

A LEPIDUS SUSURRUS.
APULEIUS AND THE FASCINATION OF POETRY*

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Allusive, ambiguous, and even obscure passages are indeed easy to find in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, but the prologue seems to be particularly written to stimulate, and possibly to deceive, the reader's interpretative capabilities. Even the very first words, *At ego tibi*, immediately raise a problem: why *at*? The particle implies some sort of transition or opposition, but its setting at the very beginning of our text is rather astonishing: the reader, of course, cannot know *from what* the transition or opposition is marked. John Morgan¹ argues that "the emphatic position of *at ego tibi* implies a previous storytelling *tu mihi*... we are plunged into the position of overhearing part of a larger narrative exchange already in progress"; this suggested contextualization would be perfectly consistent with the subsequent characterization of the novel as a *sermo Milesius* ('Milesian talk'), since from the pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes* "we learn that Aristides in the *Milesian Tales* also presented himself as a participant, listener as well as teller, in a cycle of stories". Alexander Scobie² argues that the parallelism with the introduction of *Cupid and Psyche* (4.27.8 *Sed ego te...*) could suggest that with *at* Apuleius "temporarily casts off the guise of Platonist and assumes that of a *fabulator*" and that "the opening sentence of the prologue was possibly a formula used by story-tellers". He also points out that an initial *at* is not uncommon in Latin poetry, beginning from Virgil's famous *At regina graui...* (*Aen.* 4.1).³ Wytse Keulen how-

* This essay is connected with a paper (Graverini 2005) I gave at the 2nd Rethymno International Conference on the Ancient Novel (Crete, May 2003). I could not avoid a few overlappings, but – at least in my intentions – the two studies are complementary to each other. I am grateful to Alessandro Barchiesi, Ellen Finkelpearl, Marco Fucecchi, and Antonio Stramaglia, who read previous versions of this paper and offered their very helpful advice; I also received extremely useful remarks and suggestions by Ruurd Nauta, the editor of this volume. The errors which remain fall of course to my own account.

1. Morgan 2001: 161.

2. Scobie 1975: 66.

3. Cf. Prop. 2.27.1 (*at uos*); Ov. *Ep.* 12.1 (*at tibi*); *Met.* 4.1; Luc. 9.1; Sil. 15.1; Stat. *Theb.* 3.1; V. Fl. 6.1. No occurrences at the beginning of a *first* book, though; the only two parallels for this placement, as Scobie notes, seem to be Xenophon's *Symposium*, 'ἅλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ... and *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum*, 'ἅλλ' ἐγὼ ἐννοήσας... Perhaps it should

ever suggests that “perhaps... *at* is merely a colloquial particle” and notes that “the combination *at ego* is characteristic of dialogue and occurs very frequently in comedy, sometimes to emphasise a promise or proposal”.⁴

This beginning, therefore, seems to put the reader *in medias res*, as though a dialogue, or simply a speech by the prologue speaker, has already begun in his absence; what has been told before *at ego*, unfortunately, is only a subject for hypotheses. As we have seen, *at* has been interpreted by others as pertaining to storytelling and/or dialogues; as a provocative and tentative introduction to this study, I am going to suggest a different and more literary contextualization.

The dialogue we are called to participate in, or the speech we are asked to listen to, has (at its beginning at least) a very definite and particular subject, judging by the part of it that we can read: the prologue speaker, whoever he is,⁵ is giving his audience some general information about the narration that is to follow. Confining ourselves to the first sentence, we are told that this narration will be a *sermo Milesius* (‘Milesian talk’), that it will consist of *uariae fabulae* (‘different sorts of tales’), and that it will be able to *permulcere aures* (‘soothe the ears’) of those who will listen to it. Each of these pieces of information would need some interpretation, but what concerns me now is that we are informed about genre (‘Milesian’),⁶ contents (different tales somehow connected to each other), and style (a ‘soothing’ narration) of the *Metamorphoses*.⁷ So, perhaps we could lay aside for a moment the position of *at ego* at the very beginning of our novel, and consider more attentively the fact that it is connected with a prologue, and most of all with a statement concerning literary genre and style. Perhaps we could also consider the possibility

also be noted that several books of Homer (*Il.* 3 and 15; *Od.* 11, 12, 14, 19, and 20; cf. also *Il.* 9, 22, 23 and *Od.* 6) begin with *Ἀὐτάρ*.

4. Keulen 2003: 60; cf. also Harrison 2003: 240–41.

5. This is the problem that more than any other seems to have attracted the curiosity of those scholars who have studied the prologue. See Kahane-Laird 2001, and Graverini 2003 for some comments and a few bibliographical supplements.

6. While I am a supporter of Ken Dowden’s ‘prohibition 2’ (“No one shall seek to identify the speaker (singular) of Apuleius’ Prologue”: Dowden 2001: 129), I am not as much persuaded of his ‘prohibition 1’ (“No one shall refer to a genre of ‘Milesian Tales’”, p. 126). Keulen 2003: 61–62 (at *Milesio*) offers enough evidence of the fact that the adjective *Milesius* seems to be connected to a fictive and novelistic literary genre. However, it is true that our knowledge of the Milesian ‘genre’ is scanty; and I am not sure that an ancient reader would label as ‘Milesian’ all the texts anthologised by Ferrari-Zanetto 1995.

7. Of course, there is no need to differentiate so sharply between the words adopted by the prologue speaker and the information that they convey. For example, it is possible that the mention of *sermo Milesius* has some relevance for the style too, if we connect Apuleius’ archaising style to Sisenna (cf. Callebat 1968: 478; Dowden 2001: 127).

that *at ego tibi* implies not a preceding *tu mihi*, as Morgan says, but *alii tibi*: that is, it could stress the difference between the prologue speaker's literary choices and other genres and/or styles that other speakers could offer the same audience.

At ego is, of course, a very common word sequence, and to set off in search of intertextual parallels could appear to be a desperate and, even worse, pointless effort. However, if we limit the research field to metaliterary statements, we can find some interesting, or at least interpretable, matches. *At ego* was not only a common colloquial combination, easily found in comedy and dialogical texts; it was also a well established tradition in ancient literature to begin a statement about one's literary principles with something similar to 'but I...'. The Roman historians, for example, in their prologues felt the need of confronting themselves with their predecessors, and of justifying their own choices. Sallust had to account for his decision to write history instead of devoting himself to his country: *Cat.* 3.2 *Ac mihi quidem, tametsi haudquaquam par gloria sequitur scriptorem et auctorem rerum, tamen in primis arduum uidetur res gestas scribere* 'And for myself, although I am well aware that by no means equal repute attends the narrator and the doer of deeds, yet I regard the writing of history as one of the most difficult of tasks'.⁸ Livy had the less essential but still very important problem of justifying the choice of his subject matter, ancient and mythical instead of contemporary history: 1 *pr.* 5 *ego contra hoc quoque laboris praemium petam* 'I myself, on the contrary, shall seek in this an additional reward for my toil'.⁹ Proudly claiming his own impartiality and disinterest in writing history, Tacitus stresses in his prologues the opposition between himself (*Hist.* 1.1.3 and *Ann.* 1.1.3 *mihi*) and the other historians (*Hist.* 1.1.1 *multi auctores*; *Ann.* 1.1.1 *clari scriptores*).

Subject matter and literary genre were also a common and all-important issue for those Augustan poets who had a strong preference for a personal, lyric and/or elegiac Muse, while their patrons tried to promote a more politically committed poetry. In Propertius, for example, metapoetical statements often take the form of a *recusatio*, a refusal to engage in 'civil' or epic poetry. The 'but I' form explicitly shows up at 2.1.45 *enumerat miles uulnera, pastor oues; / nos contra angusto uersamus proelia lecto* 'the soldier counts his wounds, the shepherd his sheep; I for my part wage wars within the narrow confines of a bed', but it is clearly present also at 3.9.20–21 *naturae sequitur semina quisque*

8. Trans. Rolfe 1931.

9. Trans. Foster 1919.

suae. / *At tua, Maecenas, uitae praecepta recepi* ‘each man follows the elements of his own nature. But I have adopted your rule of life, Maecenas’, and 4.1.61–62 *Ennius hirsuta cingat sua dicta corona: / mi folia ex hedera porrige, Bacche, tua* ‘let Ennius crown his verse with a ragged garland: Bacchus, give me leaves of your ivy’.¹⁰ If we consider similar adversative uses of first-person pronouns, the examples from Augustan poetry might easily multiply. See for example Ovid, *Fasti* 1.13 *Caesaris arma canant alii: nos Caesaris aras* ‘let others sing of Caesar’s wars; my theme be Caesar’s altars’;¹¹ and several passages in Horace, like *C.* 1.7.1–10 *Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon aut Mytilenen... me nec tam patiens Lacedaemon... percussit* ‘others will praise bright Rhodes or Mytilene... As for me, I am not so struck by much-enduring Lacedaemon...’.¹² An explicit *at*, like in Apuleius, recurs in the lengthy *recusatio* that opens the third book of Manilius’ *Astronomica*. After enumerating a series of topics he is not going to treat, the poet concludes: ‘it is a hackneyed task to write poems on attractive themes and compose an uncomplicated work. But I (*at mihi*) must wrestle with numerals and names of things unheard of’.¹³ Also later *recusationes* reiterate this pattern. For example, in Martial 8.3.17–19 the ninth Muse incites the poet with these words: ‘let the ultra-serious and the ultra-severe write such stuff, sad fellows looked upon by the midnight lamp. But do *you (at tu)* dip your witty little books in Roman salt... never mind if you seem to sing with a nar-

10. Trans. Goold 1990.

11. Trans. Frazer 1973.

12. Trans. West 1995. See also e.g. *C.* 1.6.1–9 *Scriberis Vario fortis... Nos, Agrippa, neque haec dicere... conamur*; 1.31.9–15 *Premant Calena falce quibus dedit / fortuna uitem... Me pascunt oliuae*; 4.2.25–32 *Multa Dircaeum leuat aura cycnum... ego apis Matinae / more modoque... carmina fingo*. Such antitheses based on first-person pronouns are usual in *recusationes* and metapoetical statements: cf. Nisbet-Hubbard 1970: 85 commenting on *C.* 1.6.5 *nos*.

13. Trans. Goold 1977. Manilius’ *recusatio* (on which see Liuzzi 1988: 85–88) is an extremely interesting comparison for Apuleius’ prologue, with which it shares some key points; there is probably no direct relationship between the two texts, but the correspondences suggest that both Manilius and Apuleius resort to stock themes in their prologues. After the *recusatio* proper with *at mihi*, the poet urges the reader to listen attentively; then he takes a stand in the diatribe between *utile* and *dulce* in poetry, declaring that he will not offer *dulcia carmina*, but useful teachings; and finally justifies himself for the presence, in his poem, of foreign terms (‘come hither, whoever is able to devote ear and eye to my emprise, and hearken to the truths I utter: apply your mind [*impendas animum*], and seek not poetry that beguiles [*nec dulcia carmina quaeras*]: my theme of itself precludes adornment, content but to be taught. And if any terms are spoken in a foreign tongue, blame this on subject, not on bard’). For the first point, cf. Apul. *Met.* 1.1.6 *Lector intende* (and, for the appeal to the reader’s ears and eyes, cf. 1.1.1 *aures* and *inspicere*); for the third, cf. 1.1.5 *En ecce praefamur ueniam, siquid exotici ac forensis sermonis rudis locutor offendero*; for the second, cf. 1.1.1 *lepido susurro permulceam*, and the interpretation of this expression that I am going to suggest in the following pages.

row pipe (*angusta auena*), so long as your pipe outmatches many people's trumpets'.¹⁴

Of course, this is not the place for a thorough review of the theme of *recusatio* in Augustan poetry; but the picture would not be complete without a hint at Hellenistic Greek authors, who frequently adopted the same rhetoric gesture. Beginning with minor texts, my first example is an epigram attributed to Theocritus in the *Anthologia Graeca* (9.434.1–2): Ἄλλος ὁ Χῖος, ἐγὼ δὲ Θεόκριτος δς τάδ' ἔγραψα / εἰς ἀπὸ τῶν πολλῶν εἰμὶ Συρακοσίῳν 'The Chian is another, but I, Theocritus, the author of these works, am a Syracusan, one among many'.¹⁵ This is a problematic text. Its attribution to Theocritus appears to be autoschediastic; and also Wilamowitz's identification of the 'Chian' with Homer, that would allow us to interpret the epigram as a contraposition between epic and bucolic poetry, is probably to be rejected: the anonymous epigrammatist rather aims at differentiating Theocritus of Syracuse, the bucolic poet, from another Theocritus, a sophist of Chios.¹⁶ But, even though only a difference between personal identities is at stake in the first two verses, a literary statement occurs in the fourth and last, where the epigrammatist points out the difference between the Muses that inspired the two authors bearing the same name: Μοῦσαν δ' ὀθνείαν οὔ τιν' ἐφελκυσάμαν 'I have taken to myself no alien Muse'. Another relevant apocryphal text is the *Epitaphium Bionis* ascribed to Moschus. After enumerating a series of cities and places that lament Bion's death much more than the loss of the famous poets to whom they gave birth (Ascre/Hesiod, Boeotia/Pindar, Lesbos/Alcaeus, Teos/Anacreon, Paros/Archilochus, Mytilene/Sappho, Syracuse/Theocritus), the poet says that he, on his behalf, sings as a bucolic poet the mourning of Ausonia for Bion: that is, he is differentiating himself from others as regards both birthplace and poetic genre, just like the author of the epigram quoted above does with Theocritus (vv. 93–94: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοι / Αὐσονικᾶς ὀδύνας μέλπω μέλος, οὐ ξένος ᾠδᾶς / βουκολικᾶς 'but, on my behalf, I am singing the mourning of Ausonia, being no stranger to pastoral poetry').

However, the most famous piece, and the most relevant for my purposes, is the prologue of Callimachus' *Aitia*, a text that Margaret Hubbard defined as "possibly more significant for Latin poetry than any other

14. Trans. Shackleton Bailey 1993.

15. Trans. Gow 1986.

16. See Cameron 1995: 422–26; Rossi 2001: 344.

single page of Greek”¹⁷ and that has certainly had some influence on many of the above quoted passages. The poet proclaims that he prefers the shrill cry (λιγὸς ἦχος) of the cicadas to the din (θόρυβος) of the ass. Both the chirp of the cicadas and the bray of the ass are clearly symbols of different kinds of poetry: let other poets bray like the long-eared beast, Callimachus prefers to be like the slight and winged cicada (vv. 31–32 Θηρὶ μὲν οὐατόθεντι πανείκελον ὀγκήσαιο / ἄλλος, ἐγὼ δ’ εἶην οὐλαχὺς, ὁ πτερόεις ‘Let others bray just like the long-eared brute, but let me be the dainty, the winged one’).¹⁸ At the end of the *Aitia* a similar pattern, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ, announces a transition to a new work and a new genre, the *Iambi*: the poet says his farewell to Zeus and commends the royal house to his protection, while he, he says, is heading to the pasture where the Muses walk (fr. 112.8–9 Χαῖρε, Ζεῦ, μέγα καὶ σύ, σάω δ’ ὅλον οἶκον ἀνάκτων / αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Μουσέων πεζὸν ἔπειμι νομόν ‘Hail greatly thou too, Zeus, and save all the house of kings. But I will pass on to the prose pastures of the Muses’).¹⁹

In these texts, Callimachus employs ἐγὼ δὲ and αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ to set himself and his poems apart from other literary traditions; and, as we have seen, it is possible to find similar expressions in similar contexts also in later Hellenistic and Latin poets. Of course, it could be mere coincidence: ‘but I’ is a very natural and common way to begin a statement about one’s originality. Nevertheless, if we consider how often the name of Callimachus recurs in the critical literature about, for example, Propertius, and if we take into account that both expressions recur in similar contexts, we can at least wonder if Propertius’ *nos contra* – occurring just five lines after Callimachus himself has been mentioned as a model of the ‘slight’ poetry Propertius stands for – has something to do with Callimachus’ ἐγὼ δὲ. In other words, Propertius’ poem offers a sort of “collective security”²⁰ that allows us to imagine intertextual connections even in words or phrases that have no eye-catching peculiarity in them-

17. Hubbard 1974, 73; see also Thomas 1993: 199, who stresses that “Callimachus does in fact deserve, from a number of aspects, the prominent position accorded him by relatively recent criticism”.

18. Trans. Trypanis 1978.

19. Trans. Trypanis 1978. Pfeiffer 1949: 125 *ad loc.* points out that this is a variation on a standard closure of the Homeric Hymns: cf. e.g. *h.Cer.* 495; *h.Ap.* 546; *h.Merc.* 580; *h.Ven.* 293. Callimachus’ closure implies, I think, some sort of differentiation between the activities of the poet and those of Zeus and the kings (cf. Hes. *Th.* 94–96: ‘from the Muses are the singers... from Zeus the kings’); this could be an echo of the prologue, where he says that ‘it is Zeus’ job to thunder, not mine’ (v. 20 βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμὸν, ἀλλὰ Διός).

20. For the terminology see Hinds 1998: 28. I also refer to Hinds’ discussion of *me miserum* in Ovid and Propertius (pp. 29–34) as a theoretical background to the interpretability of such ‘loose’ intertexts.

selves. What I am suggesting is that ἐγὼ δὲ, *nos contra* and similar expressions could be regarded as stylised rhetorical gestures that recur with some frequency in metapoetical contexts, especially in the Hellenistic and Augustan authors, when a poet sets up his own style or literary genre against other ones; and, even though defining Propertius' *nos contra* an allusion proper to Callimachus' ἐγὼ δὲ would be probably too far-fetched, I think that an ancient reader could more or less easily identify this rhetorical gesture as typical of such metapoetical contexts, recalling Callimachus, Propertius and others.

Apuleius' *at ego*, as we have seen, occurs precisely in a metaliterary context. However, I am sure that at this point no critic would be ready to admit that this *at ego* has something to do with ἐγὼ δὲ or *nos contra* (of course, assuming that at least somebody is now persuaded that ἐγὼ δὲ and *nos contra* have something in common): after all, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is a prose narrative and its prologue, like the prologues of Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus, seems to have no connection with poetry, Callimachus and Callimacheanism.

It is exactly this last statement that I will try to confute in the following part of this paper.

Callimachus, in the prologue of his *Aitia*, used the braying of the ass and the songs of the cicadas as metaphors for bad and good poetry respectively. Now, exactly the same voices seem to reverberate in our prologue. The prologue speaker defines himself a *rudis locutor*, a 'raw speaker': almost all commentators, following John Winkler and Gian Franco Gianotti,²¹ connect the adjective *rudis* to the braying of the ass, *rudere* in Latin, so that *rudis locutor* also suggest a 'braying speaker', and somehow foreshadows Lucius' metamorphosis into an ass. Wytse Keulen is rather sceptical about this point in his commentary,²² but this is one of the very few occasions in which I cannot agree with him. I would rather point out that the connection of *rudis locutor* with *rudere* is a pun that fits very well with his interpretation of the prologue in the light of ancient rhetoric since, as it seems, it was a common topos to compare an orator's voice to the cry of an animal: the barking of the dog was, as it seems, the most common metaphor (cf. e.g. Cic. *Brut.* 58 *latrant enim iam quidam oratores, non loquuntur*),²³ but at least one orator was

21. Winkler 1985: 196; Gianotti 1986: 106.

22. Keulen 2003: 81 *ad loc.*: "the idea seems ingenious but far-fetched".

23. Cf. also Sallust, *fr.* 4.54 Maurenbrecher (Nonius 1.60 M. = 84 L.) *canina, ut ait Appius, facundia exercebatur*. On this passage see La Penna 1973; the metaphor is

unlucky enough to be described as a braying ass by Lucilius (*frg.* 261 M. *haec... rudet ex rostris*). As for the cicadas, we will see in a minute that they begin to enchant us with their chirp soon after *at ego tibi*. If this is true, it would be easy to interpret the prologue, at least partially and tentatively, as a reaction to Callimachus' poetic: a prologue speaker who tries to speak with a *lepidus susurrus* and ends up as a braying ass against a poet who refuses to speak like an ass²⁴ and identifies himself with a slight cicada – and, why not, *at ego* against ἐγὼ δέ. More appropriately, I think, we could say for the moment (I am going to show that there is more to be said about *lepidus susurrus*) that the prologue speaker takes over *both* the positions of Callimachus and of his opponents, showing a tendency to cross the boundaries of different genres and styles that is typical of Apuleius and the ancient novel: if so, the *Metamorphoses* are announced as a work that will participate in *both* the characteristics of a Callimachean composition (that is, high stylistic refinement) and of an anti-Callimachean poem (that is, a long narration with an epic flavour).²⁵

This is clearly an eccentric suggestion,²⁶ since it forces us to imagine Apuleius in dialogue with a Hellenistic poet like Callimachus, whose work has never been the first place critics have looked for intertextual connections with Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. However, on the one hand

adopted also by Quint. *Inst.* 12.9.9 and Hieron. *Epist.* 119.1. Cf. Also Ov. *Ib.* 232 *latrat et in toto uerba canina foro* and several other passages quoted by La Penna 1973: 189 n. 2.

24. For a bad poet speaking like an ass see also Callimachus, *fr.* 192.11 Pf.; according to [Aristoteles], *Phgn.* 813A οἱ μέγα φωνοῦντες, 'loud-voiced speakers', are similar to asses.

25. Cf. Thomas 1993: 202–03 on the presence of Callimachean motifs and expressions in statements of anti-Callimachean poetics (Persius and others). On the *Metamorphoses* and epic poetry see e.g. Harrison 2000: 222–23, who states that "though... the *Metamorphoses* is full of literary allusions to many kinds of writing, it seems to be particularly concerned with highlighting its similarities with and differences from the epic in particular".

26. Of course, I take full responsibility for it; honours, if any, are to be shared with some predecessors, whose original and more sober suggestions I have expanded. The Callimachean prologue is connected to *rudis* by Winkler 1985: 196–97; James 2001: 259 and n. 8 points out the contrast between the *lepidus susurrus* and *rudis locutor*. I became aware of the "eye-catching use of *at* to announce the subject of this... work" reading Dowden 2001: 132, who (expanding on Harrison 1990: 508) compares the prologue to the *Metamorphoses* with the verses that according to Servius originally opened Virgil's *Aeneid* (in particular the last one, *at nunc horrentia Martis / arma uirumque cano...*). Finkelpearl 1998 states that, in reading Apuleius, we should see "many allusions as, in part, literary criticism and replies to stylistic statements of earlier writers" (17); Callimachus and some metaliterary statements by the Augustan poets are exploited in her chapter on 'Hair, Elegy, and Style' (62–67).

it is well known that Apuleius had a wide and thorough Greek culture,²⁷ and this authorises us to make use of major Hellenistic authors to find an appropriate literary context to an Apuleian expression;²⁸ on the other, I will try to show that part of the Hellenistic texts concerned can actually be considered secondary references, only activated through the mediation of Latin authors.

But let us continue with the cicadas. The formulation I offered above of the relationship between the prologues of Apuleius and Callimachus implies some sort of connection between the prologue speaker's *lepidus susurrus* and the voice of the cicadas. My starting point in demonstrating this connection is a suggestion by Bruce Gibson,²⁹ who argues that Apuleius' *lepidus susurrus* is a hint at the first verse of Theocritus' *Idyll* 1, Ἄδῦ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα..., that describes the soft rustle of the wind through the branches of a pine. Indeed, the similarity is striking, and Gibson reinforces it with two further remarks: 1) the prologue also mentions the *calamus* with which the book has been written: *calamus*, here 'pen', can also mean 'reed pipe', and could somehow hint at the Pan-pipe whose sound is in Theocritus so similar to the ψιθύρισμα of the pine leafs (vv. 2–3 ἄδῦ δὲ καὶ τὸ / σὺρίσδεξ 'sweet is also your syrinx-playing');³⁰ 2) the prologue also lays great emphasis on Egypt, since it is explicitly told that the above mentioned *calamus* comes from the Nile, and that the book is written on an Egyptian papyrus: a possible explanation for these Eryp-

27. The main bibliographical reference is, of course, Sandy 1997. Apuleius studied poetry at Athens (*Fl.* 20.4) and was on his way to Alexandria when he stopped in Oea to recover from the fatigue of the journey (*Apol.* 72), starting a chain of events that will lead to the trial in Sabratha (on Apuleius' biography see e. g. Harrison 2000: 1–10). He was proud to cultivate all literary genres, including of course all kinds of poetry, *tam graece quam latine* 'both in Greek and in Latin' (*Fl.* 9.14; 9.27–29); unfortunately his poetic production is almost completely lost for us, but his remaining verses show a "notevole influsso di modelli ellenistico-neoterici" (Mattiacci 1985: 249).

28. Gellius 9.9.3 is evidence that 2nd century men of letters used to compare Virgil with Callimachus and Theocritus and others very closely: 'Virgil... showed skill and good judgment in omitting some things and rendering others, when he was dealing with passages of Homer or Hesiod or Apollonius or Parthenius or Callimachus or Theocritus' (trans. Rolfe 1927).

29. Gibson 2001: 71 ff.

30. Gibson's paper, in general, aims to demonstrate that the phrase *papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam* does not refer only to the act of writing, but contains "possible auditory elements" too (68; on this, see also Finkelpearl 2003: 47–48). Of course my focus is different, and my brief quotations do not do justice to the sophistication of his arguments. Gibson also keenly notes (71, n. 12) that "beguiling whisperings are not always agreeable... quite apart from the possibly dangerous implications of *lepidus susurro*... compare also the insidious qualities of *permulceo* at Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.12.6 *nihilque aliud quam quod uel prauis uoluptatibus aures adsistentium permulceat quaerunt*". His intuition is fully developed by Keulen 2003: 8–19; see also Graverini, forthcoming.

tian references is that “an Egyptian mode of composition could suggest Theocritus, a poet of Alexandria”. Unfortunately, Gibson leaves untold what this “Egyptian mode of composition” consists in, and to what extent an allusion to Theocritus in the prologue is significant to characterise the novel’s style, genre, or contents: should we think that the style of the whole novel is thereby characterised as Theocritean? Of course, this would really seem too far-fetched; ‘pastoral’ or ‘bucolic’ do not appear to be proper adjectives to define the *Metamorphoses* as a whole.

It is true, however, that we should not reject an interesting intertext only because we (still) do not know what we could make of it. I would also point out that Theocritus is not an unlikely source for an allusion in the *Metamorphoses*, and I will substantiate this statement with a new proposal. At *Met.* 8.1.3 one of Charite’s slaves reports the death of his masters to an audience consisting of grooms, shepherds, and cowherds (and of course the ass); this character has been frequently compared to a tragic messenger,³¹ and the comparison accounts very well for the pathetic tone of his speech. But the choice of words is not coherent with the tragic genre: the messenger’s opening, *equisones opilionesque, etiam busequae* ‘grooms and shepherds, and herdsmen too’, fully qualifies for an imitation of Theocritus, *Idyll* 1.80 ἦνθον τοὶ βοῦται, τοὶ ποιμένες, ὀπόλοι ἦνθον ‘the cowherds came, and shepherds and goatherds too’, while the Virgilian *Stant et oues circum... uenit et upilio, tardi uenere subulci* ‘the sheep stand around... and the shepherd came, and the slow swineherds too’ (*Ecl.* 10.16 and 19) seems to be less close to Apuleius’ text (the context is instead fully relevant in both Theocritus and Virgil: the shepherds and the others are called to participate in the mourning for the deaths, real or figurative, of Thyrsis and Gallus respectively). I suspect that this imitation is simply a display of Apuleius’ cultural showmanship, and that it would be pointless to go off in search for a further meaning in the implicit approach of the messenger to a bucolic poet, and of Charite to a bucolic character: she certainly dies for love, but her story is definitely too bloody for a pastoral song. What I am trying to demonstrate is only that Apuleius can imitate Theocritus, or at least that he can read Theocritus through Virgil, regardless of the literary context and also in contrast with a literary genre that is temporarily taken on. Nevertheless, a prologue is a very sensitive location for an allusion, and I still

31. Cf. López 1976: 338; and more recently Nicolini 2000: 255 *ad loc.*: “l’esordio e la struttura del discorso, con l’apostrofe a un gruppo di ascoltatori, l’uso della seconda persona plurale, l’immediata rivelazione della sciagura avvenuta, richiamano e forse addirittura parodiano uno schema comune dell’ ἄγγελος della tragedia”. On messengers in Euripides see the comprehensive study by de Jong 1991.

think that Gibson's suggestion lacks some contextualization; this is at least a good reason for trying to develop his idea by following different paths.

The leaves of the Theocritean pine gently rustle in the wind; their sound is compared by Thyrsis to the sound of the *syrinx* of his unnamed fellow goatherd. Both the terminology and the idea are taken up by Virgil in his first *Eclogue*: Meliboeus, not without envy, tells Tityrus *hinc tibi, quae semper, uicino ab limite saepes / Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti / saepe leui somnum suadebit inire susurro* 'on this side, as of old, on your neighbour's border, the hedge whose willow blossoms are sipped by Hybla's bees shall often with his gentle hum soothe you to slumber'³² (*Ecl.* 1.53–55). The pastoral fascination (sleep) induced by the drone of the bees is connected with the preceding image, Tityrus enjoying the cooling shade near sacred springs (vv. 51–52). Michael Putnam has shown that this is "figurative for one aspect of the pastoral myth – the soul's absorption by poetry and spiritual calm";³³ the *leuis susurrus*, connected with the Theocritean description of a nature that sings together with the shepherds, conveys the same ideas.

In comparison with Theocritus' ὁδὺ ψιθόρισμα, Virgil's *leuis susurrus* obviously lacks any connection with Egypt, is not strictly associated with the sound of a pipe,³⁴ and is not located in such a relevant position as the very first verse of an entire poetic collection. But, perhaps more importantly, it shares with Apuleius a fascinating effect, since it puts Tityrus to sleep: in the *Metamorphoses* the *leuis susurrus* has precisely the purpose of enchanting the listeners' ears, *permulcere aures* (and the verb *mulceo* is frequently connected with sleep).³⁵ This is, I think, a good reason to treat the Theocritean intertext as a secondary one, and to put Virgil's *Eclogue* 1 in the foreground. However, although this hierarchy might clarify the intertextual structure of the phrase, it is certainly not enough to solve our problem: why should Apuleius hint at a bucolic author, be it Theocritus or Virgil, at the very beginning of his prologue?

Let us focus for a moment on some significant innovations introduced by Virgil in the Theocritean description. Virgil's *susurrus* comes, like

32. Trans. Fairclough 1935.

33. Putnam 1970: 47–48 (cf. Hor. *C.* 3.13.9–12 and 1.17.17–20).

34. But cf. v. 1 *auena*.

35. Cf. e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 7.754–55; Ov. *Ep.* 18.27; *Met.* 8.824, 11.625; Plin. *Nat.* 10.136; Sil. 7.293; Stat. *Theb.* 2.30–31; V.Fl. 1.299–300, 2.140. On the fascination implied by the expression *permulcere aures* see Graverini 2005.

Theocritus' ψιθύρισμα, from a plant (a willow hedge in Virgil,³⁶ a pine in Theocritus), but it is actually produced by the bees; it is not only sweet (ἄδύ in Theocritus, somehow echoed by *leuis* in Virgil, as well as by *suadebit*), but it also has a practical effect on those who listen to it, since as we have seen it induces sleep (*somnum suadebit*). Bees and sleep are two important details, that contribute to the metapoetical character of Meliboeus' speech. At the beginning of Callimachus' *Aitia* and of Ennius' *Annales* (and cf. also Prop. 3.3) sleep and dream are places of poetic initiation.³⁷ As for bees and honey, they were typically connected with poetry and with the Muses. For example, the bees are *Musarum uolucres* in Varro, *Res Rusticae* 3.16.7; and Plato, *Ion* 534a–b, exploiting the easy pun μέλη/μέλιτται, compares them to the poets: Λέγουσι... πρὸς ἡμᾶς οἱ ποιηταὶ ὅτι... ἀπὸ κρηνῶν μελιρρύτων... τὰ μέλη ἡμῖν φέρουσιν ὥσπερ αἱ μέλιτται 'the poets tell us... that the songs they bring us are the sweets they cull from honey-dropping founts... like the bees'.³⁸

Virgil's bees have the distinctive feature of inducing sleep, and this seems to be an unparalleled detail for bees in ancient literature. Still, we can make a useful comparison with the cicadas of Plato, *Phaedrus* 258e ff. Like the bees, the cicadas are in Plato (and in Callimachus, as we have seen) closely connected with poetry and with the Muses.³⁹ Socrates tells Phaedrus that they were originally men who, enchanted by the songs of the Muses, forgot to eat and drink, and died of hunger and thirst. After, from these men the cicadas were born and the Muses granted that they live without any food or drink, devoting all their time to songs and music. After their deaths, they report to the Muses in what way and how much living men honour each of them. But, Socrates says, they are also dangerous: in the noontide heat, with their mesmerising voice, they can avert the philosopher's mind from his philosophical thoughts, and put him to sleep like the slaves⁴⁰ who sit nodding under a shady tree or the

36. On the introduction of hedges and boundaries into the bucolic landscape see Putnam 1970: 46.

37. See Enn. *Ann.* 1.5; on Callimachus' dream cf. also e.g. *AP* 7.42; Prop. 2.34.32. Paus. 2.31.3 reports that 'Sleep is considered the god that is dearest to the Muses'. Useful references and further bibliography on the topos in Massimilla 1996: 233–37.

38. Trans. Lamb 1925. See Scarcia 1964: 19–24 and Waszink 1974 for further occurrences of the topos.

39. On the symbolic value of both bees and cicadas see the comprehensive treatment by Roscalla 1998: 60–75.

40. He probably means 'shepherds': cf. 230d.

sheep that rest near a cool spring at noon.⁴¹ The philosopher has to avoid them, just as Odysseus had to avoid the Sirens.⁴²

The possibility and the meaning of an allusion to Plato's cicadas in Virgil's first *Eclogue* deserves, I think, to be studied separately, and I will set it aside in this paper. What is interesting for me now is that Apuleius probably has Virgil as a model for an enchanting *susurrus*; and that, for the reasons that I am about to explain, it certainly was easy for Apuleius, or for a IInd century learned reader, to make a connection between Virgil's bees, the cicadas of Plato, and Callimachus.⁴³ As we have seen, bees and cicadas share the same symbolic value; they are also explicitly connected to each other by Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.77 'so long as the bees feed on thyme and the cicadas on dew – so long shall your honour, name, and glory abide',⁴⁴ (another passage that could easily be read as a metapoetical allusion); Aelianus, *NA* 5.13 is useful to demonstrate that such a connection could be a commonplace: 'what the divine Plato says of cicadas and their love of song and music one might equally say of the choir of

41. Plato, *Phdr.* 258e–259a: 'the cicadas seem to be looking down upon us as they sing and talk with each other in the heat. Now if they should see us not conversing at mid-day, but, like most of people, dozing, lulled to sleep by their song because of our mental indolence, they would quite justly laugh at us, thinking that some slaves had come to their resort and were slumbering about the fountain at noon like sheep'. The translation is by Fowler 1914, but I have adopted 'cicadas' instead of his 'locusts' for τέττιγες.

42. Ferrari 1987: 27 comments that "Phaedrus... as cultural 'impresario'... has a tendency to promote clever talk for its own sake, indiscriminately. I propose that through the myth of the cicadas Plato takes his stand against this tendency in such a way as to admonish the readers that they too... must beware of careless discrimination among the breeds of intellectual discourse".

43. Trapp 2001: 41 already suggested, but very hesitantly, that Apuleius' prologue hints at Plato's description of the "bewitching buzz of the cicadas": "I would like to be able to see another echo of this scene [*sc.* *Phdr.* 258e–259d] in Apuleius' soothingly sibilant *aves... lepido susurro permulceam...*, but I am not sure that I can". Of course I support his hypothesis; and I also share his opinion that, in Apuleius' prologue "the Plato of the *Phaedrus* is... invoked not as an ally but as an adversary" (41): Apuleius here seems to adopt the poetics of the cicadas, rather than that of Socrates (but see below my conclusions). Plato is obviously an important model for Apuleius, who had a renown as *philosophus Platonius*: see e.g. Harrison 2000: 252–59, who however warns that the primary function of Platonic allusion in the novel is "that of entertaining literary and cultural display" (255), and not of offering the reader a sketch of Platonic philosophy. The *Phaedrus* is obviously a model for the ending of the story of Socrates: see Harrison 2002: 255–56, and especially Keulen 2003: 309–10 *ad* 1.18.8 *iuxta platanum istam residamus* (I would add that the *Phaedrus* is probably a relevant model also for the pastoral scene described by the *harundo uiridis* at 6.12.2–5, also containing a plane tree). Unfortunately, I have not been able to read O'Brien 2002 yet. In general, Trapp 1990: 141 states that "few works were more firmly entrenched in the 'cultural syllabus' of Hellenic *paideia* by the second century AD than Plato's *Phaedrus*".

44. Trans. Fairclough 1935.

bees'.⁴⁵ Finally, and most importantly, Plato's cicadas and Virgil's bees share the distinctive quality of inducing a peaceful (and poetical) sleep. As it seems, this is not a common feature for cicadas either: while their cry is often referred to as a *cantus* (cf. e. g. Apul. *Fl.* 13.1), there is also a tradition according to which it is irritating and *prevents* those who listen to it from sleeping (Phaedrus 3.16).⁴⁶

To sum up, in my opinion the prologue speaker's *lepidus susurrus*, that enchants his listener's ears, does not hint at a bucolic world, but more generally at the seducing power of literature, a metaphorical meaning that an ancient reader could easily attach to Virgil's bees and Plato's cicadas: the prologue speaker speaks with the voice of a bee or of a cicada, and his audience will be caught by his enchanting power.⁴⁷

This is a provocative assertion on Apuleius' behalf, and the *ego* speaking the prologue had a lot of opponents (*alii*, as I was suggesting at the beginning of this paper) who could attack such a programmatic statement. Any IInd century literate reader would be well aware of the never-ending debate, dating back to the times of Plato, between the supporters of a psychagogic approach to literature and rhetoric and those who preferred to stress the moral and pedagogical bases of the work of men of culture. In Plato's *Phaedrus* the cicadas and the sleep they induce are clearly an antagonistic power that the philosopher, whose main concern is truth and not enchantment, has to fight and win. On ψυχαγωγία in poetry see e. g. Horace, *Ars* 99–100 'Not enough is for poems to have beauty: they must have charm (*dulcia sunt*), and lead the hearer's soul where they will'.⁴⁸ Horace is well aware of the antithesis between education and entertainment, but is open to a compromise: 'poets aim either to benefit (*prodesse*), or to amuse (*delectare*), or to utter words at once both

45. Trans. Schofield 1958.

46. Plin. *Nat.* 11.266 defines the voice of the bees as a *murmur*, that of the cicadas as a *stridor*; however, cf. Verg. *Aen.* 7.65 where *stridor* is referred to the bees. In Callimachus' *Aitia* they sing with a λιγὸς ἦχος (v. 29). Trypanis 1958 translates 'shrill voice', and D'Alessio 1996 'suono acuto', but λιγὸς also conveys the idea of 'tuneful' and 'sweet': cf. e. g. Stephanus s. v. ("Stridulus, Argutus, s. Argutum stridens: interdum et Canorus, Iucundus... Suaviter loquens"), and esp. Hesychius' lemma λιγυρόν· ἡδύ, γλυκύ. Λιγὸς is said of the Muses e.g. at Hom. *Od.* 24.62 and Plato, *Phdr.* 237A; cf. Verg. *G.* 2.475 (quoted also by Tac. *Dial.* 13.5) *dulces... Musae*.

47. The term *susurrus* is also connected with magical practices; see Keulen 2003: 64 *ad loc.*, who points out that "the novel's pivotal theme of magic is introduced here on the level of the magic power of speech".

48. This and the other translations from Horace's *Ars* are by Fairclough 1929. See Brink 1971: 182 ff. for the distinction in literary criticism between *pulchrum* and *dulce*, καλὸν and ἡδύ.

pleasing and helpful to life' (vv. 333–34; cf. 343–44 'he has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader'). Bucolic poetry, however, clearly sided with *delectare* rather than with *prodesse*: Richard Hunter, commenting on Theocritus, *Idyll* 1.1 ἀδύ, states that "the pleasure (τὸ τερπνόν, *dulce, iucundum*) that poetry brings had been a battleground for Plato and Aristotle, and one branch of Hellenistic theory, particularly associated with Eratosthenes,⁴⁹ privileged poetry's emotional appeal, its ψυχαγωγία, over any moral or educational claims it might have. On this view, 'bucolic poetry' will have no effect in the world in which it is performed – goats go on being goats, and Daphnis' *pathos* will become... purely a subject for our aesthetic appreciation".⁵⁰ As regards rhetoric, of course the traditional Roman eloquence, trained to the gravity of the *Forum* and always solicitous about the moral qualities of the orator, did not normally like *susurrus*-like voices: see for example a Sallustian fragment preserved by Fronto, *multi murmurantium uoculis in loco eloquentiae oblectantur* 'they take delight by way of eloquence in the soft notes of mutterers',⁵¹ (*Aur.* 4.3, p. 143,15–16 Van den Hout).⁵² The moral and stylistic principles of ancient rhetoric are extremely useful to interpret Apuleius' prologue: Wytse Keulen has well demonstrated that "the *ego* in the prologue avows exactly the kind of rhetoric against which the professors of rhetoric warned", and that *ures permulcere* was a common expression that suggested "a corrupt, hyperurbane style, including offensive mannerisms of the voice".⁵³ The most evident features of this corrupted kind of rhetoric were an excess in verbal delight and a singsong *pronuntiatio*, that according to Quintilian and Seneca were connected with moral depravation.⁵⁴

49. Hunter refers to Pfeiffer 1968: 166–67.

50. Hunter 1999: 70.

51. Trans. Haines 1929: 73.

52. Cf. also Fronto, *Aur.* 2.16, p. 140,4 Van den Hout *hoc indicat loqui te quam eloqui malle, murmurare et friggere potius quam clangere*, 'this shows that you prefer mere speaking to real speaking, a whisper and a mumble to a trumpet note' (trans. Haines 1929: 67).

53. Keulen 2003: 18. I have treated more briefly the same topic in Graverini 2005; *permulcere aures* has an equivalent in γαργαλίζειν τὰ ὦτα, an expression adopted by some Greek rhetors with the same meaning.

54. Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.60 'there are some people, too, who, as well as the other vices of their life, are slaves to the pleasure of listening to sounds that soothe their ears (*quod aures mulceat*) wherever they are' (trans. Russell 2001). Sen. *Ep.* 114.1 'You have been asking me why, during certain periods, a degenerate style of speech comes to the fore, and how it is that men's wits have gone downhill into certain vices – in such a way that exposition at one time has taken on a puffed-up strength, and at another has become mincing

Therefore, philosophers, poets, and rhetors, one way or another, negotiated their position in this debate. The ancient novel was an unstable, not well defined literary genre; although the works we label as ‘novels’ were written (mostly) in prose, as it seems they did not share the primarily moral and educational character of philosophy, history, and (part of) rhetoric, they were closer to poetry (at least, to some kinds of poetry) in their search for an entertaining and distracting narration.

Verbal and musical enchantment, though of course not alien to prose genres in ancient literature, contributes to this ‘poetic’ character of Apuleius’ novel, whose language has been well described by Wytse Keulen as a “Latin that breathes the spirit of Greek poetry rather than the *sermo forensis*”.⁵⁵ This sort of literary seduction is, as we have seen, a central issue in the prologue; and any reader provided with a superficial acquaintance with his style will agree, I think, that in the whole novel Apuleius is faithful to the promises of a narration in a musical and enchanting style.⁵⁶ However, even though the main concern of Apuleius’ prologue seems to be to reassure the reader that the *Metamorphoses* will be a delightful narration (cf. 1.1.6 *Lector, intende: laetaberis* ‘reader, pay attention: you will be delighted’), it could be a rash judgement to conclude that the whole novel is just like the chirp of a cicada, who in her passion for music totally forgets the necessities of life. The question of the moral, religious or philosophical meaning of the *Metamorphoses* is indeed a difficult one; especially after John Winkler’s thought-provoking book, it is probably impossible to obtain a general agreement on whether the novel is to be considered a work of pure entertainment, a moral and educational story about religious faith and philosophical truth, or both.⁵⁷ I doubt that this question can ever be answered to the satisfaction of all, or

and modulated like the music of a concert piece (*in morem cantici ducta*)... man’s speech is just like his life’ (trans. Gummere 1925).

55. Keulen 2003:18–19.

56. Even though not everybody appreciates his results: see e.g. the harsh judgement by Norden, who states that in Apuleius “alle die Mätzchen, die dem weichlichsten Wohlklang dienen, werden in der verschwenderischsten Weise angebracht” (Norden 1898: 601).

57. Winkler challenged the view, largely predominating at his times, that the *Metamorphoses* was a novel about religious/philosophical initiation. Cf. Winkler 1985: 124: “My ultimate assessment of the *Golden Ass* is that it is a philosophical comedy about religious knowledge. The effect of its hermeneutic playfulness, including the final book, is to raise the question whether there is a higher order that can integrate conflicting individual judgements. I further argue that the effect of the novel and the intent of Apuleius is to put that question but not to suggest an answer”. See also Harrison 2000: 248: “the text in the end, despite the carefully created elevated tone of a number of the religious passages, prompts the reader to treat Lucius’ account of the cults of Isis and Osiris in *Met.* 11 as an amusing satire on religious mania and youthful gullibility. This gives the novel as a whole a clear unity: the tone throughout remains fundamentally amusing and entertaining”.

even of the majority of the readers of Apuleius' novel; but, most of all, I hope that the limited scope of a paper devoted to a part of the prologue excuses me from trying such an enterprise.

My own contribution to the debate has been a demonstration that the prologue speaker presents himself as a brilliant, sophisticated, and cicada-like entertainer, who invites his listeners to surrender to the pleasures of literature without caring too much about the moral and/or philosophical lessons that could stem from it. However, we should also ask ourselves whether this prologue speaker proves to be absolutely trustworthy. For example, as we have already seen, he also presents himself as a *rudis locutor*. If we understand this expression as referring to his poor linguistic and stylistic command of the Latin language, his statement is certainly false: he is only captivating our attention and benevolence by representing himself as a novice in the Latin language, and we cannot take his words seriously. So, are we really sure that we should take seriously his *lepidus susurrus* and his self-representation as an entertainer? Ancient literature teaches us that it is not impossible to conceal an educator under the appearance of an entertainer; and Apuleius himself declares at *Florida* 17.13 that *homini uox... maiorem habet utilitatem mentibus quam auribus delectationem* 'the human voice is more useful to the mind than delightful to the ear'⁵⁸. If instead we refer the adjective *rudis* to the asinine voice Lucius will be forced to speak with, we have to remember that Lucius, with his retransformation in the last book, regains a human voice⁵⁹. He is uncertain about what words he should say first, and his hesitation is expressed in terms that can easily suggest a *new prologue*, written (or, better, spoken) under the salvific influence of Isis:

At ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam, animo meo tam repentinum tamque magnum non capiente gaudium, quid potissimum **praeferer** primum, unde nouae uocis **exordium** caperem, quo sermone nunc renata lingua felicius auspicarer, quibus quantisque uerbis tantae deae gratias agerem (11.14.1).

58. In the preceding passage on the inferiority of the human voice compared with the sound of musical instruments (17.9), Apuleius adopts a terminology that reminds us of the prologue to the *Metamorphoses*: as a *rudor* ('roar', a rare term conneted with the verb *rudere*; maybe an Apuleian coinage, according to Hunink 2001:176 *ad loc.*), the human voice is less fearful than the sound of a trumpet, while as a *susurrus* it is less pleasant than that of the flute (or bagpipe). The whole passage 17.9–13 seems to be written to deconstruct the programmatic statements of the prologue speaker – or vice versa, since we cannot be sure about the relative chronology of the two works: the speech anthologised in the *Florida* can be dated back to 164 AD (cf. Hunink 2001: 172), but as it is well known the dating of the *Metamorphoses* is controversial.

59. On Lucius gaining a voice through Isis' intervention see Winkler 1985: 198–200; Finkelpearl 1998: 184–217; 2003, 37–51.

as for me, I was completely dumbfounded and stood speechless, rooted to the spot. My mind could not comprehend this great and sudden joy. I did not know what would be most appropriate to say first, where to find opening words for my new-found voice, what speech to use in making an auspicious inaugural of my tongue now born anew, or with what grand words to express my gratitude to so great a goddess.⁶⁰

Praefarer and *exordium* are the keywords suggesting that, even if we are by now in the middle of the last book, the passage presents itself as a new prologue. But it should be noted that the vocabulary of this passage consistently echoes the ‘real’ prologue of the novel: *at ego*, first of all; but also *gaudium* (cf. 1.1.6 *laetaberis*), *praefarer* (cf. 1.1.5 *praefamur*), *nouae uocis* (cf. 1.1.5 *rudis locutor*; 1.1.6 *uocis immutatio*), *exordium* (cf. 1.1.3 *exordior*), *quo sermone* (cf. 1.1.1 *sermone... Milesio*; 1.1.4 *indigenam sermonem*), *lingua* (cf. 1.1.4 *linguam Atthidem*), *felicis* (cf. 1.1.3 *glebae felices*).

Here we have silence instead of enchanting words, human instead of animal voice, a grateful devotee of Isis instead of a brilliant entertainer. We can think that this new *persona* completely obliterates the old Lucius and the old prologue speaker; but, after reading the prologue and as much as ten books of Lucius’ (the ‘old’ Lucius) adventures, we can also have grown so accustomed to him as to be immune from believing in such a sudden and outright change. Unfortunately, the novel does not do very much to help us in this choice; all we can do is to decide whether we want to believe the first prologue speaker, the second – or both.

60. Trans. Hanson 1989.

LITERARY TEXTURE IN THE ADULTERY-TALES OF APULEIUS,
METAMORPHOSES BOOK 9*

Stephen Harrison

1. Introduction: The Pleasures of the Text

The nexus of adultery-tales in Book 9 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* has been the subject of considerable scholarly investigation.¹ One major focus has been on the way in which these tales relate to an overall interpretation of the novel. For example, Tatum's classic treatment of the interrelation of the *Metamorphoses*' inserted tales to the novel's general framework suggests that the adultery-tales form a crucial element in the work's moralising: 'the tales in book 9 go a long way towards effecting a 'religious' view of *uoluptas*: they completely discredit the idea of sexual pleasure as a desirable thing'². Some other studies have stressed the more playful narrative effects of this constellation of tales, and I sympathise with this type of interpretation, not least because the two explicit programmes given for the adultery-tales, though couched in the potentially unreliable voice of the narrator Lucius, suggest that literary entertainment and not moral enlightenment is the aim of these miniature narratives, as (in my view) it is the aim of the *Metamorphoses* in general.³ In 9.4 when Lucius introduces the first adultery-tale, he does so with the following statement:

9.4 Cognoscimus lepidam de adulterio ... fabulam, quam uos etiam cognoscatis uolo.

We got to know a charming story about adultery, which I would like you to get to know too.

Likewise, the main tale-complex of 9.14–31 is prefaced by Lucius once again with a promise of readerly entertainment:

* I am most grateful to Dr Costas Panayotakis for his help on section 3(iii) below and to an audience at the Cambridge Literary Seminar in February 2002 as well as to my fellow-participants at Fransum for helpful comment and criticism.

1. See e.g. Bechtle 1995; Hijmans et al. 1995; Mattiacci 1996, and for more literature see Finkelpearl and Schlam 2000.

2. Tatum 1969: 523 (= 1999: 190).

3. Cf. Harrison 2000: 235–59.

9.14 Fabulam denique bonam, prae ceteris suaue comptam, ad aures uestras afferre decreui.

Finally, I have decided to bring to your ears a good story, sweetly embellished above the others.

My argument in this contribution is that a major part of the ‘sweet embellishment’ highlighted here is the interplay of different generic traditions as well as of narrative playfulness and sophistication. As elsewhere, the *Metamorphoses* demonstrates its mastery of the generic range of Latin and Greek literature, but selects for special attention those literary traditions to which it specially wishes to articulate its own relation. As so often in Latin literature, the pleasure of the text is heavily intertextual.

2. *The content and narrative structure of the Book 9 adultery-tales*

A brief summary of the contents and basic narrative structure of the interrelated adultery-tales in book 9 will be a useful preliminary. In 9.5–7 Lucius-ass, still in the ownership of the itinerant charlatan priests of the Dea Syra, relates a story which he hears when in a particular village, the famous Tale of the Jar. Here an unfaithful wife is almost caught in the act of adultery with her lover by her returning husband but manages to hide the lover in a large wine-jar; she then persuades her dim-witted husband that the lover is a potential purchaser of the wine-jar who has just climbed into it to inspect the goods, and even enjoys sexual congress with her lover outside the jar when the obliging husband offers to get inside himself and clean the item for his customer. This tale of resourceful and unpunished adulterers is clearly programmatic, and sets up a pattern to which the later tales plainly relate. In 9.15–31 we find the tale of the miller’s wife, which itself has two further tales embedded in it. All three stories, carefully interwoven with great narrative skill, express variations on the pattern set up in 9.5–7.

Lucius-ass overhears the adulterous wife of the miller to whom he now belongs talking to an old woman (9.15–16). The old woman tells the wife about the exploits of a potential new lover Philesitherus, who has had an affair with her friend Arete, the wife of Barbarus, in the course of which Philesitherus and Arete were able to outwit her husband when his suspicions were aroused (9.17–21). Inspired by this story, the miller’s wife invites Philesitherus to visit her, with adulterous intent, while her husband is out at dinner at his neighbour the fuller’s. The pair are then surprised by the miller’s early return, and the wife hides the lover under a wooden tub (9.22–23). He remains concealed while the miller narrates

yet another tale of adultery: he has come home early from the fuller's because the dinner party was ruined by the fuller's discovery of his wife's lover, unsuccessfully concealed under a basket (9.24–25). The miller's wife criticises her friend's infidelity, but then is herself exposed as an adulteress when Lucius-ass (who has been the subject of cruel treatment from her) exposes the lover's hiding-place by crushing his fingers and extracting a cry of pain (9.26–27). The miller takes the boy to bed and expels his wife from the marital home; she takes dreadful revenge, killing the miller by witchcraft (9.27–31).

Thus, following 9.5–7 in which a wife and a lover succeed in outwitting the husband, we have the tale of Barbarus, Arete and Philesitherus, in which the adulterous pair have the same success; this is apparently going to be repeated in the case of the miller's wife, but the miller's own tale about the fuller's wife holds the outcome in suspense. The tale told by the miller then concludes with an ending in which wife and lover are caught and punished, and this is what duly happens in the case of the miller's own wife when her lover is discovered shortly afterwards through Lucius' intervention. The climax of the sequence, then, appears to be the triumph of the wronged husband and the restoration of conventional morality, but this is deflated by a final twist: his wife turns to the arts of magic and kills her husband by witchcraft. Expectations are both created and defeated by this narrative structure. The paradigmatic opening tale of the jar, and the story of Barbarus, lead to an expectation that all adulterous pairs will escape unpunished; the tale told by the miller then corrects this expectation by giving an opposite outcome, and then the miller's own wife suffers this same opposite outcome. This looks like two of each outcome, with adultery paying half the time, but this simple symmetry is destroyed by the final twist of the miller's murder, which changes the tone and takes the comic narrative into a more violent and melodramatic direction.

This narrative structure can be schematically represented as follows:

9.5–7 The Tale of the Jar:

Wife 1 (unnamed) and lover 1 (unnamed) outwit husband 1 (unnamed)

9.15–31 The Tale of the Baker's Wife

- (i) First embedded tale (9.16–21): old woman (unnamed) narrates a tale in which wife 2 (Arete) and lover 2 (Philesitherus) outwit husband 2 (Barbarus)
- (ii) Philesitherus and the miller's wife, part 1 (9.22–23), in which

- (iii) Wife 3 (the unnamed miller's wife) and lover 3 (Philesitherus again) attempt to outwit husband 3 (the unnamed miller).
- (iv) Second embedded tale (9.23–25): the returning miller narrates the tale of the (unnamed) fuller's wife, in which wife 4 and lover 4 fail to outwit husband 4.
- (v) Philesitherus and the miller's wife, part 2 (9.26–28), in which wife 3 and lover 3 are caught and punished by husband 3 through ass's agency;
- (vi) Sting in the tail (9.29–31) wife 3 kills husband 3 through witchcraft.

The interlocking narrative framework is carefully managed here: one of the lovers (Philesitherus) is common to two of the stories, and the expectation that he will escape punishment with wife 3 as he had with wife 2 is created, though counterbalanced by the intervening tale of the miller in which the punishment of lover 4 creates an opposite expectation. There is careful embedding: the embedded tales (i) and (iii) are neatly alternated with the main story in (ii) and (iv)–(v). The stories thus present both similarity and contrast.

3. *Some generic influences*

I now turn to examining some literary traditions to be encountered in the adultery-tales, in order to show the complexity of generic texture in this part of the novel.

(i) Not in the *Onos*?

The extant Greek ass-tale the *Onos*, which most scholars regard as a shortened version of the Greek *Metamorphoses* ascribed to Lucius of Patras, the likely model for Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, importantly shows no sign of any original adultery-tales. In the chapters which correspond to the area of the ass-story covered by Apuleius' ninth book (39–45), there is no mention of the miller's wife or of her cruelty to Lucius-ass, and no tales of adultery are indicated. Of course, inserted tales are the items most likely to be omitted in the kind of epitome which the *Onos* represents; but elsewhere the *Onos* has some clear gaps where tales are very likely to have been cut out, for example in *Onos* 21, where the robber-tales given by Apuleius in *Met.* 4.8–22 seem to be referred to generally at the same point of the plot: 'there was a plentiful meal and a lot of conversation among the murderers over their cups'. The adultery-tales thus appear to be in the same class as the inserted tale of Cupid and Psy-

che, which seems similarly absent from the Greek model: both are likely to be Apuleian additions to the Greek ass-tale. This makes particular sense given the particularly striking expansion of the events of *Onos* 39–45 in *Metamorphoses* 9: six Teubner pages of Greek are reworked in thirty-four Teubner pages of Latin, the longest book of Apuleius' novel. This is the most extensive elaboration of the original plot-line (apart from the likely complete intercalation of the Cupid and Psyche story) in any part of Apuleius' adaptation of the Greek ass-tale.

(ii) The adultery-mime

The primary literary tradition on which the the adultery-tales of Book 9 appear to draw is not Greek but Roman – the adultery-mime. This form of popular performance seems to have been widely appreciated in the Roman empire, and it is thoroughly plausible that it is laid under contribution in *Metamorphoses* 9, just as *Metamorphoses* 10 plainly describes a performance of a pantomime, mime's higher, more mythological form, on the subject of the Judgement of Paris;⁴ the use of mime in general would also be an element shared with Petronius,⁵ whose influence on Apuleian literary texture is sometimes underestimated,⁶ and with other significant Latin genres such as love-elegy.⁷

Our chief evidence for the adultery-mime⁸ comes from Ovid's *Tristia* 2, his letter of self-defence from exile to Augustus (2.497–506):

Quid, si scripsissem mimos obscena iocantes,
 qui semper uetiti crimen amoris habent:
 in quibus assidue cultus procedit adulter,
 uerbaque dat stulto callida nupta uiro? 500
 Nubilis hos uirgo matronaque uirque puerque
 spectat, et ex magna parte senatus adest.
 Nec satis incestis temerari uocibus aures;
 adsuescunt oculi multa pudenda pati:
 cumque fefellit amans aliqua nouitate maritum 505
 plauditur et magno palma fauore datur.

What if I had written mimes with their obscene jests, which always contain the crime of forbidden love, in which the smartly-dressed adulterer always comes on, and the cunning wife tells false stories to her stupid husband? These are watched by the girl of marriageable age, by the wife, husband and boy, and most of the Senate is present. Nor is it enough that their ears should be violated with unclean words – their eyes too

4. Cf. Fick 1990; Zimmerman 1993.

5. Cf. Panayotakis 1995.

6. Cf. e.g. Walsh 1978.

7. Cf. McKeown 1979, Fantham 1989.

8. For what can be reconstructed see especially Kehoe 1984.

are accustomed to endure many shameful sights; and when the lover has deceived the husband by some novel trick, he is applauded and the palm awarded him with great support.

These lines offer some immediate links with the central nexus of adultery-tales in *Met.* 9.5–7 and 9.15–31. The plot of wife almost caught with lover and cleverly lying her way out of the situation is plainly that of the Tale of the Jar (9.5–7), but the larger complex of tales in 9.15–31 offers even more parallels. Ovid's 'smart adulterer' clearly matches Apuleius' Philesitherus, who is *adulescens et formosus et liberalis et strenuus* (9.16), 'a young man and good-looking and generous and energetic', and *puer admodum et adhuc lubrico genarum splendore conspicuus* (9.23), 'very much a boy and still remarkable for his smooth shining cheeks', and the deception of the husband by the lover mentioned in Ovid (2.505–06) is similarly picked up by the cunning of Philesitherus' clever lies to Barbarus (9.21).

The origin of these plot elements in the theatrical tradition of the mime is also specifically highlighted in the language of Apuleius' text. At 9.15, Lucius-narrator says of the miller's wife *scaenas fraudulentas in exitium miserrimi mariti subdolis ambagibus construebat* 'she began to construct deceptive plots disastrous for her wretched husband with cunning machinations'. Scholars have duly noted the theatricality of the term *scaenas* here⁹, but have not suggested that the 'plots' here are specifically those of the adultery-mime. This is plainly the case: the plots 'disastrous for the wretched husband' are surely those of the dramatic form in which the successful cuckolding of the *maritus* is the key feature. The plot-construction of the faithless wife in fact nicely matches the plot-construction of the novel itself, appropriating the dramatic patterns of the adultery-mime in its narrative. This passage is echoed, and a similar point is raised at 9.27, where the revelation of the concealed Philesitheus discloses the tricks of the same adulterous wife: *conspectui profano redditus scaenam propudiosae mulieris patefecit* 'returned to the gaze of the world at large, he disclosed the plot of the shameless woman'. Once again, the 'plot' exposed and here for once unsuccessfully completed (see 2 above) is specifically the plot of the adultery-mime, the concealment of the lover by the wife; this is indeed one of the 'unsuccessful performances' of the *Metamorphoses*. The use of *scaena* is regular in connection with mime-performances: at *Tristia* 2.514 Ovid refers to the adultery-mimes as *scaenica ... adulteria*.

9. Frangoulidis 2001: 106–07.

(iii) Fullers and comedy

Another element which suggests theatrical links in the adultery-tales is the fact that in one of them the deceived husband is a fuller (*fullo*: 9.24). Though commentators have not drawn attention to the fact, *fullones* seem to have had a particular prominence in the lower genres of drama.¹⁰ This includes mime, already seen as significant here (see (ii) above). The first century B.C. mimographer Laberius wrote one mime with the title *Fullo* (Gellius 16.7.2), and in that play or in another has a character say *coicior ... in fullonicam*, 'I am hurled into the fulling business' (Gellius 16.7.5). A mysterious passage of Nonius may refer to *Laberius in Fullonicis* (so most manuscripts at Nonius 307.15ff Lindsay), an apparent further suggestion that Laberius wrote a work *Fullonica*, perhaps 'affairs of a fuller', though the reading *Fullonicis* is insecure and controversial. Allusion to Laberius, despised by Horace as an example of a sub-literary writer (S. 1.10.6), is highly appropriate in Apuleius: Laberius is an author often alluded to by Gellius, and is cited several times by Fronto, clearly fitting the archaising taste of second-century Latin prose.

Fullers seem to have been particularly important in the *fabulae Atellanae*, the farces which with their stock characters and low-life plots belonged to the same literary level as mimes. Of the two major writers of *Atellanae* from the period of Sulla, Novius wrote plays entitled *Fullones*, *Fullones Feriati* and *Fullonicum* (fr. 29–35 Frassinetti), Pomponius another *Fullones* and a *Decuma Fullonis* (fr. 44–46 and 33–34 Frassinetti), though nothing can be reconstructed of their plots.¹¹ Earlier, the *fabulae palliatae* of Plautus mention fullers and their activities several times,¹² and there is some evidence of a *fabula togata* by Titinius from the second century BC entitled *Fullonia* or *Fullones*¹³, some fragments of which suggest that it contained an argument between a fuller and his wife (fr. 16–24 Guardì; perhaps Apuleius' tale reflects a comic tradition about the unhappy marriages of fullers), and the comic play centering on a fuller goes back to Middle Comedy: we have some lines (PCG 121) from Antiphanes' Κναφεύς 'Fuller', in which a speaker, perhaps the fuller himself, laments the drudgery of business life. In short, fullers appear to have been a stock class of lowly artisans who could be brought into all types of comic drama. This general interface with the various forms of comic

10. For a summary see Guardì 1978.

11. On these plays and their possible subject-matter see Giancotti 1967: 47–48, Frassinetti 1953: 39–47.

12. *Aul.* 507 and *Pseud.* 782 (both urine jokes) and *Asin.* 907 (in a list of tradesmen).

13. See the fragments with commentary in Guardì 1985.

drama is no surprise in the *Metamorphoses*, which constantly alludes to Greek and Roman New Comedy as well as to mimes and *fabulae Atellanae*.¹⁴

(iv) Milesian Tales ?

A further low-life and 'subliterary' genre which would be an appropriate influence in the adultery-tales is that of the Milesian Tales. I have argued elsewhere that the Milesian Tales, short, scandalous and amusing stories embedded in a larger narrative structure, are an important influence for the Roman novels,¹⁵ and three aspects of the adultery-tales of *Metamorphoses* 9 link up in particular with the literary tradition of Milesian Tales. First, the likely character of Milesian Tales as inserted tales in a longer narrative; the adultery tales clearly fit this basic narratological framework, as may be seen from the analysis in 2 above. Second, their subject-matter of adultery. The sexually colourful topics of Milesian tales are famously noted by Ovid in terms which befit stories of adultery: in *Tristia* 2.444 Milesian tales are said to consist of *turpis ... iocos*, using an adjective which is twice linked with adultery elsewhere in the same poem – cf. *Tristia* 2.211–12 *Altera pars superest, qua turpi carmine lecto / arguor obsceni doctor adulterii* 'the second part [sc. of the charge against me] remains, in which, after a reading of my shameful poem, I am proved to be the teacher of obscene adultery', and the description of the adultery-mimes as *imitantes turpia mimos*, 'mimes which imitate shameful acts' (2.515). The two most celebrated Latin stories usually regarded as belonging to the Milesian tradition, the Petronian narratives of the Boy of Pergamum (*Satyrical* 85–87) and the Widow of Ephesus (*Satyrical* 111–12), though neither is about adultery, both concern similarly illicit and extra-marital sexual relationships. Finally, the element of witty erotic reversal. Both the Boy of Pergamum and the Widow of Ephesus use a pattern where the sexual behaviour of one character is wholly reversed to amusing effect: the reluctant catamite becomes the voracious partner, while the faithful widow is so seduced from her mourning that she allows her husband's body to be crucified. This pattern is plainly present in the story of Philesitherus, the aptly-named hunter of erotic game and penetrator of married women, who in an entertaining reversal is himself penetrated by the husband he attempted to cuckold (9.28).

14. On New Comedy in Apuleius see May 2002.

15. Harrison 1998.

(v) The old woman: elegy and tragedy ?

It has been suggested¹⁶ that the old woman who persuades the miller's wife to adultery with Philesitherus in 9.15–16 is a form of the elegiac *lena*, the old woman who tempts the *puella* with the prospect of a richer rival who is a better lover than the impoverished elegist, the scenario for example of Propertius 4.5 or Ovid *Amores* 1.8. There are some obvious superficial differences. The miller's wife is no innocent who requires persuasion to be unfaithful, indeed the old woman is simply persuading her to change lovers, and the rival is younger and bolder rather than richer. Both these elements may be seen as appropriately deromanticising this elegiac topos for the more cynical and entertaining literary environment of the novel. There are also some other possibilities: the wheedling old woman tempting the younger woman to infidelity is found in the mimiambic tradition of Herodas 1,¹⁷ and we may have some element of the Greek mime tradition here as of the Roman.

A close consideration of the presentation of the old woman gives some support to the allusion to elegy (9.15–16):

Sed anus quaedam stuprorum sequestra et adulterorum internuntia de die cotidie inseparabilis aderat. Cum qua protinus ientaculo ac dehinc uino mero mutuis uicibus uelitata scaenas fraudulentas in exitium miserrimi mariti subdolis ambagibus construebat. At ego, quanquam grauiter suscensens errori Photidis, quae me, dum auem fabricat, perfecit asinum, isto tamen uel unico solacio aerumnabilis deformitatis meae recreabar, quod auribus grandissimis praeditus cuncta longule etiam dissita facillime sentiebam. (16) Denique die quadam timidae illius amiculæ sermo talis meas adfertur auris: "De isto quidem, mi erilis, tecum ipsa uideris, quem sine meo consilio pigrum et formidolosum familiarem istum sortita es, qui insuauis et odiosi mariti tui caperratum supercilium ignauiter perhorrescit ac per hoc amoris languidi desidia tuos uolentes amplexus discruciat. Quanto melior Philesitherus adulescens et formosus et liberalis et strenuus et contra maritorum inefficaces diligentias constantissimus!"

But an old woman who was a pursuer of debaucheries and a go-between in adulteries was there as her inseparable companion all day and every day. Breakfasting with her at once and then over unmixed wine she skirmished in mutual interchanges and began to construct deceptive plots disastrous for her wretched husband with cunning machinations. But I, though greatly angered at the error of Photis, who had managed to make me a donkey while trying to make me a bird, was comforted by the only solace of my grievously deformed shape, that I was endowed with vast ears and could easily pick up all remarks dropped even at some distance. (16) Finally, one day, the words of that timid old woman were carried to my ears: "As for that lover of yours, my lady, he's your own business, for you just acquired him without my advice – that

16. Mattiacci 1996: 143.

17. Hijmans et al 1995: 147.

lazy and timid friend, who shudders like a coward before the knotted brow of your hateful husband and as a result tortures with suspense your willing embraces by his lack of forwardness and lukewarm love. How much better is Philesitherus, a young man, good-looking, generous, energetic and most determined in the face of the useless precautions of husbands”.

The old woman shows several clear parallels with the two classic elegiac depictions of the aged *lena*, Acanthis in Ovid *Amores* 1.8 and Dipsas at Propertius 4.8. In all three texts the old woman acts as self-prompted intermediary between a new lover and a woman currently attached to someone else, and engages in extensive rhetorical advocacy of the charms of the potential lover. Two elements in the Apuleian scenario seem to be close to the Ovidian poem, and it is possible that this particular intertext is operating here.¹⁸ In both texts the male narrator is indignant at the devious female conversation he overhears; and in both texts, the narrator states that he was able to overhear the conversation he reports owing to a privileged concealment. In the case of ‘Ovid’, this consists of being accidentally hidden by the door (Ovid *Am.* 1.8.21–22); in the case of Lucius-ass, the unintended concealment is his asinine form which gives him better ears with which to hear.

Another generic strand operating in this scene would seem to be that of tragedy. The older woman who facilitates the sexual ambitions of a younger, unhappily married social superior resembles not only the *lena* of elegy but also the nurse of Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, who, after a similarly lengthy dialogue about the unsatisfactory nature of the mistress’s erotic situation and the servant’s capacity to assist in a solution, likewise departs in order to solicit the favour of the young man, in that case of course Phaedra’s stepson Hippolytus, on her behalf (*Hipp.* 433–524). Of course, there are again major differences: the old woman acts with the full knowledge of the miller’s wife, unlike the Euripidean nurse who goes behind Phaedra’s back, and the young man is more than willing, unlike Euripides’ horrified Hippolytus. Both these elements represent realistic transgeneric modifications of the elevated world of tragedy; in the low-life and cynical world of the novel, everyone is naturally out for their own erotic gratification, and the issue is not whether to sin (Phaedra’s great moral struggle) but how to sin most pleasurably, safely and effectively. Philesitherus’ speaking name seems to confirm the Euripidean echo here: its meaning ‘lover of hunting’¹⁹ does not merely refer

18. There is no doubt of Ovidian influence on Apuleius in other elements: see the material collected by Harrison 1999, xxxv, and further Kenney 1990, Mattiacci 1998 and Mueller-Reineke 2000.

19. Hijmans et al 1995: 154.

to its bearer's commitment to sexual predation, well evidenced by his affair with Arete, but also recalls Hippolytus' fondness for hunting animals so evident in Euripides' play; Philesitherus is a low-life Hippolytus, just as the miller's wife is a low-life Phaedra (Philesitherus, though not her stepson, seems young enough to match that role – cf. 9.22 *puer admodum*). The allusion (and its generically modified form) is further reinforced by the extensive use of a sensationalist and explicitly marked version of the Hippolytus plot in the 'wicked stepmother' story of the next book of the novel (10.2–12).²⁰

(vi) Epic adultery ?

A final generic element here is to be found in the story narrated by the old woman to the miller's wife as a proof of Philesitherus' resourcefulness as a lover. This story presents a slave Myrmex as set to guard Barbarus' wife Arete when her husband departs on a business trip (9.17):

Barbarus iste cum necessariam protectionem pararet pudicitiamque carae coniugis conservare summa diligentia cuperet, seruum suum Myrmecem fidelitate praecipua cognitum secreto commonet suaeque dominae custodiam omnem permittit, carcerem et perpetua uincula, mortem denique uiolentam defamam comminatur, si quisquam hominum uel in transitu digito tenus eam contigisset, idque deierans etiam confirmat per omnia diuina numina. Ergo igitur summo pauore perculsum Myrmecem acerrimum relinquens uxori secutorem securam dirigit protectionem.

Since this Barbarus was preparing for an unavoidable journey and wished to preserve the chastity of his dear wife with the greatest care, he alerted his slave Myrmex, well known for his outstanding loyalty, and consigned to him all guardianship of his mistress, threatening imprisonment and perpetual bonds, and even violent and shameful death, if any man should touch her even in passing with the tip of his finger, and swearing this as an oath he affirmed it before all the gods. And so leaving Myrmex, thus stricken with extreme fear, as the keenest guardian of his wife, he pursued his journey free from worry.

There is a clear but unnoted parallel of this story of Myrmex with that of the bard left with Clytemnestra by Agamemnon according to Nestor in the *Odyssey* (3.262–72):

Ἦμεῖς μὲν γὰρ κείθι πολέας τελέοντες ἀέθλους
ἤμεθ'· ὁ δ' εὐκηλος μυχῷ Ἄργεος ἵπποβότοιο
πόλλ'. Ἀγαμεμνονέην ὤλοχον θέλγεσκεν ἔπασσιν.
Ἦ δ' ἦ τοι τοὶ πρὶν μὲν ἀνάντεο ἔργον αἰεκές,
δῖα Κλυταμνηστρίην· φρεσὶ γὰρ κλεχρήτ' ἀγαθήσι.

20. Cf. 10.2 *Iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam legere et a socco ad coturnum ascendere*, and Zimmerman 2000: 68, 417–22, 442.

παρ δ' ἄρ' ἔην καὶ αἰοιδὸς ἀνὴρ, ὃ πόλλ' ἐπέτελλεν
 Ἀτρεΐδης Τροίηνδε κιὼν εἴρυσθαι ἄκοιτιν.
 Ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ μιν μοῖρα θεῶν ἐπέδησε δαμῆναι,
 δὴ τότε τὸν μὲν αἰοιδὸν ἄγων ἐς νῆσον ἐρήμην 270
 κάλλιπεν οἰωνοῖσιν ἔλωρ καὶ κύρμα γενέσθαι,
 τὴν δ' ἐθέλων ἐθέλουσιν ἀνήγαγεν ὄνδε δόμονδε.

We for our part sat there in Troy fulfilling our many labours; but he (Aegisthus), at ease in a corner of horse-pasturing Argos, continually sought to charm with his words the wife of Agamemnon. Now at the first she rejected any shameful action, god-like Clytemnestra, for she had a good understanding; and with her too was a minstrel, who had been given strong orders by the son of Atreus, when he set out for Troy, to guard his wife. But when the fate of the gods bound her so that she was overcome, [270] then indeed Aegisthus took the bard to a desert island and left him as the prey and spoil of birds, and took Clytemnestra, willing as he was willing, to his own house.

The reader has already been pointed towards the *Odyssey* in Book 9 by the citation of its opening at 9.13 in Lucius-ass's famous self-comparison with Odysseus.²¹ The unfaithful wife in the story of 9.17 has also been named as Arete; this is not just an ironically inappropriate name for an adulteress ('virtue'), but also recalls the queen of Alcinous from the *Odyssey*, who (unlike her novelistic namesake) is a model of proper behaviour.²²

This embedded story of infidelity from the *Odyssey*, not found in any other extant treatment,²³ is clearly replayed in Apuleius' embedded adultery-tale, with appropriate generic modification. Arete is evidently a low-life Clytemnestra, but with differences; it is the listening miller's wife and not Arete who will kill her husband as Clytemnestra did, and Arete (unlike Clytemnestra) is caught and punished (though not in this particular story). Thus the narrative pattern set up by the Homeric allusion is not wholly repeated, misleading the reader's expectations in typical Apuleian manner. Philesitherus, 'lover of hunting', the resourceful adulterer, is evidently a low-life Aegisthus. These words in the *Odyssey* are spoken by Nestor, contrasting himself and Agamemnon as labouring warriors with the stay-at-home Aegisthus, and the boyish drone Philesitherus makes a similar contrast with the absent and active Barbarus; his effeminacy (stressed later at 9.22) also matches that traditionally attributed to Aegisthus.²⁴ The Homeric model is also elaborated in the figure of the

21. 9.13 *Nec inmerito priscae poeticae diuinus auctor apud Graios summae prudentiae uirum monstrare cupiens multarum ciuitatum obitu et uariorum populorum cognito summas adeptum uirtutes cecinit*; cf. Harrison 1990, esp. 193.

22. Hijmans 1978: 111; Hijmans et al 1995: 160; Mattiacci 1996: 145.

23. De Jong 2001: 82, Andersen 1992.

24. E.g. A. Ag. 1224–25, 1625–27.

guardian, no longer a bard but endowed with a further significant name (Myrmex, 'Ant'). This name appears to be ironically ambiguous, fitting both his initial ant-like loyalty to his master and his ant-like love of gain showed in his ultimate acceptance of the bribe.²⁵ The list of extreme penalties with which Myrmex is threatened for non-performance of his duty expands the simple Homeric 'strong orders', and the swearing of an oath is both melodramatic and refelects a low-life world where human promises are not enough. The Homeric bard is brutally marooned by Aegisthus, but in Apuleius Philesitherus needs only to resort to bribery to overcome Myrmex's scruples, showing that real slaves are more venal than their unrealistically virtuous epic counterparts and that the novelistic adulterer needs to be amusingly rather than ruthlessly resourceful. Clytemnestra's initial reluctance in Homer (3.265–66) is to be contrasted with the keen collaboration of the baker's wife, who is clearly just waiting for the opportunity to commit adultery more effectively. Thus the transformation of this Homeric adultery-tale for its new context shows the realistic and low-life character of the novelistic world, bleak and cynical view of the vice and weakness of human nature.

4. Conclusion

This investigation of the adultery-tales of Apuleius *Metamorphoses* Book 9 hopes to have shown that the prime characteristic of these stories is literary entertainment, and that this is achieved not only through their salacious and amusing content and clever narrative structure but also through subtle intertextual interactions with a range of literary and sub-literary traditions in both Latin and Greek, suitably adapted for a low-life and sensationalist novelistic context.

25. Hijmans 1978: 111; Hijmans et al 1995: 162; Mattiacci 1996: 146.

SOME CASES OF GENRE CONFUSION IN APULEIUS

Vincent Hunink

Whenever one thinks of ‘genre’ in Apuleius, some passage of his works and a specific genre comes to one’s mind, e.g. tragedy, epic, or satire. But after a moment or two, one starts to think of *another* genre that is connected in some way to that same passage, and the image becomes less clear. What I propose to do in this paper is to discuss some selected passages from Apuleius, notably from his rhetorical works *Apology* and *Florida*, where we can observe how Apuleius seems to play with genres, sometimes with a number of them simultaneously, and how he can even mix them up to something quite unique.

Tragedy in court

First, we may turn to the *Apology* (*Apol.*), Apuleius’ famous speech, which is perhaps more often praised and quoted than read.¹ In literary complexity, versatility, wit, and linguistic skills, the speech is by no means inferior to the novel, and it fully deserves the sort of literary analysis we apply without hesitation to the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.*).

At an earlier occasion, I was able to review the elements of comedy in this speech, which prompted me to the conclusion that the speech was in fact modelled on the basic pattern of a comedy: it has a plot, standard characters, and a happy end.² By way of contrast, let me now highlight some elements of tragedy which one can also find in the text, and see how these are related to the context.

Tragedy is much less dominant in the speech than comedy, but some interesting passages may be mentioned. In c. 13 we see a reference to several dramatic genres at once:

Quid enim? Si choragium thymelicum possiderem, num ex eo argumentare etiam uti me consuesse tragoedi symmate, histrionis crocota, + orgia, mimi centunculo? Non opinor. Nam et contra plurimis rebus possessu careo, usu fruor. (*Apol.* 13.7)

1. For an English version of Apuleius’ speeches see: Harrison et al. 2001.

2. Cf. Hunink 1998.

‘Look, if I possessed an actor’s equipment, would you argue that I was regularly wearing the long cloak of tragedy, the saffron-coloured dress of the stage, or the patchwork robe of mime? I do not think so. On the other hand there are many things I do not possess, but which I use nonetheless.’³

The references are only minor ones, but interestingly, the actor of tragedy, the *histrion* and the player of mime, or rather their specific garments, are put alongside each other without further comment. Apparently these forms of drama were all still commonly known to Apuleius’ audience, which in the case of tragedy may seem surprising.⁴

The reference to tragedy, as casual as it already is, is given further depth by the context, which has little to do with this genre. The argument Apuleius is developing is one of a highly rhetorical nature: can the circumstance that one possesses a mirror be taken as a sign that one repeatedly stands before it and uses it? We all know: yes, that is most likely, but Apuleius of course defends the opposite.

The same passage presents us with another reference to tragedy:

Quem tu librum, Aemiliane, si nosses ac non modo campo et glebis, uerum etiam abaco et puluisculo te dedisses, mihi istud crede, quanquam teterrimum os tuum minimum a Thyesta tragico demutet, tamen profecto discendi cupidine speculum inuises et aliquando relicto aratro mirarere tot in facie tua sulcos rugarum. (*Apol.* 16.7)

‘If you had known his book, Aemilianus, and had not devoted yourself just to the clods of the field but also to the sand on the counting-board, believe me: although your hideous face differs only a little from the mask of tragic Thyestes, curiosity would certainly have made you look into a mirror. Yes, finally you would have left your plough and wondered about all those furrows in your face.’

The tone is even sharper here, unequivocally polemical and sarcastic. Moreover, the context alludes to other sorts of texts too, notably the language of scientific inquiry. While discussing the allegation that he possessed a mirror, Apuleius has substantially broadened the scope of his speech, including various scientific problems in his account: for instance, in c.15 he refers to the various philosophical schools and their different physical explanations of the likeness of images in mirrors (a rather ostentatious display of erudition in court). Plato, Archytas, and the Stoics are all mentioned. So, Apuleius adds, a philosopher has to investigate all of this. Various optical effects are added, for which Archimedes is quoted as an authority (16.6). After the quotation, Apuleius goes on to make fun

3. Translation Vincent Hunink, in: Harrison 2001: 11–121. All following translations from the *Apology* are also from this edition.

4. In this period, tragic subjects were usually no longer dealt with in traditional tragedies but in *fabulae salticae*, ballet-like mythological narratives performed by a pantomime dancer, who was accompanied by a choir.

of his opponent, adding puns, and briefly touching on an entirely different theme, the question of ‘possessing only a few slaves’. For this, he adduces historical examples such as Cato, and the whole theme is developed as a proper popular philosophical diatribe. There we have a mixture of rhetoric, satire and polemics, tragedy, science, and philosophy.

Something similar can be observed much later in the *Apology*, where the abominable Rufinus is the target of Apuleius’ wit, erudition, and polemics.

Vix hercule possum irae moderari, ingens indignatio animo oboritur. Tune, effeminatissime, tua manu cuiquam uiro mortem minitaris? At qua tandem manu? Philomelae an Medae an Clytemnestrae? Quas tamen cum saltas – tanta mollitia animi, tanta formido ferri est –, sine cludine saltas. (*Apol.* 78.3–4)

‘I can hardly control my anger, and an immense indignation is surging within me! So you, the most effeminate of men, are threatening death to a real male ‘with your own hand’? But what hand will it be? That of Philomela, or Medea, or Clytemnestra? But if you perform these roles, you do so without a dagger: such is your weakness, such your fear of steel!’

Rufinus, one of the opponents, has threatened, so we are told, that he will kill Apuleius, who now reacts with great indignation and compares him to legendary female figures (killers and sorcerers) from tragedy. The ambiguous comparison to women and killers is bad enough as it is, but Rufinus even performs these roles⁵ with fake daggers because of his cowardice.

The epic element in the indignant question *qua tandem manu* is immediately subverted by the sarcastic triple perversion implied by the tragic roles. Rufinus is simply ridiculed, but not only by means of tragedy. He is also called a ‘pimp’ (*leno*), a clear echo of Roman comedy and mime, and he is amply criticised by the speaker, who takes the position of the wise philosopher and morally superior ‘family man’. So here again, we see how Apuleius refers to various genres, high and low, and easily switches between them to achieve his rhetorical aim.

Apart from one or two other scattered references to drama,⁶ there is one major section dealing with tragedy, a piece of literary history.

The poet Sophocles, the rival of Euripides, whom he also survived (for he became extremely old), was accused by his son of insanity. It was alleged

5. Notice *saltas*, a clear reference to the way these roles were staged: by means of a sort of pantomime.

6. Cf. *Apol.* 30.11 *ex comoediis et tragoediis graecis et ex historiis...*; and *Apol.* 79.1 *An sola Phaedra falsum epistolium de amore commenta est?* We may observe that the latter quotation is a fairly uncomplimentary reference to Apuleius’ own wife.

that he was 'out of his mind', due to his age. Then, it is said, he took a copy of his *Oedipus in Colonus*, that most excellent tragedy, which he happened to be writing at the time. He read it aloud to the judges, without adding a word in his defence, except that they should not hesitate to declare him 'insane' if they disliked the poem of an old man. At that point, so I read, all the judges rose for this great poet and praised him highly for the skilful plot and the solemn style. They all very nearly declared the accuser himself 'insane'! (*To the attendant:*) Have you found the book? Thank you very much! Well, let us see whether my writings can help me too in court. Please read a few lines from the beginning and then some lines about the fish. (*To another attendant:*) In the meantime, while he is reading, please stop the waterclock.' (*Apol.* 37)

This is a very interesting passage, not so much for the information it contains, which is attested to in other sources as well,⁷ but for its functions in the speech. The narrative about the tragedy recited by Sophocles functions as a break in the speech and is closely connected with Apuleius' further aims. He literally compares himself with Sophocles, and points to the parallel in their situations: they are unjustly sued for enormous charges concerning property. Of course Apuleius also takes pride in his erudition here and makes the audience share in it.

The passage obviously attests to Apuleius' knowledge of tragedy, but here also, the context refers to many other forms of literature as well. The whole argument is about... fish. Apuleius has been accused of searching fish for magical purposes, and as in the case of the mirror, he brings in everything he can to broaden the horizon. Among the literary authorities he refers to are Homer, Vergil, Pythagoras, Orpheus, and Laevius (c. 30–32). He brings in medicine (c. 32), sexual vocabulary related to fish names (c. 33), Apuleius' own (lost) works as a source for such names (c. 34), some dangerous remarks involving cases of sympathetic magic (c. 35), culminating in an account of the zoological works of Aristotle and others (c. 36). The anecdote of Sophocles is inserted when a court attendant leaves the stage to look for a zoological volume of Apuleius. On his return, a passage from the book is read out,⁸ followed by further biological particulars and a list of magical-sounding Greek fish names (c. 38), and as a surprising climax, a culinary poem about luxury fish by the famous Ennius (c. 39), which represents the rather abstruse

7. The story about Sophocles is told in other sources as well, although with minor differences. Cf. *Vita Soph.* 13; Cic. *Sen.* 22; Plu. *Mor.* 785a–b (who even gives the lines allegedly read in court: *OC* 668–73); Ps. Lucian *Macr.* 24; Athen. 12.510 b; Charisius, *GLK* 1.215; for the different versions of the anecdote cf. Mazon 1945 and Powell on Cic. *Sen.* 22.

8. Regrettably, the quotation has not been preserved.

genre of gastronomic didactic poetry.⁹ On account of the many verse insertions in the *Apol.*, one might be tempted to consider the speech as a Menippean satire on the lines of Petronius' *Satyrical*.¹⁰ But it may equally be seen as a comedy,¹¹ a philosophical and scientific text, or a novella.¹²

So within just a few pages, we see a complete panorama of ancient literature, Greek and Latin, high and low, with all elements ultimately serving Apuleius' main rhetorical purpose. All genres, as it were, have become material from which the speaker can freely select and combine. I have now focused on drama but a fascinating, and even richer field of study here would be the numerous references in the *Apology* to epic, notably the epics of Homer and Vergil.¹³

The same phenomenon may be observed again and again: references to tragedy, epic and other genres are made mostly in passing, and are quite natural in the context of the argument of the speech as a whole. But as soon as one has started concentrating upon such a genre, the attention is shifted to some other genre, leaving readers with the impression that Apuleius' speech encompasses them all. Genres are not literally confused, but the overall effect may nevertheless be a bit confusing.

A little drama in the Florida

Before passing on to the *Met.* some brief remarks may be added with regard to the *Florida* (*Fl.*). Being a collection of fragments, this work is certainly more difficult to analyse in terms of genre or shifts of genre. Nonetheless, there are some passages that seem relevant here too, if only because they have a clear connection with the theatre.

The first of these is *Fl.* 16, which is set in a theatre and deals with a theatrical story, the tale of Philemon. One day, this Greek comic poet started a recitation¹⁴ of one of his plays, but had to postpone the last part, due to rain. Next day, he was found dead.

Stetere paulisper qui introierant, perculsi tam inopinatae rei, tam formonsae mortis miraculo. Dein regressi ad populum renuntiauere Philemonem potam, qui expectaretur, qui in theatro fictum argumentum finiret, iam domi

9. Cf. also Hunink 2001.

10. The *Met.* contains hardly any poetical insertions, with the notable exception of the oracular text in 4.33.1–2.

11. Cf. note 2.

12. Cf. Sallmann 1995.

13. To mention one thing, opponents are easily compared to Vergilian figures such as Charon or Mezentius (both in 56.7), or Homeric heroes such as Odysseus (57.4, ironical).

14. A curious anachronism, for such recitation is unattested in Philemon's days, and is typical for Apuleius' own time.

ueram fabulam consummasse; enimuero iam dixisse rebus humanis ualere et plaudere, suis uero familiaribus dolere et plangere; hesternum illi imbrem lacrimas auspicasse; comoediam eius prius ad funebrem facem quam ad nubtialem uenisse; proin, quoniam poeta optimus personam uitae deposuerit, recta de auditorio eius exequias eundum, legenda eius esse nunc ossa, mox carmina. (*Fl.* 16.16–18)

Those who had entered stood still awhile, struck with wonder at so unexpected an event, so beautiful a death. They then returned to the people and announced that the poet Philemon, who was expected to finish his fictitious plot in the theatre, had concluded the real story at home. He had said “farewell and applaud” to human affairs but “lament and wail” to his friends. That shower yesterday had been an omen of tears; his comedy reached the funeral torch before the wedding torch. And that since this excellent poet had laid aside his role in life, everyone should go to his funeral straight from the auditorium; and that his bones should now be collected, and then his poems.¹⁵

What is happening here? Everybody is expecting a comedy, which has, in fact, begun the day before. But the dramatic fiction changes into reality: instead of a fictional play on stage, Philemon performs a real story at home. He says *ualete et plaudite* to human affairs, in a typical phrase from comedy,¹⁶ but he also says *dolete et plangite* to his family, in a phrase which seems coined for the occasion. The many references to tears, grief and death make us realise that comedy has turned into tragedy,¹⁷ for one cannot call this a happy end.

Again we may note the many genres in the context: these words reflect a speech or, possibly, a ‘messenger’s report’, and the whole tale is subsequently taken by Apuleius as an *exemplum* in his epideictic speech with its congratulatory, laudatory, and self-laudatory purposes. One may also note another instance of scientific, medical details (*Fl.* 16.20–22). So again we see a panorama of genres, fused into something new.

The second passage from the *Florida* to which I would like to refer is *Fl.* 2, the description of the eagle. In this case too, one may properly ask what sort of text it really is. It is, of course, a speech, as the inclusion in the *Florida* makes clear. But many things happen in it. It starts making a point about Socrates, which more or less automatically strikes a philosophical note: ‘one must not judge people by looking with the eyes of the

15. Translation John Hilton in: Harrison 2001: 123–84. Subsequent translations from the *Florida* are also from this edition.

16. Cf. e.g. Pl. *Men.* 1162 *Nunc, spectatores, ualete et nobis clare plaudite*; *Per.* 858; *Truc.* 968; further Ter. *Eu.* 1094 *ualete et plaudite*; *Hau.* 1067; and *Ph.* 1055; further Hor. *Ars* 155. In the present text the words are fittingly ascribed to Philemon as his last words, directed to ‘human affairs’ in general, and so they continue the metaphor of life as a play. Cf. a similar use in Cic. *Sen.* 70 *neque sapientibus usque ad “plaudite” ueniendum est*.

17. For other references to tragedy in the *Fl.*, see 17.8, 18.4, and 18.6.

body, but by means of the sharpness of the mind.’ For this, Apuleius quotes a line from Plautus, that is: from comedy, facetiously suggesting that Socrates had rewritten it. Next, the notion that the eyes should not prevail introduces hints of higher genres: *quodam modo caecutimus* (2.6) we are, in a way, blind (a notion widely present in tragedy), and we humans cannot see far, because of a cloud hanging before our face which limits our view *intra lapidis iactum* (2.7). This is, of course, full-blown epic.¹⁸

The rest of the passage is a description of the lofty flight of the eagle, which continues the allusions to epic together with intimations of tragedy: the nautic image of flying as ‘rowing’ (2.10), ultimately going back to Aesch. Ag. 52, but here phrased in Lucretian terms.¹⁹ In the end, we do not know very clearly what genre we are in: rhetoric, philosophy, drama, didactic poetry, or epic. The clear boundaries between these genres seem to be fading.

A judicial speech in the novel

Finally let us turn to Apuleius’ novel. From ‘tragedy in court’ (tragic motifs in the context of a judicial speech), ‘comedy turned tragedy’, and ‘philosophy turned epic’ I now jump *desultoria scientia* (cf. *Met.* 1.1.6) to ‘a court in the novel’, more specifically, the famous scene where Lucius stands trial in the context of what turns out to be the festival of Risus, the first major section of book 3.

At the opening of book 3 we see how Lucius feels at a loss: surely he cannot escape condemnation in a trial for the three murders he has committed. Then all of a sudden people start shouting that the trial must take place in a theatre, and Lucius is dragged as a *hostia* to the theatre and put in the *orchestra* (end of c.2). This is surely a first clear signal of the genre confusion we are about to witness.

Even with the theatrical surroundings, the trial is evidently presented in ‘judicial’ terms: after an erudite periphrasis for the well-known water-clock (c.3, beginning), an old man stands up and voices an accusation quite in line with the rules of the genre: an address to the audience, fol-

18. Apuleius clearly refers to a famous passage in the *Iliad* 3.10–12 and to Verg. *Aen.* 11.608 *intra iactum teli*.

19. Cf. Lucr. 6.743 *remigi oblatae pennarum uela remittunt*. There are several other clear echoes in *Fl.* 2 to Lucretius: cf. the tranquil abode of the Gods in Lucr. 3.19–22 *quas neque concutiunt uenti nec nubila nimbis / aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina / cana cadens uiolat semperque innubilis aether / integit et large diffuso lumine ridet*; cf. further the distinction between *fulgur* and *fulmen* in Lucr. 6.160–218 and 219–422.

lowed by a claim of personal integrity, a *narratio*, and an appeal to severity (c.3).

Lucius first only cries but then manages to state his defence, which starts no less in line with the rules (c.4–5): an attempt to make the audience *docilem*, followed by the start of a *narratio*. But then something interesting happens: he starts to give the alleged words of one of the robbers in direct speech.

“Heus pueri, quam maribus animis et uiribus alacribus dormientes adgrediamur. Omnis cunctatio ignauia omnis facessat e pectore; stricto mucrone per totam domum caedes ambulet. Qui sopitus iacebit, trucidetur; qui repugnare temptauerit, feriat. Sic salui recedemus, si saluum in domo neminem reliquerimus.” (*Met.* 3.5.4–5)

“Come on, lads, let’s attack them, while they sleep, with all our manly spirit and ready vigour. Away with all feelings of hesitation and cowardice! Let slaughter stalk with drawn sword throughout the house. Let’s cut down those who lie sleeping, and run through those who try to resist. We shall make good our retreat unscathed only if we leave no one in the house unscathed.”²⁰

The words themselves have a rather heroic and military colour: the robber does use rather elevated language, but it may be observed that most characters in Apuleius’ novel use a similar style.²¹ But the fact that it is direct speech is even more noteworthy, for this is certainly most unusual in a judicial speech. It was customary to refer to other people’s words only indirectly. So here we see, as it were, forms of narrative or historiography merging into judicial speech.

Of course, the speech by Lucius is entirely fictitious, for he presents his case as a just cause against injustice, quite contrary to how his bad conscience had shown it to be in c.1–2. So in this respect too, one might point to elements of fiction creeping into the speech, but this might be seen as ‘normal’ within rhetoric.

Next, we see Lucius crying again (c.7) and beseeching the audience to believe him. This then appears to be a *role*, for Lucius stops when he thinks the effect has been sufficient. The reaction is strange: people are roaring with laughter, as if it were a comedy or a farce, to the indignation of Lucius, who is apparently starting to believe his own heroic fiction. He expresses this in a short speech to himself, a technique which seems

20. Translation P.G. Walsh, in: Walsh 1994: 42.

21. In this, the *Met.* are markedly different from Petronius’ *Satyrica*, where characters use different, and often lower, styles of language, often in accordance with their social status or characterization. One may think of the freedmen talking at Trimalchio’s dinner, whose speeches are an important source for our knowledge of Vulgar Latin. Cf. e.g. Boyce 1991.

an echo from tragedy or from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*²² rather than rhetoric or other forms of prose.

Next there follow speeches by an old woman, appealing for compassion for her three killed darlings, and a magistrate, pleading for severe measures (c.8–9). Here the context seems firmly judicial again, even with references to torture instruments at the beginning of c.9.²³ But then Lucius is asked to uncover the dead bodies himself, a procedure unheard of in court, and clearly recalling a scene from tragedy, where Aegisthus is made to unveil the corpse of Clytaemnestra, whom he believes to be Orestes.²⁴ What follows, after some pathetic exclamations by Lucius, resembles the solution in a comedy: the corpses appear to be wine-skins. Comical notes are evident. Everybody starts laughing and leaves the theatre, as if the show is over.

Lucius is struck with amazement, and is comforted by Milo. In c.11 he is soothed and calmed by a magistrate with a very polite and complimentary speech, much as we know them by Apuleius himself from his *Florida*, and Lucius answers in a similar vein, even politely refusing a statue. It is really as if we are in the epideictic sphere of the Florida.

In a further confusing scene, Lucius next answers his aunt Byrrhena, declining her dinner invitation. He does so in the form of a short speech. Or is it a letter he is dictating to the messenger? With Lucius, we may well feel quite confused: *inpos animi stupebam* (c. 12).

Matters are not really much clarified later on, when Photis explains to Lucius what has happened. In an atmosphere of magic and sorcery she gradually uncovers the mystery, comparing Lucius to Ajax killing animals (c.18). In his answer, Lucius compares himself to Hercules and his deeds, in a clear echo from tragedy and epic, but immediately changes his tone to that of elegy, in a flattering address to the adorable Fotis (c.19) in openly elegiac terms, to which she replies with religious language ('keep this secret'), and with the erotic language of the body, as they start making love.

The question comes up: what is it we have been reading? Was it a judicial account with speeches? Or an epic fiction extolling rather meagre facts, first interpreted as a crime, but turning out to be a comedy? Or is the key element that of private speeches in the epideictic genre? What was Lucius' performance in the Risus Festival anyway: a theatrical

22. To mention one example, one may think of Medea's long speech to herself in Ov. *Met.* 7.11–71.

23. A somewhat confusing element, since Lucius, a freeborn citizen, certainly cannot be put to torture.

24. Sophocles, *Electra* 1470–82. I owe the reference to Stephen Harrison.

show? A religious ceremony? A carnival in which the rich and famous may be made fun of? Was there a real crime or not? On all of these points, readers are left in great doubt. More than any other scene, this passage about the Risus festival shows how all genres get confused into something really new.²⁵

It is, perhaps, unwise to analyse the text as I have done until now. Apuleius' book clearly cannot be understood by means of definitions of genre in the traditional way. But the work clearly brings in all of the ancient literature we know (there may be much that we do not know) and jests with everything.

Since much of this can also be observed in Petronius, one might assume that it is a characteristic of the Roman novel as such: parodying, varying and deliberately confusing all genres. In that way, the confusion of genre has become a specific genre convention by itself.

25. Walsh (1994), XXIX mentions the scene (along with the Phaedra episode in 10.7ff. and another parody, outside court in 7.27.) as an example of 'literary parody', for which lawcourts offer an opportunity, a literary device also figuring prominently in the Greek romances. I would suggest, however, that Apuleius' aims go somewhat further than 'parody' of one genre. It is the deliberate confusion of all genres that hits the eye.

THE WET RITUALS OF THE EXCLUDED MISTRESS: MEROE AND THE MIME

Wytse Keulen

Introduction: genre in Apuleius' Metamorphoses and the role of the theatre

Although one could hardly think of anything more abstract than the central theme of the present volume, *Genre in Apuleius*, my contribution will involve matters that are far from abstract, indeed quite concrete and physical. It will focus on the cruel physical treatment that both the protagonist of Aristomenes' story (Apul. *Met.* 1.6–19), a character named Socrates, and Aristomenes himself have to suffer, when in the middle of the night two vengeful witches pay them an unexpected visit in a violent invasion of their hotel room. Still, I hope that the present reading of the vivid, theatrical action of the Apuleian scene in question, which pictures in appallingly vivid detail the shedding of blood and of other bodily liquids, may serve to develop some thoughts about genre in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. My discussion of 'genre in Apuleius' entails both his use of conventions from other genres, such as mime, satire and elegy, and the genre into which these conventions are assimilated, a sophisticated prose genre, which we nowadays conveniently call the 'Roman novel'. The argument is in agreement with recent views according to which the Latin works of prose fiction should not be viewed one-sidedly as Roman translations or parodies of Greek originals, but as belonging to the mainstream of Latin literature and Roman culture.¹ As I will argue, Apuleius' work joins a Roman literary tradition, as it follows the literary technique of typically Roman genres such as satire and elegy in their adaptation of Greek literary conventions, and in their technique of conflation of elements from 'high' and 'low' literature. In my view, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* can be studied along the same lines that scholars like Jim McKeown (1979), Elaine Fantham (1988) and Costas Panayotakis (1995) have used to study Propertius and Petronius.

The main part of this paper will focus on the theatricality of the Apuleian scene in question, and on the characterisation of Meroe as the

1. See Zimmerman 2003, especially the second chapter, "The Roman Connection".

comic type of the so-called ‘excluded mistress’ (ἀποκεκλειμένη), related to conventions of the παρακλαυσίθυρον, such as we know them from sophisticated genres like elegy, and from less sophisticated genres that are associated with comic theatre and dinner entertainment. I will compare the Apuleian scene with a number of scenes from Roman literary predecessors, especially from Propertius (*Elegy* 4.8), and from Petronius’ *Satyrical*, the Oenothea episode (134–38) and the Quartilla episode (16–26).² These scenes, in spite of many differences, reveal a striking resemblance, especially in their use of a theatrical setting, stage equipment and dramatic action, with noisy door-battering, drinking in abundance, and crashing furniture. They feature a nocturnal setting in a public building of low status, and an unexpected invasion of one or more dominant women, who involve their passive male victims in ritualistic performances of an explicit sexual nature or with strongly sexual undertones. In all these texts we also find words that point to performance and theatre.³

It seems therefore convincing to read and interpret the Apuleian passage in terms of a theatrical scene. The characters appear as theatrical types; their vicissitudes seem to recall situations from the comic stage. We see stock situations and characters shimmering through the text, which the readers from Apuleius’ time perhaps knew from their own experiences in the theatre. No doubt, Apuleius exploited the vitality and popularity of the theatre in his lifetime to engage and maintain his readers’ attention.⁴ Apuleius’ sophisticated use of such low theatrical genres stands in a long tradition, and his lettered readers were probably familiar with his literary antecedents in this tradition, in the form of Roman satire and elegy. Therefore, we can fruitfully compare our scene with similar scenes in Propertius, Horace, and Petronius, each representing a different Roman genre, but having in common that they belong to an established

2. For a comparison between the Quartilla scene in Petronius and the Apuleian episode with Meroe and Panthia see Ciaffi 1960: 17–23, who argues for a direct influence of Petronius on Apuleius (cf. below, note 32). For a detailed comparison of the Quartilla episode and Prop. 4.8 see Hallett 2003: 334–42, who points out that ‘both texts are developed dramatic scenes containing much descriptive information about the setting, gestures and dialogue’ (p. 340). On the parallels between Propertius and Petronius and the connections with the mime see also McKeown 1979: 83 n. 47. As far as I know, no attention has hitherto been paid to the parallels between the Apuleian scene and Propertius 4.8.

3. E.g. *spectaculum*: Prop. 4.8.21 and 56; Petr. 26.5 (2x); Apul. *Met.* 1.6.5. Cf. the technical theatrical terminology referring to tragedy and mime in Apul. *Met.* 1.8.5 *aulaeum tragicum dimoueto et siparium scaenicum complicato*. On the theatrical nature of Socrates’ ragged costume (1.6.4 *sutili centunculo*) see Keulen 2003b: 118–19.

4. In the *Florida*, Apuleius indicates his affinity with the mime several times (4.3, 5.2, 18.4); the mime was a popular form of theatrical entertainment in Apuleius’ day, see Hunink 2001: 82 on *Fl.* 4.3 *mimos*, with further references.

Roman tradition of sophisticated Latin reworkings of Greek comic material. They seem to have common ground in their technique of conflation of elements from ‘high’ (epic, tragedy) and ‘low’ literature, and in their interests in traditions of the mime.

In other passages, scholars have already demonstrated Apuleius’ use of comic conventions that are also typical of elegy, such as Aristomenes’ conversation with the hard-hearted doorkeeper (*ianitor*) in 1.15, and his interrupted tragicomic suicide attempt in 1.16.4–5.⁵ These conventions are related to the literary form of the παρακλαυσίθυρον, which goes back to improvised forms of song.⁶ In view of the παρακλαυσίθυρον setting in the dialogue between Aristomenes and the *ianitor*, and in Aristomenes’ failed suicide attempt (1.16.5–6), we may read the spontaneous serenade by Aristomenes – who is *inclusus*! – to his faithful *grabattulus* (1.16.2–3) as a parody of the excluded lover’s song to his beloved, in the tradition of Ovid’s comical serenade to the doorkeeper and door in *Amores* 1.6.

The tale of Aristomenes: horror and farce

Keeping this in mind, let us take a look at some other actions that take place on the stage of Aristomenes’ narrative. The dramatic nocturnal events are preceded by a recognition scene, in which one character finds and helps another unfortunate character.⁷ After Aristomenes finds his old friend Socrates in a deplorable state, sitting on the ground like a poor beggar, half-naked, pale, and emaciated (1.6.1), he takes him to an inn and washes, clothes and feeds him. They pass the evening together in drinking, eating, joking, and storytelling (1.7.2–3). One of the stories narrated by Socrates is the autobiographical story in which he confesses his adulterous affair with a lustful old woman called Meroe, who overpowered him with her unrestrained libido (1.7.5–10). Like the hoydenish priestesses who attempt to rape Encolpius in Petronius’ *Satyricon* (134–38), Meroe entirely dominated Socrates in bed. The old hag is an inn-

5. E.g. James 1987: 49, 63; C. Panayotakis 1995: 126.

6. On the παρακλαυσίθυρον see the ample note of Kißel 1990: 728–29 on Pers. 5.165–66; see also Hunter 1999: 107–09 on Thcr. 3. On the use of the παρακλαυσίθυρον in Roman elegy see Yardley 1978. Other scholars prefer to use the term κῶμος, see Cairns 1972: 6; Yardley 1978: 19 n. 1 with further references. On κῶμος and mime see Fantham 1988: 158 with n. 32. See also below, notes 25 and 49.

7. Plutarch in *On Exile* 4 (*Mor.* 600b) describes the situation where a character urges his friend to take heart and make a stand against Fortune as a typical scene from comedy. The appropriate way to react to these mishaps, he continues, is to look for ‘a fire, a bathhouse, a cloak, a roof’, which seems reflected in the practical measures undertaken by Aristomenes to help his friend (1.6.5–1.7.3).

keeper by profession. She serves her wine to her customers, but also has a taste for it herself, as we may surmise from her speaking name Meroe,⁸ and from the fact that she has told several stories to Socrates while being the worse for drink (1.10.3 *temulenta*).⁹ This Meroe, however, as we learn from Socrates' tales, is also a dangerous witch, a woman of divine status who is able to control the cosmic forces with her magic (1.8.2–4; cf. Petr. 134.12), and who travels all over the world to satisfy her unrestrained lust (1.8.6). Moreover, Socrates dramatically recounts that she takes ruthless revenge on those who betray her, especially unfaithful lovers, by changing them into animals or worse (1.9–10).

When Socrates finishes his storytelling, Aristomenes responds that he is deeply impressed by his account, and he suggests that they should flee first thing in the morning (1.11.1–3). But while Aristomenes is still suggesting this, his friend Socrates is already snoring loudly (*iam sopitus stertebat altius* (1.11.4)), sleeping off his debauch caused by the great quantities of wine, to which he is apparently not accustomed despite his liaison with a professional alcoholic (*insolita uinolentia*). This comic note is immediately followed by another one: Aristomenes makes great efforts to prevent any danger from outside. An elaborate sentence depicts Aristomenes' anxious care in shutting off the room, not only by carefully closing all the locks of the door, but also by putting his little cot (*grabatulus*) in front of it as a barricade, and finally, by lying down on the bed himself (*Ego uero adducta fore pessulisque firmatis grabatulo etiam pone cardine<m> supposito et probe adgesto super eum me recipio* 'But I closed the door and fastened the bolts and even put my cot behind the hinges and set it up firmly against the door, and on top of it I retired to rest' (1.11.5)).¹⁰

We can easily picture this as a theatrical scene, and, as a matter of fact, Aristomenes' barricading of the door is an essential preparation for the spectacular action that is very soon going to take place on the stage

8. On Meroe's speaking name see S. Panayotakis 1998: 126, comparing the puns in Suet. *Tib.* 42 (the nickname Biberius Caldius Mero for Tiberius Claudius Nero) and Auson. *Epigr.* 21 Green (11–12 *quod uinum non diluis undis,/ potare immixtum sueta merumque merum*). Through the pun on wine, the name of the witch Meroe follows a tradition of speaking names belonging to dipsomaniac sorceresses (see also next note); in Roman elegy, compare the name Dipsas in Ov. *Am.* 1.8.1–2 (cf. 3 *ex re nomen habet*). On the type of the drunk old woman see Zanker 1989.

9. In Petronius, the old witch and priestess of Priapus called Oenothea – note the speaking name – drinks large amounts of undiluted wine during her uncanny rituals (137.13, 138.3; cf. also 136.11).

10. Translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

on which this story is set.¹¹ One could say that Aristomenes puts a very important stage-prop into its proper place, as required by the scenario, the stage-prop of the *grabattulus*, around, on, and below which much of the impending spectacular action is going to take place.

When Aristomenes is lying on his bed, his fear does not allow him to go to sleep immediately. But then, around the third watch, which would be just after midnight, Aristomenes finally dozes off. Precisely at the point of time when Aristomenes falls asleep, the doors of the room are battered with great violence, and thrown down to the ground:

Ac primum prae metu aliquantisper uigilo, dein circa tertiam ferme uigiliam paululum coni[hi]ueo. Commo[do]dum quieueram, et repente impulsu maiore quam ut latrones crederes ianuae reserantur immo uero fractis et euolsis funditus cardinibus prosternuntur. (1.11.6–7)

And first, out of fear, I stayed awake for a little while, then around the third watch I closed my eyes for a moment. I had only just fallen asleep, when suddenly, with a greater violence than you could imagine of brigands, the door was unbarred, no, worse still, its hinges were broken and ripped off their sockets completely, and the door was battered down to the ground.

Although the narrator does not indicate who is battering the doors down, it is clear that we have here an extreme version of the theatrical element of noisy door-battering, which introduces a new character on stage.¹² We realise that we are becoming the audience of a spectacular entrance scene, and although we are still left in suspense with regard to the identity of the new character entering, we may guess that this identity is related to the great fear felt by Aristomenes, caused by the horror stories of Socrates.

First, however, our attention is drawn to the immediate consequence of the violent breaking down of the doors, which sets in motion a slapstick scene, the unfortunate collapse of Aristomenes' carefully built up barricade, including himself. Through the violence of the crashing doors, the stage-prop of the *grabattulus* collapses and lands upside down on the ground, on top of Aristomenes, who had rolled out of it and had been hurled to the ground too:

11. The comic blockading of the door with a piece of furniture seems to have appealed to Apuleius as a subject for his fictional work, as may appear also from *fr.* 4 of his *Hermagoras* (Prisc. 2.111 GLK): *uerum infirma scamillorum obice fultae fores* (see Harrison 2000: 22).

12. For the theatrical element of noise of the doors introducing a new character on stage see Costa 1973 on Sen. *Med.* 177 *sed cuius ictu regius cardo strepit?*; see also Brown 1995. For other important connotations of door-battering see below, notes 27–29.

Grabatulus alioquin breuiculus et uno pede mutilus ac putris impetus tanti uiolentia proste<r>nitur, me quoque euolutum atque excussum humi recidens in inuersum coperit ac tegit. (1.11.8)

My cot, smallish and lacking one foot and rotten as it was, was smashed down by the violence of such an assault; I was also rolled out and thrown off, and my cot, falling backwards upside down on the floor, covered and shielded me.

Through his spectacular crash, Aristomenes unwillingly becomes the central figure of an outrageous scene with strong elements of farcical theatre. As a result of his farcical fall, Aristomenes finds himself the audience of his own comic performance, and he cannot restrain his laughter at ‘Aristomenes made into a turtle’ (*risum nequiui continere de Aristomene testudo factus* (1.12.1)).¹³ Aristomenes’ poor *grabattulus* is transformed into a stage-prop of a typical scene from the adultery-mime, where the illicit lover hides under the bed.¹⁴ Just as in Petronius’ *Satyrice* (94.8, 97.4), the bed functions in Aristomenes’ story both as a hiding-place and as a future instrument for attempted suicide by hanging. The latter will result in another slapstick accident with Aristomenes as a victim, when the (rotten) rope, taken from the *grabattulus*, breaks under his weight and Aristomenes tumbles down on Socrates (1.16.6).

The wet rituals of Meroe and Panthia

In the present situation, the *grabattulus* temporarily ceases to be the focal point of the scene, and becomes the perspective from which Aristomenes will observe the following gruesome events (1.12–13). Aristomenes vividly pictures us a scene, featuring two women of advanced age that act and move like a couple, each of them carrying equipment that implies sinister purposes, a lamp, a sponge, and a sword (1.12.3). We hear their agitated conversation quoted verbally, which enhances the impression of a dialogue on stage. In this dialogue, the woman with the sword, whom Aristomenes identifies as Meroe (cf. 1.13.3), poses as the poor heroine

13. Compare Oenothra’s tumble from a rickety stool in Petr. 136.1 *fracta est putris sella, quae staturae altitudinem adiecerat, anumque pondere suo deiectam super foculum mittit*. Encolpius’ reaction to Oenothra’s farcical tumbling down on to the hearth and Aristomenes’ reaction both contain the comic key-word *risus* (136.3 *anumque non sine risu erexi*). On this scene see Preston 1915: 263; C. Panayotakis 1995: 179.

14. Cf. Apul. *Met.* 9.26.4 *ad instar testudinis alueum succubabat*; Petron. 97.4 *imperaui Gitoni ut raptim grabatum subiret annecteretque pedes et manus institit, ... extensus infra grabatum scrutantium eluderet manus*. On the use of the bed as a stage-prop in farcical situations in Petronius, inspired by the mime, see C. Panayotakis 1995: 131. The comic use of furniture as a hiding-place goes back to Attic comedy, cf. Xenarch. *fr.* 4.10–12 K-A (see Preston 1915: 267).

who has been spurned by her lover, uttering bitter complaints and comparing herself with Calypso, abandoned by her Odysseus (1.12.6). Then, she points to Aristomenes, who is still hiding under the small cot, and utters an eloquent accusation, accompanied by threats, in which she identifies him as the cause of her misery:

“At hic bonus ... consiliator Aristomenes, qui fugae huius auctor fuit et nunc morti proximus iam humi prostratus grabattulo subcubans iacet et haec omnia conspicit, impune se laturum meas contumelias putat. Faxo eum sero, immo statim, immo uero iam nunc, ut et praecedentis dicacitatis et instantis curiositatis paeniteat.” (1.12.7–8)

“And this good plotter Aristomenes, who was the author of this flight and now, being very close to death, is already lying prostrate on the ground under his cot and observes all this, he thinks he will get away unpunished with insulting me! I will make him repent later on, no, immediately, no, even at this very moment, both of his earlier glibness and of his present curiosity.”

This accusation strikes Aristomenes with great fear, and he displays his panic in a forceful, dramatic way by his physical symptoms of fear, sweating and trembling, which probably recall similar emotional displays from the pantomime and the mime.¹⁵ The shaking caused by Aristomenes’ panic brings about another scene of farce, again starring the little *grabattulus* on top of him, which starts to perform a spasmodic dance:

Haec ego ut accepi, sudore frigidus miser perfluo, tremore uiscera quatuor, ut grabattulus etiam succus[sus]u meo inquietus super dorsum meum palpitando saltaret. (1.13.1)

The moment I hear this, wretched me, I break into a cold sweat, my insides flutter with trepidation, so that even my cot, disturbed by my own jolting, starts to dance, rocking on my back.

During this tragicomic performance, the dialogue between Meroe and her accomplice, whom she calls ‘sister Panthia’, continues, as they start deliberating their murderous schemes (1.13.2–3). Panthia’s first suggestion is to tear Aristomenes to shreds in a Bacchic ritual (*bacchatim*), or to tie up his limbs and to cut off his genitals. But Meroe has something better in mind than these maenadic rituals, and she deems it more convenient to let Aristomenes live, so that he can bury his comrade.

The sinister implication of this apparent mercy towards Aristomenes becomes immediately clear through Meroe’s following bloody performance with her sword, with which she carries out a kind of ritual slaugh-

15. Emotional displays in the pantomime and the mime were influenced by literary archetypes of emotional symptoms, such as the famous symptoms of love in Sappho *fr.* 31.13–14 (cf. Plu. *Demetr.* 38.4 πολλάκις ἐγένετο τὰ τῆς Σαπφῶς ἐκεῖνα περὶ αὐτὸν πάντα; see Swain 1992: 78).

ter, with Socrates as her victim (1.13.4–7). Pulling Socrates' head to one side, she plunges the whole sword into the left side of his throat. With a small leather bottle applied to the wound she carefully receives the blood that spurts out. Then, continuing her ritual sacrifice, she puts her hand into the wound, and tears out the victim's heart. This horrifying scene, pictured in gruesome and gory detail by the eyewitness Aristomenes, can compete with violent scenes known from Senecan drama. It was doubtless designed by Apuleius to shock his Roman audience.¹⁶ The repulsive sounds suggested by the description of Socrates 'gurgling forth his life's breath', producing a hissing sound through his wound, complement the horrifying visual details of the slaughter (*inpetu teli praesecata gula uocem, immo stridorem incertum per uulnus effunderet et spiritum rebulliret* (1.13.6)). Moreover, the draining of Socrates' vital fluid seems to symbolise Meroe's exhausting sexual behaviour in her preceding relation with Socrates, wearing out her sexual slave with her unrestrained vampire-like lust, and turning him into a pale and emaciated skeleton-like man.¹⁷

But the wet rituals of Meroe and Panthia have not reached their climax yet. Now it is Aristomenes' turn, who is still hiding under his *grabattulus*, and has witnessed the cruel murder of his friend. Ruthlessly, the murderous two remove the cot, spread their feet, and squat over Aristomenes' face, discharging their full bladders until he is drenched in their stinking urine:

His editis ambae una remoto grabattulo uaricus super faciem meam residentes uesicam ex[h]onerant, quoad me urinae spurcissimae madore perluerent. (1.13.8)¹⁸

Having solemnly pronounced these words, they both at once remove my cot and while sitting astride my face they relieve their bladder, to drench me in the liquid of their filthy urine.

16. Such violent descriptions were a hallmark of Senecan drama and probably influenced by declamation; see Frank 1995 on Sen. *Phoen.* 159–60 *effringe pectus corque tot scelerum capax / euelle*; cf. also Sen. *Dial.* 5.14.2 (*De Ira* 3.14.2) (*Praexaspes*) *ipsum cor adulescentis ... figit rescissoque pectore haerens in ipso corde spiculum ostendit*, where the author comments upon the shocking nature of the scene (5.14.3 *eius rei laudator fuit, cuius nimis erat spectatorem fuisse*).

17. Cf. 1.6.1 *paene alius lurore, ad miseram maciem deformatus*, 1.6.3 *laruale simulacrum*, 1.7.10 *ad istam faciem ... bona uxor et mala Fortuna perduxit*. For the interpretation of such symptoms as a sexual *pallor amantium*, cf. Hor. *Epod.* 17.21–25 and see Smith-Woods 2002: 182; Keulen 2003a: 41.

18. I follow Rohde's emendation *ambae una* of the corrupt reading *ab-una* in the main manuscript F; see Keulen 2003a: 254.

After this orgiastic, uncanny rite, which is pictured as a kind of rape, carried out as a punishment,¹⁹ the women leave their victim in a state of utter humiliation, lying on the ground, soaked in their filthy urine:

At ego, ut eram etiam nunc humi proiectus, inanimis, nudus et frigidus et lut[i]o perlitus, quasi recens utero matris editus ... (1.14.2)

But I, as I was still even then prostrated on the ground, breathless, naked and cold and bedaubed with filth, as if I was recently born from my mother's womb ...

Thus, Aristomenes has become initiated through a wet ceremony carried out by two frenzied drunk old witches, just as Encolpius has to endure being smeared with the ritual liquids during the dirty rites performed by Oenothea and Proselenos, who are *aniculae ... solutae mero ac libidine* 'pathetic old creatures ... fuzzy with wine and sexual arousal' (138.3):

profert Oenothea scortum fascinum, quod ut oleo et minuto pipere atque urticae trito circumdedit semine, paulatim coepit inserere ano meo ... hoc crudelissima anus spargit subinde umore femina mea ... nasturcii sucum cum habrotono miscet perfusisque inguinibus meis uiridis urticae fascem comprehendit omniaque infra umbilicum coepit lenta manu cadere (Petr. 138.1–2)

Oenothea, drawing out a leathern prick, dipped it in a medley of oil, small pepper, and the bruised seed of nettles, and proceeded to insert it by degrees up my backside ... With this mixture the sadistic old hag sprinkled my thighs; ... and with the juice of cresses and southern-wood washing my loins, she took a bunch of green nettles, and with measured strokes began to whip all my body below the navel ...²⁰

After their wet rituals, as soon as the two Apuleian witches leave the stage by crossing the threshold (*limen*), the doors are spontaneously restored to their original state,²¹ creating an apt closure of their spectacular performance of magic, and appropriately balancing their dramatic entrance through those same doors, across the same threshold.

19. The sexual connotations of excretory terminology in Latin (cf. Adams 1982: 91–92; 141) suggest a kind of rape, carried out as a punishment. Cf. Hor. *S.* 1.2.44 *hunc perminxerunt calones*, where the kitchen slaves 'urinate upon' the adulterer as a punishment. In Hor. *S.* 1.8.37–39, urinating and defecating on a person is mentioned as a punishment for telling lies.

20. Translations of Petronius are after Heseltine-Warmington (1969) and Walsh (1996).

21. Apul. *Met.* 1.14.1 *Commodum limen euaserant, et fores ad pristinum statum integrae resurgunt: cardines ad foramina resident, postes ad repagula redeunt, ad claustra pessuli recurrunt.*

The excluded mistress who batters the door

Unfortunately, the text does not give us any details about the appearance and dress of the two Apuleian witches, but perhaps the contemporary audience would fill in those details themselves, as they knew the type from their visits to the theatre. As we may surmise from other sophisticated texts, the sorceress and her accomplice were probably familiar types in the mime. Meroe's cruel revenge on Socrates, perpetrated together with her accomplice Panthia, seems to have a literary antecedent in the murderous schemes of the sorceress Canidia and her assistant (Hor. S. 1.8), two old, ugly hags with false teeth and wigs, who were probably inspired by characters from the mime. Fantham and McKeown in their studies on the influence of the mime on Roman literature compare these types with Sophron's mime of the sorceress and her accomplice, and Theocritus' second *Idyll*, featuring the courtesan Simaetha, who sings incantations to compel her handsome lover to come back to her house, with the help of her assistant Thestylis.²²

Being a sorceress who employs love magic for her own interests, and posing as a mistress who has been abandoned by her lover, with bitter complaints about his deceit and flight (1.12.4–5), our Meroe appears to be a more extreme and more aged version of the Theocritean Simaetha. Both sorceresses appeal to mythological parallels to their situation; both are compared with the vengeful heroine *par excellence*, the arch-enchantress Medea.²³ Both Simaetha and Meroe resemble a type from less sophisticated mime-like texts that were designed for immediate performance. In one of those texts, the *Fragmentum Grenfellianum* (mid-second century BC), we have the song of a so-called ἀποκεκλειμένη, a woman who has been spurned by her former lover, and now complains bitterly outside his house. As Richard Hunter (1996: 8) remarks, this combines the familiar setting of the παρακλαυσίθυρον with a kind of sexual inversion, since it is usually the male partner who is the *exclusus amator*. Hunter points out that texts like the *Fragmentum* were indeed presumably performed by a man, the μαγῶδός. Thus, the sexual inversion that characterises the type of the excluded mistress seems to have

22. See McKeown 1979: 77; Fantham 1988: 159. C. Panayotakis (1995: 171–72) draws the parallel with the magic rites performed by Proselenos and Oenothra in Petronius (see above), and argues that 'one can reasonably surmise that magic rites were somehow presented on the mimic stage.' On the links between Theocritus and the mime (Sophron) see most recently Hordern 2002.

23. Mythological parallels: cf. Thcr. 2.45–46; Apul. *Met.* 1.12.4, 1.12.6. Medea: Thcr. 2.16; Apul. *Met.* 1.10.2.

taken place on the level of performance as well.²⁴ That Apuleius' audience was familiar with such performances becomes likely if we take into account that our knowledge about them comes from a source that is more or less contemporary with Apuleius, his fellow-African Athenaeus (14.621c–d). This author informs us about the shocking nature of this form of dinner entertainment, which derives from comedy, and explains the name *μαγωδία* through the connections with magic:

The player called a *magodos* (*μαγωδός*) carries tambourines and cymbals, and all his clothes are women's garments. He makes rude gestures (*σχινίζεται*), and all his actions lack decency, as he plays the part of adulterous women or bawds (*μαστροπούς*), or a man drunk and going on a revel to his mistress. Aristoxenus [*fr.* 110 Wehrli²] says that [...] *magodia* derives from comedy (*παρὰ τὴν κωμωδίαν*). For often *magodoi* took comic scenarios (*ὑποθέσεις*) and acted them in their own style and manner. *Magodia* acquired its name from the fact that they recited, as it were, 'magical' verses and exhibited powers like those of enchantment.²⁵

Although Meroe does not utter her complaints outside her lover's house but after breaking in (1.12.4–5), she acts according to the type of the *ἀποκεκλειμένη*. Meroe seems to have an obsession with thresholds, doors, bars, unlocking and locking, which is already foreshadowed by her magic feat with the houses of her enemies in the anecdote told by Socrates.²⁶ This obsession culminates in her violent intrusion described above (1.11.6–7), and is illustrated again by the threshold-magic that she performs while leaving (1.14.1; see note 21). Her invasion of her former lover's room produces a dramatic climax that features the theatrical element of angry door-battering (*θυροκοπεῖν*), a motif that goes back to Attic comedy and the mime, and is frequently used in Roman comedy, elegy and satire, connected to nocturnal visits of illicit lovers.²⁷ The motif of *θυροκοπεῖν* is not only related to the *παρακλαυσίθυρον*, but words related

24. This inversion of sexual identity is no surprise in view of the fact that female roles in ancient theatre were traditionally played by men.

25. Translation after Hunter 1996: 8. According to Philostratus (*Imagines* 1.2.198), during the *κῶμος* ('carousal', 'revel', 'festive procession', but also the song performed at such occasions; see above, note 6) men were allowed to dress in drag and to walk in an effeminate way; see Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague 1990: 228.

26. Apul. *Met.* 1.10.3 *cunctos in suis sibi domibus tacita numinum uiolentia clausit, ut toto biduo non claustra perfringi, non fores euelli, non denique parietes ipsi quiuerint perforari...*

27. For the motif of *θυροκοπεῖν*, which goes back to Attic comedy and mime, see Pinotti 1993 on Ov. *Rem.* 31 *frangatur ... ianua*, with lit.; on its use in Latin comedy (e.g. Plaut. *Pers.* 568–69; Ter. *Ad.* 88–89) see Leo 1912: 155; for the topos of noisy doors connected to nocturnal visits of illicit lovers in comedy and elegy see McKeown on Ov. *Am.* 1.6.49–50. Cf. above, note 12.

to θυροκοπεῖν seem also to be attested as generic terms for an improvised form of song. Notably, Hesychius uses the term θυροκοπιστικόν for an improvised form of song like the παρακλαυσίθυρον, and Athenaeus (14.618c) lists θυροκοπικόν (= κρουσίθυρον) as a variety of song.

While showing an acute awareness of the motif's vicissitudes in the various literary genres, Apuleius blends and combines its various dramatic associations into a new, forceful and highly charged instance of door-battering, which is in agreement with the hybrid characterisation of its perpetrator, Meroe. Being Socrates' spurned mistress, Meroe appears as a kind of furious *exclusa amatrix* battering down the closed doors that impede her from seeing her lover. Meroe's version of the παρακλαυσίθυρον transforms the sung complaint of a locked-out woman spurned by her lover into a complaint of a woman who violently breaks into the house of her lover. Moreover, Meroe's reputation of being a ruthless punisher of adulterous lovers (1.9.1–2 and 5) adds the flavour of a stock scene from an adultery-mime, in which the angry husband breaks down the adulterer's door, a scene that Horace used for *Satires* 1.2.²⁸

In the light of Meroe's associations with drunkenness (her significant name; cf. 1.10.3 *temulenta*) and Panthia's unrestrained Dionysiac frenzy (1.13.2 *bacchatim*), the picture may be evoked of drunkards who force their way into Aristomenes' and Socrates' drinking-party uninvited, which may recall situations from Aristophanic comedy.²⁹ That the witches have been drinking quite a lot before going to meet their male victims is also suggested by the fact that their bladders are full, which leads to their uncanny punishment of Aristomenes.

Yet, the sudden opening of the doors (*repente*) also creates an atmosphere of magic, like an epiphany-miracle that ominously announces the entrance of some supernatural being with divine powers.³⁰ The atmosphere of mystery and magic combined with the low theatrical setting of the inn resembles the spectacular entrance-scene of Quartilla's slave-girl in the *Satyrice*, where, after aggressive knocking, the securely barred door suddenly opens spontaneously:

28. In Hor. *S.* 1.2.128 *ianua frangatur*, the vivid picture of the angry husband breaking down the adulterer's door recalls a stock scene from the adultery-mime (see Brown 1993 *ad loc.* with lit.). In the *Met.*, cf. 9.20.3 (maritus) *iam pulsat, iam clamat, iam saxo fores uerberat*. On the adultery-mime in *Met.* 9 see Harrison in this volume, esp. his section 3 (iii).

29. In Ar. *V.* 1253–54 θυροκοπήσαι is an offence caused by drunkenness, which makes the 'door-battering' escalate into 'breaking down doors' (see MacDowell 1971 *ad loc.*). According to Sommerstein 1983: *ad loc.*, it evokes the picture of drunkards trying to force their way into a party uninvited (comparing Alicibiades' entrance in Pl. *Smp.* 212c).

30. See Keulen 2003a: 43, with n. 148.

sed ut primum beneficio Gitonis praeparata nos impleuimus cena, ostium satis audaci strepitu exsonuit impulsus (...) dumque loquimur, sera sua sponte delapsa cecidit reclusaeque subito fores admiserunt intransentem. (Petr. 16.1–2)

Thanks to Giton, we found supper ready, and we were making a hearty meal, when a very aggressive knock sounded at the door (...) while we were speaking, the bar slipped and fell of its own accord, the door suddenly swung open, and let in our visitor.

This entrance turns out to be the ominous beginning of an orgiastic scene featuring a repulsive retaliation by means of an overdose of sex, accompanied by drinking in abundance. There is mentioning of faltering lamps and crashing furniture.³¹ As in other passages, the parallels between Apuleius and Petronius are striking; still, there is no reason to assume that Apuleius was directly influenced by Petronius' text.³² The close resemblance between Petronius' and Apuleius' works of comic fiction reveals shared interests and literary techniques, but does not presuppose any direct dependence; in fact, a direct influence from Petronius cannot be sustained by verbal reminiscences (see Walsh 1978).

Meroe and Cynthia (Propertius 4.8)

What is more, Meroe strikingly resembles another sophisticated Latin reworking of the type of the *exclusa amatrix* performing in a 'low life' setting, Cynthia (Prop. 4.8). It seems that the Propertian and the Apuleian scene are inspired by one and the same theatrical situation, which was probably a popular scene from the adultery-mime.³³ Both scenes feature a bed or a couch as the focal point of the action. Just like the angry Meroe, Cynthia violently interrupts a licentious drinking-party of her unfaithful lover, which is taking place in secrecy (35 *secreta*; cf. 1.8.2).

31. Petr. 22.3 *lucernae quoque umore defectae tenue et extremum lumen spargebant; 22.4 cecidit etiam mensa cum argento.*

32. Compare the analogous situations of a failed suicide attempt and the subsequent rushing in of the *ianitor/deuersitor* (Petr. 94.8–95.1; Apul. *Met.* 1.16–17), where Ciaffi (1960: 30–35) assumed a direct influence of Petronius on Apuleius (cf. note 2). This was refuted by Effe (1976: 370 n. 23). According to Walsh 1970: 31 and C. Panayotakis 1995: 126–27 the similar incidents in Petronius and Apuleius may have been inspired by a common source, probably the mime. For a similar analogy cf. 1.21.2 *Ego uero quod primum ingressui stabulum conspicatus sum, accessi et de quadam anu caupona ilico percontor: 'estne', inquit, 'Hypata haec ciuitas?' Adnuit, which A. Collignon (1892: 380) in his Appendix 'Rapprochements entre Pétrone et Apulée' compared with Petr. 6.4–7.1 *accedo aniculam quandam, quae agreste holus uendebat, et 'Rogo', inquam, 'mater, numquid scis ubi habitem? Delectata est illa urbanitate tam stulta ...**

33. On the links of Propertius 4.8 with the adultery-mime see McKeown 1979: 74–75; Fantham 1988: 158. See also above, note 2.

Cynthia's arrival is announced by mysterious phenomena, such as the flickering of the flame, although the lamps are full (43), and the table-top falling upside down upon its trestles (44), a spectacular element that seems echoed in the tumbling upside down of Aristomenes' *grabattulus*.³⁴ Then, the sudden strident sound of the gates mark Cynthia's spectacular entrance, featuring the motif of θυροκοπεῖν:

cum subito rauci sonuerunt cardine postes,
nec leuia ad primos murmura facta Lares.
Nec mora, cum totas resupinat Cynthia ualuas. (Prop. 4.8.49–51)

Then all of a sudden the sound of creaking hinges / and a murmur of voices away in
the entrance hall / and at once the doors are flung back, and there stands Cynthia³⁵

In a terrible scene of physical abuse, Cynthia punishes her unfaithful lover with vampire-bites (64–65), and drags forth his companion Lygdamus, who is still hiding at the back of the couch (68 *ad plutei fulcra sinistra latens*), a situation that seems to repeat itself in the Apuleian version, where Aristomenes is hiding under the cot.³⁶

Meroe's indictment of her unfaithful lover's accomplice (1.12.7–8) recalls Cynthia's treatment of her unfaithful lover's servant Lygdamus, who had been in charge of the drinks during the secret orgy (37), and whom she calls the 'cause of all my wrongs'.³⁷ In both Propertius and Apuleius, the outrageous scene is concluded with a bizarre wet ritual. Whereas Cynthia concludes a thorough purification of the whole house with a cleansing ritual on the thresholds, and by touching the poet's head three times with sulphur (4.8.83–86), Meroe performs a different kind of ablution before she crosses the threshold again to leave the room, as we have seen above (1.13.8).

Just like Cynthia, Meroe plays the part of the rejected mistress, who adopts a masculine role, and completely overpowers her passive male partner. As Fantham points out, it is very probable that the character of the lustful woman who is even more virile than a man was a type from the mime (Fantham 1988: 156).³⁸ In both Propertius and Apuleius, the

34. Prop. 4.8.44 *reccidit inque suos mensa supina pedes*; Apul. *Met.* 1.11.8 *Grabattulus alioquin breuiculus et uno pede mutilus ac putris impetus tanti uiolentia proster*<r>*nitur, me quoque euolutum atque excussum humi recidens in inuersum coperit ac tegit.*

35. Transl. Musker 1972.

36. Prop. 4.8.68–69 *Lygdamus ad plutei fulcra sinistra latens / eruitur*; Apul. *Met.* 1.12.7 *Aristomenes, qui ... grabattulo subcubans iacet*; cf. 1.13.8 *remoto grabattulo.*

37. Prop. 4.8.79 *Lygdamus in primis, omnis mihi causa querelae*; Apul. *Met.* 1.12.7 *'At hic bonus', inquit, 'consiliator Aristomenes, qui fugae huius auctor fuit.*

38. For Meroe's active sexual behaviour cf. 1.7.8 *urigine percita cubili suo adplicat* (cf. the sexual innuendo in 1.12.4 *Catamitus*, picturing Socrates as a passive homosexual);

state of being *exclusa* is associated with the lover's scorn of his mistress' old age. In Propertius, the fate of being old and excluded was predicted by the poet as a curse on his faithless Cynthia, whose obdurate door had always been closed for him.³⁹ In Apuleius, both Socrates and Aristomenes make tendentious remarks about Meroe's old age, by which the rejected mistress feels highly offended.⁴⁰ Both Cynthia and Meroe are associated with witchcraft (cf. Prop. 4.5). Both Cynthia and Meroe are ironically compared to Calypso as the paradigm of genuine fidelity, and Meroe even calls Socrates her Odysseus.⁴¹

However, both women actually adopt the role of the vengeful Odysseus themselves, in a comic re-enactment of Odysseus' unexpected homecoming, vividly pictured by his dramatic leap on the threshold (*Od.* 22.2), which is singled out in Plato's *Ion* (535b) as one of the most impressive incidents in Homer.⁴² Two studies of Propertius 4.8 demonstrate that Cynthia's unexpected homecoming is a deliberate echo of this spectacular entrance-scene, which introduces the massacre scene where the drinking party of the suitors is violently thrown into chaos.⁴³ Cynthia's wet rituals, consisting of a thorough purification of the whole house, are amusingly similar to the ritual cleansing with water and sulphur after the massacre of the suitors. No doubt, the scene of Odysseus' homecoming was a kind of paradigm for disrupted banquet scenes on which comic genres like the mime would work, featuring low characters whose actions comically reflect those of mythological figures. It seems that both Meroe and Cynthia are variants of the same comic type that displayed a provocative inversion of sexual roles and crossing of gender boundaries, and was

in 1.13.2 the two witches consider castrating Aristomenes, and end up urinating in his face, which is pictured as a kind of rape (1.13.8). See above, note 19.

39. Prop. 3.25.11–12 *At te celatis aetas grauis urgeat annis/ et ueniat formae ruga sinistra tuae*, 15–16 *exclusa inque uicem fastus patiare superbos, / et quae fecisti facta queraris anus!*

40. Apul. *Met.* 1.7.7 *anum, sed admodum scitulum*, 1.8.1 *scortum scorteum*, 1.12.4 *qui diebus ac noctibus inludit aetatulam meam*; cf. 1.12.7 (Aristomenes) *impune se latu-rum meas contumelias putat*. For Meroe's obsession with old age compare the priestess's lament in Petr. 134.6 *nec minus illa fletu confusa altera parte lectuli sedit aetatisque longae moram tremulis uocibus coepit accusare*.

41. Prop. 1.15.9–10 *At non sic Ithaci digressu mota Calypso / desertis olim fleuerat aequoribus*; Apul. *Met.* 1.12.6 *At ego scilicet Vlixi astu deserta uice Calypsonis aeternam solitudinem flebo*. For the ironical implications of this comparison in Propertius see Gaisser 1977: 387 ff.

42. Pl. *Ion* 535b ὅταν εὖ εἴπεις ἔπη καὶ ἐκπλήξῃς μάλιστα τοὺς θεωμένους, ἢ τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα ὅταν ἐπὶ τὸν οὐδὸν ἐφαλλόμενον ἕδης, ἐκφανῇ γιγνόμενον τοῖς μνηστῆρσι 'when you give a good recitation and specially thrill your audience, either with the lay of Odysseus leaping forth on to the threshold, revealing himself to the suitors'. For the notion of ἐκπλήξις in the *Met.* see 1.1.2 *ut mireris*, with Keulen 2003a: 68–69 *ad loc.*; see below, note 45.

43. See Evans 1971; Currie 1973.

probably familiar to both Propertius and Apuleius from the mime or mime-like texts.

Although the parallels between the Apuleian Meroe and the Propertian Cynthia are evident, there are also many differences, which should warn us not to go too far in comparing the Apuleian and the Propertian scene. I do not believe that Apuleius alludes to Propertius here, although it is conceivable that his readers knew the poem, and recognised the similarities.⁴⁴ Both were Latin authors writing in a Roman tradition, and followed established literary procedures of allusion and conflation, but each of them applied these techniques to their own specific literary programme. Apuleius did not write a Roman aetiological poem in the Callimachean tradition; Propertius did not write entertaining prose fiction. The features that they share may shed light on the features that distinguish them.

Across the threshold (limen): Roman literary strategy and cultural symbolism

What is the literary programme to which Apuleius applied these established literary conventions? To answer this question, we may turn to the programmatic statement in the prologue, which announces changes and reversals of men's appearances and fortunes, recounted to astonish the reader.⁴⁵ I am convinced that we are invited to view Meroe's performance as a vivid dramatisation of the programme of the novel. Her violent and noisy intrusion into the closed room of the inn is linked with a crossing of boundaries on more than one level at the same time. The crossing of the *limen* creates a dramatic, highly charged moment, which is not only an important transition in time in the story, set at the beginning of the third watch, the proper time for apparitions to appear (*circa tertiam uigiliam* (1.11.6)). It also coincides with the transition from waking to sleeping in the experience of the narrator, and thus possibly symbolises the crossing of the boundary between reality and dream experience. This boundary in itself may be an emblem of the difference between truth and fiction (cf. Laird 1993), a programmatic theme in this text, which is possibly enacted by the dramatic appearance of Meroe, who may symbolically represent a figment of the superstitious imagination of our narrator.

44. Apuleius mentions Propertius and Cynthia in *Apol.* 10.3 *Propertium, qui Cynthiam dicat, Hostiam dissimulet.*

45. *Apul. Met.* 1.1.2–3 *figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conuersas et in se rursum mutuo nexu reffectas ut mireris exordior.* See above, note 42.

Moreover, Meroe herself embodies the crossing of boundaries on the level of sex and gender, as she enacts the sexual inversion that is associated with the type of the excluded mistress (ἀποκεκλειμένη), a type that embodied everything that would be threatening and shocking for a Roman male. Reading and impersonating this theatrical character, the Roman reader would vividly recall licentious forms of entertainment and performance, where transvestism and role-changing temporarily allowed the confusion of traditional patterns that defined Roman male identity. The use of a feminine, shrill voice was fun, but also posed a threat, the threat of 'gender metamorphosis', which could turn a public appearance into the shameful experience of suffering a loss of face.⁴⁶

By her unrestrained sexual lust and dominant behaviour, and by her dramatic entrance that pays homage to the retour imprévu of the vengeful Odysseus, Meroe personifies the confusion of conventional boundaries of genre as well as gender. Her thrilling theatrical performance makes a delightful contribution to the topsy-turvy world of the *Metamorphoses*, which is designed to startle and to entertain, and can be interpreted along multiple lines.⁴⁷ Both Meroe and Cynthia overturn literary as well as sexual conventions by crossing the threshold of their beloved, and illustrate a shared literary strategy of the Roman authors Apuleius and Propertius: both writers, each in his own way, employ the cultural and symbolical power of expression that Romans observed in the *limen*, as a borderline between life and death, between inside world and outside world, between fiction and reality/truth.⁴⁸

Conclusion: Apuleius, Meroe, Gender, and Genre

In the first, programmatic, book of the *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius calls forth both his literary skills and his stagecraft to produce the theatrical character Meroe, whose crossing of the *limen* symbolises transgressive behaviour on many levels. The hybrid characterisation of Meroe's *persona* and actions brings us back to the topic of genre, the subject of the present volume. Meroe's overpowering and invading performance is not

46. For the fascination in Apuleius' time with the use of voice and gesture as important markers of gender see Gleason 1995: 98–99, 123–24. According to Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.19, the Roman orator should save his voice from dwindling to the feeble shrillness that characterises the voices of eunuchs, women and invalids.

47. Selden's (1994) discussion of *syllipsis* in Apuleius illuminates the play with various 'scenarios' that co-exist within one scene or story, an important characteristic of the 'genre' in which Apuleius was writing.

48. For Propertius' use of the cultural symbolism of the *limen* see Debrohun 2003, especially chapter three: 'Exposing the *Limen*', pp. 118–55.

only an illustrative contribution to the incongruous world of the *Metamorphoses*, which is a world designed to astonish, to thrill, and to seduce the reader, and a world with a sophisticated literary structure that offers several levels of interpretation. With her thrilling theatrical performance, including implicit and explicit aspects of cross-dressing, role-changing, and shifts in identity and gender, Meroe also pays homage to the genre of comedy. Significantly, during their performance in the inn, the Apuleian witches explicitly emphasise their connection with Bacchus, the god of comedy and the theatre, as well as their acquaintanceship with Dionysian ritual.⁴⁹ Cross-dressing, metamorphosis, turning the normal world upside-down, crossing boundaries, and confusing traditional patterns: these are essential grounds that Bacchic rituals have in common with comedy, and such grounds are reflected in the generic structure of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.⁵⁰

Being a good rhetorician, Apuleius knew how to hit the weak spots of his Roman audience, in order to get the attention and the admiration he wanted. There is an interesting parallelism between the apology given in the prologue to the *Metamorphoses*, in case this *fabula Graecanica* cause offence to the Roman ear, and the introductory apology that introduces Apuleius' catalogue of the immoral behaviour of Herennius Rufinus: *Met.* 1.1.5 *praefamur ueniam, siquid ... offendero* 'I beg your pardon in advance if I... strike an offensive note'; *Apol.* 75.1 *multus honos auribus praefandus est* 'I apologise for the language I am going to use'. In order to represent Rufinus as an immoral comic character of the lowest rank, Apuleius describes him as both a pimp and a whore, portraying his house as a breeding place of adultery and corruption. This catalogue of immoral behaviour, with its references to kicking at doors and noisy singing at windows, indicates a similar repertoire to the one that had inspired our scene in the *Metamorphoses*, including θυροκοπεῖν.⁵¹ In both cases, the speaker apologises for the indecent lan-

49. 1.13.2 *Quin igitur, ... soror, hunc primum bacchatim discerpimus uel membris eius destinatis uirilia desecamus?* For Dionysus as the god of the theatre, the mask, and of metamorphosis (cross-dressing) see Roux 1970–72 on Euripides' *Bacchae*, 82. For Dionysus as the god of the κῶμος see Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague 1990: 230–31. On the κῶμος, see above, note 6.

50. For the parallels between cross-dressing as a 'subversive' phenomenon of all times and ancient ritual feasts in which anarchy and liberation of the conventional are central elements, see e.g. Ackroyd 1979: 89–90.

51. *Apol.* 75.2 *prorsus diebus ac noctibus ludibrio iuuentutis ianua calcibus propulsata, fenestrae canticis circumstrepitae, triclinium comisatoribus inquietum, cubiculum adulteris peruium; neque enim ulli ad introeundum metus est, nisi qui pretium marito non attulit.*

guage he is going to use, using synonymous expressions (*praefari ueniam* or *praefari honorem*). In both cases, the speaker informs us about his choice of a certain genre. In both cases, this choice involves a sophisticated display of comic and tragic paradigms of immorality staged in a low-life setting.⁵² The impact that Apuleius expects for this form of rhetoric in his invective in the *Apology* may tell us something of its impact in the case of his fictional work, the *Metamorphoses*.

Although we do not know, and never will know, what kind of impact Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* had on its contemporary audience, the ancient testimonies plus the fact that we still have the text in our hands after so many centuries give some indication of the success that it had in its time.⁵³ I am convinced that reading the *Metamorphoses* was not only a thrilling experience, but also a directly satisfying one, an experience that we with our bookish approach of intertextuality and learned allusion will never be able to reconstruct, partly because we lack the vital context of mime performances, cymbal players, *magodoi*, and dancers of Pyrrhic dances (cf. *Met.* 10.29) that fleshed out the kind of delight that this sophisticated text wished to provoke and employ. Nowadays, the thrilling experience of cross-gender impersonation has been marginalised to the gay scene. We find it difficult to associate or connect such performances with a sophisticated, multi-levelled form of art. I suppose that Italian operas, in the time they were composed, made their audiences go into raptures – featuring castratos playing female roles. Nowadays, if we go to the opera, we prepare ourselves beforehand by listening to CD's and by reading the booklets, or by studying the programme of the performance, and by following the electronic surtitles, in order to attain a more or less directly satisfying experience. Reading Apuleius in the twenty-first century is perhaps not dissimilar. If we work hard enough, we may be rewarded by a tiny glimpse of a work of art that once must have thrilled in an instant.

52. Cf. *Apol.* 78.4 *Philomelae an Medeae an Clytemnestrae*, about the transvestite roles played by Herennius while indulging in his effeminate hobby of mythological ballet performances (*fabulae salticae*); on this passage see also Hunink's contribution to this volume. A reader of the *Metamorphoses* who would impersonate the character of Meroe (a second 'Medea', cf. 1.10.2), would run a similar risk of losing his face as Herennius had done in Apuleius' eyes.

53. For ancient readers' reactions to Apuleius see Di Piro 1995.

CAMELS, CELTS AND CENTAURS
LUCIAN'S AESTHETIC CONCEPT – THE *CHARIS* OF THE
HYBRID*

Peter von Möllendorf

I.

The Greek writers of the Imperial period understood their literary activities primarily as the emulative imitation of those texts and genres of the fifth and fourth centuries BC which had come to be perceived as classic. Their conception of this 'imitation' included issues of language and style on the one hand and questions of content on the other. However, merely to imitate perfectly was not sufficient for the most sophisticated authors of this period. As early as Ps.-Longinus (*De Subl.* 44–45), the question had been raised of why contemporary literature no longer produced great talents (ὑπερμεγέθεις φύσεις: 44.1), but only a technical perfection which, lacking the spark of genius, somehow failed to produce delight. Lucian was also deeply interested in the problem of achieving originality without violating the rule of imitation, as well as in the possibility of successful imitation without clumsiness, of going beyond the mere production of pleasant and skilfully written texts to provide them with the effect of the authentic and the impressive, that effect of the beautiful which reaches its audience *in the very moment* of reception, in short: in the possibility of achieving the very originality and directness of the canonical model texts in the process of imitation. Without mistaking Lucian for an actual theorist, one can still find in his texts on literary criticism – in particular in *Prometheus Es in Verbis*, *Zeuxis*, *De Domo*, *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus* – certain assertions that convey his two general theoretical concerns. *First*, he repeatedly discusses a particular innovation in the field of literary genres: he had managed, so he says, to merge into one two classical genres which conflicted in several respects

* This paper is a considerably revised form of my lecture in Fransum and another one at the university of Giessen. I thank the participants of both Colloquia for their helpful suggestions, Bettina Full and Sabine Vogt for commenting on the here presented theses, as well as Andrej and Ivana Petrovic and Glenn Patten for their substantial discussion of the manuscript and for translation into English. Manuel Baumbach read an early version of the paper and I am indebted to him for helpful commentary and criticism.

– the Old Comedy and the Socratic dialogue. In the context of the general discussion of the Colloquium, I would like to look more closely at Lucian's aesthetic concept of this hybrid of genres, and to discuss its practical adaptation with reference to the example of the *Piscator*. *Second*, throughout his texts (albeit even less systematically and more implicitly than in the previous case) Lucian reflects on the problem of the *χάρις* of a work of art. The poetological tradition of this and the related terms in the theory of art, as well as the way it is used by Lucian, imply that it is precisely this generic *παλίντονος ἁρμονία* which can act as a source of the desired immediate impression of *charis*, but also that it can be the very cause of failing of this artistic goal. My purpose is to demonstrate that, taken in general, Lucian's thoughts towards a conception of the aesthetic of the hybrid are not contradictory, how ever imprecise his terminology might be and in spite of the fact that the corresponding statements remain for the most part in the sphere of images and comparisons.

2.

In *Prometheus Es in Verbis* Lucian discusses an anonymous claim to the effect that he was a Προμηθεὺς ἐν λόγοις, a literary Prometheus. After offering several interpretations of this claim, he ultimately takes the statement to mean that he is a literary innovator. The notion, however, that, like Prometheus, the maker of humanity, he should have created something which did not, in that form, exist before, does not satisfy him at all (3): on the contrary, originality must be accompanied by a particular aesthetic perfection, and Lucian explains that he only will accept the comparison with Prometheus if it was meant in 'praise of this originality in following no exemplar, just as Prometheus at a time when no men existed fashioned them from his imagination, when he gave shape and form to such living creatures that they might move easily and be graceful to see. He was the master-craftsman, though Athena helped by breathing into the mud and making the models live'.¹ The results of his literary production thus appear animated (*ἔμψυχα*) and lively (*εὐκίνητα*), that is, natural, and they possess grace, *χάρις*. None of these three categories is

1. Throughout this essay, I follow the (slightly modified) Loeb translations of K. Kilburn, M.D. Macleod and A.M. Harmon: ... τὸ καινουργὸν τοῦτο ἐπαιῶν καὶ μὴ πρὸς τι ἄλλο ἀρχέτυπον μιμημένον, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος οὐκ ὄντων ἀνθρώπων τέως, ἐννοήσας αὐτοὺς ἀνέπλασε, τοιαῦτα ζῶα μορφώσας καὶ διακοσμήσας, ὡς εὐκίνητά τε εἶη καὶ ὀφθῆναι χαρίεντα· καὶ τὸ μὲν ὅλον ἀρχιτέκτων αὐτὸς ἦν, συνειργάζετο δέ τι καὶ Ἀθηνᾶ ἐμπνέουσα τὸν πηλὸν καὶ ἔμψυχα ποιοῦσα εἶναι τὰ πλάσματα (*Prom. Es* 3).

elucidated more precisely; Lucian, like Horace in the programmatic introduction to his *Ars Poetica* (1–5), refers instead to an artistic fiction (5), which however seems almost to be the precise opposite of those works of Prometheus:² the Hippocentaurs, to whom he attributes the following negative characteristics: they are ἀλλόκοτον (repulsive), οὐκ ἐπέραστον (not loveable), and ὕβριστότατον (violent). The first of these features – ἀλλόκοτον (elsewhere ξένον)³ – has its origin in the hybrid nature of the centaurs, who are a cross between humans and horses; Lucian connects the other two characteristics – οὐκ ἐπέραστον and ὕβριστότατον – with the typical representation of these beings as drunk and aggressive:⁴ physical and psychical deformity complement each other and correspond to the inversion of the previously formulated aesthetic ideal of physical and mental perfection and naturalness, of adherence to a measure that reminds one of the general archaic epitome of perfection – καλοκἀγαθία. This aesthetic classification is nevertheless not immutable. True, due to his hybrid nature a centaur is already *a priori* grotesquely ugly and his mental nature is therefore also predestined to be excessive. These beings however do not exist in reality, but rather only in the imagination of an artist and in his works of art:⁵ it ought, therefore, to be possible by means of superior craftsmanship to compensate for the beauty these creatures lack and to generate it in the work of art. Another reason for this supposition is the fact that the basic components of this fantastic being are two constitutive elements – horse and human – which Lucian without further explanation describes as καλά, beautiful. Since the material of which the new creature is made is in itself beautiful, it should be possible for this creation, as the combination of the two καλά, also to be beautiful. The mere fact, however, that two things, in themselves beautiful, are combined, by no means guarantees the beauty of the final result. On the contrary: the example of the centaurs shows that the actual artistic danger lies in the insuperable aesthetic distance between the two καλά. Lucian admits there are beautiful things

2. *Humano capiti ceruicem pictor equinam / iungere si uelit, et uarias inducere plumas / undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum / desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne, / spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?* (Hor. *Ars* 1–5). Horace's creature, however, is much more hybrid than Lucian's hippocentaurs and is furthermore not prefigured by traditional myth. For argumentative similarities between Horace and Lucian cf. Heinrich 1885: 3–20 and Homeyer 1965: 63–81.

3. Cf. *Zeux.* 1, 3; *Ver. Hist.* 1.2.

4. The Nephelocentaurs (*Ver. Hist.* 1.16, 18) and the Aiolocentaur (*Ver. Hist.* 1.42) in *True Histories* are dangerous and belligerent creatures. For the negative characteristics of the centaurs cf. *Conv.* 45; *JTr.* 21; *Per.* 25; *Salt.* 48.

5. Cf. *Herm.* 72.

which are so congenial or similar to each other that their combination is bound to be harmonious: his example is the mixture of wine and honey that is ξυναμφοτέρων ἴδιον (5). An animal and a human, however – this seems to be the underlying reasoning – are so different with respect to their genera and their particular sets of characteristics that the specific καλόν of the animal and that of the human disintegrate by being combined, rather than being complemented by each other and replaced by a new, third καλόν.⁶

All this now raises the question of exactly what deficit of the combination should be held responsible for the absence of beauty, and of how the aforementioned danger arises that in the process of combination the constituent members can even lose the beauty they had before being combined with each other. Lucian explains this (4) with two examples. These, however, relate rather to unsuccessful combinations of characteristics within a *single* genus – perhaps in order to elucidate the problem more clearly – but the underlying thought seems to be that, should it come to a mixing of two genera, the faults merely become more fatal. King Ptolemy I presented to the Egyptians two curiosities in the theatre: first, a totally black Bactrian camel, decked with a very valuable bridle of gold, purple and precious stones, and, second, a man, one half of whose body was painted jet-black, the other white. The reaction of the Egyptians was fear in the first case and disgust and laughter in the second; according to Lucian, both reactions were indications of their superb taste in the matters of art: ‘The Egyptians did not admire the novelty but set more store on beauty of form and line’.⁷

Nevertheless, Lucian leaves it to his listeners and readers to evaluate the two examples with respect to literary theory. In my opinion, one can deduce three conclusions from the example with the camel: 1) There were no two-humped camels (named ‘Bactrian’ after their primary range) in northern Africa and the Arabic peninsula, only one-humped dromedaries, and dromedaries are not black. Therefore, for the Egyptian eye, the innate, specific *kalon* of the camel was destroyed by the change of the colour and especially by the addition of the second, abnormal hump.⁸ 2) The fact that the fur of the camel was *completely* black is slightly empha-

6. In *Dial. Deor.* 17 Apollo and Hermes mock the two marriages of Hephaestus with Aphrodite and Charis: as far as they are concerned, the ugliness of the husband does not fit the beauty of his two spouses. But is this not rather the marriage of artistry and beauty?

7. ... οὐκ εὐδοκίμει ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ θαυμάζεται ἀπὸ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἡ καινότης, ἀλλὰ πρὸ αὐτῆς τὸ εὐρυθμον καὶ τὸ εὐμορφον κρίνουσι ... (*Prom. Es* 4).

8. Lucian emphasises the fact that the public was Egyptian and thus underlines the importance of the relativity of aesthetic judgements.

sised (Lucian describes the animal as κάμηλος Βακτριανὴ παμμέλαινα (4)). The two humps of the camel may stand for excess. Thus, the *kalon* of the camel would be additionally jeopardised by extreme uniformity and by excess, both summed up by the term *hyperbole*. 3) The exquisite finery of the (external) jewellery not only fails to compensate for these serious deficits, it actually aggravates them further: the beauty lies in the object itself, not in external additions – like the *purpurei panni* of Horace (*Ars* 15–16) – however precious and even beautiful these may be on their own.⁹

The excessiveness of the colouring is further emphasised in the example with the man: neither too much of the black, nor too much of the white colour (τὸ μὲν ἡμίτομον αὐτοῦ ἀκριβῶς μέλαν εἶναι, τὸ δ' ἕτερον ἐς ὑπερβολὴν λευκόν (4)) are fitting for the human species; unnatural is also the sharp distinction between the contrasting colours which counterfeits a break where in reality there is a (invisible) line of symmetry. Furthermore, there is no transition whatsoever between the black and the white part, they are unmixed and contrast violently with each other. In sum, the aesthetic deficits in this example appear to be (a) the production of unnatural, unfitting features; (b) the effects of monotony and excess; (c) the creation of unmediated contrasts which, unlike the mixture of wine and honey, do not lead to a genuine mixing, but rather to a mere coexistence.¹⁰

A verification of this allegation of Lucian's aesthetic postulates is to be found in his other, not professedly poetological texts. His collection of the *Dialogues of the Sea-gods* is framed by two dialogues of demigods who discuss questions of beauty. In *Dial. Mar.* 1, the nereid Doris reproaches her friend Galatea for her love-affair with the Cyclops Polyphemus, a variation of the 11th Idyll of Theocritus. The Cyclops' unkempt and wild appearance strikes Galatea, so she claims, not as ugly, but rather as especially manly;¹¹ his one-eyedness is by no means an obstacle for his ability to see (1) and he is in addition rich and a son of a god, which of course makes his attention all the more flattering. Doris, on the other hand, mocks all of this and stresses his repulsive appear-

9. The speaker in *Dom.* 5, 7 advocates the same view. For the aesthetic views in this text and their tradition cf. Laplace 1996.

10. The opposition between producing imperceptible transitions *versus* strong contrasts is not new in the aesthetic tradition of the Imperial period, which describes it with the Greek terms ἁρμογὴ and τόπος; cf. Plin. *Nat.* 35.29 and Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.4; cf. Pollitt 1974: 150–54, 247–54, 270–01.

11. οὐδὲ τὸ λάσιον αὐτοῦ καί, ὥς φῶς, ἄγριον ἀμορφὸν ἐστὶν – ἀνδρῶδες γάρ – ... (*Dial. Mar.* 1.1).

ance, culminating in his one eye, as well as his frightening lack of musicality which he himself ignores (4). Particularly revolting, so Doris finally, is his habit of dining on the occasional stray traveller (5). Although Galatea's accusing Doris of jealousy is quite justified, Doris is still a more sophisticated aesthete and, taking *Prom. Es* into consideration, certainly nearer to Lucian's position than Galatea. Galatea namely, seduced as she is by superficialities such as Polyphemus' divine descent and wealth, refuses to see that the Cyclops, who although descended from a god is nevertheless a freak, combines, like the centaurs, inner and outer ugliness, and can consequently be neither beautiful nor loveable. The symbol of his physical deformity, his one-eyedness, not only gives the impression of abnormity, as was the case with the two humps of the Bactrian camel, but also fails even to live up to the standards of Xenophon's Socrates, according to whom a thing is beautiful if it optimally satisfies the criteria of usefulness and functionality¹² – and that for the simple reason that it provides him not with a superb vision, but merely with a normal one: ὁ τε ὀφθαλμὸς ἐπιπρέπει τῷ μετώπῳ οὐδὲν ἐνδεέστερον ὁρῶν ἢ εἰ δύ' ἦσαν 'And his eye goes very nicely with his forehead, and it sees just as well as if it were two' (1). The fact that he uses a bear-cub as a cuddly toy only indirectly stresses his childishness (5) and, finally, the inconspicuous detail that he sings and accompanies himself on a self-made lyre that can not be tuned is a hint of the fact that this ἀπαιδευσία will not be able to be improved either. His physical deficits are thus reflected by his mental faults: Polyphemus is therefore the very personification of ugliness, and, like the centaurs, he is the exact opposite of the beautiful.

Galatea's ability to overlook this casts no very flattering light on her perception of aesthetic quality, or even on her own beauty, which she also seems unable to evaluate sufficiently critically. Doris, at least, explains the affinity between the Cyclops and the Nereid on the grounds that Galatea's beauty is not up to the highest standards either: Ἐπὶ τὰ γε ἄλλα ὁπότεν ἐθελήσης μαθεῖν, οἷα τυγχάνεις οὐσα τὴν ὄψιν, ἀπὸ πέτρας τινοῦ, εἴ ποτε γαλήνῃ εἴῃ, ἐπικύψασα ἐς τὸ ὕδωρ ἰδὲ σεαυτὴν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ χροῶν λευκὴν ἀκριβῶς: 'Apart from all that, any time you want to find out what your face really looks like, take a peep into the water from a rock when it's calm and look at yourself. You're nothing but white skin' (3). The point of Doris' smug reference to the etymology of Galatea's name is to declare that what the surface of the sea is about to show will be true, for this mirror will show its image at a moment of

12. Cf. X. *Smp.* 5, in particular 5.5. See also Grassi 1962: 55–78.

γαλήνη in which its nature corresponds to that of its observer. It will show that Galatea's skin is completely white, without any variation (λευκήν ἀκριβῶς).¹³ In the camel-example it was left unsaid what exactly the deficiency of its complete blackness was, and neither was the flaw explicitly explained in the case of the half white and half black man. Here, however, Doris offers an explanation for her disparaging aesthetic judgement: οὐκ ἐπαινέται δὲ τοῦτο, ἦν μὴ ἐπιπρέπη αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἐρύθημα 'Nobody thinks much of that, unless there's some rosy colour as well to show it off' (3). What is meant here is not the artificial red colour achieved by make-up – the use of make-up is always viewed with suspicion by Lucian, because it conceals natural flaws and signals deception¹⁴ – but rather the rosy, *natural* glow of the skin which Lucian also praises in his description of the ideal of female beauty, Panthea in the *Imagines*: τὸ δὲ ἄλλο σῶμα ὁ Ἀπελλῆς δειξάτω κατὰ τὴν Πακάτην μάλιστα, μὴ ἄγαν λευκὸν ἀλλὰ ἔναιμιον ἀπλῶς 'The body Apelles shall represent after the manner of his Pacate, not too white but just suffused with red' (*Im.* 7); and also: πλὴν μειδιάσασά γε ... ὀδόντας ἐξέφηνε πῶς ἄν εἴποιμί σοι ὅπως μὲν λευκοῦς ... ἐκοσμοῦντο γοῦν, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου, ἐλέφαντι τῷ πριστῷ ὅμοιοι 'But when she smiled ..., she disclosed such teeth! How can I tell you how white they were ...; they shone, just as Homer says, like sawn ivory' (*Im.* 9).¹⁵ These formulations illustrate what exactly is meant: a completely white skin represents an unpleasant excess inasmuch as it is unnatural and therefore fails to convey the impression of vividness. It is rather milky and cheesy, as Doris (with another etymological pun on the name of Galatea) venomously remarks, and it is precisely this special characteristic of Galatea's skin which in Doris' opinion provides the reason for the *shepherd* Cyclops' keen interest (3). The unnatural monotony of monochrome skin colour is thus the reason for her aesthetic condemnation: it is static and lacks the vivid variety of liveliness – ποικιλία. The fact that it is not only Galatea who is in love with Polyphemus, but also Polyphemus who loves Galatea, is, from the perspective of Lucian's aesthetics, a rather witty joke.¹⁶

13. For the phrasing cf. *Prom. Es* 4, discussed above.

14. Cf. e. g. *Somn.* 6, *Alex.* 40, *Dear. Iud.* 10, *Dom.* 7 et al.

15. The Homeric simile is based on *Il.* 4.141–45.

16. A quite different case is presented in *Dial. Mar.* 3: here the river Alpheios avoids a 'vulgar' mixture with sea-water and proves himself to be an aesthetic connoisseur, who does not shun a difficult and perilous journey in order to be united with his equal, the spring Arethusa: μόνος τῶν ἄλλων ἐμπροσθὲν ἐς τὸ πέλαγος οὐτε ἀναμίγνυσθαι τῷ ἁλμῇ, ὥς ἔθος ποταμοῖς ἄπασιν, οὐτε ἀναπαύειν σεαυτὸν διαχυθεὶς, ἀλλὰ διὰ θαλάσσης ... ἀμιγῆς ἔτι καὶ καθαρὸς ἐπείγῃ 'When you run into the sea, you're the only one that doesn't mix with the salt water like all the other rivers! You don't disperse and give yourself a rest, but

The presentation of an unaesthetic and therefore ridiculous romantic relationship at the beginning of the dialogue collection is paired with an account of the artistic and aesthetically exceptionally successful abduction of Europa, described from the perspective of the amazed and bedazzled observer Zephyrus (*Dial. Mar.* 15). Zeus presents himself to Europa and her companions as a powerful, and yet gently looking and amicably mooing bull, with elegantly bent horns and snow-white hide.¹⁷ According to what has been said above, the monochromatic hide could represent a disturbance: monotonous, unvaried snowy whiteness has appeared to us up to now as an aesthetic flaw. In addition, this motif is quite pointedly placed at the beginning of the description. However, it is precisely this position which enables a connection with its counterpart at the end of the description of the procession. There Zephyrus reports how Aphrodite, riding in a shell pulled by two Tritons, sprinkles colourful flowers on the pair.¹⁸ As the narrative reaches its climax, the disturbing monochromaticity is transformed into ποικιλία, and the erotic success of the capture of the bride simultaneously brings the work of art 'The Abduction' to a satisfying conclusion.¹⁹ In addition, the characterisation of the bull as friendly-looking, dancing and amicably mooing implements the transformation of the innate character of the wild and aggressive animal into a certain 'refinement', a hint of the concealed god. His beautiful appearance agrees with his inner being, although the actual metamorphosis is perfected only with the help of Aphrodite's erotic and artistic abilities. The initial monochromaticity of the bull's hide, his 'dazzling' whiteness could in this case genuinely denote a state of aesthetic incom-

go through the sea ... and keep your water fresh' (1). Even though 'unnatural', their union is nevertheless appropriate to their essence, although only achievable in the fictional world of myth, whereas the everyday mixing of sweet and salt water is, from an aesthetical point of view, a catastrophe, for this destroys the purity of the river, its καλόν.

17. λευκός τε γὰρ ἦν ἀκριβῶς καὶ τὰ κέρατα εὐκαμπής καὶ τὸ βλέμμα ἡμερός· ἐσκίρτα οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῆς ἡϊόνος καὶ ἐμυκάτο ἥδιστον (2).

18. ἐπὶ πάσι δὲ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην δύο Τρίτωνες ἔφερον ἐπὶ κόγχῃς κατακειμένην, ἄνθη παντοῖα ἐπιπάττουσαν τῇ νύμφῃ. The flowers which Aphrodite sprinkles on Europa of course also fall on the bull who is carrying her. Lucian has obviously paid great attention to the symmetrical positioning of the two motifs. Thus, the mention of the white hide is preceded by an account of Europa's coming to the beach to play with her companions and the appearance of Zeus in the form of a bull; comparably, the motif of the scattering of flowers is followed by a similar short account of Europa's and Zeus' arrival on the coast of Crete and his resuming his divine form in order to take her to the cave where they are to spend their wedding night. Hence, the arrangement of the individual episodes also serves the purpose of enabling the reader to create a connection between the motif of the white hide and that of the flowers.

19. Could this perhaps be merely another version of the marriages of Hephaistos with Aphrodite and Charis (cf. *Dial. Deor.* 17 and n. 25)?

pleteness that is brought to perfection only by the intervention of Aphrodite (who, of course, is *per se* able to perform the benefits of *charis*).

But even the arrangement of the wedding procession is also aimed at creating a harmonic scene and thus corresponds to the highest aesthetic demands. On the one hand, the obviously graceful combination of a god (Zeus), a human (Europe) and an animal (bull) results in a successful hybrid – the south wind calls it: ἡδὺ τοῦτο θέαμα (indeed a delightful spectacle (3)) –, on the other, the arrangement of the procession is in accord with the demand for the union of variation and symmetry. The three groups of members of the procession ride in their respective vehicles. Poseidon and Amphitrite, the respectable married couple, are at the head of the procession in a carriage. They are followed by the bride and groom, Europa riding the bull, and are surrounded by Nereids riding dolphins and dancing Tritons, who stand to a certain extent for unmarried young women and men; encircling them and almost touching them with their toes, is a group of Erotes flying just above the surface of the water.²⁰ At the end of the procession Aphrodite rides in her shell, sprinkling the whole group with flowers: The Erotes and the goddess of love represent marital love on the one hand and hoped-for fertility on the other, thus symbolising the very origin and the aim of marriage. The winds cease, letting the sea stand still and unmoved, and stir it up again only after the procession is gone (3.4), the Erotes have lit their torches and are singing the Hymenaios.²¹ Thus, ‘son et lumière’ make a contribution to

20. Symmetrical variation is not only ensured in the horizontal dimension of the procession, but also in the vertical: all three groups of demigods are in contact with the sea. The Tritons, having no vehicle, are swimming, their bodies in the water, the Erotes are touching the surface with their toes, and in the middle are the Nereids who, although fellow-beings with Tritons, are not swimming, but riding on dolphins and are therefore moving between the water and the air. In contrast to them, the (correspondingly three) groups of gods (Poseidon and Amphitrite on their carriage, Europa on the bull and Aphrodite in a sea-shell) all remain on the water-surface. Thus a charming variation of movement and stillness is also provided for.

21. Both of these motifs are an antithesis to *Dial. Mar.* 1. Whereas the concert of Erotes entirely satisfies all musical requirements, the serenading of the courting Cyclops was an unbearable performance. In *Dial. Mar.* 1, the sea is obviously moving, in spite of Galatea's presence (< γαλήνη!) as can be concluded from Doris' remark that Galatea should observe her image in the water once the sea will calm down (prospective): it follows from this that not even Galatea's name corresponds to her essence; and further, that Doris' hostile interpretation of it (< γῶλα) is to the point. Further connecting elements between the two framing texts of the dialogue collection are: both the Cyclops (a son of Poseidon and a Nereid – equivalent to the members of the wedding procession in *Dial. Mar.* 15) and Zeus notice their loved-ones on the beach, encircled by a group of friends; the aesthetic signification of the white skin and its colourful variation; the pragmatic situation of the dialogue: a more or less uninvolved observer explains his view of the erotic-aesthetic happenings.

the festive performance; the stillness of the sea (γαλήνη), explicitly mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the description,²² obviously also makes a decisive contribution to the overwhelming impression of the scenery as a whole.

Dial. Mar. 1 and 15 thus present the reader with an aesthetically unsuccessful and an aesthetically successful erotic relationship, in both of which the two partners come from quite different spheres and thus *a priori* do not belong together.²³ They further clarify the conception resulting from the analysis of *Prom. Es.* The artful presentation of natural liveliness and movement, the avoidance of abrupt contrasts and exaggerated and undifferentiated uniformity, the creation of colourful variety and at the same time the skilful achievement of the effects of symmetry, well-balanced structure and disposition, an impression of serenity and placid buoyancy instead of distorted effects, but at the same time the attempt to join together that which is disparate: these are the components of the successful aesthetic object according to Lucian.

3.

These circumscriptions of Lucian's aesthetic ideal which remain, as we have seen, quite vague even in his own texts, have put us in a position to reflect on the more difficult question of the possibility of implementing such artistic perfection in the case of hybrid constructions. To this context, as I intend to show, also belongs the previously mentioned problem of creating an impression of naturalness and directness, in the Greek language expressed by terms from the semantic field of χάρις. The semantic range of these terms is so wide that it has been the object of numerous studies.²⁴ Conceptually, χάρις differs quite clearly from κάλλος and

22. ἥ τε γὰρ θάλαττα εὐθὺς ἀκύμων ἐγένετο καὶ τὴν γαλήνην ἐπισπασαμένη λείαν παρεῖχεν ἑαυτήν, ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἡσυχίαν ἄγοντες ... παρηκολουθοῦμεν 'The sea became waveless at once, and draping herself in calm, made herself smooth; we all kept quiet ... and followed beside them' (3); ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐμπεσόντες ἄλλο ἄλλος τοῦ πελάγους μέρος διεκυμαίνομεν 'But we each assailed a different part of the sea, and stirred up the waves' (4).

23. One theme runs through both of the frame-dialogues in the corpus of the *Dialogues of the Sea-Gods*, namely that of the success or failure of an aesthetic model. This raises the question – which cannot be discussed here – of the significance of this display of aesthetic motifs for a – yet to be written – interpretation of the structure and content of this small dialogue collection as a whole.

24. I refer to the most relevant: Deichgräber 1971; Franzmann 1981; MacLachlan 1993. See also various chapters in general surveys of ancient aesthetics.

τέχνη.²⁵ Κάλλος (beauty) can be linked to inner qualities, contriveable by τέχνη, such as harmony, proportion, symmetry, etc.: a being or an object either possesses it always or not at all. Χάρις however is the lustre, splendour, or allure that emanates from something in a certain moment and which produces in the recipient a delightful (< χαρά) reflex of sudden pleasure. In the case of objects of art, this is the immediate impression that the piece is a 'significant work of art', a 'success', that it is not merely perfect and beautiful in terms of craftsmanship, but that it is also inspired. The long and laborious work of the artist should not be recognisable, rather, the work should appear as though made in a single creative moment, it must possess radiance: only then can χάρις appear. *Charis*, on the other hand, needs no beauty, which is already inherent in the thing and independent of the moment of perception.²⁶ It is therefore obvious that χάρις is in fact a category of receptive aesthetics; casually put, χάρις stands for an aesthetic aha-experience that may be provoked by the smallest of (artistic) details, by one that is especially successful, a detail that, no matter for what reason, reaches to and touches the recipient, so that the whole object is suddenly bathed in its splendour. Being captivated and touched in this way causes the recipient's response to the work of art: χάρις – the term also means 'gratitude' – thus possesses in addition an aspect of reciprocity and exchange between two subjects or between a work and its recipient,²⁷ an important extension of the phenomenology of the aesthetic.

Let us now reflect on the way Lucian uses this term. Alongside its highly imprecise application in *Prom. Es.* 3, a further terminologically and conceptually relevant text is *Im.* 9. Lycinus has described the beautiful Panthea to his friend Polystratus by using the combination of individual parts of different classical statues of women as an illustration; nevertheless, the essential point is still lacking:

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν πλαστῶν καὶ γραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν παῖδες ἐργάσσονται. ὁ δὲ πᾶσιν ἐπανθεῖ τοῦτοις, ἡ Χάρις, μᾶλλον δὲ πᾶσαι ἅμα ὀπόσαι Χάριτες καὶ ὀπόσοι Ἑρωτες περιχορεύοντες, τίς ἂν μιμήσασθαι δύναιτο;

This, then, is what sculptors and painters and poets can achieve; but who could counterfeit the fine flower of it all – the grace; nay, all the Graces in company, and all the Loves, too, circling hand in hand about her?

25. Cf. already Hom. *Od.* 6.237; for the difference from τέχνη, cf. Hom. *Il.* 18.382: Charis is the wife of the superb artisan Hephaistos, and thus secondary to craftsmanship.

26. Cf. Plin. *Nat.* 35.79–80.; Ael. *VH* 12.41; and Pollitt 1974: 299.

27. Cf. for this Deichgräber 1971: 54ff.

That Lycinus was petrified with amazement at the very look at her (*Im.* 1) cannot be explained only by her extraordinary beauty; one must add the radiance of this beauty, the effect it produces, which cannot be captured or explained by mere description.²⁸ That is to say, both the beauty of living beings and that of objects of art – and the latter is of more significance to Lucian – affect the observer directly.²⁹ Lycinus however describes Panthea by the means of a doubly discontinuous discourse: first, he combines fragments of the famous ‘classical’ statues to form an external image of a beautiful woman, and second, he uses the medium of language to transmit this image. What the λόγος is supposed to accomplish, and what Lycinus, initially optimistic, promises to deliver, is the synthesis of the descriptions of different fragments of statues into a harmonious image which at the same time does not obscure their heterogeneous backgrounds.³⁰ Polystratus undertakes a similar venture in the second part of *Imagines* as he tries to describe the soul of Panthea by the means of imitative references to literary and general cultural tradition. To him might also apply what Lycinus (*Im.* 9) acknowledges as a certain failure of his efforts: the synthesis is not really successful, the re-creation of the natural directness and vividness of the ‘real’ Panthea and of the classical works of art by the means of the imitative Logos has failed: χάρις can not be accomplished by means of mere imitation, and it is therefore precisely χάρις and the achievement of it which poses the greatest problem for the authors of the Imperial period, bound as they are to the dictates of mimesis.³¹

28. For the differentiation between ‘Beauty’ and ‘Charis’ in the sense of ‘static’ versus ‘dynamic’ cf. Walter 1893: 54ff. *Hipp.* 5 and 7 may be comparable here: the topic is the architectural beauty of a bath, and both instances of the word field χάρις refer to effects of lighting, that is, to effects of a momentary character; ‘radiance’ has a similar etymological connotation; cf. also the German word ‘Ausstrahlung’.

29. Walter (n. 29) believes that a similar conception of χάρις is already present in Homer and Hesiod. Although Lucian often uses terms from the word field ‘charis’ in a rather general sense, one can still find a significant amount of references in contexts which suggest an association with spontaneity and directness, so for example χάρις in the sense of ‘joke’ (cf. *Dem.* 6, 10; *Pisc.* 22; *Par.* 10; *Merc. Cond.* 30; *Im.* 15; *Eun.* 9; similarly *Symp.* 12). Such an association also makes sense of the use of this word field in the context of the flaring up of love or erotic affection; cf. Zieliński 192, who with reference to Plut. *Amat.* 5 characterises *charis* in the area of love as the female-passive principle as opposed to the masculine-active principle of *eros* (159–60).

30. ... παραδόντες τὰς εἰκόνας τῷ λόγῳ ἐπιτρέψαι μὲν αὐτῷ μετακοσμεῖν καὶ συντιθεῖν καὶ ἀρμόζειν ὥς ἂν εὐρυθμότατα δύναιτο φυλάττων ἅμα τὸ συμμιγὲς ἐκείνο καὶ ποικίλον ‘if ... we give Master Eloquence a free hand with those statues and allow him to adapt, combine, and unite them as harmoniously as he can, retaining at the same time that composite effect and the variety’ (*Im.* 5).

31. The author is currently preparing a publication on the aesthetic theory expounded in the two *Imagines* dialogues. Basic for the entire question is Bretzigheimer 1992.

Now I consider it not unlikely that Lucian saw precisely in his literary procedure of combining two different genres into one hybrid a means of guaranteeing his texts the quality of *charis*. Here, as we have already seen, it is not merely the novelty of such unions, their *καινότης*, which achieves the desired effect, but instead the fact that from them something *beautiful* can emerge, something unexpected and yet truly natural, in short: their aesthetic creativity in the true sense of the word. This specifically aesthetic creativity can be ascribed to art, and in particular to literary art, in a measure which does not hold true for nature: natural hybrids, as was clear in the examples of the centaurs and the two-coloured man, appear not aesthetic, but rather abnormal and therefore repulsive.³² An exception is the case of *miracula* such as the behaviour of the river Alpheios in *Dial. Mar.* 3.³³ Of course, on this view of art, the risk of aesthetic failure is particularly high, and Lucian is aware of this: the impression of spontaneous naturalness could all too easily be replaced by that of artificial and forced conglomeration. The strong incentive to produce *charis* is matched by the high probability of artistic defeat – according to Lucian, his literary works are *εὐθρυπτα*, fragile (*Prom. Es* 2) –, and the success of such hybrid constructions is therefore all the greater.

As an illustration of this, Lucian chooses in the *Zeuxis* the very centaurs who have turned out to be so problematic in aesthetic terms, more precisely, a painting by the famous artist from the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century BC.³⁴ The question of whether this painting ever really existed – in (3) Lucian offers a whole legend as its accreditation, but there is no other evidence of its ever having existed – is of less importance than the observation that the reference to a work of Zeuxis could have something to do with the name of the artist. Lucian's principal aim here is to demonstrate just how perfect the joining of the heterogeneous beauties of a human being and an animal can be. The name Zeuxis is derived from the verb *ζεύγνυμι* 'join', so that the choice

32. In *Dial. Deor.* 3 the ideally beautiful Eros (*πάγκαλος*) is contrasted with the uglier beings Priapus, who is *πέρα τοῦ εὐπρεποῦς ἀνδρικός* 'quite indecently masculine' (1), that is, his masculinity is unnaturally exaggerated, and Hermaphroditus, whose masculinity is, by way of contrast, so weak that it is almost impossible to detect it. The hybrid nature of Hermaphroditus is not seen as beautiful; on the contrary, the child of Hermes and Aphrodite is not *καλός*, but *ἀμφίβολος* (half one thing and half the other), meaning that the original separateness of the two natures of his parents is preserved in his being, rather than united into one.

33. Cf. above n. 16.

34. Such a connexion between *Prom. Es* and *Zeux.* with regard to their respective poetological use of the motif of the hippocentaur is also established by Lins Brandão 1995. He takes these poetological reflections to be a protective background for a benevolent reception of his hybrid literary texts (421).

of the painter's name could have programmatic reasons. A pun of this kind, of course, would be nothing more than a pointed extra to the fact that, in the history of art, precisely Zeuxis (together with Apollodorus) was credited with the detailed development of a theory of the contrast of *τόνος* and *ἀρμολογία*.³⁵

The painting, as described by Lucian,³⁶ shows a female centaur on a verdant green meadow, half-lying, half-raised; she is breastfeeding two centaur babies, one of whom is suckling from the mare's teat like a horse, the other from the breast in the human fashion. Behind her stands a male centaur, the father of the babies, of whom primarily the human part is visible. He is, as is later stated, covered with hair and has wild eyes, is however smiling. In his right hand he holds a lion-cub, suspending it high over his head and showing it to the babies, in order to frighten them for fun.

What fascinates Lucian about this painting is neither the novelty of the subject (*υπόθεσις*) nor the perfection of the craftsmanship (*τέχνη*), whose praise he leaves to the experts in painting. Instead, he admires Zeuxis because 'in one and the same subject he has shown his extraordinary craftsmanship in such a variety of ways' (*ποικίλως*).³⁷ It seems to me that this passage too reveals certain conceptional similarities with the begin-

35. Cf. Pollitt 1974: 270–01.

36. Ἐπὶ γλῶσσις εὐθαλοῦς ἡ Κένταυρος αὕτη πεποιήται ὅλη μὲν τῇ ἵπῳ χαμαὶ κειμένη, καὶ ἀποτέτανται εἰς τοῦπίσω οἱ πόδες, τὸ δὲ γυναικεῖον ὅσον αὐτῆς ἡρέμα ἐπεγλήγεται καὶ ἐπ' ἀγκῶνός ἐστιν, οἱ δὲ πόδες οἱ ἔμπροσθεν οὐκέτι καὶ οὗτοι ἀποτάδην, οἷον ἐπὶ πλευρὰν κειμένης, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ὀκλάζοντι ἔοικεν ὦν καμπύλος ὑπεσταλμένη τῇ ὀπλῇ, ὁ δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπανίσταται καὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἀντιλαμβάνεται, οἷοί εἰσιν ἵπποι πειρώμενοι ἀναπηδᾶν. Τοῖν νεογνοῖν δὲ τὸ μὲν ἄνω ἔχει αὐτὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀγκάλαις καὶ τρέφει ἀνθρωπικῶς ἐπέχουσα τὸν γυναικεῖον μαστόν, τὸ δ' ἕτερον ἐκ τῆς ἵππου θηλάζει ἐς τὸν πωλικὸν τρόπον· ἄνω δὲ τῆς εἰκόνης οἷον ἀπὸ τινος σκοπῆς Ἴπποκένταυρός τις, ἀνὴρ ἐκείνης δηλαδὴ τῆς τὰ βρέφη ἀμφοτέρωθεν τιθηνουμένης, ἐπικύπτει γελῶν οὐχ ὅλος φαινόμενος, ἀλλ' ἐς μέσον τὸν ἵππον, λέοντος σκύμνον ἀνέχων τῇ δεξιᾷ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἑαυτὸν αἰώρων, ὥς δεδίξαιτο σὺν παιδιᾷ τὰ βρέφη. (*Zeux.* 4)

'The Centaur herself is depicted lying on fresh young grass with all the horse part of her on the ground. Her feet are stretched behind her. The human part is slightly raised up on her elbows. Her fore-feet are not now stretched out, as you might expect with one lying on her side; one foot is bent with the hoof drawn under like one who kneels, while the other on the other hand is beginning to straighten and is taking a grip on the ground, as is the case with horses striving to spring up. She holds one of her offspring aloft in her arms, giving it the breast in human fashion; the other she suckles from her mare's teat like an animal. Towards the top of the picture, apparently on some vantage point, is a Hippocentaur, clearly the husband of her who is feeding her children in two ways. He is leaning down and laughing. He is not completely visible, but only to a point halfway down his horse body. He holds aloft in his right hand a lion's whelp, suspending it above his head to frighten the children in his fun.'

37. Ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ Ζευξίδος ἐκεῖνο μάλιστα ἐπήνεσα, ὅτι ἐν μιᾷ καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ ἀποθέσει ποικίλως τὸ περιττὸν ἐπεδείξατο τῆς τέχνης (*Zeux.* 5).

ning of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, in which technical perfection is also seen as a mere prerequisite for the actual artistic act, and which postulates precisely this connection of unity ('one and the same subject') and variety ('in such a variety of ways') as an artistic ideal.³⁸ For Lucian, this is demonstrated in the artist's detailed and natural representation of the wildness and aggressiveness of the male centaur and the untamedness and beauty of the female on one hand, and the even and harmonic blending of the contrasts in the representation of those centaurs which can be wholly seen (the female centaur and the babies) on the other (*Zeux.* 6):

ἡ μῆξις δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀρμογή τῶν σωμάτων, καθ' ὃ συνάπτεται καὶ συνδεῖται τῷ γυναικείῳ τὸ ἵππικόν, ἡρέμα καὶ οὐκ ἄθρόως μεταβαίνουσα καὶ ἐκ προαγωγῆς τρεπομένη λανθάνει τὴν ὄψιν ἐκ θατέρου εἰς τὸ ἕτερον ἀπαγομένη. Τὸ νεογνὸν δὲ τὸ ἐν τῷ νηπίῳ ὅμως ἄγριον καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀπάλῳ ἤδη φοβερόν³⁹

The union and the junction of the bodies whereby the horse part is fused with the woman part and joined to it is effected by a gradual change, with no abrupt transition; the eye, as it moves gradually from one to the other, is quite deceived by the subtle change. In the case of the young, their babyhood is wild and already fearsome in its gentleness.

Thus in Zeuxis' presentation of the hybrid of the human and an animal, the three potential deficits of the junction of the contrasts which follow from the analysis of *Prom. Es* are avoided. The animal and the human nature are preserved respectively, which is evident from the fact that the female centaur feeds her new-borns both in the human and in the animal fashion. Excess is excluded by the very subject of the amicable and joyful family scene: as contrast, one may recall the representations of excessively aggressive, drunken, fighting centaurs that Lucian mentions as customary in literature and the visual arts; even though Lucian accentuates the aggressive wildness of the male centaur, he is only too careful to mention his only partial representation on the one hand – only his human half can be seen – and the laughter of the centaur on the other hand – he frightens his young for fun (σὸν παιδιῷ), which softens his frightening sight. Finally, the junctures of human and animal bodies are invisible, the transition from one into the other is subtle and gradual: Zeuxis obviously did honour to his transparent name.

Does this painting also possess *charis*? And what would the appropriate reaction of an observer be? Although Lucian does not use the term

38. *Denique sit quoduis, simplex dumtaxat et unum* (Hor. *Ars* 23); *Aemilium circa ludum faber imus et unguis / exprimet et mollis imitabitur aere capillos, / infelix operis summa, quia ponere totum / nesciet*. (Hor. *Ars* 32–35). See also Brink 1971 *ad loc.*

39. Even the otherwise rare *terminus technicus* ἀρμογή appears in this passage.

itself, I would like to suggest that an element of *charis* is provided by means of an inter-‘textual’ reference. The subject chosen can, it seems to me, be seen as an allusion to what is probably the most famous, and indeed the first, family scene in European literature: the parting of Hector and Andromache in the sixth book of the *Iliad*. There we also encounter an exceptionally wild and aggressive warrior together with his wife⁴⁰ who is holding a small child frightened by a warlike attribute of its father: the pictorial detail – the centaur is holding a lion-cub high over his head – could then be interpreted as a direct reference to the crest of Hector’s helmet. The amusement present in the scene is not without parallel in Homer either: Andromache and Hector laugh affectionately at the fear of the child, Hector takes off his helmet. Finally the motif of the female centaur breastfeeding the two babies: this perhaps could point to the nurse who, in Homer (*Il.* 6.467–68), is carrying little Astyanax.⁴¹ If this suspicion of an allusion is correct, then ‘Zeuxis’ has created a true hybrid of the human and the animal on this level as well: the transformation of the half-animal creatures into characters is not achieved by the crude use of artificial attributes – for example by putting a helm on the centaur’s head – but with the help of a structural hint: it is not conspicuous, precious accoutrements which create the connection to the human ethos (as in the case of the Bactrian camel), but rather the (figural) constellation of the theme.⁴² Here it would therefore be the hermeneutic activity of the recipient which would bear ultimate responsibility for the painting’s effect of *charis*: the representation achieves *charis in the very moment* in which the recipient recognises its Homeric background, in which he actively ‘con-figures’ the picture on the basis of his literary knowledge. It is interesting here that the reader is unable to make the leap to the plot of the *Iliad* until the end of the description, when the apparently innocuous detail that the centaur is holding the lion-cub ‘high above his head’ is mentioned: the connection between χάρις and καιρός, the sudden totality of representation on the basis of one minor detail thus becomes wholly evident.

40. Zeuxis / Lucian may have derived the motif of the untamedness of the female centaur not only from Andromache’s character, but also from her name, ‘man-fighter’.

41. Ὡς εἰπὼν οὗ παιδὸς ὀρέξατο φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ. / Ἄψ δ’ ὃ πάϊς πρὸς κόλπον ἐϋζόνοιο τιθήνης / ἐκλίνθη ἰάχων, πατρὸς φίλου ὄψιν ἀτυχθεῖς, / ταρβήσας χαλκὸν τε ἰδὲ λόφον ἱππιοχαίτην, / δεινὸν ἀπ’ ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας. / ἐκ δ’ ἐγέλασσε πατὴρ τε φίλος καὶ πότνια μήτηρ. / Αὐτίκ’ ἀπὸ κρατὸς κόρυθ’ εἴλετο φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ / καὶ τὴν μὲν κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ παμφανόωσαν. (Hom. *Il.* 6.466–73).

42. *Charis* would here then be the result of the reduction of physical presence and the accentuation of ethos. Cf. Walter 1893: 54–55.

Now it turns out that it is precisely this response to a beautiful object which constitutes, in Lucian's opinion, the appropriate reaction of a lover of beauty, a φιλόκαλος, in *Dom.* 2ff. The further examples cited there make it clear that the final consummation of the beauty of an object, its coming alive in its entirety – in a word: its *charis*⁴³ – is achieved only with the aesthetically appropriate and also spatially and temporally contingent reaction it evokes in an observer,⁴⁴ and not, for example, by its mere novelty. Lucian indicates the latter quite clearly in the second part of the *Zeuxis* by mentioning a victory of Antiochus over the Celts of Asia Minor. This victory could only be achieved with the assistance of the elephants, animals that the Celts had never seen before and by whom they were duly terrified. Antiochus however, no brute soldier, but rather an expert in the *art* of war, could not react to such a victory other than by shedding tears of disgrace.⁴⁵

4.

In what follows, I want to consider Lucian's specific literary creation, the hybrid of Socratic dialogue and Old Comedy, from the standpoint of the discussion so far. In *Prom. Es*, Lucian describes their specific *καλά* and explains why the attempt to combine them would represent an impossible and almost certainly ill-fated artistic venture. He explains (6) that comedy is performed in a θέατρον, in the high-spirited and somewhat ribald atmosphere of the Dionysiac festival. The language of comedy is based on jokes and mockery: παίζειν, γελοιοποιεῖν and σκώπτειν (joking, making fun and abusing); finally, it is written in metre. The Socratic dialogue, however, stays at home, or, at best, goes out for a walk in the portico, accompanied by a few good friends, where it reflects on questions of φύσις and ἀρετή; its language – prose, naturally – is characterised by dignity, σεμνότης. To all these important differences – which have of course been selected in order to emphasise the contrast as much as possi-

43. Cf. Walter 1893: 53–54.

44. In *Hipp.* 8 the lack of an appropriate, educated reaction at the sight of a beautiful object is described as typical for an ἀχάριστος, which is terminologically highly appropriate for the discussion here. Lucian clearly intends to provoke his readers' reactions in the proem to his *True Histories* (1.2) as well, where within a few sentences the term *χαρίεν* is first combined with *ψυχαγωγία*, and then with *ἐπαγωγόν*.

45. Ὁ δὲ καὶ δακρύσας, ὥς φασιν, Αἰσχυνόμεθα, ἔφη, ὃ στρατιῶται, οἷς γε ἡ σωτηρία ἐν ἑκκαίδεκα τούτοις θηρίοις ἐγένετο· ὥς εἰ μὴ τὸ καινὸν τοῦ θεάματος ἐξέπληξε τοὺς πολέμιους, τί ἂν ἡμεῖς ἦμεν πρὸς αὐτούς; 'Antiochus is said to have wept as he addressed his troops. "Men," he said, "we owe our lives to these sixteen animals; so let us rather feel shame. For if the strangeness of what they saw had not thrown the enemy into confusion, what should we have been compared with them?"' (*Zeux.* 11)).

ble – is added an incompatibility which is no less serious, because it leads to a genuine hostility between the two genres: comedy – Lucian is thinking, as his allusions show, of the *Clouds* of Aristophanes – ridicules the disputing philosophers, and mocks them as charlatans and confused thinkers. Lucian can therefore say in summary: ‘they (sc. dialogue and comedy) are not in the least docile and do not easily tolerate partnership’.⁴⁶ The *Dialogos*, directly affected by Lucian’s attempts to fuse him with comedy, is of the same opinion. His complaints about the Syrian in *Bis Accusatus* culminate in the reproach (33):

τὸ γὰρ πάντων ἀτοπώτατον, κρᾶσίν τινα παράδοξον κέκραμαι καὶ οὔτε πεζός εἰμι οὔτ’ ἐπὶ τῶν μέτρων βέβηκα, ἀλλὰ ἵπποκενταύρου δίκην σύνθετόν τι καὶ ξένον φάσμα τοῖς ἀκούουσι δοκῶ

What is most monstrous of all, I have been turned into a surprising blend, for I am neither afoot nor ahorseback, neither prose nor verse, but seem to my hearers a strange phenomenon made up of different elements, like a Centaur.

The fact that the motif of the hippocentaurs, as the incarnation of the failed hybrids, appears precisely here is an indication of how consistent Lucian’s aesthetic model, for all its imprecise figurativeness, really is.⁴⁷ The Syrian goes on to reply (*Bis Acc.* 34) that the σεμνότης *Dialogos* swears by was actually nothing more than fossilisation and grumpiness, and that whereas he may well have made an impression of respectability, he himself was not a pleasant person and failed to give any pleasure to most of his recipients: ... οὐ πάντῃ δὲ δδῆν οὐδὲ τοῖς πλήθεσιν κεχαρισμένον ‘not in any way attractive or agreeable to the public’. The Syrian, on the other hand, has succeeded in yoking together comedy and dialogue (*παραzeugnónai*: 34) without, let me add, degrading the one to the mere concomitant of the other.

Lucian repeatedly realised these generic creations in practice. One could almost, *cum grano salis*, be tempted to view all of Lucian’s texts, which literary history has subsumed under the admittedly not very helpful rubrik of ‘Menippean satire’,⁴⁸ as examples of this generic hybrid of comedy and dialogue, the theory of which Lucian himself developed.

46. οὐ πάνυ πειθόμενα οὐδὲ εὐμαρῶς ἀνεχόμενα τὴν κοινωνίαν (*Prom. Es* 6).

47. Similarly, *Philosophia* describes to Zeus the Sophists of the fifth century as hippocentaurs (*Fug.* 10), as συνθετόν τι καὶ μικτόν ἐν μέσ’ ἀλαζονείας καὶ φιλοσοφίας πλαζόμενον ‘something mixed, astray in the interspace between quackery and philosophy’, neither entirely devoted to philosophy, nor utterly ignorant; this is the source of their useless and aporetic questioning. The nephelocentaurs from the *Ver. Hist.* (cf. above, n. 4) are to be understood as a poetological motif which illustrates the problems of mimesis; cf. v. Möllendorff 2000: 129–31.

48. For the most recent critical evaluation of the term, see Rütten 1997: 111–30.

Promising candidates would be *Charon*, for example, the *Vitarum Auctio*, *Juppiter Tragoedus*, *Juppiter Confutatus*, *IcaroMenippus* and *Dialogi Mortuorum*. However, one text seems to me to represent this new 'genre' in every way: the *Piscator*. The old philosophers, having been freed from the underworld for one day, are chasing a man named Parrhesiades, because he refuses to stop ridiculing them. Parrhesiades offers them a trial with Philosophy herself as judge, and in an agon with Diogenes as representative of the philosophers he manages to persuade his opponents that his ridicule is directed only at the *contemporary* representatives of their schools. Now assured of their support, he is accompanied by Philosophy to the acropolis where, using gold and delicacies as a bait, he fishes some of the degenerate philosophers up out of the city in order to expose them as avaricious and self-indulgent. Philosophy then assigns him the task of finding the few real philosophers left in Athens, and so he sets out for the city.

It is not difficult to discern in particular the elements of Old Comedy in this literary construction, and a number of studies have already done so, at least in part.⁴⁹ The general structure already reflects the typical course of an *Archaia*, apart from the lack of a prologue and a parabasis. A chorus confronts the protagonist, and it comes to a typical comic *diallagé* with a quarrel, an agreement, an agon, a verdict, followed by episodic scenes with conflicts with the enemies and the parasites of the new conditions (the fishing out of the false philosophers); the story ends with the departure of the protagonist 'from the orchestra'. Further particulars of the *Archaia* are to be seen in the prominent role of the chorus, which gradually takes the side of the protagonist and whose participation in the plot is withdrawn in the second, 'post-parabatic' part of the text, as well as in the existence of an agon (whose parts admittedly do not accord with the pattern of a comedy, the formalisation of which however was first achieved in the nineteenth century).⁵⁰ Equally typical for a comedy is the sudden change of the dramatic scenery (here: to the acropolis) and the staging of the performance on the two spatial levels in the fishing scenes. But Lucian has also integrated numerous allusions to the *Archaia* into various details: the motif of a chorus of returnees from Hades is derived from Eupolis' *Demoi*; the *choreutai* who attack the protagonists are borrowed from Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (which in some places they quote word for word), and some aspects of Parrhesiades' character are reminis-

49. Cf. Ledergerber 1905; Anderson 1976.

50. Gelzer 1960: 1ff.; Zieliński 1885.

cent of that play's protagonist, Dikaiopolis;⁵¹ the motif of the change of scenery to the institutional area of the polis, where an agon is about to be staged, is familiar from Aristophanes' *Knights*, the performance on two spatial levels from the *Peace*. To add to this are the three introductory paragraphs which contain four quotations from tragedy, an unusually high proportion for Lucian, which may serve as a hint of the comic procedure of *paratragodia*. Fred Householder has compiled other references to Aristophanes, Eupolis and the *Comici incerti*: taken together they are not very numerous, which accords well with the above-mentioned observation that Lucian generally prefers structural analogies to conspicuous quotations.⁵²

How has Lucian combined comedy with dialogue? This is primarily achieved on the level of content, and I will list several points. If the intent of comedy, in Lucian's opinion, is the exposure of fraud, what emerges here, in addition and entirely in accord with the concerns of Dialogos, is a recognition: the old philosophers recognise that they have misjudged Parrhesiades and correct their opinion of him. The motif of 'refutation', a central characteristic of the Socratic dialogue, becomes here a component of comic episodic scenes. The finale, with the departure of Parrhesiades, may be reminiscent of comedy, but there is nevertheless no actual triumph of the protagonist; we are referred, instead, to future discussions, this too quite in the fashion of the dialogue. In being commissioned by Philosophy to sort out the good philosophers from the bad by means of such discussions, Parrhesiades is promoted to being a second Socrates, on a mission from Delphi, so to speak. And finally: by means of the subtle idea of distinguishing between the figures of the old and the new philosophers, Lucian can even mix comedy's *mockery* of the philosophers with the *practice* of philosophy in persuasive discussion characteristic of the Socratic dialogue in such a way that the two cannot be separated. Moreover, it seems to me that there are two places where Lucian even formulates the juncture comedy/dialogue explicitly, although figuratively. In *Pisc.* 14, Philosophy explains that she does not mind comedy's mockery of philosophy: she shines no less brightly because of this mockery, but instead more radiantly, and is easier to recog-

51. As analogies I would consider: (1) both declare their usefulness for the common weal; (2) both are ready to justify their actions before the chorus and to accept their enemy as judge; (3) as Dikaiopolis, Parrhesiades does not refrain from cheating, if necessary: in *Vit. Auct.* it is *de facto* the *old* philosophers who are being put up for auction, not their contemporary colleagues, as Parrhesiades maintains here.

52. Householder 1941.

nise.⁵³ In *Pisc.* 20, Philosophy calls upon Parrhesiades (with an implicit allusion to the end of Plato's *Symposium*) to unite both his *technai* – namely, to love truth, beauty and simplicity on the one hand, and to hate fallacy and pomposity on the other – in *one technē*.⁵⁴ That this refers to the union of dialogue, which strives towards the recognition of the truth, and comedy, which exposes fraudulence and lies, is to my mind beyond a doubt.

In working out the agonistic aspect particularly intensively, Lucian has stressed the very constituent that is dominant in *both* genres. The avoidance of a triumphal ending fits the dialogue well, but is not foreign to comedy either;⁵⁵ the opening of the plot into the space *post textum* is also common in both genres.⁵⁶ Finally, there is at least one point of contact for the exorbitant mockery of the *Archaia* in the irony and wit of the Socratic dialogue: although Lucian imitates the comedy, he manages to do it without rude insults, scatological jokes and obscenities, which in conjunction with the dialogue would have represented an unnatural and inappropriate excess. Thus, a prerogative for the hybridization of the two genres is, no differently than for the creation of a centaur, a reduction of their typical characteristics to a measure compatible with combination.

53. Εἴτα ἡγανακτήσατε λοιδορησαμένου τινός, καὶ ταῦτα εἰδότες ἐμέ, οἷα πρὸς τῆς Κομφιδίας ἀκούουσα ἐν Διονυσίοις ὅμως φίλην τε αὐτὴν ἡγήμαι καὶ οὔτε ἐδικασάμην οὔτε ἡτiasάμην προσελθοῦσα, ἐρήμι δὲ παίζειν τὰ εἰκότα καὶ τὰ συνήθη τῇ ἑορτῇ; οἶδα γὰρ ὡς οὐκ ἂν τι ὑπὸ σκόμματος χεῖρον γένοιτο, ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ὅπερ ἂν ἦ καλόν, ὥσπερ τὸ χρυσίον ἀποσώζονον τοῖς κόμμασι, λαμπρότερον ἀποστύβει καὶ φανερώτερον γίγνεται. Ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως ὀργῖλοι καὶ ἀγανακτικοὶ γεγόνατε. Τί δ' οὖν αὐτὸν ἄγχετε; (*Pisc.* 14).

'Then it made you angry to be vituperated? And yet you knew that in spite of the hard names which Comedy calls me during the festival of Dionysus, I have held her my friend, and neither sued her at law nor berated her in private, but permit her to make the fun that is in keeping and customary at the festival. I am aware, you see, that no harm can be done by a joke; that, on the contrary, whatever is beautiful shines brighter and becomes more conspicuous, like gold cleansed by its minting. But you, for some reason or other, have grown hot-tempered and violent. Tell me, why do you throttle him?'

54. ΦΙΛ. Ἡ τέχνη δέ σοι τίς; ... ΠΑΡΡ. Μισαλαζών εἰμι καὶ μισογόης καὶ μισοψευδῆς καὶ μισότουφος καὶ μισῶ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτῶδες εἶδος τῶν μιαιφάνων ἀνθρώπων. ... Οὐ μὲν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐναντίαν αὐτῇ πᾶν ἀκριβῶς οἶδα, λέγω δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ φίλου τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχουσαν· φιλαλήθης τε γὰρ καὶ φιλόκαλος καὶ φιλαπλοϊκὸς καὶ ὅσα τῷ φιλεῖσθαι συγγενῇ. ... ΦΙΛ. ... τοῦ γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ τάδε, φασί, καὶ τάδε· ὥστε μὴ διαίρει τὸ τέχνα· μία γὰρ ἐστὶν δύο εἶναι δοκοῦσαι. (*Pisc.* 20).

'PHIL. But what is your calling? ... PARRH. I am a bluff-hater, cheat-hater, liar-hater, vanity-hater, and hate all that sort of scoundrels ... However, I am very well up in the opposite calling too: I mean the one with love for a base; for I am a truth-lover, a beauty-lover, a simplicity-lover, and a lover of all else that is kindred to love. ... PHIL. ... if a man can do the one, they say, he can do the other. So do not distinguish the two callings; they are but one, though they seem two.'

55. Cf. the *exodoi* in Ar. *Nub.*, *Lys.*, *Th.*

56. Cf. the finales of Ar. *Eq.* and *R.*; on these cf. v. Möllendorff 1995: 164–66, 173.

By constantly keeping the opposing voices of the praise and the mockery of the philosophers close to each other through the entire text, Lucian can also avoid the monotony of a too even colouring. It would be worth undertaking a detailed analysis in order to trace the seams at which the connection of the two genres is still visible; such a study would provide us with a fuller picture of Lucian's aesthetic technique. In particular, a close analysis of his style and language would be highly desirable, as it would enable us to gain an insight in the process of the amalgamation of the different stylistic qualities of dialogue (αὐστηρόν, σεμνότης) and comedy (witty, colloquial language, ἰδιωτικόν, ἀνθηρόν) on the semantic and syntactic level. For as Dionysius of Halicarnassus observed,⁵⁷ in the process of the reception of a literary work of art, *charis* can arise precisely from a specific arrangement of the words which pays attention to their transitions, rhythm, melody, and context. Finally, when we think of the initial reception of texts from the Imperial period, we tend to think primarily of recitation and reading. One should, however, not exclude the possibility of half-dramatic presentations of the texts.⁵⁸ Such a performance would make both the classical comedy and the philosophical dialogue visible to the audience, it would enable situation- and props-comedy and so retrieve a further dimension of that original directness, *charis*, which has been lost in the long process of their merely textual tradition.

5.

It has become clear that, in the middle of the second century AD, Lucian is less concerned with devising a system of genre distinctions than with developing an advanced approach to genre aesthetics, one that will also provide criteria for the production and critical reception of *new* kinds of texts, which he seems to understand primarily as hybrids of their generic predecessors. In *Piscator*, he has created an especially impressive example of the practical, literary applicability of this aesthetics, whose traces are also to be found in many of his other texts.

Is this concept of harmonious generic hybrids something Lucian has adopted from older aesthetic tradition? I have already made some suggestion of what he might have taken over from Horace or Horace's Hellenistic sources and from other aesthetical, technical and rhetorical writ-

57. Cf. D.H. *Isoc.* 3; *Comp.* 10–20; and Pollitt 1974: 299–300.

58. Such representations of dialogical texts are attested for symposia; cf. Schäfer 1997; *Spettacoli* 1982; Jones 1991.

ings from the fourth century BC onwards at the appropriate points. What he could not have found there, however, is the concept of the *charis* of aesthetic hybrids. Here the crossing of motifs, a practice especially popular in Hellenistic literature, may have been an inspiration, as when, for example, typically epic descriptions of the gods or of dangerous monsters like the Cyclops are interspersed with the realism of the low which has its ultimate origins in the comedy and mime.⁵⁹ The jealousy scene in *Dial. Mar.* 1 is in this tradition, as is the happy family idyll of the painting of the centaurs in *Zeuxis*; interestingly enough, one might also note that it is precisely in Hellenistic poetry, especially in the epigram, that this crossing of motifs is combined with the striving after a maximum of details, *poikilia*, of which Lucian approves in the description of the painting of the centaurs and which he himself cultivates. This cannot be discussed here, but should by all means be the subject of a separate study, especially in the light of the newly discovered epigrams of Posidippus.

Instead, I want to conclude these remarks by indicating that Lucian's aesthetic considerations are not without parallel in the literary landscape of his day. The very examples he uses are to be found again, though with slight modifications and different emphases, in the *Eikones* of Philostratus, whether these represent an implicit allusion to Lucian or not. In *Imag.* 2.3, Philostratus describes a painting of a country idyll with several female centaurs and their children involved in various games. He emphasises the beauty of the centaurs with respect to both their human and their animal parts; the high-point is nevertheless the image of a two-coloured female:⁶⁰

Ὅς καλαὶ αἱ κενταυρίδες καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἵπποις· αἱ μὲν γὰρ λευκαῖς ἵπποις ἐμπεφύκασιν, αἱ δὲ ξανθαῖς συνάπτονται, τὰς δὲ ποικίλλει μὲν, ἀποστίλβει δὲ αὐτῶν οἷόν τι τῶν ἐν κομιδῇ ἵππων. Ἐκπέφυκε καὶ μελαίνης ἵππου λευκὴ κενταυρίς καὶ τὰ ἐναντιώτατα τῶν χρωμάτων εἰς τὴν τοῦ κάλλους συνθήκην ὁμολογεῖ.

how beautiful the female centaurs are, even where they are horses; for some grow out of white mares, others are attached to chestnut mares, and the coats of others are dappled, but they glisten like those of horses that are well cared for. There is also a white-skinned female centaur that grows out of a black mare, and the very opposition of the colours helps to produce the united beauty of the whole.

Whereas Lucian criticises the unmediated contrast of black and white in the description of the two-coloured man, now it is precisely the stark contrast which creates the charm of beauty. Philostratus' aesthetical posi-

59. Cf. e.g. Zanker 1983.

60. Translation (as in the following citation) by: Fairbanks 1931.

tion here goes beyond that of Lucian, for in the description of the painting which preceeds this one, ‘The education of Achilles’, he describes the centaur Cheiron and stresses precisely the perfect mixture of the human and the animal (2.2.4):

ἀλλὰ ἵππον ἀνθρώπῳ συμβαλεῖν θαῦμα οὐδέν, συναλεῖναι μὴν καὶ ἐνῶσαι καὶ διαδοῦναι ἄμφω λήγειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι καὶ διαφεύγειν τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, εἰ τὸ τέρμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐλέγχοιεν, ἀγαθοῦ οἶμαι ζωγράφου

to combine a horse and human body is no wondrous deed, but to gloss over the juncture and make the two into one whole and, by Zeus, cause one to end and the other to begin in such wise as to elude the eye of the observer who would try to detect where the human body ends, this seems to me to demand an excellent painter.

The assessment given here makes it in my view probable that in the case of the two-coloured female centaur in *Imag.* 2.3, the transition from the human to the animal was fashioned with a skilfulness and subtlety of mediation equal to that apparent in the case of Cheiron. In her case, however – and this is obviously the exceptional feature of the painting – the very contrast concealed and covered up *in the form of her body* is revealed in the *coloration of her skin*: the aesthetically fatal break in the contrast is hinted at and attention is drawn to the fragility of the structural harmony which *de facto* exists.

It is precisely this metareference to an aesthetic deficit not actually present which elevates this harmony to the level of a genuine maxim of beauty. Lucian also reflects on the fragility of his hybrid constructions. His exclusive concern, however, is another: whilst he does not wish the hybrids to be all too simple, a break must be avoided at all costs. The colour contrast of his black and white man, in whose case the perfect natural transition from the one half of his body to the other is guaranteed on the level of his physical form *per se*, is, for Lucian’s Egyptians, an object of contemptuous laughter, whereas Philostratus’ observer of the painting can already enjoy the thrill of potential aesthetic failure – a sign that this artistic requirement is already well on its way to becoming an established norm, or merely a different conception of art?

ECHOES OF ROMAN SATIRE IN APULEIUS' *METAMORPHOSES**

Maaïke Zimmerman

Introduction

In this essay it is not my intention to investigate any specific intertextual references to identified passages of individual Roman verse satires in Apuleius' novel.¹ I will look at some features and stratagems which are common to both Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Roman satire. Elsewhere I have argued that the Roman novels, while belonging to the wider realm of Graeco-Roman fictional prose texts of their age, are on the other hand undeniably connected to the Roman literary tradition.² Here I will concentrate on satire as one specific area of the Roman literary tradition, and investigate its various manifestations in Apuleius' novel. In terms of intertextuality, then, this study is concerned with 'Systemreferenz' not with 'Einzeltextreferenz'. The concept of 'Systemreferenz' is here used in the sense of the relation of the text of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* with a group of texts, or rather with the formative systems behind this collective of texts.³

Under separate headings I will discuss the presence of a number of 'satirical' elements and procedures in the *Metamorphoses*. These I regard, as I said, not as references to specified, individual passages of Roman satire. They are simply elements and procedures that come naturally to an author who works within the tradition of Latin literature. Nevertheless, in a few of the cases discussed below intertextual references to individual satires of Juvenal are mentioned. This should not be amazing: Juvenal's satires, the latest of which had been published some time after 127 A.D.,⁴ were probably very much alive and present in the minds of

* I express my sincere thanks to the editor of this collection, Ruurd Nauta, for his thorough reading of, and most valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper.

1. Such specific intertextual references can certainly be discovered too in Apuleius' novel. For instance, Gowers 2001 has compared the styles of 'therapy' as they are presented by the speaker in the prologue of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and by Persius. She has shown that those two authors share important components of image, method, and language.

2. See Zimmerman 2003.

3. On the concept of 'Systemreferenz', see Pfister 1985: 52–58; on the distinction between 'Systemreferenz' and 'Einzeltextreferenz' Broich 1985: 48–49.

4. See Coffey 1976: 121–23.

both Apuleius himself (ca. 125 – ca. 170 A.D.) and his contemporary Roman reading public. Reminiscences of Juvenal's writings in Apuleius' novel may at the time of writing have had a particular impact as references to the actuality of literary life. Acknowledging such references, and, for instance, recognition of Juvenal's 'angry satirist' in one passage discussed below in the section on 'Encounters with a satirist' may enrich our own reading and interpretation of such a passage; the same may be said with regard to the wicked women in Books 9–10 of Apuleius' novel and the intertextual relationship with Juvenal's sixth satire.⁵

'Menippea'

Before focussing on the novel's various connections with Roman verse satire, it is necessary to pay attention to the links which undeniably exist between this text and the Greco-Roman 'Menippean' satirical tradition. Whoever reads Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, the one Latin text (before Late Antiquity) about which all scholars agree that it is a unique sample of a 'Menippean' satire, will recognise some similarities of an atmospherical as well as of a stylistic nature between that text and Apuleius' novel. One may point to the typical blending of 'high' and 'low' registers which characterises both texts.

Of course, the *Metamorphoses*, though containing a couple of verses,⁶ cannot be considered a prosimetric text. However, the predominance of verse fragments in the transmitted fragments of Varro's *Menippeae* may reflect a special interest of the grammarians and literary historians who preserved those fragments rather than being representative for the whole of Varro's satires, as Coffey points out.⁷ This much can be stated, that the *Metamorphoses* has a number of elements in common with both Varro's *Menippeae*, with Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, and with Lucians Menippean dialogues, elements which belong to the typical features of Menippean satire as enumerated by Bakhtin.⁸ Bakhtin, indeed, considers Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* an extended Menippean satire.⁹ The subject

5. See below, the section 'Connections of a general kind', under 'shared topics'.

6. Cf. Apul. *Met.* 4.33.1, 9.8.2. Both verse passages quote 'oracles'.

7. Coffey 1976: 163–64.

8. These features are conveniently listed and annotated by Riikonen 1987: 22–27, who at every point of this list signals those works—among which Apuleius' novel figures, too—where a specific feature is evident; Riikonen 1987: 17–20 discusses the German scholars who played an important role in shaping Bakhtin's views on Menippean satire; see also Relihan 1993: 6–7; Rütten 1997: 120–28.

9. Bakhtin 1971: 126, "Die 'Metamorphosen' ('Der goldene Esel') des Apuleius ... stellen eine weit ausgeführte 'Menippeische Satire' dar."

matter, moreover, of a number of episodes in the *Metamorphoses*, and notably those presenting caricaturistic and exaggerated moments in the novel, appear to mirror subjects identifiable from Varronian fragments. One may point, for instance, to the exaggerated terms with which the narrator describes the beauty of Fotis, and particularly when this culminates in a praise of the beauty of her hair (Apul. *Met.* 2.9). This is exactly the kind of *encomion* which Varro seems to ridicule in his *Papia Papae* περὶ ἐγκωμίων, and, indeed some verbal parallels are there to point to the connection.¹⁰ Another example can be found in Apul. *Met.* 10.18, where the millionaire Thiasus has his ass decked out with purple cloths and silver and gold ornaments in an absurdly luxurious manner. Many of the elements in this description point to fragment 97 of Varro which apparently is about the excessive ways in which people adorn their horses with oriental glitter.¹¹ Apart from some evident verbal parallels with Varro's satires, the *Metamorphoses* shows a similar predilection for flamboyant passages, as well as for diminutives, archaisms, and colloquialisms, and etymological word-plays. Relihan's following characterisation of the style of the Menippean satire could as well be about Apuleius' novel:

... in the Menippean satire, vocabulary and grammar are allowed to be as fantastic as the action that they describe, and are suffered to alternate in the wildest swings from grand to low style, from fustian to textbook simplicity, from the recherché to the banal.¹²

Relihan's insistence on studying ancient Menippean satire as a genre obliges him to exclude Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, on the formal ground that it is not a prosimetric text. However, in many of the pages of his interesting book his characterisations of Menippean satire are quite illuminating for someone studying Apuleius' novel. According to Relihan, one of the central characteristics of Menippean texts is that they figure an incompetent narrator who is himself parodied, along with his claim to philosophical knowledge.¹³ For this a phrase like the one from Apuleius' book 10, where the narrator is called a *philosophantem asinum* 'philosophising ass',¹⁴ is almost emblematic. After a discussion of the Menippean satires of Varro, Relihan (71) concludes:

10. Varro, *Men.* 375 (376 Cèbe); see e.g. van Mal-Maeder 2001: 177 on Apul. *Met.* 2.9.4.

11. See e.g. Zimmerman 2000: 256 on Apul. *Met.* 10.18.4.

12. Relihan 1993: 26.

13. Relihan 1993: 22–5.

14. The phrase is discussed more extensively below, in the section on 'encounters'.

There is a good deal of sophistication in the *Menippeans*, but ... the prominence granted to philosophical topics derives from a desire to abuse the technicalities of philosophy and philosophers. Varro, a student of philosophy if not a philosopher, makes fun of matters dear to his own heart as he follows the lead of Menippus, who abused all dogmatic systems ...

One is reminded of Apuleius, who in his other works proudly professes being a *philosophus platonicus*, but in his novel makes a fictional audience ridicule Lucius the narrator by calling him an *asinum philosophantem*.¹⁵

Menippean satire rises through time to philosophical formulations of the inadequacy of human knowledge and the existence of a reality that transcends reason, but in its origins the genre merely thumbs its nose at pretenders to the truth by a denial that anything other than common sense is valuable or apprehensible.¹⁶

If we, with Fusillo 2003, consider ‘Menippea’ not in the restricted sense as a genre, but rather as “a cultural trend spanning various eras and genres: a trend characterised by a great stylistic and formal liberty, and inevitably associated with low, corporeal, grotesque and obscene themes”,¹⁷ Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* definitely earns a place within this cultural trend. Roman verse satire itself, too, abounds in Menippean elements, some of which may be explained by satire’s often discussed connections with Aristophanic comedy. In the following discussion of general connecting elements between Apuleius’ novel and Roman satire, ‘Menippean’ elements will often be implied but not mentioned separately.

Connections of a general kind

Re-use of elevated poetic genres in satire and in Apuleius’ novel

Both Roman satire and the Roman novel of Apuleius abound in passages where material from more elevated genres, especially tragedy and epic, is re-used, often in debasing and debunking ways, but not always. This has often been remarked separately in studies of satire and studies of Apuleius’ novel.¹⁸

15. It has recently been argued that Lucius in many respects may be considered a literary projection of Apuleius himself, the author of the *Metamorphoses*; see Keulen 2003a.

16. Relihan 1993: 29.

17. Fusillo 2003: 416.

18. On the (often parodic) re-use of epic in satire see e.g. Von Albrecht 1986: 158–59, with references in note 44; Braund 1996: 47–49. Harrison 2000: 221–26, with further

Connected to the satire's and the novel's treatment of established classical literary genres like tragedy and epic, is the hybrid generic status typical of both Roman satire and Apuleius' novel. Classen 1988 entitled an article on satire 'Satire – The Elusive Genre', and Braund 1992 concludes: "Satire ... is essentially parasitic: it continually exploits and re-uses other forms of discourse, both literary and non-literary, always in travesty, parody, or inversion." Elsewhere, Braund remarks that "Satire combines the forms of drama (monologue and dialogue) with the metre of epic. It is a hybrid form." Finkelpearl in her monograph of 1998 is to my knowledge the first who in passing points to the parallel of satire and Apuleius' novel in this respect.¹⁹

Shared topics and types

A further connecting element between satire and Apuleius' novel consists in their numerous thematic interrelations. I will here mention a few general examples.

One may think of the omnipresent theme of *avaritia* in Roman satire.²⁰ It is a recurrent theme in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, too. In Apuleius' *Met.* Lucius' host, Milo is introduced as a greedy person.

(Someone shows the newly arrived Lucius where the house of Milo is) Inibi iste Milo deuersatur ampliter nummatus et longe opulentus uerum extremae auaritiae et sordis infimae infamis homo, foenus denique copiosum sub arrabone auri et argenti crebriter exercens, exiguo Lare inclusus et aerugini semper intentus, cum uxorem etiam calamitatis suae comitem habeat. Neque praeter unicam pascit ancillulam et habitu mendicantis semper incedit. (Apul. *Met.* 1.21.5–6)

There is where your friend Milo lives, a man with heaps of money and abundant substance, but notorious for his utter miserliness and sordid squalor. He is constantly lending at high interest, with gold and silver as security, but he keeps himself shut up in a tiny house, worrying about every speck of copper-rust. He lives with a wife, his companion in adversity, maintains no servants except one little maid, and always goes about dressed like a beggar.²¹

Compare Horatius, *S.* 1.1.41–91:

(the satirist to his interlocutor, who is presented as a greedy person)
Quid iuuat immensum te argenti pondus et auri

bibliography in notes, is a helpful discussion of the various ways in which high genres are employed in Apuleius' novel.

19. Classen 1988; Braund 1992: 3–4; 1996: 1; Finkelpearl 1998: 30.

20. The theme crops up in a number of satires, but is treated extensively in Hor. *S.* 1.1; Pers. 6; Juv. 14.

21. Translations of passages from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* are taken over from Hanson 1989, unless expressly stated otherwise.

furtim defossa timidum deponere terra ?

...

... congestis undique saccis
indormis inhians, et tamquam parcere sacris
cogeris aut pictis tamquam gaudere tabellis.

...

An uigilare metu exanimem, noctesque diesque
formidare malos fures, incendia, seruos,
ne te compilent fugientes, hoc iuuat?

...

Non uxor saluum te uult, non filius; omnes
uicini oderunt, noti, pueri atque puellae.
Miraris, cum tu argento post omnia ponas,
si nemo praestet quem non merearis amorem?

...

... ne facias quod
Ummidius quidam. Non longa est fabula: diues
ut metiretur nummos; ita sordidus, ut se
non umquam seruo melius uestiret ...

What good to you is a vast weight of silver and gold, if in terror you stealthily bury it in a hole in the ground? ... You sleep with open mouth on money-bags piled up from all sides, and must perforce keep hands off as if they were hallowed, or take delight in them as if painted pictures ... What, to lie awake half-dead with fear, to be in terror night and day of wicked thieves, of fire, of slaves, who may rob you and run away—is this so pleasant? ... No, your wife does not want you well, nor does your son; every one hates you, neighbours and acquaintances, boys and girls. Can you wonder, when you put your money above all else, that nobody pays you the love you do not earn? ... lest you fare like a certain Ummidius—'tis a short story—so rich that he measured his money, so miserly that he dressed no better than a slave ...²²

As Milo in the Apuleian passage quoted, Horace's miser guards his treasures day and night, clothes himself in rags, and is despised by his wife ('his companion in misery') and neighbours (it is a neighbour who gives Lucius the unflattering description of Milo in the passage quoted above). To Milo, later on, in book 3, happens precisely what Horace's satirist in *Satires* 1.1 warns his interlocutor of: Milo's carefully guarded treasures indeed attract the attention of robbers, and he is left behind ruined.

Auaritia recurs in the *Metamorphoses* in some of the robbers' tales of book 4, and, again in the tale of the greedy neighbour in chapters 35–39 of book 9. In the indignant outburst in book 10 (discussed below), the narrator ascribes the corruptness of judges since the Judgement of Paris to avarice.

22. Translation Fairclough 1929.

The themes of adultery and of infidelity of married women, ubiquitous in Roman satire, figure in various ways in Apuleius' novel, and not exclusively in the adultery-tales.²³ In fact, it would be rewarding to investigate how many of the examples of adulterous and murderous women of Juvenal's sixth satire feature as 'real' characters in the tales of books 9 and 10 of the *Metamorphoses*. The reader is even alerted to a connection with Juvenal's sixth satire in the following passage:

(a stepmother who has cast a covetous eye on her stepson has just now been introduced:) Iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam legere et a socco ad coturnum ascendere. (Apul. *Met.* 10.2.4)

Know now therefore, most worthy reader, that you are reading a tragedy, not an amusing story, and that you are rising to a higher level, exchanging the low slipper of comedy for the high boot of tragedy.²⁴

Compare Juv. 6.634–38:

Fingimus haec altum satura sumente cothurnum
scilicet, et finem egressi legemque priorum
grande Sophocleo carmen bacchamur hiatu,
montibus ignotum Rutulis caeloque Latino?
Nos utinam uani.

To fashion these tales do you think our satire takes up the lofty buskin of tragedy? Have we stepped over the law and limit of our predecessors to revel in a song of Sophoclean tone, with a theme unknown to the Rutulian hills and the Latin sky? Would that ours were an idle tale!²⁵

It has been argued convincingly by Warren Smith that Juvenal's sixth satire receives its underlying structure from continuously being directed to, and centered around the figure of Postumus.²⁶ According to Smith, in this satire Postumus marries, against the satirist's advice, and plucks the sour fruits of that marriage in the course of the poem. Smith shows in this way that this satire is as much about stupid husbands as about evil wives. Of stupid and gullible husbands we meet several examples in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. The miller in book 9, who first is deceived, and in the end murdered by his wife, inbetween enjoys amorous trysts with his wife's young lover-boy, before chasing him as well as his faithless wife away from his home. The way he is presented in the tale makes

23. On these see Harrison's contribution to this volume.

24. Translation Zimmerman 2000: 68.

25. The translation has been taken over from Tatum 1979: 78, who there (78–79) discusses Apuleius' wicked women and their connection with those of Juvenal's sixth satire.

26. Smith 1980.

him a character who is as ambiguous as the husbands in Juvenal's sixth satire.²⁷

Avarice and adultery are only two of the many themes which satire and Apuleius' novel have in common. One could also point at the theme of credulity, present in several passages of Apuleius' novel, and lampooned for instance in Juvenal's sixth satire.²⁸

In both satire and novel we meet numerous and various different types from daily life, caricatures often. Both satire and novel are in this respect clearly indebted to comedy.²⁹ One instance from the first book must suffice here. In 1.24 Lucius on the market of Hypata meets a former fellow-student, Pythias, who has achieved the rank of aedile there, and is rather ostentatious about that, going round with the attendants and rods and dress befitting a magistrate.

(Lucius): "... Sed quid istud ? Voti gaudeo. Nam et lixas et uirgas et habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te uideo". "Annonam curamus" ait, "et aedilem gerimus et siquid obsonare cupis utique commodabimus." (Apul. *Met.* 1.24.7)

"But what 's this? Congratulations! I see you have the attendants and the rods of office and the dress of a magistrate." "I am administrator of food supplies," he said, "and market inspector, and if you wish to do any shopping I am at your service."

In the next chapter Pythias demonstrates his magisterial power by crushing under his feet a fish which Lucius had bought for dinner, in order to demonstratively punish the fishmonger who according to Pythias had charged too high a price. The result of this caricatural act is disastrous for Lucius, who loses his dinner and his money.

Compare Horace, *S.* 1.5.34–36:

Fundos Aufidio Lusco "praetore" libenter
linquimus, insani ridentes praemia scribae,
praetextam et latum clauum prunaeque uatillum.

Fundi, with its "praetor" Aufidius Luscus, we quit with delight, laughing at the crazy clerk's gewgaws, his bordered robe, broad stripe, and pan of charcoal.³⁰

27. See Hijmans in Hijmans et al. 1995: 384–89: 'The *pistor*: a complicated character'.

28. Credulity in the *Met.*: e.g. 1.3–4 (see Keulen 2003: 125 on 1.4.2–3), 2.1, 2.12 (see van Mal-Maeder 2001: 207 on 2.12.1). Shumate 1996: 45–55 adduces more passages, and discusses several aspects of credulity in the *Met.*; see also van Mal-Maeder 1997: 105–06 on Lucius as a naive and credulous Isis-adept in Apul. *Met.* 11.

29. See on the influence of the comic stage on Horace's satires Freudenburg 1993: 27–51; Keulen 2003a and in this volume on the comic and satirical backgrounds of the Socrates- and Meroe-figures in Apul. *Met.* book 1.

30. Translation Fairclough 1929.

Another comparandum is Persius 1.129–30:

sese aliquem credens Italo quod honore supinus
fregerit heminas Arreti aedilis iniquas ...

... the vulgarian who thinks he's someone because he's strutted in Italian dignity and once broke up substandard pints as deputy Mayor of Arezzo.³¹

In his commentary on this passage in Persius, Kißel points to parallels of such caricatures of petty arrogance of aediles in provincial towns in comedy and satire, and mentions Apuleius *Met.* 1.24 as well.³²

Besides meeting several types and caricatures from satire as discussed above, one may even encounter a satirist in person, in some rare cases when the narrator himself seems to take on the guise of a satirist. In the next section two of such encounters are analysed more closely.

Encounters with a satirist

The following analysis of two 'encounters' with a satirist in Apuleius' novel elaborates some suggestions already made by Warren Smith in a not widely known article of 1996. Smith there argued that the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* in several passages wears the mask of a self-ironising satirist: such a satirist on the one hand adopts a moralising stance, but at the same time betrays his inadequacies as a moraliser. Commentators, while often noting this trait of the narrator of the *Metamorphoses*, had thus far not related it to Roman satire.

In book 7 of the *Metamorphoses*. Lucius, the ass, overhears the newcomer in the robbers' camp, Haemus, who proposes to the gang to sell the captive bride Charite to a brothel, in order to make profit. The ass is outraged when he observes that Charite herself apparently shows joy at this prospect. At least this is his conclusion from seeing her smiling at Haemus' proposal:

Quae quidem simul uiderat illum iuuenem fornicisque et lenonis audierat mentionem, coepit risu laetissimo gestire, ut mihi merito subiret uituperatio totius sexus, cum uiderem puellam proci iuuenis amore nuptiarumque castarum desiderio simulato lupanaris spurci sordidique subito delectari nomine. (Apul. *Met.* 7.10.3)

The moment she saw the young man and heard him mention the words 'brothel' and 'pimp', she became jubilant and broke out into joyous laughter. This caused me, as was only natural, to vilify the entire sex, when I saw a girl who had pretended love

31. Translation Jenkinson 1980.

32. Kißel 1990: 281 and n. 576.

for her young suitor and desire for a faithful marriage suddenly show delight at the mention of a filthy, sordid whorehouse.

But soon the ass, and we, as readers, will discover that in reality Charite has already then recognised her fiancé in the disguise of the new robber Haemus. The narrator had added to his moralising words the following remark:

Et tunc quidem totarum mulierum secta moresque de asini pendebant iudicio. (7.10.4)

Indeed, at that moment the character and principles of all womankind depended on an ass's verdict.

From this first encounter with a satirist it will be apparent immediately that here an intricate game is being played with the two narrative voices in Apuleius' novel. The 'I' who condemns Charite is Lucius the ass, the actorial narrator, at the moment of his experience. The 'I' who speaks the ironising remarks on the 'ass's verdict' is the 'I' at the moment of narration, the auctorial narrator, who knows the whole story.

The narrative situation in the next 'encounter' discussed here is even more complicated. In chapters 29 to 34 of book 10 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the narrator describes the preludes to his own planned performance in the theatre of Corinth: Lucius the ass is to have sexual intercourse with a convicted murderess who has been condemned to the wild beasts in the arena. For the time being Lucius is tethered near one of the entrances of the theatre and enjoys the spectacles of a *pyrrhica*, a ballet performed by charming young boys and girls, and then of a sensually staged performance of a pantomime, representing the Judgement of Paris. After having described the scene in which the seductive and scantily-clothed dancer who enacts Venus has successfully bribed Paris into handing her the apple of victory, the narrator suddenly (Apul. *Met.* 10.33) bursts into a long tirade in which he traces all present corruption of justice back to this mythical case. In my commentary on this episode I have discussed this passage at length as a rhetorical *indignatio*, and I have also pointed at connections of this passage with Cynic diatribe.³³ There, and elsewhere,³⁴ I have also tried to come to terms with the question of whose voice it is we are hearing in this sudden interruption of the lush description of the pantomime. I have argued that it is the voice of the authorial narrator, Lucius-*auctor*, who, when writing his tale of *Metamorphoses* after he had regained his human form thanks to the

33. Zimmerman 2000: 393, 399.

34. Zimmerman-de Graaf 1993.

grace of Isis and has become an Isis-priest, included this piece in an otherwise actorially presented description.³⁵ I would like to offer here another possibility: this passage may well be read as an utterance in which the narrator assumes the character of a satirist, one quite similar to that of Juvenal's 'angry' satirist. The *persona* who utters the indignant outburst in this chapter of Apuleius' novel must be imagined to be someone standing at the gates of the theatre of Corinth. His angry monologue, obviously indebted to the tradition of the diatribe, is, like some of the satiric monologues of Horace, Persius and Juvenal, apparently 'addressed to the world at large, the world passing by the street corner where the satirist has set up his soap-box.'³⁶

As is shown by Anderson, the *indignatio* of the satirist is a clever adaptation of the rhetorical prescriptions and rules for the orator when the circumstances of a speech call for a convincing expression of indignation.³⁷ All the stylistic procedures prescribed as the means to create a convincing and persuasive *indignatio* are found in Juvenal's adaptations of the 'angry satirist'; many of the same figures of thought and stylistic devices, discussed by Anderson in this connection, are found in this indignant outburst of the narrator in chapter thirty-three of book 10 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as well:

Quid ergo miramini, uilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo uero togati uulturii, si toti nunc iudices sententias suas pretio nundinantur, cum rerum exordio inter deos et homines agitatum iudicium corruperit gratia et originalem sententiam magni Iouis consiliis electus iudex rusticanus et opilio lucro libidinis uendiderit cum totius etiam suae stirpis exitio? Sic hercules et aliud sequensque iudicium inter inclitos Achiuorum duces celebratum, cum falsis insimulationibus eruditione doctrinaque praepollens Palamedes proditoris damnatur, uirtute Martia praepotenti praefertur Vlixes modicus Aiaci maximo. Quale autem et illud iudicium apud legiferos Athenienses catos illos et omnis scientiae magistros? Nonne diuinae prudentiae senex, quem sapientia praetulit cunctis mortalibus deus Delphicus, fraude et inuidia nequissimae factionis circumuentus uelut corruptor adolescentiae, quam frenis cohercebat, herbae pestilentis suco noxio peremptus est relinquens ciuibus ignominiae perpetuae maculam, cum nunc etiam egregii philosophi sectam eius sanctissimam praeoptent et summo beatitudinis studio iurent in ipsius nomen? Sed nequis indignationis meae reprehendat im-

35. See van Mal-Maeder 2001: 8–9 for other instances of such shifts from actorial to auctorial narrator; also Hijmans et al. 1995: 132.

36. Quoted from Braund 1996: 53; see there on Roman verse satires which are styled in this way.

37. Anderson 1982: 425–30. For a critical discussion of this theory see Nauta 2002: 373–80.

petum secum sic reputans: “Ecce nunc patiemur philosophantem nobis asinum?”, rursus, unde decessi, reuertar ad fabulam. (Apul. *Met.* 10.33)

So why are you surprised, you inferior individuals, or rather forum cattle, or better still vultures in togas, if all judges today sell their verdicts for money like market goods, when already at the beginning of history a case involving gods and humans was corrupted by favouritism, and the peasant judge, a cattle herder, chosen on the advice of the great Jupiter, sold the primal verdict for the profit of lust, resulting in the ruin of his whole tribe? So, by Hercules, has also another, later judgement become famous among the renowned leaders of the Achaeans, for example when on the ground of false allegations Palamedes, most influential through his knowledge and learning, is condemned for treason, and the mediocre Ulysses is preferred to the formidable Ajax, unsurpassed in warlike valour. And what sort of trial was the one before the clever lawgiving Athenians, those masters of every science? Is it not true that that divinely wise old man, whom the god of Delphi exalted above all mortals, was persecuted, through the fraud and envy of a malicious mob, as a corrupter of the young men, whom he actually curbed and restrained, and was killed by the deadly juice of a poisonous herb, thus leaving to his fellow-citizens the taint of perpetual disgrace, because even now outstanding philosophers prefer his noble teachings, and in their highest pursuit of happiness swear allegiance precisely to his name ?

But lest someone find fault with the vehemence of my *indignatio* and thinks to himself, ‘look here, are we going to put up with an ass lecturing us on philosophy?’, I will return to the story where I digressed.³⁸

In this passage the speaker himself refers to this outburst as an *indignatio*. Several of the rhetorical devices, as they are discussed by Anderson in his study of *indignatio* in Juvenal, can be pointed out here:

- *uituperatio*, invective: *uilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo uero togati uulturii* ‘you inferior individuals, or rather forum cattle, or better still vultures in togas’; *iudex rusticanus et opilio* ‘the peasant judge, a cattle herder’.
- tricolon crescens: *uilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo uero togati uulturii*.
- hyperbole: *toti nunc iudices sententias suas pretio nundinantur* ‘all judges today sell their verdicts for money like market goods’; ... *cum totius etiam suae stirpis exitio* ‘with the ruin of his whole tribe’.³⁹
- rhetorical questions: *Quid ergo miramini ...? Quale autem ...? Nonne ...?* ‘Why are you surprised ...? And what sort of ...? Is it not true that ... ?’

38. Apul. *Met.* 10.33. I have here used the working translation which I made for my commentary (Zimmerman 2000: 393–400).

39. Similar exaggerations are often found in Roman satires; cf. e.g. Hor. *S.* 1.1–2, 1.2.2, 1.4.6–7, discussed by Freudenburg 2001: 18.

- irony: *legiferos Athenienses catos illos et omnis scientiae magistros* ‘the clever lawgiving Athenians, those masters of every science’.
- hyperbaton combined with antithesis: *uirtute Martia praepotenti praefertur Vlixes modicus Aiaci maximo* ‘the mediocre Ulysses is preferred to the formidable Ajax, unsurpassed in warlike valour’: the phrases ‘unsurpassed in warlike valour’ and ‘the formidable’, belonging together as qualifications of Ajax, are separated from each other by ‘the mediocre Ulysses is preferred...’.
- periphrasis: *diuinae prudentiae senex, quem sapientia praetulit cunctis mortalibus deus Delphicus*: instead of the name Socrates, we have the circumscription ‘that divinely wise old man, whom the god of Delphi exalted above all mortals’.
- ellipsis: *Sic hercules et aliud sequensque iudicium ... celebratum; Quale autem et illud iudicium ...* (in the Latin the verbs are omitted) ‘So, by Hercules, <has> also another, later judgement <become> famous’; ‘And what sort of trial <was> the one ...’.
- asyndeton: *Palamedes prodicionis damnatur, uirtute Martia praepotenti praefertur Vlixes modicus Aiaci maximo* ‘Palamedes ... is condemned for treason, <and> the mediocre Ulysses is preferred to the formidable Ajax, unsurpassed in warlike valour’.

In another famous article, Anderson has shown that in their presentation of the indignant satirists the poets while following the rules of a convincing *indignatio* have at the same time often deliberately built in objectionable and offensive ways, more or less a warning to the audience to dissociate itself from their indignation.⁴⁰ This is exactly what happens in the presentation of our narrator’s indignation, through the final sentence where the audience is expressly invited to distance itself from the indignation of the satirist, however convincingly presented.

As is often the case with the satirists of Roman satire, here the ‘I’ addresses himself to an imaginary interlocutor, or to some imaginary interlocutors, first in a rather hostile approach: *Quid ergo miramini, ... uilis-sima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo uero togati uulturii ...* ‘So why are you surprised, you inferior individuals, or rather forum cattle, or better still vultures in togas’; later in a more civilised manner: *Sed nequis indignationis meae reprehendat impetum secum sic reputans: “Ecce nunc patiemur philosophantem nobis asinum?”*, *rursus, unde decessi, reuertar ad fabulam* ‘But lest someone find fault with the vehemence of my *indignatio* and thinks to himself, “look here, are we going to put up with an ass lecturing us on philosophy?”’, I will return to the story where

40. Anderson 1982b: 297–314. For a critical discussion

I digressed.⁴¹ Apuleius' novel often features such addresses to an imaginary audience, a characteristic it shares with satire and diatribe. Indeed, the famous opening of the novel, with its first words *ego tibi*, "resembles the *sermo* or conversation typical of Roman verse satire ...".⁴²

The final sentence of this passage, where the preacher self-mockingly refers to himself as a 'philosophising ass', is rich with connotations and contains 'Systemreferenzen' to a variety of intertexts.⁴³ Firstly, it carries with it the connotations of Menippean satire with its central feature of denying and satirising any claim to philosophical knowledge, as already—with references to this passage—has been mentioned above, in the section on 'Menippea'. Secondly, the pronouncedly diatribal character of this outburst of the 'philosophising ass' reminds one of numerous passages in Horace, Persius and Juvenal which testify to Hellenistic popular moralising as one of Roman verse satire's (as well as Menippean satire's) backgrounds. Horace himself, in one of his letters refers to his satires as 'venomous discourses in the manner of Bion'.⁴⁴ Thirdly, there is a reference to comedy: the rhetorical flourishes of the indignant and moralising narrator are summed up and ridiculed in the expression *asinum philosophantem*, put in the mouth of the imaginary audience. This use of the verb *philosophari* in a mocking or even contemptuous sense is first and mainly attested in Plautus (and in some colloquial passages in Cicero).⁴⁵ And, finally, the phrase *asinum philosophantem* brings with it the atmosphere of the animal fable,⁴⁶ which, as may be noted, is a frequent ingredient in iambic poetry and invective,⁴⁷ but also in Roman satire, from Ennius onward.⁴⁸

Such encounters as discussed here, where the narrator actually appears to pose as a satirist, are just extreme instances of a general, and often

41. Cf. Horace's satirist, who at S. 1.1.108 announces: *illuc, unde abii, redeo*. For comparable phrases addressed to the imaginary interlocutor(s) see Freudenburg 1993: 12.

42. Quotation from Tatum 1979: 26, who there (26–27) gives other examples from the *Met*.

43. For the term 'Systemreferenz' see above, the introductory section, with n. 3.

44. Hor. *Ep.* 2.2.60; see Coffey 1976: 92–93; Schmidt 1979: 269–72, with references in nn. 54–70. Freudenburg 2001: 15–23 (Horace); 187–88 (on diatribal features in Persius). Juvenal's satires 11, 12, and 15 are often called diatribes (Anderson 1982: 431, with references).

45. See *ThLL* s.v. *philosophor* 2031.2–23. See Zimmerman 2000: 401, with references.

46. Compare, e.g., Lucian. *Gall.* 20, where a rooster moralises at length on the theme of 'wealth alone does not make for happiness'; there, at 20.4, Micyllus expresses his amazement at the miracle of an ἡλεκτρὸν φιλόσοφος.

47. Zanetto 2003: 324, with bibliography.

48. See Adamietz 1986: 4; von Albrecht 1986: 161. Only in the satires of Juvenal there are no instances of the use of fable (Adamietz 1986a: 233).

noted trait of Lucius, the ass-narrator, who frequently casts himself in the role of moral arbiter.⁴⁹ His moralising, however, is often as humorously flawed as the sermonising of Horace's satirist.⁵⁰

For other encounters with a satirist in the *Metamorphoses*, less obtrusive perhaps, one may point to those pieces of narrative where the 'I' finds himself in circumstances which belong to the stock repertoire of satire, and where his report of the happenings around him, and of the characters in his company clearly shows the marks of distance, irony and exaggeration. Thus, for instance, 'The Journey to Thessaly' in book 1,⁵¹ or the bizarre 'Cena Thiasi' in book 10, with parasites and all.⁵²

Un-authorised texts

It has convincingly been shown that the various types of discourse (monologue, dialogue, letter) in Roman satire are unvariedly "tricky and slippery discourses to interpret... The author tends to play games with us by creating a mask or voice, a satirist who is persuasively and seductively authoritative, and then by undermining that authority ... This continual destabilisation can be very disconcerting. It suggests that there are no final 'right answers', no 'correct' way of reading the texts of satire."

This is a quotation from Braund, at the conclusion of an interesting discussion of 'Satirists and their Audiences'.⁵³ The numerous disconcerting appeals to their audiences by satirists, demanding a high degree of alertness from them, often thwarting their expectations, are a recurring point of attention in Freudenburg 2001.⁵⁴ Readers of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* have strikingly similar experiences when confronted with the inconsistencies and ambivalences of the narrating voice(s), which put high demands on them, and often oblige them to revise earlier formed interpretations. The term 'un-authorised text' for Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* has been introduced by Winkler 1985,⁵⁵ and has since become widely used.

49. See, e.g., with further references, Hijmans et al. 1995: 62, 145, 206, 231.

50. See Freudenburg 1993: 21–39.

51. Apul. *Met.* 1.2–21. For inversions of the Horatian 'journey to Brundisium' in Lucius' 'Iter Thessalicum', see Keulen 2003: 26–27.

52. Apul. *Met.* 10.16; see Zimmerman 2000 *ad loc.*

53. Braund 1996: 52–59.

54. The emphasis on the demands the satirist makes on the reader is present throughout Freudenburg's book; see in particular e.g. Freudenburg 2001: 7–9, 12–14, 55–58, 137–38, 207–08.

55. See e.g. Winkler 1985: 126–27.

The elusive ego-narrator

As we have seen, Roman verse satire offers us, more than any other literary expression, many shifting perspectives and changing roles of the 'I'. In this respect particularly, the 'I' of Apuleius' novel comes close to a satirist, whom the reader encounters in multiple and varied guises, of which I have (above, in the section on 'encounters') only discussed the most remarkable instances.

Such experimenting with the adoption of various roles of the 'I' may be seen as a certain mode, pervading Latin literature. Roman satire as well as Augustan elegy have, as has been shown in a number of recent studies, greatly contributed to the development of this feature of Latin literature.⁵⁶ As is now commonly accepted, thanks to the work of scholars like Anderson and others, the speaker's *persona* in the satires of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal was shaped to suit the purposes of their individual poems, and it has been shown how that role changed over the years and over successive collections of satires. The creation of these *personae* came easily to Roman authors through their training in rhetoric, and was immediately recognizable for their equally trained audience.⁵⁷ Braund 1996 examines the most prominent masks created by the satirical poets, discussing in consecutive order 'the angry satirist', 'the mocking satirist', and 'the ironic satirist'.

Rhetorical training in *persona* was, of course, in itself not responsible for the creation of the self-parodying or self-ironising *persona* which the narrator of the *Met.* sometimes displays.⁵⁸ It is, however, in Roman satire that the development of a self-parodying 'I' has been traced. Concentrating mainly on the satirist created by Horace, Freudenburg 1993 has argued that the satirist is, in essence, a comic figure. With examples from Horace's satiric works, Freudenburg highlights the comic self-definition of Horace's satirist, which often results in irony at his own expense. Freudenburg 2001 discusses instances of self-defeating irony in Juvenal.⁵⁹ Menippean satire too may have contributed to this trait of the narrator's *persona* in the *Met.*: As Relihan argues, "the self-parodying author/narrator is a fixed feature of Menippean satire ...".⁶⁰

56. For a critical survey of these studies see Nauta 2002.

57. See Freudenburg 1993: 3–8.

58. See discussion of this feature above, at the beginning of the section on 'Encounters ...'.

59. Freudenburg 1993: 39; see also, e.g., Freudenburg 2001: 11–14, 248–58 (on Juvenal).

60. See Relihan 1993: 18–20, 23, 29–30 (Menippus himself the paradigm of self-mockery; instances from a.o. Varro and Lucian).

Satire in the final book of the novel

One of the thematic elements mentioned by Bakhtin among the relevant characteristics of Menippean satire (see above, the section ‘Menippea’) is the element of observation from an unusual point of view.⁶¹ Apuleius exploited the satiric possibilities of this element, present already in the Greek ass-tale which he adapted and transformed,⁶² to the full: As an unnoticed observer, the ass reports the behaviour, the crimes and follies and often revulsive practices of the humans among whom he finds himself. However, when Lucius thanks to the grace of Isis has regained his human form, the element of the unnoticed observer and the satirical possibilities inherent in it are gone. But the reader is in for a surprise: Roman satire is now manifest at another level. No longer it is the ass who amuses us with his satirical observations of people’s faults and follies: it is the protagonist himself, Lucius, who becomes the object of implicit satire. The ‘I’ who reports the final stages of his adventures has become a fervent adept and priest of Isis, but his story, related in all earnest by the protagonist himself, contains too many satirical elements to go unnoticed. Harrison even argues that the narrative of Lucius’ conversion satirises the seriously presented narrative of Aelius Aristides’ *Sacred Tales*.⁶³ Over the head as it were of the *ego*-narrator the author alerts his audience through numerous references to the satirical potentialities of the situation presented in this part of the novel. Some examples may suffice.

The protagonist is in this final episode presented as a gullible Isis-adept, who in his religious zeal allows himself to be plucked by the greedy priests of Isis and Osiris. The venality of Osiris’ priests is attacked in Juvenal’s sixth satire, whereas the importance of money and the corruption of religion in general are treated in Persius 2.⁶⁴ The negative and satirical connotations of Lucius’ proud display of his shaven head have been discussed by Winkler and van Mal-Maeder.⁶⁵ Moreover, Lucius’ condition in his relationship with Isis is compared by some to the condition of a Roman *cliens*’s relationship with his *patronus*.⁶⁶ The hardships of a *cliens* in his relationship with an influential *patronus* are a re-

61. See above, n. 8.

62. See below, n. 67.

63. Harrison 2002.

64. See van Mal-Maeder 1998, 102–04, with further references.

65. Winkler 1985: 224–27, with references; Van Mal-Maeder 1997: 107, with n. 72; to her references there add Juv. 6.532–34.

66. See, e.g. Riess 2001: 335 with references in n. 69: “Isis hat Lucius aus der Eselschaut befreit (*manumissio*), dafür ist dieser nun als *cliens* seiner *patrona* zu lebenslänglichem Dank und *obsequium* verpflichtet.”

current theme in Juvenal's satires (e.g. Juv. 1.132–34; 3.119–36; 5 *passim*).

Conclusion

As far as we can judge from the epitome of the Greek ass tale which served as a model for Apuleius' novel,⁶⁷ this model already contained many satirical elements, like for instance the 'Menippean' element of observation from an unusual point of view, and the parodying of credulity. In the Latin *Metamorphoses* these elements are preserved and characteristically expanded. As he did in other respects, Apuleius also 'Romanised' the satiric tone of his model, by including themes and strata-gems peculiar to Roman verse satire. Without doubt an important aspect of Apuleius' adaptation is his intricate game with the ever-elusive voice(s) and masks of the *ego*-narrator, a procedure which he inherited from the Latin literary tradition. This aspect deserves more close scrutiny than could be offered here.

67. On Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and its Greek sources see conveniently Mason 1999, with further references and bibliography.