

Editors' Introduction

This second volume of *Fictional Traces* (*Fictional Traces II*) contains fourteen articles dealing with the reception of the ancient novel in literature and art. These articles are revised versions of papers originally presented at the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN IV), which took place at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, in Lisbon, on July 21-26, 2008. The papers are assembled in four groups according to a thematic arrangement. The first group contains two studies on the reception of the ancient novel in the visual tradition; the second includes essays that discuss the echoes of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* in art and literature; the third category brings together papers involving the reception of Petronius' *Satyricon*; and finally the essays of the fourth section are unified by their focus on the reception of the ancient novel in the performative arts.

Hugh Mason's paper introduces the first series of two papers that illustrate the repercussions of the ancient novel in visual arts, in secular writing and in popular narrative. In "Charikleia at the Mauritshuis" Mason uses as an example of such influence a painting by Abraham Bloemaert in the Mauritshuis, the 17th century town house in Den Haag which is home to the (Dutch) Royal Collection of Paintings, that depicts Theagenes receiving the price at the Pythia from Charikleia. This painting, inspired by *Ethiopica* 4, 4, commemorated the wedding in 1625 of Amalia von Solms (1602-1675), and Frederik Hendrik of Orange (1584-1647), the third Stadhouder of the United Provinces of the Netherlands. It is a "history painting", a large-scale painting incorporating figures that, like episodes in history used as *exempla* in rhetoric, portray a narrative illustrating a human virtue of interest to the artist or his patron. In other words, it is the inverse of a literary *ecphrasis*, that is the verbal representation or literary description of a real or imaginary work of art (painting, sculpture, tapestry, architecture, bas-relief). As Mason stresses, the iconoclasm of the Reformation and the New Republic's need for its own imagery made secular history paintings especially popular in the Netherlands in the 16th century, just at the time when the ancient novels were becoming widely known. In this context, ancient novels provided artists with a fresh repertory of classical narratives for history paintings. The "mannerist" ef-

fects and other aspects of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*, such as the tales of shipwrecks and pirates, the exotic environment and the high moral seriousness, made the novel very popular, and by far the best known and most admired of the ancient novels. So, the history illustrated by such painting suggests some parallels between Heliodorus' narrative of a marriage achieved after desperate adventures and the princely couple's own experience. Bloemaert's painting, which iconographically recalls his *Adoration of the Magi*, may also give some indication of how the Prince viewed his wife, and consequently present an outstanding example of ideas of companionship and even equality in marriage that are characteristic both of the ancient novels and of contemporary Dutch culture.

The second article of this series, "Susanna and her Sisters. The Virtuous Lady Motif in Sacred Tradition and its Representation in Art, Secular Writing and Popular Narrative", by Faustina C.W. Doufekar-Aerts, is focused on the development of the virtuous lady motif as represented in the biblical story of Susanna and the Elders. This ancient motif can be found in many works of literature, art and music. It also survived in novellas and narratives in several languages of the Middle East, and it became a favorite subject of iconography both in early Christianity and later in medieval illuminated Bibles and books of *exempla*. However, research and criticism have been concentrated on issues such as the story's origin and date of composition, as well as on its close connection with the Book of Daniel (13) in the Septuagint and Theodotion (*floruit* 2nd c. A.D.), and little attention has been paid to other evidence of "Susanna" in a non-biblical context. Doufekar-Aerts widens the scope of the analysis, uncovering other testimonies of the Biblical story, by reviewing and comparing other versions related to the traditions of the Samaritans, Shi'ite and Sunnite Muslims, Copts and Ethiopian Jews, and by establishing their relation to the Biblical source. Doufekar-Aerts' analysis leads to the conclusion that the Susanna story originated in the ancient world, and that it is probably much older than the version that became known through the Septuagint and Theodotion. She also argues that other branches (apparently more closely linked to Jewish historiography) could originate from a parallel line, and that, in the wake of this tradition, other versions were created. She also argues that it cannot be ruled out that the Biblical story of Susanna was an excerpt taken from a pre-existing legend or story which had a mythical character, and that from this legend only the Susanna part survived in the Bible for its function as an edifying parable. However, an investigation on the novelistic character of the episode of Susanna's trial plot reveals that "In spite of their diversity the Susanna stories

agree on a crucial statement; a complete orchard of different trees has passed under review here, brought up as silent witnesses of Susanna's crime, but they all evidenced the same thing: how the name of a tree could make the difference between life and death."

The next category, "Echoes of Apuleius' *Metamorphosis* in Art and Literature", is comprised of five essays unified by their focus on Apuleius' novel and its *Nachleben* during the Late Antiquity, Middle Ages and the Renaissance. With Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* we are drawn away from the strict field of the ancient novel. In fact, the fictional setting is one among many other genres or sub-genres, such as *fabula*, epic poetry, drama, didactic prose, and religious poetry, that were remarkably explored by Martianus Capella's matchless literary competence. *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* is the story of a young mortal, Philology, whom the God Mercury decides to marry. A reader that would be eager to find the usual romantic events would be inevitably disappointed, insofar as the love story remains peripheral. The novel is but a generic component of a work which is regarded by the author himself as an "I don't know what." In a paper entitled "Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* or the Subversion of the Latin Novel", Beatrice Bakhouché dissects the novelistic texture and the highly cryptic construction of the work to illuminate the relationship that the *Wedding* maintains with its Latin models and, specifically, with Apuleius' *Golden Ass*. In this respect, three peculiarities stand out. First, "The plot of the *Wedding* could be compared with the story of Eros and Psyche in the *Golden Ass*, but with a kind of reversal, since the young Psyche is considered to be a goddess and, because of this, she cannot find a husband." Second, "Apuleius frames the story of the two young people within the revenge of Venus who sees her worship neglected due to the amazing beauty of Psyche, whereas the young couple in the *Wedding* meet no opposition." Third, by employing a great variety of topics and levels of language and style, *De Nuptiis*, as Apuleius' novel, stands for an "aesthetics of hybridization." Moreover, in many aspects, the *Wedding* incorporates the codes of the novelistic genre (e.g., the polyphony of authorial voice, several levels of narrative, the intertextual dimension). Nevertheless, Martianus' cunning games of mirrors in which his work refracts the numerical harmony of the universe and the author reflects his heroine (Philology), confirming himself worthy of the immortality acquired by knowledge and eloquence, confirms the pedagogic aim of Martianus Capella's work: a high level of knowledge (*sapientia*) is accessible to everyone, provided it is preceded by study and hard work.

In an essay entitled “Apuleius, Beroaldo and the Development of the (Early) Modern Classical Commentary”, Gerald Sandy addresses the issue of the place of Filippo Beroaldo’s commentary (1500) on Apuleius’ *Golden Ass* in the historical development of early modern and modern classical commentaries and simultaneously attempts to isolate some of the features that contributed to its success in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Filippo Beroaldo (1453-1505) was a popular professor of rhetoric at the University of Bologna and, as Sandy stresses, “One of his remarkable achievements was to produce publications that simultaneously met the demands of scholars (*docti*), the educated public (*studiosi*) and students (*scholastici*)”. Sandy also adds that Beroaldo’s success depended on his astute understanding of the needs of his students and readers. Details that at first glance might appear to be extraneous to his explanation of an issue usually have relevance to it. Moreover, he states exactly what the relevance is, instead of leaving it to the reader to infer it from a list of presumably germane but undifferentiated citations of ancient authorities. Since most of the students at the University of Bologna were pursuing legal studies, Beroaldo repeatedly elucidates Roman legal terms and practices, frequently advising his students and readers to be alert to Apuleius’ nuanced manipulation of specialized vocabulary. At first glance, many words do not appear to be worthy of further consideration, because they do not seem to involve any obscure or recondite subject of study. However, “throughout his comments on the tale of Cupid and Psyche, which belongs to the world of fairy tales seemingly far removed from the concerns of Roman law, Beroaldo highlights the vocabulary and practices of the Roman law of marriage.” Besides the explanations of Roman law, Sandy’s analysis also focuses on three other features of Beroaldo’s commentary which helped to ensure its success: explanations of the finer points of the Latin language, engagement with ancient sources and engagement with post-classical scholarship. Sandy notes that for Beroaldo, Apuleius was a stylistic and moral authority and, as a conclusion, he states that “Probably because he was used to teaching hundreds of students each day, Beroaldo was able to judge his readers’ needs and, accordingly, to present the *Golden Ass* as a repository of Roman law, Latin style and Platonist-inspired moral paradigm.”

Ferruccio Bertini, in turn (“The *Golden Ass* and its *Nachleben* in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance”), examines the critical, conceptual and philological problems of the textual tradition of Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass* and its *Nachleben* during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, in the light of the different critical interpretations of the novel’s argument. His inquiry

begins with a lexicological analysis of the meaning of the term *curiositas* (the key concept of the novel) in Greek and Latin, and continues with the statement that the *Metamorphoses* may be considered a Dantesque *Divina Commedia ante litteram*, because in both there is a clear difference between simple curiosity and authentic knowledge. Bertini points out that in Plutarch too there exists a difference between *curiositas* (πολυπραγμοσύνη) and authentic knowledge, because in the term *curiositas* there is no eschatological perspective. He also states that the word comes very probably from a Meandrian slave, who in a fragment of a lost comedy represents the typical πολυπράγμων, declaring that “Nothing is sweeter than to know everything”. After defining what we usually mean by the words πολυπραγμοσύνη and *curiositas* in Greek and Latin, Bertini explains how they become emblematic in the eleven books of Apuleius' novel. Bertini's main goal is to evaluate the different critical opinions on *The Golden Ass* and to present his own interpretation of the novel. For that, relying on ancient authors and texts (Artemidorus, Macrobius, Hieronymus, Iulius Capitolinus, Lactantius, Ausonius, Augustinus, Fulgentius, and the anonymous *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*), he revisits the exegetical tradition of the *Golden Ass*, from the second century AD. to the seventeenth century as well as the main questions concerning the history of the transmission and interpretation of the text. For instance, he argues (in agreement with most modern scholars) that the *fabella* of Cupid and Psyche is not an insertion in the novel, but an integral part of it, supplying in advance an interpretative key to understand the meaning of the whole novel. However, Boccaccio occupies a predominant place in Bertini's overview: as is well known, stories of adulterous love in the *Decameron*, taken from the ninth book of the *Metamorphoses*, illustrate the debt of the Florentine writer towards Apuleius.

Michele's Rak's essay, “From word to image: notes on the Renaissance reception of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*” represents an aspect of an ongoing project investigating love in European culture. In this context, Rak uses an interdisciplinary approach and focuses on the European artistic representation of Cupid and Psyche, trying to reconstruct the multifaceted representation of the story in frescoes, paintings, statues, sketches, panels, plays and literary works in early modern Italian culture. Referring specifically to literary and visual sources that contain different interpretations of Apuleius's tale, he demonstrates how each of the works analyzed reflects various ways in which love has been conceived in different cultural contexts and elucidates their role as significant pieces in the complex mosaic of European thought. In early modern Europe, the myth of Cupid and Psyche circulated

through printed editions, translations and literary adaptations, poetic paraphrases and theatre adaptations. Towards the end of the fifteenth century many intellectuals began to read and interpret Apuleius's work. *The Golden Ass* or *Metamorphoses* was mainly read as a pagan and lascivious text whose meanings had to be decoded and manipulated. It was in early modern Ferrara, Rome and Modena, towards the end of the fifteenth century, that some of the printed editions of *Metamorphoses* started circulating, and that consequently "the iconic, allusive and spiritual journey of Psyche began." In early modern Europe, Cupid and Psyche became a fashionable subject for paintings, sketches and prints, games and cards, encouraging a philosophical analysis of Apuleius' tale. The strong visual impact of some passages of *The Golden Ass*, mostly the tale of Cupid and Psyche, has facilitated its reception among different cultures through the centuries. For instance, as Rak states, the fact that the human body had become a focal point of observation in Renaissance painting, visual arts, medicine, and scientific treatises facilitated the wide circulation of the Apuleian text in Renaissance Italy. Raphael's *Loggia di Amore e Psiche* (Villa Farnesina, Rome) is a model of this artistic tendency. Raphael and some of his pupils (Raffaellino del Colle, Giovan Francesco Penni, Giulio Romano, and Giovanni da Udine), decorators and makers of design sketches drew from several illustrated sources, especially printed editions of the *Metamorphoses* containing engraved images and representations of Apuleius' tale, which became a popular subject for interior decorations and privately owned objects.

The next and last essay in this series by Christiane Reitz and Lorenz Winkler-Horaček ("Love on a wallpaper: Apuleius in the boudoir") moves us again into the domain of artistic representation. The object of study is a set of grisaille wallpapers from the Empire period that draws on the story of Amor and Psyche. First printed in 1815 in Paris by Joseph Dufour after the designs of Merry-Joseph Blondel (1781-1853) and Louis Lafitte (1770-1828), the wallpaper was a great success and was sold until 1924 all over Europe. As Reitz and Winkler-Horaček stress, in antiquity, artifacts depicting Amor and Psyche, rather than focusing on the narrative aspect, concentrate on the allegorical force of the two concepts, the unity of "Soul" and "Love" as part of a religious perception. From the Middle Ages onwards, and specially in the Renaissance, the main interest lies in the narrative element. In their article, Reitz and Winkler-Horaček take a twofold approach. Firstly, they concentrate on the narrative technique of the images in comparison with that of the novel of Apuleius, and the extended prose version by Jean de La Fontaine (*Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*, 1669). Secondly,

looking at two episodes in particular, they show how the artists constructed the scenes by elaborately combining different sources. They point to the fact that the story, the heroine, who looks different in every panel according to her state of mind and fortune, the setting, the allusions to ancient sculpture, and the interior design form an artificial cosmos. In several scenes, "visual codes deriving from the ancient iconography of the goddess Venus are applied to Psyche", which means that Venus and Psyche overlap. Designed to appeal to highly educated customers, who are moreover drawn into the story by short subtitles, the wallpapers give insight into the vision of antiquity in 19th century Europe through the reconstruction of ancient narrative texts. During the more than hundred years of their successful marketing, the wallpapers reflect their buyer's antiquarian taste for details and decorations, which matches a general tendency for a nostalgic return to the mythical past.

The next set of papers deals with the reception of Petronius' *Satyrical*. Three of the most famous references in modern literature to Petronius are in the epigraph to T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. However, the *Satyrical* has received little attention in Fitzgerald studies, which is, according to Nikolai Endres ("Petronius in West Egg: The *Satyrical* and *The Great Gatsby*"), "all the more remarkable considering that Fitzgerald had originally entitled his novel *Trimalchio* or *Trimalchio in West Egg*". It is, therefore, symptomatic of a change of perspective in the study of Fitzgerald's work that two papers in this series are consecrated to the American writer's famous novel. Nikolai Endres' essay is centered on the analysis and discussion of the two narrators' characters (Petronius' Encolpius and Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway), and their desire for greatness. *The Great Gatsby*, like the *Satyrical*, portrays a quick-tempered yet surprisingly sentimental narrator who flounders but also threads his way through a world that rarely meets his expectations. As Endres stresses, not only Trimalchio and Gatsby (the incarnation of an indigenously American breed, the self-made man), but also Nick Carraway and Encolpius would like to lead a life of fairy tale and romance, only to be disappointed by pedestrian reality. And behind the narrators we find the hidden authors. Endres' discussion stresses the theatricality and inauthenticity of any form of human intercourse in Fitzgerald's novel, and the permanent discrepancy between the ideal and the trivial reality. Both Nick and Encolpius fail in their effort to turn banality into melodrama, that is, to promote the narrow scope of ordinary life to the level of grandeur through the appropriation of great literary models. They fail because they lack the critical awareness to see that no imitation can be anything but a caricature. Both

Petronius and Fitzgerald introduce into their stories characters that are their doubles in the sense that they aspire to giddy heights in their fiction to compensate for the self-confessed failure in their private lives. Nick is both Nick and Gatsby, both little and great, Encolpius is also both Encolpius and Trimalchio, both little and great too. As Endres stresses, "In the patchwork of incongruity, modes of life are denigrated and human values satirized. In both the *Satyricon* and *Gatsby*, the beginning is ashes, the end melodrama."

The second essay on Fitzgerald's "great American novel" offers us a different perspective. In an article entitled "'His Career as Trimalchio': Petronian Character and Narrative in Fitzgerald's Great American Novel", Niall Slater re-examines the considerable rearrangements and the important rewriting undertaken by Fitzgerald when he revised the first version of his novel. Although it has long been known that Fitzgerald considered calling his greatest novel *Trimalchio in West Egg*, the full dimensions of Petronian influence on the original design for *The Great Gatsby* could not be clear until the text of his first version was published by James L. W. West in 2000. Slater begins by drawing attention to the unsolved question of how Fitzgerald knew Petronius, especially if we consider that the syllabuses of the two Latin courses he took at Princeton do not include Petronius, as well as the fact that Fitzgerald portrays himself as "a poor Latin scholar". So, Slater thinks that most probably he would have read Petronius in English. He also argues that, while the great majority of this earlier text remained in *The Great Gatsby* as finally published, there are substantial differences, particularly in the portrayal of Gatsby's assumption of the role of profligate host, which the Encolpius-like narrator Nick Carraway labels "his career as Trimalchio," and in the re-structuring of the narrative that reshapes our views of its characters. Such changes show a significant Petronian influence in Fitzgerald's novel and allow us "to see fuller dimensions of Petronian influence on the novel's original design". The narrative structure borrows from but significantly transforms the Petronian precedent. Where Encolpius provides an often satiric but static and detached viewpoint on the Trimalchian spectacle, Carraway's perspective over time allows for both significant change and growth in both his own and Gatsby's characters as well as a deepened appreciation of the protagonist's crafted Platonic self-image. At last, if Fitzgerald perceives himself as Gatsby and still more as Nick Carraway (if there is much of Fitzgerald in Gatsby and still more of him in Nick Carraway), we could say that the deviation from the Petronian chronotope at work in the original version of the novel (*Trimalchio*) portrays a deeper insight into Fitzgerald own double (or triple) personality.

Similarly historically oriented is Massimo's Fusillo's contribution on Petronius' contemporary reception. The *Satyricon* becomes in the twentieth century a model for experimental novels and for open and encyclopedic forms, especially with respect to the revival of the picaresque pattern. Its expressive polyphony is linked with a polyhedric and promiscuous view of sexuality, that also recalls crucial contemporary issues, such as camp and the performative idea of gender. In an article that bears the title "Petronius and the Contemporary Novel: Between New Picaresque and Queer Aesthetics", Fusillo starts by defining the main features of the picaresque, to finally conclude that the new picaresque contemporary novel can be as productive as the old one. A certain number of Petronius's innovative features look towards the modern novel and contemporary experimentation, such as: the absence of teleology (i.e., the labyrinthine and anarchic course of the narration as well as its paratactic and hectically episodic organization), its open form, theatricality ("his characters ... conceive their adventures in terms of sublime literary models, epic and tragic, and read their experience as a continuous performance", and realism. In turn, the new picaresque is an interesting example of how the 20th century novel can re-use and transform traditional narrative patterns. As stressed by Fusillo, "The paratactic and associative structure of the canonical antecedents is now aimed at expressing a shattered identity, a cosmic dissatisfaction, a profound nomadism." In order to show how, in different cultural contexts, the transcultural label of picaresque can be applied to the novel, Fusillo focuses on texts coming from different moments of the 20th century, Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit* and (principally) the third, expanded new version (1993) of Arbasino's *Fratelli d'Italia* (1963), which he considers according to the postmodern aesthetics of the "camp", an outstanding category in Anglo-Saxon culture, first defined by Susan Sontag in 1967, that "indicates a mixture of irony, theatricality, aestheticism, and juxtaposition of incongruous elements; a playful re-use of consumer culture; a refined contamination of kitsch with cultivated, high-brow elements." Petronian ambivalent resumption of consumer genres (mime, pantomime, sentimental novel) can be read through the lens of contemporary camp and as its embryonic archetype.

The last group of papers explores the theme of the reception of the ancient novel on stage. The first of these deals with the influence of the novels' heroines on opera. Relatively few operas have been inspired by ancient novels, but Jon Solomon's article ("Psyche, Callirhoë and Operatic Heroines Derived from Ancient Novels") presents some important examples. Two notable heroines, Apuleius' Psyche and Chariton's Callirrhoe, gained consi-

derable popularity, the former particularly in late-Renaissance France, and the latter shortly after the publication of Jacques Philippe d'Orville's *editio princeps* in 1750. The operatic genre, as Solomon stresses, owes its existence largely to the dramatic format of ancient Greek tragedy. The new and innovative musical style, the *stile rappresentativo*, and what the creative humanists of the Florentine Camerata called *dramma per musica*, aimed at resembling, as much as practicable, ancient Greek musical theatre. Most baroque operas were based on ancient myth and history, although the narrative structure and subject matter (coincidental appearances, episodic narratives, and geographical exoticism) of many early operas as well as most operas of the eighteenth century are the same we find throughout the extant ancient novels. Nevertheless, as Solomon explains, opera was a relatively conservative artistic genre and audiences and critics tend to prefer what is familiar to them, that is, ancient myth and history. He also notes that adaptations from ancient narratives and myths often occur in clusters. One of them produced Francesco Cavalli's Venetian opera *Amore innamorato*, that was inspired by the Cupid and Psyche story. Soon after came Tomaso Breni's *Psiche* (1645) performed in Lucca, and Marco Scacchi's *Le nozze d' Amore e di Psiche*, with a libretto by Puccitelli, performed in Gdansk, Warsaw, and Cracow in 1646. Besides presenting us with a list of musical works inspired by a reinvigorated interest in the Cupid and Psyche story in the middle of the seventeenth century, Solomon also points to a adaptation of this portion of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* in libretto form. Of great interest also is the Sacchini/Verazi *Calliroe* (1770), which was performed several times (in Padua, in Naples, again in Pisa, in Milan, and in Florence). Solomon also alludes to Auguste Mariette's plot outline for *Aida*, set by Giuseppe Verdi, and commissioned by Khedive Isma'il to celebrate the inauguration of his Cairo opera house in 1870. As for Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, it has not surprisingly found its most familiar home in ballet. Finally, Solomon refers as one of the most interesting and appropriate operatic versions of Petronius' *Satyricon*, Bruno Maderna's last work, *Satyricon* (1973), "a pastiche of traditional music and electronic tape intertwined with *commedia dell'arte* motifs and a variable sequence of sixteen scenes—matching effectively the episodic nature of the ancient novel."

In his contribution, the second of the series, entitled "Le dieu Pan fait pan pan pan de son pied de chèvre: Daphnis and Chloe on the stage at the end of the nineteenth century", Simone Beta analyses the theatrical adaptations of Longus' novel in the second half of the nineteenth century. His aim is to throw new light on the appeal of this Greek novel in theatre and music.

At the same time, he underlines which elements the composers (together with their librettists) took from the Greek original and how they organized this material in their works. His overview starts from the vaudeville by Clairville and Cordier, performed in 1849 and set to music by Jacques Offenbach in 1860. After this comic operatic version (which was restaged in 1866 with a few significant differences), Fernand Le Borne, a Belgian pupil of Massenet, composed the “drame pastoral” *Daphnis et Chloé*, performed in Brussels in 1885. At the end of the century, Paris hosted two other adaptations of Longus’ novel: the “Pastorale en un acte” by Henri Busser (a good friend of Debussy) in 1897 and the “comédie lyrique en trois actes” by Charles Henri Maréchal in 1899. Through study of the librettos, Beta analyses the differences among these adaptations and the parody composed by Angelo Casirola and published in 1894. In this modern adaptation, the authors of the libretto (Lebrun, Gramet, and Larseneur), take one of the most famous moments of Daphnis and Chloe’s discovery of sex, and turn it “into a funny and disrespectful farce.” In this paper, Beta also briefly mentions the ballets inspired by Longus’s novel, from the one planned by Claude Debussy in cooperation with the novelist Pierre Louÿs to the celebrated version composed by Maurice Ravel in 1912 for a production by the Russian choreographer Mikhail Fokine, first performed by the Ballets Russes, the celebrated dance company led by Sergej Diaghilev, in Paris, at the Théâtre de Châtelet, on 8 June 1912. As a conclusion, Beta stresses that “The everlasting success of one of the most celebrated compositions of Maurice Ravel, compared with the oblivion into which the five operatic versions dealt with in this paper have sunk, is clear evidence that, sometimes, music and gestures move the soul more effectively than music and words.”

The latest phase of the *Nachleben* of the “Widow of Ephesus” story includes several operatic adaptations of the Petronian novella version. The aim of Tiziana Ragno in her paper, “Widows on the operatic stage: The ‘Ephesian Matron’ as a dramatic character in twentieth-century German musical theatre (esp. 1928-1952)”, is to investigate some of these operatic transpositions produced (and concentrated) in Germany from the 1930s onwards, and to compare them to assess to what extent the Petronian narrative “hypotext” was adapted and re-invented. This specific form of “hypertextuality” (from *diegesis* to *mimesis*) probably finds good grounds in some dramatic features belonging already to the Petronian source (e.g. the triangular structure, the nurse as “go-between”, the voyeuristic atmosphere and the repeated allusions to the widow’s “performance”). Ragno also stresses that in the past some theorists (e.g. G. E. Lessing) illustrated the difficulties of transposing

this story into dramatic form and postulated that the “actual” presence on stage of its characters could deprive them of any “symbolic” features. Then, the operatic adaptations can be considered as a sort of “field tests”. In fact, in some cases the librettists reproduce just the “symbolic” perspective, making the characters universal (e.g. presenting the widow not as a female individual but as a paradigmatic “persona”) or adding further meanings to the literal ones. Hence, in K. A. Hartmann’s short opera *Die Witwe von Ephesus* (1930), the plot is treated in a satirical light, revealing the composer’s social engagement and his socialist political views that prefigure his stand against Nazi dictatorship. Therefore, Hartmann “practises one of the most efficacious means of modernizing the ancient plot by using prophetic tones and hinting at contemporary times.” In terms of intersemiotic translation, the librettist (Erich Bormann) produced a “travesty” that exploits and manipulates the original story as a “pre-text”, submitting it to a process of overall “re-semanticization”. This operation, which consists in a “reduction” or “compression” of the subject, is achieved, for instance, with the “contraction” of the cast (e.g. the suppression of characters and the combination of different roles). Accordingly, W. Fortner’s pantomime, *Die Witwe von Ephesus* (1952), points to a manner of musical-dramatic development of the ancient tale, being inspired by an analogous “stylization technique” but without Hartmann’s strong adulteration of the source: here, the “effet de réel” is diminished by inserting a teller’s voice. Finally, there are two other cases, again from Germany, of musical-theatrical transposition of the “Widow of Ephesus” theme. The first (E. d’Albert, *Die Witwe von Ephesus*, 1928) appears closely connected with the “Cena Trimalchionis”, and in the second (R. Wagner-Régeny, *Die Witwe von Ephesus*, 1950), the ancient tale was once again rewritten in the light of antimilitarist beliefs.

Besides opera, ballet, and theatre, the radio can be also a medium for a dramatized transposition of the ancient novel in a contemporary context. Stephen Harrison in his essay “Apuleius On the Radio: Louis MacNeice’s BBC Dramatisations” focuses on two unpublished radio plays by the Anglo-Irish poet, classical scholar and prolific author Louis MacNeice (1907-1963). These radio plays, of which the scripts are preserved in the BBC archives, are based on Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* and the Cupid and Psyche story, and were both originally produced and broadcast in 1944. In this paper, Harrison’s aim is to provide a first critical assessment of how the Apuleian text was rewritten by MacNeice, as well as to stress the significant differences of the Irish writer’s scripts in comparison with its original. In the *The Golden Ass* adaptation, Harrison stresses “the relevance of the plot of

Apuleius' novel in a wartime context where Nazism and its followers, now at last being defeated, could be described as asinine," and he also observes that MacNeice's drastic abbreviation of Apuleius' plot puts into practice a form of "reduction" that is due to the various constraints and conventions of the radio play form and to the need for simple and effective construction. On the other hand, some strategies of selection and modification of the original text were also applied by MacNeice to Apuleius, such as the addition of characterising speeches and the use of a musical accompaniment. In the second piece, the version of the tale of Cupid and Psyche, the fairytale aspect of the story and its amusing features are emphasized. As Harrison stresses, the two pieces are complementary in that the *The Golden Ass* script passes over the extensive Cupid and Psyche episode very briefly, while the Cupid and Psyche script focuses on that episode. Both scripts are generally in prose, while using verse for some marked and solemn passages that are supported by a musical score. Harrison's contribution also looks at the way in which Apuleius' narratives are transposed and reshaped for a shorter form, without a strong adulteration of the source, but according to MacNeice's priorities and BBC-style educational, entertaining and even informative interests.

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