V

Third Rivalry over Giton: Encolpius versus Eumolpus (§§ 92–96)

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The reconciliation episode (§ 91) is immediately followed by a sequence of further events taking place at Encolpius' lodgings (§§ 92–99). As it bears some close similarities with the First and the Second Rivalry over Giton,[572] I will refer to this section of the *Satyrica* as the Third Rivalry over Giton. One major aspect that sets this episode apart from those that came before is that Encolpius now faces not one but two rivals: Not only does Ascyltus demand Giton back after the boy has reconciled with Encolpius (cf. esp. § 97.1–98.1), but the old man Eumolpus now also shows a clear interest in snatching the boy away from Encolpius (§§ 92–96). It is this section of the episode, i.e. the one in which Eumolpus takes centre stage, that my discussion will focus on.[573]

[**92**.1] *et iam plena nox erat mulierque cenae mandata curaverat, cum Eumolpus ostium pulsat.* [2] *interrogo ego: 'quot estis?' obiterque per rimam foris speculari diligentissime coepi, num Ascyltos una venisset.* [3] *deinde ut solum hospitem vidi, momento recepi. ille ut se in grabatum reiecit viditque Gitona in conspectus ministrantem, movit caput et 'laudo' inquit 'Ganymedem. oportet hodie bene sit'.* [4] *non delectavit me tam curiosum principium timuique ne in contubernium recepissem Ascylti parem.* [5] *instat Eumolpus, et cum puer illi potionem dedisset, 'malo te' inquit 'quam balneum*

572 For a summary of the Second Rivalry over Giton (§§ 79–82), cf. section IV. Reconciliation: Encolpius and Giton (§ 91).

573 Schmeling (1991: 366–8) also interprets §§ 92–6 as a more or less independent episode. The same applies to Panayotakis' (1995: 122–30) discussion.

totum' siccatoque avide poculo negat sibi umquam acidius fuisse. [6] *'nam et dum lavor' ait 'paene vapulavi, quia conatus sum circa solium sedentibus carmen recitare, et postquam de balneo [tamquam de theatro] eiectus sum, circuire omnes angulos coepi et clara voce Encolpion clamitare.* [7] *ex altera parte iuvenis nudus, qui vestimenta perdiderat, non minore clamoris indignatione Gitona flagitabat.* [8] *et me quidem pueri tamquam insanum imitatione petulantissima deriserunt, illum autem frequentia ingens circumvenit cum plausu et admiratione timidissima.* [9] *habebat enim inguinum pondus tam grande, ut ipsum hominem laciniam fascini crederes. o iuvenem laboriosum: puto illum pridie incipere, postero die finire.* [10] *itaque statim invenit auxilium; nescio quis enim, eques Romanus ut aiebant infamis, sua veste errantem circumdedit ac domum abduxit, credo, ut tam magna fortuna solus uteretur.* [11] *at ego ne mea quidem vestimenta ab officioso ⟨custode⟩ recepissem, nisi notorem dedissem. tanto magis inguina quam ingenia fricare.'* [12] *haec Eumolpo dicente mutabam ego frequentissime vultum, iniuriis scilicet inimici mei hilaris, commodis tristis.* [13] *utcumque tamen, tamquam non agnoscerem fabulam, tacui et cenae ordinem explicui*

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[**93**.1] *'vile est quod licet, et animus errore laetus iniurias diligit.*
[2] *ales Phasiacis petita Colchis*
atque Afrae volucres placent palato,
quod non sunt faciles: at albus anser
et pictis anas involuta pennis
plebeium sapit. ultimis ab oris
attractus scarus atque arata Syrtis
si quid naufragio dedit, probatur:
mullus iam gravis est. amica vincit
uxorem. rosa cinnamum veretur.
quicquid quaeritur, optimum videtur.'
[3] *'hoc est' inquam 'quod promiseras, ne quem hodie versum faceres? per fidem, saltem nobis parce, qui te numquam lapidavimus. nam si aliquis ex is, qui eodem synoecio potant, nomen poetae olfecerit, totam concitabit viciniam et nos omnes sub eadem causa obruet. miserere et aut pinacothecam aut balneum cogita.'* [4] *sic me loquentem obiurgavit Giton, mitissimus puer, et negavit recte facere, quod seniori conviciarer simulque oblitus officii mensam, quam humanitate posuissem, contumelia tollerem, multaque alia moderationis verecundiaeque verba, quae formam eius egregie decebant*

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[**94.**1] [*Eumolpus ad Gitonem*] *'o felicem' inquit 'matrem tuam, quae te talem peperit: macte virtute esto. raram fecit mixturam cum sapientia forma. itaque ne putes te tot verba perdidisse, amatorem invenisti.* [2] *ego laudes tuas carminibus implebo. ego paedagogus et custos etiam quo non iusseris sequar. nec iniuriam Encolpius accipit, alium amat.'* [3] *profuit etiam Eumolpo miles ille, qui mihi abstulit gladium; alioquin quem animum adversus Ascylton sumpseram, eum in Eumolpi sanguines exercuissem.* [4] *nec fefellit hoc Gitona. itaque extra cellam processit tamquam aquam peteret, iramque meam prudenti absentia extinxit.* [5] *paululum ergo intepescente saevitia 'Eumolpe' inquam 'iam malo vel carminibus loquaris quam eiusmodi tibi vota proponas. et ego iracundus sum et tu libidinosus es: vide quam non conveniat his moribus.* [6] *puta igitur me furiosum esse, cede insaniae, id est ocius foras exi'.* [7] *confusus hac denuntiatione Eumolpus non quaesiit iracundiae causam, sed continuo limen egressus adduxit repente ostium cellae meque nihil tale expectantem inclusit, exemitque raptim clavem et ad Gitona investigandum cucurrit.*
[8] *inclusus ego suspendio vitam finire constitui. et iam semicinctio ⟨lecti⟩ stantis ad parietem spondam vinxeram cervicesque nodo condebam, cum reseratis foribus intrat Eumolpus cum Gitone meque a fatali iam meta revocat ad lucem.* [9] *Giton praecipue ex dolore in rabiem efferatus tollit clamorem, me utraque manu impulsum praecipitat super lectum ⟨et⟩* [10] *'erras' inquit 'Encolpi, si putas contingere posse ut ante moriaris. prior coepi; in Ascylti hospitio gladium quaesivi.* [11] *ego si te non invenissem, petiturus praecipitia fui. et ut scias non longe esse quaerentibus mortem, specta invicem quod me spectare voluisti.'* [12] *haec locutus mercennario Eumolpi novaculam rapit et semel iterumque cervice percussa ante pedes collabitur nostros.* [13] *exclamo ego attonitus, secutusque labentem eodem ferramento ad mortem viam quaero.* [14] *sed neque Giton ulla erat suspicione vulneris laesus neque ego ullum sentiebam dolorem. rudis enim novacula et in hoc retusa, ut pueris discentibus audaciam tonsoris daret, instruxerat thecam.* [15] *ideoque nec mercennarius ad raptum ferramentum expaverat nec Eumolpus interpellaverat mimicam mortem.*

[**95.**1] *dum haec fabula inter amantes luditur, deversitor cum parte cenulae intervenit, contemplatusque foedissimam iacentium volutationem* [2] *'rogo' inquit 'ebrii estis an fugitivi an utrumque? quis autem grabatum illum erexit, aut quid sibi vult tam furtiva molitio?* [3] *vos mehercules ne mercedem cellae daretis fugere nocte in publicum voulistis. sed non impune. iam enim faxo sciatis non viduae hanc insulam esse sed M. Mannicii.'* [4] *exclamat Eumolpus 'etiam minaris?' simulque os hominis palma excus-*

sissima pulsat. [5] *ille †tot hospitum potionibus liber† urceolum fictilem in Eumolpi caput iaculatus est solvitque clamantis frontem et de cella se proripuit.* [6] *Eumolpus contumeliae impatiens rapit ligneum candelabrum sequiturque abeuntem et creberrissimis ictibus supercilium suum vindicat.* [7] *fit concursus familiae hospitumque ebriorum frequentia. ego autem nactus occasionem vindictae Eumolpum excludo, reddita scordalo vice sine aemulo scilicet et cella utor et nocte.*

[8] *interim coctores insulariique mulcant exclusum et alius veru extis stridentibus plenum in oculos eius intentat, alius furca de carnario rapta statum proeliantis componit. anus praecipue lippa, sordidissimo praecincta linteo, soleis ligneis imparibus imposita, canem ingentis magnitudinis catena trahit instigatque in Eumolpon.* [9] *sed ille candelabro se ab omni periculo vindicabat.* [**96**.1] *videbamus nos omnia per foramen valvae, quod paulo ante ansa ostiole rupta laxaverat, favebamque ego vapulanti.* [2] *Giton autem non oblitus misericordiae suae reserandum esse ostium succurrendumque periclitanti censebat.* [3] *ego durante adhuc iracundia non continui manum, sed caput miserantis stricto acutoque articulo percussi.* [4] *et ille quidem flens consedit in lecto. ego autem alternos opponebam foramina oculos iniuriaque Eumolpi velut quodam cibo me replebam advocationemque commendabam, cum procurator insulae Bargates a cena excitatus a duobus lecticariis in mediam rixam perfertur; nam erat etiam pedibus aeger.* [5] *is ut rabiosa barbaraque voce in ebrios fugitivosque diu peroravit, respiciens ad Eumolpon* [6] *'o poetarum' inquit 'disertissime, tu eras? et non discedunt ocius nequissimi servi manusque continent a rixa?'*

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[7] [*Bargates procurator ad Eumolpum*] *'contubernalis mea mihi fastum facit. ita, si me amas, maledic illam versibus, ut habeat pudorem'*

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[**92**.1] It was now completely dark, and the woman had taken care of our orders for dinner, when Eumolpus knocked at the door. [2] I asked, "How many of you are there?", and meanwhile began looking very carefully through a chink in the door to see whether Ascyltus had come with him. [3] When I saw that he was the only guest, I let him in immediately. He threw himself on the bed, and as he saw Giton before his eyes waiting at table, he nodded his head and said: "I approve of this Ganymede. It should be a nice day." [4] I was not pleased at this officious opening; I was afraid I had taken on another Ascyltus as a companion. [5] Eumolpus persisted, and when the boy had given him a drink, he said: "I like you

better than an entire bathhouse." And once he had greedily emptied his cup, he said he had never had a more sour time: [6] "For, even while I was taking my bath," he said, "I was almost beaten up, just because I tried to recite a poem to those sitting around the tub. And after I was thrown out of the bathhouse, I began going round every corner and calling out 'Encolpius' in a loud voice. [7] On the other side of the place, a young man who had lost his clothes called out for a Giton with equally indignant shouts. [8] And while the boys were making fun of me with the most insolent imitations as if I were a lunatic, a huge crowd surrounded him with applause and most humble admiration. [9] For, he had such an enormous load of genitalia that you would think the man was just an attachment to his penis. Oh, what a man for the job: I think he could start on the day before and finish on the day after. [10] So he found assistance at once: Someone or other – a disreputable Roman knight, they said – covered him with his own clothes as he was wandering around and took him off home, I think, in order to enjoy this great fortune alone. [11] But I should not even have got my own clothes back from the zealous overseer if I had not produced someone to vouch for me. It is so much more useful to rub your groins rather than your brains." [12] As Eumolpus was saying this, I very often changed my facial expression. For, of course, I rejoiced at my enemy's misfortunes and was saddened by his successes. [13] At any rate, I remained silent as if I did not know what the story was about, and I explained the order of the courses for dinner.

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[**93**.1] "We hold cheap what is legitimate; our minds delight in folly and love wrongdoing.

> [2] The bird won from Colchis on the Phasis river and fowls from Africa are pleasant to the palate, since they are not easy to get. But the white goose and the duck bedecked with colourful feathers are of a lowly taste. The parrot-wrasse brought from far-off shores and the fish of the furrowed Syrtis gain praise – if only they come at the price of a shipwreck. The mullet is by now a weariness. The mistress wins over the wife; the rose fears the cinnamon. Whatever must be sought after seems to be the best."

[3] "Is this how you keep your promise," I said, "not to produce any verse today? Please, at least spare us, who have never stoned you. For, if anyone drinking in the same house we are in smells the suggestion of a poet, he will rouse the whole neighbourhood and bury us alive for the same reason. Have pity on us and remember the art gallery or the bathhouse."

[4] Giton, the gentlest of boys, reproached me when I spoke in this way, saying that it was wrong to rebuke an older man. He said that I had forgotten my duty as host and that I let my insults spoil the meal I had provided in all kindness. He added more words of moderation and modesty, which very well became his beauty.

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[**94.**1] "Oh, how fortunate is the mother who bore a son such as you," he said. "Bravo to your excellence. Beauty and wisdom have made a rare combination. So do not think all your words have been wasted: You have found a lover. [2] I will fill poems with your praises. I will follow you as your teacher and guardian, even if you do not ask me to. Encolpius does not suffer an injustice; he is in love with somebody else." [3] That soldier who took away my sword did Eumolpus a good turn, too. Otherwise, I would have used the anger I had raised against Ascyltus to draw the blood of Eumolpus. [4] This did not go unnoticed by Giton. So he went out of the room as if to fetch some water, and quenched my anger by his prudent withdrawal. [5] Therefore, as my fury cooled a little, I said: "Eumolpus, I would prefer even that you should speak in verse rather than harbour such hopes. I am hot-headed and you are lecherous: You can see how these temperaments do not go together. [6] So think of me as a madman, yield to my insanity – that means: Get out quickly!". [7] Baffled by this announcement, Eumolpus did not ask the reason for my anger, but at once going out over the threshold, he suddenly slammed the door of the room. He shut me in, who was not expecting anything of this sort, removed the key and ran off to look for Giton.

[8] Having been locked in, I decided to end my life by hanging myself. I had just tied a belt to the frame of a bed standing against the wall,[574] and was inserting my neck in the noose, when the door was unlocked, Eumolpus came in with Giton and called me back to light from the brink of death. [9] Giton in particular passed from grief to rage. He raised a shout, pushed me with both hands and threw me on the bed, crying: [10] "You are wrong, Encolpius, if you think you could possibly die be-

574 My understanding is that Encolpius puts the bed upright against the wall, which is what the *deversitor* later refers to when he says: *quis autem grabatum illum erexit …?* (§ 95.2); cf. e.g. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*). However, a few translators suggest that the bed is merely standing "by the wall" (Heseltine & Warmington (eds., trans. 1969 *ad loc.*), cf. Kline (trans. 2018 *ad loc.*)), which might make it easier for Giton to throw Encolpius on the bed at § 94.9. Neither can we exclude the possibility that there are several beds in the room.

fore me. I tried first: I looked for a sword in Ascyltus' lodgings. [11] If I had not found you, I would have hurled myself over a precipice. And so you realise death is not far away from those who seek it, watch in your turn what you wanted me to see. [12] Having said this, he snatched a razor from Eumolpus' servant, slashed his throat once and then twice, and collapsed at our feet. [13] Thunderstruck, I let out a cry. I rushed to him as he fell and sought the road to death with the same steel. [14] But Giton was not marked with any trace of a wound, nor did I feel any pain myself. For, in the sheath there had been a practice razor, blunted so as to give the courage of a barber to boys learning the trade. [15] And so the servant had not panicked when the steel was snatched, nor had Eumolpus interrupted the farcical death scene.

[**95**.1] While this drama among lovers was being performed, an inmate of the house came in with part of our little dinner. Looking at us rolling about on the floor in the filthiest fashion, he said: [2] "I ask you: Are you drunk, or runaway slaves, or both? Who turned that bed up, and what is this hidden contrivance supposed to mean? [3] By Hercules, you wanted to run off into the open at night without paying for your room. But you will not get away with it. For, I will teach you that this apartment house does not belong to some widow, but to Marcus Mannicius." [4] Eumolpus yelled, "Are you threatening us?", and at the same time he hit the man hard in the face with the flat of his hand. [5] †Reckless from so much drinking with the guests,† the man hurled an earthenware jug at Eumolpus' head, split his forehead in the midst of his clamour, and rushed out of the room. [6] Eumolpus did not put up with the insult: He grabbed a wooden candlestick, followed the man out of the room and avenged his pride with a shower of blows. [7] The whole household gathered around, as well as a crowd of drunk guests. I took the opportunity for my revenge and shut Eumolpus out. Having paid the brawler back in his own coin, I was without a rival and enjoyed the room as well as the night. [8]

Meanwhile the cooks and lodgers beat up Eumolpus, who had been locked out. One thrust a spit full of sizzling meat at his eyes, another took a fork from a meat rack and got in position for a fight. Above all, a bleareyed old woman – dressed in a very dirty linen wrap and wearing odd wooden clogs – dragged along a dog of enormous size on a chain and set it on Eumolpus. [9] But he defended himself from all danger with the candlestick. [**96**.1] We were watching everything through a hole left in the door leaf when the handle had been broken a little while before, and I

was cheering as Eumolpus got thrashed. [2] But Giton had not forgotten his compassion for Eumolpus: He said we ought to open the door and help him in his peril. [3] As my anger was still fresh, I did not restrain my hand but smashed the compassionate boy on the head with my clenched fist. [4] He sat down on the bed in tears. I applied each eye alternately to the hole and gorged myself on Eumolpus' miseries as if on some rich food. I was recommending legal assistance, when Bargates, the manager of the apartment house, having been disturbed at his dinner, was carried into the centre of the brawl by two litter bearers. For, he had gouty feet. [5] In a furious and vulgar language he spoke at length against drunkards and runaway slaves, then seeing Eumolpus, he said: [6] "Oh, you most learned of poets, was that you? And these completely worthless slaves do not get off and keep their hands away from quarrelling?"

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"The woman I am living with despises me. So, if you love me, abuse her in verse and put shame into her."

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As soon as the brawl has ended, an entirely new development occurs: A crier and a municipal slave enter the house, accompanied by a large crowd of people (§ 97.1). The crier announces that a handsome slave boy named Giton has run away from his owner and that anyone who can give information about the boy's whereabouts will receive a reward of a thousand sesterces (§ 97.2). Ascyltus stands nearby, holding the promised reward in his hands (§ 97.3). Encolpius tells Giton to hide under the bed, and to cling to its frame just as Ulysses clung to the belly of a ram when escaping from Polyphemus' cave (§ 97.4–5). Encolpius makes sure the bed looks as if he had been lying in it alone (§ 97.6). When Ascyltus and the municipal slave enter the room by force, Encolpius pretends not to have seen Giton. Falling at Ascyltus' feet, he claims that Ascyltus must have come to kill him and, so as to make his feigned entreaties more credible, he offers him his neck (§ 97.7–9). Ascyltus responds that he does not wish to kill Encolpius, but that he merely wants to have back his runaway slave Giton (§ 97.10). The municipal slave, however, is unperturbed by Encolpius' words: He examines the entire room, poking under the bed with a cane. Giton barely manages to remain undetected (§ 98.1). There follows a *lacuna* in the text; when the narrative resumes, Ascyltus and the municipal slave have left. Eumolpus enters the room, saying that he will inform the crier about Giton's whereabouts and claim the reward

(§ 98.2). Encolpius tries to convince Eumolpus that Giton has already left, but the boy suddenly sneezes three times under the bed, thereby giving away his location (§ 98.3–5). Eumolpus is angry at having been deceived, but Giton and Encolpius eventually succeed at ingratiating themselves with the old man (§ 98.6–99.4). Suddenly, a sailor arrives and tells Eumolpus that he must hurry to the ship he intended to board (§ 98.5). Encolpius and Giton join Eumolpus on his voyage (§ 98.6); the next episode of the *Satyrica* is set aboard the ship (§§ 100–115).

The Third Rivalry over Giton has received a fair amount of scholarly attention, not least because Giton's and Encolpius' fake suicide (§ 94.8–15) is one of Heinze's (1899: 505) main reference points for arguing that the *Satyrica* amounts to a parody of the 'idealising' novel (cf. below). Panayotakis (1995: 122–30) has devoted a thorough discussion to the episode's theatrical elements, focusing on parallels with the Graeco-Roman mime.

My reading of the Third Rivalry over Giton will concentrate on the resemblances between the *Satyrica* and the *fabula palliata,* the large extant corpus of which allows us to investigate matters of characterisation and plot development. Among other things, I will argue that Eumolpus' role in this episode can be understood as that of a *senex amator* in the Plautine vein, and that much of Encolpius' and Giton's behaviour corresponds to that of (desperate) lovers in the comic tradition. For the sake of clarity, I will divide the episode into three sections, each of which is characterised by a specific set of comic features: 1) a lecherous old man (§ 92.1–94.7), 2) suicidal lovers (§ 94.8–15), 3) a spectacular brawl (§ 95.1–96.7). Thereafter, I will once more examine Petronius' narrative technique, concentrating on its effects on the episode's theatricality.

V.1 Lecherous Old Men (§ 92.1–94.7)

V.1.1 Eumolpus

In the first part of the episode, Encolpius is greatly concerned that his old rival Ascyltus will re-enter the scene and try to take Giton away from him once more. Encolpius' fears are not unfounded, but – as it turns out – Ascyltus will appear somewhat later than he expects (§ 97.1–98.1). In the passage at the heart of this chapter (§§ 92–6), Encolpius comes to find a new rival in someone he did not suspect: the old poet Eumolpus, whom he had met at an art gallery some time earlier (§§ 83–90).

When Eumolpus knocks at the door, Encolpius is instantly anxious that the old man might have brought along Ascyltus (*num Ascyltos una venisset,* § 92.2). This is why Encolpius peeks through a chink in the door (*per rimam foris speculari diligentissime coepi,* § 92.2),[575] and asks *quot estis?* ("How many are there", *ibid.*) rather than the usual *quis est?* ("Who is it?").[576] While he is deeply preoccupied with Ascyltus, Encolpius is completely unsuspicious of Eumolpus: Once he has seen the old man has come alone, he immediately lets him in (*deinde ut solum hospitem vidi, momento recepi,* § 92.3).

Eumolpus throws himself on the bed and, seeing Giton waiting at table, says that he approves of this Ganymede (*laudo … Ganymedem,* § 92.3). His words are likely to have several effects on Petronius' audience: On the one hand, readers/listeners may think of Encolpius' and Eumolpus' first meeting in the art gallery, where there was on display a picture of Ganymede being carried off by an eagle (§ 83.3). On the other hand, they may be reminded of the fact that Eumolpus is a self-professed lover of young and beautiful boys (boys like Ganymede), as his tale about the Pergamene youth (§§ 85–7) had made abundantly clear. We may also note that Ganymede serves as the prototype of handsome young males in erotic poetry[577] and that, at least in a Roman context, he is often depicted as Zeus' (sex) slave.[578] Encolpius does not fail to notice the sexual overtones of Eumolpus' remark. It is now that he first thinks of the old man as another Ascyltus: *non delectavit me tam curiosum principium timuique ne in contubernium recepissem Ascylti parem* (§ 92.4).

Why does Encolpius not sooner realise that Eumolpus poses a threat to his relationship with Giton? After all, the old man had shared with him the story about the Pergamene youth when they were alone in the art gallery. Was Encolpius not put on his guard by Eumolpus' tale of how he tricked a handsome boy into having sex with him? One possible ex-

575 Petronius' characters repeatedly look through chinks or keyholes, cf. § 26.4 f., § 96.1, § 140.11.

576 Cf. e.g. § 16.1–2: *ostium [non] satis audaci strepitu exsonuit impulsum … et cum et ipsi ergo pallidi rogaremus quis esset …* ("A very aggressive knock sounded at the door … And when we, having turned pale, asked who it was […]"). Cf. also Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 92.2).

577 The authors of the twelfth book of the *Anthologia Palatina* regularly compare their beloved boys to Ganymede, e.g. Dioscorides at *A.P.* 12.37 and Meleagros at *A.P.* 12.65; cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 92.3) for further references. On Ganymede in the comic tradition, cf. section II.3. Other Male-Male Relationships in the Comic Tradition.

578 Cf. e.g. Mart. 1.6 and Juv. 5.59, and see Williams (2010: 59–64) for further discussion. On Giton's slave-like features, cf. section III.1.2. Rape and Comic Slave Characters.

planation for Encolpius' 'forgetfulness' is that he is so preoccupied with Ascyltus that the danger posed by Eumolpus simply slips his memory. Only the mention of Ganymede makes him remember that Eumolpus is not an 'innocent' old man. If we find this explanation unsatisfactory, we might be inclined to admit that Petronius here – as he does elsewhere – 'sacrifices' narrative plausibility or verisimilitude for the sake of the episode's momentary effect: In order to present his audience a comedy of errors, as it were, Petronius has Encolpius know (or 'forget') just as much as is necessary for this purpose. Related questions of verisimilitude will be addressed in the section on Petronius' narrative technique; Encolpius' slow-wittedness will also be part of the discussion.

Though Encolpius now conceives of Eumolpus as a sexual rival, he does not raise his voice but allows the old man to continue talking to Giton. The old man's tale about what occurred at the bathhouse is a superb piece of storytelling (§ 92.6–11). Its humour relies on the symmetry (and contrast) between Eumolpus' and Ascyltus' experience – thereby foreshadowing that Eumolpus will take up Ascyltus' place in the *Satyrica*.[579] What I would like to emphasise here, though, is that the story means much more to Encolpius and Giton than it means to Eumolpus himself. As far as we can tell, to Eumolpus the events at the bathhouse are simply the stuff of an amusing tale, a means of ingratiating himself with the handsome boy he has just met. For, he does not know he has just seen a man named Ascyltus, who used to be Encolpius' and Giton's companion. To Eumolpus, whom the two know to be Ascyltus is just a *iuvenis nudus, qui vestimenta perdiderat* (§ 92.7).[580] Even more importantly, the old man is not aware that the Giton this stranger was looking for (*Gitona flagitabat,* § 92.7) is the very 'Ganymede' he is telling the story.[581]

While we do not learn what Giton thinks about the tale, we get a clear picture of what is going on in Encolpius' head as he listens to Eumolpus: *haec Eumolpo dicente mutabam ego frequentissime vultum, iniuriis scilicet inimici mei hilaris, commodis tristis* (§ 92.12). Encolpius feels *Schadenfreude* when he hears about Ascyltus having a bad time (having lost his

579 Cf. Courtney (2001: 145). For a thorough discussion of this passage, cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*) with references for further reading.

580 Note that the name Ascyltus does not come up in Eumolpus' story (§ 92.6–11). Petronius' readers/listeners – same as Encolpius and Giton – only infer Ascyltus' identity from how Eumolpus describes the *iuvenis*.

581 Cf. e.g. Courtney (2001: 145) and Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 92.7).

clothes and his Giton) and feels miserable when Ascyltus is said to experience something positive (receiving help from a Roman knight). Yet, Encolpius decides to leave Eumolpus in the dark as to what the story means to him: *utcumque tamen, tamquam non agnoscerem fabulam, tacui et cenae ordinem explicui* (§ 92.13). When examining the rest of the episode, we need to keep in mind this discrepancy between the knowledge states of Encolpius and Giton on the one hand, and Eumolpus on the other.

Eumolpus recites a poem (§ 93.2), apparently inspired by the frugal *cena* the trio is having, and Encolpius scolds him for it as soon as he has finished (§ 93.3). It is quite implausible that Encolpius gets angry because the poem is Eumolpus' way of driving a wedge between Encolpius and Giton.[582] Rather, Encolpius is 'justified' in criticising the old man, since the latter had earlier promised to refrain from reciting poetry for the entire day.[583] Encolpius now reminds Eumolpus of his promise (*hoc est … quod promiseras,* § 93.3) and of the way he is usually treated by his 'audience' when reciting poetry: He had been stoned after his recital of the *Troiae halosis* (§ 90.1), and he had been thrown out of the bathhouse when he had tried to put on another performance (§ 92.6). Encolpius believes something similar is bound to happen in the apartment house they are in now; and more importantly, Encolpius is certain that he himself will be beaten up on account of being a poet's companion (§ 93.3).[584] Giton speaks up, reproaching Encolpius for talking to their elderly guest in this manner (§ 93.4). Although Giton takes Eumolpus' side against Encolpius, the latter finds the boy's empathy and modesty most appropriate to his beauty (*formam eius egregie decebant,* § 93.4). He seems to be incapable of finding fault with Giton.

582 *Pace* Panayotakis (1995: 125), who states the following: "In the poem that he composes so easily at 93.2, Eumolpus mentions all sorts of exotic birds as implicit objects of desire, that is Giton, and goes as far as the explicit statement or sexual invitation that a mistress surpasses a wife (*amica vincit | uxorem,* lines 8–9), implying, of course, himself and Encolpius, respectively;" cf. also Slater (1990: 102 n. 32). This interpretation can only be upheld if we assume that Eumolpus learned about the (sexual) relationship between Encolpius and Giton in some lost portion of the *Satyrica* (cf. my discussion below). Furthermore, note that Encolpius later tells Eumolpus that he would prefer him to speak in verse rather than to flirt with Giton (§ 94.5). Apparently, this statement refers back to Encolpius' anger at § 93.3. For different reasons, Panayotakis' reading of Eumolpus' poem has been criticised by Setaioli (2011: 129–32).

583 § 90.6: *ceterum ne [et] tecum quoque habeam rixandum, toto die me ab hoc cibo abstinebo* ("But so as not to quarrel with you as well, I will keep off this food [sc. poetry] for a whole day").

584 Encolpius had expressed the same concern at § 90.2.

Apparently, Eumolpus takes Giton's friendly words as an invitation to flirt with him.[585] He praises Giton's mother for having given birth to such a boy, extolling his beauty as well as his wisdom (§ 94.1). The old man's words clearly hark back to literary and/or philosophical role models. According to Courtney (2001: 145 f.), for instance, Eumolpus here refers to two passages of Virgil's *Aeneid,* casting Giton in two different roles. On the one hand, the praise of Giton's mother is said to be reminiscent of how Aeneas addresses Dido: *qui tanti talem genuere parentes?* ("What glorious parents gave birth to so noble a child?", Verg. *Aen.* 1.606). On the other hand, Courtney suggests that *macte virtute esto* (§ 94.1) alludes to the ninth book of the *Aeneid* (9.641), where Apollo speaks to Ascanius in this manner: *macte nova virtute, puer* ("A blessing, boy, on your young valour!").[586] Next, Eumolpus tells Giton that he has found a new lover (*amatorem invenisti,* § 94.1) and promises that he will praise him in verse (§ 94.2). Significantly, Eumolpus pledges to be Giton's *paedagogus et custos* (§ 94.2), which is, of course, what he had been to the Pergamene youth.[587]

Eumolpus' concluding remark is the most baffling one. He tells Giton that Encolpius will not suffer an injustice (sc. from the relationship between the boy and the old man), since Encolpius is in love with somebody else: *nec iniuriam Encolpius accipit, alium amat* (§ 94.2).[588] Of course, it is possible that some clue as to these words was lost in the course of our text's transmission. As it is, however, we are left with two alternative interpretations: Encolpius "must have told Eumolpus about Giton but omitted his name, or Eumolpus invents (he is a ποιητής) this on the spot to move Giton away from him" (Schmeling & Setaioli eds. 2011 *ad loc.*). I deem the latter possibility[589] highly unlikely, since – as I have pointed out above – Eumolpus does not yet know there is any reason to move Giton away from Encolpius. If he was intimately acquainted with the relationship between the two, the old man would have grasped the wider significance of the events at the bathhouse, and Encolpius would have had no reason to feign ignorance about the matter.

585 For a discussion of the *lacuna* after § 93.4, cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*). Likely, only a few words have fallen out.

586 For further possible literary/philosophical echoes, cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 94.1).

587 Cf. § 85.3 and Courtney (2001: 146).

588 Slater (1990: 102): "Eumolpus's claim that Encolpius loves another (94.2) is very puzzling. Who can this be?"

589 It has also been advanced by Aragosti et al. (1988: 368 n. 278).

The interpretation that remains is that Eumolpus knows something about Encolpius' love life, but that he is not aware it involves Giton, i.e. the boy whom he has just met and whose name he still does not know. In order to maintain this hypothesis, we need not even speculate about lost sections of the *Satyrica.* In the text as we have it, the last time Encolpius talked about Giton – rather than *with* him, as in § 91 – was in the art gallery, where he contemplated various pictures of deities and the mortal boys they desired. Inspired by these depictions, Encolpius spoke out loud as if he was alone (§ 83.4): *ergo amor etiam deos tangit* ("So love affects the gods, too!"). All these deities had found their loved ones – only he had lost his boy to a rival (§ 83.4–6). It is exactly at this point that Eumolpus enters the scene (§ 83.7), and it is not implausible that this is the last (and only) piece of information about Encolpius' love life that the old man receives before § 92. Eumolpus knows that Encolpius was separated from his beloved, and he is not aware that the two have already become reconciled.[590] Therefore, it makes perfect sense for the old man to assume that the 'Ganymede' in Encolpius' room cannot possibly be the boy Encolpius so recently lamented about.

Although Eumolpus apparently does not intend as much, his advances towards Giton make Encolpius jealous. The narrator refers to an earlier episode in which a soldier had prevented Encolpius from going on a killing spree (§ 82.2–4), Encolpius' target being Ascyltus and Giton (cf. § 81.6). We may also be reminded of § 79.10, where Encolpius catches Ascyltus in bed with Giton and contemplates murdering them both. Now the narrator claims that, had the soldier not taken away his sword back then, Eumolpus would have to pay for his flirt with his blood (§ 94.3). Notably, Encolpius claims that he would have used against Eumolpus "the anger I had raised against Ascyltus" (*quem animum adversus Ascylton sumpseram,* § 94.3), thereby concealing the fact that his past anger was also aimed at Giton.[591]

The boy senses that the jealous Encolpius is about to resort to violence (*nec fefellit hoc Gitona,* § 94.4). According to the narrator, Giton's method of withdrawing from this dangerous situation is to use his talent

590 Remember that, at § 91.3, Encolpius makes sure nobody (including Eumolpus) overhears his conversation with Giton.

591 Note also that Encolpius beats Giton at § 79.11, and that he will do so again at § 96.3 (cf. below).

for play-acting and improvisation: He pretends to fetch some water from outside (*tamquam aquam peteret,* § 94.4).[592]

Now that he is alone with Eumolpus, Encolpius tells the old man that he would prefer him to speak in verse rather than to behave in this manner. He alleges that Eumolpus 'harbours hopes' for Giton (*tibi vota proponas,* § 94.5), a formulation that once more echoes the old man's story about the Pergamene youth.[593] Encolpius declares himself to be hot-headed (*iracundus,* § 94.5) and Eumolpus to be lecherous (*libidinosus, ibid.*). His conclusion is that the two are incompatible (*vide quam non conveniat his moribus, ibid.*), just as he had found himself to be incompatible with Ascyltus in the First Rivalry over Giton.[594] As we have observed elsewhere in the *Satyrica,* Encolpius' words sound somewhat too artificial to be the product of true emotion: Slater (1990: 102) has rightly pointed out that Encolpius' formulation (*puta igitur me furiosum esse,* § 94.6) appears to give away the fact that he is merely putting on a role.

Encolpius having told Eumolpus to leave (*foras exi,* § 94.6), the narrator relates how the old man reacted: *confusus hac denuntiatione Eumolpus non quaesiit iracundiae causam, sed … me[…] nihil tale expectantem inclusit* (§ 94.7). Note that the narrator does not only tell us what Eumolpus did (shutting Encolpius in) but also what he *did not* do (asking why Encolpius minded his flirt with Giton). Again, the narrator's words suggest that Eumolpus – up to this point – did not know about the (sexual) relationship between Encolpius and Giton. Otherwise, there would be no reason for Eumolpus (to be expected to) inquire about Encolpius' anger (*non quaesiit iracundiae causam*). The old man is much more quick-witted than Encolpius had thought (*nihil tale expectantem*). He seizes the opportunity to get rid of his rival (which he has now found Encolpius to be) – and locks him in.

Of course, some readers may object that I cannot conclusively prove Eumolpus' ignorance of the sexual relationship between Encolpius and Giton. It is equally possible, one might argue, that the old man is aware of their relationship and deliberately feigns ignorance of it, his aim being to win Giton over from Encolpius. This is to see Eumolpus as a 'master of

592 Cf. Slater (1990: 102 n. 34).

593 Eumolpus' euphemism for having sex with the boy is *in unum omnia vota coniunxi* ("I united all my desires into one," § 86.5).

594 Cf. § 10.4: *intellego nobis convenire non posse.* Courtney (2001: 146) rightly notes that Encolpius is using the language of divorce.

disguise' and/or as the 'mastermind' behind the entire episode.[595] While it is true that I cannot disprove this possibility, I would like to emphasise that – in the sense of Ockham's Razor – it is much more complicated than the interpretation I have presented above: While my reading is consistent with Petronius' text as we have it, the 'dissimulation hypothesis' needs to make several assumptions about lost portions of the *Satyrica.* After all, for Eumolpus to be in a position to slyly make advances toward Giton, the boy whom he knows to be Encolpius' boyfriend, he must somehow have learned about their relationship in the course of the story. However, Encolpius cannot have (deliberately) told him himself, as Encolpius evidently assumes the old man to be ignorant of the matter (cf. esp. § 92.13, § 94.7). Moreover, we are told that Eumolpus could not overhear the conversation between Encolpius and Giton when the two were about to reconcile (§ 91.3). Since Eumolpus never has a chance to be alone with Giton (before § 94.8), the only character who could plausibly have told him about Encolpius' and Giton's relationship is Ascyltus. Did Ascyltus and Eumolpus speak about the other two at the bathhouse (§ 92.6–11)? If this is our assumption, we also have to postulate that Eumolpus' story about what happened at the bathhouse is entirely made up – for, in the story he does not tells us he ever spoke to Ascyltus, but simply that he saw a *iuvenis nudus* (§ 92.7). If we follow this path, then, there is no limit to Eumolpus' dissimulation – and we soon run out of plausible explanations for why he acts the way he does. While I am sure one may think of several other ways Eumolpus might have learned about the relationship, my point is that any of these 'reconstructions' likely poses more questions than it answers.

I shall prefer, therefore, to go with the simpler explanation: At the beginning of the episode, Eumolpus is not aware of the sexual relationship between Encolpius and Giton; he only learns of it in the course of the passage at hand (§ 92.1–94.7). The effect of the Third Rivalry over Giton relies in part on the complications arising from this discrepancy between the knowledge states of Petronius' characters – and it is this structure of an 'comedy of errors' that most clearly links this episode to the ancient theatrical tradition.

595 This idea of Slater's (1990: 103) will be taken up once more in the section on Petronius' narrative technique.

V.1.2 Lecherous Old Men in Comedy

It is not far-fetched to read the Third Rivalry over Giton against the backdrop of ancient comedy. As will be discussed in more detail below, the words of the narrator at § 94.15 (*mimicam mortem*) and § 95.1 (*fabula inter amantes luditur*) clearly portray the action as a kind of performance. What is more, the episode involves several instances of role-playing: 1) Giton pretends to fetch water (§ 94.4); 2) Encolpius tells Eumolpus to think of him as a madman (§ 94.6); 3) Encolpius and Giton attempt to outperform each other in the role of the desperate, suicidal lover (§ 94.8–15; cf. below).

The most comprehensive theatrical reading of the Third Rivalry over Giton has been advanced by Panayotakis (1995: 122–30).[596] Among other things, he draws attention to the sheer number of times that Petronius' characters enter, leave or re-enter the centre of the action.[597] Panayotakis (1995: 123) rightly suggests that these movements may remind us of long series of entrances and exits in farcical plays, as in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (138–210) or *Birds* (851–1057). For other parts of the episode, his interpretation relies on the scarce evidence of the (adultery) mime: He argues, for instance, that Encolpius takes the role of the jealous spouse, as exemplified by the mistresses in Herodas' fifth mimiamb and in a later mime papyrus.[598]

Taking Panayotakis' findings as a starting point, I will now focus on the connections between the Third Rivalry over Giton and the *fabula palliata*. I will argue that the relationship between Eumolpus and Encolpius is reminiscent of that between Plautine *senes amatores* and their younger rivals, who are usually no other than their own sons.

596 For references to earlier discussions, cf. Panayotakis (1995: 122 n. 2).

597 Eumolpus enters the room (§ 92.3); Giton leaves (§ 94.4); Eumolpus leaves (§ 94.7); Eumolpus and Giton re-enter (§ 94.8); the inmate of the house enters (§ 95.1); the inmate leaves (§ 95.5); Eumolpus leaves (§ 95.6); members of the household and drunk guests arrive (§ 95.7); Bargates arrives with his litter bearers (§ 96.4).

598 Cf. Panayotakis (1995: 123) as well as my discussion in section III. First Rivalry over Giton: Encolpius versus Ascyltus (§§ 9–11).

V.1.2.1 The *senex amator*

In an earlier chapter,[599] we have observed that Eumolpus' character is reminiscent of lecherous old men known from the ancient stage, such as Philocleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps* or Lysidamus in Plautus' *Casina.* This comic stock type is commonly referred to as the *senex amator.* It is worth bearing in mind, for instance, that the narrator introduces Eumolpus as a *senex canus* (§ 83.7), that one of the first things the old man talks about is how he used his cunning to seduce an attractive citizen boy (§§ 85–7), and that – at § 94.1 – he explicitly calls himself Giton's *amator.* We have also noted that, apart from his age, the most important link between Eumolpus and *senes amatores* is their excessive sexual desire – a desire for males and females alike, and even for (some) individuals past the prime of youth. In this section, we will see that Eumolpus' comicality is not restricted to his character traits but also pertains to the way he interacts with those around him and *vice versa.*

We have noted that Encolpius' rivalry with Eumolpus – other than his rivalry with Ascyltus – features a significant discrepancy between the knowledge states of the two. Neither does Encolpius suspect Eumolpus of threatening his relationship with Giton, nor is Eumolpus aware that Encolpius and Giton even have an intimate relationship. Situations as such – i. e. constellations in which at least one sexual rival is not aware of the full story he is involved in – are very common in comedies starring a *senex amator.*[600]

In Plautus, lecherous old men typically desire the same women as their own sons. In the *Cistellaria* (305–21), for instance, a *senex* flirts with the very prostitute whom he (wrongly) believes to 'corrupt' his son.[601] Similarly, at the end of the *Bacchides* (1120–1206), the two *senes* Nicobulus and Philoxenus are seduced by the same prostitutes their sons are in love with. In the *Casina,* the old man Lysidamus desires the same slave girl as his son Euthynicus.[602] The comedies most relevant to our

599 Cf. section II.2. Indiscriminate Lechery.

600 For an overview of these plays, cf. Ryder (1984) as well as section II.2.2. The Evidence of Graeco-Roman Comedy.

601 Owing to the scene's fragmentary transmission, however, there is little more we can say about this *senex amator.* For an up-to-date discussion, cf. the introduction to the *Cistellaria* and the accompanying notes in de Melo (ed., trans. 2011–3).

602 This is despite the fact that Euthynicus never appears on stage; cf. my plot summary of the *Casina* in section III.1.2. Rape and Comic Slave Characters.

discussion are Plautus' *Mercator* and *Asinaria.* For, both plays rely on a discrepancy between the knowledge states of the *senex amator* (the father) and his young rival (his own son).

V.1.2.2 Plautus' *Mercator*: A Comedy of Errors

At the outset of Plautus' *Mercator* we learn that, while on a business trip to Rhodes, a young man called Charinus fell in love with the slave girl Pasicompsa and consequently bought her for himself. Since Charinus' father Demipho had always disapproved of his son's affairs with prostitutes, Charinus does not dare to tell his father about the purchase.[603] When Demipho first sees Pasicompsa at the harbour, Charinus' slave makes up a lie so as to keep his master's secret: He tells Demipho that Charinus bought the girl as a maid for his mother, i.e. Demipho's wife (*Merc.* 200–2). The old man feels strongly attracted to Pasicompsa and starts to fondle her.[604] Clearly, Demipho is just as unrestrained as Eumolpus when it comes to expressing his amorous and/or sexual intentions.[605] The remainder of the play centres around Demipho's attempts to have sex with Pasicompsa behind the back of his wife.[606]

Crucially, Demipho's scheme does not involve the deception of his son. Having received false information as to what occurred in Rhodes, the old man is completely unaware that he desires the same woman as his son Charinus. As far as his son is concerned, Demipho may find his advances toward Pasicompsa are just as 'innocent' as Eumolpus finds his flirt with Giton (§ 92.3; § 94.1–2). Remember that Eumolpus, similar to Demipho, was not in a position to know about the true relationship between Encolpius and Giton: *nec iniuriam Encolpius accipit, alium amat* (§ 94.2). In other words: Both Demipho and Eumolpus, driven by their sexual appetite, are unaware of the young rival (Charinus and Encolpius respectively) directly under their noses.

603 Cf. the prologue to the *Mercator*, esp. 100–7.

604 At least, this is what Charinus' slave tells his master after the fact: *sed scelestus subigitare occepit* ("But the criminal [sc. Demipho] began to bestow his caresses," Plaut. *Merc.* 203). On this meaning of the verb *subigitare,* cf. Adams (1982: 156).

605 Cf. § 92.3, § 94.1–2 as well as, e.g., Plaut. *Cist.* 306–8.

606 Cf. my plot summary of Plautus' *Mercator* in section III.1.2. Rape and Comic Slave Characters.

When father and son first meet on stage (*Merc.* 335–468), both conceal their desire for Pasicompsa. Demipho wants to avoid that this piece of information reaches his wife, and Charinus is still anxious about his father's disapproval of his new affair with a prostitute. Both come up with excuses for why they want to be in charge over what happens to Pasicompsa. Just as when Eumolpus talks about the events in the bathhouse (§ 92.6–11), Plautus' characters speak without being aware of the full significance of what they are saying. In both cases, only the audience is in a position to appreciate the mutual misapprehension.

Only at the very end of the play does Demipho learn he had been chasing after his own son's *amica* (*Merc.* 972–3). The old man neatly spells out the fact that the entire plot of the *Mercator* hinged on the discrepancy between the knowledge states of father and son: *si hercle scivissem sive adeo ioculo dixisset mihi | se illam amare, numquam facerem ut illam amanti abducerem* ("If I had known or if he had told me merely in jest that he was in love with her, I would never have taken her away from her lover," Plaut. *Merc.* 993 f.).

V.1.2.3 Plautus' *Asinaria*: An Unexpected Rival

The parallels between the Third Rivalry over Giton and Plautus' *Asinaria* are no less striking. As the *Mercator,* this play relies on a difference in awareness between two main characters. Just like Encolpius, the young man Argyrippus comes to find a sexual rival in someone he did not suspect: the old man Demaenetus, who is no other than Argyrippus' own father.

As in the Third Rivalry over Giton, sexual rivalry in the *Asinaria* is not restricted to two rivals. At the beginning of the play, the *adulescens* Argyrippus is desperate to find money so as to pay for the exclusive services of the prostitute Philaenium. Apart from his desire for Philaenium, Argyrippus is motivated by the fact that he has a rival named Diabolus, another impecunious young man. The latter tries to buy Philaenium off her procuress before Argyrippus can do so.[607] If we compare the *Asinaria* to the Third Rivalry over Giton, Diabolus takes the role of Ascyltus: He is the obvious rival, the one with whom the protagonist (Argyrippus/Encolpius) is constantly preoccupied.

607 Cf. the conversation between Diabolus and the *lena* Cleareta (Plaut. *Asin.* 127–242).

From the very outset of the play, Argyrippus' father Demaenetus is aware of his son's desire for Philaenium. Announcing that parents have to indulge their children's wishes, he orders his slaves Libanus and Leonida to get hold of the money for Argyrippus behind the back of his wife (who poses the chief obstacle).[608] For the time being, it looks as if Demaenetus' only wish was to ensure the happiness of his son. Argyrippus is just as unsuspicious of Demaenetus as Encolpius is of Eumolpus. Importantly, Argyrippus' expectations are later confounded just as drastically as Encolpius'.

First of all, Argyrippus has to defend his claim on Philaenium against the slaves Libanus and Leonida, who also display a keen sexual interest in her.[609] Before receiving the money from the two slaves, Argyrippus has to endure various insults and provocations. Among other things, he has to witness Philaenium sweet-talk and kiss Leonida (*Asin.* 662–9). The situation gets even worse for Argyrippus. Having endured the slaves' insolence, he is surprised to learn that his father has one condition for handing the money over to him: Demaenetus wants to have sex with Philaenium himself (*Asin.* 736). Just like Encolpius, Argyrippus had a blind spot about the sexual desires of old men.

A little later, Argyrippus has to witness his father flirting with Philaenium and demanding kisses from her (*Asin.* 891). Argyrippus and Encolpius resemble each other not only in that they are both confronted with an elderly rival, but also in that they both (at least for a time) grudgingly bear the pangs of jealousy this rival causes.[610] Argyrippus is finally 'rescued' by his mother. Having been tipped off by Diabolus' parasite, she interrupts her husband's party and drags him back home (*Asin.* 909–41). In the play's epilogue (942–7), the members of the troupe express their sympathy for the *senex amator.*

608 Cf. esp. Plaut. *Asin.* 64–84.

609 Cf. also the plot of Plautus' *Casina,* where the father-son rivalry is complemented by the rivalry between the slaves Olympio and Chalinus.

610 For Argyrippus' jealousy, cf. Plaut. *Asin.* 837–9, 842–5, 882; cf. also *Asin.* 669, where Argyrippus is jealous of Leonida. For Encolpius' (silent) jealousy, cf. § 92.4, § 94.3.

V.1.2.4 Other Parallels between Eumolpus and Comic *senes amatores*

There are several other regards in which Petronius' depiction of Eumolpus resembles comic portrayals of *senes amatores.* Firstly, there is the basic notion that love/sex and old age do not go well together. As we have seen, at the beginning of the Third Rivalry over Giton Encolpius seems quite incapable of thinking of Eumolpus as a sexual rival. This is despite the fact that Encolpius had already listened to an elaborate story about the old man's sexual appetite (§§ 85–7). When – after the events in the apartment house – Encolpius and Giton have joined Eumolpus on his sea voyage, Encolpius comes to contemplate the group's new situation: *molestus est quod puer hospiti placet* ("It is annoying that our new acquaintance likes the boy", § 100.1). Although this passage is immediately preceded by a *lacuna,* the context makes clear that the *hospes* is Eumolpus and that the *puer,* of course, is Giton.[611] Encolpius is aggrieved by the fact that he finds himself in yet another sexual triangle – will he ever get to have Giton for himself? Encolpius' thoughts drift on: Having pondered that a thing (i.e. Giton) is only worth having if it fills others with envy, he comes to think that Eumolpus does not really pose a serious threat: *unus, et senex, non erit gravis; etiam cum voluerit aliquid sumere, opus anhelitu prodet* ("One rival, and he too an old man, will not be troublesome; even if he wished to try something, he will give himself away by his panting", § 100.1).

Encolpius' expression (*voluerit aliquid sumere*) euphemistically describes Eumolpus' sexual advances toward Giton.[612] Notably, *anhelitu* echoes Eumolpus' exhaustion after his three-times-in-a-row sexual encounter with the Pergamene youth: *inter anhelitus sudoresque tritus* ("ground between panting and sweating," § 87.8). Encolpius suggests that, if Eumolpus was to attempt having sex with the boy, the old man's heavy breathing would immediately alert Encolpius to what is going on. In other words: Encolpius mocks Eumolpus for aspiring to be sexually active at his old age – and this very mockery amounts to a commonplace of the comic tradition.

Senes amatores on the comic stage have to endure all sorts of disparaging remarks and/or plain insults. In Plautus' *Mercator,* for in-

611 For further discussion of the *lacuna,* cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*). Encolpius here clearly thinks of Eumolpus as a rival, just as he had done, for instance, at § 92.4 (*Ascylti parem*) and § 95.7 (*sine aemulo*).

612 For references and further discussion, cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 ad *loc.*).

stance, Demipho's friend Lysimachus comments on the old man's desire to kiss Pasicompsa: *iaiunitatis plenus, anima foetida,* | *senex hircosus tu osculere mulierem?* | *utine adveniens vomitum excutias mulieri?* ("On an empty stomach, with stinking breath, you goaty old man would kiss a woman? In order to make her throw up when you approach her?", Plaut. *Merc.* 574–6). Somewhat earlier, Lysimachus succinctly expresses the idea that love simply is not for old men: *tun capite cano amas, senex nequissime?* ("You with your gray head are in love, you wicked old man?").[613] Similar mockery and/or reproaches can be found in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (1364–6), Plautus' *Casina* (239 f.), *Asinaria* (920 f.), or *Bacchides* (1152). All these passages express the idea that old men should not or plainly cannot pursue amorous/sexual relationships. It is the very notion Encolpius uses to reassure himself at § 100.1–2.

Even though it does not involve a *senex amator,* another striking parallel with the comic oeuvre is worth mentioning. In Plautus' *Menaechmi,* Sosicles (Menaechmus I) comes to Epidamnus in order to find his lost twin brother (Menaechmus II). Having arrived in the city, Sosicles' slave Messenio warns his master that Epidamnus is full of tricksters and various allurements, such as prostitutes (*Men.* 258–64). After this warning, Sosicles (So.) tells Messenio (Me.) to hand over the wallet he had entrusted to him:

So.: *ego istuc cavebo. cedodum huc mihi marsuppium.*
Me.: *quid eo veis?*
So.: *iam aps te metuo de verbis tuis.*
Me.: *quid metuis?*
So.: *ne mihi damnum in Epidamno*[614] *duis.*
tu amator magnus[615] *mulierum es, Messenio,*
ego autem homo iracundus, animi perciti,[616]
id utrumque, argentum quando habebo, cavero,
ne tu delinquas neve ego irascar tibi.
(Plaut. *Men.* 265–71)

613 Plaut. *Merc.* 305. For this sentiment, cf. also the epilogue to the *Mercator* (1015–26).

614 Of course, this is a pun, suggesting that the Greek city Ἐπίδαμνος derived its name from the Latin word *damnum* ("harm, damage"); cf. Thoresby Jones (ed. 1918: *ad* Plaut. *Men.* 263–4).

615 Lindsay's (ed. 1904/5) edition reads *tu magis amator mulierum.* I follow the reading of manuscript *P,* as does de Melo (ed., trans. 2011–3).

616 *perciti* is an emendation by Lipsius; the manuscripts read *perditi.*

So.: I will be on my guard against it. Give me the wallet.
Me.: What do you want with it?
So.: Because of your words I am afraid of you now.
Me.: What are you afraid of?
So.: That you may cause me some damnification in Epidamnus. You are a great lover of the ladies, Messenio, but I am an irascible man, with a quick temper. When I have the money I will prevent both these things: you committing an offense and me being angry with you.

Although the context is different, the dialogue between Sosicles and Messenio sounds remarkably similar to the one between Encolpius and Eumolpus.[617] Encolpius and Sosicles accuse Eumolpus/Messenio of lechery:

tu libidinosus es (§ 94.5) ~ *tu magnus amator mulierum es* (*Men.* 268)

Both think of themselves as hot-headed:

ego iracundus sum (§ 94.5) ~ *ego autem homo iracundus* (*Men.* 269)

Both argue that these character traits are incompatible. They tell Eumolpus/Messenio that they should do as they are told if they want to avoid a furious outburst:

puta igitur me furiosum esse, cede insaniae, id est ocius foras exi. (§ 94.6)

~

id utrumque, argentum quando habebo, cavero,
ne tu delinquas neve ego irascar tibi. (*Men.* 270 f.)

In short: When Encolpius' jealousy causes him to lash out against Eumolpus, his words seem to come right out of a comic script.

We may now briefly summarise the points made in this section: While earlier scholars have noted that Eumolpus bears some resemblance to the figure of the *senex amator,* these studies have often examined him in isolation. I have tried to broaden our scope, looking at how characters such as Demipho, Demaenetus and Eumolpus fit into the overall struc-

617 Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 94.5) briefly mentions this verbal echo.

ture of their plays/episodes. We have seen that, just like Eumolpus, *senes amatores* have to contend with much younger sexual rivals. In Plautine comedy, these young men are typically the *senes*' own sons. As in the *Satyrica,* the dynamics between the two rivals are regularly determined by misapprehensions and/or false expectations: Like Eumolpus, comic old men unwittingly stumble into the amorous affairs of young men (Plaut. *Merc.*), or – again like Eumolpus – they surprise their unwitting rivals with their enormous sexual appetite (Plaut. *Asin.*). What is more, Eumolpus resembles comic *senes amatores* in that he is mocked for trying to be sexually active at his old age. Lastly, we have examined a passage from Plautus' *Menaechmi,* a dialogue between an 'irascible' and a 'libidinous' man, which has close verbal correspondences with § 94.5–6.

V.2 Suicidal Lovers (§ 94.8–15)

V.2.1 Encolpius and Giton

Having been locked inside the room (and thus having been separated from Giton once again), Encolpius decides to end his life by hanging (§ 94.8). When he has already inserted his neck in the noose, Eumolpus and Giton come back at exactly the right point to stop him (*ibid.*). Giton gets angry and tells Encolpius that he could never be the first of them to die. He himself, the boy claims, had tried to commit suicide when he had been with Ascyltus (§ 94.9–10). Now, he announces to show Encolpius exactly what Encolpius wanted him to watch (sc. his lover dying), and immediately puts his words into action: He snatches a razor from Eumolpus' servant, repeatedly slashes his throat and falls to the ground (§ 94.11–12). Encolpius cries out and seeks to end his life with the same razor (§ 94.13). Since the *deversitor* later refers to more than one person lying on the ground (*iacentium volutationem,* § 95.1), it appears that Encolpius collapses after 'cutting' his throat. Thereafter, the narrator tells us that nothing was as it seemed: Neither Giton nor Encolpius was hurt, since the supposedly deadly weapon in their hands was in fact a blunted practice razor (§ 94.14). This is why Eumolpus and his servant had done nothing to stop the suicide attempt (§ 94.15).

According to Schmeling (1971: 336 f.), the key to understanding this passage is that Petronius parodies the widespread literary motif of the παρακλαυσίθυρον. Whereas – for instance in Roman love elegy – the distraught lover usually finds himself shut out of the house of his

beloved (*exclusus amator*), the situation is different for Encolpius: "Eumolpus had not locked Encolpius out but in, and taken the key with him. In one of the wildest turns of the plot the *amator* wishes he were *exclusus*" (Schmeling 1971: 337). Notably, Schmeling refers to *exclusi amatores* who threaten or actually commit suicide at the doorstep of their loved ones. These include the speaker of Theocritus' third Idyll (esp. 52–4, suicide threat) and Iphis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (14.733–8, suicide by hanging).[618] Possibly, then, Encolpius' and Giton's double suicide attempt amounts to another twist on the παρακλαυσίθυρον motif.

It is another line of interpretation, however, that has received most scholarly attention: Heinze (1899: 496 f.) was the first to note that – just as Encolpius and Giton – the protagonists of the Greek 'idealising' novel regularly contemplate killing themselves because they believe to have lost their beloved partner. As in the *Satyrica,* their suicide attempt is often stopped at the last moment.[619] It is also striking that in Achilles Tatius' novel the apparent death of the heroine Leucippe is brought about by a sword that turns out to be a stage prop (Ach. Tat. 3.20.7) – a weapon remarkably similar to the practice razor used by Giton and Encolpius. To Heinze, who argues that Petronius parodies the 'idealising' novel throughout his work, the passage at hand is a case in point: He suggests that the episode mocks the trite *topos* of suicidal lovers in the novelistic tradition.[620]

Many scholars have followed Heinze's lead; more recent discussions in this vein include those by Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 94.8) and Setaioli (2011: 379 f.). Others remain sceptical and/or propose alternative readings. Courtney (2001: 147), for instance, speaks of "remarkable parallel[s]" with the 'idealising' novels but falls short of calling Petronius' episode a parody of the latter.[621] As far as Conte (1996: 77 f.) is concerned, parody is only one aspect of what this passage is about. In accordance with his overall reading of the *Satyrica,*[622] he claims that Giton's romantic gesture (i. e. his suicide attempt) triggers Encolpius' *mythomania*: Seeing his lover

618 For further references, cf. Schmeling (1971: 337 n. 19).

619 For suicide attempts in the 'idealising' novel, cf. e. g. Chariton 5.10.6–10 and Ach. Tat. 3.16.2–17.7; for further references, cf. Heinze (1899: 497 n. 2) and Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 94.8).

620 On Heinze's (1899) influential reading of the *Satyrica*, cf. section I.4.2.2. The *Satyrica* as a Parody.

621 Elsewhere, Courtney (2001: 24) unequivocally supports Heinze's hypothesis.

622 Cf. section I.5.2. The Unreliable Narrator and the Implied Author.

dying at his feet, Encolpius imagines himself to be another Nisus, and decides that he must follow Giton (another Euryalus) to the grave.[623] In a way, Conte's interpretation is compatible with Slater's (1990: 102) view that Encolpius engages in play-acting (cf. above). Other scholars have pointed to tragic suicides.[624] Adopting a different perspective, Valerie Hope (2009: 144) suggests that Petronius does not parody novelistic suicide attempts but rather "the ideal noble suicide bravely met in the face of real adversity," as exemplified by Marcus Junius Brutus or Seneca the Younger. Her reading should remind us of the fact that Petronius possibly did not know any 'idealising' novels.[625] What is more, Henderson (2010: 486) deems the differences between the *Satyrica* and the novelistic suicide attempts to be too profound to allow for effective parody:

> In the Greek novels, however, the beloved is never on hand; no hero or heroine fakes death in order to deceive or manipulate the beloved; and cutting one's *own* throat appears only here [sc. at § 94.12–13] and in an episode of Apuleius that evidently recalls this very passage.[626]

In his discussion, Henderson (2010: 485 f.) rightly points out that the evidence as to Petronius' parodic technique is inconclusive. Lovers' suicide attempts are a widespread literary motif – as well as a serious real-life act – that is far from exclusive to the 'idealising' novel.[627] In the following section, we shall see that the comic tradition is almost as full of suicidal lovers as the novelistic one.

Before moving on, it is worth placing § 94.8–15 in the context of Petronius' plot. Firstly, we may recall that Encolpius had already contemplated suicide somewhat earlier in the story: When Giton leaves Encolpius for Ascyltus at the end of the Second Rivalry over Giton (§§ 79.8–82), we learn that Encolpius was thunderstruck and thought about killing

623 Cf. esp. Verg. *Aen.* 9.444 f. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*) notes that Encolpius might have other mythological role models in mind, for instance Pyramus and Thisbe.

624 Cf. George (1966: 339) and Panayotakis (1995: 126 f. with n. 18).

625 Cf. section I.4.2.2. The *Satyrica* as a Parody.

626 The Apuleian passage that Henderson has in mind is *Met.* 9.38.7: In one of the many inset tales, a man first kills his enemy and then commits suicide with the same blade. Apuleius' formulation is *iugulum sibi multis ictibus contrucidat,* which Henderson finds strikingly similar to Petronius' *semel iterumque cervice percussa* (§ 94.12).

627 Henderson's argument is similar to Morgan's (2009), who, however, does not discuss § 94 in particular.

himself. According to the narrator, the only reason Encolpius did not end his own life was that this would have amounted to another triumph for Ascyltus.[628] We may keep in mind, then, that § 94.8–15 is not the first time a Petronian suicide attempt comes to nothing.[629]

Secondly, there is another passage in the *Satyrica* where Encolpius and Giton come close to dying together, albeit not through suicide: When the two find themselves in a sea storm, on a ship that is about to sink, Encolpius is afraid that the sea will separate their loving embrace (*ecce iam amplexus amantium iratum dividet mare,* § 114.9). Giton, being as smart as ever, fastens a belt around Encolpius and himself, thus making sure the two will remain together even in death (§ 114.10–11). Thereafter, Encolpius is no longer afraid of dying: *patior ego vinculum extremum, et veluti lecto funebri aptatus expecto mortem iam non molestam* ("I submitted to the final bond and as though laid out on a bier I awaited death – no longer an enemy," § 114.12).[630] Clearly, then, the notion of 'being without one's lover equals being dead' is a recurring motif in the *Satyrica.*

Lastly, it cannot be stressed enough that Encolpius and Giton appear to be playing yet another role in the passage at hand. This time around, it is the role of desperate lovers.[631] The fact that they are play-acting is most obvious in the case of Giton: He falls to the floor even though, as he must feel, the razor does not do him any harm (*cervice percussa ante pedes collabitur nostros,* § 94.12).[632] As far as Encolpius is concerned, his disingenuousness had already been hinted at by the way he expressed his anger towards Eumolpus (§ 94.6, cf. above).

Keeping these findings in mind, my suggestion is that Encolpius' and Giton's behaviour in this passage is just as staged as that of Encolpius and Ascyltus during their shouting match in the First Rivalry over Giton. (§ 9.6–10.3). In fact, I argue that there is another striking parallel between the two episodes: In both cases, Petronius' characters try to outdo one another by means of mirroring and exaggeration. Re-entering the room, Giton finds Encolpius in the act of hanging himself (§ 94.8). The boy's

628 § 80.7: *et attulissem mihi damnatus manus, si non inimici victoriae invidissem.*

629 We should also remember that Encolpius threatens to commit suicide at § 108.11, using the same fake razor Giton employed at § 94.12.

630 On the theatrical aspects of this passage, cf. Slater (1990: 112) and esp. Panayotakis (1995: 156).

631 Panayotakis (1995: 127) briefly mentions a similar idea: "adopting the role of the faithful concubine, he [sc. Giton] voluntarily cuts his throat […] in order to show his devotion to his companion in life and death."

632 Cf. e.g. Jones (1987: 813 n. 16).

first reaction is to get angry at Encolpius, to shout out and to throw him on the bed (§ 94.9). Thereafter, Giton begins to beat Encolpius at his own game, as it were. He tells Encolpius that his own devotion (and desperation) is greater than his in two regards: Firstly, the boy claims that he thought of suicide much earlier than Encolpius: *prior coepi* (§ 94.10).[633] Secondly, while Encolpius has only thought of one way of killing himself (hanging), Giton has thought of two: stabbing himself with a sword (*gladium quaesivi,* § 94.10) and jumping off a cliff (*petiturus praecipitia fui,* § 94.11).[634]

Words not being enough, Giton now *acts* faster and more resolutely than Encolpius. The concepts of mirroring and role reversal are clearly expressed in the boy's words: *specta invicem quod me spectare voluisti* (§ 94.11). He snatches a razor and actually slashes his throat with it (§ 94.12). Encolpius, having met his match in the game they are playing, has no way of outdoing the boy. His only remaining option is to reach a draw, as it were: He mirrors the boy's behaviour, slashing his own throat just as Giton had done: *secutusque labentem eodem ferramento ad mortem viam quaero* (§ 94.13).

Only at this point – both actors having played their part to the fullest – does the narrator make explicit it was all something of a farcical performance (§ 94.15–95.1), thereby rendering a theatrical reading of the passage more plausible than ever.

V.2.2 Suicidal Lovers in the Comic Tradition

V.2.2.1 Deadly Desperation

According to the narrator, the 'death scene' performed by Encolpius and Giton is one that you would expect to encounter in a mime (*mimicam mortem,* § 94.15); it is a 'drama among lovers' (*fabula inter amantes,* § 95.1). Through these labels, the narrator strongly suggests that the entire passage should be understood in a theatrical context. This applies, for instance, to the (inversion of the) *exclusus amator* motif that has been

633 In fact, we know that Encolpius was first, since he contemplated suicide as soon as Giton had left him (§ 80.7, cf. above). However, Giton does not give Encolpius any time to make this point.

634 Cf. Courtney (2001: 146): "So between them the two [sc. Encolpius and Giton] have run through three standard forms of suicide in the ancient world, ξίφος, ἀγχόνη, κρημνός." For numerous references, cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*).

observed by Schmeling (1971). As Panayotakis has pointed out, this is not least because the παρακλαυσίθυρον occurs in several *fabulae palliatae,* and there is even fragmentary evidence for its existence in the mime.[635] In this section, I will focus on another theatrical aspect of the Third Rivalry over Giton: I will argue that Encolpius' and Giton's behaviour is reminiscent of that of desperate lovers on the ancient comic stage, the most striking example being Argyrippus and Philaenium in Plautus' *Asinaria.*

It has been noted that, since lovers' suicide attempts occur in many literary genres (as well as in real life), it is virtually impossible to pinpoint the inspiration and/or parodic target of Petronius' episode. While this point remains valid, I intend to show that the 'suicidal contest' between Encolpius and Giton has significant forerunners in comedy. We should note from the very outset, though, that although the text of the *Satyrica* points us directly to the mime (*mimicam mortem*), this genre does not help us much in making sense of Petronius' passage: The scarce evidence of the mime-genre does not contain references to suicides, not to speak of a (fake) double suicide performed directly before the eyes of the audience. This is why, as it stands, we can assert nothing more than that Encolpius "visualizes the scene clearly as *mimicam mortem* (95.15), a farcical incident containing the motifs which were employed especially by the popular mimic stage" (Panayotakis 1995: 128). However, if we remember that the mime shares various motifs with the rest of the comic tradition, we will not fail to encounter significant parallels.

We know that Diphilus wrote a comedy entitled Συναποθνήσκοντες ("those dying together"), and that this play was the inspiration for Plautus' *Commorientes.* Unfortunately, Diphilus' play has been lost altogether, and of the *Commorientes* no more than one fragment survives. Nevertheless, these may be the kind of plays that Petronius' audience thought of as a *fabula inter amantes* (§ 95.1).[636] It is also worth mentioning that the motif of apparent death occurs in an extant mime fragment, one that we have already noted for the 'jealous spouse' it features.[637]

635 Cf. esp. Plaut. *Curc.* 1–164 and Plaut. *Pers.* 564–72, two passages that Schmeling (1971: 336) does not fail to mention. Sandy (1974: 342) and Panayotakis (1995: 126) offer some further discussion.

636 Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 95.1) and Henderson (2010: 486 n. 9) mention these two plays in their discussions.

637 Cf. lines 34–36 in Rusten & Cunningham (eds., trans. 2003: 394) and see note 243. The parallel has been noted by Courtney (2001: 147).

Yet, the evidence of suicidal lovers in New Comedy and in the *fabula palliata* does not end here.[638] In Menander's *Perikeiromene* (504, 977), the soldier Polemon twice speaks of dying/committing suicide because his beloved Glycera has left him.[639] Similar references to suicidal lovers occur in Menander's *Misoumenos* (710 f.) and, as far as we can tell from Donatus, in Menander's *Adelphoi.*[640] Plautine suicidal lovers include Alcesimarchus in the *Cistellaria* (639 f.), Charinus in the *Mercator* (471–3) and Calidorus in the *Pseudolus* (88–90; 348 f.).[641]

On the comic stage, it is a common notion that love is worth dying for. In Plautus' *Casina,* for instance, this is what the slave Chalinus tells his rival Olympio: *tun illam ducas? hercle me suspendio | quam tu eius potior fias satiust mortuom* ("You should marry her [sc. Casina]? I would rather die by hanging than let you get hold of her," Plaut. *Cas.* 111 f.). Similar sentiments are expressed in Plautus' *Mercator* (857–63) and *Miles gloriosus* (1239–41) as well as in Terence's *Phormio* (483). Notably, once he has actually lost Casina to his rival in the drawing of the lots, Chalinus is much more pragmatic about such life-and-death matters:

> *si nunc me suspendam, meam operam luserim*
> *et praeter operam restim sumpti fecerim*
> *et meis inimicis voluptatem creaverim.*
> *quid opus est, qui sic mortuos?*
> (Plaut. *Cas.* 424–7)
>
> If I were to hang myself now, I would have wasted my effort, and besides the effort I would have spent money on a rope, and I would have made my enemies happy. What is the point? I am dead as it is.

638 Dutsch (2012) offers an overview of suicide threats in the ancient comic tradition.

639 Wrongly believing that Glycera was unfaithful to him, Polemon cut off Glycera's hair, thus causing her to flee from him.

640 In Terence's *Adelphoe,* the dialogue between the two brothers Aeschinus and Ctesipho implies that Ctesipho was about to go into exile because he could not be together with the girl he desired (275). In his fourth-century commentary, Donatus (*ad* Ter. *Ad.* 275) notes: *Menander mori illum voluisse, Terentius profugere* ("Menander (writes that) he [sc. Ctesipho] wanted to die, Terence (writes that) he wanted to run away"); my translation.

641 Plaut. *Pseud.* 348 f. is reminiscent of a fragment of Menander's *Misoumenos*; cf. fragment 4 in Arnott (ed., trans. 1979–2000 vol. 2: 356).

Strikingly, Chalinus' line of reasoning (*meis inimicis voluptatem creaverim*) is identical to Encolpius' at § 80.7, where he refrains from committing suicide because he begrudges Ascyltus yet another victory: *attulissem mihi damnatus manus, si non inimici victoriae invidissem.*

We should also mention that in Terence's *Eunuchus* (57–70) the slave Parmeno mocks the weakness and indecision of lovers (as exemplified by his master Phaedria).[642] One of the follies Parmeno criticises is that desperate lovers contemplate killing themselves in order to prove they are 'true men'.[643] This motif is also the object of ridicule in Plautus' *Cistellaria*: The young man Alcesimarchus is angry at himself because he left his beloved *meretrix* Gymnasium alone for a couple of days; when Alcesimarchus asks his slave for advice on how to make it up to her, the latter replies: *supplicium illi des, suspendas te, ne tibi suscenseat* ("Give her satisfaction, hang yourself, so that she will not be angry with you," Plaut. *Cist.* 250). Notably, Stockert (ed. 2012 *ad loc.*) thinks the slave's ironic suggestion to be genuinely Plautine, i. e. to be an element of farcical humour that does not go back to the Greek original.[644]

The above-mentioned passages prove that suicide threats of star-crossed lovers constitute a *topos* of the ancient comic tradition – even a *topos* ripe for mockery. What is more, the passages plainly show that – when interpreting suicide attempts in Petronius – we should not overestimate the importance of the 'idealising' novel. For, if Terence and Plautus were able to parody this motif without the knowledge of 'idealising' novels, why should Petronius not have been able to do the same?

V.2.2.2 A Suicidal Contest in Plautus' *Asinaria*

The parallels between suicide threats in Petronius and in comedy go even further than we have seen so far. As noted above, it is commonly assumed that Petronius' treatment of the suicide motif parodies the 'idealising' novel. Among other things, critics of this hypothesis object that – unlike

642 The scene in question has been discussed above, cf. section IV.2.4. Parallels in Other Comedies.

643 Parmeno 'quotes' Phaedria's thoughts about his beloved Thais: *"egon illam, quae illum, quae me, quae non …! sine modo, | mori me malim: sentient qui vir siem"* ("I – her? when she – him? when she – me? when she will not –? Just let it be, I would prefer to die, she shall realise what sort of man I am," Ter. *Eun.* 65 f.).

644 On farcical elements in Plautus and their possible connection to the mime and the *fabula Atellana,* cf. section I.3.2. Farcical Elements in 'Popular' and 'Literary' Comedy.

Encolpius and Giton – novelistic lovers are never *together* when contemplating or attempting suicide. For, the reason why novelistic lovers think about killing themselves is that they have been separated from their beloved. It is crucial to point out, however, that the situation is different for ancient comedy: In Plautus, we encounter two lovers who play with the idea of a *double suicide* during their dialogue.

In the second half of Plautus' *Asinaria,* the young man Argyrippus believes he can no longer be together with his beloved Philaenium because he does not have the means to buy her off her mother.[645] The slaves Libanus (Li.) and Leonida (Leo.) overhear Argyrippus and Philaenium as they (believe they) see each other for the last time. Both lovers shed tears (Plaut. *Asin.* 587); Philaenium (Ph.) holds on to Argyrippus' (Arg.) cloak as he gets ready to depart:

Arg.: *qur me retentas?* 591
Ph.: *quia tui amans abeuntis egeo.*
Arg.: *vale, ⟨vale⟩.*
Ph.: *aliquanto amplius valerem, si hic maneres.*
Arg.: *salve.*
Ph.: *salvere me iubes, quoi tu abiens offers morbum?*
Arg.: *mater supremam mihi tua dixit, domum ire iussit.*
Ph.: *acerbum funus filiae faciet, si te carendum est.* 595
Li.: *homo hercle hinc exclusust foras.*
Leo.: *ita res est.*
Arg.: *mitte quaeso.*
Ph.: *quo nunc abis? quin tu hic manes?*
Arg.: *nox, si voles, manebo.*
[…]
Leo.: *ne iste hercle ab ista non pedem discedat, si licessit,* 603
qui nunc festinat atque ab hac minatur sese abire.
Li: *sermoni iam finem face tuo, huius sermonem accipiam.* 605
Arg.: *vale.*
Ph.: *quo properas?*
Arg.: *bene vale: apud Orcum te videbo.*
nam equidem me iam quantum potest a vita abiudicabo.
Ph.: *qur tu, opsecro, inmerito meo me morti dedere optas?*

645 Cf. my plot summary of the *Asinaria* in section V.1.2.3. Plautus' *Asinaria*: An Unexpected Rival.

Arg.: *egon te? quam si intellegam deficere vita, iam ipse*
vitam meam tibi largiar et de mea ad tuam addam. 610
Ph.: *qur ergo minitaris tibi te vitam esse amissurum?*
nam quid me facturum putas, si istuc quod dicis facis?
[mihi] certum est ecficere in me omnia eadem quae tu in te
faxis.
Arg.: *oh melle dulci dulcior tu es.*
Ph.: *certe enim tu vita es mi.*
complectere. 615
Arg.: *facio lubens.*
Ph.: *utinam sic ecferamur.*
Leo.: *o Libane, uti miser est homo qui amat!*
Li.: *immo hercle vero*
qui pendet multo est miserior.
Leo.: *scio qui periculum feci.*
(Plaut. *Asin.* 591–617)[646]

Arg.: Why are you holding me back? 591
Ph.: Because I pine away for you when you go away, I love you so.
Arg.: Farewell, farewell.
Ph.: I would fare somewhat better if you were to stay here.
Arg.: Be well.
Ph.: You are telling me to be well? By going away you make me ill.
Arg.: Your mother said this would be my last hour, she told me to go home.
Ph.: She will celebrate a dire funeral for her daughter if I have to be without you. 595
Li.: That chap has been shut out from here.
Leo.: Indeed.
Arg.: Let me go please.
Ph.: Where are you off to now? Why do you not stay here?
Arg.: I will stay at night if you want me to.
[…]
Leo.: He would not go one foot away from her if he were allowed to stay, but now he is in a hurry and threatening to leave her.

646 Panayotakis (1995: 127 n. 17) briefly mentions this scene in his discussion.

Li.: Put an end to your talk now, I will listen to his.
Arg.: Farewell.
Ph.: Where are you rushing?
Arg.: Fare very well: I will see you in the Underworld: I will now deprive myself of life as quickly as possible.
Ph.: Why, I entreat you, do you wish to hand me over to death even though I do not deserve it?
Arg.: Me doing such a thing? If I were to see you running out of life, I would immediately donate my life to you and add from mine to yours.
Ph.: Then why are you threatening me with throwing away your life? What do you think I will do if you do what you say? I have set my mind on doing to me everything you do to yourself.
Arg.: Oh, you are sweeter than sweet honey.
Ph.: Certainly you are sweeter than my life to me. Embrace me.
Arg.: I do so with pleasure.
Ph.: I wish we could be carried to the grave like this.
Leo.: O Libanus, how miserable a chap is when he is in love.
Li.: No, a chap is much more miserable when he is hanging.
Leo.: I know it, I have tried it.

In a way, this Plautine scene is a forerunner of Encolpius' and Giton's (fake) double suicide (§ 94.8–15) as well as of their attempt to die together in a sea storm (§ 114.8–12). Just like in the *Satyrica,* the dialogue revolves around the idea that being without one's lover equals being dead, or even that being without one's lover leads directly to suicide.

Philaenium holds on to Argyrippus' cloak because she cannot bear to see him leave (591). She starts out by comparing his departure to an illness that greatly affects her (*morbum,* 593). Then, her words quickly become more drastic: She claims that her mother – being responsible for the separation – will soon have to attend her own daughter's funeral (*acerbum funus filiae faciet,* 595), the implication being that the loss of her lover will cause Philaenium's death. While she leaves open how exactly her death will come about, Argyrippus openly announces that he himself will be the one ending his life: *me iam quantum potest a vita abiudicabo* (607). Note that, even at this point, Argyrippus appears to conceive of the conversation as a kind of contest – like the one we have seen in the *Satyrica*: a contest in which star-crossed lovers try to outdo each

other through (the announcement of) ever more desperate measures. In this competition, Argyrippus tries to be always one step ahead of Philaenium. What is more, we should note that Argyrippus' suicidal determination equals Encolpius' at § 94.8: *inclusus ego suspendio vitam finire constitui.*

Let us remember that, when Giton finds Encolpius in the act of inserting his neck in a noose, the boy's reaction is to pass from grief to rage (§ 94.9). He scolds Encolpius for even considering leaving his lover alone in this world: *'erras' inquit 'Encolpi, si putas contingere posse ut ante moriaris*' (§ 94.10). Similarly, Philaenium's reaction to Argyrippus' suicide threat is to reproach him: *qur tu, opsecro, inmerito meo me morti dedere optas?* (608). Her point is that, since she cannot live without him, *his* suicide would also entail *her* death. She asserts that the lives of Philaenium and Argyrippus are interlinked, just as Giton's and Encolpius' (supposedly) are.

Argyrippus throws Philaenium's suggestion right back at her: If he were to learn of her death, he would immediately take his own life as well (609 f.). In trying to prove that he is no less faithful (and desperate) than Philaenium, he takes up her own proposition (mirroring) and – by spelling out what had been implicit in her words – exaggerates it. These are the same techniques that Giton uses in the suicidal contest with Encolpius.

However, Philaenium is no less talented at this 'game': She twists Argyrippus' words around, suggesting that his announcement amounts to a threat to her own life (611 f.). She also uses the technique of mirroring, neatly expressing the idea at line 613: *certum est ecficere in me omnia eadem quae tu in te faxis.* Her announcement comes very close to what Giton says right before snatching the razor and slashing his throat: *specta invicem quod me spectare voluisti* (§ 94.11).

Unlike Giton and Encolpius, Argyrippus and Philaenium restrict themselves to words. Plautus' characters do not actually (pretend to) commit suicide on stage. Rather, their dialogue takes a different turn, one that – remarkably enough – may also remind us of the *Satyrica*: Argyrippus takes as a compliment Philaenium's readiness to die for/with him; he tells her that she is sweeter than honey (614). Philaenium responds in the same vein (614). Finally, the two embrace each other, wishing they could be carried to the grave like this: *utinam sic ecferamur* (615). This, of course, is the same desire we encounter at § 114.8–12 in the *Satyrica.* When Encolpius and Giton think they are about to die in a sea storm, the boy fastens a belt around the two, thereby causing Encolpius to lose

his fear of dying: *patior ego vinculum extremum, et … expecto mortem non iam molestam* (§ 114. 12).

Lastly, what is the function of the slaves Libanus and Leonida in Plautus' scene? I argue that they lend a farcical air to the melodramatic dialogue between Argyrippus and Philaenium, which is what Giton's and Encolpius' fake suicide does to Petronius' (otherwise) melodramatic passage. When Argyrippus and Philaenium embrace, believing to have found bliss in the face of death, the two slaves destroy this harmonious picture: At first, Leonida comments on the lovers' embrace, noting that a man in love is a miserable creature (616). Libanus jokingly responds that there is much greater misery in hanging (i.e. in actually dying, 616 f.). Turning from jokes to the brutality of ancient slavery, Leonida signals his agreement: He himself once came close to being hanged – a common punishment for people of his social class.[647] The slave's plight – cruelly enough – reminds Plautus' audience of how petty the 'life-and-death troubles' of bourgeois lovers are.[648] This kind of 'comic relief' is similar to what we have seen in Terence's *Eunuchus* (65 f.) and Plautus' *Cistellaria* (250; cf. above): It draws attention to the fact that killing oneself does not bring lovers any closer to each other. The idea of a lover's suicide is a folly of the privileged.

Petronius' passage starts out from the same notion – that it is not worth living if one cannot be with one's beloved – but creates a farce in a different mode. Petronius has Giton and Encolpius take the lovers' reasoning to its logical end: a double suicide. Actually going through with this, of course, is absurd because the two lovers do not have anything to gain from dying. Rather, the 'act of love' brings about their eternal separation. Petronius briefly conjures up this image before the eyes of his audience – only to tell us after the fact that it was all but a charade. After all, when Encolpius and Giton talk about committing suicide out of love, they are just as serious about it as Chalinus in Plautus' *Casina* (424–7, cf. above). Encolpius and Giton are not truly desperate lovers, but it is one of the many roles they play in the course of the *Satyrica.*

647 For some further discussion, cf. Hurka (ed. 2010 *ad loc.*).

648 This is also how Dutsch (2012: 192) understands this passage.

V.3 A Spectacular Brawl (§ 95.1–96.7)

V.3.1 Eumolpus against the Rest

After Encolpius' and Giton's theatrical suicide attempt, new characters complicate the action. Upon entering the room, an inmate of the house sees the two lying on the floor (§ 95.1). At first, he suspects the group of being drunk or fugitive slaves (§ 95.2). Then, believing that they were planning on leaving the house without paying, he announces that they will not go unpunished (§ 95.3).

The man's accusations set in motion a series of events that, in several regards, constitute a reversal of what happened before. While a little earlier it had been Encolpius' role to be furious (*puta igitur me furiosum esse,* § 94.6), it is now Eumolpus' turn to become enraged: He asks the man whether his tirade was meant to be a threat, and hits him in the face (§ 95.4). The man retaliates by throwing a jug at Eumolpus' face, thereby splitting his forehead, and then leaves the room (§ 95.5). We may note that this is not the first time one of Petronius' characters is hit by such an object. During the orgy at Quartilla's place, a cup falls down from a considerable height and hits a slave woman on the head (§ 22.4). In the course of the *cena Trimalchionis,* Fortunata scolds her husband Trimalchio for lavishly kissing a slave boy (§ 74.8–9). Trimalchio becomes angry and throws a cup in her face (§ 74.10).

Eumolpus grabs a wooden candlestick and follows the man out of the room. With the help of this 'weapon', the old man avenges his *supercilium* (§ 95.6), which – as we may remember from § 91.7 – refers not only to his eyebrow but also to his pride. Ruden (1993: 169–71) rightly observes that this passage is characterised by a sustained contrast between its subject matter and the way it is represented. This applies, for instance, to how Eumolpus delivers the first punch to the other man's head: *os hominis palma excussissima pulsat* (§ 95.4). The (otherwise unattested) superlative *excussissima* is derived from *excutere,* a verb which is usually used for 'throwing' or 'brandishing' a javelin, thereby giving a martial and/or epic ring to the lowly brawling.[649] The same is true for the arrival of the other drunk guests: The phrase *fit concursus* appears to come right out of an epic poem or a work of historiography.[650]

649 Cf. Ruden (1993: 169) and Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*) for further references.

650 Ruden (1993: 170) points to Verg. *Aen.* 1.725: *fit strepitus.* Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011 *ad loc.*) refer to Caes. *B Gall.* 1.76.2: *fit celeriter concursus.*

The fact that Eumolpus has left the room gives Encolpius an advantage over the old man, whom he (as narrator) now plainly refers to as his rival (*aemulo,* § 95.7). Encolpius' way of taking revenge is to lock Eumolpus out, just as the latter had locked him in earlier. This reversal has been remarked upon, for instance, by Schmeling (1971: 337). We may note, then, that the rivalry between Encolpius and Eumolpus is characterised by the same kind of tit-for-tat moves we have observed between Encolpius and Ascyltus.[651] The idea of 'mirroring' is made explicit in the way the narrator describes Encolpius' revenge: *reddita scordalo vice* (§ 95.7).

We are now offered a closer look at the other drunk guests, who set out to give Eumolpus a thrashing: There are not only cooks and lodgers, equipped with a spit and a fork, but also – at the climax of the narrator's description – a blear-eyed old woman with an enormous dog (§ 95.8).[652] Ruden suggests that each of these brawlers corresponds to a specific type of gladiator known from ancient amphitheatres.[653] Of course, the 'weapons' these characters wield clash with the text's epic tone just as much as Eumolpus' candlestick does.[654]

Encolpius and Giton watch the brawl through a hole in the door; Encolpius cheers as Eumolpus gets beaten up (*favebamque ego vapulanti,* § 96.1). It has rightly been observed that the verb *favere* is closely associated with the Roman games: Encolpius behaves as if he was watching a public spectacle.[655] It almost goes without saying that he feels *Schadenfreude* – just as he had done when Eumolpus told him about the misfortunes of his (old) rival Ascyltus (§ 92.12). Yet, Giton does not share Encolpius' enthusiasm. In accordance with his earlier sympathy for Eumolpus (§ 93.4), the boy suggests that he and Encolpius open the door and come to the old man's assistance (§ 96.2). Encolpius' reaction to this proposal comes as a surprise: While he found Giton's compassion most charming a little earlier (§ 93.4), he now becomes angry and smashes the

651 Cf. section III.1.3. Sexual Rivalry between Two Tarquinii.

652 Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*) rightly remarks that the passage has a climactic structure.

653 Ruden (1993: 74): "the man with the sword-like spit is the *murmillo* or Samnite, the man with the trident-like fork the *retiarius*; and the old woman with her dog turns the victim into the *bestiarius*."

654 For further discussion, cf. Ruden (1993: 73, 169–71).

655 The idea that Encolpius behaves like a *fautor* at the public games was first proposed by Rowell (1957: 225); cf. also Panayotakis (1995: 129 f.) and Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011 *ad loc.*).

boy on the head with his fist (§ 96.3).[656] Clark (2019: 86) rightly notes that Encolpius here treats Giton like a slave. Having made the boy cry and thus having got rid of the nuisance he posed, Encolpius continues watching the spectacle outside the room even more intently (§ 96.4).

Thereafter, yet another new character brings the brawl to a sudden end: Bargates, the manager of the house, is carried in. He complains about drunkards and fugitive slaves – which is what the inmate of the house had done at § 95.2 – and eventually recognises Eumolpus (§ 96.4–5). Since the old poet usually does not delight but rather infuriate his audience, it comes as a surprise that Bargates commends Eumolpus for his eloquence: *'o poetarum' inquit 'disertissime'* (§ 96.6). Unfortunately, much of the remaining episode has been lost in *lacunae.* It seems likely that Bargates causes the other guests to leave Eumolpus alone. Plausibly, Bargates' words at § 96.7 reflect his motive for coming to the old man's aid: He wants Eumolpus to abuse his partner (*contubernalis*) in verse.[657]

V.3.2 Spectacular Brawls in Comedy

When it comes to identifying theatrical elements in § 95.1–96.7, Panayotakis (1995: 128–30) has already gone a long way. Among other things, he has noted that the authoritarian *deversitor* at § 95.2–3 may remind us of Plautine *senes* addressing their slaves. He and others[658] have observed that Eumolpus' fight against the drunk guests should be conceived of as a comic/mimic battle, not least because the old man suffers no more than a slight wound to his eyebrow (cf. § 98.7). It has also been noted that this type of slapstick violence has forerunners, for instance, in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (254 f.) and *Knights* (411–4) as well as in Plautus' *Amphitruo* (esp. 370–462).[659] Lastly, Panayotakis mentions that Petronius' 'fighters' – cooks, lodgers and an old woman with a dog – seem to come right out of Choricius' list of mime characters.[660] In my own discussion of slapstick violence in § 95.1–96.7, I will repeat neither the points made

656 Encolpius' sudden change of mood toward Giton has been commented upon by Codoñer (1995: 711).

657 For further discussion, cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*).

658 Cf. my summary of Ruden's (1993) discussion above.

659 For further references, cf. Panayotakis (1995: 129 n. 21).

660 Cf. Chor. *Apol. Mimorum* 110 as well as Panayotakis (1995: 129 n. 22 and 23).

by Panayotakis nor the ones already touched upon in earlier sections.[661] Rather, I will focus on three aspects that so far have received little or no scholarly attention.

V.3.2.1 Jugs, Jars and Pots

Firstly, it is worth commenting upon the earthenware jug the *deversitor* throws at Eumolpus: *urceolum fictilem in Eumolpi caput iaculatus est solvitque clamantis frontem* (§ 95.5). While Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*) has rightly noted that jugs or jars are regularly used as weapons in ancient literature – cf. e.g. Prop. 2.6.17 f. and Ov. *Met.* 5.82–4 – the role of such objects in comedy has not been fully taken into account.[662] For, as Richlin (2017: 97) has noted, having a jar broken over one's head is "perhaps the equivalent of the clown's cream pie in the face" in modern slapstick performances. In the *fabula palliata* this form of violence is typically suffered by parasites, whose job description apparently included physical abuse:[663] In Plautus' *Curculio,* the eponymous parasite poses as the freedmen of a soldier; his plan is to trick the banker Lyco out of the soldier's money. When Lyco sees Curculio wearing an eye patch – which is part of his disguise – the banker contemptuously suggests that Curculio's eye might have been knocked out by a broken pot of ashes (*aula quassa cum cinere ecfossus,* 396). In an aside, the parasite comments that there is some truth to Lyco's assumption: *superstitiosus hicquidem est, vera praedicat;* | *nam illaec catapultae ad me crebro commeant* ("He is a prophet, he is telling the truth: Such missiles often wind their way toward me," Plaut. *Curc.* 397 f.). A statement made by the parasite Ergasilus in Plautus' *Captivi* is even more striking. In his opening monologue, in which he elaborates on the profession of parasites, he mentions some of the indignities people like him have to endure: *et hic quidem hercle, nisi qui colaphos perpeti* | *potes parasitus frangique aulas in caput,* | *vel ire extra portam Trigeminam ad saccum licet* ("And here at any rate, unless as a parasite you

661 Cf. esp. section III.3.2.3. Physical Abuse.

662 Most scholarly comments are highly unspecific; cf. e.g. Preston (1915: 262): "The breaking of dishes is more than once employed for comic effect [sc. in the *Satyrica*]; cf. 22.3, 64.10, 70.5."

663 In Plautus' *Captivi* (472) Ergasilus refers to parasites such as himself as *plagipatidae* ("blow-sufferers"), a word that is otherwise associated with slaves; cf. Richlin (2017: 97) for further discussion. Some connections between comic parasites and Petronius' characters have been noted in section III.2.2.2. Sex and Food.

can bear blows, and pots being broken on your head, you can just as well go outside the Three-Arch Gate to carry a porter's bag," Plaut. *Capt.* 88–90). The Porta Trigemina led to Ostia; Ergasilus' point is that parasites can choose between suffering physical abuse on the one hand and living the life of a poor labourer or beggar on the other.[664]

What these passages make clear is that having an earthenware vessel broken over one's head amounts to a commonplace of ancient comic (slapstick) violence. Ergasilus mentions it in the same breath as slaps or blows (*colaphos*). This is the context in which we should interpret the jug thrown at Eumolpus (§ 95.5) as well as the ones hitting people at § 22.4 and § 74.10.

V.3.2.2 Armies, Battles and Weapons

The second aspect I wish to highlight concerns the brawl between Eumolpus on the one hand, and *coctores, insularii* and the *anus lippa* on the other (§ 95.8–9). As noted above, scholars such as Ruden (1993) and Panayotakis (1995) have already discussed the humorous/comic characteristics of this passage. However, so far one important point of comparison has not been taken into consideration. What I am referring to is the presence of 'armies' and 'battles' in the comic tradition.

In Aristophanes' *Birds,* Euelpides and Peisetaerus initially meet with resistance when proposing to establish a bird *polis.* When the chorus of birds attacks them, the two Athenians defend themselves with the kitchen utensils they have at hand: kettles (χύτραι), a skewer (ὀβελίσκον), a saucer (ὀξύβαφον), and a bowl (τρύβλιον).[665] Of course, these items belong to the same class of 'weapons' as the candlestick (*candelabrum*), the spit (*veru*) and the fork (*furca*) in Petronius. In Menander's *Perikeiromene,* the soldier Polemon 'besieges' a house in order to recover the girl Glycera. Although, unfortunately, the scene only survives in fragments, it appears that Polemon's 'army' consists of a few slaves and a flute-girl;[666] it is clear that some of the combatants are as drunk as the *ebrio-*

664 For a detailed discussion, cf. Richlin (2017: 98 f.).

665 Cf. Aristoph. *Av.* 343–450, esp. 356–61.

666 Cf. Men. *Pk.* 354–406 and esp. 467–85. For a detailed discussion and for possible reconstructions of the plot, cf. Gomme & Sandbach (ed. 1973 *ad loc.*), Arnott (ed., trans. 1979–2000 *ad loc.*) and Furley (ed. 2015 *ad loc*).

rum frequentia (§ 95.7) in the *Satyrica*.[667] Incidentally, we may note that Ascyltus' later attempt to recover Giton with the help of a crier (§ 97.1–98.1) is reminiscent of how Polemon tries to 'take back by force' the person he desires.

While much of the 'siege' in Menander's *Perikeiromene* has been lost, a comparable scene survives in Terence's *Eunuchus*.[668] Towards the end of the play, the soldier Thraso tries to take back by force the girl Pamphila, whom Thraso believes to be his property. Together with his parasite Gnatho (Gn.), the slave Sanga (Sa.) and a few more followers, Thraso (Thr.) sets out to attack the house of Thais, who has taken Pamphila in.

Thr.: *hacin ego ut contumeliam tam insignem in me accipiam,*
Gnatho?
mori me satiust. Simalio, Donax, Syrisce, sequimini.
primum aedis expugnabo.
Gn.: *recte.*
Thr. *virginem eripiam.*
Gn.: *probe.*
Thr.: *male mulcabo ipsam.*
Gn.: *pulchre.*
Thr.: *in medium huc agmen cum vecti,*
Donax;
tu, Simalio, in sinistrum cornum; tu, Syrisce, in dexterum.
cedo alios: ubi centuriost Sanga manipulus furum?
Sa: *eccum adest.*
Thr.: *quid ignave? peniculon pugnare, qui istum huc portes, cogitas?*
Sa.: *egon? imperatoris virtutem noveram et vim militum;*
sine sanguine hoc non posse fieri: qui abstergerem volnera?
Thr.: *ubi alii?*
Gn: *qui malum "alii"? solu' Sannio servat domi.*
Thr.: *tu hosce instrue; ego hic ero post principia: inde omnibus signum dabo.*
(Ter. Eun. 771–81)

667 Cf. esp. Men. *Pk.* 469–73.

668 For a plot summary of this play, cf. section III.1.1. Sexual Violence in Petronius and in the Comic Tradition.

Thr.: The very idea that I should put up with such a palpable insult, Gnatho! I would rather die. Simalio, Donax, Syriscus, follow me. First I will storm the house.
Gn.: Right!
Thr: I will carry off the girl.
Gn.: Excellent!
Thr: I will give the mistress a good thrashing.
Gn.: Brilliant!
Thr.: Donax, in the centre of the line with your crowbar. You, Simalio, on the left wing. You, Syriscus, on the right. Bring on the others. Where is the centurion Sanga and his company of thieves?
Sa.: Present.
Thr.: What, you useless creature? Are you proposing to fight with a sponge? I see you are carrying one with you.
Sa.: Me? I knew the valour of the general and the violence of the soldiers. This operation cannot take place without blood. How else was I to wipe the wounds?
Thr.: Where are the others?
Gn.: What others, damn it? There is only Sannio and he is on duty at home.
Thr.: You draw up these. I will be here behind the front line. I will give the signal to everyone from there.

Admittedly, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the siege in the *Eunuchus* and the brawl in the *Satyrica.* The focus of Terence's scene is on Thraso's character: He likes to play the role of the military commander as long as this means to bully people about (771–6). When this role requires him to fight, however, he prefers to remain in the rear (781).[669] In fact, as soon as he is approached by Thais, Thraso tells Gnatho to call off the attack (814).

Still, there are significant parallels between Terence's scene and Petronius' episode. As in the *Satyrica,* the fighters – other than the coward Thraso – are not professional soldiers but ill-prepared slaves and/or cooks.[670] Sanga, ostensibly a cook (cf. 816), apparently did not have time to get hold of any 'weapon' other than a sponge (777). The only other

669 For a detailed discussion of this scene, cf. Barsby (ed. 1999 *ad loc.*).

670 *manipulus furum* (776) likely refers to a group of cooks, who were notorious for thieving in ancient comedy; cf. Barsby (ed. 1999 *ad loc.*) for references.

weapon we learn of is a crowbar (*vecti,* 774). Just like Petronius' *coctores insulariique* – and just like Euelpides and Peisetaerus in Aristophanes' *Birds* – Terence's characters make use of whatever comes to hand: the everyday items that surround them.

Sanga makes up for his blunder through his resourcefulness and his willingness to flatter Thraso (779 f.). When the attack is called off, Sanga admits that his mind had been on his pans for some time (816). Clearly, this character could never seriously hurt anyone. He is like the 'fighters' in the *Satyrica,* who give Eumolpus a 'thrashing' (*mulcant,* § 95.8; *vapulanti,* § 96.1) but let him get away with no more than a slight wound to his eyebrow nevertheless. In the *Eunuchus,* of course, the 'army' is dismissed without having inflicted any violence whatsoever (814).

Furthermore, just as Petronius' narrator gives an epic ring to the lowly brawling at § 95.8–9, Thraso speaks to/about his followers in a grandiloquent style. His military *termini techniqui* – e.g. *agmen* (774), *centurio* (776) and *manipulus* (776) – fulfil the same function as the martial vocabulary and the allusions to epic/historiography in the *Satyrica.* Both texts create a contrast between their subject matter (lowly brawling) and their means of representation (high-flown language).

V.3.2.3 *Schadenfreude* and Ill-Timed Compassion

Schadenfreude does not only play a role in the First Rivalry over Giton[671] but also in the episode at hand: Encolpius rejoices when he hears about Ascyltus' misfortunes in the bathhouse (§ 92.12), and he is full of glee when he witnesses Eumolpus taking a beating (§ 96.1, 96.4). What I wish to focus on here is the interesting moment when Giton comes in the way of Encolpius' *Schadenfreude*: While he had first praised Giton's empathy for Eumolpus (§ 93.4), Encolpius smashes the boy on the head when he expresses this empathy a second time (§ 96.3). Strikingly, Encolpius' sudden change of mood has a close parallel in the *fabula palliata.*

Plautus' *Persa* ends with the spectacular punishment of Toxilus' archenemy: the pimp Dordalus.[672] Although these two characters are not sexual rivals in the narrow sense, their relationship is comparable to the one between Encolpius and Eumolpus. Initially, Toxilus does not have the means to buy the girl Lemniselenis off the greedy Dordalus. The pimp

671 Cf. section III.3.2.1. Laughter as well as section III.3.2.2. Applause.

672 For a plot summary, cf. section III.3.2.2. Applause.

thus stands in the way of Toxilus' pleasure, just as Eumolpus stands in the way of Encolpius' during the Third Rivalry over Giton. However, Toxilus eventually manages to trick Dordalus and to buy Lemniselenis' (Lem.) freedom. At the very end of the play, Dordalus (Do.) suffers the verbal and physical abuse of Toxilus (Tox.), his friend Sagaristio, and his *puer delicatus* Paegnium (Pae.):

Do.: *ludos me facitis, intellego.*
To.: *vin cinaedum novum tibi dari, Paegnium?*
quin elude, ut soles, quando liber locust hic. 805
hui, babae! basilice te intulisti et facete.
Pae:. *decet me facetum esse et hunc inridere*
lenonem lubidost, quando dignus ⟨es⟩t.
To.: *perge ut coeperas.*
Pae.: *hoc, leno, tibi.*
Do: *perii! perculit me probe.* 810
Pae.: *em, serva rusum.*
[…]
To.: *agite sultis, hunc ludificemus.* 833
Lem.: *nisi si dignust, non opust.*
et me hau par est.
To:: *credo eo quia non inconciliat, quom te emo.*
Lem.: *at tamen non – tamen –* 835
To.: *cave ergo sis malo et sequere me.*
te mihi dicto audientem esse addecet, nam hercle apsque me
foret et meo praesidio, hic faceret te prostibilem propediem.
sed ita pars libertinorum est: nisi patrono qui advorsatust,
nec sati' liber sibi videtur nec sati' frugi nec sat honestus,
ni id ecfecerit, ni ei male dixit, ni grato ingratus
repertust. 840
Lem.: *pol bene facta tua me hortantur tuo ut imperio paream.*
To.: *ego sum tibi patronus plane qui huic pro te argentum dedi.*
* *graphice hunc volo ludificari.*
Lem.: *meo ego in loco sedulo curabo.*
(Plaut. *Pers.* 803–43)

Do: You are mocking me, I realize.
Tox.: Do you want to get a new catamite, Paegnium? Have your fun, as you always do, since you have a free field here. Hey, wow! That was a fantastic, fine movement!

Pae.: I ought to be fine and I am keen to make fun of this pimp, since he deserves it.
To.: Continue the way you began.
Pae.: Take this, pimp.
Do.: I am dead! He almost knocked me over.
Pae.: There, watch out again.
[…]
To.: Go on, please, let us have our fun with him.
Lem.: There is no need if he does not deserve it; and it is not appropriate for me.
To.: No doubt because he did not create any trouble when I bought you.
Lem.: But still, I do not – still –
Tox.: Do watch out for trouble and then follow me. You ought to be obedient to me, because if it had not been for me and my protection, he would have turned you into a prostitute without delay. But that is how some freedmen are: Unless one has opposed his patron, he does not consider himself free enough or useful enough or decent enough. Unless he has done this, unless he has been rude to him, unless he has been found to be ungrateful to his benefactor.
Lem.: Yes, your good turns spurn me on to obey your command.
To.: I am clearly your patron as I have paid him for you. I want him mocked beautifully.
Lem.: For my part I will do my best.

Toxilus and his friends mock and beat Dordalus throughout the final scene of the *Persa* (777–858); the above quote is only a small sample. What becomes clear is that Toxilus enjoys the violence inflicted on Dordalus no less than Encolpius enjoys Eumolpus' suffering. For instance, Toxilus spurs on Paegnium (*perge ut coeperas,* 809), just as Encolpius cheers as Eumolpus gets thrashed (*favebamque vapulanti,* § 96.1). Equally importantly, Toxilus' mood swing toward Lemniselenis may remind us of Encolpius' mood swing toward Giton.

In the scene directly preceding Dordalus' punishment, Toxilus had finally managed to buy the freedom of his beloved Lemniselenis. His attitude towards her was helplessly romantic: When she embraces him, he tells her that nothing is sweeter as her (*oh, nil magi' dulcest,* 764),

and he uses several terms of endearment (*amabo, oculus meu'*, 765).[673] Of course, this may remind us of Encolpius, who is usually completely infatuated with Giton (cf. e.g. § 93.4). However, both Toxilus and Encolpius only appreciate their lovers' affection when it is convenient to them.

As far as we can tell, it is one of Lemniselenis' character traits to be conciliatory. When Dordalus furiously berates Toxilus for having tricked him (795 f.), she tries to calm the pimp down: *stultitiast, | quoi bene esse licet, eum praevorti | libitu'* ("It is stupidity if someone who can have a good time turns to fights instead," 798–800). She attempts to de-escalate the conflict between the two men fighting over her – not unlike Giton, who speaks up for Eumolpus so as to calm Encolpius' anger (*sic me loquentem obiurgavit Giton…*, § 93.4). However, when Lemniselenis shows some scruples about mocking/humiliating the pimp (833 f.), Toxilus quickly becomes angry at the girl he claims to love: He accuses her of being a conceited, ungrateful freedwoman (836–40), a rebuke that, incidentally, is reminiscent of how Trimalchio scolds his wife Fortunata when she once dares to criticise him (§ 74.13). More significantly, Toxilus threatens Lemniselenis with physical punishment if she continues to disagree with his judgement: *cave ergo sis malo et sequere me* (835).[674] He comes close to doing what Encolpius does when he is annoyed by Giton's scruples: Giving his beloved a smack on the head in order to shut them up: *ego durante adhuc iracundia non continui manum, sed caput miserantis stricto acutoque articulo percussi* (§ 96.3). The motivation of Toxilus and Encolpius is the same: They will not allow anyone to spoil their *Schadenfreude* – not even their beloved partner whom they took enormous pains to be with.

V.4 Interim Conclusion

Having divided the Third Rivalry over Giton in three sections, my reading has focused on the dynamics between Encolpius and Eumolpus ('the rivals') on the one hand, and between Encolpius and Giton ('the lovers') on the other. We have observed that the first part of the episode (§ 92.1–94.7) heavily relies on wrong expectations and, more generally, on a discrepancy between the knowledge states of Petronius' characters. Fur-

673 Cf. also Plaut. *Pers.* 773 f.

674 For further discussion of this line, including the social ramifications of what Toxilus (himself a slave) is threatening, cf. Woytek (ed. 1982 *ad loc.* and p. 44).

thermore, the passage at hand is characterised by reversals: 1) Encolpius tries to outsmart Eumolpus by mirroring his behaviour (locking in vs. locking out), 2) Giton copies and exaggerates Encolpius' suicide threat, 3) Encolpius, who usually adores Giton, suddenly smashes him on the head. Overall, the last part of the episode abounds with slapstick violence and *Schadenfreude.*

In the second step of my analysis, we have seen that the misapprehension between Eumolpus and Encolpius is in line with that between *senes amatores* and their younger rivals on the ancient stage. It has also become clear that reading Encolpius' and Giton' double suicide attempt as a parody of the 'idealising' novel is only one of many possible ways to understand this passage. I have emphasised that notions such as 'being without one's lover equals being dead' or 'the separation from one's lover leaves no option other than suicide' were commonplaces of comedy long before the ('idealising') novel came into existence. With regard to the brawl at the end of the episode, I have drawn attention to a few less obvious comic elements: 1) Eumolpus shares the fate of comic parasites when he is hit with an earthenware jug; 2) the cooks and lodgers who brawl with Eumolpus resemble 'fighters' or 'armies' in Aristophanes, Plautus and Terence; 3) there is a striking connection between Encolpius in the Third Rivalry over Giton and the slave Toxilus at the end of Plautus' *Persa*: When it comes to seeing their rival suffer, Encolpius' and Toxilus' *Schadenfreude* gets the better of their infatuation with their beloved.

V.5 Narrative Technique

At this point, I believe it is unnecessary to give a full narratological analysis of the Third Rivalry over Giton. This is not only because such an analysis would be disproportionally long but, more importantly, because most findings of the preceding chapters can be applied, *mutatis mutandis,* to the episode at hand. I will therefore restrict my discussion to a single portion of the Third Rivalry over Giton, not least because this bit has by far received most scholarly attention: Encolpius' and Giton's double suicide attempt (§ 94.8–15). As before, I will first address narrative techniques that create the impression of a theatrical performance, followed by those that do not have a one-to-one correspondence on stage. Lastly, I will delve into the scholarly debate as to who 'is behind' the fake suicide(s) and whether Encolpius the narrator tells his story from an ironic point of view.

V.5.1 A Narrative Emulating Stage Performances

Through detailed information about the visual and auditory aspects of the action, certain parts of the double suicide passage create the impression of a stage performance before the inner eye of the audience. For instance, the narrator tells us about several objects in the room he was trapped in (the 'scenery'): There is a bed standing against the wall with a belt fastened to its frame (§ 94.8). Encolpius relates how he inserted his neck into the noose and – taking his time to mention the unlocking of the door (*reseratis foribus,* § 94.8) – how Giton and Encolpius saved him at the last moment (*ibid.*). Next, the narrator names Giton's feelings (*ex dolore in rabiem efferatus,* § 94.9)[675] and, more importantly, describes how the boy physically expresses these feelings: He shouts out (*tollit clamorem,* § 94.5) and throws Encolpius on the bed by pushing him with both hands (*me utraque manu impulsum praecipitat super lectum, ibid.*). As noted before, the amount of detail devoted to such emotional gestures may remind us of stage directions in dramatic scripts.

Giton's accusation against Encolpius is quoted in full (38 words of reported speech at § 94.10–11). In terms of speech representation, of course, this is as close as a narrative can get to a theatrical performance. Thereafter, the narrator recounts rather graphically how Giton commits (a fake) suicide: The boy is said to snatch a razor, to slash his throat once and again, and to collapse at the others' feet (§ 94.12). Unlike elsewhere in the passage, the narrator's words here amount to an 'objective' description of what Giton said and did. Rather than manipulating the story in one way or another, the narrator allows the audience to see Giton's suicide for themselves, as it were. The last portion of the passage contains another reference to the episode's soundscape (*exclamo ego attonitus,* § 94.13) as well as a detailed description of a 'stage prop', the blunt razor that is key to the entire charade.

675 My understanding is not that Encolpius can here look into Giton's head, as it were, but rather that this piece of information is meant to help the audience visualise Giton's demeanour; cf. section IV.4.1.2. Paralepsis: The Thin Line between Emotions and Appearances.

V.5.2 A Narrative Emancipated from Stage Performances

V.5.2.1 Emphasis and Condensation: Giving the Stage to Giton

Despite the stage-like elements listed above, the suicide passage is most remarkable for how Petronius' narrator manipulates the story. His technique is most obvious in terms of narrative speed: Encolpius (as narrator) devotes no more than six words to the fact that he (as protagonist) decided to kill himself: *inclusus ego suspendio vitam finire constitui* (§ 94.8). The narrator's terseness is all the more striking if we remember that this is not the first time Encolpius thinks to have lost Giton to a rival (cf. §§ 80–81). Back then, the protagonist had delivered – and the narrator had quoted in full! – a long monologue about the moral turpitude of Giton and his new lover Ascyltus (§ 81.3–6). Only after this elaborate warm-up, so to speak, had Encolpius (the protagonist) been ready to resort to violence (§ 82.1–2). The suicide passage stands in a sharp contrast to this. While the narrator's words focused on the protagonist's emotions at § 81.3–6, his concise language at § 94.8 hints at the fact that here Encolpius' emotions are *not* at the heart of what he wants to tell his audience. Rather, the protagonist's decision to end his life appears to be no more than a prelude to what is to come.

The same applies to Encolpius' preparations for hanging himself and to Eumolpus' and Giton's sudden arrival. Despite the significant amount of detail (cf. above), it is crucial to note that the narrator summarises all these pieces of information in a single sentence: *et iam semicinctio … revocat ad lucem* (§ 94.8). Story time is clearly longer than narrative time. The narrative slows down, however, as soon as its focus shifts to Giton: The boy's angry outburst (§ 94.9) and the words that accompany it (§ 94.10–11) are presented in the mode of a 'scene' (story time = narrative time).

It is worth remembering that these narrative movements, i. e. variations in narrative speed, have no (obvious) equivalent on stage. A stage director cannot simply fast-forward Encolpius' suicide preparations and then slow down for Giton's speech. The effect of this narrative technique is that it emphasises Giton's role in the episode. To use a theatrical metaphor, it shines a spotlight on the boy and has the other characters fade into the background.

After Giton's words, the narrative speeds up again: We do not need as much time to read/listen to § 94.12–3 as Giton and Encolpius hypothetically need to each grab the razor, slash their throats (repeatedly), and

collapse. Thereafter, the narrative comes to a complete standstill. In a descriptive pause, the narrator tells us that neither Giton nor Encolpius were hurt, and that the blade was in fact a blunted practice razor (§ 94.14). What is more, the narrator now looks back at something that happened a little earlier (analepsis) and that he failed to mention at the time (paralipsis): He tells us that – knowing that the razor was blunt – neither had the *mercennarius* feared for Giton's safety, nor had Eumolpus stopped the boy's suicide attempt (§ 94.15).

Again, things would look different in a theatrical performance. If this was a suicide scene acted out on stage, the audience would be able to see Eumolpus' and the servant's unimpassioned demeanour whilst Giton snatches the razor and cuts his throat. This would not only (potentially) turn the audience's attention away from Giton, but it might also alert the spectators to the fact that the boy's action is not as serious as it seems. The effect of Petronius' narrative technique, then, is to create suspense. By sidestepping information that is central to the understanding of the passage – both that the razor is blunt and that Eumolpus and his servant know about this – the narrator initially creates the impression that Giton has actually killed himself. By means of analepsis, the narrator provides these key pieces of information only when he sees fit – thereby releasing the tension no sooner than it has reached its peak. The narrator's technique will be further discussed in the section on Encolpius as *actor* and *auctor*.

Before moving on, it is worth noting that this passage contains an even more blatant case of paralipsis: The *mercennarius*, i.e. the person from whom Giton suddenly snatches the razor, had never been mentioned before in the extant *Satyrica*. He (including his mere presence) will not be commented upon again until the very end of the episode (§ 99.6). The narrator fails to mention this character even though – as scrupulous readers might note – the *mercennarius* must have entered the room at some point, and he must be *somewhere* whilst Eumolpus gets beaten up (§ 95.6–96.7).

Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011 *ad* § 94.12) state that this servant – who is called Corax, as we learn at § 117.11 – is apparently introduced simply for "reasons of plot": Later in the story, Encolpius and Giton will need to disguise themselves in order to avoid the attention of their old acquaintance Lichas; in this context, they will need a barber to shave their heads and eyebrows (§ 103.1–2). According to Schmeling & Setaioli (*ibid.*), Petronius chooses the "convenient setting" of the suicide passage to introduce the figure of a barber. While I do not disagree with this in-

terpretation, it is important to note that Corax has a small but significant task to fulfil in the suicide passage: His function is to provide Giton with a (fake) weapon – and it is in this function only that the servant is ever mentioned!

There is hardly a point in asking – or trying to explain – when exactly Corax entered the room, or what he did whilst Eumolpus was getting thrashed; not to speak of asking how a poor poet like Eumolpus can even afford a personal servant.[676] The fact of the matter appears to be that Corax is only important, inasmuch as the figure of a barber 'plausibly' introduces a (fake) razor to the plot. Since he is irrelevant to what follows (as well as to what came before), the narrator has him 'disappear' by means of paralipsis.[677] In line with what I have pointed out above, my belief is that had the narrator devoted any further attention to Corax, this would have risked shifting the audience's attention away from Giton and his charade of a suicide.

V.5.2.2 Subjective Storytelling: Encolpius Making Sense of the World around Him

I have noted that some of the narrator's words in this passage amount to an 'objective' description of the action. What I mean is that, as far as we can tell, the narrator relates the events of the story without any additions, omissions, or other significant manipulations. In the preceding section, then, we have observed that the narrator at times reveals his presence through manipulations of narrative speed and order. Yet, this is not the only way in which Encolpius (the narrator) can give away the fact that he is not an impartial observer. At times, his word choice is clearly the product of what we may call subjective storytelling.

This phenomenon is most obvious, perhaps, when Encolpius (the narrator) describes his own suicide attempts by means of language that is metaphorical and melodramatic: Rather than saying something along the lines of 'Eumolpus and Giton stopped me from hanging myself', the narrator tells us that they 'called me back to life from the brink of death' (*meque a fatali iam meta revocat ad lucem,* § 94.8). Rather than saying 'I slashed my throat with the razor just as Giton had done', he relates

676 Cf. for instance the speculations indulged in by van Thiel (1971: 41 f.), which Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 94.12) finds 'ingenious'.

677 This roughly corresponds to the interpretation proposed by Courtney (2001: 147).

that 'I sought the road to death with the same steel' (*eodem ferramento ad mortem viam quaero,* § 94.13). Clearly, these words are not 'objective descriptions' – spoken as if the narrator was completely detached from the action –, but they reveal Encolpius' personal standpoint: He apparently conceives of his actions as extraordinary and therefore as worthy of elevated language.

Still, another manifestation of 'subjective storytelling' may be even more significant. It seems clear that throughout (most of) this episode the narrator tells his story in the mode of experiencing focalisation: Encolpius (the narrator) describes the action in accordance with what he (the protagonist) perceived and felt at the time. The narrator does not make use of hindsight knowledge – which he might have done, for instance, in order to forewarn the audience about the blunt razor. A few cases in which the distinct standpoint of the narrator might shine through will be discussed later on. For now, it is crucial to note that the narrator's manipulations of narrative time and order appear to correspond to the protagonist's thought process at the time the story is unfolding.

As we have observed above, the pace of the suicide passage slows down ('scene', i.e. story time = narrative time) when Giton delivers his speech, telling Encolpius that he could never be the first one to die and that Encolpius shall now witness the boy's own suicide (§ 94.10–11). I suggest that this mode of storytelling reflects what is going on in the protagonist's head: He can hardly believe what he is hearing from his beloved Giton. The boy says that he tried to kill himself in the recent past, and that he will go through with it this time. Encolpius (the protagonist) pays close attention to Giton, making sure not to miss a single word. Accordingly, the narrator quotes Giton's speech in full.

Afterwards, the narrative accelerates (story time > narrative time), as the narrator tells us how Giton and Encolpius each grab the razor, slash their throats, and fall to the ground. This narrative movement corresponds to how the protagonist struggles to keep up with what is going on around him. 'Everything happened so fast' is a modern-day commonplace of how people describe unforeseen accidents or similar events – and it is along these lines, I suggest, that we should understand the fast pace of Petronius' narrative. The protagonist is overwhelmed by what is happening before his eyes and by how he (instinctively?) reacts: Seeing the supposedly dead Giton at his feet, he immediately follows the boy's example.

The narrative comes to a complete standstill – with some narrative time corresponding to no story time whatsoever – once both Giton and

Encolpius are lying on the floor, supposedly dead (§ 94.14–5). Just as the 'scene' and the acceleration, the narrative pause appears to reflect the protagonist's thought process: Having struggled to keep up with Giton's action and his own reaction, the protagonist now finally has time to stop and think: 'Wait a minute. Something is not right here': *sed neque Giton ulla erat suspicione vulneris laesus neque ego ullum sentiebam dolorem* (§ 94.14). It is crucial to realise that this statement is not made by the narrating I (narrating focalisation) but that it still represents the point of view of the protagonist (experiencing focalisation). Rather than telling us what happened – Giton and Encolpius lying on the ground, both alive – the narrator tells us what did *not* happen (*neque … neque*), indicating by *sed* that all of this stood in contrast to something. This 'something', of course, is the protagonist's expectation at the time: He expected Giton to be marked by a wound (*suspicione vulneris laesus*) and himself to feel pain (*sentiebam dolorem*) – but neither of these expectations was met.

In short, what I suggest is that the narrator's mode of storytelling corresponds to the protagonist's (slow) process of understanding the world around him. Viewed in this light, the suicide passage fits a common pattern in the *Satyrica,* one that has been best described by Mario Labate (2013): Encolpius regularly struggles to make sense of what he sees, hears or feels – be it Trimalchio's 'riddles' during the *cena* (e.g. § 41.5), Quartilla's 'practical jokes' during the orgy (e.g. § 24.1–2), or nearly countless other situations. The prime example of this phenomenon occurs early on in the extant *Satyrica*: When an old woman tricks Encolpius into entering a brothel, the narrator spells out the fact that it took him (the protagonist) a long time to realise his mistake: *tarde, immo iam sero intellexi me in fornicem esse deductum* ("Slowly, indeed too late, I became aware that I had been led into a brothel," § 7.4). My suggestion is that this is exactly what is going on at the end of the suicide passage: The protagonist slowly comes to understand that nothing is as he thought it would be, and the narrator makes sure to share his (past) thought process with the audience.

V.5.3 The Character of Encolpius as *actor* and *auctor*

V.5.3.1 The 'Mastermind' behind the Charade

Several scholars have debated matters of agency in the suicide passage. Which character(s) came up with the idea of staging a fake suicide? Which characters are 'in on the joke', and what role does the narrator play in all of this?

Most scholars agree that Giton never truly intended to commit suicide, i.e. that he is fully aware he is putting on a show. After all, the boy falls to the ground even though, as he must realise, the razor is blunt.[678] It is more difficult to assess Eumolpus' role in the suicide performance. Slater (1990: 103) has gone as far as to suggest that:

> The whole scene has been staged for Encolpius' benefit by Eumolpus and Giton. Perhaps they have been observing him through the door […]. Probably the idea is Eumolpus's, as the farce turns on the stage prop of the blunted razor, which only he is likely to know his servant has.

Slater proposes that the suicide charade was ultimately Eumolpus' idea – a view that might have been inspired by Eumolpus' role as the 'mastermind' behind the legacy-hunting plot in Croton (§ 117.4–10). As it stands, however, Slater's suggestion clearly belongs to the realm of speculation: Not only is Giton (hypothetically) resourceful enough to think of the practice razor himself, but postulating Eumolpus to be a 'master of deception' also leads us to a never-ending series of assumptions, each one less likely than the one that came before.[679] Even more importantly, perhaps, we should be cautious about assuming that there is a 'strict logic' underlying every episode of the *Satyrica.* We should remember, for instance, that the narrator has the *mercennarius* 'appear' and 'disappear' as he sees fit – arguably, this type of storytelling shows that Petronius did not prioritise verisimilitude down to the last detail.

Put another way: It is important to acknowledge that the text as we have it simply does not hold any clear indication as to the 'originator'

678 § 94.12. For further discussion, cf. e.g. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 94.15) and Setaioli (2011: 380).

679 Cf. the discussion in section V.1.1. Eumolpus.

of the suicide charade. Perhaps, this question is simply beside the point. What the text does tell us, however, is that both Giton and Eumolpus (as well as his servant) are 'in on the joke': The boy falls to the ground for no other reason than to give credence to his performance, and the other two do not intervene because they know the razor in Giton's hand is blunt (§ 94.15). Rather than around 'masterminds', the passage revolves around matters of awareness: It is about who knows what is truly going on, and who does not.

V.5.3.2 The Presence of the Narrator

As we have observed above, most of the passage is conveyed in the mode of experiencing focalisation. We are invited to see through the narrator's eyes, as it were, as he decides to end his life, is stopped by Giton and Eumolpus, witnesses Giton's (supposed) suicide, and follows the boy's example. Encolpius (the narrator) even shares with the audience his (the protagonist's) slow process of realising something is wrong: Contrary to his expectations, Giton and himself are unhurt by the razor (§ 94.14). At this point, however, the mode of storytelling changes: *rudis enim novacula et in hoc retusa, ut pueris discentibus audaciam tonsoris daret, instruxerat thecam* (§ 94.14). Here, the point of view of the narrator is revealed through the use of hindsight knowledge: At the time, the protagonist was in no position to know he was dealing with a practice razor meant to be used by apprentice barbers.[680] There can be no doubt, therefore, that this is a case of narrating focalisation.

It seems clear that the narrator's intrusion continues a bit further: *ideoque nec mercennarius ad raptum ferramentum expaverat nec Eumolpus interpellaverat mimicam mortem. dum haec fabula inter amantes luditur* (§ 94.15–95.1). Though the protagonist was in a position to see Eumolpus' and Corax' unimpassioned reaction to Giton's fake suicide, it appears that he either did not pay attention to the two, or that he failed to grasp the meaning of their behaviour (i.e. that there was no real danger to Giton). However, the significance of their demeanour is apparent to the narrator (after the fact). Much of the same applies to the idea of a theatrical suicide (*mimicam mortem*; *fabula inter amantes*; cf. below). Since the protagonist does not know about the blunt razor (yet), he cannot tell

680 This has rightly been noted by Courtney (2001: 147).

that Giton is merely play-acting. Rather, this interpretation of the events must have been made with the benefit of hindsight.[681]

V.5.3.3 Self-Irony and the Character of the Narrator

The effect of the narrator's intrusion is threefold. Firstly, the narrator provides his readers/listeners with the key piece of information they need to make sense of the story. Having created the impression that Giton has actually killed himself, he now gives away the fact that the razor is blunt; it cannot do any harm. What is more, the narrator describes Giton's suicide as 'mimic' (*mimicam mortem,* § 94.15), in the sense that it is the product of play-acting. This message is reinforced by another theatrical metaphor immediately afterwards: *dum haec fabula inter amantes luditur* (§ 95.1). The narrator thus releases the tension he built up in the course of the passage, allowing the audience to enjoy it as a 'farce in prose'.

Secondly, the narrator's intrusion has an effect on how we perceive the relationship between the two Encolpii: the protagonist and his 'older' counterpart, the narrator. By categorising Giton's suicide as theatrical – which the protagonist would not have been able to do (yet) – the narrator joins the perspective of 'those who know better', i.e. of Giton, Encolpius and Corax. This creates a certain distance between the narrator and the protagonist: The joke is exclusively on the protagonist, and the narrator's 'bemused detachment' from his past self may rightly be referred to as self-irony.[682]

Lastly, it is worth noting that the narrator is not the only one who joins 'those who know better': His readers/listeners do the same. Having received hindsight knowledge from the narrator, the audience is in a position to understand the suicide charade before the protagonist does so himself – in fact, we never learn when/how the protagonist manages to put the clues together. At any rate, the narrator's self-ironic stance is only completed by the fact that he brings the audience over to his side, as it were.

Other than in the reconciliation episode, the narrator is here fully aware he was made a fool of by Giton. In fact, by poking fun at his credulity at the time, the narrator presents himself as the 'more mature' coun-

681 Cf. Courtney (2001: 147), who concisely notes that both *mimicam mortem* and *fabula inter amantes* "are naturally later interpretations by the narrator Encolpius."

682 Cf. esp. Codoñer (1995: 710 f.) and Conte (1996: 78 f.).

terpart of his past self. This is as close as we get to Beck's (1973) much-cited distinction between the two Encolpii.

Still, we should not go as far as to speak of a significant 'difference in character' between the two. For, what the narrator does here amounts to nothing more than using the benefit of hindsight – and (even) the protagonist is not unable to see through his plain stupidity after the fact. When the protagonist is stopped from his killing spree by a soldier, for instance, he soon realises that it was for the better: *despoliatus ergo, immo praecisa ultione retro ad deversorium tendo paulatimque temeritate laxata coepi grassatoris audaciae gratias agere* ("So I was not only robbed, but my revenge was nipped in the bud. I walked back to the lodgings and gradually, as my rashness decreased, I began to feel grateful for the thug's audacity," § 82.4). Note that the protagonist starts to thank the solider at the time of the action (*coepi … gratias agere*); this is not a retrospective interpretation by the narrator. Later, when Encolpius tries to play down the threat Eumolpus poses as a rival, he himself – i.e. the protagonist at the time – does not fully believe what he is suggesting: *haec ut infra fiduciam posui fraudavique animum dissidentem, coepi somnum obruto tunicula capite mentiri* ("When I had made these points without much confidence, deceiving my sceptical spirit, I covered my head with my little tunic and pretended to sleep," § 100.2).

All these points should caution us against postulating a clear-cut distinction between the narrator and the protagonist. I suggest we regard self-deprecation as a (narrative) technique rather than a character trait; it is one of the many stances the narrator may assume towards his 'younger' self.

V.5.3.4 Summary: The Function of the Narrator

As we have seen, the narrator fulfils a complex set of functions in the suicide passage. Apart from putting the action before the inner eye of the audience, he allows his readers/listeners to see, hear and feel as the protagonist does. In the case at hand, this type of 'subjective storytelling' pertains to the narrator's word choice as well as to his manipulations of narrative speed. The effect of this technique is not only the depiction of the protagonist's credulity and slow-wittedness, but also the creation of suspense.

At the end of the passage, the narrator reveals his presence by using knowledge that is unavailable to the protagonist at the time of the action.

By giving away the nature of the razor, the narrator allows himself and the audience to 'join the alliance' of Giton, Eumolpus and Corax. As this alliance knows nothing is as it seems (i.e. that Giton is not truly dying), the protagonist alone remains the butt of the joke. The ironic distance between the narrator and the protagonist is a significant addition to his narrative repertoire, but it does not constitute a true difference in character between the 'younger' and the 'older' Encolpius.