

Dreams and Superstition: A Reinterpretation of Satire in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11

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The question of whether Book 11 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is a sincere religious evocation or a satirical parody continues to animate discussion among scholars.¹ Indeed, many scholars believe that the text deliberately allows for both conclusions, following Winkler's idea of an 'unauthorized', indeterminate ending.² One such scholar, David Carlisle, emphasises the centrality of Lucius' dreams to any interpretation of Book 11.³ It appears that if one accepts the dreams as true and meaningful, then the conclusion is edifying, just as Lucius presents it; but if the dreams are considered to be meaningless fantasies misinterpreted by Lucius, then the conclusion presents a gullible convert deceived by his priests, who themselves claim to experience instructional, god-sent dreams. I will argue, however, that this is a false dichotomy, for it is not the only way to approach the dreams as a key to interpreting Book 11. If the depiction of god-sent dreams could be seen to parody religious experience, then the existing view of satire in Book 11 might be modified significantly.

Since Winkler first proposed that the novel presents a satire of religious gullibility in Book 11, those who have argued likewise view it as analogous to the satire on priestly corruption in Books 8 and 9. During this episode, ass-Lucius witnesses his owners, Philebus and his troop of itinerant priests, rob a

¹ This question is posed in Keulen and Egelhaaf-Gaisser (eds.) 2012, vii.

² Winkler 1985, 179, 227; Shumate 1996, 310-328 and 1999, 96-105; Hunink 2006, 26-31. Kirichenko 2010, 6-7 proposes multiple plots (including religious and satiric plots).

³ Carlisle 2008, 215-233 argues that Apuleius employs dreams as the prime motivator in Lucius' religious experience to create ambiguity, thus enabling an indeterminate ending whilst challenging the reader to find meaning.

temple and deceive unsuspecting petitioners with all-purpose oracles. Likewise, in Book 11, the cult of Isis and Osiris is believed to manipulate a gullible Lucius into receiving ever more expensive initiations. Thus, the priests of Isis are ‘rapacious vultures’ and ‘religious charlatans’, whilst Lucius is a ‘sucker’, who is ‘duped by his own gullibility’ and ‘allows himself to be plucked by the greedy priests of Isis and Osiris’.⁴ He pays money ‘for obvious religious fraud’, which itself ‘recalls the uncanny description of the vagabond priests of the Syrian Goddess in Books 8 and 9’, thus forming a ‘familiar satirical pattern’.⁵ Ultimately, Lucius himself becomes a charlatan priest just like those whom he had earlier criticised.⁶

As noted above, this argument relies upon the notion that Lucius misplaces his trust in dreams.⁷ Three main ideas inform this position: (1) the dreams are products of Lucius’ desire, revealing his overeagerness for religious experiences; (2) the priests manipulate this desire, influencing or interpreting Lucius’ dreams to their advantage; and, (3) Lucius is presented as gullible because he trusts his ‘charlatan’ priests and believes his ‘self-generated’ dreams, finding divine significance in unimportant details.⁸ This emphasis upon deception occurs in the satire of superstitious religious behaviour by Lucian and Juvenal.⁹ But this picture is not painted clearly in Book 11, for those who argue for such a satire also include the gods as playing an active role in the deception of Lucius, which implies that they *are* sending some of the dreams.¹⁰ This, however, begs the question of which dreams are god-sent and

⁴ Kirichenko 2010, 139; the second and third quotes are from Shumate 1996, 325; Harrison 2000, 246; Zimmerman 2006, 103.

⁵ The first and third quotes are from Kirichenko 2010, 138; Van Nuffelen 2011, 95.

⁶ Edsall 1996, 218-219; Weiss 1998, 95; Kirichenko 2010, 135-36.

⁷ For the purpose of this paper, I shall use the terms ‘true’, ‘meaningful’, and ‘god-sent’ interchangeably for dreams that are considered to have a supernatural source; the terms ‘meaningless’ and ‘self-generated’ will be used for dreams that are considered to have a natural source (i.e. the mind of the dreamer).

⁸ Harrison 2000, 246-248; Weiss 1998, 83-94; Kirichenko 2010, 137-138; Murgatroyd 2004, 320-321; cf. Hunink 2006, 28: ‘Nocturnal visions are almost piled up ..., which reveals perhaps more about Lucius and his ardent desire to devote himself to Isis than about her divine power.’

⁹ Lucian depicts the falsification of god-sent dreams by a charlatan (*Alex.* 49), whereas Juvenal presents the misinterpretation of meaningless dreams as god-sent by self-deceiving followers (6,522-531).

¹⁰ Van Mal-Maeder 1997, 102 states that Isis robs Lucius just as Meroe robbed Socrates; similarly, Murgatroyd 2004, 320 believes that the Judgement of Paris scene at the end of Book 10 provides the context of ‘divine corruption’ in Book 11 and that Lucius is ordered about by ‘master and mistress figures’. Kirichenko 2010, 138-139 also places the gods

which are self-generated, and how the reader is supposed to tell the difference between them. Significantly, recent studies on the dreams in the *Metamorphoses* have argued convincingly that, throughout the novel, dreams consistently convey meaningful content to the dreamer.¹¹ Those who see Lucius' dreams as meaningless, however, have neglected to consider that the dreams of Books 1-10 inform how the reader understands such divination in the world of the novel prior to Book 11.¹² Indeed, the dreams of Books 1-10 follow the convention of those in narrative fiction (i.e. true dreams that function as storytelling devices).¹³

Likewise, the dreams in Book 11 can be shown to be god-sent by examining the first double-dream sequence of Lucius and the high priest, which prefigures Lucius' retransformation.¹⁴ After Lucius prays to the moon on the beach at Cenchreae, he falls asleep and immediately beholds a vision of Isis, whose subsequent instruction can be substantiated.¹⁵ She declares that on the

alongside the priests as making financial demands of Lucius through more initiations. Harrison 2012, 78-79 appears to accept that Mithras has received word about Lucius from Isis, which indicates that the goddess does send some dreams.

¹¹ Cf. Gollnick 1999, 74; Hunink 2006, 24; Carlisle 2008, 232. For a general discussion of dream divination in antiquity, see Hanson 1980, 1325-1427 and Harris 2003, 18-34. On dream-visions in Aristides, Pausanias, and Artemidorus, see Platt 2011, 253-292.

¹² The characters who experience dreams in Books 1-10 include Socrates (1,18,7), Charite (4,27,1-4; 8,8,6-9), and the miller's daughter (9,31,1-2). The characters who are only suggested to have been dreaming include Aristomenes (1,18,2), Thelyphron (2,25-26,2), and Lucius (3,22,2). The dreams of Books 1-10 differ from those in Book 11 in that they do not involve divine instruction. Yet they do follow dreams in the literary tradition (see the following footnote for examples), including communication between the dead and the living and visions pertaining to future and contemporaneous events. All of the dreams, save the one at 4,27, occur in sub-narratives, which could be fictitious; this, however, does not deny the possibility of supernatural events (such as god-sent dreams) in the world of the novel. For example, magic features in the sub-narratives of Aristomenes and Thelyphron as well as in the main narrative; thus, Lucius' tale is just as wondrous as the sub-narratives. For discussions on the dreams of Books 1-10, see Gollnick 1999, 53-67, Hunink 2006, 19-25, and Carlisle 2008, 218-227.

¹³ The admonitory and predictive aspect of dreams is utilized in the Greek romances; cf. Ach. Tat. 4,1,4; 4,1,6-7; 7,12,4; Hld. 3,11,5; 5,22,1-3; Longus 1,7. Bartsch 1989, 80-108 discusses the role of dreams in the Greek romances; cf. Harris 2003, 33. God-sent dreams also appear in Petronius, *Sat.* 17,7; 104,1-3. Dream instruction is used frequently in epic poetry; cf. Hom. *Il.* 2,5-41; 23,65-110; *Od.* 4,795-841; 6,20-49; 19,535-559 (message, but not instruction); Verg. *Aen.* 2,270-297; 3,147-171; 4,351-353; 5,722-745; 8,26-67. For a full discussion of dreams in Homer, see Kessels 1973.

¹⁴ The first and second initiations are also prefigured by double-dream sequences (first, 11,22,3; 11,22,5-6; second, 11,27,4; 11,27,9).

¹⁵ Cf. Hunink 2006, 26-27.

next day her followers will celebrate the festival which opens the sailing season (11,5,5). It is indeed the *navigium Isidis* that the Isiac faithful celebrate after Lucius is transformed (11,16,6-10). Isis also explains that her high priest will lead the procession carrying Lucius' long sought cure (11,6,1-2). The priest indeed carries a wreath of roses (11,13,1-2). This passage also confirms that, since the priest appears startled by the realisation that his own dream has come true (*nocturni commonefactus oraculi miratusque congruentiam mandati muneris*), Isis did appear in his dream also. In Lucius' dream, the goddess states that she is instructing her priest (11,6,3). Isis also assures Lucius that people will not accuse him of sorcery (11,6,4). Indeed, they pay homage to the goddess by stretching their hands out to heaven and calling out with one voice (11,13,6).¹⁶ Lucius' dream of Isis, therefore, cannot be explained away rationally because its content is borne out by the subsequent events.¹⁷

This position is only strengthened by the detailed information Isis has given the high priest about Lucius. For instance, the priest addresses the newly-reformed Lucius by name (*Luci*), alludes to his high birth (*natales, dignitas*), education (*doctrina*), and that he became an ass as a result of his curiosity (*curiositatis ... sinistrum praemium*; 11,15,1). Moreover, he specifies robbers, wild animals, and slavery as the torments of Lucius' adventures (*quid latrones, quid ferae, quid servitium*; 11,15,3).¹⁸ Lucius, as a speechless animal, could not have related this information to anyone, so the double-dream of the Isiac high priest and Lucius has to be god-sent. We can hardly accuse Lucius, on this basis, of gullibility for believing in his dreams.

Yet the repeated use of dreams in Book 11 to motivate Lucius does warrant consideration. The seemingly superfluous dreams include the Candidus dream (11,20), Isis' message sending Lucius to Rome (11,26,1), and the instructions for his initiations into the mysteries of Osiris (11,27-29). Ostensibly, the first two connect the loose threads regarding what became of Lucius' property and why the prologue concerns Rome.¹⁹ Even so, these matters could

¹⁶ By contrast, the crowd want Loukios burned to death or, at least, to explain himself (Ps.-Lucian *Asinus* 54).

¹⁷ Carlisle 2008, 232, note 57 concedes that one may use 'very contorted logic' to rationalise the dreams as meaningless, which ultimately protects Lucius from the charge of falsifying his account. But such 'contorted logic' leaves too many coincidences unexplained, making such a conclusion impossible to maintain. And yet this does not mean that Lucius' tale should be dismissed as a lie because it is, after all, a wondrous story involving magical transformations; so its unambiguous use of supernatural dreams is entirely consistent with the nature of the tale.

¹⁸ Cf. Kirichenko 2010, 80 and note 38.

¹⁹ That is to say, Lucius the narrator (or whoever the prologue speaker might be) claims to be Greek in descent but has decided to tell the story in Latin, giving it a Roman point of

have been handled without the use of dreams (for instance, through the advice of priests). Therefore, they have to serve some narrative purpose. The effect of the Candidus dream is twofold: first, by prefiguring the return of Lucius' property in a dream, its actual return appears to be Isis' gift; second, the wonder caused by its unexpected bounty increases Lucius' devotion to Isis and the attention he pays to his dreams (11,21,1). The dream that sends Lucius to Rome builds upon this, illustrating that he will make life-changing and expensive decisions at the behest of his dreams.

The second and third initiations continue to demonstrate Lucius' deference to dreams. He is pushed by divine will (*numinis premebar instantia*; 11,28,2) to sell his clothes to pay for an initiation that is unexpected and likely unnecessary.²⁰ Likewise, a 'friendly phantom' (*clemens imago*) justifies the third initiation to Lucius, telling him it is because his ceremonial cloak is stored in Cenchreae (11,29,3-4).²¹ Significantly, these dreams serve to justify the expense and necessity of the initiations rather than provide spiritual guidance. Moreover, since the justification does not come from priests, it highlights the role of the gods as instigators of this prolonged religious induction.²²

These unforeseen initiations and their bizarre explanations only serve to diminish the wonder caused by the initial dreams. The first dream of Book 11 features Isis in her true form, the sublime detail of its *ecphrasis* promoting awe. Likewise, the last dream of Book 11 features Osiris' true form, but his majesty is not related in a magnificent manner: he gets no *ecphrasis*. Indeed, Lucius' attempt to express the supremacy of Osiris comes across as comically histrionic wordplay (*deus ... regnator*; 11,30,3).²³ Moreover, the dream's content bestows a sense of banality to the conclusion: the detail that Lucius' legal career has divine endorsement seems superfluous and uninteresting given the

reference. If the story ended in Greece, however, this would beg the question of why the narrator has decided upon Latin for the story.

²⁰ The second initiation, not to mention the third, is superfluous to the plot of religious salvation (see note 83, below) and possibly to his religious requirements; Griffiths 1975, 330: 'Apuleius is at pains to justify the additional initiations in Rome. Isis, Osiris and Sarapis all had some distinctive rites at this time. The temples were in the name of Isis or Sarapis, but an Osirian element was present in all the ceremonies.'

²¹ Griffiths speculates that the local temple in Cenchreae forbids the cloaks from being removed, *ibid.* 340. This seems an arbitrary excuse for another initiation; cf. Libby 2011, 316.

²² Cf. Carlisle 2008, 230.

²³ Finkelpearl 2004, 329 refers to this description as 'over-the-top' and that 'there is clearly humor in this excess'. Libby 2011, 316: 'The god Osiris is not described in anything like the detail that we expect, and he receives only a lukewarm attention from Lucius'.

extraordinary nature of Lucius' adventure so far.²⁴ So, whilst the dreams from 11,26,4 onward show a continued link between Lucius and the divine, the link has become more mundane than mystical, with the result that the wonder imparted by Lucius' first dream, his transformation, and his first initiation is diminished by the more prosaic dreams and initiations in Rome.²⁵ This does not indicate that the dreams are self-generated and Lucius is gullible for believing them, but their anti-climactic nature, in conjunction with the simpler narrative style in the last four chapters, could be a ploy by Apuleius to suggest that Lucius' religious awakening should not be taken at face value and may even hint that Lucius' relationship with the gods is tainted by superstition, so reliant upon his dreams he has become.²⁶

This approach to dreams is similar to the paradoxical employment of dreams by Petronius. In the *Satyrical*, the protagonists promote an Epicurean stance regarding dreams by pointing out their meaninglessness.²⁷ Simultaneously, however, Petronius employs god-sent dreams for plot development and characterisation. Dreams about the protagonists are sent to their adversaries by the gods;²⁸ the presence of god-sent dreams, however, does not elevate these characters or laud such dreams. Instead, god-sent dreams are mocked because they do not provide a lasting benefit to their recipients.²⁹ In addition, Petronius exposes their very absurdity by having unlikely gods send dreams to unworthy people in unseemly settings about base and trivial matters.³⁰

²⁴ Hunink 2006, 29; cf. Edsall 1996, 220, who notes that Book 11 ends with 'strange dreams'.

²⁵ Griffiths 1975, 54 and Massey 1976, 42 note that the spirituality is tarnished by materialism.

²⁶ By way of contrast, the ending would have to be taken at face value (i.e. as religiously edifying) if, after his first initiation, Lucius summed up the last four chapters in one sentence: 'Having returned to my home in Corinth, I was instructed by the goddess to travel to Rome, where I embarked upon a successful rhetorical career and joyfully advanced my way in the cults of Isis and Osiris.'

²⁷ Ascylltus (Petron. *Sat.* 10,1), Eumolpus (104,3), and possibly Encolpius (frag. 43). For a comprehensive discussion on Epicurean dream theory, see Long 1986, 24-25.

²⁸ Quartilla (*Sat.* 17,7-8; 18,3); Lichas and Tryphaena (104,1-2).

²⁹ Lichas is killed (*Sat.* 114,6), Tryphaena loses Giton (114,7), and Encolpius, Ascylltus, and Giton somehow escape Quartilla (26,6).

³⁰ The gods who send the dreams are Priapus and the Neptune of Baiiae (a town of ill-repute; cf. Cic. *Cael.* 27, 35, 38, 47, 49; Sen. *Ep.* 51,1-4, 11-13; Prop. 1,11,27-30). The double-dream of Lichas and Tryphaena warns them about their close proximity to Encolpius and Giton, respectively (*Sat.* 104,1-2); Lichas seeks Encolpius, possibly as a former lover (cf. 105,9-10; cf. 109,3), or possibly for seducing his wife (113,3). Tryphaena seeks Giton, who is possibly her runaway slave and/or lover (109,2). Similarly, Quartilla seeks the protagonist, claiming that Priapus informed her that the cure for her malady, caused by them spying upon her secret rites, is a nightlong orgy with them in his honour (cf. 19,2); the

Moreover, by maintaining an Epicurean perspective, the recipients' willingness to believe in these dreams characterises them as superstitious *despite* the god-sent nature of the dreams within the story.³¹ Petronius, therefore, has it both ways by using a common literary device for narrative ends while at the same time characterising superstitious behaviour.

Admittedly, Lucius' dreams are not unseemly and Apuleius is not expounding an Epicurean perspective, but the use of god-sent dreams to highlight superstition is instructive when applied to Book 11. Indeed, the excessive use of god-sent dreams in Book 11 helps to show that Lucius is the kind of person who superstitiously sublimates his rational mind to dreams. Furthermore, the overabundance of dreams, concluding with an epiphany of Osiris that is much less compelling for the reader than that of Isis, combined with the knowledge of Lucius' undiscerning nature during the first ten books, raises suspicion about whether he has really changed. But this is not the only suspicion created in Book 11, for Lucius casts doubt upon his priests before his third initiation (11,29,3). Those who argue for a satire on priestly deceit believe that this mistrust is justified and signals how the reader is supposed to view them;³² but given that the dreams are god-sent and since it is the gods who justify the later initiations, a reassessment of the priests is required.

The idea that the presentation and content of the later dreams undercut those preceding them is aided by the contrasting portrayal of Mithras and Asinius Marcellus. The notion of priestly decline in Book 11 has been proposed by Margaret Edsall.³³ She argues that Mithras is an 'idealised Egyptian priest' who is sincere in his motive for initiating Lucius, whereas the profit-seeking

possibility exists that she has fabricated this dream to mask her own desires, which would fit her manipulative display of tears. Lichas and Tryphaena, by contrast, are not aware that Encolpius and Giton are aboard ship, so the report of their dreams cannot hide an ulterior motive. And yet, if Lichas and Tryphaena can experience god-sent dreams, it seems arbitrary to doubt Quartilla's dream just because she is manipulative; thus, I believe that the burden of proof lies with those who view the dream as fictitious. One might observe that Quartilla's dream is not confirmed to be true in the text; but this is due to the nature of the dream: it offers instruction regarding a cure, not a premonition. That is, it does not predict anything that can be borne out, such as the double-dream of Lichas and Tryphaena. Krage-lund 1989, 439-440, 445-446 believes that all of the dreams are to be understood in Epicurean terms by the reader; that is, they are self-generated erotic wish-fulfillments, not god-sent. Harris 2003, 29 believes the dream-dream of Lichas and Tryphaena to be god-sent.

³¹ *tam superstitione oratione Trypaena mutata... / 'Tryphaena was so moved by the superstition in [Lichas'] harangue...'* (106,4).

³² See Harrison 2000, 247; Kirichenko 2010, 138; and Libby 2011, 304.

³³ Edsall 1996, 202-219.

Asinius Marcellus dupes Lucius with his ‘degraded mysteries’.³⁴ Nevertheless, when Mithras and Asinius receive god-sent dreams it regards their religious duties, whereas Lucius’ final dream from Osiris deals only with his fame in the law court, which contrasts the materialistic concerns of this *pastophorus* with the pure asceticism of Mithras.³⁵ I shall use Edsall’s model as a base for my own discussion of the priests, adding to it where I can and modifying it so as to shift the focus of the satire towards Lucius’ relationship with the gods.

The criticism levelled against Mithras that supposedly points to satire concerns his inspired speech and the apparent cost of his initiation rites.³⁶ Mithras has been likened to the Syrian priests due to his breathlessness after his divinely inspired speech to Lucius (11,16,1), which recalls the frenzied breathing of a Syrian priest before he makes his false confession (8,27,6).³⁷ Even if the intratext is deliberate, several factors indicate disparity between the two priests rather than parity.³⁸ That the priest of the Dea Syria is feigning ecstatic possession is beyond doubt, but the difference for Mithras is that he has already been shown to have Isis’ favour since she instructs him in his dream (11,6,3; 11,13,1). Furthermore, Mithras’ very words prove this divine favour in that his speech is entirely accurate—Lucius has been a victim of his curiosity. Therefore, this is not an attempt by Mithras to dupe Lucius or the crowd by feigning divine possession.

Mithras has also been said to betray an anti-intellectual sentiment in this speech.³⁹ When contrasted with Apuleius’ own learning, this is meant to signal that the priest is a figure of ridicule. Such a conclusion, however, stretches Mithras’ words.

‘Nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles delapsus voluptates, curiositatis inprosperae sinistrum praemium reportasti.’
(11,15,1)

‘Neither your lineage, nor even your social position, nor even the learning in which you flourish has benefited you in any way; but having sunk to

³⁴ The quotes are from *ibid.* 212 and 216, respectively.

³⁵ Edsall accepts the god-sent status of the dreams in Book 11, *ibid.* 201, 203.

³⁶ The accusation that Mithras manipulates Lucius’ dreams (see Weiss 1998, 86) can be set aside due to the high priest’s belief in god-sent dreams, which is evident from his first double-dream with Lucius.

³⁷ Libby 2011, 303.

³⁸ Edsall 1996, 207 argues for a contrast; cf. Griffiths 1975, 29 and *GCA* 1985, 252, 287.

³⁹ Weiss 1998, 92; Van Nuffelen 2011, 97.

slavish pleasures on the hazardous path of inexperienced youth, you have won the perverse reward of your ruinous curiosity.’

What the high priest is actually saying is that Lucius had all the advantages of birth, position, and education (i.e. things that usually benefit people), but his curiosity was so strong that it overrode even these positive attributes and led to him becoming an ass. Mithras no more condemns education than he does noble birth or social position. Far more suspicious is Mithras’ call for Lucius to ‘submit to the voluntary yoke of service’ (*ministerii iugum subi voluntarium*; 11,15,5), the wording of which cannot but recall Lucius’ negative experience as a beast of burden. This expression indeed foreshadows Lucius’ relationship to the gods in the latter half of Book 11 (cf. *iugum subeo*; 11,30,1). But in making this recommendation, Mithras acts in accordance with Isis’ command that Lucius worship her until his last breath (11,6,5). This does not expose Mithras as a fraudulent priest like those of the Dea Syria.

The cost of Lucius’ initiation is said to connect Mithras to the Syrian priests, but several points undermine this suggestion. First, Lucius pays for his initiation not in full but only as much as he is able to give (11,24,6). Second, Lucius states that he was not able to reward Mithras as much as he deserved (11,25,7).⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Lucius is not impoverished by the initiation because he can afford to relocate to Rome afterwards.⁴¹ Moreover, since the details of the amount Lucius was able to give are lacking, these passages, though admitting expense, do not depict a cult mercilessly exploiting Lucius for everything he has.⁴² Indeed, Mithras is not annoyed by Lucius’ humble offering; on the contrary, the two embrace and Lucius now views the high priest as a father (*meum iam parentem*). Thus, the last image of Mithras displays a degree of affection not to be found with Asinius in Rome.

This positive presentation of Mithras’ character is aided by an absence of satirical physical description. Whereas other priests in the *Metamorphoses* receive arguably unflattering, stereotypical descriptions, Mithras is given no

⁴⁰ Edsall 1996, 213.

⁴¹ Kirichenko 2010, 139 sees the first initiation as all but bankrupting a fabulously wealthy Lucius. Yet it is the cost of Lucius’ travels and living expenses in Rome that has reduced his ‘modest inheritance’ (*viriculas patrimonii*; 11,28,1).

⁴² The cost of the initiation—which would benefit a satirical presentation—is not included. This contrasts with the precise amounts of other financial transactions (1,24,4; 8,25,6). It thus seems that when the focus is upon exorbitant price, the price is given.

physical description other than that he wears linen and carries a sistrum.⁴³ Indeed, Mithras is only broadly associated with a satirical theme in that he takes payment for his services; yet he is content to receive less reward than was agreed, which contrasts with the large fee required for the services of Zatchlas (2,28,1). Furthermore, whilst the expenses of initiation are included, they are laid down by Isis (11,22,3), not demanded by Mithras. Therefore, it is difficult to maintain that Mithras is to be understood as an insincere, greedy, or inept priest of a type whom the reader is to understand as being satirised.

By contrast, the characterisation of Asinius is dubious at best. This is most evident in his name, status, and deformity. The name ‘Asinius’ is significant to Lucius because he believes that it is a favourable omen relating to his re-transformation (11,27,7). This conclusion, however, recalls Lucius’ trait of misapprehension since the name could just as easily refer to his original transformation from man into ass (symbolising his foolishness), thus becoming a name of ill omen.⁴⁴ Indeed, that the name recalls the animal which is so hateful to Isis (11,6,2) creates uncertainty about his suitability.

This uncertainty is reinforced by Asinius’ rank. As a *pastophorus*, Asinius is significantly lower in status than Mithras the *summus sacerdos*.⁴⁵ Fittingly, Asinius is shown only to hang garlands around the statue of Osiris (in his dream at 11,27,9), whereas Mithras actually conducts a public ceremony (11,16,6). Egelhaaf-Gaiser notes that the elevation of a *pastophorus* to the role of a priest (i.e. functioning as a *mystagogue*) is strange, but attributes this to literary licence, suggesting that Asinius anticipates ‘the final image of the bald-headed Lucius on the board of the college of *pastophori*’.⁴⁶ Of course, if one views Asinius as an inadequate figure, then this identification becomes

⁴³ Diophanes is described as ‘tall and slightly swarthy’ (*procerus et suffuscus*; 2,13,1), Zatchlas as ‘shaven-headed’ (*deraso capite*; 2,28,2), and Philebus as ‘bald’ and ‘effeminate’ (*calvum, cinaedum*; 8,24,2); for a discussion of these priests, see Edsall 1996, 169–183, 193–200. Satirised Eastern priests are depicted as bald, such as the wig-wearing Alexander (Lucian *Alex.* 59) and the Egyptian priest Pancrates, who is ‘shaven-headed, dressed in linen, ever thoughtful, speaks accented Greek, has a snub-nose, protruding lips, and quite skinny legs.’ (‘ἔξυρμημένον, ἐν ὀθνίοις, ἀεὶ νοήμονα, οὐ καθαρῶς ἑλληνίζοντα, ἐπιμήκη, σιμόν, πρόχειλον, ὑπόλεπτον τὰ σκέλη.’ Lucian *Philops.* 34). For the stigma attached to baldness, see Winkler 1985, 225–227 and Kirichenko 2010, 35–36.

⁴⁴ Ahl 1985, 151–152 believes that the name is a ‘subversive implication that Lucius could now be making an ass of himself in a rather different way.’ See Nicolini 2012, 29–30 for wordplay in the use of the term *reformationis*.

⁴⁵ Griffiths 1975, 265–266. In addition to *sacerdos*, Mithras is referred to as *summus sacerdos* (11,16,6; 11,20,1), *sacerdos maximus* (11,17,1), *primarium sacerdotem* (11,21,2), and *sacerdotem praecipuum* (11,22,3).

⁴⁶ Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012, 53.

uncomplimentary for Lucius.⁴⁷ Indeed, a clue to Asinius' character could lie in the role of the *pastophorus* as a collector of alms—that is, the taking of material wealth as a measure of religious devotion.⁴⁸

The most striking detail of Asinius' characterisation, however, is his deformity. The left ankle of Asinius is 'slightly twisted' (*paululum reflexo*) causing him to walk with a limp (11,27,5). It is therefore surprising that he holds a priestly position at all, since priests were required to be pure of body and mind.⁴⁹ In the *Metamorphoses*, the adjective *purus* is used (without irony) only in association with the cult of Isis (11,10,1; 11,16,6; 11,21,9).⁵⁰ Associating purity with the cult of Isis only to have a deformed figure initiate Lucius is as conspicuous as it is disconcerting. In classical literature, deformity and mobility impairment often indicate a negative character.⁵¹ Significantly, Plutarch describes Typhon (Seth) as the part of the body that is 'destructible, diseased and disorderly' (τὸ ἐπίκηρον καὶ νοσῶδες καὶ ταρακτικὸν; *De Is. et Os.* 49,371b).⁵² When one considers this along with Asinius' name, a cognate to the animal that symbolises Typhon, then it seems that Osiris has made an unfit choice for Asinius to succeed Mithras. Thus when combined, Asinius' ominous name, lower status, and conspicuous deformity diminish the standard of Lucius' religious experience.

Importantly, a detail near the conclusion of Psyche's adventure relates to both Asinius' name as well as his deformity. Having been sent on a quest to the Underworld by Venus, Psyche is informed that she will encounter 'a lame,

⁴⁷ For Lucius as a possible charlatan, see note 6, above.

⁴⁸ The entry for *pastophori* in the Lewis-Short Latin Lexicon reads: 'a kind of priests who carried about the images of their deities in a little shrine for the purpose of collecting alms.' Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012, 49-50, and note 29 has recently argued against the etymology of *pastophorus* ('carrier of the *παστόρις*') to mean 'carrier of the shrine' or 'carrier of the fabric'. Regardless of its meaning, she concludes that the evidence points to 'a lower-grade function on the border between temple servants and the higher-ranking priests.'

⁴⁹ Griffiths 1975, 333; Winkler 1985, 218.

⁵⁰ *GCA* 1985, 289.

⁵¹ Figures with deformed or injured feet and/or a limp include Thersites (Hom. *Il.* 2,217-219), Philoctetes (Soph. *Phil.* 1326-1328), ill-omened Oedipus ('Swollen Foot'), and Claudius (Sen. *Apocol.* 1). Gout sufferers are common in satire because the condition was linked to unrestrained appetites in food and lust; cf. Pers. 3,64; 5,57; Petron. *Sat.* 64,3; 96,4; 140,6; Lucian *Gall.* 23; *Philops.* 6-7; Sen. *Ep.* 24,16; Catull. 71. Altogether, these examples display the negative moral connotations of the deformity and mobility impairment that Asinius bears. For a discussion of physiognomy in the *Metamorphoses*, see Keulen 2006, 168-202.

⁵² Translation by F. C. Babbitt 1936.

wood-carrying ass with a similarly disabled driver' (*claudum asinum lignorum gerulum cum agasone simili*; 6,18,4).⁵³ She is instructed to ignore the driver when he asks for her help to pick up sticks. This seemingly harmless (yet somehow perilous), lame duo, consisting of a man and an ass, may anticipate the unthreatening and lame *pastophorus* whose name recalls Lucius' asinine form. The connection is strengthened when one considers that Osiris was the Egyptian god of the dead, and Lucius does meet Asinius on his path to this chthonic god just as Psyche will meet the lame ass and man on her journey to the Underworld. This could serve as warning to a cautious reader that the path Lucius takes by listening to Asinius (and the demanding gods behind him) should be avoided.

In addition to the contrasting presentation of Mithras and Asinius, the initiations of the two priests differ with respect to the dream material preceding them. In the dream featuring Mithras at 11,20, the high priest generously offers gifts to Lucius that represent his returned possessions. But in the dream preceding his third initiation (11,29,4-5), Lucius is told that he must be initiated again to receive a new cloak because his old one is still in Cenchreae (evidently, *this* possession cannot be returned).⁵⁴ For the second initiation, the dream of Asinius placing sacred objects near Lucius' household altar is said to prefigure a banquet Lucius is to provide for the faithful, showing another expense (11,27,1).⁵⁵ Moreover, Asinius is told in his dream that he ought to initiate Lucius because, in doing so, he shall receive a 'great reward' (*grande compendium*; 11,27,9). That money is used to entice him strongly suggests that he does not practice asceticism.⁵⁶ Furthermore, while Isis' dream instruction to Mithras contains detailed and accurate information about Lucius, Osiris' instruction to Asinius is vague and, taken directly, contains incorrect information; Lucius is a Greek from Corinth not a Madauran from North Africa. Nevertheless, since the dream is god-sent, the relevance of this remarkable detail requires closer investigation.

Significantly, Asinius Marcellus was not the first to speak of a poor Madauran man. As can be deduced from the *Apologia*, the prosecution in the

⁵³ The commentators of *GCA* 2004, 502 consider the identification of the lame duo as Ocnus and his donkey to be uncertain. Finkelppearl 1990, 345-346 takes them to be an 'alter-ego' of Lucius the ass. Panayotakis 1997, 29 identifies them as personified abstractions of malignity.

⁵⁴ See note 21, above.

⁵⁵ Griffiths 1975, 270.

⁵⁶ Edsall 1996, 216; cf. Van Mal-Maeder 1997, 103. Compare the *grandi praemio* and the *compendium* that are to be paid for the magical services of Zatchlas and the witch (2,28,1; 9,29,4).

case against Apuleius portrayed him as having once been impoverished and hailing from a backwater town (*Apol.* 17-24).⁵⁷ A backwater hometown would provide few opportunities for advancement and thus carries the connotation that a poor Apuleius left to find advancement at the expense of others; and so, being clever and familiar with the esoteric, he advanced by means of *magia*, which he used to seduce Pudentilla in order to acquire her fortune (cf. *carmina et venena*; *Apol.* 69,4). Before he addresses the charge of being a *magus* proper, Apuleius confronts the accusations of former poverty and a backwater origin sequentially. In true Cynic fashion, he explains that a philosopher cannot be poor because poverty is measured by one's desire for material things—thus a content but poor man is in fact wealthier than a rich man who continually desires more (*Apol.* 20).⁵⁸ For good measure, Apuleius throws the accusations of a backwater origin, greed, and former poverty back against one of the men behind the prosecution, Aemilianus (*Apol.* 23, 24). So it is significant that Asinius, who literally dreams of receiving wealth for initiating Lucius, applies to Lucius two of the things laid against Apuleius by the prosecutor who, according to the *Apologia*, figuratively dreams of receiving reward for prosecuting Apuleius.

Further thematic ties link Aemilianus of the *Apologia* to the *Metamorphoses*. Apuleius claims that Aemilianus is nicknamed 'Charon' because he gained his wealth through the deaths of several relatives (*Apol.* 23). In the tale of Cupid and Psyche, Charon is said to do nothing unpaid (*nec ... quicquam gratuito facit*), hence greed is living amongst the dead (*ergo et inter mortuos avaritia vivit*; 6,18,6). Moreover, Aemilianus is said to have ploughed his

⁵⁷ The name of the hometown, Madauros, is missing from the speech, but was widely known; see August. *Ep.* 102,32; *De civ. D.* 8,14,2; Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 9,13,8; Cassiod. *Inst.* 2,5,10. The temporal relation between the *Apologia* and *Metamorphoses* is slightly contentious. Apuleius' *Apologia* is dated soon after his trial in the winter months of AD158/159; cf. Harrison 2000, 41 and Harrison, Hilton, and Hunink 2001, 12. The *Metamorphoses* is usually thought to have been published after the trial because the work is not mentioned in the *Apologia* and thus appears not to have been used to demonstrate Apuleius' involvement with magic; cf. Kenney 1990, 2, Schlam 1992, 12, Walsh 1999, xix-xx, Harrison 2000, 9-10, and, most decisively, Hunink 2002, 233. Moreover, Lucius' trial at *Met.* 3.1-12 may allude to Apuleius' own court case; see Harrison, Hilton, and Hunink 2001, 21, note 19. Dowden 1994, 419-34 has the *Metamorphoses* published prior to the *Apologia*. Hunink, 2002, 234, suggests that the *Metamorphoses* could have been written earlier in Apuleius' career but not published until after the *Apologia*. My opinion, however, is that the case behind the *Apologia* could have been what initially motivated Apuleius to adapt the original Greek ass-tale, since its narrator—a young man with intellectual pretensions—becomes involved in magic, just as the prosecution claimed Apuleius had done.

⁵⁸ In the *Metamorphoses*, this Cynic sentiment can be found in the words of the last dying brother to the murderous and greedy young nobleman (9,38,2-4).

small plot with one ass (*solus uno asello ... exarabas; Apol.* 23). This links him to the lame driver (with the lame ass), whom Psyche is told to ignore in the Underworld. This duo has already been connected by name and disability with Asinius—the one who, like Aemilianus, mentions Apuleius' homeland and Lucius' poverty. If Aemilianus and Asinius are to be linked by these themes, on top of providing another connection between the *Apologia* and *Metamorphoses*, this would further degrade Asinius' character, distancing him from the ascetic Mithras.

But while Asinius appears to have a defective character in addition to his deformed body, this does not confirm that he is a charlatan priest like Philebus. First, Asinius is unknown to Lucius when he dreams about a second initiation. This shows that Asinius cannot have influenced Lucius' dreams towards receiving initiation, nor who is to perform the rites. Second, Lucius is poor when Asinius meets him and so not a suitable target to con (cf. 11,28,1). The false prophet Alexander, by contrast, dupes a wealthy and superstitious Roman *senex*, Rutilianus (Lucian *Alex.* 30-35), and the Syrian priests travel the country fleecing folk by the townful. It is not until after Lucius' initiations that he wins fame and an income as a lawyer—gaining financial security after being duped makes little sense if the object is to show a victim of clerical deceit.

Moreover, the typical traits from the satire of avaricious, foreign priests are difficult to assign to Asinius. First, Asinius has a Roman name, thus is not foreign. Second, like Mithras, his shaven-head is not highlighted. Third, while Asinius is promised by Osiris to be greatly rewarded for initiating Lucius, the reader is not shown the value of this 'great reward' or him even receiving it; the priests of the Dea Syria, by contrast, are shown to greedily accept their ill-gotten gains (*avidis animis conradentes omnia*, 8,28,6; 9,8,1; 9,8,6). Most importantly, it is Lucius' dreams—not the priests—that instruct him about, and later justify, his initiations.⁵⁹ Yet if the priests were the target of the satire, being avaricious and manipulative, one would expect that they would be in focus during each step along the path of Lucius' induction. On the contrary, the priestly element is entirely missing from the third initiation—there is no double-dream with the priest who will initiate him. It is only Lucius and his god-sent dreams that are highlighted.

This divine element creates the biggest problem with the view that Book 11 is a satire on priestly corruption and youthful gullibility. The satire in Books 8-9 and in Lucian's *Alexander* act as an exposé of disreputable and impious behaviour; but if the gods are complicit in a religious scam, this changes the very nature of such satire. For example, if the Syrian goddess was

⁵⁹ Carlisle 2008, 231.

shown to be instructing Philebus and his troupe, then the priests would cease to be corrupt or false; instead, they would be men carrying out the orders of a thieving goddess. Likewise, the satire in *Alexander* would fall flat if the prophet were actually receiving instruction from a god called Glycon. The humour of such satire lies in the affectation of the priests: they make a grand spectacle of their religious devotion, but they are really thieving degenerates.⁶⁰ They cannot be both obedient to their gods *and* impious thieves because the humour of affectation disappears, the focus instead falling upon the corrupt divinities. Similarly, Lucius—regardless of his previous gullibility—cannot be gullible for obeying what are clearly commands from the gods. And since neither Mithras nor Asinius is shown to benefit personally from initiating Lucius, the focus of the satire must lie elsewhere. The only character to be laid bare to such scrutiny is Lucius.

The intertext of *Metamorphoses* 11,27,9 with *Apologia* 17-24, discussed above, draws a comparison between ‘Apuleius’ and Lucius.⁶¹ The result is not favourable to Lucius. In the *Apologia*, Apuleius defends himself against the charge of *magia* by claiming that his peculiar interests all relate to him being a philosopher.⁶² By contrast, Lucius seeks out magic in a less than intellectual manner (*nimis cupidus*; 2,1,1; 2,6,6).⁶³ Additionally, while Apuleius was falsely accused, Lucius, who *did* use magic, was protected from such accusations by Isis (11,6,4; 11,13,6).⁶⁴ Another point of contrast is Apuleius’ ability to keep a secret. In the *Apologia* he makes a point not to reveal the nature of the objects he received after initiation or the name of the divine king he is said to worship (*Apol.* 55, 64). Lucius, however, lets too much information slip

⁶⁰ On affectation as a key to Lucian’s satiric strategy in *Alexander*, see Branham 1984, 149.

⁶¹ I am here referring to Apuleius as he presents himself in the *Apologia* (see note 70, below).

⁶² Cf. Rives 2003, 325: ‘Apuleius thus makes the case hinge on the distinction between a philosopher and a *magus*.’

⁶³ Unlike Apuleius’ philosophical curiosity, Lucius’ curiosity is indiscriminate (cf. 1,2,6). For the notion of positive and negative curiosity in antiquity, see Kirichenko 2008, 340-345.

⁶⁴ By contrast, Loukios does have to defend himself as if in court (Ps.-Lucian *Asinus* 54-55). Note that Apuleius’ posthumous reputation as a *magus* contradicts his own denial of magical practices in his defence speech, a point which Augustine uses against those who claim that Apuleius worked miracles (August. *Ep.* 137,13; 138,19). Nonetheless, Augustine views Apuleius as a magician because he revered *daemones*, which Augustine believes to be the source of pagan magic. For Augustine’s treatment of Apuleius as philosopher and magician, see Gaisser 2008, 29-36. Winter 2006, 97-106 argues against the idea that Apuleius’ reputation and knowledge of magic (as displayed by the *Apologia*) betrays occult leanings.

when relating his first initiation (11,23,6).⁶⁵ Regarding appearances, Apuleius counters the accusation of being handsome and using a mirror by emphasising his unkempt appearance (*Apol.* 4), all while demonstrating his polymathy during his speech.⁶⁶ Significantly, Apuleius attributes Lucius with good looks (1,23,3; 2,2,9) and yet leaves him full of character flaws (curiosity, gluttony, anger, and lust).⁶⁷ Indeed, Keulen views Lucius as the type of immoral man from Apuleius' *de Platone*, with his unquenchable thirst for pleasure, lack of self-knowledge, and fixation on appearances (*De dog. Plat.* 2,16 [242-243]).⁶⁸ Similarly, Kenney argues that Lucius does not gain wisdom in Book 11.⁶⁹ Thus, the identification of Apuleius and Lucius at 11,27,9, rather than showing unity, fixes Lucius as Apuleius' fictional alter-ego who is but a debased parody of the original.⁷⁰

In addition to the contrast of 'Apuleius' and Lucius, the *Apologia* and *Metamorphoses* differ in their treatment of the relationship between philosophy and religion. Van Nuffelen indicates that in the *Apologia*, religion and philosophy are intrinsically linked, whereas in the *Metamorphoses*, religion is devoid of philosophy.⁷¹ Indeed, he goes on to state that, like Plutarch in *de Iside*, Apuleius' *Apologia* advocates the use of philosophy to check religion, which

⁶⁵ Cf. Weiss 1998, 100; Schmeling and Montiglio 2006, 39; Van Nuffelen 2011, 95; Harrison 2012, 82-83. Even Griffiths 1975, 308 admits that Lucius has said too much. In addition, while Apuleius was initiated into many cults (*Apol.* 55), Photis merely flatters Lucius that he is (*sacris pluribus initiatus*; 3,15,4); cf. Winkler 1985, 319, note 77.

⁶⁶ Apuleius elsewhere says that appearance is of little consequence; cf. *De dog. Plat.* 2,22 [251].

⁶⁷ Keulen 2006, 192 sees a connection between a handsome Lucius and the beautiful yet ignoble stepmother in Book 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 193-194. This immoral man has an unquenchable thirst for all sorts of pleasures and cannot see true beauty due to his fixation on surface appearances; he also lacks self-knowledge. Cf. *Apul. De deo Soc.* 23 [172-175]. Kirichenko 2010, 140 links Lucius' fixation on the strange letters of the sacred books (11,22,7-8) with his fixation on the embroidered *Olympiaca stola* (11,24,3), betraying misplaced importance on surface detail.

⁶⁹ Kenney 2003, 177.

⁷⁰ Cf. Heiserman 1977, 149-151. Kenney 2003, 187-189 suggests Lucius' religious experience is a parodic reworking of Apuleius' own, making Lucius an alter-ego. Apuleius' presentation of himself in the *Apologia* is, like all sophistic self-presentations, carefully designed for a specific purpose, here being to win over the philosophical judge (and, to a lesser extent, the audience). I believe that the *Metamorphoses* forms an extension of this same sophistic self-presentation in that Apuleius, the author who has displayed his learning and literary artistry throughout, contrasts himself with Lucius, the comic *scholasticus* cum narrating *pastophorus*. Apuleius thus puts himself forward as the ideal philosopher in the *Apologia* (as the defendant, in contrast with the prosecutor) and in the *Metamorphoses* (as the author, in contrast with the narrating protagonist).

⁷¹ Van Nuffelen 2011, 91-93; cf. Rives 2003, 326.

helps to avoid superstition.⁷² Unfortunately for Lucius, superstition (not to mention its requisite, unbalanced emotion) is crucial to his characterisation in Book 11.

Lucius' emotions are a driving force behind his initiations and his whole religious experience.⁷³ Finkelpearl accepts the opposition to Lucius' philosophical progress when compared to the Platonic approach to Isiac religion in Plutarch.⁷⁴ Instead, she argues that, in Book 11, Apuleius presents the mystical nature of Isiac religion using an emotional approach.⁷⁵ A positive interpretation of Lucius' emotionally driven religious awakening, however, is problematic because Lucius' emotional volatility is crucial to his initiation into magic as well as his initiations into the cult of Isis.⁷⁶ Preceding Lucius' botched initiation into magic, he encounters the animated wineskins (2,32). This leads to the humiliating ordeal of the Risus festival, during and after which he is an emotional wreck.⁷⁷ A similar emotional rollercoaster can be seen to start when Lucius flees from the amphitheatre in Corinth and ends with him as a joyful *pastophorus* in Rome.⁷⁸

This illustrates a connection between Lucius' strong and constantly shifting emotions and his various initiations. In addition, it reinforces the idea of Lucius' intense emotional—one might say irrational—link to Isis. This is exactly the same connection that Lucius had to Photis. Indeed, Lucius uses the same phrase, *inremunerabili beneficio* ('an unrepayable favour'), with regards to Photis using magic on him (3,22,5) as he does when thanking Isis for saving

⁷² Van Nuffelen 2011, 91 cites Apuleius' use of Plato to reject cult statues made with anything other than wood (cf. *Apul. Apol.* 65; *Pl. Leg.* 955E).

⁷³ Cf. Weiss 1998, 94.

⁷⁴ Finkelpearl 2012, 194-196.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 196-199, 201.

⁷⁶ Contrast Frangoulidis 2008, 175-203, who argues that the lead up to and initiation into the mysteries of Isis (Book 11) is a successful and positive version of the failed initiation into magic in Book 3.

⁷⁷ Lucius displays various emotions before and after the Risus festival: daring (2,32,4-5); anguish and bewilderment (3,1); wretchedness and boldness (3,4); sorrow and indignity (3,7); gloom and dumbfoundedness (3,9); downheartedness, fear, and misery (3,10); fear and embarrassment (3,12); curiosity and eagerness (3,14); lust (3,20,3-4); amazement (3,22,1); anger and resentment (3,26). Cf. Weiss 1998, 94, note 20.

⁷⁸ Lucius exhibits familiar emotionality before and after his initiations: shame and fear (10,34); awe and tears (11,1); misery (11,3,1); fear and joy (11,7); joy and fear (11,12); amazement and great joy (11,14); doubt (11,19,3); overeagerness (11,21,2); calmness (11,22,1); thankfulness (11,24,5-6); confusion and eagerness (11,27); anxiety (11,28,2); astonishment and doubt (11,29,); joy (11,30,5).

him from his asinine state (11,24,5). Thus, Lucius demonstrates no development but merely fastens on a divine recipient for his emotional attachment.⁷⁹ Such overbearing emotion was discouraged by philosophers, including Apuleius (*De dog. Plat.* 2,4 [225]). One might object that Lucius displays genuine joy at 11,30, which contrasts with his former misery. Seneca, however, indicates that misplaced joy disrupts a rational mind by contrasting the frivolous joy of the masses with the profound joy of philosophy.⁸⁰

Overpowering emotion was not just viewed negatively for subordinating rational thought, but also because, with respect to the gods, it led to superstition.⁸¹ Indeed, Van Nuffelen states that, to Plutarch, ‘superstition is essentially a misinterpretation of religion by the uneducated.’⁸² This would suggest that, despite his schooling, Lucius approaches religion in an uneducated manner—just as he approached magic. For instance, when Lucius rents an apartment in the temple precinct, he does so in order to be ‘an ever-present worshipper of the great deity’ (*numinis magni cultor inseparabilis*; 11,19,1). Plutarch states that whilst shrines and altars are sanctuaries even to social outcasts, they are places of fear and hope to the superstitious man, who cannot be parted from them (*De sup.* 4,166e-f). Indeed, the idea of slavery to Isis in order to escape Blind Fortuna is fundamental to Lucius’ religious experience. Likewise, the themes of emotion, enslavement, and escape from distress, all feature heavily in the superstitious man (*De sup.* 5,167B). Furthermore, Lucius’ two most prevalent emotions in Book 11, awe and anxiety, are united in the superstitious man (*De sup.* 3,165d).

Indeed, fear is the reason why Lucius never disregards a dream command, hence his obedience when selling his clothes to pay for his second initiation (11,28,5) and his madness (*insania*) whilst fretting about his third initiation (11,29,3).⁸³ Lucius often discusses his dreams with others (11,27,1, 11,27,6; 11,30,1), which is stereotypical behaviour of the superstitious man (Thphr.

⁷⁹ For continuity between Lucius’ relationships with Photis and Isis, see Schmeling and Montiglio 2006, 36-39 and Hindermann 2009, 79-82.

⁸⁰ The foundation of a sound mind is not to rejoice in empty things (*Huius fundamentum [sc. bonae mentis] quod sit quaeris? Ne gaudeas vanis*; Sen. *Ep.* 23,1). As such, ‘proper joy is a serious matter’ (*verum gaudium res severa est*; 23,4).

⁸¹ Weiss 1998, 94; cf. Plut. *De sup.* 2,165b-c.

⁸² Van Nuffelen 2011, 96.

⁸³ Cf. May 2006, 316: ‘Isis has fulfilled her function as a saviour already, and the second and third initiations of Lucius may function as a hint for the reader to take the mystery narrative less seriously, and may make him/her understand their function as a tool to reinforce the reader’s impression that Lucius is still as credulous as before.’ In my view, the second and third initiations show that Lucius is willing to placate his demanding gods not due to gullibility but out of fear, just like the superstitious man.

Char. 16,11). When he has doubts, it is his dreams that provide the answers. For instance, when he is afraid that he will be unable to remain chaste and guard against life's misfortunes, he does not come to an answer using sound reasoning; instead, Isis sends him a dream (11,20) that fires his desire to be initiated (11,21,2).⁸⁴ Later, when Lucius doubts his own priests, he does not overcome these suspicions with rational thinking; instead, he is instructed by the 'friendly phantom' not to fear and is offered a bizarre explanation (11,29,4-5).⁸⁵ Similarly, Lucius does not decide to go to Rome after self-deliberation; instead, the goddess commands him and he hastily obliges (11,26,1). Thus, Lucius' dependence on his dreams and fear to disappoint the gods becomes clear. Likewise, the superstitious man is governed by unfounded fear both waking and sleeping (*De sup.* 3,165E-F; 3,166C).⁸⁶

Lucius' mode of worship also reflects that of the unreflective, superstitious man. When Lucius tells his story to his relatives (11,19,1), he does so not because he has reflected upon it, but 'out of courtesy' (*ex officio*), performing this 'quickly' (*pro<pere>*)⁸⁷ so that he may return to his 'greatest pleasure' (*gratissimum*). That is, 'gazing upon' (*conspectum*) Isis. Moreover, having wept melodramatically with his own face pressed to the statue of Isis' feet (11,24,7), he promises to keep the vision of the goddess's face close to his heart (11,25,6). Plutarch, however, considers the focus upon mere representations of gods as the product of superstition (*De sup.* 6,167d-e).

Another trait found in the superstitious man is the need for purification with seawater (Theoph. *Char.* 16,13).⁸⁸ Indeed, Plutarch makes a special mention of those who act irrationally because of their dreams, including dipping themselves in the ocean (*De sup.* 3,165f-166a). Significantly, after waking from sleep and being awed by sight of the moon, Lucius' first act is to purify himself in the sea, making sure to dip himself seven times because of the number's significance to Pythagoras (11,1,4).⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Lateiner 2000, 329 views Lucius' celibacy under Isis as the goddess's means of binding him to her.

⁸⁵ See note 21, above.

⁸⁶ On the programmatic (metaliterary) meaning of superstitious fear as a typical feature of Apuleian storytellers (tormented by 'visions'), see *GCA* 2007, 46-48.

⁸⁷ I here follow the emendation by Kronenburg (1892. 'Ad Apuleium Madauremsem', *Erasmiani Gymn. Progr. Litt.*, Rotterdam, 1-32), adopted by the Budé edition of Robertson and Vallette (Paris, 1945) and the Loeb edition of Hanson (Cambridge, Massachusetts – London, 1989).

⁸⁸ Keulen 2003, 126.

⁸⁹ Harrison 2000, 240 and 2012, 77 sees humour in an ass ritualistically bathing in the sea. In this context, the Pythagorean detail comes across as more trite and superstitious than pious.

Therefore, it is clear that many traits of the superstitious man can be found in Lucius. Yet one of the central aspects, as presented by Plutarch, appears to be absent from Lucius' characterisation. This is the unhappiness that arises from the superstitious man's secret hatred and fear of the gods, to whom he attributes every evil he suffers (Plut. *De sup.* 11,170e). The explanation for this lies in the identification of two *Fortunae*, one Blind and the other Seeing (11,15,3). Naturally, Lucius reserves his hatred for the former as the cause of his ills, whereas the latter he views as his saviour.⁹⁰ Yet by blaming Fortuna, Lucius still conforms to the trait of the superstitious man in taking no responsibility for the actions that led to his misfortunes.⁹¹ Moreover, whilst Lucius no longer fears Blind Fortuna, he is still god-fearing when it comes to Isis and Osiris, obeying their every command because he fears losing their support.

The account of Lucius, then, portrays the superstitious man from his own perspective. Consequently, Isis and Osiris are presented as the gods of the superstitious man come to life. So, whilst Lucius' dreams are truly god-sent, they help to depict an irrational man whose continued emotionality reveals a lack of philosophical depth. Equally, Lucius is as much a slave to the gods as is the superstitious man, except that by being saved from his (literal) slavery as an ass, he actually enjoys his new (figurative) slavery as an Isiac. Thus the gods have ensnared him more comprehensively than Photis ever could and, like Pamphile's apprentice, they have transformed him into something he did not anticipate becoming: a superstitious *pastophorus*. The cure for Lucius' asshood was roses; it seems that, as far as Plutarch is concerned, the cure for his superstitious enslavement would be a bouquet of philosophical insights. For despite his schooling (and ancestry), Lucius approaches religion in an uneducated manner—just as he had approached magic.

Thus, Lucius and Apuleius are related, but they are not the same. This is the humour behind the *Madaurensis* passage: it evokes the 'real' Apuleius, but this only highlights the inadequacy of the fictional version. According to the *Apologia*, Apuleius is interested in substance, whereas Lucius is interested in mere appearances. This is evident when Lucius goes out of his way to purchase the books containing Egyptian hieroglyphics with the help of friends (*meos socios coemenda procuro*; 11,23,1). He is driven by his curiosity for

⁹⁰ Cf. 11,2,4: *ac si quod offensum numen* (a clear allusion to the *saevitia* of Fortuna), and also 11,1,3: *fato ... satiatio*, which also refers to his suffering at the hands of the goddess Fortuna.

⁹¹ Rather than taking responsibility for convincing Photis to show him magic, Lucius still blames her for his transformation (11,20,6), despite Mithras telling him he was at fault (11,15,1); cf. Smith 1993, 1593-1594. Socrates likewise blames Fortuna for his pitiable state, revealing his own superstitious nature (1,7,1); cf. Keulen 2003, 120, 123.

religious items and will pay money he does not have for them, betraying the value he places on the trappings of the cult rather than the deeper meaning.⁹² This is important when considering Lucius' dubious second and third initiations, for which he shaves his head, and the last image of him as a bald *pastophorus* happily going about his duties (11,30,5). In this way, Lucius merely imitates the image of a wise and ascetic Isiac priest (cf. Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 3,352c). One might object that Lucius joyfully sporting a shaven head would have caused great embarrassment to the shy Lucius who blushes in front of his aunt (2,2,7), indicating that he has changed. Indeed, Lucius has changed, but only in that he now values baldness as a member of the Isiac priesthood. And yet his pride in publicly asserting this fact is a clear demonstration that, contrary to the idea that Lucius distinguishes appearance from what is important, his appearance is *all important* to him.⁹³ Thus Lucius' decision to display his shaven pate is not a conscious rejection of former lust for Photis or her hair, because at no point has he reflected upon this.⁹⁴ To Lucius, his stereotypically bald head gives him status in the eyes of the god and goddess he so adores. He has not reached enlightenment; he just wants everyone to know that he is one of the chosen of Isis and Osiris.⁹⁵ The final image of Lucius as a proudly bald *pastophorus* symbolises his whole conversion; outwardly he has changed—he is a priest and a successful lawyer who has divine sponsors—but internally Lucius is still the same because he values the trappings of the cult, such as the hieroglyphic holy books (11,23,1), his robes of initiation (11,24,3), and now his new tonsure. The ultimate irony is that his insight has remained unchanged as a bald *pastophorus* just as it remained unchanged

⁹² Note that Mithras produces the books from a secret part of the temple (*de opertis adyti*) and that they contained 'unknown letters' (*litteris ignorabilibus*; 11,22,8). Since Lucius is still uninitiated, he is clearly one of those whose curiosity drives him to learn about them (*curiositate profanorum*). Lucius focuses on the exotic form of the writing, rather than its meaning; cf. Kirichenko 2010, 136.

⁹³ In Egypt, it was common for bald priests to wear wigs during secular life, see Fletcher 2004, 100-101; cf. James and O'Brien 2006, 246, also note 17. If this were the case in Rome, this would confirm that Apuleius is making a point of Lucius publicly displaying his bald head. Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012, 47-49 discusses the shaven-headed busts of 'Scipio' as depicting Isiac priests. These portraits, if they indeed represent Isiac priests, do not confirm that these men did not wear wigs during secular activities, just that the busts highlight the religious aspect of their character.

⁹⁴ Cf. van Mal-Maeder 1997, 107. For seeing Lucius as rejecting *serviles voluptates* at 11,30, cf. Englert and Long 1973, 239; Smith 2009, 56-57; Frangoulidis 2008, 201-202.

⁹⁵ Lucius is told by the *clemens imago* that he should consider himself blessed to be initiated three times while most are not even initiated once (11,29,4). Cf. also 11,16, where Lucius relishes in his minor celebrity status after his transformation.

when he transformed into an ass (3,26,1). Consequently, he is no wiser and appears to be something that he is not.⁹⁶

The divine experience of Lucius, therefore, is instrumental to the satire of un-philosophical approaches to religion.⁹⁷ Fittingly, the gods are also debased. For example, Plutarch says that the name 'Isis' is Greek, implying a link to the verb εἰδέναι 'to know' (*De Is. et Os.* 2,351f).⁹⁸ But in the *Metamorphoses*, Isis does not require Lucius to attain knowledge; she only desires the same slavish worship and obedience which he had earlier offered to Photis (11,6,5; 3,22,5).⁹⁹ This desire for irrational devotion rather than wise followers is reflected in the decision to favour an (internally) unchanged Lucius and to select an unworthy Asinius to succeed the wise Mithras. For while Lucius is too caught up in surface details to perceive the difference between these priests, the gods, who should be able to tell the difference, do not appear to care so long as Lucius remains a devout, un-philosophical servant.

In summary, this paper has endeavoured to illustrate that interpreting a satire of priestly deceit and religious gullibility in Book 11 is flawed. First, the double-dreams of Lucius and his priests have to be true to make sense of the many concurrences between dream and reality. Second, this involvement of the gods removes the key ingredient to satire involving deceitful priests, namely, religious affectation. Third, viewing Lucius as naively believing self-generated dreams creates inconsistency between Apuleius employing meaningless dreams in Book 11 and meaningful dreams in Books 1-10. Instead, if one understands a Petronian use of literary dreams throughout, Apuleius is freed of this charge. Moreover, the use of god-sent dreams is entirely in keeping with a narrative of magical and miraculous transformations.

The dreams themselves are not necessary to illustrate Lucius' eagerness for initiation, for he and Mithras explicitly note this enthusiasm (11,21). Instead, the dreams form part of a larger strategy to characterise Lucius as superstitious for his un-philosophical approach to religion and the gods as deficient for not requiring anything better. Thus, the doubt Lucius experiences when he is called for a third initiation is not intended to flag the priests as

⁹⁶ Lucius' comment at 9,13,5 that he has broader knowledge (*multiscium*) due to his time as an ass, even if he is less wise (*minus prudentem*) than Odysseus, is undercut by him proceeding to relate a tale 'better than the others' (*prae ceteris*; 9,14,1), which concerns adultery and results in his master's death. Sharing such stories illustrates that Lucius is still a busybody, which is a trait of negative curiosity; cf. Kirichenko 2008, 357.

⁹⁷ Van Nuffelen 2011, 97 and note 54.

⁹⁸ Also noted by Frangoulidis 2008, 173 and Kirichenko 2010, 151.

⁹⁹ cf. Van Nuffelen 2011, 97. Van der Stockt 2012, 179-180 illustrates that Isis in the *Metamorphoses* is different in role and significance to the Isis from Plutarch's *De Iside*.

untrustworthy but to show that Lucius would sooner question his priests than his dreams, which—unsurprisingly—replace rational thought in providing the answer. Similarly, the financial theme, previously understood to hint at Lucius' exploitation, is better explained as demonstrating priestly decline through Lucius' (and Asinius') non-ascetic concerns, reflected in the presentation of his secular career alongside his religious one. Therefore, one should not be surprised that Lucius misconstrues Mithras' speech about his unbound curiosity exposing him to the vicissitudes of wicked Fortune because he fails to condemn his past behaviour throughout the narrative and still blames Photis (and Fortuna) for his transformation.

Thus, the satire has a philosophical point behind the ironic presentation of Lucius' religious 'awakening'. For, as well as offering entertainment, Apuleius advocates a philosophical approach to Isiac religion similar to Plutarch in *De Iside*. Apuleius, however, makes his point by portraying its opposite, namely, an unenlightened approach based upon dream-visions and a lack of introspection. And yet, in the end, Lucius finds success in the law court and in his promotion to the rank of *pastophorus*. It is thus a nightmarish vision of a world in which financial input without philosophical development can secure religious advancement even in the eyes of the gods. Indeed, the choice to supplant the exemplary Mithras with the lame and suspiciously mercenary Asinius, not to mention the unexpected and poorly justified second and third initiations, suggests that Isis and Osiris are no less flawed than the other characters of the novel. Equally, the choice of showing special favour to Lucius illustrates that they care not for piety so much as irrational and obsessive worship—just as the superstitious man is obsessed by his relationship with the divine, dictating his every action. These, then, represent the gods of the superstitious man. Moreover, the revelation that Lucius 'is' Apuleius is tainted because it is included in the dream of the unworthy Asinius. The comparison to Apuleius in the *Apologia* fixes Lucius as his debased alter-ego. Thus, the joy Lucius finds is misplaced—he has not achieved an enlightened state. This is what informs his baldness and reveals that he, like a charlatan, wishes to affect the appearance of the Isiac priest due to its perceived importance to him. In the end, Apuleius demonstrates to the reader that the philosophising ass indeed makes for an asinine philosopher.¹⁰⁰

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