

■ De/valorization of Platonic Love in Petronius' *Satyricon*: Desire, Declamation, and Dominion*

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Abstract

To disprove Foucault's argument that the early Roman empire comes to belittle pederasty and valorize heterosexual marriage, Daniel B. McGlathery points out that this argument has been contextualized within and confined to philosophical and medical works. For instance, regarding texts that do foreground pederasty in the early Roman empire, such as those by Roman novelists Petronius and Apuleius, McGlathery relates that Foucault sees them as being simply odd. In particular, McGlathery analyzes the Pergamene boy's story in Petronius' *Satyricon* to demonstrate that this Roman parody of Platonic love does not devalue pederasty in itself; it exposes instead the hypocrisy of this love. However, McGlathery's criticism is sustained only if the current text of the novel is all that it was back then when Petronius presented it to his Roman readers. To check such a comment, this paper would like to explore whether pederasty is valorized by juxtaposing the Pergamene boy's story and the declamation scene in the opening chapter of the present *Satyricon*. This exploration will proceed based on such juxtaposition—since, if one finds no narrative framework in the novel, it might be valid to resort to the societal structure in which it was written. This structure is the practice of rhetoric, one major signature of the Roman culture and which is prominently figured in the form of declamation in the opening of the novel. In the end, one sees that

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McGlathery's facile success against Foucault requires modification. The *Satyricon*, with its inset declamation scene, implies the need to reconsider homoerotics, which does not necessarily mean to disparage pederastic practice.

Keywords: declamation, rhetoric, *Satyricon*, Platonic love, the Pergamene boy

Daniel B. McGlathery's Critical Reading of the *Satyricon*¹

In an attempt to disprove Foucault's argument that the early Roman empire comes to belittle pederasty and valorize marriage, significantly in contradistinction to fourth-century B.C.E. Greece's keen attention to homoerotic love, McGlathery points out that this argument has been in general contextualized within and confined to philosophical and medical works (206, 227). For instance, regarding texts that do foreground pederasty in the early Roman empire, such as those by Roman novelists Petronius and Apuleius, McGlathery relates that Foucault views them as being simply odd (206). The Roman valorization of marriage is even less certain. One finds that Foucault's target texts for his argument—Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* and pseudo-Lucian's *Erotes*—can engender different interpretations: in both, heterosexual conjugal relation does not receive particularized concern to the exclusion of love and sex between males (McGlathery 218).²

McGlathery analyzes, among others, the Pergamene boy's story in Petronius' *Satyricon* to demonstrate that this Roman novelist's parody of Platonic love does not suggest "a devaluation of pederastic practice per se but rather a humorous exposure of the sexual reality that underlies Socratic protestations of chastity" (223). That is, the idealized form of pederasty, Platonic love, appears implausible; behind this metaphysical façade, it is the physical need that arbitrates all. Petronius' satirical rendering of Platonic *eros* is thus not so much a disapproval of homoerotics as an "exposure of human hypocrisy" (McGlathery 212). Accordingly, the ever-recurrent "sexual reality" that informs the *Satyricon* certifies "the ongoing, lively interest of the subject [pederasty]" (217). In particular, as if to highlight the valorization of homoerotics in the *Satyricon*, McGlathery indicates that the tale of the Pergamene boy has been narrated "with no moralizing comments" (223). By implication, events and stories related to sex between males other than this one in the novel might not have been judged morally, either.

McGlathery's idea that the *Satyricon* stages the liveliness of pederastic practice uncritically is apparently true—if the current text of the novel is all that it was back then when Petronius presented it to his Roman readers. However, as Niall W. Slater has it: "The loss of so much text [of the *Satyricon*], particularly the opening, means that we cannot come to this story as the author originally planned" (17). Then, if one does not have the original novel to read, how can any interpretive

¹ The original version of this paper was presented at the 8th Conference of the Taiwan Association of Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

² For instance, Plutarch can be cited as evidence of "the continuing practice and justification of pederasty" since there is the need to valorize heterosexual love; pseudo-Lucian expressly promotes pederasty, "albeit in a form that does not elide sexual desire" (McGlathery 218).

consistency be presumed for the novel in its present fragmented form? Some may oppose the possibility of consistency on the grounds of postmodernism and poststructuralism, but what is problematic here is McGlathery's definitive conclusion, which is ignoring what the missing part might show, instead of his general problematics about Foucault's argument. The present *Satyricon* is thus a puzzling text, devoid of any framing structure, or any overarching point of reference, even though one has a vague idea that the novel features Encolpius' mock-epic sexual escapade.

Interpretation is still possible without the whole text as long as one does not claim to argue based on novelistic integrity. From this stance, the current study would like to explore whether pederasty is valorized (to reexamine McGlathery's study question and view) by juxtaposing the Pergamene boy's story and the declamation scene in the opening chapter of the present *Satyricon*. This exploration will proceed based on such juxtaposition—since, if one finds no narrative framework in the novel, it might be valid to resort to the societal structure in which it was written. This structure is the practice of rhetoric, one major signature of the Roman culture and which is prominently figured in the form of declamation in the opening of the novel.³ Since rhetoric links a diversity of aspects of Roman life, using it as a reference point may contribute to discussions on the degree of valorization of pederasty regarding the text. In the end, one sees that McGlathery's facile success against Foucault requires modification.

Specifically, declamation can serve as an apt governing point of reference, particularly in the early Roman empire when the *Satyricon* makes its debut, because it signifies part of the training phase before the perfection of rhetorical education. In declamations, students of rhetoric have to practice arguing for and against positions presumably with overriding Roman ideologies in mind. As practice speech, then, declamation is the rite of passage by which they learn how to become a Roman, more than just practicing the art of persuasion. In short, declamation is a process by which these students learn to master the abject. If such is the case, reading the tale of the Pergamene boy in relation to the significance of the declamation scene would be revealing: McGlathery's idea of the valorization of pederasty may be true to the social life in the novel but could be partial when this life is considered in juxtaposition with the opening. Here, since practice speeches rehearse and reproduce Roman identity, the valorization must face a narrative counterforce that complicates the meanings of the novel. In light of this, this study proposes that the *Satyricon*, with its inset declamation scene, implies the need to reconsider homoerotics, which does not necessarily mean to disparage pederastic

³ I propose this structure—"rhetoric"—because it is not only the threshold skill but also the privileged ticket—if not the only one, at least a remarkable one—for the Romans to access status and wealth.

practice. In what follows, some basics about declamation will be related before moving on to Petronius' text.

Roman Declamation and Its Dynamics

In Roman rhetorical education, declamation is chiefly the speech-making exercise the future orators have to do before they complete their education. Based on the nature of themes, such an exercise is categorized into "persuasion" (*suasoria*) and "dispute" (*controversia*): while the former speech aims to persuade a figure from the past, either historical or mythological, the latter speech looks to accusation or defense in an imagined lawsuit (Braund 148). "Invented" themes posed to the students would be like these: for a *suasoria*—"Should Cicero beg Antonius to spare his life?"; for a *controversia*—"A married woman gave birth to a black boy. She is charged with adultery" (Gunderson 1). Such categorization enables one to see that declamation prepares students for political and courtroom occasions that are the paramount social realities wherein Roman civil ideologies reign and define Romanness.

The two kinds of speech obviously square with Aristotle's two types of rhetoric: deliberative and forensic oratory respectively. However, neither *suasoria* nor *controversia* is real, in terms of the audience and the actual problems it addresses. Neither of them appeals to decision-makers; concerns do not lie in whether a political or legal problem is settled, but in how sound the argumentation process is. That is to say, declamation as oratory can only be epideictic in the Aristotelian sense though its formal features are undoubtedly "pragmatic."⁴ The epideictic nature of declamation is thus reflective of the pedagogical practice of public speaking: apart from the application of rhetorical skills, it also aims to establish Roman values by negotiating with conflicting ideas and thoughts, which might be endorsed or dismissed by teachers of rhetoric. In Eric Gunderson's words, declamation is ultimately "the emplotting of Roman identity" (6). Through mock-speeches, students learn how to be a Roman: what is praise- or blame-worthy about this identity.

Furthermore, the social import of declamation can be approached in two aspects. The first aspect concerns who has the privilege to learn rhetoric in the early Roman empire. It is either the élite group (Braund 150) or the teenagers from families with affluence (Imber 163) that have viable access to rhetorical education and dec-

⁴ Aristotle divides rhetoric into three kinds: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. In late-sophistic rhetorical theory, especially, the former two form what is defined as "pragmatic" rhetoric, while the latter one stands independently as a rhetoric of its own kind, which is "more amorphous and inclusive" but "typically conceived as the discourse of praise and blame" (Walker 7). Here in this paper, I follow the differentiation between "pragmatic" and "epideictic" rhetoric.

lamation training. Or, it could be “those of less than aristocratic status” who through declamation “laid claim to the cultural prestige of old-time oratory and strove to turn themselves into true Romans” (Bloomer 199). One can thus gather that rhetorical education is largely restricted to privileged groups, whose learning of rhetoric and practice of declamation targets at the continuation of a particularly defined model Roman identity, which, in turn, safeguards the rights or privileges of these groups.

The second aspect concerns what values will be acquired in declamations. In general, Roman boys are asked to learn how a Roman society is hierarchically constructed in terms of class, gender, and social position (Imber 164). Naturally, they must argue to foreground the apex of the social pyramid: the “*vir bonus*, the *civis* and *pater* the student would one day become” (164). In other words, students of rhetoric in declaiming must undertake to maintain an image of Roman that in all manners is exclusive of otherness—a male citizen free in both birth and speech (*ingenuitas* and *libertas*) (Bloomer 199). Hence, declamation resembles an abjection process to ensure that the boy-speaker, as a would-be father and citizen, does not derail and vitiate his Romanness.

As W. Martin Bloomer indicates, the hierarchy-forming declamation with the *vir bonus* at the top is “a sort of role-playing that practiced category-making” (212). Students are supposed to divide society into various categories. To serve their own purpose, they should in the first place examine and explore the categories “essential to the socialization of the new imperial governing classes” (200). These categories, in a nutshell, form an amalgam of guidelines derived from the roles of father and citizen. They also have to learn to articulate for lower classes with a view to serving their future clients (213). This might look business-oriented, but one cannot but also see that such familiarization with minor voices would likewise contribute to the authority of an orator, who remains the one to arbitrate. So, as it appears, declamation might serve as a site for role-playing, and with its explicit purpose of practice, it cannot be serious or regarded as capable of affecting any decision-making. Nevertheless, the hierarchized categories as thought over and applied in declamations reveal that a rigid social structure will of necessity instill Roman values in students, which in turn act as background knowledge when they become real orators.

As a consequence, it is possible to imagine that the issue of reverence for and loyalty to fathers (*pietas*) is a “general interest” in the corpus of Roman declamations (Bloomer 213).⁵ Aspiring to be a Roman father and citizen, a student

⁵ The ideal of *vir bonus* is sustained particularly by the role of a Roman father. According to Imber, he is the anchor of connection between country and family—he is a male citizen, and only he can cre-

declaimer is often seen engaged in figuring out how to align himself with the words and authority of a paternal figure. In all likelihood, the son's obedience might be severely tested in a given situation where he assumes two conflicting but inseparable roles. He might, for example, have to choose between a mother who has committed adultery and a father who has been betrayed by his wife (Imber 165). However difficult the situation is, the son must undertake to maintain and exert a sense of paternal authority. Even in declamations filled with tyrants and pirates, as Margaret Imber explains, one can still witness "the perilous state a *domus* is left in when a *pater* goes traveling" (167). So far, one comes to understand that, in point of Roman cultural continuation, declamation may not signify due to its double inferiority (in terms of language and position [Bloomer 199]) but in fact acts as the ideological center that directs the would-be Roman male citizens to the right path, to the authority-generating place they should occupy in the social grid.⁶

Becoming a Roman or normalizing oneself into a Roman via declamation is, however, hardly a linear and one-sided process. The fact that declaimers undertake to build a sense of authority over thorny issues over and again in *suasoriae* or *controversiae* means fundamentally that the unmanageable abject remains in Roman minds and could be a constant threat to their social grid. Gunderson thus reminds us: "In declamation we learn not about reality at Rome but rather about how one plays with that reality in order to negotiate or to refigure one's imaginary relationship to that reality" (19). In this vein, although students declaim to internalize Roman laws and ideologies, the themes assigned to them not only test their Roman identity but also testify to the difficulty of maintaining this identity—which might be dismantled unnoticed.

In this regard, Gunderson discusses a piece of declamation on homosexual desire (in Pseudo-Quintilian's major declamations) to illustrate the hardly controlled reality for which a declaimer must summon authority in a rigorous manner. This piece relates the time of the Cimbrian war when a soldier is brought to trial for murdering his tribune who has tried to rape him and who also happens to be a relative of the military general Marius (156). Gunderson notes in particular that, unlike

ate a son to maintain his family's identity; the son, in turn, is also "a potential soldier and citizen who guaranteed the security of Rome into the next generation" (161).

⁶ One thing worth mentioning is that socialization through declamation occurs in another domain as well. Declamation is meant for education of Roman boys, but as Gunderson indicates, it could be similarly "pursued by mature men who sought to entertain a circle of friends or even a broader public with a display of verbal dexterity" (1). For him, declamation for the sake of entertainment is as significant as declamation exercises for students' socialization to become a Roman father and citizen. It is also about joining esteemed social circles that would probably recognize one's taste and talent in declamatory speeches. Therefore, declamation forms "one of the venues for just such a process of aristocratic recruitment, training, and evaluation" (Gunderson 13).

various other declamations, this one presents a specific historical past (though fictitious) and the declaimer “speaks not as a man of today but instead as a figure from the past” (156). As declamation bears a strong sense of contemporary relevance, one can only explain the specificity of time by saying that a narrative distance must be kept by the declaimer from the topic of homoerotics, which might very likely constitute a major menace to Romanness—“All of this takes place ‘back then’” (Gunderson 156-58). And remember, the context of the case is a war that could possibly cause substantial damage to the empire. Therefore, if “saving Rome from a foreign enemy and saving Roman manhood from sexual assault are acts of comparable scale and import” (159), it is no wonder that creating a sense of past enables the declaimer and his audience to better confront the topic, albeit indirectly.

The declamation thus borders on the line between the sayable and the unsayable. Gunderson then offers quite a few instances of liminal moments. First, the case can be narrated because it is situated in the past, but the narration seems to be infected with language impairment. For instance, the exordium shows that the declaimer has had trouble in bringing up the subject—in the opening are continual syntactic interruptions that make easy and smooth reading unlikely (Gunderson 159-60). The speaker is obviously postponing the moment of revelation of a very offending but pertinent topic. Second, he is also seen to be indecisive as to how to address the soldier. As Gunderson shows, the speaker calls him a boy (*puer*) but in another place calls him a man (*uir*)—if a boy, the soldier can be “a legitimate sexual object” but cannot be a soldier, and if a man, he can only be a soldier but cannot possibly be desired (172). On the one hand, such indecision suggests the declaimer’s intention to deproblematize the case: the soldier is young enough or at least looks young enough so that the case might sound less offensive. On the other hand, the declaimer has unwittingly implied the possibility of the desire between men: being boy-like or young enough is no subterfuge. Third, the idea of a sexually attractive man (to man) is again traced in the speaker’s explanation of why the tribune is motivated. The soldier does possess “physical charms”—however hard he tries to touch upon this subject with caution (174). So, though determined to be cautiously elusive, the declaimer could not but give way to his slips of tongue. To conclude, this declamation demonstrates normalization for the Romans to be never a finished and effortless project: the threats are always real, and the audience is “enjoined to produce the tribune’s desire as ineffable” (175).

The case mentioned above may be rare and extreme, but it does point to the general condition of declamations: declaimers set out to learn about Romanness by thinking about how they are going to master compromising social realities.

Their appearance in declamations means that they are ever-recurrent to the extent of constantly mining an exclusive Roman identity. Declaimers are thus like censors: to keep watch on the repressed, whose nature, however, is destined to return repetitively (Gunderson 182). These censors then task themselves to say no, but what underlies that no is yes: “In the negation we find nevertheless an affirmation of the forbidden possibility” (165).⁷ The dynamics of declamation is thus the Freudian negation: it represses but in repressing it confirms the presence of the repressed, which remains in its protean forms at the conscious level.

The Declamations in the Opening of the *Satyricon*

In the following, this study will examine the opening declamations in the novel—“opening” in terms of the present approachable text—and move on to explore their implications in relation to the Pergamene boy’s story. These speeches can be exemplary because they are delivered at the school of rhetoric. One may find them not exactly in a pedagogical context, but their delivery at the school is itself symbolic enough. These speeches are given at a site which is supposedly the liminal space where students must face transgression and the improbable, learn to distinguish between a lawful Rome and a Rome gone awry, and finally seek and generate a sense of paternal authority.

Encolpius gives the first declamation, criticizing the contemporary declamation exercises:

. . . in reality all that they [students] achieve with their turgid themes and their utterly pointless and empty crackle of epigrams is that when they set foot in court they find themselves transported into another world. This is why I believe that our hapless youngsters are turned into total idiots in the schools of rhetoric, because their ears and eyes are trained not on everyday issues, but on pirates in chains on the sea-shore, or on tyrants signing edicts bidding sons decapitate their fathers, or on oracular responses in time of plague urging the sacrifice of three more or maidens. These are nothing but verbal gob-stoppers coated in honey, every word and every deed sprinkled with poppy-seed and sesame! Students fed on this fare can no more acquire good sense than cooks living in the kitchen can smell of roses. Forgive my saying so, but you teachers of rhetoric more than any others have been the death of eloquence. Your lightweight, empty bleatings have merely encouraged frivolity, with the result that oratory has lost all its vigour, and has collapsed. (1.1-1.2)

⁷ Gunderson is referring to Freud’s idea of negation—the conscious dismissal of the abject. Note that he has not reached the conclusion that the mechanism of negation alone underlies declamation; it is due to the staging of the repressed in declamation and then the conscious dismissal of it that I regard it as reasonable to say the dynamics of declamation is negation in what follows.

In response, Agamemnon is similarly critical but in a different strain:⁸

It is hardly surprising that teachers are at fault in these school exercises; they have to go along with lunatics, and play the madman. Unless their speeches meet with the approval of their young pupils, they will in Cicero's words be left high and dry in the schools. Our plight is like that of flatterers on the stage who cadge dinners from the rich; their chief preoccupation is what they think will please their hearers most, for they will attain their aim only by laying traps for their ears. Likewise, unless the teacher of eloquence turns angler and baits his hook with the morsel which he knows the fish will bite on, he stands idle on the rock with no hope of a catch. So what is the moral? It is the parents who deserve censure for refusing to allow stern discipline to ensure the progress of their children. To begin with, they sacrifice their young hopefuls, like everything else, on the altar of ambition. Then, in their haste to achieve their goals, they bundle them into the courts while their learning is still undigested. When their sons are still in their cradles, they swaddle them with eloquence, believing that eloquence is the be-all and end-all. Whereas if they allowed them to struggle step by step, making the youngsters work hard, steep themselves in serious study, order their minds with the maxims of philosophy, score out with ruthless pen what they had first written, lend patient ears to the models which they wished to imitate, convince themselves that nothing admired by boys can be of intrinsic worth—then the lofty utterance of old would maintain its weight and splendour. (1.3-1.4)

In sum, Encolpius and Agamemnon declaim to lament over the ineffective education of oratory (“death of eloquence”), indulging themselves in the glorious past of overpowering eloquence (“the lofty utterance of old”). Symptoms of this decline of rhetoric include: first, the topics for students to practice and declaim on are farfetched, detached from their empirical world (“turgid themes” and “not on everyday issues”); second, the oratory they acquire is tintinnabular at the expense of substance (“verbal gob-stoppers coated in honey,” etc.). According to Encolpius here, the culprit is the group of teachers of rhetoric who encourage “frivolity” instead of seriousness. Agamemnon shows consent, but he considers the root of the decline to be students’ parents: they not only fail to discipline their children with sound and ethical principles but also task them to profit by eloquence before they are well-grounded in basics. Teachers of rhetoric are then forced to ingratiate their students by teaching only wordplay to make a living.

This interchange of views on the status of rhetoric has become one popular example quoted to evidence the decline of eloquence (Gunderson 11). Nevertheless, these declamations defy such an easy reading: their literal domain does not cover all the meanings they might imply. To begin with, the recession of oratory into “inconsequential” declamation has been associated with “a fallen

⁸ For readers’ reference, Agamemnon here is one of the characters in the novel and has nothing to do with his tragic or epical namesake.

Rome” (Gunderson 2). Such association may be true and false at the same time—true in the sense that the change to empire from republic might arguably offer far fewer venues for oratorical impact (Palmeri 25), and false in the sense that “paradoxically, the importance of rhetorical training in the educational system increased even as the empire eliminated the political uses of oratory” (25). As a result, the idea of rhetoric on the decline is in fact a way to phrase the receding of rhetoric from public view and indicative of a focal shift. That is, one witnesses not the waning of rhetoric but the turning to epideictic rhetoric from pragmatic rhetoric. So, the lamentation over the decline of rhetoric expressed by Encolpius and Agamemnon can hardly be taken in toto. They are merely showing and putting forward certain values to be considered; no persuasion is targeted as in pragmatic contexts. Therefore, for Jeffrey Walker, the idea of declining rhetoric can be dismissed simply as “without proof” (94). One reason why rhetoric is claimed to founder is probably due to a “classicizing mentality,” the tendency to eulogize what is past (94). The sentiment of nostalgia is possibly created to re-fract an imagined lack experienced here and now, and this lack is being remedied by epideictic oratory.

It is noteworthy that Encolpius and Agamemnon inscribe their criticism of declamatory practice in declamations. This metadiscourse—declamation on declamation—invariably discusses “the fatuity of declamation” ironically in the form it puts in a negative light (Bloomer 211). Typical are complaints about declamation being inadequate training for the real court scene, tending towards ornaments, and catering to the likings of audiences (211). So, one has the irony that “Antiquity is filled with denunciations of declamation,” which, however, are “not infrequently *themselves* informed by declamation” (Gunderson 9). Even more paradoxical is the fact that the complaints could be “part of the standard moralizing fare” offered by rhetoricians for their students to memorize and recite (Walker 95). The nature of such criticism is thus, as Gunderson has it, rather figurative than factual (13).

If “rhetoric on the decline” is merely a figural expression, declamation remains intact as one of the major categories of rhetoric—epideictic oratory—and receives popular attention though under constant attack. Then, one asks what the trope does say, if it is not literally communicative. The metadiscourse might have derived from the “Roman resentment at the growing preeminence of Greek literary culture” (Walker 94). Declamation seems too Greek. For one thing, most teachers of rhetoric might have been Greeks (Bloomer 208). The other thing is that these teachers teach original Greek issues teeming with pirates and tyrants (200). This corresponds to Encolpius’ attack that teachers of rhetoric do not teach topics related to life and experience but pirates, tyrants, or mythological events. If not Greek

topics, absurd ones could also be part of the curriculum.⁹ Using declamation to declaim against declamation thus underlines an implicit tug of war between Roman and Greek subjectivity. Yet, somehow Romans also acknowledge the utility of these Greeks' pedagogy: the far-fetched topics, as mentioned in the previous section, pertain as well to the Roman concern of setting up the authority of *vir bonus*. So, one can argue that the decline of rhetoric as a favored conception in the empire is symptomatic of Romans' contradictory attitudes toward Greeks: a hybridity of homage to Greek culture and Romans' self-importance and subjectivity claim.

To place the opening declamations in the *Satyricon* in the framework of "negation" (conscious repression of the object), one can find that Encolpius' and Agamemnon's metadiscourse on the trope of declining rhetoric seeks, among others, to repress Greekness (albeit unsaid) for the sake of fashioning a true Roman identity. This identity, moreover, should be incarnated in the figures of parents, who are responsible for applying "stern discipline" so that their boys can become Romans proper, as Agamemnon explains without being refuted. However, one must be cautious about his use of "parents" here because only a Roman father has absolute power over his boy, whose status is slave-like (Imber 161), and therefore "parents" should be understood in terms of paternal figures.¹⁰ It appears in this light that the trope of declining rhetoric does not only hint at the urge to become a Roman by expelling Greekness, but also calls for a socialized father-son relationship by which Romanness can be continued.¹¹ More importantly, these declamations culminate in the demand for a normalizing center that contributes to the maintenance of Roman subjectivity, but simultaneously, that demand ironically evidences the difficulty of solidifying the center. Declamation negates but only to recognize the repressed.

The Pergamene Boy's Story Vis-à-vis the Opening Declamations

With the opening declamations appealing to the execution of norm and authority, the tale of the Pergamene boy cannot be read simply as revealing "sexual reality" and "human hypocrisy." McGlathery's idea of valorization of pederasty in the *Satyricon* thus may be true, but it needs to be modified. The better way to interpret the novel based on the juxtaposition of the opening declamations and the Pergamene boy's story might be that, with declamation functioning to regulate and

⁹ Declaimers could even deliver a speech in praise of salt (Bloomer 211).

¹⁰ The paternal rights enjoyed by the Roman fathers are so great that Imber describes their privileges as "legendary" (161).

¹¹ The elder Seneca criticizes "vice" as "effeminate," "vulgar," and "Greek" (Bloomer 204).

control, the text displays an ongoing struggle between the call for governance and the drive for unruly behavior. It is hard to say which one Petronius favors.

To begin with, the world of the *Satyricon* is a lawless realm. The name of the protagonist Encolpius (“in the groin” [Palmeri 28]; “crotch” [Slater 26]) has already implied that the narrative would proceed along desire, barely capable of aiming at a hierarchical system characteristic of classical heroic quests. The corresponding form is likewise in disarray. Petronius makes the novel a “hybrid genre” that “parodically reduces elevated styles to bathos and common speech” (Palmeri 21). The mixture of genres high and low enables Frank Palmeri to observe that this novel suggests “a leveling and tolerance of heterogeneous languages and forms of understanding” (32). However, such celebration of emancipatory hypotactic narration hardly takes into account the significance of hierarchy-forming declamation for Romans. Again, Petronius’ subversion of high and low in point of genre needs to be held in check, too.

Encolpius also describes himself and his friends as living as “outlaws” (12.125). This state of lawlessness is aptly reflected in the fact that he, Giton, and Ascyltos call one another brothers. According to Amy Richlin, “What is interesting about this term [brothers, *fratres*] is that it implies equality and interchangeability among an indefinite number, unlike the man/boy norm described above, which defines hierarchical pairs with no role-switching allowed” (84-5). Richlin means that, even though sexual love of the three males seemingly conforms to the norm of pederasty (man-boy relationship with the older one as the [active] lover and the younger one as the [passive] beloved), their addressing one another as *fratres* indicates that their roles in pederastic affairs may not follow the norm (unseen in the present text). If this is true, then, with the opening declamations as major reference points, Petronius does not problematize or valorize pederasty. Instead, what is focused is to think over whether pederasty is practiced according to the norm.

Moving on to the story of the Pergamene boy, one finds similarly that whether pederasty is endorsed depends largely on whether the norm is implemented—if the call for a regulating mechanism in the opening declamations is considered. Note first that the story is considered to have parodied the idealized pederastic love between Socrates and Alcibiades in Plato’s *Symposium* (Richlin 95; McGlathery 205). It is well-known that, among others, the dialogue portrays Alcibiades’ attempt to seduce Socrates to sex. The latter is, however, so self-governing that the former fails. The youth then comes to recognize and admire the philosopher’s self-control in abjuring physical love.¹² In this case of pederasty, what matters are

¹² See Alcibiades’ encomium to Socrates in Plato’s *Symposium* 215a-222b.

the adult man's self-mastery and the consequent discipline of the beloved.

Petronius' parody relates the affair between the tutor Eumolpus and his pupil the Pergamene boy. Before he is hired by the boy's father, he has decided to obtain his trust because "my host has a most handsome son" (8.85)—so that to ease his father's suspicion, Eumolpus devises the following:

Whenever the table-talk turned to the subject of sex with good-looking boys, I would seethe with such fury, and show such austere displeasure in refusing to have my ears outraged by foul gossip, that the boy's mother regarded me as a real Stoic. So in no time I had started escorting the young fellow to the exercise ground, organizing his studies, acting as his tutor and moral adviser, and ensuring that no one set foot in the house for sex. (8.85)

Here, Petronius has Eumolpus assume a philosopher's pose of repudiating the physical. However, unlike Socrates, he does not aim at knowledge and quite reverses the Socratic fake interest in the physical but genuine investment in the metaphysical. The Pergamene boy eventually enters a pederastic relationship with Eumolpus but this liaison hardly resembles that between Socrates and Alcibiades. While the attraction to love in the latter pair lies in self-control, the former pair is led to pseudo-Platonic love. Particularly, Eumolpus entices the boy into physical contact by offering a series of gifts such as "a pair of doves," "a pair of really lively fighting-cocks," and "the finest Macedonian stallion" (8.85-6). That is, the boy enters a relationship with his tutor not because he sees virtues in him, but because there are material gains. After all, Eumolpus is no philosopher: his name connotes "one who sings well" (Connors 62).

It is interesting to note that not only does Eumolpus dismiss self-control in playing a philosopher, but also the boy shows a lack of discipline by transgressing the pederastic norm that requires him to be passive. Before his advances, Eumolpus prays that the boy does not feel anything after the night and then he will offer him the said gifts the next day—knowing very well that the boy pretends to sleep (8.85-6). The Pergamene boy is therefore *enthusiastically* passive and shown to become greedier and more wanton as the story goes on (8.87).¹³ What Petronius foregrounds in this place is hence not related to the reality of pederasty, but the problem of excess and the difficulty of self-mastery. If one juxtaposes this scene with the opening declamations, it is hardly surprising to find parallels: inefficacy of education, unruly boys, ingratiating teachers, indulgent parents, and material pursuit on both parents' and boy's part. So, granted that declamation stages Roman-ness in the making, the story of the Pergamene boy cannot stand alone simply to

¹³ For a detailed discussion on how the boy quite rewrites the ideal of Platonic love and challenges the Roman pederastic norm, see McGlathery 214-15.

expose “human hypocrisy” and “sexual reality.” This tale is also layered with the demand for order and discipline necessary to the “emplotting” of Romanness. The implied negation cannot but confirm the excess in the Roman world, though.

Possibility of Limits?

This study has used declamation as the overarching framework for considering the *Satyricon*, especially the opening declamations and the tale of the Pergamene boy. Declamation is about normalization, socialization, and hierarchy-production in the early Roman empire, but one finds there is always excess that keeps the dynamics of declamation—negation—repetitively at work. The repressed is destined to return. In this regard, Petronius provides a critical moment where excess might explode or cease to be. That is when Eumolpus finds he can no longer hoax his legacy-hunters for his personal benefits (13.141). Thus, he announces his will: “All those who are left legacies in my will, with the exception of my freedmen, will obtain my bequests only on one condition, that they cut my body in pieces and eat it before the eye of citizens” (13.141). However, to eat a Roman body is unthinkable. The present *Satyricon* does not narrate what happens to Eumolpus following this will, but the suspense quite suits the paradox of the declamatory negation. Eumolpus is setting the limit, the lawful boundary Romans should observe, but the world in the novel is nothing but excess. One is uncertain as to Petronius’ vision: a Rome that stands, or a Rome that falls, eventually? If it is the latter case, the decline of rhetoric becomes factual.

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試論佩托尼斯《色蹄利坑》中的柏拉圖式愛情：羅馬治理與修辭演說練習

摘要

學者 McGlathery 指出，在傅柯的論述裡，早期的羅馬帝國轉而關注異性婚姻連結、並較少著墨同性之愛的看法，其實是侷限於哲學及醫學文本的解讀。例如，針對小說家如佩托尼斯及阿帕雷斯的同性愛書寫，傅柯認為他們僅是個案，不影響前述所提到的轉向。McGlathery 進一步分析了佩托尼斯《色蹄利坑》中的佩家盟男孩的故事，說明該小說並非貶抑同性愛，而是突顯其現實面，以及人性中真實存在的偽善。然而，McGlathery 觀點的基礎實不穩固，因為現今《色蹄利坑》的版本並不完整，尚有部分付之闕如，而難以確認佩托尼斯是否在整體上有一致性的敘述。因此，本文希望另闢蹊徑，透過並置、分析小說一開始的演說練習場景與佩家盟男孩的故事，來檢視 McGlathery 的觀點。原因在於，如果小說本身無可辨識的架構，則或可透過其誕生的社會結構去推論文本可能的含意。此處的結構指的是羅馬文化標誌之一——修辭，具體而微的以「演說練習」(declamation) 的面貌出現在現存版本的開頭。最後可看出，有鑑於「演說練習」的象徵意涵，《色蹄利坑》彰顯的，有可能是有必要重新建立同性情愛倫理，但此無關於歌頌或貶抑同性之愛。

關鍵字：演說練習、修辭、《色蹄利坑》、柏拉圖式愛情、佩家盟男孩

