the exhortation of the *miles* to the widow: *te iacentis corpus admonere debet ut vivas*. It is marked by framing it between two quotations from the *Aeneid*. The widow’s final words in the story, *malo mortuum impendere quam vivum occidere*, are simply a restatement of the central point. Confined to a tomb and surrounded by all the symbols of death, the *miles* and widow nevertheless reject death and choose life²⁰), and it is appropriate that the theme of the story should be its core.

19) Beck (*supra* 18) 251.

20) C. W. Müller (*supra* n. 18) 111: “Aber auch die Häufigkeit, mit der das Motiv des Todes in die Darstellung einbezogen wird, erklärt sich aus seiner besonderen Beziehung zum Leben als Zentralthema”.

Critics have frequently cited contrarities, inversions as well as similarities between the story of the Widow of Ephesus and that of Dido and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4, and speculated just how Petronius had intended us to connect the two widows and the two soldiers²¹). To what end Petronius intended to parody the Dido and Aeneas story is not our concern here. We are, however, interested in contrasting the restraints on invention placed on Virgil, because he chose to tell a traditional epic, with the freedom of originality allowed to Petronius because he wrote a novel. By the time the reader of the *Aeneid* arrives at Book 4, he knows that Aeneas cannot stay with Dido and that the union of the two will explode in some kind of tragedy. The reader is perhaps unprepared for the insensitive and disastrous way in which Aeneas leaves Dido, but the suicide of Dido is no surprise. Under the unyielding hand of Clio Aeneas chooses Empire over Dido. The story of Dido and Aeneas moves inevitably from its beginning to its clearly predestined conclusion, because it is a narrative construct and not a novel. Virgil lives under the constant anxiety of the ending of Aeneas' story, like the writers of the New Testament awaiting the apocalypse, and reduces the scope of his actors to human subjects in the drive toward the Golden Age, the "empire without end" in Kermodé's terms²²). For our purpose here we stress the differences

21) *Ibid.* p. 119; P. Fedeli, La matrona di Efeso. Strutture narrative e tecnica dell' inversione, MCSN 4 (1986) 9–35, R. Dimundo, La novella dell' efebo di Pergamo: struttura del racconto, MCSN 4 (1986) 83–94, and G. Mazzoli, Ironia e metafora: valenze della novella in Petronio e Apuleio, MCSN 4 (1986) 199–217, are just a few of the scholars who have recently dealt with the subject. The bibliography on the Widow of Ephesus is enormous: O. Pecere, Petronio: La novella della matrona di Efeso (Padova 1975).

22) Virgil is roundly criticized for his methods by the English poet W. H. Auden in his "Secondary Epic" (Homage to Clio, New York 1960, pp. 26–27): "No, Virgil no:/Not even the first of the Romans can learn/His Roman history in the future tense,/Not even to serve your political turn:/Hindsight as foresight makes no sense.../No, Virgil, no:/Behind your verse so masterfully made/We hear the weeping of a Muse betrayed". The reader is, of course, always conscious that this is "history in the future tense", and it is one of the rules of the game which the reader must observe. For our purposes here we focus on the differences between the restraints placed on Aeneas and Dido over against the freedom of the *miles* and *vidua*. Aeneas is manipulated by the gods and fate, by Virgil, but more importantly by history; the *miles* is free to act in unexpected ways as Petronius chooses. Aeneas "chooses" Empire and duty; Dido "chooses" death. The *miles* deserts his post, neglects his duty, and exhibits no concern for the Empire; the *vidua* chooses life. The *miles* and *vidua* choose a happy life now because it is the here and now which are important (cf. Arrowsmith, *supra* n. 15); Aeneas, sacrificing himself and Dido to the Empire, the apocalypse, and the purpose, cannot disconfirm the ending. The tail of history wags Virgil's dog. Though Petronius borrows from Virgil, he has an

in the two stories: Virgil's hero comes from a city which goes back into darkest history and is heading for the new Troy which will last forever. Between the beginning and the conclusion (*in mediis rebus*) life is essentially a transitional phase and worth living only because Aeneas can sense the purpose of the quest: "Virgil, describing the progress of Aeneas from the broken city of Troy to a Rome standing for empire without end, is closer to our traditional apocalyptic, and that is why his *imperium* has been incorporated into Western apocalyptic as a type of the City of God. And in the journey of Aeneas the episodes are related internally; they all exist under the shadow of the end"²³). Dido must surrender to Aeneas' mission or risk changing the course of world history; the Widow of Ephesus is free to alter the plot and effect a reversal which respects the readers sense of reality. Since Petronius (emphasizing the new) writes a novel and not a myth, the reader demands that the writer *not* move in predictable ways from beginning to end. Good writers like Petronius create tension in the reader who at times desires the familiar, the paradigm, and then yearns for something new. At one moment the reader wants only to be surprised, tricked, and then made to laugh at himself; at other moments he wants to feel in command and to guess the end correctly. Both feelings give joy. For Petronius, as Arrowsmith says, writes about "the old pagan landscape, the radiance here and now"²⁴). But Arrowsmith is mistaken, we believe, to claim also that the "*Satyricon* is a book obsessed with luxury ... and death"²⁵). The *Satyricon* is a novel consumed with items *in mediis rebus* because Petronius has no thought for the ending (i.e. death).

The *Satyricon* can be contrasted legitimately also with Lucan's epic, since Petronius himself draws our attention to the *Pharsalia* at 119–24 where Eumolpus delivers a 295 line version of

entirely different kind of story to tell. Petronius' characters have no role in the larger affairs of state; they are restricted to the minor (major for each individual) events of everyday life. Their only significance is in their daily (small) social and economic activities: *credite mihi* (says Trimalchio 77.6): *assem habeas, assem val-eas; habes, habeberis*. Kermode (*supra* n. 1) p. 30 phrases this all very well: "... we concern ourselves with the conflict between the deterministic pattern any plot suggests, and the freedom of persons within that plot to choose and so to alter the structure, the relations of beginning, middle, and end".

23) Kermode (*supra* n. 1) 5. This is not to say that the *Aeneid* is not full of rich invention: for his own purposes Virgil apparently alters the received version of the Dido story.

24) Arrowsmith (*supra* n. 15) 329–330.

25) *Ibid.* 304.

the Civil War. There is a great deal of controversy about this poem in the *Satyricon*, because no one can be certain about the (parodic) intent of Petronius in inserting it²⁶). Fortunately we are not interested here in that Petronian controversy. The position of Eumolpus' *Civil War* in the structure of the *Satyricon* illustrates Petronius' lack of interest in the purpose of Lucan's *Pharsalia*: what could be seen by some as an epic on the origin of the Julian family, was used by Petronius as entertainment, something to while away the time on a lonely trip to Croton. Both Virgil and Lucan write epics which conclude or imply that the Julian family will reign supreme in the Roman world: Virgil that this apocalypse is the Golden Age, Lucan that the empire without end ushers in an un-republican Age. We see, however, a marked contrast between the epics of Virgil and Lucan and the epic novel of Petronius: Virgil and Lucan write about life as a transitional stage under the shadow of the end, and Petronius about the crises *in mediis rebus*. The two approaches are so incompatible that any use Petronius makes of Virgil and Lucan must appear a parody, whether Petronius intended it or not. Petronius' focus on the crises *in mediis rebus* denies, as it were, an ending. Without a beginning or an ending, reality is just a continuation of Epicurean crises.

In 1971 Zeitlin wrote of the *Satyricon* that "Petronius seems not to order experience but to disorder it, by irony and ambiguity of tone, by disorganized plot, by shifting characterizations, and by bewildering incongruities . . .", and about Encolpius that he is a character "who has no past or future, no destination or purpose beyond passing pleasures. . ." ²⁷). This absence of purpose and goals in the *Satyricon* and the aimlessness of Encolpius result, we would conclude, from a lack of interest in the ending (= purpose). Without working under the shadow of an ending like Virgil and Lucan, Petronius seems to construct his novel of episodes which need not be tied tightly together. If Petronius finished his novel, we can speculate from episodic endings that the final conclusion to the whole text was exceedingly clever and witty.

The episode of the Widow of Ephesus is told by Eumolpus to distract feuding factions on the ship from violence (110.6 *ne sileret sine fabulis hilaritas*). Eumolpus, as *periclitantium advocatus et*

26) For widely differing views see J. P. Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 160 ff., 182 ff., and P. Grimal, *La guerre civile de Pétrone dans ses rapports avec la Pharsale* (Paris 1977).

27) F. Zeitlin, *Petronius as Paradox: Anarchy and Artistic Integrity*, TAPA 102 (1971) 633, 683.

praesentis concordiae auctor, does not try to make his *fabula* fit the circumstances or to serve as a moral lesson for Lichas or to point out similarities between the *matrona* and Tryphaena and Hedyle²⁸). Carefully crafted in structure and timing which combine to yield a narrative gem, the episode of the widow nevertheless seems to have no wider implications than to be an entertaining story: Eumolpus tells it to entertain his audience and Petronius to amuse his. A result of such unaffiliated stories in a long narrative like the *Satyricon* is an episodic structure²⁹).

III

Soon after his introduction in the *Satyricon* (83), Eumolpus tells the story of the Pergamene *ephebus* (85–87). Like the Widow of Ephesus story, that of the Pergamene *ephebus* seems to have been told simply for amusement (88.1 *erectus his sermonibus*): “One receives throughout the novel the consistent impression of a narrator *shaping* the adventures and encounters of his past life into episodes which will delight and amuse”³⁰). The structure of the tale of the *ephebus* has several similarities to that of the Widow of Ephesus story – in addition to being told by the same actor, Eumolpus³¹). In Pergamum Eumolpus is invited to become the tutor of a very pretty young boy by the parents because, whenever conversation comes around to pederasty, Eumolpus protests so forcefully (*tam vehementer . . . tam severa . . . ut*) that he is readily

28) At 113.2 Lichas reacts angrily to the story about the Widow but quickly becomes reconciled to the *hilaritas* of the moment. P. Fedeli (*supra* n. 21) feels that the story of the Widow has been designed by Petronius to fit just here to compare the adulterous treachery of Lichas’ wife (?) Hedyle with the Widow’s betrayal of her husband. Although Fedeli’s arguments are generally very perceptive, at this point they fail to convince because the Widow, unlike Hedyle, does not commit adultery with the stranger. The Widow’s husband is, after all, dead. That is the point of the story.

29) The episodic nature of the *Satyricon* is further emphasized because Petronius does not have a consistently satirical approach to the description of his subjects. He seems not to address his audience from a preordained perspective. On this subject and related ones, see G. Sandy’s clever article, *Satire in the Satyricon*, *AJP* 90 (1969) 293–303.

30) R. Beck, *Some Observations on the Narrative Technique of Petronius*, *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 45.

31) In a very perceptive article R. Beck (*supra* n. 18) 245, has analyzed the narrative skills of Eumolpus and concluded that “. . . while Eumolpus may be a mediocre artist in one medium of works, he is a brilliant one in another: though a third-rate poet, he is a first-rate raconteur”.

accepted as a *philosophus*. The reader recognizes the familiar paradigm: the adverbs *tam . . . tam* followed by *ut* will yield their real result only later. Unlike the *miles* who at first is driven by curiosity only, Eumolpus in the opening words declares his attraction to the boy; like the widow who yields slowly, step by step, so too the boy (85.4 *intellexi puerum vigilare*). According to the paradigm the reader can expect that Eumolpus will make progress in his assault on the boy with each progressively more expensive gift, until the youth finally surrenders his virginity.

At 86.5 Eumolpus who sees himself as a *miles amans* achieves the goal of pursuit: *deinde in unum omnia vota coniunxi*. The climax of the story proves to be physical without being structural. The tale might have ended here since Eumolpus had what he wanted; the story of Philomela's daughter at 140 apparently has such a structure³²).

Eumolpus had, however, a contract with the boy to provide him with an *asturconem Macedonicum . . . si ille non senserit*. But the boy obviously *senserat* (85.4 *intellexi puerum vigilare*; it is the guardian father who is asleep, 87.1 *intellexi stertere patrem*) and, just as obviously, Eumolpus could not make a gift of an *asturconem*. Both sides break the contract, but there are no bad feelings on either side. The boy's threats to tell his father (87.3 *aut dormi, aut ego iam dicam patri*) if Eumolpus does not stop his sexual advances prove to be hollow, and soon man and boy are in bed again achieving even greater heights of ecstasy. This mutually acceptable resolution provides the paradigmatic dénouement to the tale: the older male has found a boy-love. For a second time the story ends. This first part of the story is marked by the words *intellexi puerum vigilare* (85.4), the second section by *intellexi stertere patrem* (87.1), but a third section will now sneak up on us

32) The episode at 140 is in some strange way a blend of the Widow of Ephesus and Pergamene *ephebus* stories. Sat. 140 begins *matrona inter primas honesta*, and the mindful reader cannot help but remember the opening of the story of the Widow of Ephesus (111): *matrona quaedam Ephesi tam notae erat pudicitiae*. The *matrona . . . honesta*, however, does not bury her husband; she gives her son and daughter to Eumolpus (140.2): *qui praeceptis etiam salubribus instruere iuvenes quotidie posset*. In a similar fashion the *ephebus* was entrusted to Eumolpus at 85.3: *iam ego coeperam ephebum . . . docere ac praecipere*. Sat. 140 is thus a variation on earlier themes, but the cleverness of the story makes it worthwhile for the reader. Though the episode at 140 is illustrative of the legacy hunting motif which pervades the whole Croton story, what is remarkable about chapter 140 is the cleverness of its ending (140.9–10), which causes the reader temporarily to forget that the episode with the *matrona . . . honesta* is set in the midst of a larger story about legacy hunters.

with a succession of expressions (87.6 ff.), *in somnum delapsus sum . . . me sopitum . . . inter anhelitus sudoresque tritus . . . rursusque in somnum decidi gaudio lassus*, all pointing to the conclusion.

What Eumolpus had begun, he had completed. He was the instigator of the love affair, and as the narrator years later of this successful episode can be expected to revel in recollections. The second ending, however, like the first proves not to be final. When the story does not end as expected, its continuation disconfirms our expectations and exposes them as false. The reader is suddenly in virgin territory. The chief actor and narrator now assume a less active role, and the *ephebus Pergamenus* a less passive one. The action of the story from here on is initiated by the *ephebus*, who is forced to goad (87.6 *fac iterum*; 87.7 *numquid vis*; 87.9 *quare non facimus*) the erstwhile randy but now exhausted Eumolpus on to repeated sexual performances. Just as at the end of the Widow of Ephesus story when the passive *vidua* becomes the active partner, so the *ephebus* at the end of this episode becomes aggressive. The insatiable lover Eumolpus is now *lassus* and saves himself by borrowing the lad's threats (from 87.3): 87.10 *aut dormi, aut ego iam patri dicam*³³).

Petronius could not bring himself to conclude his story with a traditional or paradigmatic ending. The efficient *peripeteia* must be daring and in this case verbally brilliant. As the *ephebus* throws insults of sexual sluggishness into his face, so Eumolpus throws back the exact words of the boy's threat. Both the Widow of Ephesus story and the *ephebus* end with lightning quickness and not in the places the reader had expected.

The reader realizes that each of the two stories has concluded wittily but without real purpose and without reaching any goal. The cleverness of the ending is the important element not the sense that it has come to a conclusion³⁴). The Widow of Ephesus story

33) K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London 1978) 91: "That the eromenos should initiate a homosexual act for its own sake is not a possibility admitted by Pausanias [in Plato's *Symposium*] or by any other Greek enthusiast or apologist for homosexual eros". P. 52: "In crude terms what does the eromenos get out of submission to his erastes? The conventional Greek answer is, no bodily pleasure (cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 240d); should he do so, he incurs disapproval as a *pornos* and as perverted". The action of the *ephebus* here undermines his status as an eromenos, renders him a *pornos*, and partially redeems the character of Eumolpus. The humor of the final ending is thus not the cruel wit of rejection of an erastes at the expense of his eromenos, but the sparkling retort of a gifted *fabulator* to a greedy *pornos*. See also the end of Footnote 9.

34) R. Beck (*supra* n. 18) 251, speaks of the "antithetical structure".

could have logically continued with an episode in which the husband's parents, scandalized by what their daughter-in-law has done, commit suicide and shame the widow into exile or worse. The father of the *ephebus* could easily have discovered Eumolpus' real motives for living in the house (in fact the reader is amazed that the father is so ignorant) and have him beaten. The reader is not given a concluding and graphic scene in which the father vents his anger, but rather a witty epigrammatic one-liner. Verbal wit takes precedence over graphic description. The reader had every right to expect that the father would discover Eumolpus' real designs, which he tried to hide from the father (85.1 *qua non essem patri familiae suspectus*), because disguises in the *Satyricon* are regularly uncovered (16.2 Quartilla recognizes her intruders; Giton and Encolpius are unmasked at 105.7; Eumolpus is found out after 141.11 when his heirs agree to eat his body).

It seems (but not to the first-time reader) that a goal of each story is to conclude with a brilliant line or an outrageous scene. It is almost as if Petronius had heard or had composed a witty statement and then worked backwards to build a story around it. Not that the stories are badly structured, but that the purpose and structure of the stories seem to be contrived to conclude with a clever or witty punch-line.

In both the story of the *vidua* and of the *ephebus* the expectations of the reader about the endings are disconfirmed. The paradigmatic structure of the love story is recognized by Petronius as one familiar to his audience and hence suitable for use to lull the audience into an unexpected *peripeteia*. The reader recognizes the paradigm, but Petronius goes outside or beyond this familiarity to shock the reader with reality. Events in the real world unlike those in myth do not have a predestined end and can legitimately be employed to surprise the reader of the novel. Like the reader of the modern novel, the reader of the *Satyricon* receives new and unexpected events.

IV

According to T. K. Hubbard, who argues from a different theoretical basis than do we, Petronius constructs the *Cena* with a false ending. Petronius establishes a structure for the *Cena* and then jolts the reader by running outside that structure to end an episode with a particularly brilliant scene: "And of course, the

cock who ominously crows as a *bucinus*, reminding Trimalchio of the late hour (74, 1–4), echoes the mention of Trimalchio’s dining-room *bucinator* at the beginning of the *Cena* (26.9)³⁵). . . . There is a third major point at which the text (of the *Cena*) defies the expectations engendered by its overall structure, and that is of course at the end. According to all reasonable standards, and in agreement with the ring-structure, the *Cena* should end with the cock’s crow at 74.1. But it does not³⁶). Hubbard makes a convincing argument that Petronius disguises his structure, though the reader, once he perceives the structure (in this case a ring-structure), expects the author to follow it. When the cock crows (74.2 *hic bucinus signum dedit*) and the *Cena* does not conclude, and the reader realizes that this is only a minor reversal, then the ending expected by the reader is disconfirmed and he must reorient himself and search for a new paradigm against which to compare the events. If Sullivan³⁷) is right that these major episodes run about an hour in length, the reader knows, however, that the *Cena* will end soon.

Because the reader has in mind a structure for the *Cena* and thus a sense of the ending it will have according to this paradigm, the unexpected turn of events breaks the rigidity of literary patterns and restores some reality to the narrative about Trimalchio. Reality comes crashing into the *Cena*, when the fire brigade, thinking the house is on fire, breaks the front door down and the party up. This *peripeteia* is swift, daring, and final. Unlike the conclusions of the episodes of the *vidua* and the *ephebus* which were verbally witty, the *Cena* concludes with a scene of graphic description and excitement. It could be significant that the two short episodes of the *vidua* and *ephebus*, told by the raconteur Eumolpus, conclude with verbal wit, while the long *Cena*, related by Encolpius, ends with graphic virtuosity³⁸). The narrator Encolpius (as opposed to Encolpius the actor) remembers the fireworks with which the *Cena* ended, while Eumolpus is credited with the verbal wit of a brilliant *fabulator*. Three long episodes (in addition to the *Cena*) could be structured to conclude with scenes of

35) T. K. Hubbard (*supra* n. 7) 201.

36) *Ibid.* 203.

37) Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 36.

38) R. Peden, Endings in Catullus, *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. M. Whitby *et al.* (Bristol 1987) 95–130, makes a relevant observation: “It is, however, more important for us to identify the structures of the short poems, and to see whether the elements discussed above fit into a wider pattern leading readers toward the sense of an inevitable ending” (p. 99).

descriptive interest. The tale of the *pallium* and *tunica* (12–15) seems to end in the Forum (at Puteoli?) with a legal battle over a worthless garment which at one time contained gold coins. Though the Quartilla episode (16–26) exists in a fragmentary state, it is tempting to view (with Encolpius and Quartilla) the defloration scene of Pannychis and Giton as the final *peripeteia* of the long episode, one of graphic rather than verbal wit. The episode at Croton (125–141) appears to end with an heirs' feast on Eumolpus' flesh. If the conclusion of this episode, however, is told by Eumolpus, we can hazard a guess that it ends with verbal wit.

V

The game that Petronius plays with the reader's expectation and sense of an ending can also be demonstrated at Sat. 92–96, where Encolpius and Eumolpus manoeuvre to obtain Giton's favors. The space between the end of this *Cena* (78) and the beginning of the trip on Lichas' ship (100) contains one or more long episodes and probably several short episodes. We would like to mark off chapters 92–96 as a short episode framed by Eumolpus' arrival at the door of the room and his departure the same way.

At 92.6 Eumolpus admits that he came to Encolpius' room because he had been cruelly treated for reciting his poetry (*conatus sum . . . carmen recitare, et postquam de balneo eiectus sum*). While Encolpius recognizes immediately that Eumolpus is *Ascyli parem* (92.5), the reader (familiar with the randy raconteur from his autobiographical story about his exploits in Pergamum) is just as quickly tipped off to the ending: Encolpius and Eumolpus will quarrel over Giton, and Giton will choose Eumolpus and run off with him in a repeat performance of the scene at Sat. 80.6, where Giton followed Ascyllus: *fratrem Ascyllon elegit*.

Encolpius agrees with those at the bath who threw Eumolpus out for reciting poetry and demands of him (93.3) *saltem nobis parce, qui te numquam lapidavimus*. The reader must here pause and reconsider: Encolpius is attacking Eumolpus not for his leering but for his bad poetry. Perhaps the reader is to be treated to a literary feud? Giton takes the side of Eumolpus not because he is stronger (like Ascyllus) but because he is a guest, and reconciles Encolpius to Eumolpus. The paradigm of the Ascyllus episode (80.6) is turning out to be useless.

Poetry and sex, however, move rapidly together, and literary

and erotic feuds converge to become one. When Eumolpus uses his poetry to try to win sexual favors from Giton (94.2 *ego laudes tuas carminibus implebo*), Encolpius shouts that he prefers Eumolpus the bad poet to Eumolpus the *paedagogus* and orders him out of his room (94.5 *malo vel carminibus loquaris quam eiusmodi tibi vota proponas . . . ocius foras exi*). Because Giton had earlier slipped out of the room and is not present, the reader is not confronted on stage with a love-triangle. Eumolpus bolts out the door and promptly locks it from the outside leaving Encolpius an *inclusus amator*³⁹). The end is sudden and a variation of the Ascyllus-Giton theme. And the variation of the paradigm appears to hold.

This is, however, not the ending. Giton and Eumolpus return almost immediately, a new quarrel erupts, not in our *mélange à trois*, but between Eumolpus and Marcus Mannicius, the owner of the apartment building. The combatants draw blood, and Eumolpus follows Mannicius into the hall, whereupon Encolpius locks Eumolpus out and leaves him in the hall to the tender mercies of his assailant. This *peripeteia* is bold, reverses the outcome of the Ascyllus episode at Sat. 80.6, stands it on its head, and leaves Encolpius a clear winner in one of his little daily struggles.

Again the reader does not get an ending, as Eumolpus is rescued by Bargates, *procurator insulae*, and probably taken back to the sumptuous dinner at which Bargates had been disturbed (96.4 *a cena excitatus*). And why does Bargates rescue Eumolpus, a poet? because Bargates wants him to write a *maledictio* against his *contubernalis*: *maledic illam versibus, ut habeat pudorem* (96.7). The rescue of Eumolpus is the final *peripeteia* in this episode and the ending of the short episode. These concluding words of the episode are very witty when seen in the context of the words which had begun it: at 92.6 Eumolpus had said, *paene vapulavi, quia conatus sum . . . carmen recitare*. At the end Eumolpus is asked (like Martial) to turn his poetic skills to good and remunerative goals and dash off a two-line curse. The episode is thus not a literary feud between Eumolpus and Encolpius nor a lovers' quarrel among Giton-Encolpius-Eumolpus, but rather a comic and uncomplimentary vindication of Eumolpus' *amor ingenii* (83.9). Each of two earlier reversals in the episode prove to be inconclusive and disconfirm the reader's expectation of the ending. The final and efficient *peripeteia* is surprising because the sense of the

39) G. Schmeling, The *Exclusus Amator* Motif in Petronius, *Fons Perennis: Saggi critici in onore del Vittorio d'Agostino* (Torino 1971) 333–357.

episode seemed to be erotic and the action of the episode a struggle between Eumolpus and Encolpius. The structure of the episode, however, which began with a scene in which Eumolpus reports having been mistreated because he is a poet, is almost certainly lost to all but the most attentive and second-time reader. Had the reader marked for future reference the opening scene, he might have seen through the first two *peripeteiai*. According to the sense of the episode, the reader's expectations are disconfirmed; according to the structure, Petronius concluded the episode as he had begun it, and Eumolpus, the *fabulator elegantissimus*, put all his wit into the last line.

VI

We can only guess at the conclusions of many of the short and long episodes in the *Satyricon*. The opening scene (Sat. 1–6) with its discussion of rhetoric and the decline of education seems to have no preserved ending, and the love quarrel between Encolpius and Ascyltus over Giton is lost in fragments (7–11). The young boys seem to retrieve their ill gotten gold, but the conclusion of the story is irreclaimable (12–15). The episode with Quartilla (16–26) may end in the comical (surely not gruesome) deflowering of Pannychis, just as the story at Croton (116–141) may conclude with the comical (surely not gruesome) ingestion of Eumolpus' body by his heirs. Though the text breaks off, the episode on Lichas' ship (99–115) surely did not end with a simple epigram from Eumolpus over the dead Lichas (115.2). Because we know how well Petronius can bring a story to a conclusion, we feel an acute loss over episodes which promise much but lack endings.

VII

F. Zeitlin⁴⁰) reasons that there are at least three criteria by which critics evaluate literature – and that Petronius subverts all of them: (1) in a work of art “there is an organic connection between form and content, when artistic form imposes itself upon and disciplines its ‘formless’ subject”; (2) a “fusion of form and content

40) F. Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 632.

should result in some significant statement⁴¹⁾ . . . about the human condition”; (3) art should “achieve a formal intelligible ordering of experience to satisfy a deeply felt human need of apprehending an intelligible world order”. Most classical authors seem to subscribe to these general criteria, but says Zeitlin, “Petronius seems not to order experience but to disorder it⁴²⁾ . . . Its guiding principal seems to be . . . (one) undertaken with the deliberate intention of defeating the expectations of an audience, accustomed, far more than we, to an organizing literary form”⁴³⁾. Zeitlin appears to seek a purpose in the *Satyricon*, an explanation why it was written, a conclusion which would set Petronius’ disordered house into order, an end which would tie up at least a few of the loose strings of which the *Satyricon* is constructed. A more satisfactory approach to the *Satyricon* might be to concede that there is no purpose beyond entertainment and that nothing is done by Petronius to tie up the loose strings. The *Satyricon* would then be a collection of loose strings⁴⁴⁾.

In a broad (and in the manner of a structuralist) stroke Zeitlin concludes that Encolpius’ disordered experiences imitate or reflect disintegrated (to Petronius) Roman life. (She might go as far as to say that Petronius’ disordered experiences imitate disintegrated Roman art forms.)⁴⁵⁾ Zeitlin seems to want to grasp the entire

41) “Significant statement” seems strangely similar to Clive Bell’s “significant form”: “The hypothesis that significant form is the essential quality in a work of art has at least one merit . . . it does help to explain things” (Clive Bell, *Art* [New York 1958 (London 1913)] p. 22).

42) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 633.

43) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 635.

44) G. Sandy, *Petronius and the Tradition of the Interpolated Narrative*, TAPA 101 (1970) 476: “it (the *Satyricon*) is amorphous and flexible enough to contain almost anything that strikes his fancy. Apart from the limited importance of Priapus’ wrath and the trials to which it exposes Encolpius, the *Satyricon* appears to lack a unifying plot”.

45) R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York ³1956) 223, speak of “literature reminding itself that it is but literature”. Encolpius, the narrator, regularly amuses himself by shattering the reader’s illusion that the *Satyricon* is a description of real life and not an art form. His frequent retreat into poetry, his constant allusion to literary forms, and his contrivances to set up jolting exit lines and scenes remind the audience that this is art imitating art. Beck (*supra* n. 30) 45–46, shows how well the narrator at 116.6–9 strips away the mask of mimesis. It seems to us that Petronius, in reflecting literature and not life, can mold his successive episodes with scenes from literature, whose causal relationships need not be strong at all. Variety and reader interest may be all the causes the narrator needed to string non-causal episodes together. The ends of episodes thus also need not be causal; non-mimetic endings will do. The frequent movement from genre to genre

Satyricon as one unit, as she would a late play by Euripides, and analyze its form according to the rules of classical genres: therefore Petronius, both by his rejection of a single form and by his mixture of established genres, adopts an anti-classical stance and introduces a fundamental disorder into his work. But since there is no whole integrated unit which can be explained universally, be shown to have one purpose and world-view, and be said to conclude with one ending which ties up the parts into a neat package, Zeitlin's reading of the *Satyricon* possibly goes beyond the evidence.

She makes, however, an interesting comparison with Ovid: "In Ovid, metamorphosis is a change to a permanent (*etiam* Proteus?) new state of being. In Petronius change is only temporary and hence unreliable"⁴⁶). The narrator *in situ*⁴⁷), Encolpius, does not seem to change throughout the extant *Satyricon*, nor does he learn anything from his adventures. From time to time he pauses to reflect on the unfairness of life (125.4 *dii deaeque, quam male est extra legem viventibus: quicquid meruerunt, semper expectant*), but these general complaints about Fate like those about the faithlessness of Giton and treachery of Eumolpus are surely rhetorical poses. According to Beck the old Encolpius only (the real narrator), who is recalling the adventures of his younger self (narrator *in situ*), has profited from his life experiences⁴⁸). If we focus on the endings, the conclusions, then Petronius can be said to be as unreliable about change (= outcome), as Encolpius is about reality⁴⁹). Since Petronius must write episode after episode using many of the same actors, he clearly runs into a difficulty about permanent changes in his characters: permanent changes like permanent endings would limit severely the scope of his actors in the next scene. As actors grow, change and learn, they cannot be expected to act in later scenes as they did in earlier ones. Therefore, change and the narrator are unreliable. Zeitlin also makes an observation about episodes and endings which is relevant for our inquiries: "Episodes are not resolved; they disintegrate"⁵⁰). In other words, the endings of episodes are not causally related to the stuff of the

stands as a constant reminder to the reader that this *Satyricon* is a literary game and not a game of life and death.

46) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 660.

47) The phrase comes from R. Beck.

48) Beck (*supra* n. 30) 43, 61.

49) Sat. 41.5: *damnavi ego stuporem meum et nihil amplius interrogavi, ne viderer numquam inter honestos cenasse.*

50) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 655.

episode. If we could re-phrase her statement, we would say: episodes are not resolved; they merely stop in their tracks with some witty or clever remark or scene. The conclusions of episodes in the *Satyricon* do not result in (re)establishment of order, social norms, or true love.

The *Satyricon* is a large collection of episodes, some long, some short, in which there are frequently episodes within episodes, each with an ending that may or may not relate to other endings. The ending, which could convey a purpose, a moral, or a cohesive element is used instead merely to cap off an episode with a pun or a brilliant exit. The interest of Petronius lies in the material between the beginning and end, in crises *in mediis rebus*. Even the long *Bellum Civile* (119 ff.) of Eumolpus, while it adds to his slowly developing character, serves no part in moving the reader to the end of the episode. It does, however, move the actors to Croton. Walsh remarks about this epic that “it has the conventional status of an entertainment whiling away a journey”⁵¹).

VIII

Picaresque novel is “a term often used to describe the *Satyricon*”⁵²). As long as the term “picaresque” is used to describe the structure of the *Satyricon*, we believe that Zeitlin’s observations about Petronius’ novel are most fitting. Though the picaresque novel, strictly speaking, was not “invented” until the 17th century in Spain, we believe that Zeitlin in the picaresque novel (speaking synchronically) has re-discovered a most apt comparison: “The genre is distinguished by an episodic plot using a first-person narrative in which an itinerant rogue or picaro undergoes a series of sensational low-life adventures. Strong social satire and a cynical realism are also important elements of this form, but critics”⁵³)

51) P. G. Walsh (*supra* n. 7) 48.

52) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 650, agrees with S. Miller, *The Picaresque Novel* (Cleveland 1967) who believes that the picaresque novel reflects a world in chaos and disorder. Examples of the early picaresque novel are (Spain) de Quevedo, *El Buscón* (1616), (Germany) von Grimmelshausen, *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (1668), and (England) Smollett, *Roderick Random* (1748). For modern examples, Jaroslav Hasek, *The Good Soldier Svejk*, and Thomas Mann, *Felix Krull*.

53) Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton 1957 [1971]) 55, would disagree with Zeitlin: “. . . when the poet communicates as an individual, his forms tend to be discontinuous; when he communicates as a professional man with social functions, he tends to seek more extended patterns”.

when they apply the epithet 'picaresque' to the *Satyricon* rarely seem to consider these corollaries . . . Picaresque form and its devices aim at projecting a view of a chaotic and disordered world. The picaresque novel sees experience as fragmented, disjointed, and unstable . . . The picaresque plot asserts that experience is ultimately devoid of order and intelligibility. Episode follows upon episode without true causal connection"⁵⁴).

When, however, she attributes social satire to the episodic structure, we cannot follow her; when she sees in Encolpius a proto-picaro, we must disagree. Petronius does not write "strong social satire". In 1969 Sandy clearly defined the kind or level of satire in the *Satyricon*: the object of Petronius' satire is artificiality and self-delusion; the satire is directed from an undogmatic and neutral point of view against false pretensions and shows hostility to unnaturalness in literature; Petronius espouses naturalness and does not satirize even artificiality from a righteous or dogmatic point of view⁵⁵). Also in 1969 Scobie compared the *Satyricon* with the Spanish picaresque novel and concluded that, though their structures were similar, Encolpius cannot be classified a *picaro* because he is not self-sufficient, but is clumsy, gullible, and self-derisive; he is interested in aesthetics and art and literary criticism⁵⁶). Though Encolpius fits into the role of the protagonist in the episodic structure of the picaresque novel, he is no *picaro*. In fact the character of Encolpius is determined by the type of episode in which he plays. The episode creates, as it were, the character and nature of the protagonist (he is thus no *picaro*), rather than the protagonist molds the episode. Sullivan supports this view, though on a different basis: "The character of Encolpius, alternately romantic and cynical, brave and timorous, malevolent and cringing, jealous and rational, sophisticated and naïve, is composed of those traits, even if contradictory, which are appropriate responses to the demands of the particular episode . . . Encolpius' character . . . is the structural and narrative link for the different themes that Petronius has chosen"⁵⁷).

54) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 650–652; Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 39; R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York 1966) 73–76, see the "first person narrator merely serving as a connection from one tale to the next. Thus picaresque narration develops in part as a means of connecting separate stories".

55) Sandy (*supra* n. 29) 295, 296, 300, 303.

56) A. Scobie, *Aspects of the Ancient Romance and its Heritage. Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* 30 (Meisenheim/Glan 1969) 96.

57) Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 119. cf. Beck (*supra* n. 30) 43, 61. For the opposite view see Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 671.

In so far as the term picaresque helps us to describe the episodic structure of the *Satyricon* it is useful. The social satire and development of the *picaresque*, however, must await the 17th century evolution. In the meantime we are left with a *Satyricon* “of loose and episodic structure indicative of its relative indifference to plot, relying on wit and variety...”⁵⁸). We might recall that Apuleius pointed to this very structure (Met. 1.1): *varias fabulas conseram auresque tuas benivolas lepido susurro permulceam*⁵⁹).

The *Satyricon* is regularly compared with Menippean satire⁶⁰) because of similarities in subjects treated and the mixture of prose and verse, but the comparison is always made with serious reservations and with an emphasis on the originality and uniqueness of Petronius’ work⁶¹). What, if anything, Petronius took from Menippean satire, is now very difficult to tell, since both the *Satyricon* and the Menippean satires of Varro exist only in fragments. Since the *Satyricon* is populated with poetasters like Eumolpus, literary critics and students like Encolpius, a theatrical artificer of word and scene, we should not be surprised that the *Satyricon* has a prosimetric form. It is possible, after all, for poets to restrain themselves only so long. The poetry, moreover, is irrelevant to the episodic structure of the *Satyricon* and is little more in the literary arsenal of Petronius than another level of language to go along with the *sermo urbanus* and *sermo plebeius*.

The relationships between the *Satyricon* and Menippean satire are probably not as strong as some would like them to be, i.e. those who feel uncomfortable unless literary works fit into genres. In 1970–1971 three scholars questioned the classification of the *Satyricon* as Menippean satire: Zeitlin⁶²) noted that “I concur in Cameron’s judgment that ‘there is no sign that there existed in the shadowy satires of Varro anything of the rich invention of the

58) Scholes and Kellogg (*supra* n. 54) 75. Miller (*supra* n. 52) 10: “The infinite possibilities of the picaresque plot express total openness. Since there are no limitations of probability, the door is left open to the fantastic, the improbable, and even the weird”.

59) Cf. also Macrobius, Comm. in Somn. Scip. I.2.6.

60) J. Adamietz, Zum literarischen Charakter von Petrons Satyricon, RhM 130 (1987) 329–346, discusses this anew and provides an extensive bibliography. See also J. Relihan, On the Origin of ‘Menippean Satire’ as the Name of a Literary Genre, CP 79 (1981) 226–229.

61) E. Courtney, Parody and Literary Allusion in Menippean Satire, Philologus 106 (1962) 90, Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 81–83, Walsh (*supra* n. 7) 19 ff., R. Astbury, Petronius, P. Oxy. 3010, and Menippean Satire, CP 72 (1977) 22–31.

62) Zeitlin (*supra* n. 27) 635.

Satyricon”⁶³); Sandy observed that “. . . its long, continuous narrative and eschewal of moral and philosophical considerations place the *Satyricon* outside strict classification as Menippean satire”⁶⁴). It seems that we cannot shed any light on the structure of the *Satyricon* by looking at Menippean satire; a comparison with the later picaresque novel probably bears some fruit. Our desire to concentrate on the structure of parts of the *Satyricon* runs into the dilemma so clearly articulated by Hernadi: “. . . how can we fully understand individual parts of a text before the whole text has been understood and *vice versa*? Indeed, the genre critic can only solve his problem by entering a version of that not so vicious Circle of Hermeneutics”⁶⁵).

Petronius was confronted with certain real problems, once he chose to present readings before Nero’s circle or before his own friends. By making choices Petronius began to limit his options. It was, perhaps, only after he had begun that Petronius began to map out a large project. We do not believe that Petronius began by saying, “I want to write a long, episodic Menippean Satire”. It seems clear that Petronius did not begin the *Satyricon* in order to move quickly to its end. He writes it for the material in the middle, to stretch out the story by inserting episodes between the beginning and the end⁶⁶). The purpose of the *Satyricon* is to tell the events, the crises *in mediis rebus*, with no interest to justify the ways of God to man.

The apparent fragmentation of the *Satyricon* and its surface-level disintegration have been ingeniously addressed by Roger Beck, who finds a cohesiveness in the novel: “Continuity and consistency in the *Satyricon* lie not in the *content* of the narration but in the *persona* of the narrator as an artist shaping a highly selective and fanciful autobiography”⁶⁷).

The apparent disintegration of the content of the *Satyricon* is to a large extent caused by the episodic nature of the work, which

63) A. Cameron, *Myth and Meaning in Petronius: Some Modern Comparisons*, Latomus 29 (1970) 404.

64) Sandy (*supra* n. 44) 466.

65) P. Hernadi, *Beyond Genre: New Dimensions in Literary Classification* (Ithaca 1972) 2. He restates this problem in other terms: “How can I define (the novel) . . . before I know on which works to base the definition, yet how can I know on which works to base the definition before I have defined (the novel)?”

66) Wellek and Warren, (*supra* n. 45) 221: “Another device . . . is the short story included within the novel . . . This can be seen as, on one level, the attempt to fill out the size of a work; on another, as the search for variety”.

67) Beck (*supra* n. 30) 46.

in turn is made necessary by its great length. The size of the original *Satyricon* is calculated by Sullivan⁶⁸) at 400,000 words (about ten times longer than the extant version). Even if we cut Sullivan's estimate in half, the original *Satyricon* would still be almost four times longer than Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*⁶⁹). When we consider that the *Metamorphoses* is not tightly woven, is arranged in a series of interpolated tales⁷⁰), is given a clear and cohesive purpose only in Book 11, and is considerably shorter than Sullivan's reconstructed *Satyricon*, we must be willing to consider always the *Satyricon* in light of its episodic structure. Add to this that the *Satyricon* was probably prepared for recitation to Petronius' friends and not intended (originally) for publication. Petronius surely did not have a grand design for a 400,000 word prose epic, when he began writing 1–2 hour segments (it takes about 1–2 hours to read the *Cena*) for recitation, a fact which contributes to the choppiness of the final product. Walsh wisely cautions us about seeing the *Satyricon* as court entertainment⁷¹). For our purposes it does not matter if Petronius wrote for court entertainment or for a "restricted audience of trusted intimates" (without Nero). What matters is that he wrote it in a serial fashion for recitation to some group.

Because Petronius wrote the *Satyricon* in episodes and perhaps with large intervals of time between the composition of juxtaposed episodes, there appear to be frequent violations of the ancient rules of literary decorum. It seems reasonable that, because of the great length of the *Satyricon*, i.e. because of the great length of time in which it was presented, Petronius varied the settings of each episode. The package into which Petronius wrapped each episode is strangely similar to a recognizable genre. Beck has observed that our narrator is "one who molds the experience of life into literary forms"⁷²). From the extant material we can tentatively set up the following list of settings (or packages or genres):

68) J. P. Sullivan (*supra* n. 3) 34 ff.

69) MS A speaks of Books 15 and 16 of the *Satyricon*; a letter of Poggio of May 1423 makes reference to finding Book 15 at Köln, which is almost certainly the *Cena*; in a Paris MS of Fulgentius' *Mythologiae* there is a reference to Book 14; a ninth century *glossarium* from France indicates that the *Troiae halosis* belongs to Book 15. For the pertinent texts, see the notes of any of Müller's four editions of the *Satyricon*.

70) G. Sandy (*supra* n. 44) 467–474.

71) Walsh (*supra* n. 7) 70.

72) R. Beck (*supra* n. 30) 46.

1. Episode in the school of rhetoric (tract on deficiencies of education)
2. Episode of stolen money and lost cloak (New Comedy; picaresque episode)
3. Quartilla episode (mime or farce)
4. *Cena Trimalchionis* (symposium literature)
5. Episode with Eumolpus (tract on art and literature)
6. On board ship, shipwreck (ancient novel)
7. Legacy hunting in Croton (mime)

This list of seven episodes represents the major surviving sections, but by no means exhausts all the episodes or genres in the *Satyricon* which the careful reader can detect⁷³). All we are trying to establish here is that Petronius appears to have written the *Satyricon* in episodes, each of which bears a remarkable similarity to a recognizable literary form. Of course, he must add “filler” and connecting scenes between episodes which smooth over the rough joints.

Of these seven listed episodes we can be certain about the end of the *Cena*, and speculate about the ending of the episode with Quartilla and the one at Croton. What each ending has in common with the others is its outrageousness. The *Cena* concludes with the arrival of the fire brigade, which physically breaks up the party. The deflowering of the seven-year old Pannychis seems to be the concluding scene in the Quartilla episode, and the episode at Croton apparently ends as the would-be heirs of Eumolpus eat his body.

Regardless of the genre or the kind of episode from which it comes, each ending is unexpected to all but the most observant reader. Petronius demonstrates an outstanding ability to frame a scene in an episode in such a way that the reader could expect the episode to end in a certain way; this practice is repeated a number of times in each episode until Petronius decides to conclude the episode. Each larger episode is made up of many smaller episodes of which Petronius can have any number. The *Cena*, for example, could easily be shortened or lengthened at several places. Petronius chooses illustrative details and shapes them into scenes and the scenes into episodes with the intention to entertain⁷⁴). He apparently knows how to avoid dull incidents. When he has enough incidents or filler for each scene and episode – or enough for his

73) Courtney (*supra* n. 61) 86–100.

74) R. Beck (*supra* n. 30) 45.

oral presentation – he brings the episode to an end without tipping his hand to the fact that this scene will conclude the episode. He fixes the end when there is enough, but not too much, in the episode. While the reader may be mistaken in his sense of the ending, Petronius never is, for he has a fine feel for timing and a sense of the ending. When the possibilities of the episode have been exhausted, he fashions an unexpected ending calculated to delight his audience and win applause.

Petronius apparently never allows himself to write a simple and predictable ending. He demonstrates total artistic control over his narrative by the restraint he shows on a natural desire to satisfy expectations which he himself raised. Like an experienced lover extending the foreplay before climax, Petronius teases his reader again and again in each episode before bringing it to an end. Such control over rhythm and timing reveals the consummate craftsman.

And what of the end of the *Satyricon* (assuming that Petronius finished the novel)? The episodic structure of the picaresque novel is so elastic that no conclusion to the whole project is required. Surely no conclusion which rewards the innocent, punishes the guilty, and sets finally everything right according to some cosmic order. Like the picaresque novel, the end of the *Satyricon* may simply have remained unfinished: “The ending of *El Buscón* ... like *Guzmán* ... is unfinished, the first edition promising further recitals of Pablos’ misadventures ‘in the second part’. No second part ever appeared. The novel is open at the end in another way, for Pablos implies that the plot of the book goes on forever”⁷⁵).

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75) S. Miller (*supra* n. 52) 113. The end of Lucian’s *True History* (2.47) promises to tell the reader in the next book what happened on the other side of the world. No additional book was ever written by Lucian, and the scholiast remarks in the margin that this is the biggest of Lucian’s lies. The last adventure in the *True History*, like the last one in the extant *Satyricon*, deals with cannibalism.