

# Constructing Apuleius: The Emergence of a Literary Artist

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This paper aims to be both a contribution to the history of scholarship and a stimulus to further research. In it I seek to follow some key themes in the scholarly reception of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* before and after the work of Ben Edwin Perry, and to show how the critical constructions of literary works are necessarily affected by contemporary ideological prejudices, which change over time as scholarship develops. In particular, I try to trace the emergence after much negative judgement of the modern construction of Apuleius as a careful literary artist, and of the *Metamorphoses* as a novel worthy of detailed study and a carefully composed, complex and highly allusive literary text, a view which has come into being almost entirely during the twentieth century, and to suggest consequent paths for further scholarly investigation.<sup>1</sup>

## 1: The Problems of Prejudice – from Antiquity to Perry

Anxiety about how ancient prose fiction relates to the conventional canon of literary genres, about its overall quality, and about whether it can be accounted 'proper' literature, goes back to the Roman world.<sup>2</sup> Prose fiction is notably omitted from the most extensive survey of literary genres to be

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<sup>2</sup> On this issue see Kennedy 2001, 115.

found in ancient literary criticism, the syllabus for the aspiring orator in the tenth book of Quintilian's *Institutio*, and novels are largely unmentioned in the other literature of the ancient world until the fourth to fifth centuries. Then we find two revealing comments. In his Neoplatonising commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, Macrobius condemns prose fiction as merely titillating and more suitable for the nursery than for serious consideration (*Somn.*1.2.8):

*Auditum mulcent ...argumenta fictis casibus amatorum referta, quibus vel multum se Arbiter exercuit vel Apuleium non nunquam luisse miramur. Hoc totum fabularum genus, quod solas aurium delicias profitetur, e sacrario suo in nutricum cunas sapientiae tractatus eliminat.*

‘Our hearing is charmed by plots stuffed with the imagined vicissitudes of lovers, on which Petronius spent much labour, and in which we are surprised that even Apuleius often sported. This whole kind of story, since it aims only at the pleasuring of the ears, is expelled by the discussion of wisdom from its shrine to take refuge in the cradles of nurses’.

Here prose fiction and its trivial concerns are seen as mere empty and false story-telling, insignificant compared to the truth of philosophy which is central for Macrobius himself; Apuleius’ combination of Platonic philosophy and novel-writing is seen as surprising and inconsistent. A similar attitude is shown in the supposed attack by Septimius Severus in a letter to the Senate on the character of Clodius Albinus, his rival for the purple in 195–7, in the *Historia Augusta* (*SHA Clod. Alb.*12.12):

*Maior fuit dolor, quod illum pro litterato laudandum plerique duxistis, cum ille neniis quibusdam anilibus occupatus inter Milesias Punicas Apulei sui et ludicra litteraria consenesceret.*

‘It is a greater pain to me that many of you have deemed him to deserve praise as a man of literature, when he was busied with some nonsense or other fit for old women and was growing senile amongst the Punic Milesian tales of his friend Apuleius<sup>3</sup> and such literary trivialities’.

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<sup>3</sup> Clodius came from Hadrumetum near Carthage and therefore from Africa Proconsularis, the same province as Apuleius. Since Severus also came from the province, from Lepcis

This association of novels with old women, suggesting the credulity of their readers and the triviality of their content, is likely to be of earlier origin, since it seems to be playfully alluded to in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, when the inserted tale of Cupid and Psyche, which is clearly designed to parallel the plot of a Greek romantic novel, is presented as being told by a real old woman, the anonymous housekeeper of a robber-band, who herself introduces her narrative as an old woman's tale in a phrase which seems to pick up the kind of criticisms made by Macrobius and Severus' supposed letter (4.27.8): *sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protinus avocabo*, 'but I will distract you at once with elegant narratives and with the stories of an old woman'.

Allegory, a mode of analysis which discovers seriousness under apparent frivolity, has naturally been perennially popular in the criticism of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, which unlike Petronius' *Satyrical* offers clear opportunities for figurative interpretation. The most famous analysis of Apuleius from the ancient world, the reading of the story of Cupid and Psyche by Fulgentius, from the late fifth or early sixth century,<sup>4</sup> offers an elaborate allegory (*Myth.* 3.6), from which I select a key portion:

*Civitatem posuerunt quasi in modum mundi, in qua regem et reginam velut deum et materiam posuerunt. Quibus tres filias addunt, id est carnem, ultronietatem quam libertatem arbitrii dicimus et animam; Psice enim Graece anima dicitur ... huic invidet Venus quasi libido; ad quam perdendam cupiditatem mittit; sed quia cupiditas est boni, est mali, cupiditas animam diligit et ei velut in coniunctione miscetur ...*

'They [i.e. Apuleius and his lost Greek imitator Aristophontes of Athens] have put Psyche's city to represent the universe, in which they have put a king and a queen, standing for God and matter. To these they add three daughters, that is the flesh, spontaneity (which we call freedom of will) and the soul, for the soul is called 'psyche' in Greek ... She is envied by Venus, representing lust, who sends Desire to destroy her; but since De-

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Magna, *sui* must suggest more than origin in the same province, and could imply that Clodius knew Apuleius, a generation older, but this semi-fictionalised biography is unfortunately not reliable on such details.

<sup>4</sup> On the dating of the *Mythologiae* see Hays 1996, 24.

sire is for both good and bad, Desire loves the soul and mixes with it in a form of union'

The details of the allegory are not wholly clear, but it is plain that we are dealing with a serious moralising interpretation in a familiar ancient tradition, aimed at uncovering the real truth under the apparent falsity and levity of fiction.<sup>5</sup>

The Renaissance like late antiquity felt that the apparent triviality of Apuleian fiction needed explanation and justification, by allegory if necessary. The elder Filippo Beroaldo, the most distinguished Renaissance editor of Apuleius, clearly addressed this issue in the introduction to his 1500 text of and commentary on the *Metamorphoses*,<sup>6</sup> where he discusses the writer's intention and plan (*scriptoris intentio atque consilium*):

*Ego Apuleium quidem nostrum confirmo Lucianum Graecum scriptorem argumento consimili imitari, verum sub hoc transmutationis involucro naturam mortalium et mores humanos quasi transeunter designare voluisse, ut admoneretur ex hominibus asinos fieri: quando voluptatibus beluinis immersi asinali stoliditate brutescimus nec ulla rationis virtutisque scintilla in nobis elucescit. ...rursus ex asino in hominem reformatio significat calcatis voluptatibus exutisque corporalibus deliciis rationem respicere et hominem interiorem qui verus est homo ex ergastulo illo caenoso ad lucidum habitaculum virtute et religione ducibus migrasse ... illa vero eruditioribus principalis huiusce transformationis causa valdeque probabilis videri potest, ut videlicet sub hoc mystico praetextu Apuleius noster Pythagoricae Platonicaeque philosophiae consultissimo dogmata utriusque doctoris ostenderet et sub hac ludicra narratione palingenesiam et metempsychosim, id est regenerationem transmutationemque, dissimulanter afferret...*

'I for my part maintain that our Apuleius imitated the Greek writer Lucian by means of a similar plot, but wished under the cover of this

<sup>5</sup> Fulgentius makes it clear that in his view Apuleius and Aristophontes write merely *falsitas*, a word he uses twice of their fictions in his analysis at *Myth*.3.6. On Fulgentius' methods of allegorising in the *Mythologiae* see the very helpful material in Hays 1996, 93–132.

<sup>6</sup> Cited from Fol.2v. of Beroaldo 1500, with some normalisation of spelling and punctuation. For an assessment of Beroaldo's commentary see Krautter 1971.

story of metamorphosis to mark out as if in passing the nature of man and human character, so that a warning should be given that asses can be made of men: since when submerged in bestial pleasures we become like brutes with the stupidity of the ass, and no spark or reason or virtue shines out in us ... Again, the retransformation from ass to man signifies the spurning of pleasures and the stripping off of fleshly delights so as to take note of reason, and that the inner man, which is the true man, has passed from that foul prison to a habitation of light through virtue and religion.... to the more learned the following can indeed seem the principal cause of this transformation and an extremely probable one, namely so that under this mystic pretext, our Apuleius, an expert in Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy, might demonstrate the teachings of both masters and introduce in a concealed way under the cover of this frivolous narrative palingenesis and metempsychosis, that is rebirth and transformation... .<sup>7</sup>

It was in the Renaissance, too, that Apuleius' novel came under attack from a different angle, that of its style. Though there is some ancient evidence for an African provincial accent in the speaking of Latin,<sup>8</sup> and Isidore in the seventh century could claim that Latin had been corrupted by contact with barbarian languages in the expansion of the Roman Empire (*Orig.* 9.1.7), it is to the Renaissance that we owe the argument that provinces generated their own debased regional dialects of Latin, and the invention of 'African Latin' in particular, a topic that was to be the subject of particularly heated scholarly debate in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.<sup>9</sup> The cult of Ciceronian style amongst many humanists<sup>10</sup> led to the denigration of other Latin styles and to the categorisation in particular of post-Ciceronian Latin as decadent,<sup>11</sup> though Beroaldus and several other humanists prized

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<sup>7</sup> Beroaldus' views here were paraphrased and adopted by Adlington 1566, the first English translator of Apuleius, in his preface 'To the Reader'; for this and other Renaissance adherents of allegorical interpretation cf. Heine 1978, 32–33.

<sup>8</sup> See Petersmann 1998 and n.51 below.

<sup>9</sup> For the historiography of the question see Brock 1911, 161–261, and the discussion below, pp.161–162.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. Bolgar 1954, 249–275.

<sup>11</sup> This is part of the invention of an inferior 'Silver Latin', which goes back at least as far as Erasmus; see Farrell 2001, 90–92, Klein 1967 and Ax 1996.

and defended the exuberant and non-classical diction of Apuleius.<sup>12</sup> A letter of Erasmus written some twenty years after Beroaldus' edition (*Ep.* 1334, from 1523) clearly uses this rhetoric against Apuleius, characterising his style along with that of his fellow-African Tertullian as studied, affected and obscure, showing provincial over-striving for stylistic effect:

*Mihi veterum dictionem variam consideranti videtur vix ullos provinciales feliciter reddidisse Romani sermonis simplicitatem praeter aliquot, qui Romae a pueris sunt educati. Nam et Tertulliano et Apuleio suus quidam est character et in decretis Afrorum, quae multa refert Augustinus contra Petilianum et Crescentium, deprehendas anxiam affectationem eloquentiae, sed sic, ut Afros agnoscas.*

On considering the varying styles of the ancients, it seems to me that hardly any writers of provincial origin have successfully rendered the purity of the Roman language, except for those who were educated at Rome from their youth. For Tertullian and Apuleius have their own particular stylistic stamp; in the decrees written by Africans, too, which are cited in abundance by Augustine writing against Petilianus and Crescentius, you will find an anxious affectation of style, but such as to enable you to recognise them as Africans.

Some of Erasmus' great contemporaries put it more succinctly, claiming that the style of Apuleius' novel was as asinine as his hero's metamorphosis. Thus Melanchthon (*Eloquentiae encomium* 29): *recte Apuleius, qui cum asinum repraesentaret, rudere quam loqui mallet*, 'rightly did Apuleius in depicting an ass choose to bray rather than speak'. Vives (*De tradendis disciplinis* 1.3), picking up Melanchthon's gibe, differentiated between the unacceptable style of the *Metamorphoses* and the more restrained style of some of the other works, thinking no doubt of the more Ciceronian *Apologia: Apuleius in asino plane rudit, in aliis sonat hominem*, 'Apuleius in his ass clearly brays, in his other works he sounds a human note'.

The already established twin criticisms of the *Metamorphoses*, frivolity of subject-matter and barbarism of style, are deployed in the most influential

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<sup>12</sup> See D'Amico 1984.

work of literary criticism on the novel before the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> The *Traité des Romans et leurs origines* (1670) of Pierre-Daniel Huet, tutor of the Dauphin (son of Louis XIV) and originator of the Delphine Classics, translator of *Daphnis and Chloe* and Bishop of Avranches, concludes by arguing that novels can be defended as serious literature if they have a didactic underlying purpose and are excellent in material and style:

‘Now Fictions being nothing but narrations, true in appearance and false in effect, the minds of the simple, who discern only the bark, are pleased with this show of truth, and very well satisfied. But those who penetrate further, and see into the solid, are easily disgusted with this falsity, so that the first love the falsehood, because it is concealed under an appearance of truth, and these others are distasted with this Image of truth, by reason of the real falsehood which is couched under it, if this falsehood is not otherwise ingenious, mysterious and instructive, and buoys itself up by the excellence of the invention and art.’<sup>14</sup>

At the beginning of his work, Huet had defined the key purpose of novels as moral didacticism, and it is interesting to see literary excellence achieving almost equal prominence by the end in the passage just cited. The opening is uncompromising:

‘The chief end of a Romance, or (at least) that which ought to be, and which the Composer ought to propose to himself, is the Instruction of the Reader, to whom he must always present Vertue crowned, and Vice punished.’<sup>15</sup>

Literary entertainment and pleasant style is then justified in a Lucretian-style argument that literary honey is needed to sweeten the moral cup owing to human pride:

‘But as the spirit of man naturally hates to be taught, and self-love does spurn against Instructions, ‘tis to be deceived by the blandishments of

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<sup>13</sup> It was reprinted many times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; I cite from the English translation of Lewis (= Huet 1715).

<sup>14</sup> Huet 1715, 97.

<sup>15</sup> Huet 1715, 3.

pleasure, and the severity of Precepts to be sweetened by the agreement of Examples.<sup>16</sup>

But for Huet neither Petronius nor Apuleius, though not without their merits, provided attractive style or fitting didactic content. Petronius contained ‘agreeable and ingenious fictions, but very often too wanton and immodest,<sup>17</sup> and his style was too affected: ‘he is somewhat too much Painted and Studied, and degenerates from that natural and majestic simplicity of the happy age of Augustus.’<sup>18</sup> Apuleius’ novel was ‘an Italian fiction very divertising and full of Wit,<sup>19</sup> but ‘he has not at all retrencht the smuttiness which was in the Originals which he had followed’ and ‘his style is that of a Sophist, full of affectation and violent figures, hard, barbarous and befitting an African.’<sup>20</sup>

That this low view of Apuleian Latinity was alive and well a century later is shown by David Ruhnken’s preface to Oudendorp’s (posthumous) edition of 1786.<sup>21</sup> Ruhnken repeats the familiar charge of barbarous style, but grounds his accusation more precisely in the wholesale appropriation of archaic language in the *Metamorphoses* when Apuleius had the ‘better’ example of Cicero before him. He argues that the Antonine writers Gellius and Apuleius (the palimpsest of Fronto was not to be discovered for another generation) could indeed write like Cicero and other classical authors but chose to adulterate this style with excessively archaic vocabulary (I–II):

*Non ii quidem optimos illos omnino reliquerunt, sed tamen cum eorum imitatione scriptores ex ultima antiquitate repetitos coniunxerunt, ut modo cum Cicerone, Caesare, Livio et similibus, modo cum Evandri matre loqui viderentur.*

‘For their part these writers did not leave aside these excellent models, but yet combined with imitation of these the use of writers sought out from the most distant antiquity, so that sometimes they seemed to be

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<sup>16</sup> Id. ib.

<sup>17</sup> Huet 1715, 69.

<sup>18</sup> Huet 1715, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Huet 1715, 34.

<sup>20</sup> Huet 1715, 72.

<sup>21</sup> Oudendorp 1786.



conversing with Cicero, Caesar, Livy and the like, sometimes with the mother of Evander’.

But in this deliberate lexical obscurantism, Ruhnken continues, Apuleius had done his linguistic research and was largely echoing archaic usage as opposed to rankly inventing terms (II–III):

*Is igitur tantum abfuit, ut sibi in hoc genere temperaret, ut potius e casca vetustate eam orationem conflaret, quam nemo, nisi qui multum temporis in ea Latinitate cognoscenda contriverit, sese sperat assecuturum. Scio viros eruditos esse, qui non omnia huius modi verba ab antiquis scriptoribus sumpta, sed temere et pro libidine conficta putent ... sed ego libentius sequar Oudendorpium ... bene iudicantem, nihil Appuleium sine exemplo scripsisse ...*

‘He was so far from restraining himself in this sphere that he preferred to throw together that style of his from primitive antiquity, that no-one can hope to follow unless he has spent a great deal of time in learning that kind of Latin. I know that there are scholars who believe that all his words of this kind are not taken from ancient writers but are wilfully and capriciously invented ... but I would prefer to follow Oudendorp’s sound view that Apuleius wrote nothing without a model’.

This partial defence of exquisite lexical archaism interestingly echoes the programmatic statements of Fronto, who was (as already noted above) yet to be rediscovered.<sup>22</sup> But Ruhnken’s relative moderation here does not detract from his overall negative judgement on Apuleius’ archaism, which is followed by an uncompromising attack on his ‘swollen’ style as a whole (IV):

*Est sane ista antiquitatis affectatio molesta Appuleium legentibus. Nescio tamen, an molestior sit tumor Africanus, quo orationem, in iis quidem libris, quos a doctis legi voluit, praeter modum et pudorem inflavit.*

‘That affectation of archaism is irritating enough for Apuleius’ readers. But even more irritating may be the African tumidity, with which he in-

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Marache 1957.

flated his style beyond the limits of shame, at least in those books which he wished men of learning to read.’

Here Ruhnken seems to be referring to issues of syntax rather than vocabulary, to the deliberate and exuberant accumulations of effects of sound, balance and sentence-structure which were later to be so notably attacked by Norden (see below).

Half a century later in the preface to his important edition of 1842,<sup>23</sup> Hildebrand could only assent to Ruhnken’s judgement on Apuleius’ style in the *Metamorphoses*, pointing again to its ‘African’ exuberance and the contrast with the more Ciceronian works (xxiv):

*Mihi vero accuratius libros perlegenti haec statim quaestio sese obtulit, cur in Metamorphosi auctor turgidum plane et conquisitum et ad taedium usque luxurians genus dicendi affectasset: qua quidem verborum copia nimisque eloquendi ac fucatis illis pigmentis tanto lectorem fastidio affecit, ut nisi animus vivida imaginandi et speciosa describendi alliceretur ratione, librum statim e manibus deponeremus. Quodsi Florida praecipue tamen Apologiam ceterosque Apuleii libros accuratissime perlectos cum Metamorphosi contuleris, unius eiusdemque esse scriptoris omnia vix tibi persuaseris.*

‘As I read carefully through the works this question presented itself to me immediately – why the author in the *Metamorphoses* had affected a style which was plainly swollen and recherché, and exuberant to the point of over-satiety. He affects the reader with such disgust with his abundance of words and his excessive and artificial colours of speech, that were it not that our mind is attracted by his vivid powers of imagination and his decorative manner of description, we would put down the book at once. But if you compare the *Florida* and especially the *Apologia* and the other works of Apuleius with the *Metamorphoses* after the closest of readings, you will have difficulty in convincing yourself that all these works are by one and the same author.’

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<sup>23</sup> Hildebrand 1842.

Hildebrand attributed this exuberance again to Apuleius' African origin and suggests that the *Metamorphoses* were composed early in his career at Rome, a view which has recently been notably revived (xxv).<sup>24</sup>

*Omnes enim Afros constat antiqua quaeque affectasse .... Si vero Apuleium saepius quam ceteros Afros hanc antiquitatem plane obsoletam sectatum fuisse apparet, minus dedita opera quaesitae affectationi hoc tribuo, qua sui temporis perversitatem corruptumque iudicium perstringere voluerit, quam iuvenili eius ingenio et quae in adolescentulis saepius observari potest, verborum inusitatorum captationi, qua orationem vividiorum reddi et exornari putant.*

'For it is generally agreed that all the African writers affected whatever was ancient ... but if it clearly emerges that Apuleius pursued this wholly outdated archaism more often than other African writers, on reflection I attribute this less to a search for affectation and more to his youthful spirit and to something which is often observable in young men, the taking up of unusual words, with which they think that their style is made more vivid and ornate.'

But it was in the matter of allegory, untouched by Oudendorp, that Hildebrand mounted a defence of Apuleius. In a discussion of some ten pages he generates a Platonising allegory which is recognisably based on Fulgentius, of which I cite his outline summary (p. xxxviii):

*Psychem castam intelligo atque pudicam animam, qualem a summo numine profectam Plato iam disseruit. Cupido sive Eros coelestis ille est et sanctus amor qui pudicae et purae insitus animae a natura est, unde eius nominatur maritus, quia artissimo naturae vinculo cum Psyche coniunctus est.*

'I understand Psyche to be the chaste and innocent soul, in the form that set out from the supreme deity according to Plato. Cupid or Eros is that heavenly and holy love which is naturally inherent in the chaste and pure soul, and is hence called her husband, since he is joined with Psyche in the closest of nature's bonds.'

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Dowden 1994.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the rise of the concept of ‘African’ Latin, anti-Apuleian scholars tend to focus on the issue of outlandish language rather than frivolous content. The most notable treatment is that of Norden in *Die Antike Kunstprosa* (1898), who like Huet before him emphasised the sophistic element in Apuleius. Norden, writing with youthful polemic in his first major book, opposed the then fashionable idea of African Latin, but delivered an attack on Apuleian Latinity which held no punches:

*Bei ihm feiert der in bacchantischen Taumel dahinrasende, wie einer wilder Strom sich selbst überstürzende, in ein wogendes Nebelmeer wüster Phantastik zergehende Stil seine Orgien; hier paart sich mit dem ungeheuerlichsten Schwulst der affektierteste Zierlichkeit; alle die Mätzchen, die dem weichlichsten Wohlklang dienen, werden in der verschwenderischsten Weise angebracht, als da sind Alliterationen, Ohren und Augen verwirrende Wortspiele, abzirkelte Satzteilchen mit genauer Korrespondenz bis auf den Silbenzahl und mit klingelndem Gleichklang am Ende. Die römische Sprache, die ernste würdige Matrone, ist zum prostibulum geworden, die Sprache des lupanar hat ihre castitas ausgezogen.*

‘In him the style which rages away in Bacchic ecstasy, which rushes along like a wild torrent, which vanishes into a misty surging sea of depraved imagination, celebrates its debaucheries; here the most affected delicacy is coupled with the most monstrous bombast; all the tricks which serve to produce the most feeble euphony are applied in the most extravagant manner, such as alliterations, word-plays which bewilder eye and ear, precisely-shaped clauses with the most exact correspondences, even as far as the number of syllables, and with a jingling harmony at the end. The Roman language, a serious and worthy matron, has become a prostitute; the language of the brothel has stripped away her chastity.’<sup>25</sup>

In the nineteenth century, where the modern novel was so central to general literary output, appreciation of this ancient novelist was inevitably linked with critical battles over the novel more generally, battles not entirely van-

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<sup>25</sup> Norden 1898, II. 600–601.

ished by the day of Ben Edwin Perry.<sup>26</sup> In the essay ‘The Art of Fiction’ of 1884, the earliest of his contributions to the criticism of the novel, Henry James suggests that it is only recently that the novel had become a respectable subject of literary criticism,<sup>27</sup> and indeed the novel had become increasingly socially, morally and intellectually acceptable since Jane Austen’s determined defence of it under fire in the fifth chapter of *Northanger Abbey* (1818, written 1798), a development which is well traced by Trollope in his *Autobiography* of 1883.<sup>28</sup> For his critics in the early twentieth century, Apuleius could thus be received as a late and non-canonical writer of barbarous style, best known for his work in a genre which was barely intellectually respectable.

This was the context in which Rudolf Helm entered on his project of editing all the (non-philosophical) works of Apuleius, which occupied him for the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> Helm was a junior colleague of Eduard Norden in Berlin for the whole of that time, but clearly did not share Norden’s disdain for Apuleian style. In the 1910 Latin preface to the *Florida* which gathers Helm’s views on all the Apuleian works, he argues (rightly I think) against the view that the statement in the prologue of the *Metamorphoses* that the narrator learnt Latin late in life applies to Apuleius himself:

*Sed hoc quidem vix credet qui eum scriptores antiquos haud sine fructu legisse animadvertet, qui optime eum verba elegisse sentiet ut rebus et personis accommodaret, qui denique intelletget summam iam artem inesse in hoc libro, quem primum scriptum esse putant.*

‘But this will hardly be credible to anyone who notes that he has read the older writers not without profit, who feels that he has made an excellent selection of words to suit his material and characters, who indeed under-

<sup>26</sup> On the battles over the status of the novel in Britain cf. e.g. Altick 1957 110–116, 123–126, 194–198; for Perry’s consciousness of the debate cf. Perry 1967, 330.

<sup>27</sup> James 1957, esp. 23 ‘Only a short time ago it might have been supposed that the English novel was not what the French call *discutable*’.

<sup>28</sup> Trollope 1946, 194–198, arguing that the novel became respectable in the period 1826–1876.

<sup>29</sup> His editions (all subsequently revised) first appeared as follows: *Apologia* (Helm 1905), *Metamorphoses* (Helm 1907) and *Florida* (Helm 1910).

stands that this book (which they think was written first) contains the highest art.<sup>30</sup>

The issue of the high quality of Apuleian style in the *Metamorphoses* is here connected with another argument, that the novel could not have been the earliest work of Apuleius (with which I also agree).<sup>31</sup> But Helm principally pursued another angle of negative criticism, one reflected in other scholarly work of the early twentieth century – the inappropriateness of Apuleius’ inserted tales and the general confusion of his narrative line. Both these emerged from increasing scholarly interest in the relationship between Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* and its Greek model, rightly identified by Helm himself with the lost Greek *Metamorphoses* of Lucius of Patras, which suggested that Apuleius should be viewed as an inferior Latin imitator and even mangler of a Greek work. This is clearly the mindset behind Helm’s view on the inserted tales, *quae quamquam lector ut laetetur efficiunt, tamen totum narrationis corpus, ut ita dicam, totum deformant*, ‘which though they effect pleasure for the reader, nevertheless (so to speak) deform the whole body of the narrative.’<sup>32</sup>

Modern scholars have a very different view, and the consensus, following German work of the generation following Helm and especially the work in English of James Tatum in his important article of 1969, is (to cite Tatum himself) that ‘by anticipation of later events; by sensitivity to the narrative ‘environment’; by extremely subtle interrelationships between characters in a tale, and the people hearing it; and by thematic relationship to the final “Isis-book”, the tales are not simply relevant to the main story, they are in fact essential to its conclusion and its philosophy of human life’.<sup>33</sup> We will return shortly to the key question of the coherence of Book 11 with the rest of the novel, but on the issue of the coherence of the tales with the main narrative Helmian scepticism is outmoded given modern research, which argues rightly for high Apuleian narrative and narratological skill.

The supposed incoherence of the tales was for Helm symptomatic of a larger incompetence, which he attacks in a section entitled *De rebus ne-*

<sup>30</sup> Helm 1910, xi–xii.

<sup>31</sup> See Harrison 2000, 9–10.

<sup>32</sup> Helm 1910, v.

<sup>33</sup> Tatum 1969, 525 = Tatum 1999, 192.

*glegender compositis*, ‘on material carelessly composed.’<sup>34</sup> Though it is undeniable that a long work such as the *Metamorphoses*, like the epics of Homer and Vergil, has its small inconsistencies, some of Helm’s examples are indicative of an unwillingness to accept that Apuleius was capable of subtle intertextuality. For instance, Helm discusses the scene from the narrative of Aristomenes to Lucius in the first book, where Aristomenes relates his own despairing attempt at suicide in a shabby inn, including his farewell address to his bed (*Met.* 1.16): ‘*grabbatule, animo meo carissime, qui mecum tot aerumnas exanclasti*’. Helm comments: *ita ...lectum appellare videtur, non qui per unam noctem mutilo et putri et alieno, sed qui suo et semper eodem usus est. sed non satis perspicio, qua ex conditione rerum haec possint sumpta esse, quae certe ad amantis tristem multo magis quadrarent*, ‘this kind of address to a bed seems not to belong to someone who has used another’s mangled and crumbling bed for one night, but to someone who has used his own and always the same one. But I do not understand from what circumstances these words are derived, which would certainly be much more fitting for a lamenting lover’. Helm, though he is conscious to some degree elsewhere of both Apuleius’ use of previous authors and his sense of humour, does not see (as Silvia Mattiacci has most fully explored)<sup>35</sup> that this scene brilliantly parodies several literary sources, and especially the tragic scenes in Euripides’ *Alcestis* where the queen Alcestis, about to die for her husband Admetus, bids a touching farewell to her marital bed (177–80), or in Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*, where the suicidal Deianira does the same (920–22), as well as the scene in Vergil’s *Aeneid* where Dido, bent on suicide, bids farewell to the bed which she had shared with Aeneas (4.648–52). This (again) is one of many cases in which detailed modern research can make a concrete contribution, and where an undemanding view of Apuleian literary texture is less effective for interpretation.

Another key question confronted by Helm is that of the relevance of Book 11 to the rest of the novel: *nam ut nos magnopere iuvat de diebus festis piaculisque et pompis Isidis edoceri, ita tota haec descriptio aliena est a hilari lubricaque fabula quae antecedit*, ‘for though it gives us great pleasure to be given such full information about the festivals, offerings of processions of Isis, this whole description is alien to the amusing and lubricious tale

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<sup>34</sup> Helm 1910, xv–xvii.

<sup>35</sup> Mattiacci 1993.

which precedes it.<sup>36</sup> This fundamental issue was also famously faced by Ben Edwin Perry in his *The Ancient Romances* of 1967. By that date Perry had spent some five decades working on Apuleius and connected texts, and his fundamental view was that of Helm, and was well paraphrased as follows: ‘his method was to look for evidence of *res negligenter compositae* and to argue from them that Apuleius was either unwilling or unable to develop and sustain a single idea.’<sup>37</sup> Naturally with this general view, Perry followed Helm in viewing Book 11 as basically inconsistent with the rest of the *Metamorphoses*. His judgement, though lengthy, is worth citing for its emphasis and for its importance in the scholarly debate, though by 1967 the mood was turning the other way:<sup>38</sup>

‘... the last book of the *Metamorphoses* was added for a very special purpose ...to redeem his book from the appearance of complete frivolity. To publish for sheer entertainment a lengthy work of fiction in the form of dramatically sput-out witch stories, fairy tales and tales of sensational or scandalous adventure, all of which types of prose narrative were looked upon with disdain by his contemporaries as trivial old wives’ tales (*aniles fabulae*), or tales fit only to be told on the street-corner (*aureae fabulae*), was something that Apuleius *really* wanted to do, but did not *dare* to do, without qualifying his work in such a way as would leave the impression that he had, after all, something of serious importance to convey by it, which was instructive, and high-minded, and thereby worthy of an educated writer. Book XI served that necessary purpose, but only in a very perfunctory and superficial fashion. Instead of building into the framework of his story-book as a whole an ostensible meaning in terms of satire, philosophical critique, or allegory which would be evident from start to finish, as is the case in Lucian’s novels, Apuleius is content merely to tack on at the end a piece of solemn pageantry as ballast to offset the prevailing levity of the preceding ten books. With his showman’s instinct for the value of immediate dramatic effects (which often leads him into self-contradiction elsewhere), he feels that all he needs to do in order to prevent the publication of his old wives’ tales

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<sup>36</sup> Helm 1910, vi.

<sup>37</sup> Sandy 1978, 124.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. e.g. Sandy 1978.



from becoming a scandal in the literary world, comparable to that of Aristides' *Milesiaca*, is to make a personal appearance on the stage in the last act, bow deeply and reverently before his audience, and overwhelm them with the magic of his eloquence on a subject of grave and universal import, a subject about which he speaks with earnest conviction and sincerity, but which does not belong with the story of Lucius.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, Perry, though critical of Apuleius' intellectual content and level of seriousness, was (like Helm) more positive about his style:

'Indeed, it is in the realm of style that Apuleius has made his most original contribution to literature; for that style – so highly colored, fanciful and rococo, so studiously piquant and recherché, and so picturesque, varied and opulent – is shaped in large measure by his own romantic outlook on the world.'<sup>40</sup>

A romantic Apuleius is an interesting concept for modern Apuleian scholars; but it is plainly with this idea that Perry justified his interest in the writer, since he argued that the *Metamorphoses* was 'deeply permeated with a spirit of belief in the hidden and marvellous potentialities of nature and human life.'<sup>41</sup> Perry certainly did not hold an allegorical view of the *Metamorphoses*: in a terse footnote he dismisses the work of religious allegorisers such as Merkelbach as 'all nonsense to me,'<sup>42</sup> and he plainly holds that Apuleius' Platonism is too superficial to provide an allegorical interpretation of his novel.

## 2: Beyond Perry: Present and Future Directions in Apuleian Studies

Thus in Apuleian criticism up to Perry we have seen three main strands in a predominantly negative reception of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*: criticism on the grounds of extravagant and decadent style, of frivolous and low-brow content, and of poor literary and narrative technique. Perry himself would agree to the last two of these charges while tolerating Apuleian style as in-

<sup>39</sup> Perry 1967, 244–245.

<sup>40</sup> Perry 1967, 239.

<sup>41</sup> Perry 1967, 239.

<sup>42</sup> Perry 1967, 336 n.17.

teresting for its exoticism. In this final section I will look at these three areas in turn, trace the development of scholarship in each since Perry and open up future prospects, and conclude by suggesting some further directions which Apuleian scholarship might usefully explore.

In broader academic terms, the prejudice which underlies the view of Apuleius as late, decadent and second-rate is one which is under general challenge in modern classical studies. Driven partly by the vast body of existing research on traditionally canonical periods and genres, recent scholarship has focussed on writers and writings beyond conventional bounds and has re-evaluated texts previously viewed as ‘marginal’; the Greek and Roman novels have recently been identified as a genre which has raised its standing as a result of this process,<sup>43</sup> and though there is naturally a danger of making exaggerated claims for the interest and quality of previously neglected texts, the avidity with which scholars have taken to the novel and the enthusiasm of their students who have seen the ancient novels become increasingly central to classics courses suggest that these texts provide substantial subjects of study. It is not perhaps coincidental that this movement within the classics has coincided with the more general challenge to the literary canon in the ‘culture wars’ of the 1980’s and early 1990’s.<sup>44</sup> As we shall see below, this ideological metamorphosis has affected scholarship on Apuleian language, literary texture and narrative technique, changing the common perception of the *Metamorphoses*: no longer an incoherent and marginal work in barbarous Latin, it is now viewed as an elegantly expressed, intertextually complex and narratologically intriguing central work of Roman literature.

### Apuleian style and language

Between the time of Norden and Perry most analysis of the style of the *Metamorphoses* was devoted to listing its syntactical features<sup>45</sup> or to working out the balance in its diction between everyday and elevated Latin.<sup>46</sup> Callebat’s later work<sup>47</sup> has used his analysis of the mixed register of the style in

<sup>43</sup> Kennedy 2001, 115.

<sup>44</sup> On the ‘culture wars’ see especially the essays in Gorak 2001.

<sup>45</sup> The main contribution of Bernhard 1927.

<sup>46</sup> The route taken by Médan 1925 and especially Callebat 1968, which remains the most detailed and helpful work on the topic.

<sup>47</sup> Now conveniently collected in Callebat 1998.

the *Met.* to argue that the richness and exuberance of Apuleian style represents a lively and vivid view of the world and a genuine awareness and seeking after religious experience and philosophical truth. Rather different and perhaps less speculative is the work by scholars such as Tatum, who like Norden ascribes many of the features of Apuleius' style to his sophistic intellectual context and his continuation of the Gorgianic tradition of rhetorical Asianism.<sup>48</sup> This is also true of perhaps the most useful recent brief analysis of Apuleian style, that of Kenney,<sup>49</sup> who also views Apuleius as an Asianist but as belonging to the central tradition of Latin literary style. Importantly, he stresses the poetic elements in Apuleius' language in the *Metamorphoses*, and suggests that Apuleius' exuberance derives partly from this feature rather than from mere eccentricity.

More thought is needed here on the way in which artistic prose replaced poetry as a vehicle for complex and ambitious literature under the high Roman empire, the very period where Apuleius is writing; the scattered evidence needs to be brought together and analysed in a detailed and literary-historical manner. We need in effect a general history of Latin prose in the second century from (say) Pliny the younger to Tertullian, in which Apuleius can be placed in his proper context. This should cover not only the development of the language of prose through the use of archaic and poetic vocabulary, but also issues of genre and literary history, especially the way in which more flexible prose genres such as the novel and the miscellany tend to replace conventional poetic genres such as the epic, something which has been only briefly touched on in the work of by scholars such as Marache and Steinmetz.<sup>50</sup>

One interesting feature of recent work is a revival of discussion of African Latin. Lancel has distinguished between the supposed lexical *Africitas* identified by nineteenth-century scholars and the tendency of writers from Roman North Africa to a high rhetorical style with exuberance and euphony as its main features,<sup>51</sup> which fits well Juvenal's quip that Africa is the *nutricula causidicorum* (7.14). There is no real evidence for lexical *Africitas*, he argues, but the shared general stylistic features demand further research. Kenney went beyond this in speaking of Apuleius' 'creative and poetic atti-

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<sup>48</sup> Tatum 1979, 135–159.

<sup>49</sup> Kenney 1990a, 28–38.

<sup>50</sup> Marache 1952, Steinmetz 1982.

<sup>51</sup> Lancel 1987.

tude to the language, suggesting the experimental exploitation of an adopted tongue, as by an Ennius or a Nabokov'.<sup>52</sup> However, it seems likely that from his early education in Madauros Apuleius learnt Latin before Greek, though he may have known the vernacular Punic before either, and Latin is therefore for him the natural tongue of literary composition rather than an artificial form of discourse; and if learning Latin in an African context engendered such style, we would expect more of it in writers of similar background such as Fronto, who shares Apuleian archaism but not his exuberance. Most recently, Petersmann has shown that there is clear evidence from inscriptions and grammarians for some elements of pronunciation, orthography and even morphology as especially prevalent in Roman North Africa, but he denies that this extended to the written language and argues that such elements may be survivals from the archaic vulgar Latin of earlier Roman settlers.<sup>53</sup>

On this front Bakhtinian formalism might be a useful theoretical model. Though Bakhtin himself wrote about Apuleius in his work on the chronotope, novelistic space and time,<sup>54</sup> he did not discuss his language in detail apart from pointing to the potential openness created by Apuleian bilingualism.<sup>55</sup> Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia can be profitably pursued further in an Apuleian context. Heteroglossia is roughly speaking the range of informal, varied, dialectal or colloquial languages which differ from and oppose official or literary discourse.<sup>56</sup> In Bakhtinian terms, a parodic novel such as the *Metamorphoses* is a site of continuous dialogue between this subversive linguistic tendency and official or elevated literary language. This would seem to fit well with the combination between colloquial, archaic and literary elements consistently detected by detailed research into the style of Apuleius' novel, and a study which could draw together the detailed linguistic evidence while applying a Bakhtinian model would be an exciting prospect; this key idea has been partly applied at a more thematic level in Finkelpearl 1998, who shows that the *Met.* seems to fit well the Bakhtinian notion that the novel naturally subverts and ironises more elevated literary genres, given its largely ironic relationship to epic, but could be pursued in more detail.

<sup>52</sup> Kenney 1990a, 29.

<sup>53</sup> Petersmann 1998. 'African' pronunciation could be recognised as such: cf. Statius *Silv.* 4.5.45 *sermo Poenus* with Coleman 1988, 169.

<sup>54</sup> Bakhtin 1981, 111–123.

<sup>55</sup> Bakhtin 1981, 60, 64.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Bakhtin 1981, 259–422 with the analysis of Vice 1997, 18–44.

## Frivolity of content

Many modern readers still feel the urge to interpret Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as an allegorical text, feeling that the surface story is too insubstantial and frivolous for so apparently ambitious a literary work, and thinking (unlike Perry) that the novel can be unified through an allegorical interpretation. The most extreme example of this tendency is Merkelbach: his view that the whole novel, and especially the story of Cupid and Psyche, represents an allegorical version of the conversion of Lucius to Isiac religion in the last book, though much attacked, has been sustained by the same writer a generation later.<sup>57</sup> Other accounts have been advanced claiming that the novel is a Platonising allegory, a view as we have seen which goes back at least as far as Beroaldus in the Renaissance.<sup>58</sup> In my view these attempts to make Apuleius intellectually respectable in terms of uplifting content are misconceived, for reasons which say more about intuitive modern views on the supposed didactic and moralising function of high literature than about the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>59</sup> The programmatic prologue of the *Met.* itself claims that the reader will receive pleasure from reading this text (1.1 *lector intende, laetaberis*): there is no requirement to make further demands of ideological or improving content, and such content is in any case not the sole criterion for intellectual interest. What we have in the *Metamorphoses*, as (I would argue) in Ovid's homonymous epic poem, is a type of literature where the prime intellectual element derives not from a didactic message but from a complex and allusive literary texture.

One aspect helpful here is the connection of Apuleius with the Second Sophistic, which has been recently strongly emphasised.<sup>60</sup> Here is a literary environment where epideictic-type performance, whether in person or on the page, is a prime criterion of literary standing, and where literary texture and stylistic features such as archaism (or pure 'Attic' Greek) are often more important than the didactic content of a piece of writing. The *Metamorphoses* constantly demonstrates the cultural capital (to use Bourdieu's term)<sup>61</sup> of its author and his elite literary education, and this sociological

<sup>57</sup> Merkelbach 1962 and 1995.

<sup>58</sup> See pp. 146–147 above and Thibau 1965, Gianotti 1986, Kenney 1990b, Fick-Michel 1991.

<sup>59</sup> See Harrison 2000, 235–259.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Sandy 1997; Harrison 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Bourdieu 1984, and the comment of Robbins 2000, 32–36.

aspect of literary culture in the second century AD, already raised for the Greek sophists,<sup>62</sup> could be given more emphasis in the study of Apuleius.<sup>63</sup> The *Met.* is clearly an act of self-definition and self-advertisement by an elite intellectual, and deserves further study as such.

### Literary and narrative technique

The reassessment of the literary and narrative texture of the *Metamorphoses* has been perhaps the most important achievement of the post-Perry generation of Apuleian scholars. In terms of literary texture, the careful analyses of Apuleian style made by Callebat and others have laid the ground work for the type of thoroughgoing literary and linguistic commentary to be found in the latest volumes of the Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius,<sup>64</sup> where ten or more pages of commentary are dedicated to each page of Latin text, recognising the depth of allusion and literary ornament underlying Apuleian language, and showing that apparent peculiarities are due to conscious archaism, subtle intertextual echoes, and recognisable planning. These commentaries have been supplemented by an increasing number of studies.<sup>65</sup> These works and others of similar content make the kind of connections long familiar to readers of the scholarship on Latin poetry, showing a wide range of literary allusion and a subtle adaptation of diverse material to a particular novelistic context. This has allowed research on the literary texture of Apuleius to connect with what one might call the ‘intertextual revolution’, the way in which literary allusion and its various forms have come to dominate the most interesting recent work on Latin poetry, for example in the work of Conte, Thomas, Hinds, Barchiesi and Hardie.<sup>66</sup> The fruits of applying intertextual literary analysis to the *Metamorphoses* are still to be wholly harvested.

The recognition of complex literary texture has also led to a revaluation of the issue of the novel’s readership. Earlier views, famously including that

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Schmitz 1997.

<sup>63</sup> Harrison 2000, 226 n.88 at least mentions Bourdieu, but more can be done.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Hijmans et al 1995, Zimmerman 2000, van Mal-Maeder 2001.

<sup>65</sup> Most notable perhaps are Walsh 1970, the first sustained argument for complex and allusive Apuleian literary texture, and Finkelppearl 1998, which is the first book-length study of Apuleius’ novel to engage with the theory of intertextuality. For other work (especially by Mattiacci and Frangoulidis) cf. Harrison 1999, xxxiv–xxxv.

<sup>66</sup> Conte 1986, Thomas 1999, Hinds 1998, Barchiesi 2001, Hardie 2002.

of Perry himself, that the implied readership of ancient novels was at a cultural level below that of the readers of elevated ancient texts such as epic and tragedy have now been refuted, not only through our increased knowledge of the circulation and production of literary texts, but also through the aforementioned scholarly analysis of novelistic texts which shows their highly literary and allusive nature. Novels like the *Metamorphoses* can thus be expected to engage in literary allusion at the same level as (say) the *Aeneid* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and achieve readerly recognition.

A comparable reversal has taken place in the analysis and valuation of Apuleian narrative technique. In terms of macro-narrative, most modern scholars are agreed against Perry that the *Metamorphoses* shows a conscious and consistent thematic unity and that Book 11 is organically linked to Books 1–10, even if they disagree about the nature of the unifying thread;<sup>67</sup> the specific connections between the conversion-narrative of Book 11 and the adventures of Lucius in Books 1–10 uncovered by close scholarly analysis are too many to be ignored.<sup>68</sup> In terms of micro-narrative, I alluded above to Helm's heading 'de rebus neglegenter compositis', and there is a similar section in Perry's chapter on Apuleius which is a natural extension of his belief in the work's overall lack of unity and the 'bolting-on' of Book 11. These concerns with illogicalities, especially in the embedded narrative stories of Aristomenes and Thelyphron, have some marginal validity, but too often impose twentieth-century standards of realism and consistency which both Homer and Vergil would fail; they also exclude deliberate narrative confusion and misleading which has since been seen as a characteristic Apuleian trait, and effects such as dramatic irony or the second-time reader. Thus Byrrhena's words at 2.31.2, *hunc tua praesentia nobis efficies gratiores*, 'you will make this day more pleasant for us by your presence', plainly look forward to the forthcoming appearance of Lucius in the mock-trial at the festival of laughter. Perry regards this as impossible, since neither Byrrhena nor Lucius know that the trial will take place, as it is the result of unexpected events yet to happen,<sup>69</sup> but this view ignores the perspective of the omniscient narrator and the second-time reader, for whom this statement is proleptically amusing and dramatically ironic.<sup>70</sup> This passage has a close paral-

<sup>67</sup> Cf. e.g. Sandy 1978, and further material cited at Harrison 1999, xxxii.

<sup>68</sup> Useful here are Wlosok 1969 (translated as Wlosok 1999) and Alpers 1980.

<sup>69</sup> Perry 1967, 279–280.

<sup>70</sup> See van Mal-Maeder 2001, 400.

lel in another utterance of Byrrhena, where, as Lucius looks at the statue of Actaeon, she says (2.5.1) *tua sunt cuncta quae vides*, ‘everything you see belongs to you’, both offering him the run of her house and suggesting without knowing it that Lucius too will come to disaster through voyeurism and bestial metamorphosis, though here there are also cleverly misleading elements (Lucius will not die, and will be saved rather than destroyed by the intervention of a goddess).<sup>71</sup>

Some countervailing voices were available even in Perry’s own time,<sup>72</sup> but one of the most important developments in post-Perry Apuleian scholarship has been the general emergence of the view that the *Metamorphoses* is not only a work of careful thematic unity (whether or not through Isiac and Platonic colour) but also one in which all the resources of narrative technique are consistently exploited to subtle effect. Two important articles published shortly after Perry’s book deserve mention here as symptomatic of this upwards revaluation of Apuleian narrative technique: that of Tatum,<sup>73</sup> which first adequately demonstrated the way in which the inset tales reflected the main plot of the novel, and that of Smith,<sup>74</sup> which pointed to the careful and subtle effects achieved by the separation of narrator and author. The most significant piece of work, however, is that of Winkler’s *Actor and Auctor*,<sup>75</sup> a book which has been rightly characterised as epoch-making in Apuleian studies,<sup>76</sup> and on which I will not linger here. Its suggestion that the *Metamorphoses* is like a detective novel in which the ending leads to reassessment of the previous plot has been a vital contribution to arguments for overall unity and coherent structure, while its constant stress on Apuleian narratological tricksiness, hermeneutic playfulness and deconstructive tendencies has provided many creative answers to apparent difficulties and inconsistencies as well as demonstrating the text’s narrative competence and indeed virtuosity.

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<sup>71</sup> See van Mal–Maeder 2001, 91–92.

<sup>72</sup> See Harrison 1999, xxxv.

<sup>73</sup> Tatum 1969 (= Tatum 1999).

<sup>74</sup> Smith 1972 (= Smith 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Winkler 1985.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. e.g. Penwill 1990, Harrison 2000, xxxiii.



Some future directions for research<sup>77</sup>

The work of Winkler shows that the application of literary-theoretical considerations can make decisive contributions to the interpretation of Apuleius. His use of narratology, along with its use by the Groningen group in the later volumes of their commentary, provides a springboard for much further analysis, whether or not specifically narratological in form.<sup>78</sup> Other areas of theory await fruitful employment. Relatively little feminist analysis has been applied to the *Metamorphoses*; though some work has been done on the representation of Psyche as a feminine type<sup>79</sup> and on the possible colouring of the narrative of Cupid and Psyche by its aged female narrator,<sup>80</sup> a feminist analysis of the function and characters of (e.g.) Pamphile, Photis and Byrrhaena, or of the poor view taken of female sexuality in the ‘adultery-tales’ of Book 9 would be a very interesting development. The *Metamorphoses* might well respond well to postmodernist analysis, at least in its post-Winklerian form: the subversion by gaps and slippages of the master narrative of error, punishment, conversion and rescue is a key element in Winkler’s deconstructive analysis, but has a recognisably postmodern tendency, as does the stylistic combination of traditional literary language, *recherché* archaism and exuberant neologism, and the overall aspect of hermeneutic playfulness and parody. A current project to study Bakhtinian formalism in the context of the ancient novel will surely have much to say about Apuleius from a Bakhtinian perspective, whether in connection with his notion of heteroglossia, discussed above, or through the use of his concepts of the carnivalesque (the Isis festival of Book 11?) or the chronotope (how ‘everyday’ is the space and time of the *Met*, and does it vary at significant points?).

A post-colonialist approach to the *Metamorphoses* fits (but would be complicated by) its status as an appropriation of a Greek plot (along with that plot’s implicit opposition to Roman authority – cf. e.g. the account of the soldier in books 9.39–10.1, cf. *Onos* 44–5). Here Apuleius’ origins and location for most of his career in Roman North Africa might allow his analysis as a peripheral figure vis-à-vis the cultural core of Rome; this would not be

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<sup>77</sup> It may be instructive to compare this final section with my views a decade ago (Bowie and Harrison 1993).

<sup>78</sup> A good example here is Bitel 2000.

<sup>79</sup> Katz 1976.

<sup>80</sup> van Mal-Maeder and Zimmerman 1998.

in terms of the empire writing back (there are few signs of subaltern resentment in the *Met.*), but in terms of the evident anxiety of the *Met.* to belong to metropolitan Roman culture.<sup>81</sup>

Another area where there has been much work but where much is still needed is that of reception. The relative obscurity of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* in late antiquity and the middle ages<sup>82</sup> is more than outweighed by its significant influence on the emerging novelistic literature of the Renaissance and early modern period,<sup>83</sup> and there is much significant nineteenth century material.<sup>84</sup> Looking the other way chronologically, intertextual analysis should continue to look at further earlier genres which have a particular influence on the literary texture of the *Met.*; here important work on Roman declamation and on New Comedy is in progress.<sup>85</sup>

Overall, there seems little doubt that future research will continue to stress the complexity, learning and subtlety of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, and its importance as a major and influential work of classical literature. Both these ideas would have been somewhat problematic for Ben Edwin Perry's view of this work, but we should not forget that but for his foregrounding of a neglected genre throughout his academic career, and particularly at its end in his Sather Lectures, the study of the ancient novel might well not be where it is today.

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<sup>81</sup> For the *Met.* and the culture of Rome cf. Dowden 1994.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Schlam 1990, Horsfall Scotti 1991, Stramaglia 1996.

<sup>83</sup> There is some stimulating material in Doody 1997, and a monograph version of Carver 1991 (which will provide a more detailed and contextualised account) is well advanced.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. Walter Pater's use of Apuleius in his *Marius the Epicurean* (1885); cf. Brzenk 1978.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. May 2002; van Mal-Maeder 2003 and 2003a (forthcoming).

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