

## THE REALM OF SENSORY PERCEPTION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN PETRONIUS' *SATYRICON*

### Introduction

The domain of the sensorium and its place in the *Satyricon* does not seem to have been given much attention in the literature on the *Satyricon*. This seems all the more surprising as, on the other hand, numerous articles have been dedicated to the study of the vulgar speech of the libertini of the *Satyricon*. After all, the two spheres are not entirely unrelated; on the contrary, they are both integral elements of Petronius' idiom, and they both allow of similar analytical approaches. Within the sphere of sensory perception, the only element of visual sensation which has any attention is that of colour. Thus e. g. André in his study of the Latin chromatic terminology quotes Petronius several times, using the quotations mainly to illustrate the semantics of particular chromatic terms. Walsh considers colours in the light of their functioning as means of portraying, characterizing and caricaturing Trimalchio.

The role of sensory data in the *Satyricon* can pass unnoticed neither as a linguistic phenomenon nor as a component of content. In particular episodes, as for instance in the well-known *Cena Trimalchionis*, it is so very pronounced that even by deliberate effort it could not possibly be overlooked. The diversity of its forms leaps to the eye, and the reader is surprised at its systematic functioning. This last statement, however, will have to find its confirmation in the detailed analysis.

Yet, before any analysis can be undertaken, the subject must be carefully defined. This involves finding an answer to the question what the realm of sensory perception actually is. Put otherwise, the question is how to draw the border-line between the sensory and the non-sensory realms.

Clearly, the sensory sphere claims for itself everything that is perceived through the senses; everything, then, that can be seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched. Anything imperceptible to the senses belongs to the non-sensory sphere. This demarcation of course is self-evident and apparently crystal clear. It also has the immediate merit of eliminating out of the sensory sphere everything that language expresses by means of numerals, pronouns, some adverbs, prepositions, conjunc-

tions, interjections; verbs expressing actions or states unrelated to the senses, ideas, and abstract qualities or properties. In the sensory sphere thus remain verbs expressing actions or states directly dependent on sensory perception, some adverbs, objects referred to by concrete nouns, and properties or qualities, perceptible to the senses expressed by concrete adjectives.

In spite of its ideal simplicity and its straightforward selection of the above-mentioned categories, this demarcation does not prove a workable scheme for a literary and linguistic analysis of the sensory field. It leaves the sensory sphere too open, as can be shown in the case of concrete nouns. According to the above demarcation, all the concrete nouns fall subject to a literary and linguistic analysis of the domain of the senses since they denote objects exposed to sense-perception. It therefore follows that a literary and linguistic analysis ought to concern itself with a series of concrete nouns, a series necessarily finite, yet unlimited. In practice this would mean that the analysis of the sensorium in the Satyricon would turn out to be an endless catalogue of kitchenware, culinary works of art, and the like. Such a catalogue would not tell us much, and the most we could make of it would be to determine how many and which of the listed objects belong to a particular kind of sensory perception, or in other words, to divide the original list into five, but to what purpose? Neither could such classification of the object according to the kind of sensory perception involved be carried out with much certainty, since most things are objects of a combination of sense perceptions; and certainly for the purposes of a literary analysis such an enterprise would bear no meaning whatsoever.

For the purposes of a literary analysis of the sensory sphere it is therefore necessary to adopt such criteria as will enable us to get beyond the purely quantitative relation of object and sense perception. The new criterion will therefore have to bring into relief the qualitative relation of features and properties to particular sense perceptions. In other words, our interest will not lie with the question of which or how many objects relate to a particular sense perception, but rather with the question of which are the qualities that relate a particular object or action/state to a particular sense perception. The qualitative relation is of greater interest and of higher informative value because it is multi-lateral, relating the quality to its object as much as to the sense perception, making it an element of both. Thus a third dimension is added to our sphere of interest.

As a result of the qualitative approach also the sensory range can be widened and a sixth sense introduced. This is the sense of temperature, strictly held apart from tactile perception<sup>1</sup> by Ullmann. Under normal circumstances perception of temperature will not be evidential of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ullmann, 278. Ullmann refers to this sixth sense as heat perception and discriminates it from touch on the basis of a physical autonomy. It seems, however, more appropriate to name this sense the sense of temperature, as its perceptual range no doubt extends also to the very low temperatures.

object, but of a particular quality of the object only. This naturally determines temperature perception as belonging to the qualitative relation.

In view of the selection obtained through the simplest discrimination between the sensory and the non-sensory spheres and through the criterion of the qualitative relation, the analysis will be concerned with the following material:

— concrete nouns, modified by adjectives denoting qualities perceptible to the senses

— abstract nouns, modified by adjectives denoting qualities perceptible to the senses

— verbs, denoting actions or states perceptible to the senses, modified from the point of view of sense-perception by adverbs

— verbs, denoting actions or states imperceptible to the senses, modified from the viewpoint of sense-perception by adverbs.

The analysis will also include a few special cases as a category of sensory perceptions, conveyed otherwise than indicated above, for instance by means of description or through consequence<sup>2</sup>.

### Analysis

Out of various possible analytical approaches to sensory data I have chosen one which will enable us to see the individual sensory spheres in the light of the following criteria:

- 1) formal phenomenology
- 2) special uses
- 3) function.

The sphere of formal phenomenology has been restricted and defined in the introduction. As special uses we will investigate figurative use, metaphor, and synaesthesia. The study of function will tell us what significance the sensory realm has for the Satyricon.

Though in theory these criteria are separable, in practice they overlap and interdepend to a certain degree; so their treatment can not be stiff. Special uses for instance blend special form with special function, as the following example may serve to illustrate:

Et ideo ego adulescentulos existimo in scholis stultissimos fieri, quia nihil ex his, quae in usu habemus, aut audiunt aut vident, . . ., sed *mellitosis verborum globulos* et omnia dicta factaque *quasi papavere et sesamo sparsa*. Qui inter haec *nutriuntur*, non magis sapere possunt, quam *bene olere*, qui in culina habitant. — . *Levibus enim atque inanibus sonis ludibria quaedam excitando effecistis, ut corpus orationis enervaretur et caderet.* — Grandis et ut ita dicam *puerca oratio non est maculosa et turgida*, sed natu-

<sup>2</sup> E. g. c. 121, v. 113; c. 127, 5.

rali pulchritudine exurgit. — . *Ac ne carmen quidem sani coloris enituit*, sed omnia quasi *codem cibo pasta* non potuerunt usque ad senectutem canescere. (c. 1,3 — c. 2,8)

The passage is crammed with sensory terminology, used almost entirely in its metaphorical capacity since it occurs in the abstract context of a discussion of education, rhetoric and poetry. Its common denominator is a concretization, if not incarnation, of abstract notions, exemplified in the first sentence in the metaphor (partial synaesthesia) *mellitos verborum globulos* and in the simile *quasi papavere et sesamo sparsa*. *Nutriuntur* links up with the *verborum globuli*, the *papaver* and the *sesamum* of the previous sentence, thus carrying on the concretizing metaphor. *Bene olere*, again, is a sensory comparison to *sapere*, a verb with definitely no sensory meaning. Such a strong sensory characterization of the non-sensory is followed by the reversed process: a substantive of the sensorium (*somus*) is modified by two abstract adjectives (*levis, inanis*). Yet the concretization of the abstract through the sensory occurs again in the same sentence (*corpus orationis*). The next sentence is an interesting instance of Petronius' use of two very strongly sensory epithets (*maculosa*: visual metaphor, *turgida*: visual — tactile metaphor) to describe what an oration should never be like. And finally, in the last sentence he endows poetry with colours (partial synaesthesia), and mental activities with personality (through two metaphors: *cibo pasta* and *ad senectutem canescere*).

All the described sensory metaphors represent a blend of a special form (e. g. abstract noun + sensory modification) and a special function, which may to a certain degree be considered an inherent quality of the metaphor, and experienced either as ornament (exornatio), or as poetic insight, or as expression of the author's personal view of the matter, or as surprising revelation.

Within the limits that we have imposed the most frequently recurring form of the sensory idiom in the *Satyricon* is the epithet. The epithet, however, has a number of different functions and therefore, for clarity's sake, some internal classification is necessary.

There is quite a choice of internal classifications. The epithet may for instance be classified into characterizing and affective epithets<sup>3</sup>. The function of the former is to characterize their headword, whereas the latter kind above all evoke an affective impression to be conveyed to the reader. The criterion of distinction is the orientation of the epithet.

Another type of classification is to see the epithet fall into the category of natural and the category of situational epithets<sup>4</sup>. Natural epithets express a quality that is the property of the object, expressed by the headword, in all situations; consequently they can always stand by that particular headword. Inversely, the situational epithets denote quality as subject to situation. Therefore only under certain circumstan-

<sup>3</sup> Uvod u književnost, 270.

<sup>4</sup> Enciklopedijski rječnik lingvističkih naziva, s. v. Epitet.

ces can they modify a given headword. The criterion of distinction in this case is based on the nature of the object itself expressed by the headword.

However, a literary analysis is also concerned with function; accordingly, a new classification, based on function as the criterion of distinction and suited to meet the problems of this area of investigation, may be introduced. Three categories of epithet (though they are not always alien to one another) can thus be established: 1. non-destinational epithets, 2. destinational epithets, 3. poetical epithets.

Non-destinational epithets would be those closest to the narrow idea of epithet as ornament. Their function would be description at the most. If they are excluded from the context, they do not cause loss of point or of a special effect, e. g.:

si qua foret tellus, quae *fulvum* mitteret aurum, hostis erat (c. 119, vv. 5—6).

Gold is yellow by nature — the fact that the yellow of gold is a special reddish-brown nuance of the colour is irrelevant here — therefore *fulvus* is also a natural epithet. Describing its headword, it is also a characterizing epithet. But it could be easily omitted without depriving its context of any of its meaning.

Unlike the non-destinational epithets, the destinational epithets can not possibly be left out from the context without consequent loss of point or of a special effect. The destinational epithets, therefore, are very strongly context-bound for their effective existence as such. They serve a definite purpose. The destinational epithets in the *Satyricon* are those in the service of all elements of characterization and comedy, and above all of caricature as perhaps the strongest element:

... qui brachium domini contusum *alba* potius quam *conchylia* involverat lana. (c. 54, 4)

Both epithets in this context exemplify the destinational type. We have to do here with one of the many scenes in which Trimalchio's conceited egotism reaches the point of ridiculous absurdity: after being knocked down by a falling ladder and having his shoulder hurt, he orders a slave to be whipped for dressing the wound with white instead of the more expensive purple wool. At the same time, both epithets are situational as well. From the viewpoint of their orientation, they are of course characterizing, but partly also affective since besides describing their headword they are also the source of the comicality of the situation and consequently, of a particular response on the part of the reader.

Poetical epithets include metaphor and synaesthesia. They have a special form and a special, direct intent, different though from that of destinational epithets. By force of their emotional impact they come close to affective epithets. However, they do not contribute to the element of comedy. For instances the quoted c. 1, 3—c. 2, 8 may be referred to.

### The visual sphere of sensory perception

Of all the spheres of sensorium in the *Satyricon* the visual is the most overwhelmingly present. This is not particularly surprising and very likely a similar dominance of the visual sphere might be claimed for the majority of literary texts. The reason seems inherent in the very nature of visual perception: it is by sight that we most normally and spontaneously perceive our environment. Sight is in a way also the most highly developed sense, since it not only informs us of objects and their appearance, but also conveys to us the relations between various objects, and their movement.

What is more surprising is the considerable predominance of colour in the visual sphere. In everyday life colours are usually perceived simultaneously with objects, and therefore tend to be looked upon as inherent qualities. For this reason and for its consequence — namely that in most cases the clarity of a communication does not depend on the communication of colour as well — colours often remain unexpressed under conditions of everyday life. An exuberance of colour in a text is thus bound to leap to the eye. It depends, however, on the kinds of colour employed and the modes of their employment that through the contact with the reader the text may eventually become a fleeting impressionistic vision or a palette of clear-cut features and powerful colouring.

The very first survey of the colours and the ways they are used in the *Satyricon* must tell us that we have to do with a colouring of the second type. We can't help visualizing Trimalchio and Fortunata in the tasteless colours of their pretentious clothes, and that is how we remember them throughout the *Cena*. Thus colours assume the power of characterization; and since Trimalchio and to a lesser degree Fortunata are also caricatures, colours become a means of caricature as well.

The examples speak for themselves. At the very opening of the *Cena* we are confronted with a typical scene:

... , cum subito videmus senem calvum, tunica vestitum *russea*, inter pueros capillatos ludentem pila. Nec tam pueri nos, quamquam erat operae pretium, ad spectaculum duxerant, quam ipse pater familiae, qui soleatus pila *prasina* exercebatur. (c. 27, 1—2)

Both the epithets *russeus* and *prasinus*, and in particular their combination, are a strong means of characterization; therefore they are both destinational. *Russeus* denoted a certain nuance of red, now extremely difficult to define precisely on the mere evidence of its uses known to us. It can be ascertained, however, that in imperial Rome it was a fashionable colour. The pila however, was *prasina*. This adjective in Latin meant a dark green shade, sometimes with an ele-

ment of blue. This colour occurred rarely in fashionable dress, and was, in combination with red, considered — as it still is — evidence of gross lack of taste.

So at the very first, as yet impersonal, encounter with Trimalchio, vulgarity, one of the basic traits of his character is exposed through the employment of a particular colour combination.

The combination of red and green occurs several more times in connection with Trimalchio.

In aditu autem ipso stabat ostiarius *prasinatus*, *cerasino* succinctus cingulo, . . . (c. 28, 8)

Venit ergo *galbino* succincta cingillo, ita ut infra *cerasina* apparet tunica . . . (c. 67, 4)

*Cerasinus* means cherry-red and *galbinus* a light green shade with considerable admixture of yellow. Not only was this colour not popular with Romans of taste, but it was even held in contempt<sup>5</sup> as a colour often worn by the nouveau-riche and the barbarians. In combination with red the effect must have been flatly destructive.

The fact that in the latter two examples the characteristic colours are not worn by Trimalchio himself does not prevent the epithets in question from being destinational and characteristic of the man. Self-important as he felt, he also paid great attention to the details of his surroundings, which therefore in turn reflect his personality. This natural enough personality projection provides the reason why the whole of Trimalchio's environment may be seen as an element in the build-up of his character and eventually also his caricature.

Functionality therefore is the common denominator of the quoted instances of the chromatic epithet: they all point to the vulgarity of Trimalchio's tastes. Other examples again will illuminate the man's snobbishness. The colours here will naturally be different: expensive and fashionable. But what makes them so powerful symbols of snobbery is above all the fact that they often occur in connection with objects which are in themselves of little or no value.<sup>6</sup> This type of chromatic epithet works less directly than the previous one. Its immediate effect is to endow an object of no or little value with a quality which will make its value soar. The object thus becomes a status symbol and reveals its owner to be a snob. The following exemplifies this type of chromatic function:

Vides tot culcitrae: nulla non aut *conchyliatum* aut *coccineum* tomentum habet. (c. 38, 5)

Both attributes denote expensive purple shades which Trimalchio bothers to spend even on his cushion stuffing, where they can't even be seen and properly appreciated.

<sup>5</sup> Thus e. g. Martialis in I, 96, 8—9: „nativa laudet, habeat et licet semper fuscus colores, galbinos habet mores.“

<sup>6</sup> „... tamquam hic solus color figuram possit pervertere“ (c. 102, 14).

A typical example of this type is also c. 54, 4, quoted above. Trimalchio considers that the bandage for his hurt shoulder should be only the most expensive, and he feels infuriated at the possibility of anything less.

Different kinds of expensive red have a generally high frequency of occurrence, and they all characterize Trimalchio as a snob. Apart from the form just dealt with and which conceals a special touch of irony, they appear also in other ways, usually quite explicite, as e.g. *Tyrius* in c. 30, 11 or *coccinus* in c. 28, 4.

In a few instances, however, the colour remains only implied. E. g.:

Pallio enim coccineo adrasum excluserat caput circaque oneratas veste cervices *laticlaviam* imiserat mappam . . .  
(c. 32, 2)

We are concerned with *laticlavus* here. The attribute means „broad — hemmed in red”, but the colour is indeed only an annexed specification. It is therefore arguable whether we are justified quite enough to consider this adjective as primarily expressive of colour rather than of the other perceptible features. It also seems that the point of this little scene is not so much the colour itself (Trimalchio is also wearing a scarlet coat, which is undoubtedly more imposing than a mere scarlet hem on a shawl) as the attribution of *laticlavus* to *mappa*. The piece of Roman clothing, traditionally *laticlavus*, was the senatorial toga, and in view of this fact Trimalchio's wearing such a shawl appears preposterous. Or:

. . . et stragulam albam et *praetextam* in triclinium attulit.  
(c. 78, 1)

The colour here is implied in the substantive *praetexta*, which denotes the object and its colour simultaneously, thus approximating more closely to the way in which the object and its qualities are in fact perceived than the substantive + chromatic epithet phrase.

Apart from the shades of red, green and green-yellow so far dealt with, the episode of the Cena also offers instances of white (*albus*, *candidus*), black (*ater*, *niger*) and blue (a single instance in c. 63, 7: *lividus*).

Both pairs, *albus* — *candidus* and *ater* — *niger*, are less obviously functional. The following is a clear example of destinational use:

Tum Trimalchio iactans *candidum* panem . . . inquit . . .  
(c. 64,8)

*Candidus* here does not appear in its original sense, i.e. „glistening white”, but in a sense originally conveyed by *albus*, i.e. „white” (but not shiny), „light”. Yet Petronius' Latin is already of that period when *candidus* was taking over from *albus*, so that the term itself



in connection with *panis* must not surprise. The purpose of the example, however, is to show how even white bread could in Trimalchio's hands turn into a means of showing off. The epithet therefore is destinational.

Somewhat vaguer is the following example:

... qui habebat olivas in altera parte *albas*, in altera *nigras*...  
(c. 31,9)

The quotation is taken from a longer description of one of the innumerable courses, in the perspective of the whole also a means of characterization, and the point apparently is diversity on display.

With less apparent justification materials can be included within the sphere of visual perception. Their inclusion is supported by the following two arguments:

### 1) Kinship of material and colour, manifested in various ways:

- a) Material often postulates a particular colour. On the level of perception the material is in a sense synonymous with colour in such cases.
- b) Quite a number of examples occur which are neither straightforward examples of chromatic epithet nor of material epithet, but imply a close-knit coexistence of both. Such examples may be classified as transitional between the two kinds.
- c) A special expression of the close relation of the two fields are those cases where the colour is conveyed through its material source, as e.g.:

... substulerunt servi omnes mensas et alias attulerunt, scobemque *croco* et *minio* tinctam sparserunt et... ex lapide speculari pulverem tritum. (c. 68,1)

### 2) Similar functional possibilities

The transitional examples, providing a smooth transition from the chromatic into the material sphere, are those constituted by such epithets as *aureus*, (*in*)*auratus*, *argenteus* and *vitreus*. In his study, André understands them as chromatic terms, their chromatic value of course deriving from their material base. André thus classifies *aureus* and (*in*)*auratus* together with other terms denoting yellow, *argenteus*<sup>7</sup> with those denoting white, and *vitreus*<sup>8</sup> with those denoting green, never, however, denying their basic material nature. This is then the field where the two spheres meet. E. g.:

<sup>7</sup> André emphasizes, however, that *argenteus* is rare as a chromatic term; and the entire *Satyricon* does not offer a single instance where *argenteus* could be interpreted as definitely such and not as a term of material.

<sup>8</sup> These terms of course imply different nuances of yellow, white and green: *aureus*, (*in*)*auratus*; golden yellow, reddish yellow  
*argenteus*; metallic white  
*vitreus*; bluish green.

... ut infra cerasina appareret tunica et periscelides tortae phae-  
casiaeque *inauratae* (c. 67,4)

or:

... plumato amictus *aureo* Babylonico, (c. 55,6).

In the first example the sandals are painted gold, and *inauratus* is therefore the expression of a colour perception. The subject of the description in the second example is a peacock (quotation being taken from a short poem that Trimalchio recites). The entire complex being a metaphorical description of a peacock's richly coloured feathers, it is even more evident that the perception is of colour and not of material.

With the examples of *vitreus* we move rather further into the material sphere:

Statim allatae sunt amphorae *vitreae* ... (c. 34,6)

or:

„Quid?” inquit Habinnas „excatarissasti me, ut tibi emerem fabam *vitream*.” (c. 67, 10)

In the first example the amphorae are undoubtedly made of glass, so *vitreus* is an epithet of material, and if it incidentally also implies a greenish tint, this only confirms the close proximity of the two spheres. In the context of the second example Scintilla is showing off with her ear-rings and it is these that Habinna metaphorically refers to as *faba vitrea*. Here *vitreus* denotes nothing but the material, as Habinna's attitude is recognizably that of a self-satisfied snob who deliberately belittles the value of a precious object.

Of all the materials gold and silver have the highest frequency of occurrence. This is in accordance with the function of the material epithet which — as was the case with the chromatic epithet — aims at characterization. Functionality therefore is another meeting-point of the two sectors.

Trimalchio's utterance *In argento plane studiosus sum* (c. 52,1) is typical in this respect. A whole range of kitchenware and other objects, and of course of the jewellery worn by Fortunata and Scintilla, with the weight engraved on it, are made of precious metal. With regard to the functional aspect, the most illuminating examples are those which show a material bound with an object whose banal function stands in ridiculous contrast with the precious value of the material used. The material in such cases transforms the objects into status symbols, thus characterizing Trimalchio in the same indirect fashion as has been found with colours (p. 233—235). Some examples:

Nam duo spadones in diversa parte circuli stabant, quorum alter matellam tenebat *argenteam*, alter numerabat pilas, ... (c. 27 3)

... ostiarius ... in lance *argentea* pisum purgabat.  
(c. 28,8)

Ut deinde pinna *argentea* dentes perfodit, . . . inquit . . .  
(c. 33,1)

So far the survey of the sphere of visual perception has been mainly concerned with the destinational epithet within the episode of the Cena. In the rest of the *Satyricon* the destinationality decreases. In this respect it is important to remember, though, that apart from the Cena the rest of the novel has come to us in a fragmentary condition only, and a fragmented context is of little help when attempting an assessment of destinationality. It seems probable, however, that even had the text suffered less damage, the epithet destinationality rate would be found lower, since nowhere else does the novel seem to achieve such a feat of brilliant comicality than in the Cena. And the element of comedy has been postulated as a criterion for destinationality assessment.

However, if other parts of the *Satyricon* are deficient in the destinational epithet, so is the Cena in non-destinational and poetical epithet. As example of an non-destinational epithet, the following line may be quoted:

zmaragdum ad quam rem *viridem*, pretiosum vitrum?  
(c. 55,6; v. 12)

*Viridis* here appears in a purely ornamental role.

Other parts of the *Satyricon*, on the contrary, offer numerous examples of non-destinational as well as poetical epithets.

Some examples of non-destinational use:

. . . intravit pinacothecam senex *canus*, . . . (c. 83,7)

or

. . . extulit ora / . . . *cana* sparsa favilla, (c. 120, vv. 76—77).

or

*albaque* de *viridi* riserunt lilia prato: (c. 127, 9, v. 5).

In all the three examples the chromatic epithets are of the natural kind, *senex canus* being also a cliché<sup>9</sup>, so that a feeling prevails that none of these bear much relevant meaning as verbal expressions of particular visual perceptions.

Two examples of metaphor can be noted for the poetical epithet:

. . . *atro* . . . metu, (c. 89, v. 3)

or

quodque facit populus, *candida* lingua refert. (c. 132, 15, v. 4)

Figurative, abstract use of both *ater* and *candidus* was current in the language (cf. also *candida humanitate*, c. 129, 11). Both terms developed a hole series of metaphorical applications: these were of a consistently pejorative kind for *ater*, whereas the *candidus* series

<sup>9</sup> André, 64.

was melioristic<sup>10</sup>. Being representative of this kind of metaphorical application, both quoted examples are elements of the system rather than expressions of individual apprehension and can therefore be classified as dead metaphors. The poetical value of these remains arguable.

Up to this point the survey has been concerned only with the epithet as the most abundantly represented form within the boundaries of the sphere of visual perception; and an attempt has been made to categorize the epithet according to a criterion of its function. In the introduction it was decided, however, that a survey of our kind should also include adverbs (adverbial adjuncts) if they modified their head-verbs from the viewpoint of sensory perception. But in the whole of the *Satyricon* not one juncture of this kind offers itself! Even if very generous concession is made for possible erroneous omission, the situation does appear unusual in view of the abundance of sensory epithet. The reason for the lack of this type of verbal phrase may derive from the nature itself of the verb + sensory adjunct juncture. It seems that the number of adverbs of sensory pertinence, and of visual in particular, is rather restricted. In other words this means that the problem of exact differentiation between the sensory and the non-sensory is even more acute with adverbs than with adjectives<sup>11</sup>. Verbal phrases of this kind must be either metaphors (when the verb does not denote actions perceptible to the senses, or states) or specified descriptions (when the verb does denote sense-perceptible actions or states).<sup>12</sup> The analysis of the epithet has shown that metaphorical as well as plainly descriptive (i. e. non-destinational) epithets are numerically subordinate to the destinational ones. If a straightforward equation between the epithet and the adjunct might be postulated, it would then seem that the criterion of function is the factor responsible for the lack of the verb + sensory adjunct junction.

Figurative uses, one department of special uses, will be understood as a preliminary to the narrower poetical uses, i. e. metaphor and synaesthesia. They are related to the poetical uses through their remoteness from sense-ascertainable reality, lacking at the same time the poetical vigour of the metaphor and synaesthesia. In the area of the epithet, figurative uses thus approach very closely dead metaphors. Let us quote the following to illustrate a figuratively used chromatic epithet:

Emi ergo nunc puero aliquot libra *rubricata*, . . . (c. 46,7)

<sup>10</sup> André, 48 et sqq., 36 et sqq.

<sup>11</sup> I can hardly defend this supposition but for the obvious lack of examples of adverbs clearly of the sensory realm. The reason for such a state might be the fact that the verb itself is a more abstract category than the noun, and that this may perhaps be reflected in the adverb as, basically, a verb modifier.

<sup>12</sup> Destinationality being indeed a broad context-bound distinction, any specified description may, admittedly, receive a destinational value in a particular context. Lack of examples, however, prevents the study of such transformations.

*Rubricatus* of course does mean „written in red ink”, yet in connection with *liber* it is understood to mean „legal”<sup>13</sup>, the transfer arising from the fact that in legal books titles were written out in red. A basically chromatic attribute, used figuratively, here creates with its headword a figurative idiom.

The sphere of figurative uses allows an enlargement of our field of investigation by inclusion of noun or verb without a sensory modifier.

The only representative of a nominal use of this kind is the substantive *rubor*;

... incensissimam *rubore* faciem sudario abscondit.  
(c. 67, 14)

Perfusus ego *rubore* manifesto ... (c. 128, 2)

... secretoque *rubore* perfundi, ... (c. 132, 12)

Though implying shame in all the three quotations, the physical component of redness is still there, particularly so in the first case. *Erubescere* (prevalent in the *Cena*) and *excandescere* (prevalent in other parts) offer evidence of a verbal use of this kind:

... *erubescente* non mediocriter Tryphaena ... (c. 113, 1)

..., spero, sic moriar ut mortuus non *erubescam*. (c. 57, 6)

... non *erubui* eum, qui supra me accumbebat, hoc ipsum interrogare. (c. 36, 7)

Nos etiam veram imaginem ipsius Trimalchionis, cum iam omnes basiarent, *erubuimus* praeterire. (c. 60, 9)

These examples in order of quotation also show a gradation from the concrete and sense-perceptible towards the figurative and imperceptible.

Unlike *erubescere*, *excandescere* shows no similar gradation because it only appears figuratively<sup>14</sup>. From the point of view of form the following example is interesting, the verb being modified by an adverb and a consecutive clause:

... tam vehementer *excandui*, ..., ut me mater praecipue tanquam unum ex philosophis intueretur. (c. 85, 2)

Besides colours and materials a third category may be set apart within the visual sphere: the darkness-versus-light perception. In its objective reality the perception of dark and light seems less palpable than for instance the perception of colours, but it is in a sense more primeval and fatal. It is not surprising, perhaps, that two particularly clear-cut examples occur in contexts expressive of fatality:

... tam spissae repente *tenebrae lucem* suppresserant, ut ne pro-ram quidem totam gubernator videret. (c. 114, 3)

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Juvenalis 14, 192:

„scribe, puer, vigila, causas age, perlege rubras maiorum leges“

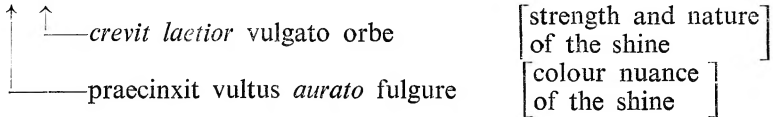
<sup>14</sup> André, 31.

The context of this quotation is a thunderstorm which later on brings about the wreck of Lichas' ship and his own death. The dark (marked by an attribute plus a consecutive clause), superseding daylight, forebodes the fatal storm.

*Ipsē nitor Phoebi vulgato laetior orbe  
crevit et aurato praecinxit fulgore vultus* (c. 122, vv. 81—82).

The meaning of this complex visual sensation in Eumolpus' poem is mythical: a new and stronger sunshine symbolizes a happy signal for the war to begin. Clear sunshine is even specified in two possible aspects:

*nitor Phoebi*



### The Auditory Sphere of Sensory Perception

The auditory sphere of sensory perception is numerically weaker than its visual counterpart, but it is more evenly distributed over the whole of the novel, which is then — seen from the viewpoint of the quantity of auditory perceptions — less marked as two separate parts, i. e. the *Cena* and the rest.

At first sight a lower degree of functional (in the sense of character caricature and comedy) possibilities within the auditory sphere would appear to be the reason for such a state. Yet examples show that the degree of functionality is no lower with the auditory than with the visual sphere. With the confusion of every kind of din, singing and musical accompaniment, with which he keeps attacking his guests' ears, Trimalchio is shown no less conceitedly vulgar than with his intrusive lack of taste for colours or proper feeling for the nature of materials or with his atrocious menu.

The very beginning of the *Cena*, when slaves are still only cleaning the guests' nails, already introduces singing:

*Ac ne in hoc quidem tam molesto tacebant officio, sed obiter cantabant. Ego experiri volui, an tota familia cantaret, itaque potionem poposci. Paratissimus puer non minus me acido cantico exceptit, . . .* (c. 31, 4—5)

Soon a gaudy Trimalchio is brought in *ad symphoniam* (c. 32, 1). Slaves begin to hand around dishes *symphonia strepente* (c. 33, 4). And no sooner have the guests finished the course and the dishes are to be removed, they are in for another musical intermezzo:

... Trimalchio ... feceratque potestatem *clara voce*, si quis nostrum iterum vellet mulsum sumere, cum subito signum symphonia datur et gustatoria pariter a *choro cantante* rapiuntur. (c. 34, 1)

While the actors are performing „in their cheeky habit” in Greek, Trimalchio himself recites in a singing voice:

... ille *canora voce* Latine legebat librum. (c. 59, 3)

though presumably he must have been quite loud, too, in order to outshout the actors.

Similarly, the dessert would not be complete without music tickling the tired ears:

Interim puer Alexandrinus, qui caldam ministrabat, *lusciniās coepit imitari clamante* Trimalchione subinde: „muta”. Ecce alius ludus. Servus, qui ad pedes Habinnae sedebat, iussus, credo, a domino suo *proclamavit subito canora voce*: „interea medium Aeneas iam classe tenebat.”  
Nullus *sonus* unquam *acidior percussit aures meas*, ... (c. 68, 3—5)

The fragment is full of auditory perceptions: the Alexandrine slave imitating the nightingale, Trimalchio shouting, another slave all of a sudden bursting into song (*proclamavit ... canora voce*). The last in the sequence of these sensations is particularly well defined:

1. sound volume: *proclamavit*, the man used the top of his voice
2. character of the sound: *nullus sonus unquam acidior percussit aures meas*, the singing was shrill
3. content of the song

Scenes of this kind follow one another to finally building up the loud cacophony of the end of the episode. First of all, there is Trimalchio's singing exhibition in his bath:

... , invitatus balnei sono diduxit usque ad cameram os ebrium et *coepit Menecratis cantica lacerare*, sicut illi dicebant, qui linguam eius intellegebant. (c. 73, 3)

After that, a noisy row with Fortunata follows and Trimalchio's drunken funereal affectations:

*Consonuere cornicines funebri strepitu*. Unus praecipue servus... tam *valde intonuit*, ut totam concitaret viciniam. (c. 78, 6—7)

The first auditory sensation is again marked for its volume which the substantive (*strepitus*) implies as well as characterized as to its

nature (*funeris*). The second perception is specified at large through its consequence: *Tam valde . . . ut totam viciniam concitaret*.

The funereal tumult brings about the arrival of the firebrigade, which in its turn bustles in, thereby providing Encolpion, Giton and Aschylos with an inomissible opportunity to slip out. The companions do so with much relief.

Thus it is actually noise as an ear-perceptible fact that leads the episode of the Cena up to its climax and further on to its abrupt end. In this respect it is important to note the gradation of the sensory perceptions in the episode, illustrated — though incompletely — in the quoted examples. The singing and music-making that accompany Trimalchio's arrival, the serving of the courses and the taking out of the dishes and even such unworthy activities as cleaning nails — this last instance running parallel with the use of expensive colours and materials for valueless objects — gradually develop into an universal tumult. This reaches its climax in the final scene of apocalyptic confusion, at the same time also providing for the immediate and abrupt anti-climax that follows with the disappearance of the protagonists of the novel. Of all the spheres of the sensorium the auditory is the only one which through its gradation of intensity mirrors the building up of the action in the episode. This may be seen as another form of its functionality, the primary form being evident from the quoted examples as comical characterization, manifested also in the sphere of the visual perception. With respect to its functionality then — and functionality is definitely a qualitative, not a quantitative, notion — the sphere of auditory perception in the episode even surpasses the sphere of visual perception. And outside the episode there seems to be no functional patterning of destinational epithets which can be established with much certainty anyway.

The auditory sphere surpasses its visual counterpart also in the variety of its forms of expression.

Unlike in the visual sphere, the epithet does not represent the main formal source in the auditory sphere. Besides, it is rather monotonous, the majority of examples consisting of *vox* + an auditory modifier in the ablative case. Such a combination is to be found in the quotations cited 34,1; 59,3 and 68, 3—5; as well as also in the two following examples:

. . . , in craticula enim argentea cocleas attulit et tremula taeter-  
*rimaque voce* cantavit. (c. 70, 7)

Is ut *rabiosa barbaraque voce* in ebrios fugitivosque diu peroravit, . . . (c. 96, 5)

In the latter example the speech is characterized according to the nature and volume of the voice (*rabiosus*) as well as according to the mode of articulation (*barbara vox*).

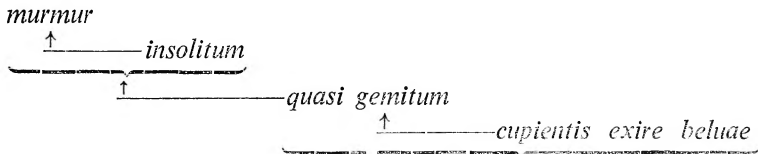




A special form is also an auditory perception expressed through a comparison.

Audimus *murmur insolitum* et sub diaeta magistri quasi cupientis exire beluae gemitum. (c. 115, 1)

*Murmur* itself implies a particular kind of auditory sensation as well as its volume. *Murmur* is modified by the abstract attribute *insolitum*, endowed, however, through a comparison, with a definite sensory value:



The comparison may also be implied; examples of implied comparisons are to be found in the quotations c. 68, 3—5 and c. 73, 3. In the first quotation a slave imitates the singing of a nightingale, which thus acts as implied comparison, providing the source of the characteristic of the described auditory impression. In the second example Trimalchio is heard lacerating Menecrates' arias, which is the source of implied comparison, though unimportant for the modern reader as a source of the characteristic of the auditory impression.

The following are examples of a form where the verb itself or the noun contains the basic characteristic of a perception:

... nescio quid taetrum *exsibilavit*, ... (c. 64, 5)

Scylax, ... , taeterrimo *latratu* triclinium implevit ... (c. 64, 10)

And finally, a poetic description of an auditory perception:

Iam *frago armorum* trepidantes *personat* aures. (c. 121, v. 113)

A description where *frago* is modified by *armorum*, *personat*, and by an implied consequence (*trepidantes aures*) is further fortified through double alliteration (*r* and *s*) as poetic means to render an auditory sensation on the direct phonetic level. The entire expression is a sensory image of unrest or war beginning.

### The Sphere of Temperature Perception

Though numerically far behind the sphere of auditory perception, the sphere of temperature perception is still relatively well represented. The majority of the examples it offers again come from the Cena episode. Somewhat against expectation a number of them show

some degree of functionality, though it should be added perhaps that their kind of destinal functioning is of a slightly different kind from that so far observed. While still more or less directly characterizing Trimalchio, the tone of these examples lacks that humouristic and sometimes openly ironical touch which constituted the best part of the visual and auditory characterization.

... pueris Alexandrinis aquam in manus *nivatam* infundentibus ... (c. 31, 3)

Sequens ferculum fuit scriblita *frigida* et super mel *caldum* infusum eccellente Hispanum. (c. 66, 3)

In the first example snow-cooled water undoubtedly instances Trimalchio's extravagances, while the second example fits into the long range of those illustrating Trimalchio's display of rich cuisine.

Both examples are acceptable as elements of characterization, but less justified as elements of comedy. To a certain degree they can be classified with the status symbolism observed in the use of colours and materials within the visual sphere.

From the formal point of view, the use of the epithet again gains importance in the temperature sphere.

Apart from the quoted c. 66, 3, the contrast between hot and cold is expressed for instance also in the following:

Itaque intravimus balneum, et sudore *calfacti* momento temporis ad *frigidam* eximus. (c. 28, 1)

The two extremes of the temperature scale, hot and cold, can also be given in 'picturesque' epithets, implying a comparison:

sola *pruinosis* horret facundia pannis (c. 83, 10, v. 5)

or:

iam tua *flammifero* membra calore fluent (c. 126, 18, v. 6).

As a formal point of interest in the temperature epithet, the attributive participle may be mentioned, practically non-existent in other spheres:

... et oleo *ferventi* aliquot convivas respersit. (c. 64, 10)

... destinatum carpimus iter ac momento temporis in montem *sudantes* conscendimus, ... (c. 116, 1)

In the first example the participle denotes an object-centred, and in the second a subject-centred perception.

Besides the epithet, the temperature sphere offers also some examples of perception defined through comparison:

„... Sic calet tamquam furnus.” (c. 72, 3)

... *frigidior* rigente bruma (c. 132, 8, v. 5).

Both comparisons, and the second in particular, are rather hyperbolic; nevertheless, they stand up as explicit parallels to the implied comparisons of c. 83, 10, v. 5, and c. 126, 18, v. 6 respectively, all the four examples at the same time attesting to a tendency of affectively identifying the temperature extremes with the heat of fire on the one hand, and the freezing cold of the winter on the other.

As an instance of metaphorical use, the following may be quoted:

... et dum in hoc *dictorum aestu* in hortis incedo, ... (c. 6, 1)

In the metaphor the headword and the modifier stand in a reversed relation of subordination; yet in Latin this is not an idiosyncrasy of the author, but quite clearly an element of the system.

All the remaining spheres of sensory perception are very weakly represented, each offering only a few examples. In view of such scantiness of material, it is impossible to discern any functional patterning within each of these spheres individually. In the Cena episode, and this is where most of the examples come from, the spheres of gustatory, olfactory and tactile perception to a degree join the prevailing stream of functional orientation of the sensory domain towards a more or less direct and usually comical characterization of Trimalchio. Due to the low frequency of occurrence, however, it is not possible to determine any characteristically individual trends and forms of functioning for each of these spheres.

The gustatory sphere thus joins that functional line which is in the Cena represented by the menu, and which mainly draws attention to Trimalchio's vulgarity:

... ovaque ex farina *pingui* figurata pertundimus. ... , persecutus putamen manu *pinguissimam* ficedulam inveni *piperato* vitello circumdatam. (c. 33, 6 in 8)

and only a few chapters further:

... garum *piperatum* currebat super pisces, ... (c. 36, 3)

For our modern tastes such greasy and heavily spiced food is in itself quite repulsive, whereas the Romans of good taste must have strongly objected above all to the never-ending succession of one heavy course after another<sup>15</sup>.

Tactile perception shows a different mode of adaptation to the functionality of the sensorium in the Cena:

... iussitque nos temptare, an bonis lanis essent confecta.  
(c. 78, 2)

The tactile perception — here a means of ascertaining the quality of the wool — is not even as yet realised in the sentence. It has, however, a straightforward parallel in *lana mollissima* at the beginning of the

<sup>15</sup> Walsh, 116.

episode (c. 28, 2). Nevertheless, the sentence bears witness to Trimalchio's kind of bragging, and upon this ground the example may join those from the other spheres whose objective is to bring out this very trait in Trimalchio's character.

The olfactory sphere has again its own way of manifestation.

*Ignoscetis mihi, quod dixero: ego malo mihi vitrea, certe non olunt.* (c. 50, 7)

In the context of the sentence Trimalchio compares glassware to the Corinthian copper and prefers glass because it has no smell<sup>16</sup>. He goes on, however, to compare glass to gold and prefers gold „because it is not breakable“. So in the end it remains the solid value scale that wins.

The following is an example of the figurative use of a verb of olfactory perception:

*Sed subolfacio, quia nobis opulum daturus est Mamea, . . .*  
(c. 45, 10)

Examples of metaphorical uses in all these three fields can be found in c. 1,3 — 2,8.

## Conclusion

### I

Undoubtedly, synaesthesia is one of the most interesting themes in the sensory domain<sup>17</sup>. It can be defined as intersensory transfer, or more accurately, as a kind of nominal transfer through intersensory association. As transfer, synaesthesia can be classed with figurative uses, and within these, with the narrower metaphor. For the realm of the sensorium synaesthesia is of particular interest especially because it is the only form of the figurative uses which relies entirely on sensory perception.

In fact, synaesthesia is a psychological phenomenon, synaesthetic perceptions a psychological fact. Of course, they provide a rich potential source for unusual literary expression. That this source has been well taken advantage of, we need only to look at early Oriental literatures, classical Greek and Latin literatures, mediaeval literature (though here synaesthesia occurs somewhat less frequently, this literature being largely of a spiritual kind), until synaesthesia reaches, quite a climax in the Romantic period (with Keats giving it extraordinary aesthetic value) and later in the 19th century with Théophile Gautier, the herald of the Aesthetic movement, becoming also its theoretician.

A psychological as well as literary reality, synaesthesia thus forms a very interesting area of sense functioning. Ullmann, in his *The Principles of Semantics*, attempts to find out some general rules that govern synaesthesia or at least some of its main traits. In view of this aim

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Martialis, IX, 59, 11: „consuluit nares an olerent aera Corinthon“.

<sup>17</sup> Ullmann, 266—284.

he divides synaesthesia into two parts, the source and the destination; the source being the element which says something about the other, and the destination the element about which something is said. The most common form of synaesthesia is the binary attributive junction, and in the case of e.g. „soft sounds”, „sounds” are the destination and „soft” the source. Ullmann then applies statistics to the study of synaesthesia in Keats and Gautier and arrives at the following interesting conclusions:

1) Hierarchic distribution:

synaesthetic transfer source→destination works in the direction from the lower, less differentiated senses, towards the higher and the more differentiated, and only rarely vice versa.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6  
touch ⇌ temperature ⇌ taste ⇌ smell ⇌ hearing ⇌ sight

This type of synaesthesia is called hierarchic synaesthesia. Of course 1 can function as source for any destination between 2 and 6, 2 for any between 3 and 6 etc.. The reversed process gives the rare antihierarchic synaesthesia.

2) The most frequent source:

in perfect conformity with 1.), tactile sensations appear as the most frequent source.

3) The most frequent destination:

contrary to expectation, it is not the visual but rather the acoustic sphere which stands out as the most frequent destination. Ullmann explains the phenomenon as due to a relative richness of visual terminology as opposed to auditory. The latter is therefore more in need of „external support”: thence the intrusion of other elements into descriptions of auditory sensations.

It would seem interesting to survey synaesthesia in the *Satyricon* in the light of the above findings. It is disappointing, however, to find that the novel in its present form offers no more than four<sup>18</sup> instances of the phenomenon on the basis of which it is of course impossible to study any possible tendencies peculiar of Petronius' synaesthesia. One can merely see whether or not the examples conform to Ullmann's findings.

Two of these four examples occur in the longer quotation c. 1,3 — c. 2,8: *mellitos verborum globulos* and *carmen ... sani coloris*. Both examples are in fact partial synaesthesiae as in the given context it is not absolutely clear that *verba* and *carmen* ought to be necessarily understood as nouns of auditory perceptions. Supposing, however, that this is so, the examples may be analyzed as follows:

<sup>18</sup> Even if a generous allowance is made for possible error, and should examples of synaesthesia in fact reach double this number, they would still be extremely scant.

*mellitot verborum globulos*

source: *mellitot globulos* → destination: *verborum*  
           gustatory →           auditory  
               3           →           5

*carmen sani coloris*

source: *sani coloris* → destination: *carmen*  
           visual →           auditory  
               6           →           5

An almost literal parallel to the latter is to be found in one of the first troubadours, Guillaume de Poitiers of Aquitania: *vers de bona color*.<sup>19</sup>

The first quotation is an example of hierarchic synaesthesia, the second of anti-hierarchic. But in both the auditory sphere is the recipient of the transfer (i. e. destination), which agrees with Ullmann's theory of the most frequent destination.

The next example is contained in c. 68, 5

*sonus . . . percussit*

source: *percussit* → destination: *sonus*<sup>20</sup>  
           tactile →           auditory  
               1           →           5

And finally, the example quoted from c. 127,5:

*dulcis sonus*

source: *dulcis* → destination: *sonus*  
           gustatory →           auditory  
               3           →           5

*Dulcis sonus* is an instance of what Ullman considers lexicalized, dead synaesthesiae. An interesting parallel is to be found in Marston's satirical commentary on the banality of this kind of synaesthesia: „Did you ever smell a more sweete sound?“<sup>21</sup>. Yet of all the four examples this one represents the most widely spread form of synaesthesia, the binary attributive junction.

All the four quoted examples show a common tendency of having the auditory sphere for their destination, which agrees with the result of Ullmann's statistical research. The prevailing source is the gustatory sphere (in two examples) and one out of the four is an example of an anti-hierarchic synaesthesia.

In an author like Petronius, so conspicuous otherwise for his use of the sensorium, a practically negligible number of examples of synaesthesia (especially as two of the examples are dubious and the

<sup>19</sup> Ullmann, 269.

<sup>20</sup> The destination in a synaesthesia is always its non-verbal element (Ullmann, 278).

<sup>21</sup> Ullmann, 269. The quotation is taken from Marston's *History of Antonio and Mellida*, part II.

other two not noted for any originality at all) appears very unexpected. But perhaps it ought to be kept in mind that Petronius is a novelist, and not a poet, whereas synaesthesia as such is part of the poetic idiom rather than that of a sober (and often biting) prose. It is also possible that Petronius was not very open to synaesthetic impressions; or — and this seems more likely — that he kept synaesthetic impression out of his novel deliberately. Petronius was a good observer, no sensory details could escape him; yet he was also selective and used only such as he found in one way or another necessary for characterization, often bordering on caricature, necessary therefore as means of expression of his own judgement, which is implied in his caricature. Other sensory details, not „necessary” in the above sense (i.e. not functional), occur sporadically wherever critical characterization is impossible but where the text, without them, would become dry. Synaesthesia is basically author-centred in that it reveals a lot about the author’s personal attitudes to the sensory, and as such it could hardly find room in Petronius’ idiom of outward, functional application of the sensory. For Petronius the sensorium is a method, a means of expressing himself in relation to objects, not to himself. This is perhaps the reason why he shows so little sympathy for synaesthesia.

## II

The general conclusion that follows from the analysis of the sense spheres in the *Satyricon* is that they are function-governed.

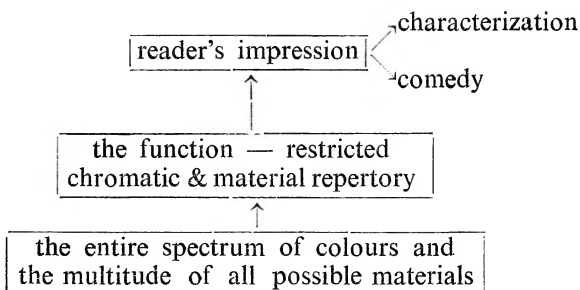
The area of functional uses is particularly strong in the spheres of visual, auditory and temperature perceptions. The auditory sphere shows even two lines of functioning:

1. functioning to the effect of comic characterization.  
This function is common to all the three above mentioned spheres. The character traits that are thus made to stand out are conceit, boastfulness, vulgar lack of taste and proportion, snobbery;
2. functioning which involves a gradation of the intensity of sense perceptions, thus following and to a certain degree even shaping the course of events in the *Cena*. This function is typical of the auditory sphere.

The destinationality has yet another attestation, however, in the colour and material section of the visual sphere. Another glance at these sections will show that Petronius uses a fairly restricted repertory of colour and material. There are colours and materials that never appear at all, and his chromatic nuancing is rough. The reason for this can only be that Petronius paints his world deliberately in a few powerful poster colours, making visible what has to be seen. Such a conclusion agrees with what follows from the noticeable lack of synaesthesia: i.e. that synaesthesia as expression of subjective and impressionistic perception must stay out of a functionalized sensorium.



The subordination of the sensorium to functionality thus appears as an exposition of a wide stock of potential material to a selective criterion:



In the fragmentary parts of the *Satyricon*, the sensorium is governed by a fundamental economy of expression; that is why it is often only a submerged element, or absent altogether. If in individual cases some destinationality may be discovered, it is not of the same kind as in the *Cena* episode, neither can any lines of functioning or destination be drawn. The comedy is less obvious and does not depend on the sense perceptions for its source, but rather on other elements, such as for instance on wildly absurd situations.

*Ljubljana.*

*Zdenka Beran.*

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