

L. GRAVERINI: *I Metamorfosi di Apuleio: Letteratura e Identità*  
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In Book 2 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (hereafter *Met.*), while dining with the witch Pamphile and her miserly husband Milo, Lucius recounts how once in his home town of Corinth, a Chaldaean visitor told his fortune, claiming that 'he would turn into a great history and an incredible story and books to boot' (*nunc historiam magnam et incredundam fabulam et libros me futurum*, 2.12). In response to this tall tale, Lucius' host Milo, with a knowing smile, asks our protagonist to identify the itinerant prophet, what he looked like and what his name was ('*qua*', *inquit*, '*corporis habitudine praeditus quoue nomine nuncupatus hic iste Chaldaeus est?*', 2.13) When Lucius describes and names him, Milo smugly states that he knows exactly who he is ('*ipse est*', *ait*, '*nec ullus alius.*', 2.13) and proceeds to tell his own tale of the seer's Odyssean adventures and comic duping at the hands of the businessman Cerdo. Lucius, in turn, silently kicking himself for initiating his tedious host's 'series of untimely tales' (*serie inopportunarum fabularum*, 2.15), makes his excuses and heads home, but not before he offers the following revealing 'reading' of Milo's tale (2.15):

et tandem denique devorato pudore ad Milonem aio: 'ferat suam Diophanes ille fortunam et spolia populorum rursum conferat mari pariter ac terrae; mihi vero fatigationis hesternae etiam nunc saucio da veniam maturius concedam cubitum.'

And then swallowing my pride, I said to Milo: 'Let that Diophanes endure his own fortune and let him confer the spoils of the people again to the sea and land alike. As for me, I am still now suffering from yesterday's exhaustion; so forgive me if I retire to bed a little early.'

Without having first read Luca Graverini's (hereafter G.) rich and nuanced study of the *Met.*, I would not have been able to have grasped several meaningful strands in this exchange. Firstly, I now see how the question of the text's literary identity (i.e. generic status, narrative voice, style) is inherently related to the status of the cultural identity not only of its author, Apuleius, but also of his projected audience. As with the case of the priest Mithras in

the final book, the competing tales of the Chaldaean Diophanes trade on evaluative, confrontational, but not necessarily exclusive judgments of Lucius and Milo. Secondly, without G.'s expansive analysis of the first words of the Prologue in tracking the genre of the *Met.*, I would not have picked up the echo in *mihi vero* as a subtle *recusatio* of Milo's brand of *fabulae*. Thirdly, now appreciating how G.'s telling fusion of genre and identity operates as a heuristic device aimed at understanding how the *Met.* figures not only as an 'open' text, but also as a seriocomic novel in the purest sense, I no longer dismiss Milo's tale as straight parody (of Lucius, Diophanes, or even Odysseus). Finally, it now seems as if Milo's counter-tale of Diophanes must be set to correct that of Lucius' parochial Corinthian world-view with the implication that the cosmopolitanism of the Roman Empire challenges the Imperial subject's limited perceptions.

There is, however, a way in which this scene between Lucius and Milo and their conflicting tales of the prophet Diophanes remains elusive even after reading G.'s book. In many ways, any Apuleian *interpretes* is put in the position of Milo in relation to previous readings of the *Met.*, exclaiming: 'Oh, so that is *your* story about Apuleius, then?'. What quickly follows (and this is especially dangerous for a reviewer) is the next stage of Milo-esque reading, which sounds like: 'Well, let me tell you about *my* Apuleius!'. However, I feel that this elusive danger is one of the most powerful aspects of G.'s book and actually rehearsed in his own creative re-reading and constant engagement with John J. Winkler's *Auctor & Actor* (Winkler 1985). Too many recent treatments of Apuleius have either avoided or underestimated Winkler's contribution to the field. One way of doing both at the same time has been avoidance due to claiming a (feigned?) sense of reverence. (Paula James, in reviewing a previous study of Apuleius, has noted that 'Winkler...could surely now...be approached without incense' (James 2006, 413)). The refreshing richness or *felicitas* of G.'s book fleshes out what John Henderson has dubbed Winkler's (*prima facie*) 'parsimoniously complexified' reading. (Think cheese-eater *and* sword-swallower.) G. shares Winkler's view of the *Met.* as an open text, but his is not an aporetic reading, since he is determined to prove the text's openness by enriching the interpretive possibilities through concrete literary engagement (its 'horizons of expectations'). In other words, it is G.'s overarching claim that if we can appreciate the literary context of the *Met.* we will be able to grasp how it articulates its openness. Furthermore, it is this openness that is the main feature of its cultural context in the cosmopolitanism of the Roman Empire.

The brief introduction (v-x) establishes G.'s general adherence to a hermeneutic, readerly approach to the *Met.*, citing the genealogy 'from Fulgentius to Winkler' (v), followed by a helpful breakdown and description of the chapters to come. G. is well aware that he too cannot escape how introductions are inevitably pressurized by readers as fertile sites for understanding what we are (about to read and already) reading, so that it is unsurprising that he reveals (or we find) something of his own booklike self in his introduction. It is here that G. admits that his particular approach to Apuleius is somewhat arbitrary, and that his choices of texts and contexts are only a selection from among many possibilities, but, he claims, it could not have been otherwise ('non può essere altrimenti', v), and hopes that his choices are good ones and that they are convincing (or that we are convinced). In other words, G. is announcing from the off that 'it is my choice, I had no choice' (or 'I'll go on, I can't go on') or, alternatively, 'the surface of prefatory veniality is written out of narratorial instability.' (Henderson 2001, 188). After the methodological confession, we are given a 'key' to where G.'s previous published work fits into the current book. Anglophone readers may feel a temptation to read Graverini *Englished* in these rather than tackling his native Italian (I can now confess, I once was); however, it is worth me stating from the outset that the strength of the book's incessant, cumulative argument has been much more rewarding for this British reader than trying to piece G.'s reading together from his various performances and conference proceedings. That said, bookish bilingualism (i.e. compare and contrast) is also one way of getting the bigger picture, and, as we may see, beyond catching some minor local differences, there is always the chance of hooking those places where G. – *pro nefas!* – even changes his mind.

Chapter One (Una Poetica 'Dolce', 1-56) opens with some brief comments on the contested status of the novel genre in antiquity as a lead-in to the extensive analysis of the *Met.* Prologue and its complex network of phrases (*at ego*, *lepidus susurrus*, *ures permulcere*, *miseris*, and so on). By enacting this transition, G. aims to show how *this* novel stages its literary identity through subtle signposting that points the reader to a general literary 'background' via the 'allusive force of Apuleian expression' ('forza allusiva dell'espressione apuleiana', 23). The first section (1.1 "Ma io...", 2-11) reads the opening two words of the Prologue (*at ego*) as not merely enacting give and take within an imagined dialogue, but encoding a transition to a new generic affiliation. G. highlights the adversative conjunction *at* as a metaliterary marker by pointing to comparable statements of *recusatio*, in historians (Sallust, Livy, and Polybius) and poets (Propertius, Ovid, Horace,

Manilius, and Martial). G. sees this phenomenon as having its clearest expression in the Hellenistic poetics, stemming from Callimachus' *Aetia* Prologue. While G. accepts that reading the Callimachean text in Propertius' *recusatio* hitherto mentioned (the *nos contra* of *Elegies* 2.1) still raises the potential objection of mapping this metaliterary reading onto the prose work of the *Met.*, G. neatly answers this objection in the next section (1.2 L'asino e la cicala, 11-14) with a discussion of the aestheticised opposition between the *rudis locutor* (ass) and the *lepidus susurrus* (cicada) in the Prologue, reading both Callimachean and anti-Callimachean poetics into the Prologue, demonstrating how the novel works as the 'mixed genre *par excellence*' ('genere 'misto' per eccellenza', 13).

In the next section (1.3 Un sussuro dolce e ingannevole, 14-41) divided into four parts, G. fleshes out the ambiguities inherent in the term *susurrus* as an extension of the Hellenistic cicada-sounding poetics. Taking as his starting point Bruce Gibson's (Gibson 2001) observation that the *lepidus susurrus* is an allusion ('un'allusione', 14) to the first verse of Theocritus' first *Idyll*, G. opens out this reading into how it characterizes the 'style, content and literary genre' ('lo stile, il contenuto o il genere letterario', 14) of the *Met.* Using an intriguing passage (*Met.* 8.1), in which Finkelppearl already saw allusive generic play (Finkelppearl 1998, 147), G. teases out three ways to work on the Theocritean basis throughout the text. Firstly (1.3.1 Il canto ipnotico delle cicale, 16-23), G. reads the Theocritean echo as secondary to the Virgilian *levis susurrus* of *Ecl.* 1; secondly (1.3.2 Tra utile e dolce, 23-28), by borrowing terminology from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, as enacting the dichotomy between the 'sweetness' (*dulce*) and the usefulness (*utile*) of poetry. With a brief, but instructive, glance beyond the *Met.* to *Florida* 17 (25), G. shows how Apuleius balances these two features of the poetic in the Prologue and beyond, Lucius' asinine transformation as an abandonment to the seductions of poetic beauty. The next fleshing out of *susurrus* with the ear-soothing (*permulcere aures*) engages with rhetorical theory (1.3.3 La voce suadente dell'oratore, 28-35). G. sees the Prologue participating in debates between rhetoric and ethics (Cicero, Seneca, Quintilian) which saw problems with the 'singing-style' ('parlare cantando', 30) of contemporary oratory, as it reflected moral flaws ('i vizi morali', 30) and Eastern indulgences. G. reads this singing style into the phrase *immutatio uocis* of the Prologue and its foreign accent ('greco-asiatica', 32). The section ends with an account of the interface between rhetoric and poetry in the form of the Odyssean Siren (1.3.4 Tra retorica e poesia: le Sirene, 35-41).

In the next brief section (1.4 *Ut mireris*, o della provocazione, 41-42), G. reads the promised amazement offered by the Prologue in terms of how philosophy can both eradicate the astonishment that comes from doubt and ignorance and also enact it as a form of wonder (Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d). As G. maintains throughout this chapter, there is more to the Prologue than a clear contrast between ‘seduction and instruction, magic and philosophy, *dulce* and *utile*’ (42).

The chapter concludes with two related sections on the operations of sweetness and usefulness in the Greek novel tradition in general (1.5 La poetica del romanzo, 43-47) and the ‘sources’ for the *Met.* more explicitly (1.6 Lucio di Patre e Aristide di Mileto, 47-55). Especially convincing is G.’s use of the pseudo-Lucianic *Amores* to show how the generic markers he has been tracing throughout the chapter (especially the *lepidus susurrus* and *mireris*) not only are linked to another marker (*sermo Milesius*), but also they themselves originate in the *Milesian Tales* of Aristides.

As G. will state in the opening of the second chapter, his reading of the Prologue is the foundation of the rest of the book to come. So, it seems appropriate to press G.’s theoretical underpinnings at this point. Perhaps the most obvious place to do so is in how G. allows the ‘allusive force’ of Apuleius’ terminology in the Prologue to resonate. In general, unlike other Apuleian scholars, G. is less interested in pin-pointing recognizable ‘allusions’, and as a result he avoids specific methodological approach to textual relations in general. While he states that he adheres to Hinds’ influential study (Hinds 1998), especially in the idea of ‘collective security’ for marking an allusion, his reference makes one wonder if sometimes this ‘collective security’ was developed to be a more fruitful tool for scholars than poets. For example, in G.’s earlier manifestation of this section (Graverini 2006, 8), he refers to a particular ‘eccentric suggestion’ of intertextual intent but then shares the spoils in a lengthy footnote, ‘whose original and more sober suggestions’ he expanded. But in the book version this footnote becomes *mutuo nexu* part of the ‘collective security’ of Hindsian scholarship – G.’s eccentricity is lost! Yet, beyond this instance, to press G.’s own terminology is not a very rewarding enterprise. For example, G. describes Gibson’s argument (Gibson 2001) of the relation of the phrase *lepidus susurrus* as an allusion (‘un’allusione’, 14) to Theocritus’ first *Idyll* and his ‘veiled allusion’ (una velata allusione, 14) to Egypt in *calamus*, while in the paper, both are described (translated?) as ‘hints’ (Graverini 2006, 9); yet when he reaches Virgil’s *levis susurrus* he refers to the ‘Theocritean intertext’ and the ‘intertextual structure’ of the phrase (17). Now, this move from allusion to intertext

does not appear to be over-determined, especially when the term allusion is used elsewhere (especially, as we'll see, in the final chapter), beyond a general intimation that allusion implies a more directed sense of intention. For example, he does not want to go so far as to see 'a direct relationship' ('un rapporto diretto', 18) between the *Met.* Prologue and the *Vita Aesopi*, but more 'descriptive elements' ('elementi descrittivi', 18) shared by the bucolic genre and, perhaps, a shared 'source' ('fonte', 19) in Theocritus. G.'s approach is much more rewarding if we take his more loose conception of 'descriptive elements' or 'background' to his reading in terms of larger questions of genre and narration. For example, he moves from asking which was the primary intertext for the *lepidus susurrus* – Theocritus or Virgil – to the more pressing and general issue of why the pastoral genre in the Prologue (17). Also, G.'s approach ties the texture of the *Met.* into questions of the narrative voice, thus adhering to a loosely Bakhtinian sense of polyphony (a term G. uses, if briefly, to open chapter three, 151).

Yet, G.'s more modest approach to intertextuality, being more suggestive than conclusive, also leaves some loose threads. For example, in a long footnote on Manilius (8 n. 17), G. is non-committal on a 'direct' relationship between Apuleius and Manilius, opting, as we would expect, for a correspondence of 'topici'. However, G.'s Manilius seems to be more significant than he is letting on. In Manilius' *recusatio*, G. finds many of the features of the Apuleian Prologue: the adversative phrase (*at mihi*, 3.29) references to the reader's ears and eyes (3.36), the opposition between *utile* and *dulce* (3.38), and the foreignness of the subject matter (3.40). Now, one option we have as readers is to take G.'s findings further and press the relationship between Manilius and Apuleius. This would mean looking beyond the *Met.*, to other places in the corpus, such as ideas of stenography in the *Apologia* and the *Florida*, as found in *Astronomica* 4.197-9, or even to the lost *Astronomica* of Apuleius himself. Yet perhaps the best place to start would probably be Apuleius' *De deo Socratis*. In fact, Manilius is named alongside Apuleius and Ennius in Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* (246e-247a), based on the passage in the *De deo Socratis* in which Apuleius is quoting Ennius' account of the twelve gods (121). In short, taking G.'s lead from the shared 'topici' of the Prologue and Manilius' *recusatio* means committing to a more expansive search beyond the confines of these programmatic parts of each text.

In chapter Two (Storie da vecchie e piaceri servili, 57-149), G. considers the influence of the 'images' and 'ideas' raised by the Prologue elsewhere in the *Met.*, specifically in the final 'Isis' Book and the central tale of Cupid

and Psyche. In spite of claiming that his interpretation is not a totalizing one ('Non tenterò quindi di offrire un'interpretazione 'totale' delle *Metamorfosi*', 57), it is worth appreciating how G. decides to test his findings in the Prologue on passages which traditionally are very much the sources for 'totalizing' readings (especially the serious, religio-philosophical reading). Here G. is very much following Winkler's lead, but with the difference that, as with his discussion of the Prologue, his reading will emphasize literary identity to transform Winkler's 'aporetic' reading of the *Met.* into a question of learning and education. In this way, G. takes Winkler's ultimate assessment of the *Met.* as a 'philosophical comedy about religious knowledge' as itself an assessment of genre, in which we read the seriocomic *spoudogeloion* for 'philosophical comedy'. As with his revealing approach to the polyphonic narrative voice of the Prologue, G. also uses the interpretive voices of the priest Mithras and the Old Woman to uncover the 'background' that transforms these voices into 'master texts' for reading the literary texture of the *Met.*

In the first section (2.1 Intrattenimento, catechesi, aporia e satira, 57-63), G. begins by showing how the retransformation of Lucius back into a human in the final book (11. 14), evokes the language of the Prologue. After the findings of the first chapter, this parallel demands not only a reconsideration of the relationship between the Prologue speaker and the character Lucius (58-9 n. 1), but also how the multiplicity of the *ego* of the Prologue ought to be kept in mind when reading the character of Lucius the Isiac initiate in Book 11. But before he reaches this conclusion, G. rehearses the 'problem of the two Luciuses' in accordance with the traditionally opposed readings of the novel as ten Books of playful entertainment, appended with the religious-philosophical event of Book 11. As with the sweet danger of the Prologue, G. fuses the extreme readings into one by highlighting the text as ultimately seriocomic throughout. Firstly, he looks to what he dubs the 'dissonance' (2.2 Dissonanze, 63-76) of the religious context being diffused with satiric elements. In the first part of this section (2.2.1 Dettagli dissacranti, 63-65), G. dwells on Lucius' purification ritual at the opening of Book 11 and his later post-transformation nudity, to show that both can be read as 'serious' and 'satiric' by an attentive reader. For example, the august image of the opening of Book 11 of Lucius purifying himself and calling on the goddess is not only subverted by the ridiculous scene of an ass doing this, but also by a knowledge of Plutarch's superstitious rituals of purification in the *De superstitione*.

G. continues along similar lines in his analysis of the contrastive interpretations of Mithras and the crowd (2.2.2 Il sacerdote, la folla, e Lucio, 66-

70) as valid interpretations of the same event rather than necessarily exclusive accounts (one religious, one profane). This leads, in turn, to a discussion of the name of the priest, Mithras (2.2.3 Sua Santità Martin Lutero?, 70-76) in light of Winkler's statement that calling the priest Mithras is 'like introducing the pope in the last chapter of a detective novel and calling him Martin Luther' (Winkler 1985, 245). To balance the potentially satiric reading, G. recalls Coarelli's thesis (Coarelli 1989) that links a house in Ostia, owned by one L. Apuleius Marcellus, with the adjacent Mithraeum. This connection allows for a non-satiric reading of the priest's names and even 'a signal to the divinity to which he had a personal allegiance' ('un cenno alla divinità alla quale era personalmente legato', 76) or at least a gesture towards contemporary religious syncretism. This approach is continued in debating the potentially problematic behaviour of priests during the initiation and Lucius' role after becoming a priest. Here, in a rather uncharacteristic move, G. employs support from Apuleius' *De deo Socratis*, which utilizes images from religious ritual to expound the general call that to cultivate one's *daemon* is to cultivate a 'philosophical initiation' (*sacramentum philosophiae*, *Soc.* 22.170). G. then returns to the limits of the *Met.* to support his analysis of the cult of Isis more generally (2.4 Iside e le sue sorelle, 83-90) in terms of previous satiric and non-satiric images of cults, such as the *Dea Syria* in Books 8 and 9.

Perhaps the most revealing discussion of this whole chapter is that of Lucius' baldness (2.5 La testa rasata di Lucio, 90-99). G. parades the various references (the 'background') to shaven heads (in Herodotus, Plutarch, Juvenal, Martial, Achilles Tatius, Xenophon of Ephesus, Petronius, Plautus, Homer, Plato, and so on), ranging from satiric to religious to a complex mixture of both. G. then splits the 'religio-philosophical' reading into two, emphasizing a distinction between the bald Isiac initiate and the bald wise man. G. concludes by stating that he favours a reading 'which shows the full paradoxicality' ('che sposi fino in fondo la paradossalità', 99) of Lucius' shaven head.

The final pay-off (2.6 Orizzonti di attese, 99-105) of G.'s reading of the Isis book is how it relates to a 'background' of what Winkler has dubbed 'quest-for-wisdom narratives' (Winkler 1985, 252), and in what 'horizon of expectations' the Isis book would have been read. This section comes as close as possible to reconciling the twin identities of the book (literary and cultural), but it is also where the intricate work of the first chapter seems furthest away.



G. shifts, rather abruptly, from his analysis of the dissonance of the Isis book to the *anilis fabula* of the tale of Cupid and Psyche (2.7 *Anilis fabula*, 105-132). Throughout his discussion, as with the Isis book, G. is determined to show the balancing of seriocomic elements within this generic frame. The first section (2.7.1 Polemiche letterarie e filosofiche, 106-111) moves from the two passages in the *Historia Augusta* and in Macrobius that dub Apuleius' novel generically as *aniles fabulae* to the main sources for the phrase (Plato, Horace, Quintilian, and Seneca). The second section (2.7.2 La tradizione satirica, 111-118) emphasizes the Horatian 'intertext' and its extension in Martianus Capella and Fulgentius as a way of understanding Macrobius. As a way of further expansion, the third section (2.7.3 La tradizione narrativa: Fedro ed Esopo, 119-122), G. considers the role of the fable tradition (Aesop, Phaedrus). Finally, G. considers the pay-off for this generic posturing for the 'tale' of Cupid and Psyche itself (2.7.4 Amore e Psiche, 122-127) and how this relates back to the 'servile pleasures' of Book 11 (2.7.5 Modelli di ricezione, 127-132). The chapter ends with a more general discussion of how the Cupid and Psyche tale relates to the seriocomic genre (2.8 Paradossi, satira e livelli di lettura, 132-147) with pride of place given to Plato's *Symposium* and a brief conclusion (2.9 Lucio prima e dopo, 148).

G.'s reading of the Isis book and of the *anilis fabula* of Cupid and Psyche clearly display the benefits of and pay-off for his earlier intricate reading of the Prologue. Firstly, he astutely mobilizes the traditional debate surrounding the 'seriousness' or 'satiric' nature of the Isis book into a persuasive and novel reading of the seriocomic literary genre of the *anilis fabula*. At the same time, the force of G.'s discussion lies in his marrying of the generic richness of Apuleius' text with ambitious cultural contextualization (the 'horizon of expectations' approach). There is, however, one aspect to the argument that I want to pressurize. I have already remarked on how G. employs Apuleius' *De deo Socratis* in order to correct the satiric reading of the Isiac initiation and show how philosophy, for Apuleius, is related to religious initiation. This argument is one that is conveniently found in the speech of Socrates-Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* (as noted by G. in another context, 130 n. 195). Given that G. presses the *Symposium* as a founding text for his discussion of the seriocomic genre – specifically Alcibiades' role in that text – what would it mean to conflate the two references into one? Can we argue that the *Symposium* legitimizes the philosophical initiation reading *without* mediation by Apuleius' own *De deo Socratis*? In the previous chapter, G. uses passages from the *Symposium* unmediated by Apuleius' reading of them, such as the division of common and heavenly Aphrodite in Pausa-

nias' speech as being inherent in the Milesian levels of discourse (51 n. 145), without Apuleius' use of the same passage in the *Apologia* (*Apol.* 12). I am not calling for a limited or closed reading of the *Met.* that privileges the Apuleian reading over any other reading, nor am I gesturing towards a more generic 'Platonic reading' of the *Met.*, swiftly dismissed by G. in a judicial footnote (60 n. 5). Instead, this is a question of how G.'s reading of a text (Plato's *Symposium*) for Apuleius relates to Apuleius' own reading – both in the *Met.* and elsewhere in his corpus. Furthermore, what are the limits of Apuleius' self-professed identity as *Platonicus philosophus* for the question of reading? For example, is Apuleius' utilization of the *anilis fabula* genre his reading of Plato? Or is he accessing Plato via a Roman satiric reworking of Platonic myth (i.e. Horace)? As elsewhere, G.'s conception of diversity of literary and cultural identity demands that Apuleius cannot *just* be reading Plato; he must utilize other Greek and Roman mediation. This claim would find support elsewhere in the corpus – the Latinized philosophical lecture, *De deo Socratis* – but encounter problems elsewhere – such as the direct Platonic quotation of the *Apologia*. The gesture towards *De deo Socratis* opens the proverbial can of worms from which the status of Apuleius' Platonic 'background' emerges.

If the lengthy second chapter extended the analysis of the Prologue into the Isis Book and the tale of Cupid and Psyche, the comparatively brief third chapter (*Metamorfosi dei generi*, 151-185) treats several disparate episodes and works as a more explicit comparison between the *Met.* and various literary genres (philosophical dialogue, history, epic, drama) via a characterization of Lucius as a seriocomic fusion of an Odyssean and Socratic figure. Firstly (3.1 *Filosofi a passeggio*, 151-158), G. combines the cloak-covering scenes of Homer's *Odyssey* and Plato's *Phaedrus* to read Lucius' response to listening to tales on his journey. The second section treats Lucius the ass in the mill (3.2 *Criteri di verità: l'occhio e l'orecchio*, 158-165) and discusses how, via the Odyssean image of the wandering search for knowledge, Apuleius enters into the debate on the benefits of direct knowledge, via a series of intriguing parallels from historical writing (Polybius and Diodorus) and Lucian's satire in *True History*. The third section (3.3 *Le Sirene di Lucio*, 165-173) directs us back to chapter One (1.3.4, 35-41) and the image of the Odyssean sirens, with this update interestingly engaging with Cicero's reworking of the scene in *De Finibus*. The fourth and final section (3.4 *Lettori, ascoltatori, spettatori*, 173-185) discusses the 'theatricality of the novel' (183) and how Apuleius plays off the spoken and the visual, as already intimated in the Prologue. Like drama, the novel transcends the written – boo-

kish – production (180). There are some important insights here, although now the terrain has been comprehensively covered by Regine May (May 2006).

While the issue of cultural identity has been stressed throughout the book, G.'s fourth chapter (Grecia, Roma, Africa, 187-232) addresses this issue directly. G. makes the important distinction between the protagonist Lucius' Corinthian background as enacting a meaningful transition from the *Onos* and considers in detail the question of the 'Romanization' of Greek learning more generally. He then clarifies that 'Romanization' does not necessarily entail 'Romanocentrism', as he focuses on the contexts for the production of the *Met.* (where it was written, what its immediate audience was), concluding that it was a culturally diverse work that straddles Greece, Rome, and Africa. Diversity of interpretation and literary context has now developed into a fully-fledged argument for cultural diversity.

The first part of G.'s argument (4.1. I viaggi di Lucio, 188-191) is focused on the significance of Corinth for Lucius' identity as a creative response to his source Lucius of Patrae and the identity of the protagonist of the Pseudo-Lucianic *Onos*, and is followed by a more general discussion of the pivotal place of Corinth as a meaningful mediator between Greece and Rome (4.2 Corinto e la sua fama, 191-198). This is followed by a subtle consideration (4.3 Romanizzazione, 198-202) of the implications of this argument for the question of the literary 'Romanization' of the *Onos*, specifically how Apuleius substitutes Virgil for Homer in a passage closely modeled on the Greek source.

G. moves from how the *Met.* 'Romanizes' its sources to the question of the immediate place of Rome itself in the text (4.4 Romanocentrismo, 203-223). The first section (4.4.1 *Metamorfosi a Roma?*, 203-218) argues that, when Apuleius in the *Met.* evokes sites in the city of Rome, he does so in a way to be understandable to a non-Roman native. He then counters, point by point, Ken Dowden's influential thesis (Dowden 1994) that the novel was actually written in Rome around 155 C.E. G. reads the idea of a projected Roman audience not necessitating Apuleius' presence in Rome (citing Ovid's case) nor does he see that need for *just* a Roman audience. In addition, G. sees the survival of the manuscript tradition in Rome as a result of 'historical processes' and not of any intention on Apuleius' part. While the general absence of Carthage is striking, the metaleptic reference to the 'man from Madauros' (11.27) implies that Apuleius is, to a limited extent, writing back to the African provincial audience. G. dismisses the argument that the *Met.* predated the *Apologia*, on account of verbal parallels between the charge of

the statue of Mercury (*Apol.* 61-64) and ‘theological’ passages from the *Met.* (e.g. the description of Anubis, Isis, and Venus), as well as the more general argument about Rome in the 150s C.E. Having questioned and supplemented Dowden’s thesis, G. proceeds (4.4.2 *Spinte centrifughe e integrazione*, 218-223) to consider ways in which the *Met.* showed that Roman power was operative in provincial contexts (especially through the law) and how integration worked on a literary and cultural level (citing the example of the appropriation of Dido in the Charite story argued by Finkelppearl (1998) 115-48).

The final two sections establish a reading elite for the *Met.* (4.5 *Il pubblico del romanzo*, 223-226) and one that spread across the Roman empire (4.6 *Tra Roma e le province*, 226-232). These final statements about the nature of Apuleius’ audience need finessing in relation to an earlier part of the chapter. While discussing the presence of Roman sites in the *Met.*, G. marks out how certain Roman topographical references (the *forum Cupidinis* and the *metae Murtiae*) locate the action in the city of Rome. It is intriguing that G.’s treatment of topography seems to reveal an approach to allusion seemingly missing from the earlier chapters. For example, he gauges the merits of these references based on a presumed accessibility. Given that the *forum Cupidinis* existed in Rome centuries before Apuleius’ time, it becomes an obscure allusion mediated by antiquarian sources and not a site encountered ‘through direct experience’ (‘per esperienza diretta’, 204). Yet the *metae Murtiae*, in the Circus Maximus of Apuleius’ day, G. reads as not ‘obscure and incomprehensible’ to those not even living in Rome, given its link to the shrine of Venus Murtia and its appearance in imperial authors (Plutarch and Tertullian) and in other cultural artifacts (coinage, reliefs, mosaics). Yet in spite of the distinctions G. makes between these two allusions, he still must posit different readers for both. So, the *lector scrupulosus* (or, what he has previously dubbed, the ‘engaged’ reader) will get the references, but ‘others will not need to know anything’ (‘altri potranno invece non sapere alcunchè’, 206) about these sites. This statement, given the emphasis on the various readers of the *Met.* (from the critical/hedonistic reader of the Prologue to the engaged/disengaged reader of the dissonance of the Isis book), seems to be imposing a dichotomy between ignorant and learned readers all along. But what constitutes ‘learning’? Perhaps a learned reader would link the *forum Cupidinis* of Hypata not to Rome, but to the *altar Cupidinis* in Plato’s Academy in Athens, and what actually *enacted* his learning this was a reading of Apuleius’ *De Platone et eius dogmate (nam vidisse sibi visus est cygni pullum ex altari, quod in Academia Cupidini consecratum est,*

1.182). Furthermore, this disturbs the very scene that I referenced to open my review. As you well know, learned reader, that scene did not in fact begin with Lucius' recounting of Diophanes' prophecy, but with Pamphile's 'reading' of the house-lamp, Milo's skeptical jab at her divinatory power and Lucius' impassioned defence of divination in general, which leads into his tale of Diophanes. What happens if we read into this scene general ideas of superstition and divination gleaned from the wealth of classical literature and culture, compared to Apuleius' own discussion in *De deo Socratis*? Is one more learned than the other? My one concern with the positing of an elite learned readership for the *Met.* is that, in its simplicity, it fails to show *how* the *Met.* and the Apuleian corpus as a whole – with a little help from *noster Plato* – is inextricably part of the process of the education of that very learned elite.

To sum up, G.'s is not only a brilliant, committed reading of the *Met.* but also a valiant reaction to Winkler's challenging, irrepressible study. He intervenes in traditional debates, offers novel insights into paths not taken and generally is a serious pleasure to read. I can safely say that G. is now the last word on the *Met.*, until the next reader comes along.

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