INTRODUCTION

A praise of folly

> The battle of reason is the struggle to break up the rigidity to which the understanding has reduced everything.
>
> Hegel, *The Science of Logic*[1]

One understands all too well what a declamation is, and yet a reasoned account of the genre is perhaps still wanted. A declamation was a rhetorical piece on an invented theme. If one imagined a judicial proceeding, the resulting speech would be known as a *controuersia*. An exhortation to a fictive interlocutor was called a *suasoria*. The following proposition might form the foundation for a *controuersia* and produce accusations and defences: "A married woman gave birth to a black baby. She is charged with adultery."[2] A *suasoria* might encourage or discourage a historical or mythological figure. One was given a theme such as "Should Cicero beg Antonius to spare his life?"[3] Theoretically the same speaker might engage one side and then promptly reverse himself and plead the opposite cause. Though I will argue that we need to take declamation more seriously, clearly one cannot argue that everything said was said "in earnest." Such word play could be used to train schoolboys who dreamed of one day becoming politicians and public speakers, or these exercises might be pursued by mature men who sought to entertain a circle of friends or even a broader public with a display of verbal dexterity.[4]

[1] Hegel 1975: 54

[2] *Matrona Aethiopem peperit. arguitur adulterii*. Calpurnius Flaccus, *Declamationes* 2. Notice that "matron" equals "non-black" for the community of speakers.

[3] *Deliberat Cicero an Antonium deprecetur*. Seneca, *Suasoriae* 6.

[4] Beard does well to emphasize entertainment against the endless focus upon education in other authors: "[T]he world of the *Controuersiae* is a world not of hack humdrum teenage instruction, but a world of well-known, glamorous rhetoricians, enjoying a sparkling reputation among the Roman elite." (Beard 1993: 53) For Goldberg declamation is "a spectator sport for engaged and experienced spectators." (Goldberg 1997: 174) Heath offers a nearly identical assessment (Heath 1995: 18). Sussman offers a similar portrait, but he finds such a zeal for declamation to be "strange." (Sussman 1994: 4–5) Sussman elsewhere argues that declamation's raciness is attributable to titillation that panders to the base interests of the audience. See Sussman 1987: ii and v.

Though I am interested in its Roman incarnation, this genre neither begins nor ends at Rome. Russell rightly notes that the association of declamation with Rome is really merely an accident of the preservation of our sources.[5] These exercises became prominent in Greek rhetorical education in the third century BCE,[6] although earlier works such as Antiphon's *Tetralogies* and even Plato's dialogues reveal that fictions of rhetoric are more or less as old as systematic thought about rhetoric itself.[7] Scholars have been too eager to confine Roman declamation to the imperial era. Here they follow Seneca the Elder's assertions that the practice is as old as he is.[8] However it is clear that Seneca can only mean a certain version of the practice, since he depicts Cicero as engaged in proto-declamations. Moreover Cicero himself portrays the men of the generation preceding his own playing with fictitious cases.[9] As far as the later history of declamation goes, Libanius himself wrote an *Apology of Socrates*, and he was still producing declamations in the fourth century CE. Libanius was by no means alone in his efforts.[10] In fact declamation persisted in both the Greek East and the Latin West into and beyond the Middle Ages. Declamation was hardly an aberrant fad. Declamation was a durable player on the rhetorical scene.

If the historical time-frame of declamation is frequently distorted and compressed with an eye to critiquing it as the inconsequential product of a fallen Rome, the age of the participants becomes another occasion for dismissing the case of declamation unheard. Those who would slight the genre stress that it was a school-boy exercise – which it was – while failing to

[5] Russell 1996: 6.

[6] For examples of third-century activity one can refer to POxy 2400 which gives a list of declamatory topics, Berl. Pap. P. 9781 which plays with Demosthenes' *Leptines*, and PHibeh 15 which is also a historically-minded rhetorical exercise. See Russell 1983 for a detailed account of Greek declamation.

[7] On the varieties of proto-declamation see Russell 1996: 5.

[8] *Controversiae*, 1.pr.12. See Sinclair on evaluating Seneca's claims as programmatic and not documentary (Sinclair 1995a: 102). Winterbottom encourages the identification of declamation with the fall of the Republic (Winterbottom 1974: ix). Compare Clarke 1953: 89 and Leeman 1963: 226.

[9] Cicero, *De Oratore* 1.149. See Winterbottom for other "declamatory" portions of the Ciceronian corpus and the zeal with which later declaimers spotted and reused them (Winterbottom 1982: 60). Winterbottom also offers a concise overview of the early history of declamation from its arrival at Rome up to Seneca's day (Winterbottom 1974: vii–x). For a more detailed treatment, see Bonner 1949: 1–26. Compare Jenkinson 1955. Quintilian reads the *De Oratore* similarly at *Institutio Oratoria* 2.4.42. He also notes that the Greek practice of treating "fictional material in imitation of public and policy debate" (*fictas ad imitationem fori consiliorumque materias*; 2.4.41) began with Demetrius of Phaleron who was born around 350 BCE.

[10] For example, a papyrus fragment from the fifth century CE contains a declamation against Alcibiades. See Lewis 1936: 79–87. See Schmitz 1999 and his bibliography for a portrait of the lively interest in declamation during the Second Sophistic.

note that it was not merely a school-boy exercise.[11] A contemporary analogue might be to confuse the Hardy Boys series with detective fiction as a whole. Certainly there are many mysteries written with young readers in mind, but not all are intended for an immature audience. Similarly, like declamation, detective fiction is not usually seen as a high-brow form, but nevertheless numerous works are viewed as serious fare for the mature reader. And much as a snide critic eager to establish his own superior taste might deride such fiction as fundamentally puerile in the face of a masterpiece like *War and Peace*, one notes that *The Brothers Karamazov* itself is a sort of whodunit.

Other than the *Minor Declamations* it is not clear that any of what remains of the Latin declamatory corpus was part of school practice. And those declamations are composed as models specifically designed to inculcate the habits of mature oratory. The *Major Declamations* are very long and polished. They appear to be best suited to performance rather than the inculcation of detailed precepts via specific examples.[12] Similarly Seneca the Elder in the *Controversiae* mentions the schoolhouse only infrequently, and he often depicts scenes where it is hard to imagine that classes were being held.[13]

Moreover, declamatory training was offered to youths roughly as old as contemporary undergraduates: these are not elementary school "Dick and Jane" exercises. Elementary exercises are learning how to read, write and do math with the *grammatistes*. Then in what we might call "middle school" one was taught grammar while reading literary classics with the *grammaticus*. Some time well into the teen years – but certainly after the youth is no longer considered a boy (*puer)* and is now a young man (*iuuenis)* – students move over to the *rhetor* who offers specifically rhetorical training. This is itself gradated: first there are *communes loci* or "rhetorical commonplaces" such as the denunciation of an adulterer; and similarly there are *theses* or "propositions" such as "Is city or country life better?" Ultimately the well-practiced student moves over to declamation proper where all of the

[11] Bloomer goes perhaps too far in this direction. His arguments as to the fit between youthful psychology and declamatory fantasy invites reduction of the genre to schoolboy antics (Bloomer 1997b: 64). See also the comment that there is a parallel with "the nonsense songs learned by children" (Bloomer 1997b: 70).

[12] Sussman assumes that all of the *Major Declamations* were written by schoolmasters for their students (Sussman 1995: 191–92). But compare the position of Sussman 1987: ii, and Sussman 1987: v, "One wonders how MD 18 and 19 could find room in a school curriculum."

[13] See Chapter 4 below for prominent Romans speaking and in the audience. Calpurnius Flaccus' works are so truncated that it is impossible to guess what their full shape would have been and what sort of audience they had in mind.

elements of forensic oratory can be pursued simultaneously.[14] Declamation is not, then, etymologically speaking, puerile literature.

Declamation is not much read. Let me refine this bald statement by asking a series of questions. Why do relatively few people read declamation? Why do specialists in Latin studies – people who ought to be eager to study any of what little remains of the glory that was Rome – why do these people tend to ignore declamation? What does it mean for something to be not worth reading? Why was declamation once worth so much trouble to so many, whereas now its stock has fallen so low that we have become used to hearing of the bankruptcy of the genre in more than one sense of the term? We know that almost every man of letters in antiquity had had some truck with declamation at one time in his life and was perhaps even for a long while a devotee of the form.[15] Even so, we act as if declamation did not really matter. Or worse, such declamatory indulgences were like so many trips to a brothel – embarrassing episodes despite which one may still admire the remainder of the man.[16] Besides, at the time everybody was doing it . . .[17]

For an example of declamation-hating scholarship on declamation see the remarks of Winterbottom: "The modern will find a good deal of the elder Seneca's material unreal, unfamiliar and even tedious. He will skip many of the epigrams, and concentrate on the lively prefaces and the incidental anecdote. But anyone, lay or scholar, who wishes to understand the essence of Silver Latin will have to take the rough with the smooth and nerve himself to read at least a fair sample of the whole."[18] The "rough" would appear to be declamation itself, while the "smooth" is everything else. One is little inspired to read on. We do only because we need to take our bitter medicine. And the goal is itself a dreary one: now we can better appreciate why the rest of Silver Latin was not Gold. Indeed Leeman sees in Seneca

[14] See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* Books 1 and 2 for a portrait of the ideal course of study. Compare the outline of Greek practice offered by Heath, and see his bibliography (Heath 1995: 17–18).

[15] See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2.20.4 for a critique of men who have a taste for the outlandish in declamation and who spend all their time and energy on such exercises. Though lampooned by a "proper authority" like Quintilian, nevertheless these speakers may have had their own reasons for lingering in their chosen genre beyond mere folly.

[16] Against this compare Suetonius, *Nero* 10.2. The biographer takes the following as one of his illustrations of the good early reign of Nero: at that time the emperor would practice declamation publicly. See also Suetonius, *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* 25.3 for the declamatory histories of other notable figures.

[17] For example, Kraus 1994: 3 n.8 records the heated debate surrounding Livy and declamation wherein the scandal of declamation is repeatedly either denied or excused. Kraus herself describes declamation as being "fashionable" at the time (Kraus 1994: 3–4), and hence she would seem to be a member of the "everyone was doing it" camp.

[18] Winterbottom 1974: xxiii.

little beyond a report on "the origins of the *Argentea Latinitas*."[19] Fantham asserts that the modern reader will be amazed to learn that serious, famous Romans listened to "declamatory performances on hackneyed and fictitious themes by Porcius Latro or Cestius or Haterius."[20] Note, then, the tone of "[Seneca] knows prose writings (surely not declamations!) of Virgil."[21] And see also her characterization of the influence of declamation upon poetry as a "problem."[22] Examples paralleling Winterbottom and Fantham could be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

Why should one have to apologize for declamation? Why is it important that declamation be insignificant? How has declamation with its sound and its fury failed to signify anything? Has it failed? What would it mean to listen to this tale told by an idiot? I ask these questions of both the ancients and the moderns. They each offer roughly the same answer. Or, rather, most of the moderns would agree with some of the ancients: "Declamation is bunk." And if Henry Ford was too busy making history to believe in it, perhaps declamation's critics are themselves too busy being declamatory to bother assessing their own rhetoric.

Mine is a literary reading of a body of texts that relatively few would grace with the exalted title of "literature."[23] By a literary reading I mean to indicate that I will be looking for themes, for motifs, for allusions, and for what goes unsaid or is left implied amidst so much verbosity. But by literary reading I also mean to indicate that I will be following the play of language itself and not just the purported intentions of a variety of authors and authorities. The result will frequently be less a high-modern praise of Literature than a postmodern meditation on the questions of language and identity. And lest anyone think such contemporary musings have been foisted upon the declaimer, I hope to argue that such issues preoccupied the ancients as well. Rhetoric and identity were closely aligned categories in antiquity, and declamation is no exception to this rule. And finally the declamations also ask the question of what "empty speech" signifies. Thus, rather than offering the empty negation of rhetoric stripped of its functional content, declamation restores to rhetoric a space within which to speak on that which is otherwise refused to rhetoric.

I take it then, that declamation is not failed oratory languishing beneath the weight of febrile fantasy, nor does it embody juvenile antics awaiting

[19] Leeman 1963: 237. [20] Fantham 1996: 10.
[21] Fantham 1996: 92. [22] Fantham 1996: 94.
[23] See Walker for a revindication of oratory in general as a literary practice (Walker 2000). And note especially his assertion that a genre like declamation was one of "the chief media for eloquence on culturally resonant questons" and a place where consensus and community could be forged (Walker 2000: 108). See also Webb's survery of the connections between rhetoric and poetry (Webb 1997).

the sound judgement of more mature years.[24] Such a verdict has contented many. As will be seen below, it is also a meta-declamatory judgement against declamation. Ridiculous and funny, infuriating and trite, declamation is not forensic oratory. And yet every speaker knew that he was not in the forum or in the Senate house, and critics of this rhetoric would do well to remember that the occasion and audience of any speech in antiquity had a profound impact on its form and contents. Declamation needs a new *mode* of reading that knows how to make a break with critical tools designed for a different kind of speech. Declamation is not "failing" to be Cicero any more than Lucan fails to be Virgil.[25] There is a relationship, but it is governed as much by the idea of rivalry as it is by notions of debt. These men are playing with the idea of Ciceronianism, not fumbling to produce their own *Pro Milone*.[26]

These often ephemeral speeches not only reveal a great deal about the narrow circle before whom they might have been delivered, but they also offer us insights into the emplotting of Roman identity. By this I mean that we find in declamation a constant engagement with the "rules" of Romanness, an endless tracing of the contours of the licit and the illicit. These speeches are predicated upon a hypothetical transgression against society. The fantastic character of the sin and the often playful treatment of its exculpation nevertheless reveal a zone of intellectual engagement where serious questions are elaborated in a pointedly frivolous context. None of this is ever literally true. Still, the real keeps on intruding: political allegory, individual advancement, and the nature of authority in general return endlessly to the scene of declamation. Sometimes a play is the only thing to catch the conscience of the king. In declamation we will even find that truly disturbing themes otherwise unapproachable can be handled under the aegis of irrelevance, mere play, and idle fantasy. My guiding questions are accordingly rather broad and bold: How are we to read declamation? What will we find there? How deep can this genre get?

The foundation for such an investigation has been laid by the work of a number of other scholars. Though it remains a topic of interest today, an earlier generation of scholars was particularly engaged in exploring the

[24] For example, Winterbottom describes Cicero as one who "matured, and grew away from the schools." (Winterbottom 1982: 60)

[25] See Johnson on what it takes to find a technique of reading Lucan that escapes from the orbit of Virgilian studies wherein Lucan transcribes an endless ellipse and his critics drably note his non-progress (Johnson 1987).

[26] See Seneca, *Controversiae* 3.pr.16 for Cestius as the author of an *In Milonem*.

technical aspects of declamation.[27] Thus one examined the relationship between declamatory speeches and the rhetorical theories of Cicero and Quintilian.[28] Or one could look into the relationship between the law in declamation and the actual law used in the courts of the Greco-Roman world.[29] So too do the declamations offer room for insights into the educational practices of antiquity.[30] Frequently declamation is treated as a subsection or a chapter within a larger work, and the bibliographies on rhetoric, law, and education in antiquity often mention declamation in the course of their broader investigations.[31]

Though these avenues remain important and interesting aspects of the study of declamation and are still pursued, contemporary research has begun to emphasize the sociology of rhetoric and the world of the declaimer. Naturally the social aspect of declamation is hardly a contemporary discovery and earlier scholars have made their contributions, but the work of Martin Bloomer and Patrick Sinclair represents a much more determined effort to go beyond prosopography and relatively familiar portraits of life at Rome as rounded out by declamatory evidence in order to document the specific logic of Roman rhetorical practice.[32]

While such a logic is of great interest to me, the bulk of my efforts have been directed towards a literary reading of declamation. This reading will focus on tracing the development of individual themes within the corpus of Latin declamations and then evaluating the broader significance of that development. I certainly return to the social, but I do not begin by positing it in its exteriority in order to read declamation via "society." This means, then, that I try to avoid conjuring a society "out there" as

[27] Håkanson 1986 and Fairweather 1984 provide invaluable bibliographic resources. See also Whitehorne 1969.

[28] See especially Fairweather 1981 and Sussman 1978. See also Dingel 1988, Ritter 1967, Sochatoff 1938/39, and Greer 1925.

[29] Bonner 1949 remains the classic study. See also Parks 1945, and Bornecque 1902: 59–74.

[30] See, for example, Winterbottom 1982, Jenkinson 1955, and Clark 1949.

[31] I am thinking of works such as Bonner 1977, Kennedy 1972, Leeman 1963, Clark 1957, Clarke 1953, Norden 1923, and Cucheval 1893.

[32] See Bloomer 1997a, Bloomer 1997b, Bloomer 1992, Sinclair 1995a and Sinclair 1995b. Sinclair's work is easy to overlook given that his titles nowhere mention declamation, but his work is consistently oriented towards an analysis of the sociology of rhetoric within a milieu that assumed a dominant role for declamation. Dupont 1997 offers valuable insights into the sociology of literary gatherings in general. See also Anderson 1995 for another version of the social life of declamation. Connolly offers brief but welcome comments on the social logic of gender in declamation (Connolly 1998: 145–49). Her account is also valuable as an example how one can read the cases themselves instead of just the commentary on the cases. Schmitz invokes contemporary theories of "performance" when reading society and declamation in the Second Sophistic, and he thereby offers a welcome contribution to declamatory studies generally (Schmitz 1999).

the cause underlying the declamatory effect. Instead the society is already "in here" when it comes to declamation. The genre exposes society as itself one of the effects of all the pleading. The relationship between art and life is decidedly not one where the former always and only imitates the latter. Hypostatizing the "real" father who generates as his enervated double the declamatory father can only obscure a more vital issue: that real fathers themselves live in the shadow of their discursive representations, that they are simultaneously primary and pictures of a picture. Indeed "real" fathers can only be primary to the extent that they rhetorically efface the dimension of discursivity as a whole.

There are precedents for a thematic reading of declamation, but perhaps fewer than one might imagine.[33] The more familiar version of a study of literature and declamation involves examining the impact of declamation upon other genres.[34] In this context there is something of a tradition of blaming all of a text's perceived faults upon the baleful influence of declamation.[35] Some authors are much more positive in their approach, but there is a quiet consensus that one has to defend the contrarian position of failing to declaim against declamation. In either case declamation tends to be represented as itself relatively unambiguous, and as a known quantity shedding light on an unknown one.

Those who are willing to read declamation as literature are relatively few in number.[36] Some have just been mentioned above, but there are two particularly interesting examples of the kind of research possible once one approaches declamation not with an eye to faulting it for not being something else, but instead to read it in its own terms.[37] Matthew Roller's examination of the death of Cicero within the declamatory schools reveals that perhaps the lion's share of what we take to be historical facts of the great orator's death are nothing but the fancies of this most fanciful of genres.[38] In other words, those who cannot read declamation run the risk of losing sight of the very truth that they prefer to these fictions. Helen Morales reads

[33] Sussman 1995, Tabacco 1985, Tabacco 1979, and Tabacco 1978 are thematically-based readings.
[34] See Goldberg 1997, Braund 1997, Bonner 1966, Kenney 1963, Deratani 1930, and De Decker 1913. Similarly, Johnson 1987: 38 describes the speeches in Lucan as *suasoriae*.
[35] Webb gathers together many moments from this long tradition (Webb 1997).
[36] For example, Whitehorne 1969 has broken up his bibliography on declamation by theme. One finds education, law, and rhetoric, but literary studies are absent.
[37] Desbordes 1994 makes a general insistence that declamation delights in hidden meanings that a careless reader is likely to miss.
[38] Roller 1997. See also Kaster, Richlin and Dugan on these cases (Kaster 1998; Richlin 1999; Dugan 2001: 72–75). And notice Schmitz' position: declamation is productive of community and memory in the same gesture (Schmitz 1999: 91–92). Accordingly these "false histories" also have an important cultural truth to them.

a scene of torture from declamation that I too will discuss in the body of this text.[39] She is bold enough to claim of declamation that it is engaged with big questions, that this talk of torture and art actually offers a significant contribution to any investigation of Roman aesthetics. Once again the implicit message is, "If you would know the Romans, you must read their declamations."[40] Combining these studies with those of Anderson, Beard, Bloomer, and Sinclair one sees an emerging consensus within scholarship of the past decade that the connection between declamation and Roman society is profound and that it cannot be ignored.

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Important questions remain. What was impeding the literary study of declamation up to this point? And, similarly, how does one go about reading declamation as literature? Antiquity is filled with denunciations of declamation. If we heed these, then of course we cannot hold the genre in much esteem. Yet these denunciations are not infrequently *themselves* informed by declamation. By failing to appreciate that it is precisely declamation that trains one to decry the decay of eloquence, later critics have failed to appreciate the involuted logic of declamation that permits and indeed revels in such an irony. Furthermore they have also failed to "get the joke" of those satirical passages that express a critique of declamation. Hasty belief in the flatness of the metadiscourse about declamation produces an under-reading not only of the commentary but also of declamation itself.

Braund's revisitation of the topic of "Juvenal the Declaimer" delineates the extent to which declamatory theory and practice pervade Juvenal's writing.[41] This ought to put us on our guard: if Juvenal declaims, what are we to make of his parodies of declamation? Isn't this part of the joke, a dissonance between his overt message and the mode of its articulation? And even if we should be so brazen as to conflate this or that message of the narrator with the actual beliefs of the author, we still find here a trope: the rhetorical plea of the one who is seemingly beyond declamation and who claims that declamation is nothing but a wastrel son worthy of disinheritance. That is, the scenography remains declamatory. This is but one way of raising questions that will recur throughout this study: Does declamation have an outside? How does declamation remain genealogically a part of even those who would refuse it?

This is not an idle question. Key themes in the reception of declamation seem to be most clearly delineated in Petronius. Unfortunately these

[39] See Morales 1996 and Chapter 4 below.
[40] Similarly Goldberg sees in declamation a font of "metatheatrical allusion" (Goldberg 1997: 173).
[41] Braund 1997. See also Braund 1996: 230–36.

readings of Petronius on declamation have produced and continue to produce both distortions of his novel and some of the most deceptive commentary on declamation. What remains of the fragmentary *Satyricon* "opens" with an indictment of declamation delivered by our narrator Encolpius. A litany of offences is trotted out: declamations are outlandish and aesthetically abhorrent; they contribute nothing to real rhetorical education; they actually damage the students who are thus trained; the body of oratory has been enfeebled.[42] The speech is a vigorous and compelling one. It even has parallels with many of the ideas expressed by Seneca the Elder, a man who really ought to know about these things. If the logic and the pedigree are good, what's not to like about Encolpius' speech?

The words of the narrative that follow this outburst ought to complicate our reading of it. "Agamemnon did not allow me to declaim (*declamare*) any longer in the portico than he had himself sweated in the schoolhouse."[43] These two are playing a game. Encolpius has just delivered a declamation against declamation to a man fresh from himself training youths to declaim. Agamemnon picks up on the sport and answers Encolpius in kind.[44] The narrative frame surrounding these two fine-sounding defences of good, old-fashioned rhetoric is unambiguous: we are listening to declamations and declaimers. The speakers are sounding one another out, jockeying for positions, displaying their cleverness, recognizing their mutual education and shared training.[45] " 'Young man,' [Agamemnon] said, 'since your thoughts are of no common stamp, and, what is most rare of all, you love good sense, I will not cheat you of the mysteries of the art. It's no wonder if the teachers stray in these exercises since they have to rave with the insane.' "[46]

Even as these two deliver phrases that would seem to attack declamation as the root of all evil, the genre provides the syntax and grammar of their

[42] Compare Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.12.17–21 on the decay of declamation from a useful sort of rhetorical training into something disgusting. The images used there involve enfeeblement, castration, and a variety of threats to virility in general. And yet one must not take such a passage too far: Quintilian everywhere assumes that declamation is a *good* thing for the prospective orator. He is only lamenting that people have strayed from the proper use of it.

[43] *non est passus Agamemnon me diutius declamare in porticu quam ipse in schola sudauerat*. Petronius, *Satyricon* 3.1.

[44] Compare Cassius Severus' quasi-declamation against declamation as delivered to Seneca at Seneca, *Controversiae* 3.pr.12–15.

[45] See again Goldberg 1997: 174.

[46] *'adulescens' inquit 'quoniam sermonem habes non publici saporis et, quod rarissimum est, amas bonam mentem, non fraudabo te arte secreta. nil mirum <si> in his exercitationibus doctores peccant, qui necesse habent cum insanientibus furere . . .* Petronius, *Satyricon* 3.1–2. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2.10.8 also uses the language of madness (*furiosae uociferationi*) when reproducing an aspect of the barbed complaints against declamation made by certain unnamed critics. This strengthens the impression, then, that we are seeing in Petronius a commonplace of the rhetoric of the battle over rhetorical education.