

The Language of Animals and the Text of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*¹

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One of the most dire consequences of Lucius' transformation into an ass in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is his inability to speak in the language of humans. Almost as soon as he sees that his body is covered in hair and his ears have grown immoderately, Lucius realizes that he cannot rebuke Fotis for her error since he is "*iam humano gestu simul et uoce priuatus*" ('lacking human gestures as well as words') and that he will have to settle for inadequate gestures and complain "*tacitus*", 'in silence' (3,25: 70,20–22).² Several times in the course of the novel, the ass vainly tries to call attention to injustices using human language, but is finally only able to say part of what he wants to say, in the form of bestial braying. While Lucius retains many of his human senses, the inability to utter articulate communicative sounds renders him, according to ancient philosophical ideas about animal articulation, inhuman almost as much as does his animal body.³

Yet, a neat distinction between human and animal based on any of the traditional boundaries between them—language, food, living space, sexual partnership, level of "civilization," etc.—is inadequate to the complex blurring and deliberate undoing of such distinctions throughout the *Metamorphoses*. Not only is Lucius himself simultaneously and complicatedly both

¹ For Maaïke with the greatest fondness and admiration.

² In citation of Apuleius' *Met.* I refer to the edition of Helm (1968). Translations are by Hanson 1989 (occasionally modified) unless stated otherwise.

³ "Language of animals" in this essay is to be taken broadly to mean the language that Lucius attempts to speak, animal sounds uttered by animals and humans (such as *mugitus*, *hininitus*, etc.) and also occasionally language used *about* animals. While the focus of this essay is very much on the text, arguments about the text will be completely based on literary interpretation, leaving the paleographical arguments to those better equipped to make them.

ass and man as a result of his metamorphosis, but other animals, humans, plants and inanimate objects share frequently in this kind of ambiguous and changing status and, in Book 11, even the gods sometimes look like animals (e.g. 11,11). As Nancy Shumate says of the pre-conversion world of Lucius in general, including categories of life and death, human and animal, art and life, sleep and waking, animate and inanimate:

A consistent feature of Lucius' unfolding preconversion world view is the disintegration of the ontological and conventional categories that would have been the mainstays of his quotidian thinking and organization of reality. Common oppositions that structure thought and whose axiomatic status is rarely questioned...begin to collapse....Thus it is not simply a case of a man becoming an animal. Lucius is stuck somewhere between the two; he does not belong unambiguously to one category or the other. In view of his predicament, the categories themselves begin to seem quite inadequate.⁴

Thus, it is meaningless to say, for example, that humans often act like animals in the *Metamorphoses* or that hierarchies are reversed; rather, the work tortures the very distinctions themselves.⁵ (The *Tale of Cupid and Psyche*, however, creates a very different world, a fairy tale world in which animals speak human language without difficulty and without question and move in

⁴ Shumate 1996, 62, 65.

⁵ Schlam 1992, Chapter 9 "Animal and Human" presents a mixed view of the human-animal divide. In the early parts of his chapter, he seems to argue for a sharp distinction between human and animal delineated in the work: "The story of the transformation of a human being into an ass depends on an antithesis between human and animal.... The animality of much human behavior receives considerable emphasis" (100). Later, he argues that "the conception of animals as inferior to man, the dominant classical convention from Homer on, is challenged by the treatment of animal motifs throughout the work. The hierarchy is repudiated by the role of animals in the cult practices described in book 11" (109). In general, Schlam seems to see a reordering of categories and hierarchies so that both animals and humans finally have a proper place in an ordered cosmos under Isis (100). Shelton 2005 in an article which meticulously and admirably avoids anthropocentrism, emphasizes the hierarchies (gender and species) present in the world in which Lucius and the novel are situated. While she grants that boundaries are fluid, she foregrounds the ill effects and dangers of the transgression of boundaries and she assumes that the text seeks to reinforce rather than question those boundaries.

the same circles as humans. Although distinctions are erased, they are erased without tension.⁶)

The fluidity and collapse of boundaries between human and animal, animate and inanimate not only is evident at the level of plot, but is mirrored at the linguistic level. As Callebat has demonstrated in detail, Apuleius is among the most productive of Latin authors of neologisms, a confounder of the expected, who manipulates language to show the reversibility and instability of human actions, and, in a world of magic come true, creates through his different linguistic levels expressions to describe his world of new combinations, interconnections and disconnections.⁷ In the case of language used by and about animals, this inventiveness and expressive flexibility operates to collapse the boundaries between animal and human and to undo assumptions about species differentiation. For establishing the text of the *Metamorphoses*, a careful consideration of the mechanisms of Apuleius' linguistic inventiveness to describe the liminal state of humans in metamorphosis or the collapsed boundaries between species even at other times is essential in order to avoid throwing out readings because they are unattested elsewhere or seem not to make sense.

An apt example of Apuleius' adaptation of an existing linguistic formation to express the metamorphic condition in the work is the "*in bouem [sic] mugire*" (6,29) construction, as found in Charite's words to the ass as he carries her on his back: *Quodsi uere Iuppiter mugiuit in bouem, potest in asino meo latere aliqui uel uultus hominis uel facies deorum*, 'but if Jupiter truly bellowed with the throat of a bull, perhaps in this ass I am riding lurks the face of a man or the likeness of a god' (6,29: 151,9–11).⁸ W.T. McKibben shows that Apuleius has imported a sub-literary use of *in* with accusative in instances where Apuleius' characters have become animals, to mean "as" or "as if being." While the primary function of the construction is as "*in identitatis*," it also suggests a "pun on the preposition" where we were expecting "*in bouem mutatus*" or the like. McKibben denies that Jupiter in any sense mooed himself into a bull, arguing that the sense "into" is merely alluded to. However, it seems to me that McKibben's arguments should be broadened to comprehend more of the latent transformative meaning of *in*

⁶ See e.g. James 2005, esp. 213–217 on speaking birds in *Cupid and Psyche*.

⁷ Callebat 1978, 177–178 and *passim*. Much more could, of course, be said here about the uniqueness and expressivity of Apuleius' style.

⁸ See McKibben 1951.

with accusative. Actaeon, “*iam in ceruum [sic] ferinus*”, ‘in the very act of changing into a stag’ (2,4: 28,9): his metamorphosis, his becoming, is at the heart of the myth. Jupiter *did* undergo metamorphosis and his animal speech is part of his transition into bovinity; perhaps he did moo while a god, and the ambiguously transformed construction emphasizes liminality where *in bove* (an emendation following one of the inferior mss. accepted by Helm and Robertson) would dully imply that one either is or is not a bull.⁹

Another example of the way a consideration of Apuleius’ representation of human/animal liminality can lead to accepting a reading of F that might otherwise be considered untenable is found in Maaike Zimmerman’s commentary at 10,15 (248,2-4). The text reads:

*Nam neque asinum, qui solus interesset, talibus cibis adfici posse et tamen cotidie ꝥpa~tesꝥ electiles conparere nusquam*¹⁰

The ass, they said, who was the only creature present, could not possibly be attracted by that sort of dish, and yet every day their choice ... were disappearing

While recent editors have adopted Oudendorp’s emendation “*partis*” or “*partes*,” Zimmerman prints *pastus*, speculating that Apuleius may have in mind Lucretius 6,1127: “*hominum pastus pecudumque cibatus*,” the first attested passage in which *pastus* is used of human food. She adds:

In using this remarkable phrase, Lucretius may have wished to suggest that disease and decay, when they occur in nature, do not distinguish between human and animal food. If so, Apuleius in referring to Lucretius’ remarkable line is playing on the dichotomy between animal and human food which is prominent in this context: like Lucretius, he transfers *pastus*, which is used especially of animal food, to human food.¹¹

⁹ After *GCA* 1981, 58, the reading “*in bouem*” which is anyway the reading of F, seems firmly accepted. See also *GCA* 1977, 51; van der Paardt 1971, 179 for details and cross-references.

¹⁰ According to Zimmerman in *GCA* 2000, 220, the original reading of F, *pastis*, has been changed by a different hand to *pa~tes* and φ has *pastis*, while Robertson reports that a* has *pastus*. Zimmerman points out that the *st* is strongly represented and that therefore *pastus* should not be brushed aside.

¹¹ Zimmerman in *GCA* 2000, 221.

The context here, of course, is that Lucius may be rehabilitating himself in various ways to human existence, eating human food, enjoying the human *convivium*, etc. In such a context, the word *partis* is inert, while *pastus* makes the nature of this food nicely ambiguous: is it animal food or human food? Despite the fact that Lucius' consumption of decidedly human food seems to be re-civilizing him, critics also note that he consumes such food in animal quantities, even excessively for an animal, as he is growing fat, and that it is luxurious food suited to the animalistic gluttony of bestial humans.¹² Whether or not Apuleius is referring to Lucretius, it is clear that the division of food into animal vs. human food is not as distinct as it had seemed previously to the cooks, and that *pastus* renders nicely that ambiguity—which I would emphasize here more than the dichotomy between animal and human food.

Another passage in which a consideration of the changed conditions of species boundaries could lead to reconsidering a reading of F widely rejected occurs at 3,26, soon after Lucius' transformation:

praeclarus ille uector meus cum asino capita conferunt in meamque perniciem ilico consentiunt et, uerentes scilicet cibariis suis, uix me praesepio uidere proximantem, deiectis auribus iam furentes infestis calcibus insecuntur. et abigor quam procul ab ordeo, quod adposueram uesperis meis manibus illi gratissimo famulo. (3,26: 71,22–27)

illigatissimo (F, φ) ; *illi gratissimo* (v)

...that noble mount of mine and the ass put their heads together and immediately agreed on my destruction. No doubt they were afraid for their own rations: the moment they saw me getting close to the manger they lowered their ears and attacked me furiously with hostile kicks. I was driven far away from the barley which with my very own hands I had set before this fine, grateful servant of mine that evening.

Helm, Robertson, Giarratano-Frassinetti, Hanson, and van der Paardt all print *illi gratissimo* attested in the *deteriores*. Editors presumably have chosen *gratissimo* in response to the generally ironic tone of Lucius' complaints

¹² On animal and human food, see Zimmerman in *GCA* 2000, 21–22, 201, 221 and *passim*; Schlamm 1992, 100–103, Strub 1985, 177, 181–184 and in general Heath 1982.

about the hospitality of his horse (*equum illum uectorem meum probissimum*, ‘my horse, my most excellent mount’ [3,26: 71,15]; *praeclarus ille uector meus*). His initial expectation that there is a “*tacitum ac naturale sacramentum*” (‘unspoken natural bond of allegiance’ [3,26: 71,18 f.]) among mute animals and that his horse would recognize and pity him has proven false; instead he is being attacked by the animals defending their food.¹³ A sarcastic comment on his horse’s ingratitude is most appropriate. Further, a demonstrative (*illi*) accompanying the adjective is consistent with the references to the horse cited above.

On the other hand, the lines that follow could offer an argument in favor of “*illigatissimo*” attested in the better mss.:

*sic adfectus atque in solitudinem relegatus angulo stabuli concesseram.
dumque de insolentia collegarum meorum mecum cogito atque in al-
terum diem auxilio rosario Lucius denuo futurus equi perfidi uindictam
meditor...* (3,27: 71,28–72,2)

Thus ill-treated and condemned to solitude, I withdrew into a corner of the stable. While I was pondering the effrontery of my colleagues and plotting the revenge I would take on my treacherous horse the next day, when I became Lucius again with the aid of roses ...

With the words “*equi perfidi*,” Lucius-auctor does away with the irony as well as with the demonstrative pronoun. More importantly, the word “*collegarum*” introduces another aspect of the relationship of man to equine: Lucius is now an equal and linked to his horse and Milo’s ass in shape and vocation. *OLD* s.v. *collega* lists only this passage in reference to animals, a fresh adaptation of the word to fit the startling new equality of man and horse.

It is also relevant to compare the passage at 7,3 when Lucius, frustrated that he cannot say “*non feci*” when he hears that he has been accused of robbing Milo’s house, complains about his lot:

¹³ It is worth noting here that Lucius is annoyed at being chased from the barley that he thinks he has a right to. Critics frequently emphasize that Lucius rejects animal food, but there is reason to believe that Lucius is interested in the barley in this passage. See further below.

*sed quid ego pluribus de Fortunae scaeuitate conqueror, [quan]quam
nec istud puduit me cum meo famulo meoque uectore illo equo factum
conseruum atque coniugem.* (7,3: 156,15–18)

But what need to say more in my complaints against Fortune's perversity? She was not even ashamed to make me the fellow-slave and yoke-mate of my own servant and carrier, my horse.

Here Apuleius has given "*coniunx*" a previously unattested meaning, reactivating the usually dormant etymology of the word ('yoke-fellow'). He also brings out emphatically here the notion that he and his horse, once his "slave," are now fellow-slaves, linked together as if by a yoke.¹⁴ We should not take this too literally; Lucius does not ever plough fields yoked with his horse; rather, it is their fates and their existential states that are linked, and the startling use of "*coniunx*" brings out vividly just how linked they are. At 3,26 (71,27), then, the reading "*illigatissimo famulo*" would make use of a newly created superlative to describe the manner in which Lucius is now "most bound" or linked to his horse, formerly his slave.¹⁵

It is worth noting above that Lucius is annoyed at being chased from the barley to which he thinks he has a right. Critics frequently emphasize that Lucius rejects animal food, but there is reason to believe that he is interested in the barley in this passage.¹⁶ At the very end of Book 3, Lucius restrains himself from eating roses because he is afraid of being killed as a practitioner of the arts of magic, saying:

*Tunc igitur a rosis et quidem necessario temperaui et casum praesentem
tolerans in asini faciem faena rodebam.* (3,29: 74,5–7)

¹⁴ See GCA 1981, 100. The commentators mention the Platonic subtext, but perhaps the more relevant connection for my purposes at the moment is that of slavery. For discussion of Lucius-ass as slave, an important undercurrent of the novel, see Fitzgerald 2000, Bradley 2000.

¹⁵ It does not seem to me a problem that Lucius had set the horse's food out "*uesperi*" and that it is not until now that the horse is "*illigatissimus*" since the alternative reading "*illigatissimo*" faces the same problem: it is not until now that the beast's ingratitude is at issue.

¹⁶ Schlam 1992, 101 argues that Lucius has no interest in animal fodder here, and sharply differentiates animal from human food.

I therefore refrained from eating the roses at that time out of necessity, and, bearing up under my present misfortune, I continued to munch hay in the likeness of an ass.

A moment later, though in the next book, he is seeking more congenial food, “*adhuc insolitum alioquin prandere faenum*”, ‘since in any case I was as yet unaccustomed to dining on hay’ (4,1: 74,18–19). Gruter had for this reason emended to “*frena rodebam*,” which van der Paardt prints, while Helm accepts the mss. reading following Leo who understands the phrase to mean “*me rodere simulabam*.”¹⁷ It seems to me that liminality, uncertainty and ambivalence are again at work in the apparent contradiction between the end of Book 3 when Lucius seems to be eating hay and the beginning of Book 4 when he claims that he is not used to animal food. Lucius is struggling with his species identity; at the end of book 3, he resigns himself to tolerating his bestial form for the sake of safety, and he performs the action of eating hay “*in asini faciem*,”¹⁸ a phrase which seems to carry with it some sense of identification with other asses. In 4,1, on the other hand, Lucius rebels against being an animal that walks “*incuruo gradu*” (‘with a bent gait’) and longs to find roses so that he can rise up into the upright stature of a human. It is here that he claims reluctance to graze with his horse and ass (note his willingness at 10,29 to eat raw grass even as he is dining like a human), but his eating of garden vegetables is described using words (*uentrem sagino*, ‘I stuffed my

¹⁷ Robertson, *ad loc.* also accepts the reading of F, but with more hesitation than Helm. Van der Paardt gives several reasons for emending to “*frena rodebam*,” the contradictory information about hay in 4,1, the rarity of *faena* plural, the fact that the thieves are on the road and hence “*faena rodere* is unlikely.” More compellingly, van der Paardt cites Mazzarino who calls attention to *Onos* 17 where Lukios says that the animals were muzzled so that they couldn’t slow down progress by grazing along the way. Lukios then resigns himself to remaining an ass. The parallel is not sufficiently close, however, to support emendation, since there is no mention of such muzzling in Apuleius and since the phrase, whether it is *faena rodebam* or *frena rodebam* is metaphorical in Apuleius where there is no such trope in the *Onos*.

¹⁸ *In asini faciem faena/frena rodebam*: “I continued to eat hay in the likeness of an ass” (Hanson); “I behaved as an ass should and munched my bit instead” (Walsh); “I gnawed my hay like any other ass” (Lindsay). Callebaut 1968, 231 states: “Chez Apulée, *in faciem* n’apparaît que comme un simple synonyme de *ritu*.” This phrase is not discussed in McKibben’s article, but is of the same type, *in identitatis*. The *in* with accusative, I would argue, is not to be seen as only a feature of colloquial language, but, as in other cases, carries with it an idea of becoming or transformation. By eating hay, Lucius is potentially becoming more an ass, something he denies a moment later.

belly') properly applied to animal, not human consumption. The contradiction here is not cause for emendation or even for interpreting the passage to mean that Lucius "pretended" to eat hay. As has often been noted, sometimes Lucius is determined to prove he is not truly an ass mentally, but at other times his animal body guides him to behave like a donkey.¹⁹ These two passages need not present a uniform picture of his eating habits, therefore, and the contradiction that is part of his liminal state should not be emended away.

Let us survey some other examples more quickly. At 1,9 Socrates tells Aristomenes that Pamphile has transformed a rival innkeeper into a frog and now "*officiosus roncis raucus appellat*", 'he calls out hoarsely with courteous croaks' (1,9: 9,3). While F reads "*rontis*," editors are unanimous in printing *roncis*, rightly, not just because *rontis* is meaningless, but because "*roncis*" is once again a word taken from human vocalization (snoring—rather appropriate for an innkeeper anyway!) and re-invented to portray animal sounds made by a newly transformed human. Apuleius exploits the onomatopoeic qualities of the word and its similarities to both *raucus* and *rana* to convey the new meaning to the reader.²⁰

In the *Metamorphoses*, even the boundaries between animate and inanimate break down. At 2,4, in the Actaeon ekphrasis, the narrator describes the hunter's dogs as they are rendered in the sculptural group and adds: "*sicunde de proximo latratus ingruerit, eum putabis de faucibus lapidis exire*", 'so that if the sound of barking burst in from next door you would think it had come from the marble's jaws' (2,4: 27,13–14). Elmenhorst's emendation, "*lapideis*," is not only not necessary,²¹ but would detract from the play between art and life, real and impossible that is so dominant in the passage. Hanson's translation "if the sound of barking burst in, you would think it came from the marble's jaws" catches the sense that perhaps the marble could have jaws and could bark.²²

¹⁹ See e.g. Zimmerman in *GCA* 2000, 22–23.

²⁰ See Keulen 2003 *ad loc.*, 200.

²¹ Cf. van Mal-Maeder in *GCA* 2001, 103.

²² Also worth mentioning is 2,16: *pullulatim/p<a>ullulatim* where Fotis drinks either like a bird or slowly. I have nothing to add beyond van Mal-Maeder's note (*GCA* 2001, 251 f.) which defends F's reading via references to other erotic animal-language in the *Metamorphoses*. Here, Apuleius has apparently invented an animal word even though the referent did not undergo metamorphosis.

While Lucius returns to human form and recovers his power of speech and his place in human society in Book 11, the boundaries between human and animal—and further between human, animal, and god—are not clear and set.²³ The linguistic inventiveness that signals a newly imagined world continues. At 11,14, a priest gives Lucius a robe to cover himself: *quo facto sacerdos uultu geniali et hercules inhumano in aspectum meum attonitus sic effatur*, ‘After this the priest, staring in astonishment at me with a kindly and – by Hercules – more than human expression, addressed me as follows:’ (277,2–4). F reads “*perhumano*” but, according to edd., *per* was changed from *in* by another hand. Griffiths, however, prints “*perhumanum in aspectum meum*” arguing that “*inhumanus*” usually means “barbarous” and also that there is no reason to dwell on the priest’s face, while we do require a reason for his astonishment. Griffiths’ argument about the meaning of “*inhumanus*” is of course exactly the point; “*inhumanus*” makes us take another look and question whether what is not human is necessarily sub-human or whether it could be divine.²⁴

The world of Book 11, in Lucius’ eyes, is alive: the beasts and even the houses are joyous, birds sing the praises of Isis and plants even seem to smile and whisper:

*quid quod arbores etiam, quae pomifera subole fecundae quaeque earum
tantum umbra contentae steriles, austrinis laxatae flatibus, germine fo-
liorum renidentes, clementi motu brachiorum dulces strepitus obsibila-
bant.* (11,7: 271,24–28)

filiorum (F, φ); *foliorum* (v)

²³ Schlam 1992, 100: “In book 11 both animals and humans are envisioned as having proper places in a divinely ordered cosmos, and animals provide totemic images of the divine.” Shelton 2005, 303–304: “In the system represented in Book 11, order is maintained and the lives of humans....suffer no disturbance if all creatures respect the boundaries which define and separate the ranks.” Both these statements may be true, but it is important to qualify them by stressing that the order presented in Book 11 is not the status quo. This is a world in which animals are elevated to the rank of the divine and where Isis endows plants and animals with unusual powers... This is a world where all is right and in place, but it is not a world in which the normal boundaries set by social convention are recognized.

²⁴ Apuleius is the only author to use “*inhumanus*” to mean “divine.” He also uses it of Cupid’s table at 5,8 (109,5). See GCA 2004, 160 where the commentators call attention to the ambiguity of the term: *inhumanus* means “beyond human” but also refers to the bestial nature (real and imagined) of Cupid.

Why, even the trees – both the fertile ones with their offspring of fruit and the fruitless ones content to produce only shade – loosened by the southerly breezes and glistening with leaf-buds, rustled sweet whispers with the gentle motion of their arms.

This whole passage is replete with personification and with an altered view of the natural world. The use of “*brachiorum*” instead of “*ramorum*” presents us with trees that have arms. Just as Lucius has, as a beast, prayed to Isis (and see further below), so the birds seem to utter prayers with their song and the trees rustle and whisper in a manner that borders on talk. The better manuscripts here read “*germine filiorum renidentes*” a phrase which would be a strain, particularly since some of the trees are said to have only shade and not to produce fruit, but one can see how such a word would creep in to this passage full of fertility and humanization of the trees.

Lucius’ attempts at speech

As noted above, Lucius as ass attempts to speak several times in the novel and finds himself three times unable to say what he wants. The issues raised above about the liminality of Lucius’ existential state are still relevant, but the textual issues that arise are more miscellaneous. Three times (3,29; 7,3; 8,29) Lucius attempts to speak human language, but on two occasions he proudly speaks as an animal. Finally, as I have argued before, Lucius does succeed in speaking as a donkey under the divine protection of Isis.²⁵ His emotions and psycho-physical reactions to Isis in this section involve several textual cruces.

The first time Lucius attempts to speak occurs at 3,29 and raises questions about what language we are to understand Lucius to be trying to speak as an ass:²⁶

²⁵ See Finkelpearl 1998, Ch. 8 for a discussion of the passage at 11,1–3 where Lucius is fully awake and prays to Isis aloud.

²⁶ I omit the occasion just after his metamorphosis when Lucius realizes that he is deprived of a voice (3,25: 70,19–23): “*querens de facto Fotidis, sed iam humano gestu simul et uoce priuatus, quod solum poteram, postrema deiecta labia, umidis tamen oculis oblicum respiciens ad illam tacitus expostulabam*”, ‘I wanted to complain about what Photis had done, but I lacked human gestures as well as words. Still, I did the only thing I could: I hung my lower lip, looked askance at her with moist eyes, and berated her in silence’. Here, van der Vliet deleted *querens de facto Fotidis*. Though he is not followed by other

inter ipsas turbelas Graecorum genuino sermone nomen augustum Caesaris inuocare temptauit; et O quidem tantum disertum ac ualidum clamitauit, reliquum autem Caesaris nomen enuntiare non potuit.

(3,29: 73,15–18)

Graecorum <Romanorum> suppl. Robertson

I tried amidst those crowds of Greeks to invoke the august name of Caesar in my native tongue. And indeed I shouted the “O” by itself eloquently and vigorously, but I could not pronounce the rest of Caesar’s name.

The passage is clearly adapted from *Onos* 16 where Lukios tries to call out “O Caesar” but can only get as far as the “O.” It is assumed that Lucius is trying to say “Oh Caesar” here (cf. *GCA* 1981, 97) in parallel with the Greek of the *Onos*, and perhaps that he is saying it in Greek.²⁷ It is unclear whether *Graecorum* modifies *turbelas* or *sermone*: Walsh: “I tried to call on the august name of Caesar in my native Greek;” Hanson: “I tried amidst those crowds of Greeks to invoke the august name of Caesar in my native tongue.” I would suggest, first of all that the text ambiguously sets up the possibility that Lucius might be trying to say “Au-gustus” or “Augustus Caesar” rather than “O Caesar” since he puns just before on the “nomen *augustum* Caesaris” and since he tells us that he could not say “*reliquum Caesaris nomen*” or the rest of Caesar’s name (cf. *OLD* s.v. *reliquus* 1), not that he could not say Caesar’s name at all.²⁸

editors, it is worth noting that *querens* seems here to be redefined by the gestures Lucius invents to express his complaint. It is a first attempt at a new type of communication and is accompanied by a refiguring of the word *queror* following Ovid’s use in the Io episode in *Metamorphoses* I: “*cum Ioue uisa queri*” where, however, *uisa* implies that *queri* is a human activity which can only seem to be performed by an animal. If there is any question, “*querens...Fotidis*” should be retained both because of the Ovidian parallel and because it is part of a re-imagined conception of the language of a human animal. In general, Ovid’s play with the moments at which humans try to speak as they are being transformed into animals forms a background and interesting point of comparison to Apuleius.

²⁷ Cf. James 2005, 218 with n. 15 on Roman anecdotes about the possibility to teach the apostrophe “Caesar” to animals (i.e. birds).

²⁸ I do not mean to imply that “*reliquum Caesaris nomen*” could not mean “the rest, i.e. Caesar’s name,” but that the more natural way to construe the phrase would be “the rest of Caesar’s name.”

The question of whether, with Robertson, to supply <*Romanorum*,> however, remains. The speaker of the prologue self-identifies as a Greek, but he composes his narrative in Latin. Lucius, who may or may not be the speaker of various parts of the prologue, demonstrates both that he can understand Latin while an ass and that he can earn money pleading in the Roman forum, a skill he apparently had when the book began (see Keulen 2003, 13).²⁹ Luca Graverini is disinclined to reject Robertson's conjecture, emphasizing Lucius' Latinity, but there is also the question of why Lucius would be eager to speak to Greeks in Latin which they might not understand.³⁰ The issue could be broadened to include the notion that "*genuino sermone*" could mean neither Latin nor Greek, but human language; Lucius tries in his inborn human language to call on the emperor, but all that results is animal language.³¹ A similar phrase occurs at 9,33 when a hen, as part of the frightening omens in that section, runs into the middle of the room, "*clangore genuino uelut ouum parere gestiens personabat*", 'cackling in the usual way, as if she wanted to lay an egg' (9,33: 228,7). Here *genuino* attached to a word describing vocalization indicates that this is the natural sound made by that species. A distinction between Latin and Greek may therefore be irrelevant at 3,29; rather the main distinction is between human and animal talk. Apuleius seems to be playing with the ambiguity of whether Lucius is trying to speak Latin (his actual language in the book) or Greek (his supposed native language and the language of the source), and he maintains ambiguity by positioning *Graecorum* as an unclear modifier. More to the point is the third "language," that of animals. To add *Romanorum* is miss the point that Lucius' "*genuinus sermo*" is human language.

The other two instances when Lucius futilely attempts speech are worth noting briefly, but involve no relevant textual cruces. At 7,3 (156,14), Lucius tries to clear himself of the charge that he pillaged Milo's house and can say only "*non*," again an "o" sound. At 8,29 (200,23 f.), Lucius tries to say "*porro Quirites*," but here at least he grants that "*processit O tantum sane clarum et ualidum et asino proprium*" ('all that came out was "O ...," loud and strong and ass-like'), where his frustration at not being able to call on his fellow citizens is mitigated by his satisfaction in making such a strong and

²⁹ For a different approach see Hijmans in this volume, n. 9.

³⁰ Graverini forthcoming.

³¹ For a similar suggestion see Keulen 1997, 206–207 n. 20.

clear sound.³² At 7,13 (163,27–164,2) too, Lucius proudly and voluntarily brays to proclaim his heroic involvement in the rescue of Charite: “*porrectis auribus proflatisque naribus rudiui fortiter, immo tonanti clamore personui*” (‘I stretched out my ears, flared out my nostrils and brayed my best – I should say trumpeted with thunderous din’). Lucius actually seems to enjoy being an ass and making noise like an ass for a moment. Animal sound is granted its own kind of validity.³³

Earlier, at 6,28, however, Lucius imagines he is a horse and whinnies in response to Charite:³⁴

equestri celeritate quadripedi cursu solum replaudens uirgini[s] delicatas uoculas adhinnire temptabam. (6,28: 149,25–26)

I smote the earth in a four-footed gallop with the speed of a racehorse; I tried to neigh soft sentences to the maiden.

GCA 1981, 48 points to the erotic language of the passage; Lucius surreptitiously kisses Charite’s feet, while her speech ends by evoking Europa and Jupiter’s liaison. The words “*equestri celeritate*,” as *GCA* notes, are confusing, since *equestris* should refer to horsemen, not horses, but Apuleius again seems to be bending the meaning of a word in order to bring out the ambiguity of Lucius’ species—human or equine. The combination of *uoculas* and *gannitus* spoken by Charite (6,27: 149,21) is found again in the episode of the *matrona* (10,22) where Maaïke Zimmerman remarks that Apuleius is the first to use *gannitus* of (inarticulate) human sounds.³⁵ Here, then, both participants threaten the species barrier. Lucius, though, also insists on portraying himself as a horse, if he is going to be an animal at all, and the repetition of “*quadripedi cursu*” at 6,28 (149,25 and cf. 6,27: 149,4) which van der

³² *GCA* 1985, 259 note that Lucius is proud of his braying abilities; *clarum* is rather surprising given what people say about asses’ dissonant braying.

³³ See below on Apuleius’ interest in and admiration of animal noises in the *Florida*. One might note as well that in Book 4 Thrasyleon’s refusal to cry out in human language but rather to keep to the *fides sacramenti* by uttering only bear sounds is part of what makes him worthy of immortality; speaking like an animal thus leads the bandit closer to the gods.

³⁴ *Hinnire* is used only of horses in the *Metamorphoses*, so it is comical that Lucius attempts to sound like a horse, something commentaries do not seem to emphasize.

³⁵ Zimmerman in *GCA* 2000, 285.

Vliet wished to delete is surely a deliberate mockery by the narrator of the *actor*'s insistence that he is either a knight or a horse, but not a donkey.³⁶

Finally, in Book 11, upon sensing the presence of the goddess, Lucius, though still a donkey, speaks. Two passages, at 11,1 and 11,7 frame Lucius' contact with Isis; the textual issues that arise in these sections center not so much around speech itself, but around the emotions springing from contact with the divine and their physical manifestations. At 11,1, Lucius wakes and, understanding that he is in the presence of divinity, shakes off his sleep:

confestimque discussa pigra quiete alacer exurgo meque protinus purificandi studio marino lauacro trado septiesque summerso fluctibus capite, quod eum numerum praecipue religionibus aptissimum diuinus ille Pythagoras prodidit, laetus et alacer deam praepotentem lacrimoso uultu sic adprecabar. (11,1: 266,23–267,3)

Quickly I shook off my sluggish sleep and arose eagerly. Desiring to purify myself I went at once to bathe in the sea, plunging my head under the waves seven times, because the divine Pythagoras had declared that number to be especially appropriate to religious rituals. Then, my face covered with tears, I prayed with joy and fervor to the mighty goddess.

The disputes around this passage are well-known: Leo had objected to the use of *laetus* for a weeping Lucius and hence deleted *laetus et alacer*. Robertson follows Leo, adding <*laetus et*> to 266,23, objecting more to the repetition of *alacer* than to the tears. Griffiths adopts Robertson's reading, arguing that Lucius was in an unhappy state despite the presence of the goddess. Fredouille defends the reading of F with reference to 1,17 (where Aristomenes comments that sometimes we cry for joy and laugh with fear) and

³⁶ Lucius presents a similar equine ambiguity at 8,16 and 8,23. At 8,16 (189,19 f.): "*me cursu celeri ceteros equos antecellentem*" ('surpassing all the other horses with my swift gait'), van der Vliet supplied <*asinos et*> so as to exclude Lucius from the ranks of horses. As GCA 1985, 152 point out, this is unnecessary both because Lucius seems to imagine himself a horse here, even a winged horse, and because *ceteros* can be understood to mean "also" in the manner of Greek *allos* or Latin *alius*. At 8,23 (195,5), Lucius mentions that the *equi atque alii asini* were purchased, but he was not. Here the same *alius*-construction can free Lucius from inclusion in this group; the phrase can mean either "the horses and the other asses" which would include him, or "the horses and the asses as well" which would allow him to be whatever mixed-up species he feels he is at the moment.

3,29 where the same two adjectives appear together. Three factors seem important to me here: the frequency with which *laetus et alacer* appear together; the religious aptness of being *alacer* and, most of all, the profound confusion of emotions experienced by Lucius at this moment.

A comparison with the passage at 11,7 is illuminating. After Lucius has poured out his prayer, he goes back to sleep and has a dream vision of Isis in which he sees her and hears her speak. When she disappears, he wakes (11,7: 271,10–11): “*nec mora cum somno protinus absolutus pauore et gaudio ac dein sudore nimio permixtus exurgo*” (‘at once I was quickly released from sleep, and I rose in a confusion of fear and joy, and covered with sweat’), after which, much as before, Lucius washes himself in the sea and wonders at Isis’ powers over nature. He feels contradictory emotions—fear and joy—and he cannot seem to distinguish between his physical and emotional responses. He sweats. Griffiths debates whether *pauore et gaudio ac dein sudore* is a zeugma or not. The point is that Lucius cannot distinguish the physical from the emotional and the concatenation of unlike terms expresses his confusion. This text of this passage has been disputed,³⁷ but a parallel to Aeneas’ reaction to the epiphany of the Penates at *Aeneid* 3,175–176 shows that this is a standard reaction: “*tum gelidus toto manabat corpore sudor/corripio e stratis corpus*.”³⁸ Aeneas both sweats and leaps up in eager reaction to the divine. If we return to 11,1, then, clearly the presence of tears cannot rule out joy and perhaps the repetition of “*alacer*” describes something like a prompt religious response.

In brief conclusion, this paper has examined the ways that the liminal state of Lucius as quasi-animal and of the porousness of the boundaries between species in the novel, expressed via creative use of language, must be considered in establishing the text of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. A parting thought about the broader philosophical context: the *Metamorphoses* sets up a world in which commonly-held ancient philosophical ideas about the distinctions between animal and human do not hold. Touching only lightly on this immense subject, I would like to suggest that yet another way that Lucius (and the book) traces his ancestry to Plutarch is in its position with regard to the debate over the the rational capabilities of animals. While Aristotle and later the Stoics denied animals reason and speech and the capacity for other men-

³⁷ *pauore et stupore* (Cornelissen) *ac dein gaudio* (van der Vliet).

³⁸ I owe this parallel to my student Ela Harrison of Berkeley.

tal activity, Plutarch objects to the Stoic denial of planning in animals and the ability to feel emotions (*Sollertia*, *Mor.* 961C–F) and claims that animals (birds in particular) can generate articulate utterance (*Sollertia*, *Mor.* 973A). In the *Bruta animalia ratione uti* ('That Irrational Animals Use Reason'), he puts a sophisticated (and sophistic) argument about reason and intelligence in animals in the mouth of one of Odysseus' men transformed into a pig by Circe, who claims he would rather remain an animal, comically siding with the Cynic view of animal superiority.³⁹

The *Metamorphoses*, as a work of fictional narrative rather than philosophical discourse, does not explicitly and systematically set up any such arguments. But the work does confound the neat distinction between rational humans and brute animals, speaking humans and mute animals in ways that sometimes explicitly evoke philosophy and at other times attribute rational thought to animals other than himself (e.g. 3,26; 4,5; 10,33; 10,34) or a kind of speech to animals.⁴⁰ In the *Florida*, Apuleius repeatedly touches on the differences between human and animal vocalization, generally praising the beauty and variety of animal sounds vs. the expressiveness of human speech.⁴¹ His excerpt on the parrot (*Florida* 12) teases the reader with the bird's human qualities.⁴² Even as Apuleius points out that parrots can only say what they have learned (presumably meaning that they can't generate syntax and new combinations of words), he tells us that the variety that best learns to speak is the one that has five toes like a human, and he stresses that if you heard it you would think it a human. Hunink suggests that the full speech "may have developed the contrast of man and animal and the ideal use of human language" and that there may have been philosophical overtones.⁴³ In short, the *Florida* explicitly interests itself in the same distinctions between man and animal as does the *Metamorphoses* implicitly—though

³⁹ Plut. *Mor.* 986F–987B; 991D–992A. On these points, see Sorabji 1993, 52–53, 81, 160, and 178–179, and see in general the whole book for a history of Classical (and modern) philosophical views about animals, humans and rationality.

⁴⁰ In any case, those who read the *Metamorphoses* as philosophical allegory *vel sim.* do not demand that it set up logical arguments about Platonism. Also, see Gianotti 1986 on animals and the philosophical elements.

⁴¹ *Florida* 13 compares the speech of philosophers to birdsong; *Florida* 17 celebrates the volume and mellifluousness of the *uox* of animals, while preferring the *utilitas* of the human voice. Nonetheless, even *Flor.* 17 points out that animals were the audience of Arion and Orpheus' song.

⁴² See James 2005, 211–212.

⁴³ Hunink 2001, 128.

possibly the rhetorical work makes greater distinctions between the species than does the novel. This confusing world of collapsed distinctions, then, is situated at least to a degree within debates about such issues in philosophical realms.

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