

"The Same Way You Became Cesar." Rome, Power, Literature and Cinema

José Maurício Saldanha-Álvarez

Media and Cultural

Studies Department. Federal Fluminense University

ABSTRACT

In this essay, we debate the image of the Roman Empire represented in films produced by mainstream Hollywood cinema whose Jewish-Christian ideological matrix placed Rome as the image of evil opposed to the good image in the North American version. In contrast, we will analyze Fellini's film *Satyricon*, which, distancing itself from the conventions of the historical film produced during the Cold War, created a dreamlike image of Rome and its Empire. Secondly, we will see the historical context of Petronius' work is situated at the end of the reign of Emperor Nero. At the time, diversified sexuality presented man's power as a phallic power, which penetrates and rapes as a strategy of supremacy. The Emperor is an actor-governor employing wiles and violence to reach the throne and maintain himself there. Petronius portrays the emergence of a new female sensuality whose morals oscillated between Vestal's virginal purity, the wife's *pudicitas* and sexual bestiality. While Fellini's film recreates the cultural environment of the classical world shaped by literature and the image of the city of Rome as Cosmopolis or Anthopolis. The ambiguous characters move freely and incessantly through the corners of the Roman Empire. The struggle for power and the representations of pagan religiosity show human beings surrendered to their own cunning as a strategy for survival and overcoming existential evils. In conclusion, we will see that both works, Petronius' *Satyricon* and Fellini's *Satyricon*, present themselves with their independent and intertwined narratives, composing the account of a journey like the *Odyssey*, metaphor of the incompleteness of human life and the ephemerality of the sexual pleasure and the transience of power.

Key-Words: Empire, sex, politics, war, literature.

INTRODUCTION

Common sense fueled by two thousand years of rejection of the Roman Empire by Christian confessions represented Rome as degenerate and authoritarian. Her culture was pagan, depraved, and sexually perverted. Cold War ideology is present in some historical films about the Roman Empire made by major Hollywood studios. Reproducing the oppression of McCarthyist persecutions in America between 1945 and 1952, the film's narrative strategies adopted a Manichean vision of God standing on the side of virtuous America, while the Roman Empire represented the atheistic Soviet Union. [1] In *The Robe*, when Emperor Caligula, with effeminate gestures, infiltrates a spy among Christians, criticism of McCarthyist persecutions is perceived as the Roman Empire's violence against Christians echoed police brutality against African Americans fighting for civil rights.

Higashi analyzed the remake of the film *The Ten Commandments* of Cecil B. de Mille from 1956. It is an innovative and sensational film representation and consumer product produced in the context of the Cold War. Cecil B. de Mille was a successful director during these "troubled times," and their films were technically well-crafted narratives. Crowds of Free World aficionados saw in these movies. Messages of spiritual renewal, blending evangelical Christianity and American myths such as Manifest Destiny [2]. Critic Michael Moore wrote that while Lawrence Olivier was filming Shakespeare, Mille preferred to film God [3]. In the *Ten Commandments*, the ideological character of the narrative is evident in the personal presentation that the director made of his film. By employing Cold War rhetoric, your target is not the Roman Empire. Cecil B. De Mille attacks the villain. Pharaoh Ramses was head of a pagan repressive machine. Already Moses is the acclaimed leader of the chosen people, free from pagan oppression to be ruled by God [4].

In the film *Quo Vadis*, a voice-over, at the opening of the film, he stated that the power of the Roman Empire generated corruption. Some American historians demonstrate a distorted and unscientific view of Roman power while newspapers condemned the Roman Empire for its sins, sexual deviations, and anti-Christian policy. Film productions emphasized the supposed Roman spiritual void to be filled by Christianity, anachronistically suggesting that Emperor Constantine, was on "our side", being a Christian [5].

This ruler was far from peaceful and meek, employing the same violence that the pagan Gaius Julius Caesar used in capturing imperial power. Constantine, victorious in the civil war and supported by his legions, reinforced the new model of imperial power by employing a rigid formalism in palace etiquette. After Christianity dominated the imperial political environment, it relentlessly pursued Greco-Roman paganism by destroying books, centers of knowledge, pagan shrines, and the Olympic Games, eliminating philosophers like Hypatia of Alexandria.

METHODS

A Literature Review

With his film *Satyricon*, Fellini discarded 2000 years of Christian prejudice by elaborating a fragmentary, incomplete and dreamlike representation of Rome. Mixed with pagan beliefs it constructed a possible historical truth [6]. Cecil B. de Mille in the prologue of the *Ten Commandments* appears in person, according to Higashi "not only to attest to the historical veracity of the film, but to link the biblical past of the Cold War" [7]. We are tempted to define Fellini's film as "postmodernist" if we take into account Rosenstone's opinion that a postmodernist historical film allows for an "approach the past with humor, parody absurdist, surrealist, dadaesque, and her irreverent attitudes" [8].

The methodology used in the elaboration of a historical film is a complex epistemological task. In it a specific historical approach plays a crucial role. For example, Cecil B. Mille's *Ten Commandments* show the connection between the celebrated director and leading prominent historians who rejected historical relativism influencing films in WW 2 and during the Cold War [9].

The cognitive limits of the historical film were defined by Marc Ferro, for whom a historical film analyzes the time of its production more than the time it portrays on the screen [10]. Peter Sorlin emphasizes that a historical film is not a scientific work. Film produces entertainment

and not science or the truth [11]. In this direction, Maria Wyke demonstrates that the 1959 film *Ben-Hur*, directed by Wyler, presents a distorted vision of the Roman Empire. Shifting the axis of sacred history from Judaism to Christianity, the film takes Jesus Christ from Golgotha to Hollywood [12]. On the other hand, the book *The Persistence of History*, organized by Sobchak, brings unavoidable essays such as those by Higashi and Rosenstone, where they analyze the important support of history and historians guiding the production of films as ideological tools. For Rosenstone, professional historians hardly take a post-modern thematic approach like some filmmakers whose films "have become our chief means of telling each other about de world" [13].

For Roland Barthes (1915-1980), the anachronistic perception of the Roman Empire, circulating in the 1950s, used arbitrary signs as representative emblems of a depraved society. In the films of "toga and sandals", the bizarre bangs of hair that fell over the foreheads of the protagonists defined as an aberrant and bastard sign. This hair ornament created a distorted image of Rome[14].

Michael Moore notes on the other hand, in these mainstream films, Americans are presented as full of life, while the British are decadent like the corrupt Romans. But Jews and Christians are heralds of a fabulous future. Moore still highlights a peculiar division of labor in these historical and biblical films, where American actors play Christian heroes while Europeans play villains. Every production like *Cleopatra*, *Quo Vadis* or *Ben-Hur* triggered a welcome commodification by producing a huge menu of merchandise associated with movie stars and stars [15].

Maria Wyke debates America's Roman roots as a counterpoint to falsified images. The United States, since the nation's founding, has forged its identity as a country made up of heterogeneous immigrants. They accepted to participate and integrate under a set of myths, rituals and historical discourses, conjunction as a cultural tool would ensure their legitimacy before Europeans. George Washington himself strove to "romanize American history" and his self-image as a statesman. He represented the pater patria, cultivating typical characteristics of the Roman republican virtues such as frugality, self-sacrifice and military leadership like the Romans Cincinnatus Cato or Fabius [16].

On the other hand, the British and their monarch were brutal exploiting despots of the "Roman provinces." Later, these "Romanitas" from Washington clashed with the Christian convictions that were increasingly ingrained in the country. A remarkable new parallel between the United States and the Roman Empire emerged in the popular novel written by the Union General William Wallace, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. In it, a Jewish aristocrat converts to Christianity, transforming America into the new Holy Land.

Deciphering the Satyricon

This essay has reviewed the traditional bibliography and recent theses, illuminating the proposed debate. We used many interviews to translate the thinking and strategies adopted by the Italian filmmaker. Like Constanze Constatin who interviewed Fellini inquiring about his original cinematographic practices, while Bert Cardullo analyzed the Italian director's aesthetic by comparing it with that of other European directors. As for Hava Aldouby, Fellini was so connected to the painting that the film's final scene is stiffened like a fresco from Pompeii. For his part, Bernard Malamud debates mainstream cinema and the America of the McCarthyist era.

We read the unavoidable work organized by Prag and Repath, Petronius. A handbook, featuring Joanna Paul whose article *Satyricon. Petronius and Film*, analyzes the connections between the two works. The scholarly essay by Costas Panayotis contextualizes Petronius within the Greco-Roman literature.

To analyze the Roman sexuality present in the film, it was essential to read Foucault and his *History of Sexuality*, as well as Caroline Vout, relating sex and power, while Judith P. Hallet illustrates the issue thanks to her dense study of Roman sexualities. Finally, to understand Petronius and Roman literature, we stopped at Paul Veyne, and the *Vie de Trimalcion*, a character so impactful that the French historian sees him as an authentic human being, resulting in the *Satyricon* literature and historical document. Barthes made an important contribution to the understanding of the works and signs abundant in the object of analysis. With Claudia Moatti and J.E.G. Zetel, they offer us a broad contextualization of the role of Petronius' *Satyricon* in the body of Roman literature, completing Panayotis' analyses.

Hannah Arendt, on the other hand, debates the Roman *auctoritas*, illuminating the obsessive use of memory in Rome. The debate between power and empire is present in the work of Miriam Griffin, Gregory Golden, Paul Veyne, Richard Talbert and Barbara Levicki. We will discuss the painful transition from Republic to Empire in the work of Harriet Flower and W.V. Harris, Josiah Osgood who analyze the formation of territorial power since the conquest of Italy and the entire Mediterranean. Michel Onfray allows us to tie literature with the desire to travel. And as the characters are in perpetual movement, we look to Claudia Moatti and Wolfgang Kaiser for the dynamics of the Empire's cultural mercantile roadways. The result of the conquests was the Empire and also the *Cosmopolis* – the city of Rome, capital of a world where *Satyricon* characters transit, love, live and die.

Finally, we reach the end of the journey and in it lies death. To understand the characters and their existential frontiers, we use the concept of the *sacer man*, by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. Its definition associates power, sacredness to the vulnerability of the holder of power. The violent death and constant insecurity that occurs throughout men's lives, as in Fellini's film, supports the thesis that life is a path that leads all characters to death.

The ambiguity lies in the obscure definition of the United States as supported by Republican Rome or Imperial Rome [17]. The cinema scripted Wallace's novel and the film *Ben-Hur*, made in 1959, made with pomp and splendor thanks to the painstaking technique of the great studios. Works of this caliber pleased and delighted the masses even as they embodied the anti-colonial and anti-European struggle under American auspices. However, in the 2016 remake the film's impact reduces to the opening scene, when the veteran Tenth Legion *Fretensis* enters Jerusalem singing, magnificently represented by the Italian city of Matera, in Basilicata and the beauty of Israeli actress Ayelet Zurer.

According to Paul Veyne, being cannot be confused with knowledge of being, as historical knowledge is incomplete and fragmentary [18]. For Joanna Paul, Fellini's film overcomes these contradictions [19]. Unlike Rome's anachronistic attempts at reconstitution, Federico Fellini (1920-1993) used a dreamlike gaze as the key to understanding the film. With his imaginative reading of Petronius, Fellini roams the Roman Empire during Nero's reign, portraying what

Mattingly called the "dark side" of the seductive empire [20]. Both Petronius' *Satyricon* and Fellini's *Satyricon* narrate a journey.

The Roman Emperors traveled, and many Emperors traveled extensively throughout the Empire. According to Michel Onfray, traveling means abandoning the laborious time of civilization in search of inventive and joyful leisure. Thus followed the characters of both works. If the entire trip starts in a library, Petronius' *Satyricon* is a complete classic library. If books are the author's voices, to dream of a destiny is to dream of the foreign voice that speaks within us and which are the books that lead both of the analyzed works. In both works, the world to be traversed, that of the Emperor or of the characters Encolpius and Ascylto, is the self of each one creating a poetics of existence destined to make the body function as a sensual machine [21].

Sex, Sin, Pleasure

For the Roman poet Ovid (43 AD-18 AD), love and sexuality were distinct instances. While sex implied physical pleasure without love, this was a sublime feeling. Michel Foucault did not find any notion of "sinful flesh" rife in the Roman world in Christian thought, which suggests that Roman sexual practices, as in Fellini's film, are not perversions, much less heterodox practices. Nevertheless, they are everyday habits and as natural as the statues of Priapus and his gigantic penis, spread throughout the cities and roads of the imperial and classical world.

God Priapus, my divine phallus, source of life and pleasure

The phallus is a physical instrument of power and pleasure, associating Eros with Thanatos. In Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), Gunnery Sergeant, magnificently played by ex-marine Lee Ermey, marches in front of the recruits. He wields a gun to his right shoulder while his left hand pleasurable squeezes his cock, reciting the mantra: "This is my rifle, this is my gun, these are for fighting, these are for fun." Gunnery Sergeant prayed to Priapus, a pagan deity whose memory was damaged by Christian theologians. Priapus for Roman males was symbolic of their readiness for prompt penetration, immediate complete pleasure [22].

As a deity, Priapus, son of the god Bacchus, differed from Jupiter or Juno and the goddess Roma. These deities seemed reasonable for the Christian religion. However, a god in the form of a phallus was inconceivable! As St. Augustine of Hippo condemned the god Priapus, the Spanish priest Baltazar da Vitória, author of the 17th century, in his book, *El teatro de Los dioses de la gentilidad*, stating that if all pagan gods were "complete nonsense, but the god Priapus was sheer shamelessness" [23].

RESULTS: EMPIRE, A BRIDGE BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE

Empire is more a wandering Odysseus than a servant of law

The Roman Empire is a bridge between the past and the present. Despite its paradoxes, it is as much a mirror of modern society as a bloody ancient autocracy. The reflections of the Empire are currently in religion, law, politics, art, literature, and film [24]. In 2020 an American president tried to imitate Gaius Julius Cesar and cross the Potomac, much broader than the Rubicon. Would he wish to overthrow the Republic and establish an autocracy, a modern Principality? In that case, history would repeat itself as a farce. Cesar was a thoroughbred whose genes had 500 years of preparation for power, master general. A cunning and generous politician, Cesar often forgave his antagonists.

Our world interconnected in networks of the most diverse is increasingly similar to this Cosmopolis. Currently, some historians question whether there was an effective Romanization of conquered regions in the West. The discussion that we will not discuss here suggests that Rome is present in the nomenclature of the week whose days, in Anglo-Saxon and even Latin countries, bear the name of Greco-Roman deities. The calendar months honor deities such as Janus, Mars, and even patrician senatorial Roman families and Emperors. However, power and its exercise are the fascinating aspects inherited from this ancient social formation.

The Julius-Claudius patrician family was the first Roman imperial dynasty after the revolution that overthrew the *Respublica*. Full power, however, was not born with them. It resulted from a slow process of building unlimited authority that led to Emperor Augustus. The construction of this power was born in the Republic, or under the Republics, as Harriet Flower defines it. In the "Republics," the Dictatorship was a magistracy or unique position granted by the Senate in extreme situations [25]. He entrusted it to men who exercised it in the name of a threatened collective, and its duration is limited to one year while its occupant sought political and military stability.

When the crisis that led to the Dictatorship ended, the discretionary power returned to the Senate, and the executor submitted to the severe scrutiny of the *pater conscription*. The Dictatorship proved to be very successful during the crises of the Republics, solving emergencies satisfactorily [26]. In the passage to the Empire, the Temporary Dictatorship perfected as a lifetime and hereditary and helenistic autocracy [27].

The Actor Emperor and the Theater of Power: Nero

The imperial power system emerged at the end of the Republic as the triumphant revolutionary solution. The imperial *auctoritas* are represented in images, inscriptions, coins, literature, traditions, or *Mos Maiorum*. Rome and the imperial *auctoritas* are linked. The principality's power under Augustus no longer rested on the traditional Senate but the influential clientele represented by the veterans of the legions, provided by their political father, Julius Caesar. The Emperor also relied on cosmic and religious forces. Gaius Julius Caesar himself claimed to descend from the goddess Venus.

Under the Empire, military campaigns continued to fluctuate in intensity from Emperor to Emperor. Augustus, for example, waged expansionist wars and the consolidation of Roman supremacy in Spain. According to the definitions of Émile Benveniste, Augustus and other emperors exercised *Auctoritas* as "the agent of the *augeo*," in charge of increasing and adding to the State [28]. Tiberius slowed down the territorial expansion of the Empire but, by regulating the family's ascension to the imperial throne, turning it into a dispute between the young members of the family. In this clash, the most cunning and brutal actor, determined to triumph on stage, won.

During his reign, Tiberius murdered Agrippa but was soon disturbed by the rumor that Agrippa was alive. Upon investigation, he learned that it was an ex-slave of Agrippa, who, taking advantage of the physical resemblance between him and his master, spread the rumor that his patron was alive. Tiberius arrested the slave and, before killing him, asked: "How did you become Agrippa? To which the accused replied: "In the same way as you made yourself Caesar" [29].

Senate and power in history

The Republic was an aristocratic political construction whose institutions functioned in all seasons, as observed during the Second Punic War. The Roman Senate, the administrative structures, and the senatorial class submitted all consular, military acts to scrutiny, applying sanctions and prizes. While the celebrated Carthaginian general Hannibal responded only to his army, Roman consuls and generals appeared before the Senate to report their actions. An embryonic public opinion also evaluated these. Every defeat to Hannibal, like that at Lake Trasimene, every disaster like Cannae, made the Roman Senate more determined in its will to win. Under his power, personal devotion to elective public service was almost manic, which made Rome a tenacious and resilient power like few on earth [30].

On the other hand, imperial power was not a discretionary process and was hostile to norms. The imperium is derived from formulas based on consent and delegation established in legal codes [31]. Hellenistic monarchies and anarchy displeased the Romans, lovers of law and opponents of despotism. Since Caesar and Augustus, during the Julius-Claudius dynasty, the plebs allied with the Emperor and his imperial house, opposing the aristocratic Senate. With the institution of the Principality, private individuals looked to the Emperor directly as the source of power and no longer the Senate, although, for some recent authors, the Senate still possessed symbolic power and strength.

Emperor and individual as a subject

The republican and imperial policy coexisted with an embryonic public opinion that manifests itself on several occasions. There is a record of a woman who went to Emperor Hadrian to solve a personal problem. He replied that he did not have time to listen to her. Indignant, she retorted: "Then do not be Emperor!"

Imperial images were sometimes used by the plebs as absolute protection and guarantee of justice. After the fall of Nero and the Ascension of Vespasian, the legions and praetorian guards employed the contio to make and undo emperors [32]. The army, in turn, offered formalized greetings and communicated with the Emperor through the contio, as a group supported by its subculture.

Invested in powers and titles, the Princeps was an individual periodically scrutinized by embryonic public opinion. The individual knew that he was not an authentic god, the title dives being a protocol formula. He was an actor seeking the audience's applause and approval of his performance. In contrast, a subject was a subject who valued the idea of himself, and in defense of this principle, he disobeyed and opposed the Emperor. The individual was not a number in an accounting, but an autonomous being, capable of acting with awareness of his actions. For Veyne, clashes between individuals and rulers were constant, but only in the Roman Empire.[33] Recently, in the United States, President Trump expressed to General Mark Milley his annoyance at having Confederate heroes of critical military bases replaced. The general, echoing the Roman individuality, was firm in his intention to change them. After all, brave as the Confederate heroes were, they had been traitors and rebels to their nation and defeated. They were traitors for eternity. Therefore, for Union military bases, [34] names of Union heroes. Augustus, to ensure his supremacy, made Italy and the provinces swear loyalty to him. He was armed with the powers of the Tribune and had on his side the plebs against the elites. He used

violence against his opponents during civil strife and purges,[35] reducing the power of the Senate.

In this way, the imperial power assumed an immeasurable and overwhelming dimension in the eyes of the individual. Now, for Paul Veyne, when the individual was affected by his image's power, he changed his relationship with the Emperor. It became the same as that which he developed with another individual. One could be ruled honestly by a man who rules his passions. Otherwise, the assassination of an emperor [36] was a concrete hypothesis. The epoch of the Roman revolution was a time of criticism, of the use of reason and whose time was accelerated—a time when embryonic public opinion exposed men to both prizes and extreme risks. In Tiberius' reign, Cremutius Cordus claimed that the last Romans had been Cassius and Brutus for murdering a tyrant, Gaius Julius Cesar. They executed Cordus for telling his truth [37].

Power, Emperor, and Pater Families

Sex and Roman power were strongly intertwined. Caligula's sexual conduct was considered degenerate by the elite, not only because of its uncontrolled and arbitrary appearance but because the Emperor committed three crimes as vir (man) and Princeps. Initially, he had sex with his sisters, which originated in the Egyptian and Eastern monarchies, contrary to the Roman mores. Second, by having figurative sex with the Moon, his sin is impiety, a sacrilege, the fruit of his Hubris. Third, the rapes he perpetrated against the senators' wives disrupted established sexual conduct, degraded their husbands, and provoked a wave of resentment. The senatorial elite, consolidating their conservative position as heads of families and their Domus, [38] considered it outrageous to maintain such a frivolous individual in such a high position.

For in a society made up of individuals endowed with subjectivity, the role of the Princeps should be played, at least in theory, by a virtuous man. The honorable members of the elite demanded to be ruled by equally honorable and self-disciplined Princeps. As a supreme judge, the Emperor was "a god" above magistracy and legislation. Free men, cities, pilgrims, citizens, and provinces appealed directly to the Emperor as a leading resource, as did Saul of Tarsus in supreme distress when declaring: *Cives Romanus sum*. The Emperor was the father of the country,[39] the pontifex Maximus and his word was the ultimate rule of law and justice.

There was a sense of origin in the Roman familiar that acts like those practiced by mad Caesars disturbed and degraded. In the sense of decorum, there was a great deal of parental respect, and senior senators were symbolic relatives of the community [40]. The family was a business entity where everyone, from children to slaves, performed tasks and occupied specific and representative positions. For some, the Roman family in the lady's house, the Domus, was the focus of life together. It was a space for exercising power. According to Foucault, power is relative to their micro-levels operating on bodies [41].

At least until the Julius-Claudius, the aristocracy was a militarized elite, hierarchical, and used to discipline. The identity and emotional life of the family structure came from the nuanced relationship of power practiced between masters, slaves, and clients [42]. The exercise of their power within a Domus was often benevolent. The worship of the home gods is associated with this permanence in time and space. Alongside the slave's complete dependence on his master, there was the promise of freedom. Tribune Cicero freed a captive considered a sincere friend.

Another was the case of Petronius' character Trimalchio. When his employers died, leaving no heirs, Trimalchio became free and received the deceased's fortune.

Married life was the product of a legal agreement involving multiple institutional obligations agreed between husband and wife. On the other hand, a deep conjugal affection existed and could be real [43]. Trimalchio, for example, makes it clear that part of his business fortune was due to his wife's support. She, in the past, was an ex-whore, an ex-slave whose money and ingenuity leveraged Trimalchio to wealth.

There is a moving episode of fidelity and marital dedication in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. An aristocratic couple sides with the latter, who is defeated. While the husband fled into exile to avoid death, the wife went to Gaius Julius Cesar and begged forgiveness. Cesar granted mercy, amnesty to the poor woman's husband. However, in the new conflict declared after Caesar's death, the husband adopts the same side as Marcus Antonius. Condemned by this association, His wife hid him on her country estate, risking her own life. When Augustus consolidated her power, she sought him out, and she managed to obtain an amnesty for her husband from him [44].

The good pater familias was one who diligently managed the house and kin. The family represented a continuous flow of wealth and power inherited. He circulated as an entity through family names, always returning to the past, as if the chaotic present were unworthy [45].

RELIGION ET EMPIRE: GODS PROTECT EMPIRE AND ROME AND THE EMPEROR

The small Lares gods protect the house and the individuals

The Roman religion, part of the political system imbricated with power, was developed over time. As we know it, it emerged after the Roman victory in the social war waged against the Italian peoples. The religion established a contract composed of obligations between the human being and the deities in the form of temples, rituals, and specialists in communication [46] linking both worlds, the priests. The so-called *Lares* gods originated in the primitive religion of Rome as a private devotion. It integrated the italic sense of dwelling, aggregating everything inside the house in cosmic household order. Its central feast, the *Compitalia*, falls in the vicinity of the Christian Christmas celebrated as a feast of lights [47]. The *Lares* gods granted divine protection to individuals, opposing the official religion. Here the *Princeps* and Imperial institutions were deified. However, Augustus shrewdly incorporated these modest household deities into his deification with their rites and festivals [48].

The triumph

Roman power always entered into communication, and one of the strategies employed was the practice of triumphs. In them, Rome and its system were recognized in the collective celebrations because triumphs and festivals occurred since the city's foundation. Romulo and Remus were mythical figures, but the conflict that divided them represented the tensions that, among Romans, were latent. Tradition records that these founding fathers fought to the death, anticipating civil wars.

A triumph celebrated a victory in the war against foreigners and internal peace. Since the Republics, its ritual brought together social forces for the celebration and the disruption of the

daily order, which then stopped, reaffirming it. It brought together energies that could be conflicting and destructive between factions. The triumph was a means through which the Roman nobility celebrated military victories that the victor paid for by spending his share of the booty and loot. Triumph was the most incredible honor a Roman military could receive. Looting prisoners, the victorious troops paraded, honoring the city and Jupiter Capitoline [49]. The triumph confirmed the existence of vanquished and victorious, legitimizing the power of Rome and its right to humiliate the defeated. According to Beard, the triumph concealed an ambivalence about the dangers of military glory [50]. The triumph had something of the carnival, and it was a time of rampant comedy and licentious and pornographic songs freely sung by the troops and the public. A general's triumph celebrated the imperial and military expansion itself and was at the center of Roman culture. As a display of successes, signs indicating the biomes and presented details of the conquered lands. All the willing apparatus reenacted victory and brought the margins of empire to the center of power. Under Augustus, as did the cult of Homes, the triumph also exalted the imperial family.

Nero, principality and power

The imperial succession became a source of tension and insecurity due to the absence of adequate regulation. Sometimes, emperors died, leaving their heirs to deglaze, losing the stability so longed. The loss of stability This is the case with Nero, who, by killing his relative, Britannicus, boasted of being the last member of the family to come to power. When he assumed the throne, he made a conciliatory speech, attributed to Seneca and Burrus, then assumed personal powers, overthrowing the power of the Patriciate.

During his first years in office, he was concerned with justice, punishing abuses by provincial governors. Ambitious set out on exploration expeditions beyond the known world, imitating Alexander the Great. He and his uncle Claudius saw Augustus as a model ruler, reproaching Claudius for alleged abuses because a palace must be a sacred place, excluding corruption and favoritism [50]. He appropriated enormous wealth from the Mediterranean basin, rejecting the support of the Senate, inherited from the city-state [51]. In his speech to inaugurate the Corinthian canal, he deliberately ignored any mention of this institution. However, the Senate, according to recent theses, was more active and visible [52].

Nero used triumph as a communication strategy, presenting himself as a ruler of his time and not as the god Mars or Alexander the Great. For Paul Veyne, Nero's utopia acclaimed him as a living god and an actor, as the Princeps represents on the stage of history. Remember, the plebs of Rome continued to venerate his name in the time of the Christian emperors,[53] three centuries later".

Power under Nero resulted in new values that aggravated the relationship between power and the senatorial aristocracy. The public function consisted of dignities that were delegated (at least formally) by the Senate. It is an anachronism to judge as perverse certain features of the political practice of Roman clientelism, whose elite has a dignity conferred by its valuable public life. Some elite members fight for his dignity at the price of life itself, against everything and everyone, including the Emperor. Even the dead had a social memory since, in a Roman patriarchal society, the dead held public and voiceover roles through representation [54].

For Annah Harendt, there was a fundamental Roman trinity: religion, authority, and tradition capable of resisting what the author calls the Roman spirit. This triad survived the passage of the Republic, the Empire, and triumphant Christianity. As Arendt points out, Rome valued its foundation, cultivated its history, keeping the memory as guardian of the past [55]. As a collective conscience, the embryonic public opinion, in countless moments debated, applauded, or publicly censured the acts of others of emperors and ordinary citizens and slaves.

Emperor, Nero sought to disentangle himself from his past and family relationships, writing an original narrative of his existence. Like Trimalchio, the Satyrical character, Nero's deviant behavior as Princeps was consistent with his utopia. Tacitus explains that Nero, as he broke away from his mother's authority, fell in love with a freedwoman named Acte. Meanwhile, he maintained close relationships with two beautiful young offspring of critical Roman families, Oton and Claudio Senecião. They shared a sexual and physical connection [56] with Tacitus "because of their mutual pleasures and equivocal tastes."

In Caroline Vout's opinion, the stuprum was an indication of the relationship between the power of empire and sex. His public image was licit when a man practiced it on a woman as a passive being. Images of Emperor Claudius conquering Britannia, and Nero, Armenia, portray the provinces as women penetrated by Roman Legions. [57] The rape of these representations translates the empire as a constant process of phallic aggression. Moreover, penetration was a way of establishing or breaking hierarchies, and I penetrate. Therefore I have power [58].

The role defined Roman sexual relations played during the sexual act and penetrating a woman or a man confirmed social hierarchies. Lucretius explained that when the penetrator throws "the seed within which excited the terrible desire (...) the body seeks what has wounded its spirit with love." To appease his desire, he penetrates both "a young man with female members and women, whose whole body arouses love" [59].

In this case, the marriage performed between Nero and Sporus, a horizontal male-male relationship, violated [60] the sacredness of marriage. Sporus was castrated and, in a new baptism, received the name of Sabina, parodying the sacred union where sex was not for pleasure but procreation, the transmission of the name and goods. At the end of his term, Nero became the first Princeps to be declared a public enemy by the Senate, and his death sparked successive civil wars, reminding the elderly of the agony of the Republic.

A new actor takes the stage: the legions

If the Dictator stabilized the situation, governed exceptionally, from Augustus, the Senate, the people, and the Empire concentrated on the personal plane of the Princeps, whose *auctoritas* supported by the legions. For Veyne, military conquest justified the use of *imperium*. Paradoxically, it represents a form of personal isolation [61]. It is a legal expression associated with the conduct in military operations against foreigners that the Romans called *Clementia*. We have already seen it in the issue of the couple caught between the wheels of the power struggle, so after the civil wars, *Clementia* came to be associated with the other intrinsic qualities of being Emperor. It was associated with *virtus*, *iustitia*, *pietas* [62].

The Emperor represented the imperial territorial community, embodied the desired social and political stability, an important objective to be achieved [63]. He was a solo actor supported by

a troupe performing on stage. Tacitus narrates the feats of a certain Percenius, a legion soldier stationed in the limes of the river Rhine, whose voice-over practices are very similar to those carried out by the Princesps. It was like this: after the death of Augustus, Tiberius ascended. At that moment, Percênio, aiming to improve the conditions of the soldiers, saw the political opportunity. Percenius was "in another time, a theater director and, later, a simple soldier, talkative, daring, and accustomed by his occupation to every trick and every intrigue." He sniffed the weakness of power and mutinied the troops. His initial success came from speaking and employing the quirks learned on stage [64].

After Nero's death and Vespasian's accession to the throne consolidated the new practice of Roman succession. Tacitus reported that there were no disturbances between Senators after the spread of Nero's death in Rome. He stressed the importance of mighty legions stationed on the Empire's borders whose generals could be Emperors. The news "excited all the legions and their generals because now the secret of the Empire has been disclosed. Emperors now are made in places other than Rome" [65].

The Emperor, as the characters in *Satyrice*, was a traveler in constant motion. He occupied the stage of the Roman world with his steps, consolidating a new notion of imperial community. In both analyzed works, people of all origins and origins have a role to play. Citizenship in all Empire is widely granted. Moreover, senatorial posts were occupied by people from different regions of the Empire since, since its foundation, Rome was composed of peoples of different origin. [66] The Roman Empire at its great extent, adopted the Hellenistic sense of the universal state,[67] the only state worthy of the name, multinational and ecumenical.

A BOOK AS A LIBRARY AND LITERATURE AS A SET OF KNOWLEDGE

Recent research suggests that literacy appears to have been more widespread in Rome than is generally supposed. Habinek considers that Roman literature, from its Italian heritage, was mature when it came into contact with Greek. The surviving authors, almost all male, represented a male view of Rome. This intercourse meant a continuation of the practice of *respublica*, incorporating roman kinds of literature to increase the practice of reading and writing [68].

Writing among the Romans was limited to organizing and grouping ideas and expressions [69]. Furthermore, at the end of the Republic, Roman literature nourished an intense dialogue with Greek literature. Petroniu's work, in particular, composes an amalgamation of interwoven narratives of rich intertextuality. That is why it is a unique work, written like a library, bringing together knowledge of Mediterranean culture because, as Barthes points out, literature brings together all the knowledge of a time [70]. As Rimell points out, Petronius wrote the *Satyrice* demonstrating a deep knowledge of Greek literature [71]. Like Homer's work, Petroniu's is fragmented. Originally there were twenty books, of which three survive. The work is dense and complex, with characters contradicting the formal literature of elites, transforming mythical kings, queens, and heroes into ordinary beings. Satirizing his time results in a melodramatic dimension to the life of bisexual anti-hero Encolpius and his lover Giton and his former lover Ascylto.

The literature of the Roman woman: a matter of little importance.

The Roman woman left few writings because the Romans suppressed them for considering them of little use [72]. They were silenced and segregated, whether in public functions or in the literature written by penetrating men. Petronius is one of the few Roman authors to give voice and presence to female characters. If some of his female characters like Fortunata, the wife of the wealthy Trimalchio, or the matron of Ephesus, and the priestess Tryphaena were sexually active, their practices were strategies of resistance.

After the territorial expansion of Rome outside Italy, the role of the aristocratic woman and her sexuality, represented in the goddess Venus, changed. If the elite woman fit chastity and virtue, in Satyricon, male licentiousness transforms the prostitute into a model for the aristocratic woman [73]. In every woman in the empire, there was a Circe hidden and filled with power. At Trimalchio's banquet, a guest late for attending a funeral apologizes for being late. On the lips, his wife kisses Trimalchio's wife, Fortunata, a lady who was taken away by her husband from the direction of a brothel. The holy matrimony sanctified him. However, the touches and signals exchanged between Fortunata and the guest's wife during the banquet show an intimate relationship.

Relations between women under the Principality are denied within the prevailing political and sexual culture. Fortunata and her friend do not lewdly touch each other in public, avoiding recreating the narrative of Messalina, Claudio's seductive and insatiable wife. In writers like Tacitus, Messalina is a wild woman, dominated by excessive sexual desire. Destroyer of the social order, she abandons her home, husband, and children for her lover. On the other hand, two women physically relating, reaching multiple orgasms, disturbed the men. They obtained intimate pleasure without phallic penetration [74].

But the account of the virtuous matron of Ephesus, enacted after the banquet, points to a new sexual morality with a more permissive model. On the other hand, the female silencing of Roman literature stems from its quality of imperial literature. Dickson and Hallet consider it a "narrative of conquests", a relationship of victorious men and defeated women: "It is therefore not without reason that Rome placed itself under the patronage of Mars,[75] the god of war."

Artistic Interlocutions in Fellini's Satyricon

Fellini's film has an intense interlocution with painting, as in the aforementioned final scene where the film's heroes are frozen like inaccessible frescoes of Pompeii walls. Fellini's predilection for painters such as Alma Tadema (1836-1912) and Gustav Klimt (1862-1916) builds the dress code of the Romans in the imagination. For Fellini, gestures, clothing and props are superlative and excessive, resulting in an exotic aesthetic. This is the case of the enigmatic character Trifena, from Lichas' ship, starring the French actress Capucine, whose characterization is inspired by Gustav Klimt in his painting of *Nuda Veritas*, a refined fatal woman. Also the pictorial character of the Minotaur who challenges Eumolpus inside the labyrinth is clearly inspired by Pablo Picasso. (1881-1993) The insula where the brothel is located, whose boarders stare at the spectators, which collapses in an earthquake, originates from the Tower of Babel, by Pieter Bruegel (1525-1569) [76].

Fellini had a rhetorical image of Rome inherited from the Rissorgimento, a nationalist cultural movement born out of the struggles for Italian unification in the 19th century. During the

debates that arose, while the Catholic Church was looking for footprints of martyrs executed by the Roman Empire, secular Italy was looking for footprints of republican Rome. Romanity became a key part of the Italian unity, and fed dreams of grandeur and *mare nostrum*. Fascism after 1922 sought to exalt together with the Italian cinematographic industry [77]. Fellini was influenced by the Roman recovery carried out by the fascist regime and its mystifying militarist ideals. One must take into account his Catholic background, received in Fano, Italy [78]. Curious and restless, Fellini expanded his knowledge on his own, reading Petronius and delving into the life and culture of ancient Rome. As he says himself, he has honed his sense of history enough to get rid of it. Rather than employing stereotypes to make Rome familiar to the general public, Fellini took the personal and inventive path. He gave his film such a strong dreamlike atmosphere that in an interview he declared that there was no demarcation line between the imaginary and the exact [79].

The dialogue with architecture leads Fellini to refuse the use of eloquent colonnades. Color-covered walls without windows are the decisive element of the Fellinian interior architecture. Joanna Paul considered that the image of Rome in Fellini thins the discourse of mainstream cinema. The filming that took place at Cinecittá results in a claustrophobic, uncomfortable and unpleasant Rome. Despite the colorful impression of the city that the author's imagination reconstructs, [80] it is the dark side of Rome. The dirty and stuffy environments seem to be the ideal setting for the performance of its quirky characters. The Villa dos Suicides itself is a nightmare place, full of empty rooms, boasting the dominance of straight lines, endowed with a few wall paintings and populated with sparse furniture.

Satyricon: cosmopolitanism and a journey on the journey

Cosmopolitanism is present in the life of Rome, home to an immense population from distant regions, which made it an *Anthropolis*, a city of all humanity [81]. The enormous mobility of individuals known in the Empire generated a great flow of information and encouraged personal displacements by land and sea. After the Social Wars, the extension of the city reached the whole of Italy and later extended to the entire Empire, consolidating the position of Rome as capital and *Cosmopolis* [82]. If the word migrant did not correctly describe the travelers of the *Satyricon*, on the contrary, the word *transitor* did. The journey across the Mediterranean to Rome meant opportunism, adventure, mercantile practices, politics, war, love, sex, curiosity, and religion [83].

Acemoglu and Robinson demonstrate this context of intense monetary and mercantile exchanges, travel, and displacement. They are analyzing the letter scrutinized by a Roman merchant, in Vindolanda, on Hadrian's wall who asks for money to be sent to honor payment for a supply of wheat. At the same time, it reveals that British centers such as Oxfordshire had intense manufacturing activity [84].

Classic works of ancient literature such as *Odyssey*, by Homer and *Satyricon*, by Petronius, have the journey as their thematic axis. Fellini's work incorporated Petronius writing fragmented into episodes as a travel narrative [85]. The incessant displacement to death, as Onfray points out, is the place where the character Encolpius lives, keeping his subjectivity intact. The trip dramatizes a metaphysical operation, accelerating the alchemy of the event [86]. In Fellini's *Satyricon*, the characters do not fix themselves anywhere, and if they occupy them, they do not settle down because, in the Roman Mediterranean world, one is never a foreigner. The

characters' lives are intertwined with the death scenes that are memory images of mourning. Funerals are celebrations for the living rather than the dead.

Travels through space or time are metaphors for life and its end, death, the last port. Fellini's film, more than Petroniu's *Satyricon*, insists on diegesis, on travel as a metaphor for man's existence. He fills the episodes with means of displacement such as boats, footpaths, in carts until the end, when then, Ascylo embarks on a ship setting sail with favorable wind and tide.

Phallocratic Potency, Priapus Apotheosis

For Michel de Foucault, the traditional sexual practice formed by the *aphrodisia* led to acts determined by nature associated with intense physical pleasure [87]. Sex in Rome was a private act of the male individual, determined by the penetrating power, whose regulation did not occur through general knowledge but individual improvement. It was a victory against the animalistic and Dionysian tendencies that attributed to feminine nature. These manifested in the mystery rituals at Eleusis, Athens.

Lucretius explains that no matter how many traps "our Venuses layout, there will always be the hope that the body, which is the source of the rage, can itself extinguish the flame" The victory over the irrational represented the domination of oneself and one's body. According to the model of domestic or political power, they ideally attributed to the *Princeps*. The man "who avoids love is not deprived of the fruit of Venus, but rather collects what is pleasant and without difficulties. Effectively, the pleasure that they gather from those with a cool head is purer [88] than that of the crazed."

However, in the relationship between Encolpius, Giton, and Ascylo, there is no possibility of exercising temperance, but constant sex activity incessant and without satiety, since its interruption corresponded to a denial of the relationship and a short-circuit of the penetrator versus penetrated functions.

Petronius represents her in *Satyricon*, in the episode of the seductive boy who insists that the guest penetrate him incessantly in his wealthy residence in Asia Minor. Until the latter, exhausted by repeated ejaculations, threatens to denounce the insatiable boy to his father. The phallus is a weapon and a standard of masculinity. He is proudly flaunted by every man, as does the Signifer of a legion with the standard spear is containing the half-moon of Venus! The poet Gaius Valerius Catullus (84 BC-54 AD) refers in a poem to a woman he loves, sweet Ipsililla, "my joy, my only delight." He asks her not to leave the house because he will visit her and give her nine "rounds of love." If this pleases her, she can call him at any time because he [89] "will be hereafter lunch at rest, and with his limb so erect that he leaves his tunic up like a tent."

Diegesis and the Satyricon

Fellini's film begins with the narrator, Encolpius, entering a geometric, unfinished, and gloomy architectural structure. Regrets for the loss of his love, the young and beautiful Gíton, for his traveling companion, Ascylo. Giton is an effeminate boy, and the passive sexual role reserved for pueriles, poor free youth, or slaves, and according to Edward, they were politically weak beings in patriarchal societies. The penetrator can take intense pleasure with a woman through her vagina or anus. Giton, by appearance and behavior, looks like a woman, but since he has no vagina, he allows himself to passively penetrated through the anus [90]. Encolpius and Ascylo

behave as they come, that is, adult men, citizens, members of the elite, and ready to play leading roles. Furthermore, the boundary between penetrable and impenetrable was also related to a social role and not just a sexual one. Love and penetration are indispensable [91] for procreation, as, for Lucretius, "it is important that the seeds can mix with the seeds."

At that moment, Ascylo appears in the dark therm. He was invited there by a powerful and wealthy man to satisfy his appetites, but when the latter wished to penetrate him, seduced by his beauty, Ascylo refuses and hurls him to the ground, marking his impenetrability as a vir and member of the elite. He is not a boy, a puer, like Giton, who is a lawful object of desire on the part of older men, much less a slave, who are objects belonging to his master and can be possessed[92].

Then, because of Gíton's love affairs, Encolpius and Ascylo fight, and he wins, revealing that he has sold the boy to a famous actor. Encolpius, upset by the loss, goes to the theater, where the buyer of his beloved presents himself, characterized, before a rich and refined audience. When Gíton appears in the middle of a cloud, like a beautiful virgin, Encolpius asks that it be returned to him because he dedicates to the boy's love more significant than his own life. The actor refuses to return it, planning to employ Giton to play female roles as Elena of Troy. By slave status, he belongs to his owner who, at his wish, can penetrate, beat, sell and kill.

After a short debate, an unexpected and tumultuous auction for the boy begins. Encolpius wins and takes Giton to a gigantic brothel whose niche-filled structure features women offering sex. When the lovers find shelter, Ascylo appears and overpowers Encolpius, taking Giton with him. Desolate, Encolpius decided to commit suicide, but an earthquake destroyed the brothel preventing the fatal outcome.

Then Encolpius, in the company of his friend and poet Eumolpo, goes among guests to the banquet that the rich Trimalchio offers in his magnificent villa. Meanwhile, his voice, off-screen, Trimalchio claims to be so wealthy that he can travel all over Italy and, crossing over Sicily, reach Africa without taking his feet off land that belongs to him. Trimalchio was a slave who, after inheriting his master's fortune as a freedman, became an influential merchant and great landowner. This fortune, however, did not guarantee him the role of a citizen since his power did not come from the surname of an essential gens, nor from public office. It came from money, and, as Catherine Edwards points out, money could be used by the elite but did not allow anyone to join it from subordinate social positions [93].

The senatorial aristocracy was based on the antiquity of its origins, on the traditional legacy of its elders. However, for Trimalchio as a modern man, the past and memory of the origins do not matter. This young and ambitious man, detached from his origins, lives in a constant present. Having at his feet people inferior in fortune, he as an actor represents the parody of an aristocratic Roman. Trimalchio recalls that, in the Domus where he was a slave, the relationship between masters and slaves was one of submission. Intimate relationships worked articulating the male-master slave connection and in the lady-woman slave. For the ancient Romans, Veyne points out, as for the Japanese today, love belongs to the circles of unpretentious satisfactions of simple pleasures, bypassing matters of greater importance[94].

During the banquet, Trimalchio's wife, Fortunata, eager to present her past talents, performs a choreography of enormous sensuality, but the bored husband rejects her and turns to a handsome boy to whom he declares his love. In the same sex relationship, it can also involve the adoption of a *puer delicias* as he was, in the past, for his master. This relationship made him a son to his employer, who made him a universal heir [95]. Rejected Fortunata, despairs and tries to attack him, but is chased away by her husband. In the banquet, Trimalchio determines a recitation of Homer while attended by a troupe of actors. He dialogues with the poet Eumolpo and calls him his "colleague," reciting someone else's poem as his own. When Eumolpo claims authorship, Trimalchio, enraged, orders his servants to punish the insolent in the kitchen by the stove, where the meat roasted in an uncontrollable fire.

Trimalchio takes guests to visit his newly completed tomb. The rich man is pretending to be dead, lying down in the tomb, asking the guests to mourn him following the rites. He feignedly donated some assets as an inheritance. At that moment, one of the diners, declaring that there was no communication between the two worlds, related, for example, the story of the virtuous matron of Ephesus, whose husband died, leaving her to mourn him in the tomb. On a gallows erected nearby, a condemned man hung from a gallows, guarded by a handsome young soldier whose mission was to prevent the deceased's relatives from rescuing the body. Hearing the widow's tears, the soldier went to her and tried to console her, seducing her. Seeing it so beautiful and safe, the matron surrendered, and, during the distraction, the convict's relatives rescue the criminal's corpse. The desperate soldier fears are put to death by the authorities. Like a skirted Odysseus, the widow shrewdly replaced the corpse stolen from the gallows with her husband's body. Keeping the handsome little soldier with her, she declared that she could not bear to lose the second man in her life.

Imperial succession as a game from scratch

During the last Julius-Claudius, the succession becomes a violent game where material goods and life were lost and won. The arena's new protagonist, the legions, adds more violence and instability to the process of providing stability. The three companions on the journey, Encolpius, Giton, and Ascylto, are imprisoned by Lichas de Taranto, a pirate businessman who supplies the reigning Cesar with humans to satisfy his whims. Lichas keep those trapped in a state of permanent tension in the ship's hold. His wife is the beautiful priestess Tryphaena, who sympathizes with Encolpius. Amidst the various pleasures that the ship provides, there is the Greco-Roman fight that excites Lichas, who faced Encolpius. Nevertheless, when he knocks him down, he is entranced by the beauty of the young man to whom he declares his love. Then, both are married on the ship's deck with Lichas dressed as a bride, married a beautiful Eumolpus dressed as a mythological hero.

In the meantime, the death of Emperor Nero takes place, and the violence of the civil war breaks out, reflecting the daily life of a "normal" aristocratic family. Father, mother, and several children reside in this so-called Villa of Suicides, a surprising episode due to its sobriety and narrative balance. It is the only social group that permanently occupies space when all others are circumstantial and in motion.

The house was associated with the *paterfamilias* and the male lineage whose authority passed from generation to generation [96]. In the Villa dos Suicides, the *paterfamilias*, after saying goodbye to his well-behaved offspring, announce to everyone that the next day will come to the

decree of confiscation of property. He decided to commit suicide to avoid humiliation. After freeing his captives, old and young, women and children, he sent his beautiful children into exile in a safe place. Then, after a touching dialogue with his wife, he cuts the veins in his wrists and bleeds to death, while she pragmatically prefers to bury a dagger in her chest and die at once.

Then Ascylo and Eumolpo arrive at the Villa and walk past the corpses and enter the empty house. Ascylo seizes one of the ancestors' masks, reciting a solemn speech. Both walk around the empty rooms when they hear the voice of a beautiful young African woman with long hair and a feline body plastic surgery. They try to undress her, but she runs away from them, amused. She lets herself be touched by the beautiful young people, but they prefer to caress each other under the girl's complacent laughter. After eating, they lie down in the compluvium, where some rainwater is contained. Above them, the open impluvium allows one to see the celestial vault completely starred, a symbol of the unattainable.

Sex, Priapus, Hermaphrodite

Continuing their journey, Encolpius and Ascylo come across a wagon parked in a desert setting. Next to her, a sad-looking man and a young slave who go on a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Hermaphrodite, aspiring to cure the disease that afflicts their owner and mistress. This is a Roman woman dominated by an overwhelming sexual desire. Tied to the cart, she wants any man to cover her in the hope of satiation. The slave asks the youth to satisfy her poor lady. If they are successful, the husband, who loves his wife and is generous, will reward them.

The beautiful woman whose suffering face contrasts with the fierce energy of sexual desire dominating her will and body, writhes, bound. Ascylo climbs onto the cart and copulates with her, but the insatiable woman wants more. Encolpius comes next, although she, as a free woman, was enslaved to her desires and unable to attain the typical temperance of the free woman[97]. Consumed by unbridled desire, she lost her intellectual and bodily balance, indulging in irrational and monstrous pleasure.

The friends head to the sanctuary of the demigod Hermaphrodite, accompanied by a crowd of pilgrims seeking divine healing. The displacements on the routes of the Mediterranean obeyed several criteria of interest. The religious was associated with a geography of sacred places. It was easy to get around this sea thanks to paved roads and sheltered harbors, providing effective support to the constantly moving public [98].

A fierce-looking man who sniffed riches and spewed violence joined the pilgrims. Before the audience of unhappy sufferers, the priests present the Hermaphrodite, an adipose and albino youth, a borderline condition to which his divinity is attributed, as he is the son of Venus, the goddess of love and Mercury. The brutal newcomer convinces the other two to kidnap the demigod by demanding ransom for him. The youngsters, following the suggestion, kidnap the demigod and lead him to a desert. The intense heat dehydrates his albino body. The two friends pity the child, the mercenary, however, refuses to help him. Violent physical fight ensues between the mercenary and Ascylo who, getting the better of him, kills him even though he does not prevent the demigod's death.

The Minotaur, male impotence versus the female power of Eonothea

In front of the dead body of the Hermaphrodite, they realize that they have broken the cosmic order, suffering punishment for the death of the demigod. Encolpius, who travels alone, enters a hostile region where he is captured by a group of armed men. The local magistrate sentences him to be locked inside a maze. Roland Barthes, reading Freud, analyzes the journey in a labyrinth as a kind of anal rebirth. It is a journey through the sinuous intestines, a path taken by the being in search of an exit-enlightenment.[99] Encolpius as a new Theseus is chased by a Minotaur who beats him up. On the brink of death, employing a persuasive and elegant oratory Encolpius calls for mercy. The seduced Minotaur takes off his mask showing his handsome virile face. He declared to the consul that Encolpius is an educated young man and will not kill him. Both become friends and hug each other effusively. To the applause of the audience, the consul proclaims Encolpius a new victorious Theseus who will have to fornicate with his Ariadne.

Before the spectators and the priests, the woman who personifies Ariadne, dressed in a rich garment and costly jewels, lies down on her bed to be penetrated. The act was part of a sacred propitiatory ceremony in that region. Encolpius lies down on the woman and, after the foreplay, nothing happens. She grows impatient at Encolpius's inert penis. After several unsuccessful attempts at erection, enraged Ariadne rises from her bed, ending the ceremony with insults to the unfortunate boy. Meanwhile, Encolpius is cheered by the crowd, for whom his impotence in bed will bring bad luck to the region. The desperate young man defends himself and shouts that everything "It was the sun's fault", recalling the character Marceau, from the novel *L'étranger*, by the French-Algerian writer Albert Camus. (1913-1960) Encolpius, desperate not to feel an erection in his "weapon", shouts: "Ascylo, I lost my sword!" Not the rifle of the Gunnery Sargent because there was no firearm but the sword.

At that moment, Eumolpus, the poet banished by Trimalchio, appears transformed into a rich man, lying in a litter surrounded by beautiful female slaves. After leading him to his palace, called the Garden of Pleasures, he ordered a cheerful group of young women and girls to cure Encolpius of impotence by beating him with wands. Faced with the ineffectiveness of the remedy, Eumolpus, embarrassed, declares that only the famous witch Eonothea will be able to cure him.

Starring the African-American Donayale Luna, the beauty of Eonothea aroused the desire of a powerful wizard in the region. Pretending to accept the onslaught, she told the wizard to come at night to her tower window. "I will descend the scaffold you will climb to possess me." Instead of keeping her promise, she left the desirous suspended on the scaffolding, exposed to public debauchery. Enraged, he cursed Eonothea, putting out all fire in the region. He forced those who were left without fire to light their torches in Eonothea's vagina. Lying on a dais, supported by other women, Eonothea screams in pain every time someone lights a wash between her thighs. Encolpio and Ascylo sail to the witch's house in a boat manned by an individual who glares at them with hatred. At Eonothea's house, Encolpio begs for grace as she lies down with her legs apart, waiting to be penetrated by Encolpio. After an immense wash takes place, the cure takes place. Encolpio then sees through the window the hateful boatman murdering Ascylo. Could this young man be the homo sacer who, according to Agamben, must die, because it is lawful to kill him? In front of his friend's corpse, Encolpius laments: where is your joy, your happiness, your beauty?

Here Ascylo's journey comes to an end while Encolpius' journey continues. A map, a scale, so many useful tools for getting to know yourself and choosing your movements. For Onfray, at the moment of death, all these tools are reduced to a set of traces on a traversed map.[100]

Moving away from the tragic scene, Encolpio meets a young herald who communicates the death of his lord, the poet Eumolpus, in whose will he declares as his rightful heirs those who eat a piece of his flesh. Some men light a brazier, sharpen their knives, and unwrap the shroud around the poet's body. In this Last Supper parody, men chew on bits of human flesh, declaring their appreciation for the earthly goods they will receive. Then a young man comes to invite Eumolpus to continue his journey, saying that the ship where they will embark, like new Argonauts, is ready, waiting for the tide to put out to sea.

CONCLUSION: FIGHT AND ENJOY: THE PRESENT MUST BE THE PAGAN PAST.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the global and orgiastic sexual liberation that was reflected in Fellini's film *Satyricon*. The initial perception of this essay seems to be the exercise of an antinomy between blockbuster cinema and this author's dreamlike movies. In his book, the roman Petronius is alive, like the anguish and questions of the Romans under Nero, which remain in us when we are faced with arbitrary power. Or, as Lowenthal wrote: "The past remains integral to us all, individually and collectively (...) but their place is not simply back there, in a separate and foreign country, it is assimilated to ourselves, and resurrected into an everchanging present." [101] The power exercised in Rome was being modified, from the Republic with its Senate and its aristocratic institutions, reaching the Principality.

In the current times of environmental crisis, the Pandemic of the new COVID 19, and fake News, algorithms and back door, it is necessary to recover the motherland Gaia of the old Greco-Roman paganism. In Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*, the character General Maximus was constantly asking for and receiving the protection of his Homes, the gods who guarded his home, an ancestral father and mother. The old paganism reappears in this "everchanging present", as in Stanley Kubrick's *Born to Kill* (1998) film. When Gunnery Sargent was pleasingly squeezing his penis while marching with the recruits, holding his rifle, he prayed to the god Priapus as he recited: "This is my rifle, this is my gun, this is for fighting these is for fun."

References

- [1]. Malamud, Margaret. *Ancient Rome and modern América*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2009p. 212.
- [2]. Higashi, Sumiko. *Antimodernism as historical representation in a consumer culture: Cecil B. demille's ten commandments, 1923,1956,1993* in Sobchak, Vivian(Dir.) *The persistence of History. Cinema, television, and the modern event*. New York and London: Routledge, 1996.
- [3]. Moore, Michael, *América in the movies*, Basic books, 1975.
- [4]. Higashi,, Sumiko. *Antimodernism as historical representation in a consumer culture: Cecil B. demille's ten commandments, 1923,1956,1993* in Sobchak, Vivian(Dir.) *The persistence of History. Cinema, television, and the modern event*. New York and London: Routledge, 1996
- [5]. Malamud, Margaret. *Ancient Rome and modern América*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2009p. 212.
- [6]. Denton, Chad. *The War on Sex: Western Repression from the Thorá to Victoria*.Jefferson, McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers, 1981, P. 56.
- [7]. Higashi, Sumiko. *Antimodernism as historical representation in a consumer culture: Cecil B. demille's ten commandments, 1923,1956,1993* in Sobchak, Vivian(Dir.) *The persistence of History. Cinema, television, and the modern event*. New York and London: Routledge, 1996.
- [8]. Rosenstone. Robert A. *The future of the past: filming in the beginning of postmodern era*. in Sobchak, Vivian(Dir.) *The persistence of History. Cinema, television, and the modern event*. New York and London: Routledge, 1996
- [9]. Wyke, Maria. *Projecting Ancient Rome*, in Landy, Marcia (Ed.) *The Historical Film. History and Memory and Media*. New Brunswick, Rutgers university Press,2000, p. 127.
- [10]. Ferro, Marc. *Le cinérma: agent, produit et source de l'histoire*. In *Dix Leçons sur l'Histoire du Vingtième Siècle*. Paris: Vigot, 1996, p.117-118.
- [11]. Sorlin, Pierre. *How to look at an Historical Film*. Landy, Marcia (Ed.) *The Historical Film. History and Memory and Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers university Press,2000, p. 35-37.
- [12]. Wike, Maria. *Projecting Ancient Rome*, in Landy, Marcia (Ed.) *The Historical Film. History and Memory and Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers university Press,2000, p. 127.
- [13]. Rosenstone,Robert A. *The future of the past: filming in the beginning of postmodern era*. in Sobchak, Vivian(Dir.) *The persistence of History. Cinema, television, and the modern event*. New York and London: Routledge, 1996
- [14]. Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957, 27-28.
- [15]. Moore, Michael. *América in the movies*. New Yor: Basic books, 1975.
- [16]. Wyke, Maria. *Projecting Ancient Rome*, in Landy, Marcia (Ed.) *The Historical Film. History and Memory and Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers university Press,2000.
- [17]. Wyke. Maria. *Projecting Ancient Rome*, in Landy, Marcia (Ed.) *The Historical Film. History and Memory and Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers university Press,2000.
- [18]. Veyne, Paul. *Comment on écrit l'histoire : essai d'épistémologie*, Paris Édition du Seuil, 1971, p.
- [19]. Paul, Joanna. Fellini-Sayiricon. *Patronius and Film*, in Prag, Jonathan. Repath, Ian.(eds.) *Petronius.a Handbook*.Malden; Blackwell Publishing, ,2013, 198-208.
- [20]. Mattingly, David J. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*.Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, p.
- [21]. Onfray Michel. *La Théorie du Voyage*, Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2007.
- [22]. Harris, William V. Roman Power. *A Thousand years of Empire*. Prionceton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2016, p. 18.
- [23]. Vitória, Frei Baltazar da *El teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*. Salamanca: Libro II, Capítulo XXIX, 1620, p. 275.

- [24]. Mattingly, David J. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, p.
- [25]. Flower, Harriet, I. *Roman Republics*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- [26]. Golden, Gregory, K. *Crisis Management during the Roman Republic: The Role of Political Institutions Emergencies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2013, p. 12-15.
- [27]. Harris, *Roman Power. A Thousand years of Empire*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press 2016, p.9.
- [28]. Benveniste, Émile. *Le Vocabulaire des Institutions Indo-Européennes*, Volume 2, Pouvoir, Droit, Religion. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1974, p. 148.
- [29]. Tacitus, The Annals. *The Reigns of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 70.
- [30]. Talbert, Richard J.A. *The Senate of Imperial Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 81.
- [31]. Bobbio, Norberto et alii, *Dicionario de Politica*, vol. 2. Brasília: Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 12^a edição, 1999, p.623.
- [32]. Rowe, Greg. *Princes and Imperial Culture. The New Tiberean Senatorial Decrees*, Ann Harbour; University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 155.
- [33]. Veyne, Paul, *Sur L'Individu*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987, p. 10.
- [34]. Leonning, Carol. Rucker, Philip.. *I Alone can fix it. Donald J. Trump's catastrophic final year*. New York: Penguin Press, 2012
- [35]. Harris, William V. *Roman Power. A Thousand years of Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016, p. 103.
- [36]. Veyne, Paul. *Sur L'Individu*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987, p. 12.
- [37]. Moatti, Claudia, *La Raison de Rome. Naissance de l'esprit critique à la fin de la République*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997. P. 80.
- [38]. Veyne, Paul, *L'Empire Gréco-Romain*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2005, p. 62.
- [39]. Foucault, Michel. *Microfísica do poder*. 11a Edition, Machado, Roberto, (Org.) Rio de Janeiro: Editora Graal, 1993, p. 182.
- [40]. Bonner, Stanley, *Education in Rome: From de Elder Cato to to the young Pliny*. London: Routledge, 2012, p.7.
- [41]. Foucault, Michel. *Microfísica do poder*. 11a Edition, Machado, Roberto, (Org.) Rio de Janeiro: Editora Graal, 1993, p. 182.
- [42]. Severy, Beth. *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of Roman Empire*. London: Routledge, 2004, 8.
- [43]. Tacitus. *Annals, The Regin of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.200
- [44]. Crossan, John dominique. *The Historical Jesus*. San Francisco, Harper, 1991, p.34.
- [45]. Mattingly, David J. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*. Princeton: University Press, 2011, p 9.
- [46]. Rupke, Jorg. *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, p. .12.
- [47]. Johnson, Paulo Donoso. *El culto privado en la religion romana: Lares y Penates como custodios de la Pietas Familis*. Revista Electrónica Historias de Orbis Terrarum, Santiago: 2009, p.13.
- [48]. Severy, Beth. *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of Roman Empire*. London: Routledge, 2004, p.35.
- [49]. Rupke, Jorg. *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, p. 12.
- [50]. Beard, Mary *The Roman Triumph*, Cambridge: Cambridge University. Press, 2007, p.9.

- [51]. Griffin, Miriam. *Nero: The end of a Dynasty*. Routledge, 2002, 95
- [52]. Griffin, Miriam. *Nero: The end of a Dynasty*. Routledge, 2002, 95
- [53]. Rowe, Greg. *Princes and Imperial Culture. The New Tiberean Senatorial Decrees*, Ann Harbour: University of Chicasso Press, 2002, p.17.
- [54]. Veyne, Paul, *Sur L'Individu*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987, p.1.
- [55]. Flaig, Egon. *Pompa funebris. Concorrence des nobles et mémoire collective dans la République romaine*.in ACTES de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales. Représentations du monde social. Textes, Images, Cortéges.154, Septembre 2004. P.77.
- [56]. Arendt, Hannah, *What is Authoririty? In Between Past and Future*. New York: Penqquin Books, 2006, p. 122-126.
- [57]. Tacitus, The Annals. *The reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.275.
- [58]. Vout, Caroline. *Power and Erociticism in Imperial Rome*.Cambridge: Cambrige University Press, 2007, p. 20.
- [59]. Mattingly, David J. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*.Princeton: University Press, 2011, p.115.
- [60]. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001, p. 128.
- [61]. Walters, Jonathan, *Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thooight*, in Hallet, Judith P. , Skinner, Marilyn B. *Roman sexualities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, p.30.
- [62]. Veyne, Paul M. *L'Empire Gréco-Romain*.Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2005, p.177.
- [63]. Griffin, Miriam.T. *Nero: The end of a Dynasty*. New York, Routledge: 2002, p. 64.
- [64]. Levick, Barbara. *Augustus: Image and Substance*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010, p.129.
- [65]. Tacitus, The Annals. *The reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 p.13.
- [66].Veyne, Paul, M. *L'Empire Romain*, in Duverger, Maurice (org.). *Le Concept d'Empire*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980, p.121-122.
- [67]. Tacitus, Tacitus, The Annals. *The reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008
- [68]. Tacitus, The Annals. *The reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008
- [69].Habinek, Thomas, N. *The Politics of Latin Literature. Writing, identity and Empire in Ancient Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 66.
- [70]. Moatti, Claudia, *La Raison de Rome. Naissance de l 'esprit critique à la fin de la Renaissance*. Paris: Éditons du Seuil, 1997, p. 219.
- [71]. Rimell, Victoria. *Petronius and the Anatomy of Fiction*. New York:, Cambridge University Press, 21004, p.72.
- [72]. Barthes, Roland. *Leçon*, Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1973, p.18.
- [73]. Habinek, Thomas, N. *The Politics of Latin Literature. Writing, identity and Empire in Ancient Rome*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p.237.
- [74]. Panayotis, Costas. *Petronius and the Roman Literary tradition*. In Prag, Jonathan. Repath, Ian. (org.) *Petronius a Handbook*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.
- [75]. Mattingly, David J. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*.Princeton: University Press, 2011,p.
- [76]. Dickson, Sheila K. Hallett, Judith P. Hallett *A Roman Women Reader: Selections from the Second Century BCE through Second, Mundelein: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers,2015, p. 134.*
- [77]. Wyke, Maria. *Projecting Ancient Rome*, in Landy, Marcia (Ed.) *The Historical Film. History and Memory and Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers university Press,2000.

- [78]. Paul, Joanna. *Cinematic City in Fellini's Satyricon and Roma*. In Weygley, Richard. *Cinematic Rome*. Leicester: Troubadour Publishing, 2008, p.109-110.
- [79]. Cardullo, Bert. *European directors and their films*. Essays on Cinema. Lanham; Scarecrow Press Inc. 2012., p. VII
- [80]. Constantini, Constanzo. *Conversations with Fellini*, New York: Harvest, 1995, p.74.
- [81]. Paul, Joanna. *Cinematic City in Fellini's Satyricon and Roma*. In Weygley, Richard. *Cinematic Rome*. Leicester: Troubadour Publishing Ltd, 2008, p.109-110.
- [82]. Chartier, Michel, *Impéris*, in *Estado-guerra*, Lisboa: Enciclopedia Einaudi, 1989.p. 118.
- [83]. Moatti, Claudia. Kaiser, Wolfgang. *Gens de passage en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne: procédures de contrôle et d'identification*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose 2007, p. 90.
- [84]. Isayev, Elena. *Migration, Mobility and Place in ancient Italy*. New York: Cambridge university Press, 2012, p.21.
- [85]. Acemoglu, Daron, Robinson, James A. *Why Nations Fail. The origins of power, prosperity and poverty*. London: Profile Book, 2013.
- [86]. Prag, Jonathan, Repath, Ian (org.) *Petronius*. A Handbook. Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2013, p. 80.
- [87]. Onfray, Michel. *La Théorie du Voyage*, Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2007, p. 187.
- [88]. Foucault, Michel, volume 2 of the *History of Sexuality*. The Use of Pleasure, New York; Vintage Books, 1990, P. 35.
- [89]. Caro, Titus, Lucretius. *Da Natureza*. In Os Pensadores, São Paulo: Editora Abril, 1973, p..
- [90]. Caro, Titus, Lucretius *Da Natureza*. In Os Pensadores, São Paulo: Editora Abril, 1973, p..
- [91]. Catullus. *Poesie*, Quasimodo, Salvatore. Translator, Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 1993, p.61.
- [92]. Edwards, Catherine. *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 65.
- [93]. Caro, Titus, Lucretius. *Da Natureza*. In Os Pensadores, São Paulo: Editora Abril, 1973, p..
- [94]. Walters, Jonathan, in *Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought*, in Hallet, Judith P. , Skinner, Marilyn B. *Roman sexualities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, p.31.
- [95]. Edwards, Catherine. *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.16.
- [96]. Veyne, Paul. *Vie de Trimalcion*. In: *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*. 16e année, N. 2, 1961. pp. 213-247. doi: 10.3406/ahess.1961.420704.
- [97]. Fupont, Florence. *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992, p.91.
- [98]. Kolb, Anne. *Transport and communication in the Roman State*. Adams, Colins. Laurence, Ray (ed.) *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire*. London: Routledge, 2021, p. 41.
- [99]. Barthes, Roland, *La Préparation du Roman, I et II*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2003, p.172.
- [100]. Onfray, Michel. *La Théorie du Voyage*, Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2007.
- [101]. Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country. Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.