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# **Dress, Appearance and Perception in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses***

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Latin in the University of Auckland, 2012.



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## Abstract

This thesis consists of a literary investigation into the link between physical appearance and perception in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius of Madaura, a novel written in Latin in the middle of the second century A.D. Applying a broadly Platonist analytical methodology to the *Metamorphoses*, I aim to show how Apuleius' philosophical education, influenced by the literary climate of the time in which he lived and wrote, known as the Second Sophistic, appropriated the function of physical appearance (including clothing) in the novel, directing it towards an allegorical end. The hypothesis is that a character's physical appearance ultimately reveals the truth about him, howsoever hard he may strive to conceal his identity through disguise. Clothing is the garment of the soul and reflects personal identity.

Perception is instrumental in accessing true character; however, only those characters that have the correct perception are able to do so. The working model for perception in the novel is Socratic and can be sourced in Apuleius' philosophical works, heavily influenced by the ideas of Plato. By applying this Socratic notion of perception to the characters in the *Metamorphoses* we are empowered to gauge their perceptive faculties.

The reader's perception, too, is activated by Apuleius' narrative strategy and his use of literary allusion for the purposes of character creation and interpretation. This purpose accounts for the high level of allusive material in the novel of many kinds: poetic, embracing Greek and Latin epic, Roman satire and love elegy; and prose, including physiognomy, philosophy, historiography and declamation and motifs commonly occurring in the Greek romance and Latin prose traditions.

The allegorical function of dress and appearance as reflecting soul-types is present all throughout the novel but looks towards the final book where philosophical allegory appears in the guise of Isiac religion. Book 11 submits the question of personal identity to knowledge of a higher being: knowing oneself and others, the preoccupation of the first ten books of the *Metamorphoses*, is prerequisite to knowing the Platonic God, and is only achieved through the correct training of the perceptive faculties.

## Acknowledgements

To numerous people I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. Obviously to my supervisor, Dr Marcus Wilson, who has uncondescendingly supported me throughout all the trials of writing a doctoral thesis, and through all the concomitant responsibilities of a doctoral candidate (namely, writing and presenting conference papers), and in addition to his numerous responsibilities as Head of Department, lecturer, publisher and supervisor to numerous other postgraduate students, my debt of gratitude is enormous. To my secondary supervisor, Professor Anne McKay, whose unobtrusive and quiet support has often gone unacknowledged and underappreciated by me, the strength of my appreciation far outweighs my expression of it.

Further thanks on the academic front also go to Dr Abigail Dawson for her insights into aspects of physiognomy; to Dr Dougal Blyth for his help with Plato's language; to Simon Oswald, now at Harvard, also for help with the Greek of Plato; to Miriam Bissett for help with understanding Greek vases; and to Christopher Summer for assistance with translations of academic German texts. Especial thanks go to Professor Egelhaaf-Gaiser of the University of Göttingen for generously allowing me to consult an unpublished article.

To the University of Auckland thanks are due for its generous Doctoral Scholarship, for funds to attend the ICAN IV Conference (Lisbon, 2008), the Genre Conference (Sydney, 2010) and the Dining Divinely Conference (Christchurch, New Zealand, 2010).

To the support staff of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Auckland, I also wish to acknowledge their part in the completion of my thesis, especially Pauline Brill, Josanne Blyth, Berthe Aouad, and John Young, whose administrative skill is matched only by their willingness to go out of their way to help.

This thesis would not have been brought to completion without the personal support of numerous others. It goes without saying that my immediate family heads this list, especially my brother, Jason. After them come Maud Cahill, supplier of academic books and much moral support, Bryan Clifford and Roger Liddle. Thank you.

## Foreword

The text of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* I use is that of the Loeb Classical Library with a translation by Hanson in two volumes, 1989. Where I draw attention to Hanson's text, I give date, volume and page number, thus: 1989, 2: 14. Where I diverge from his text, this will be explicitly stated. All English translations of the *Metamorphoses* are those of Hanson, unless otherwise stated. For Apuleius' other works, I refer to the texts in the Belles Lettres series. In this series, Apuleius' *Apologia* and *Florida* are edited and translated by Paul Vallette (1971), his philosophical works (*De Deo Socratis*, *De Platone et eius Dogmate*, *De Mundo*) and fragments are submitted to editing, translation and commentary by Jean Beaujeu (1973). The three philosophical works are presented in the thesis as *DDS*, *DPD* and *DM*. Apuleius' defence speech will be referenced as the *Apologia* and his other oratorical work, the *Florida*, will be referenced as *Florida*. For the sake of clarity, I retain the book division of *De Platone et eius Dogmate* as followed by Beaujeu, but I use Arabic numerals. For the *De Deo Socratis* and the *De Mundo* I simply follow the Arabic numerals in the margin of the page. Again, any divergences from these editions will be specified. All emphasis in bold type of passages quoted in Apuleius' works is mine, unless otherwise stated.

In contradistinction to the practice of Hanson, for the sake of clarity, I use single quotation marks ('...') where a character other than Lucius is speaking or relating the words of another character again.

## Abbreviations

*DDS: De Deo Socratis* (Apuleius)

*DM: De Mundo* (Apuleius)

*DPD: De Platone et eius Dogmate* (Apuleius)

*GCA: Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius*

*GCN: Groningen Colloquia on the Novel*

*LHS: Leumann, Hoffmann, Szantyr, Lateinische Grammatik* (1972-79, München: Beck).

*LS: Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon* (1996, Oxford: Oxford University Press).

*OCD: Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (1996, Oxford: Oxford University Press).

*OLD: Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1982, Oxford: Clarendon Press).

*TLG: Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

*TLL: Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900 -, Leipzig: Teubner).

## Introduction

This thesis consists of an investigation into bodily appearance and dress, expressed as costume and disguise, in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, a novel written in the Latin language in the second century A.D. There are numerous examples of appearance and dress in the novel which form the basis of my investigation. Following the order in which they arise in the novel, these are: the noble demeanour of Lucius, the rags of Socrates and Milo, and the magisterial dress and insignia of Pythias in Book 1; the facial covering of Thelyphron and the Isiac dress of Zatchlas in Book 2; the asinine form of Lucius, which is the result of his transformation, in Book 3; Thrasyleon's bear disguise and Chryseros' rags in Book 4; Cupid's "cloak of invisibility" in Books 4 and 5; Thrasyllus' "disguise" and the cross-dressing of Tlepolemus and Plotina in Book 7; the mock-ritual costume of the *cinaedi* in Book 8; the rags of the mill-slaves and the ghost in Book 9; the colourful costumed pantomime in Book 10; and, finally, in Book 11, there are a number of manifestations of costume beginning with the dress of Isis, then moving on to the carnivalesque costumes of the *anteludia*, the stately ritual procession of the Isiac initiates in their vestments, the retransformation of Lucius into human form and his initiation garment, and the non-textile epiphany of Osiris to Lucius, which concludes the novel.

Attendant upon clothing and appearance in the *Metamorphoses* is perception,<sup>1</sup> as dress can be perceived to function in two ways: it both *conceals* true character in its primary function as disguise and *reveals* true character in its secondary function as, what I shall term, "garment of the soul" (i.e. *habitus*).<sup>2</sup> The secondary function of clothing is not, however, of less

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, my concern is with (Socratic) perception as a critical faculty, and not with ancient notions of perception as sight, or an optic faculty. For an analysis of the ancient theories of perception as the reception of images in the ancient novel, see Morales (2004) for the Greek romances, especially Achilles Tatius, and for the Roman novel, see Slater (1997), 89-105 (although he discusses at greater length the novel of Petronius).

<sup>2</sup> I shall on occasion throughout the thesis refer to dress in its capacity as reflective of personal nature, as *habitus*, a Latin word which could be used equally for outer appearance and the state of the soul or mind, although the word need not arise in the text for clothing or physical appearance to work as *habitus*. For both referents the etymology is the same, deriving from *habeo*. I use the word *habitus* with this meaning sparingly by reason of the word's modern accretions as a result of its appropriation by sociologists and anthropologists

importance than its primary function, but is dependent on the perceptual acuity of the beholder. Apuleius was far from insensitive to the question of perception, especially with regard to outer appearance. He writes of it in several of his works and imbues his narrative work, the *Metamorphoses*, with stories which project it to the forefront of the reader's imagination. It is within the nexus of perception and the body, clothed and unclothed, that the overarching philosophical thrust of the novel is most keenly apprehended, as it comes to dominate many aspects of the narration and brings with it a further set of questions concerning the reception and interpretation of identity through the clothed or unclothed body.

Perception, aided by Apuleius' highly descriptive and allusive narrative style, is the key ingredient in understanding this dual function of appearance: for every indication that a costume or an item of costume is assumed as an aspect of disguise with a view to obscuring personal identity, there is as much evidence in the text that the same costume or item thereof *reveals* essential information about the wearer, howsoever much he or she may not have intended this. Perception is the factor in the novel that allows both functions of dress to emerge simultaneously, or, in some cases, gradually. When the latter is the case, pieces of information imparted by certain characters in different places in the narrative as it progresses, give a different reading to costume, one that questions the interpretation given it by other characters. Perception in the novel finally undergoes a metamorphosis too, as the varying currents of perception run into the same channel in Book 11, the final book, where one perception of dress and appearance – that of Lucius, conflated with the author, Apuleius - prevails over all preceding readings. Narration is therefore important to the theme of clothing and appearance in the *Metamorphoses* through the aspect of narratorial perception.

The stories that make up the novel as a whole are brought to us through the main narrator, Lucius. Other narrators occur in the novel, both in the main narrative of Lucius' experiences and in those which are not Lucius' own - the

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in response to the critical function it was given by these, especially (but not exclusively) Pierre Bourdieu in the twentieth century. For more on the concept of *habitus*, both ancient and modern and its role in the *Metamorphoses*, see the Appendix and Chapters 2 and 4.

embedded narratives - but Lucius is the character who has lived through the experiences that form the main narrative and it is he who receives the embedded tales; hence, all narration in the novel ultimately, in spite of seeming lapses and the persona of ignorance he occasionally assumes, comes through Lucius. The knowledge and enlightenment acquired by Lucius as the “I-narrator”, who presents an “auctorial” point of view as the result of having lived through the experiences narrated,<sup>3</sup> is retrospectively imposed on the relation of the stories that make up the novel. This is essential for understanding the transformative role of Book 11. In this book, whatever previously carried negative connotations, like certain colours or colour combinations, acquires a positive reading.

However, the perception of a deeper reality behind intended disguise is no less the prerogative of the reader than of other characters within the novel.<sup>4</sup> It is not only through multiple and successive readings of the novel that the interplay of dress’s two functions – disguise and *habitus* – is recognised. It can be readily accessible upon the first reading alone to the perceptive reader. I also believe the ideal reader of the *Metamorphoses* to be capable of scenting out the subtleties in the novel and perceiving the allusions and intertextual

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<sup>3</sup> For these terms, and the problems related to their usage, see the GCA commentary on Book 9 (1995), 7-12. For the sake of consistency and to avoid complications associated with the application of narratological terms to the *Metamorphoses*, I shall refer to this enlightened narrative voice which imposes itself, as “auctorial Lucius.”

<sup>4</sup> On the demands of the text on the reader, see Svendsen (1978) and Zimmerman (2001), 249-252. At this point, I shall extensively quote Svendsen (1978) who seems to me to sum up the interplay between perception and authoritative narrative quite succinctly (102): “In the prologue the allusions to future action, to autobiographical information, and to literary categories all suggest a ‘retrospective’ narrative and inspire confidence in the reader. Despite his formulaic humility and linguistic disclaimer, the reader senses a highly literate, sophisticated narrator who will exercise control over the ensuing narrative, a control which never occurs ... The reader is exposed to new characters ... *along with* the narrator, and the latter’s perception of those characters, tales and digressions is consistently proved faulty and naïve by succeeding action ... Upon conversion the ‘retrospective’ narrator promised by the prologue reasserts himself, perceives the true significance of his past experience, and interprets it for the reader.” I will state, however, that not all Lucius’ judgments are false or naïve. He can see through the *cinaedi* (8.28-29. See Chapter 7) and he intuitively perceives discrepancies, such as the strange mix of heroic and passive behind the first appearance of Haemus (7.5. See Chapter 6).

echoes that abound therein, not to mention the twists that Apuleius gives to these. This erudite audience may be the kind expected or preferred by Apuleius (or auctorial Lucius) himself.<sup>5</sup> This kind of ancient reader would have been bilingual and steeped in the education which would have allowed him to appreciate the allusive quality of the novel.<sup>6</sup> At this point, it is necessary to discuss the function and manipulation of genre and inter-text in the *Metamorphoses*, as it is often upon recognisable generic motifs that character, clothed and unclothed, is built in the novel.

Other scholars have also chosen to analyse the specimens of costume in the *Metamorphoses* from the perspective of generic influence and allusion. Theatre and the pantomime are indeed two points of departure for the thematic interest of the novel, as well as ancient mime. Lucius' explicit reference to a shift in the narrative mode of a tale he overheard, expressed by the Latin words *soccus* and *cothurnus* referring to comedy and tragedy respectively, can be taken as an explicit acknowledgement of the role of the dramatic genre in the novel.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have highlighted various resonances

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<sup>5</sup> Caprettini (1986) 107, believes that the interjection by the narrator to the *lector optime* in Book 10 refers to an ideal type of reader, the "lettore modello".

<sup>6</sup> The literature on the reading audience of the ancient novel is extensive so I shall restrict reference to a few scholars only. On the vexed question of types of reader appealed to in the novel's prologue, see Zimmerman (2001), 245-255. For arguments which promote the likelihood of a highly literate reading audience for the *Metamorphoses*, see Wesseling (1988), and Harrison, who, by concentrating on the heavily allusive nature of the *Metamorphoses* in a long series of articles on epic allusion in the novel, takes it for granted that its reading audience was highly literate (1990b, 1997, 2009 and see also his book, 2000, 210-259). On the other side of the argument, Gianotti (1986) 108, argues for a less literate but capable reading audience on the evidence of what he perceives to be increased "scholarisation" of the population in the time of the Second Sophistic. Surrounding the issue of readership are attendant considerations, such as the playful and deceptive nature of the text. On this aspect of the novel, see Winkler (1985) *passim* and Graverini and Keulen (2009), 197-217. Although I favour the hypothesis of an erudite reading audience, I will however make the claim that the perceptual basis to readings of character through clothing and appearance is nevertheless accessible to the less erudite reader, due to Apuleius' narrative technique.

<sup>7</sup> 10.2: *Iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam, legere et a socco ad cothurnum ascendere*. The fact that the tale related in Book 10 (10.2-12) is presented as a

throughout the novel from comedy, especially New Comedy and Plautus, but also Aristophanic comedy and Greek tragedy.<sup>8</sup> The influence of pantomime is surely most evident in Book 10, with the enactment of the Judgement of Paris. Lucius goes into much detail describing the costumes to the reader.

The figures of Pythias, Milo and Chryseros and the *cinaedi* are representative of the stuff of Roman satire.<sup>9</sup> The saturation of satiric elements in the novel has led some scholars to interpret it as a satirical novel, a reading which circumscribes Lucius' conversion at the end of the novel within the confines of a satirical narrative; therefore, his conversion is either insincere or shows him to be a dupe.<sup>10</sup> The figure of Socrates in the novel has also been taken as an extension of Lucianic satire.<sup>11</sup>

Roman love elegy also has surfaced as an important generic element,<sup>12</sup> and, of course, epic too has been studied in its relevance to the novel. Epic is often adduced as it is one of the genres that have had most influence on the *Metamorphoses* (as on all the extant ancient novels), especially at the level of characterisation. Homeric epic contains many figures of comparative interest, and traces of Odysseus, the epic wanderer *par excellence*, illumine the rags of Socrates<sup>13</sup> and Tlepolemus,<sup>14</sup> imbuing these characters with epic colouring. Thrasyleon's disguise also evokes epic heroic behaviour, but on a downgraded scale.<sup>15</sup> Ovid's epic poem, the *Metamorphoses*, provides thematic and

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tragedy (*tragoediam; cothurnum*), but ends happily, shows the extent of Apuleius' playfulness, both with regard to genre in his novel and the reader's expectations.

<sup>8</sup> On these influences, see Shanzer (1996); May (2006); Finkelppearl (1991, 1998). Keulen (2003, 2007) perceives the influence of Old Comedy, especially Aristophanes, in the depiction of the figure of Socrates in Book 1.

<sup>9</sup> Pythias: Zimmerman (2006), Keulen (2007); Milo: May (2006), Zimmerman (2006), Keulen (2007); Chryseros: Gianotti (1986); *cinaedi*: Kirichenko (2010).

<sup>10</sup> For van Mal-Maeder (1997b), 197-199, it is because it is Lucius the Sophist speaking at the end of the novel, that his conversion must be deemed insincere.

<sup>11</sup> Keulen (2003, 2007); Zimmerman (2006).

<sup>12</sup> Hindermann (2009, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Montiglio (2007).

<sup>14</sup> Harrison (1990b); Echaliier (2007); Hunter (2008).

<sup>15</sup> Cooper (1980); Frangoulidis (1994); Harrison (1997).

imagistic interest for a study of allusion and intertext in the novel, especially with regard to the essential role of physical transformation.<sup>16</sup>

The attention of other scholars to these particular allusive and intertextual influences on the *Metamorphoses*, has not ignored the innovation Apuleius brings to the material from which he may be inspired. The weight of the preceding literary canon cannot be denied, as other scholars have pointed out; but Apuleius does not adhere strictly to generic frame and/or content, as my analyses of these specimens as they occur in the novel will attempt to prove.<sup>17</sup> The novel's prologue (1.1), in which the speaker sets out to explain the peculiarity of his style, achieved after much difficult labour, can also help to provide a context and a pretext for the recourse had to different genres, in both the Latin and the Greek canon, which may have had a hand in character creation in the novel. The reference to the reed from the Nile with which the novel as a material entity is written<sup>18</sup> may also pre-empt, and provide a narrative pretext for, the eleventh book in which the Egyptian deities Isis and Osiris appear. This triad of creative literary cultures – Greek, Roman and Egyptian – is reflected in the thematic structure of the novel which is built on motifs that can be located in these three literary and cultural incunabula. Yet the sophisticated display of erudition in the novel, of which manifold generic allusion is an essential component, does more than locate Apuleius firmly within the cultural context of the Second Sophistic;<sup>19</sup> genre in Apuleius' novel often functions as part of the mechanism of dress and appearance in their

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<sup>16</sup> For analyses of the influence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on Apuleius' novel, see Stevenson (1934), Sarafov (1976), Bright (1981), Scotti (1982), Bandini (1986), and Graverini (1999).

<sup>17</sup> It is not my intention in this thesis to inquire into the nature of the relationship between Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and the pseudo-Lucianic *Onos*, nor the development of parallel scenes found in the Greek work except insofar as the Greek epitome, as we have it, may serve to reinforce the originality of Apuleius' work, or to confirm the importance given to a theme or idea which occurs in both works by the very fact of its commonality.

<sup>18</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 1.1: *papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam*.

<sup>19</sup> On the tastes of the period known as the Second Sophistic, see Anderson (1993) and Reardon (1971). On Apuleius' place within the cultural context and tradition of the Second Sophistic, see Elsom's doctoral dissertation (1984), Sandy (1997) and Harrison (2000). Harrison goes so far as to say that the *Metamorphoses* are 'a sophist's novel' (210), and disallows any didactic purpose behind the deployment of Isiac and Platonic elements in the novel (259).

relation to perception in the novel, insofar as generic allusion helps to show how physical appearances are perceived and interpreted by other characters in the *Metamorphoses*.

More crucially, as the tragically-styled tale of the wicked step-mother in Book 10 demonstrates so cleverly, what promises to go in one generic direction in the *Metamorphoses*, often goes in another, so terminology and imagery reminiscent of one particular genre do not disqualify readings of the episode based on a different genre. The overarching philosophical vision of Apuleius appropriates the allusive content. Apuleius' longest and most sophisticated work is a novel, a fictional narrative, and not a treatise on Platonist ideas or morality; yet just as the status of the *Metamorphoses* as a work of imaginative and narrative fiction does not preclude the possibility of seeing specimens of, for example, satire in the novel, with the result that the text has been taken for a satirising work, I see no reason why the philosophical elements should not be allowed to steer echoes from other genres in a more ethical direction. Such an acknowledgement is tantamount to saying that it is a philosophising novel, without its being a strictly philosophical novel. This it could not be, otherwise the passages of more philosophical colouring in the novel would be less imaginative and more doctrinaire. But the prologue's promise that the reader will derive enjoyment (*laetaberis*) does not claim that this enjoyment and intellectual delight will come only at the expense of moral profit.

With any discussion of genre in the *Metamorphoses*, it is therefore crucial not to lose sight of Apuleius' neo-Platonist education, as this underpins the structuring of his novel. Apuleius' writings which work explicitly in the philosophical tradition give an ethical flavour to many scenes in the *Metamorphoses* in which costume or bodily appearance arise. Apuleius is merely one of a long line of writers who use clothing to express moral states and philosophical conceits. Seneca the younger provides examples of such expressions, and, nearer to Apuleius' own time and literary culture, Dio Chrysostom can be cited as among those who use clothing to transmit moral ideas, the prototypes of which can be sourced among the works of Plato

himself, Apuleius' professed master.<sup>20</sup> Apuleius' Platonism is part of what is known as Middle Platonism, or Neo-Platonism.<sup>21</sup> This philosophical tradition is eclectic, therefore more suited to the purposes of a narrative fiction concerning the journey of a flawed soul towards self-knowledge, howsoever incomplete this may be. My approach to the role of the clothed body in the novel is supported by this eclecticism, as it refutes the more stringent body-soul opposition that is indicative of Platonism in its original form. The concept of an avowedly free interdependence of body and soul, rather than a rigid opposition between the two, can substantiate the vision of the body as expressive as the truth of the soul, as the garment of the soul.<sup>22</sup> Apuleius selects materials which harmonise with his own philosophical beliefs.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Apuleius' eclectic *reception* of Plato does not overrule the primary position of Plato as teacher,<sup>24</sup> so it is still to Plato's works that we must turn for an appreciation of how they have been adapted by Apuleius into his philosophical scheme, and the *Metamorphoses*.

Also related to the themes which form the basis of analysis is the phenomenon which gives the novel its title - metamorphosis. Metamorphosis as a change of form can be used in a way which is similar to the function of disguise, to conceal personal identity, yet it also reveals an inherent aspect of

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<sup>20</sup> For examples of the metaphorical value of sartorial imagery in Seneca, see Chapters 4 and 7. For Dio Chrysostom and the reception of Plato, see Chapter 7. In Chapter 3 can be found further discussion of metaphorical uses of sartorial terms. *Laciniosa*, which appears in Apuleius' *Apologia* (21), is one of these. As Butler and Owen point out (1983, 59), this metaphorical meaning of the word is late. They quote Tertullian to testify to this (*adversus Marcionem* 4.1 and 29: *laciniosae vitae et implicitae*). Apuleius' influence on Tertullian's work on the Greek mantle, *De Pallio*, has been noted by several scholars. For the fullest treatment of the *De Pallio* and Apuleius' influence on it, see Hunink (2005).

<sup>21</sup> Starting from the works of Plato, philosophers of a later brand of Platonism added elements drawn from Aristotle, the Stoics, Neo-Pythagoreans (Dillon, 1977, 43-51) and possibly even the Gnostics (Dowden, 1998, 3-11) but individual Middle Platonists also articulated aspects of Platonism in their own way. From this mixture they created their own eclectic system.

<sup>22</sup> For more on this, see chapter 2 and the Appendix.

<sup>23</sup> Finamore (2006) 33.

<sup>24</sup> Apuleius refers to himself as a specifically Platonist thinker in the *Apologia*, 10.6: *Platonico philosopho*.

character, previously invisible to the spectator.<sup>25</sup> Hence, metamorphosis is a change in the body as the garment of the soul.

Within this “Aristotelising” Middle Platonism was a place for physiognomy.<sup>26</sup> The science of physiognomy was not the exclusive privilege of those whose inculturation had included a high level of philosophy,<sup>27</sup> and it may have been practised differently by those for whom it had the status of something less than a science, or a pseudo-science.<sup>28</sup> Physiognomy must not be overlooked, as this underpins the function of costume and disguise in the *Metamorphoses* as revelatory of personal character. The ancient corpus of physiognomic treatises, especially those of *Anonymus Latinus* and pseudo-Aristotle,<sup>29</sup> will be drawn on to show how this works, but other bodily qualities which do not occur in the physiognomies will also be examined in their function as marker of personal character.

In addition to clothing and physical appearance, there are other techniques in the novel for disclosing character identity. One of these is the “speaking name”. Often a character’s name conveys an inherent trait or expresses the essence of his/her personal identity, whether directly or by irony, so it is often revealing to analyse the function of dress, especially disguise, and bodily appearance in relation to a character’s name. The name always tells the truth in a way which is often lost on other characters.

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<sup>25</sup> I also apply the term metamorphosis more loosely to the *Metamorphoses* to refer to a change of appearance made without the intercession of magic, such as Thrasyleon’s “transformation” into a bear (4.15), or, physical change on a smaller scale, such as Telyphron’s facial mutilation at the hands of a witch (2.30).

<sup>26</sup> On the “Aristotelising” (“*aristotelizzante*”) form of this tradition of Platonism, see Danini quoted in Gianotti (1986) 21.

<sup>27</sup> Keulen (2006) 172.

<sup>28</sup> Reardon (1971), 243-248, has a whole section looking at the place of physiognomy in the second and third centuries A.D. as a pseudo-science and as an aspect of the desire at the time, of finding a meaning behind natural phenomena.

<sup>29</sup> These are *Anonymus Latinus*, pseudo-Aristotle, Polemon, and Adamantius the Sophist. On the difficult issue of the dates of the physiognomic texts, see Swain (2007) under the various ancient authors. Analysis of scenes in the *Metamorphoses* from the perspective of physiognomic teachings occurs especially in Chapters 2 and 7.

There is the danger of pushing the promotion of an overarching philosophical vision in Apuleius' novel too far and seeing a philosophical point being made at every turn. Indeed, although in section 20 of the *Florida* Apuleius admits to embracing every type of literature known at the time and justifies doing this on the ground that philosophers in the past often embraced non-philosophical genres, whilst capping his list with an emphatic stress on the inexhaustibility (hence, superiority) of philosophy,<sup>30</sup> nowhere does he explicitly state that he has combined these genres in one work. On the other side of the argument, there is a risk of overlooking the moral depth of a novel replete with entertaining stories. Any concern with the mixing of serious literature and light literature is unwarranted for a writer like Apuleius. A precedent for the mixing of high and low modes already existed in the literary canon, but this fusion flourished as never before in the second century A.D.<sup>31</sup> Middle Platonism admitted therapeutic value to the telling of tales. Galen, the Platonizing physician contemporaneous with Apuleius, even took up and elaborated the conception of the healing power of story-telling.<sup>32</sup> Long before Apuleius' time, Plato himself had invented stories and defended those myths which inculcated virtue while charming the spirit.<sup>33</sup> The irrefutable fact that the *Metamorphoses* is a novel and not a philosophical treatise, does not therefore rule out the likelihood that philosophy underpins the novel's structure.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Apuleius, *Florida*, 20, 4-6.

<sup>31</sup> On the mixing of the serious with the comic in ancient literature, known as *spoudogeloion* (or *spoudaiogeloion*), see Giangrande (1972). On its frequent use in the literature of the second century A.D., see Anderson (1993). On *spoudogeloion* with particular reference to the *Metamorphoses*, see Schlam (1992) and the review of Schlam's book by Farrell (1993).

<sup>32</sup> Galen, *De Sanitate Tuenda* 1.6, 19-21. See also Schlam (1992) 14.

<sup>33</sup> Plato, *Charmides* 157A (a passage of which is quoted by Apuleius in the *Apologia*, 26) and *Phaedo* 77E. See also Schlam (1992) 13-14.

<sup>34</sup> I refer the reader to Portogalli (1963), Gianotti (1986) 17ff, Elsom (1984) 151, and Moreschini (1993) for only some of the scholars who believe that a more philosophical approach to the novel has value. Sandy (1997) speaks authoritatively of the confusion of Apuleius' literary personae: the philosopher and the *belle-lettrist* are never too far away from each other. I also draw the reader's attention to the insightful remarks made by Citati (1990) 165.

As I see it, Apuleius' unique spirit and talent would recoil from any kind of doctrinaire treatment of his novel. Apuleius would require rather more broad-mindedness from his reader. For a man so imbued with philosophical thought in almost every aspect of his life, like Apuleius, it may be difficult to completely put off the philosopher's mantle howsoever lightly it may sit on his shoulders when he undertakes to pen a literary narrative. The philosophy of the *Metamorphoses* is of a literary kind, yet accessible to the reader (both ancient and modern) who perceives by choice or by accident an overarching moral premise to the novel.

Chapter 1 looks at episodes and scenes of the novel where the interdependence of the two linked themes, perception and appearance, comes very close to the surface of the narrative. The tale of Thelyphron's facial disfigurement (2.21-30), Lucius' sermonising at the costumed pantomime (10.30-34), Charite's encounters with Lucius (6.28-29) and Thrasyllus (8.8-13), and, finally, Psyche's sense of confounded loss in the face of ignorance of her husband's identity (5.8, 15, 18-19, 21), all relate to the issue of the perception of identity.

Chapter 2 examines the role of physiognomy and metamorphosis in the novel, and the issues surrounding the representation and reading of complex character, especially Lucius'. Platonic texts and Apuleius' philosophical writings provide the context against which to judge Lucius' human appearance and transformation into a donkey.

Chapter 3 consists of an extended examination into the significance of rags in the *Metamorphoses*, beginning with the first ragged figure we encounter in the novel, Socrates. After first establishing the precise nature of the role of rags on Socrates, the chapter then moves on to encompass other ragged figures occurring later in the novel whose ragged dress can be located within the same nexus of meaning as Socrates' rags. These figures are Milo, Chryseros, the mill slaves and the ghost who appears in Book 9.

Chapter 4 applies analysis to magisterial dress in the *Metamorphoses*, by focussing on the magisterial garment and insignia of Pythias (1.24-25), and, to a lesser but no less indicative degree, the magistrates who sit in on Lucius' mock trial in Hypata (3.1-11). Pythias' dress and insignia reflect his magisterial

*habitus*, both inner (his irascible nature, suited to his rank) and outer (his costume and lictors). The function of the magistrates' insignia in this episode approximates the modern, sociological notion of *habitus*, since they come to reflect embedded cultural values.

Chapter 5 consists of a brief study of the flawed perception of the disguise of the robber Thrasyleon (and his equally flawed self-perception) by his fellow robbers, who mistake truth of identity for illusion as a result of their own lack of self-knowledge (4.13-21). The disguise in this case is a bear-pelt.

Chapter 6 takes a fresh and close look at the Tlepolemus/Haemus episode (7.4-13; 8.1-14) and embraces a wide-range of preceding texts to present an argument for the character of Tlepolemus as lacking in heroism. Rags on this character reside on a sexually liminal, hence ambivalent, body, and operate rather more within the ambit of transvestism and lack of sexual development than on psychological or social fragmentation. Again, they show the truth of Tlepolemus' nature, lost to most readers of identity, with the exception of Charite and to a lesser degree, Lucius, within the novel.

Chapter 7 presents a study of the figure of the *cinaedus* from the perspective of a higher religious perspective than the one the priests claim to acknowledge and worship (8.24-30). The link between clothing and perception is at its most visible in this episode, as the *cinaedi* use ritual vestment to disguise their true nature whilst promoting a religious persona. The ritual vestments of the *cinaedi* come to reflect their true hedonistic and chaotic nature.

Finally Chapter 8 presents religious clothing in the light of a higher perception which has been an undercurrent in the novel but which surfaces in Book 11 and which both appropriates and transforms the antecedent functions of clothing in the novel. In Book 11 all negative readings of clothing are overturned in favour of a positive interpretation, and any semiological ambivalence in clothing is stabilised.

The Appendix allows more scope to be given to discussion of issues which arise in the thesis but which cannot be further developed in the chapters without risk of excessive divagation. It discusses the function of *habitus* as both word and idea in the *Metamorphoses*, and locates Apuleius' understanding and

usage of it within a literary canon already of long standing by his time. The Appendix looks at functions of dress in the novel without close analysis of specific scenes, but rather more universally considering possible Platonic models for the double role of clothing as *habitus* as well as disguise, and the crucial role of perception (higher and lower) in the *Metamorphoses*. The Appendix also further develops some of the problems concerning physiognomy in the *Metamorphoses* and seeks to resolve these by reference to Apuleius' literary and philosophical eclecticism.

## Chapter 1

### Perception and its Implications with Regard to Appearance

The aim of this first chapter is to establish the link between, on the one hand, dress and appearance in the novel, and, on the other hand, the perception of these, and the consequences of having the correct or incorrect perception, especially with regard to the theme of identity.

Opening this chapter is a broader survey of the nature and function of perception in the novel. Sources for this will be located within Apuleius' own work of a more overtly philosophical nature, such as the *De Deo Socratis (DDS)* and the *De Mundo (DM)*, but also the *Metamorphoses* itself. I will adduce two Platonic texts for what they bring as a support to Apuleius' vision of perception, since the Platonic model is that which he uses himself. These are the *Gorgias* and the *Sophist*. The intention in adducing these Platonic texts is not to claim that Apuleius intended to allude directly to them, but to provide a likely explanation for the *modus operandi* of perception, one based on Apuleius' own Platonist formation, especially in its relation to appearance in the *Metamorphoses*.

The order of the first two episodes studied (Thelyphron, and the Pantomime) tracks the perceptual development of Lucius. The third and fourth episodes under discussion (Charite, Lucius and Thrasyllus; Cupid and Psyche), deal with the issue of perception and its relation to appearances in a more general way, with no specific focus on Lucius' enlightenment in this matter, although, of course, both make an indirect appeal to the reader to consider Lucius' and other characters' ability to form correct judgments pertaining to identity. These episodes also appeal *indirectly* to the reader's perceptive and interpretative faculties. The pantomime is a partial exception to this, as Lucius therein makes a *direct* appeal to the reader. There are other direct appeals to the reader throughout the *Metamorphoses*, made by Lucius, which exert pressure on the reader to impose his perspective on the readings of event and/or character within the novel.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> These direct appeals occur at 1.1 (the Prologue, in the manner of a *captatio benevolentiae*): *lector, intende: laetaberis*; 4.6: *faxo vos ... sentiatis*; 8.24: *scitote qualem*;

The first episode taken up for enquiry into the workings of perception with regard to appearance is the tale of Thelyphron with its emphasis on vigilance and correct vision, with especial concentration on the character Thelyphron whose perceptive faculties are examined. The witches in the tale stand for the forces of magic which can bring about transformations, which are based, ironically, on their sharper insight into identity. The emphasis on sight and vigilance in the episode has relevance directly to Thelyphron but also indirectly to Lucius, who, like Thelyphron, must learn to keep focused on matters that help him towards enlightenment and not be side-tracked by low-level preoccupations, such as magic.

The costumed pantomime in Book 10 and Lucius' reaction to it then form the subject of inquiry, where the emphasis will be on showing how Lucius' perception of clothing and appearance has progressed from a superficial understanding of the link between the inner and the outer man into an explicit acknowledgement of the shocking truth of clothes and appearance as indices of moral character.

Charite will then be examined as modelling the ideal reader of appearance. She is capable of discerning Lucius the man beneath the donkey skin, and of detecting Thrasyllus' persona of loyalty which he adopts to mask his true nature as a dissimulator. This acuity of mental vision also empowers her to avenge her husband's death by turning Thrasyllus' dissembling nature against himself through the medium of disguise.

The chapter will finally be capped by an inquiry into the tale of Cupid and Psyche in that it illustrates the dilemma of being forced to create an

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8.28: *specta denique*; 9.14: *fabulam ... suave comptam ad aures vestras afferi decevi. Et en occipio*; 9.30: *lector scrupulosus ... accipe igitur*; 10.2: *lector optime, scito* (this appeal is disingenuous); 10.33: *Quid ergo miramini, vilissima capita* (this is obviously an apostrophe to his corrupt readers) ... *sed ne quis indignationis meae reprehendat*; 11.3: *Eius mirandam speciem ad vos etiam referre conitar*; 11.23: *Igitur audi, sed crede*. At other times, Lucius seeks to keep the reader's critical engagement with the narrative through the use of exclamation or question and indirect appeal, often through the use of the generic second person: 8.22: *Inibi coeptum facinus oppido memorabile narrare cupio*; 9.12-13: *Dii boni, quales illic homunculi ... iam de meo iumentario contubernio quid vel ad quem modum memorem? Quales illi muli senes vel cantherii debiles!*; 10.30: *quam putares Minervam*; 10.32: *lacteos puellos diceres tu Cupidines veros*; 11.29: *Et Hercules*; 10.30: *Nec hercules*.

identity where there are no visible markers of this and where information obtained by other means also leads to perceptual confusion, thereby creating identity confusion. The dependence of identity on perception of appearances is foremost among the themes of this tale.

## Perception

Apuleius' ideas about perception are inherited from his avowed master, Plato,<sup>36</sup> ideas replicated in Apuleius' philosophical works. One way of speaking of perception in Latin that is relevant to the *Metamorphoses* is to use the word *acies*, a word which arises in the novel in Thelyphron's tale (2.22). *Acies* is used of vision arising both from the eyes (*de oculis*) and the mind, vision at a psychological level, which we can comfortably equate with perception (*cf. TLL: de facultate acriter et distincte percipiendi animo*).<sup>37</sup> In a passage of the *Florida* where he speaks of the acuity of vision of the eagle and its advantages, Apuleius makes a distinction between the two types of vision, referring to the sight of the mind (*mentis acies*) as a distinctly Socratic manner of seeing - that is, judging - men and identity. In this passage from the *Florida*, the subject of consideration is a beautiful boy (*Florida*, 2): *etenim arbitrabatur homines non oculorum, sed mentis acie et animi obtutu considerandos*. Contrarily to the eagle, man has not been endowed with the capacity to see things from a higher perspective; hence his earthly gaze is dulled (*obtutum istum terrenum redigas et hebetem*) as if by a cloud (*velut nebulam*). Undeniably, the criterion of judgement in the case of the passage in the *Florida* is the boy's speech rather than his appearance. Speech strikes the auditory faculty rather than the ocular, but the inner perception required of the wise man can indubitably be applied with equal validity to the perception of outer bodily form through the eyes and not only speech. Of prime relevance here is Socrates' privileging of the sight of the mind over the sight of the eyes and other sensory apparatus.

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<sup>36</sup> Apuleius speaks openly of his Platonist philosophical persuasion in his *Apologia* (10.6) where he refers to himself as a philosopher of the Platonic persuasion: *Platonico philosopho*.

<sup>37</sup> Definitions of the word *acies* are taken from the *TLL*, Vol. 1, 400-402.

In the *DM*, Apuleius insists that God, the king and father of all things, is visible only to the sight of the mind: *animae oculis; mens aciem suae lucis*.<sup>38</sup> This idea has especial relevance for the end of the *Metamorphoses* where Lucius accedes to a vision of Osiris, and who appears in no guise but that of his essence, only after acquiring enlightenment; but Apuleius develops the idea of the sight of the mind most fully in his work on the god of Socrates, the *De Deo Socratis*, where he talks of those whose judgements, being based on the sight of the mind (*acies mentis*),<sup>39</sup> are made more keenly (*acrius contemplantes*, 121). While this particular statement occurs in a passage discussing invisible deities, its application to the workings of perception in the *Metamorphoses* is not misplaced. Furthermore, the same language occurs later on in the *DDS* in the context of judging mortals, where the notion of Socratic vision receives its fullest treatment. The philosopher Socrates<sup>40</sup> often spoke of the necessity to judge men by their qualities rather than by their appearance which, especially if attractive, counts among the extraneous possessions (*aliena*) of man (*DDS*, 174-175):

Similiter igitur et in hominibus contemplandis noli illa aliena aestimare, sed ipsum hominem penitus considera, ipsum ut meum Socratem pauperem specta. Aliena autem voco, quae parentes pepererunt et quae fortuna largita est. Quorum nihil laudibus Socratis mei admisceo, nullam generositatem, nullam prosapiam, nullos longos natales, nullas invidiosas divitias. Haec enim cuncta, ut dico, aliena sunt. Sat Porthaonio gloriae est, qui talis fuit, ut eius nepotem non puderet. Igitur omnia

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<sup>38</sup> Apuleius, *DM*, 357: *Cum igitur rex omnium et pater, quem tantummodo animae oculis nostrae cogitationes vident*. Later on (358) the notion of God is subsumed into his life-giving force (*vis*): *curatque omnibus occulta vis, nullis oculis obvia, nisi quibus mens aciem suae lucis intendit*. The words *animus* and *anima* appear to be interchangeable in contexts of discussion of the soul.

<sup>39</sup> Beaujeu (1973), 333, remarks that the formula *acies mentis* is Ciceronian, occurring in the *Disputationes Tusculanae* (1.45) and the *De Oratore* (2.160). I note in addition that the relevant passage in the *De Oratore* contains a discussion of Aristotle's keen insight, an insight which allowed him to discern the essential nature of all things. The type of Platonist philosophy which informed Apuleius' philosophical thinking, Neoplatonism, otherwise known as Middle Platonism, was in many respects "Aristotelising" (Danini in Gianotti, 1986, 21).

<sup>40</sup> Socrates is evoked both implicitly and directly in the *Metamorphoses*: implicitly by the depiction of the character named Socrates in Book 1 (1.6) and by direct reference (although he is not mentioned by name) at Book 10 (10.33).

similiter aliena numeres licebit; 'generosus est': parentes laudas. 'Dives est': non credo fortunae. Nec magis ista adnumero: 'validus est': aegritudine fatigabitur. 'Pernix est': stabit in senectute. 'Formosus est': expecta paulisper et non erit. 'At enim bonis artibus doctus et adprime est eruditus et, quantum licet homini, sapiens et boni consultus': tandem aliquando ipsum virum laudas. Hoc enim nec a patre hereditarium est nec a casu pendulum nec a suffragio anniculum nec a corpore caducum nec ab aetate mutabile. Haec omnia meus Socrates habuit et ideo cetera habere contempsit.

The Socratic tone is unmistakable, especially the emphasis on the dire consequences of judging men by externals, consequences discussed by Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*, where he tells the myth pertaining to the judgements of men in the time of Kronos: <sup>41</sup> the trials were being judged badly because those being judged, and the judges, were still alive, which meant having one's soul covered by clothes. Among the clothes Zeus lists are beautiful bodies (hence the body is also a garment), ancestry, and wealth, all things which are taken up by Apuleius in the passage quoted above from the *DDS* whose relevance for the *Metamorphoses*, as well as that of the Platonic prototype from which it takes its shape, is difficult to ignore. Apuleius' novel is replete with characters who take people at their face value, or who have done in the past, and judge them by what they see merely with the sight of their eyes, and are consequently shocked upon discovering that such people may not be as they at first seemed. Clothing, especially where it relates social status, and even physical condition including posture, can hide truths about character. In the *Gorgias*, the perception of the judge is oppressed by the undesirable force of the soul, especially where the latter is unhealthy and knows no nurture. Only those with an enlightened vision can see through outer forms, especially when these are intended as disguise, used for the purposes of deceit, and impersonation. The very tone of the passages in the *DDS* and the *Gorgias* recalls the sermon made to Lucius by the priest in Book 11, <sup>42</sup> in which the

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<sup>41</sup> Plato, *Gorgias*, 524d-525a. For more on the *Gorgias* and its viability as a working model for the *Metamorphoses*, see the Appendix.

<sup>42</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 11.15: 'Multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti. 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.'

priest makes clear that Lucius' social class and learning (*cf.* 1.20: *habitus et habitudo*), were no guarantee against the assaults of wicked, blind Fortune (*Fortunae caecitas...nefariae Fortunae*, 11.15), as these extraneous gifts (*cf. aliena* above) were undermined by his less desirable aspects of character. Lucius' too strong youthful propensity to the attractions of lust, and the misplaced curiosity which obfuscated Lucius' moral vision, make him mistake truth for its semblance and propell him towards his transformation.<sup>43</sup>

Yet even the unclothed soul, that is the soul divested of its body, exhibits the effects of its character or bad judgements. So the soul of Plato's Great King in the *Gorgias* who has perjured himself and committed injustice is a mass of wounds. This is the point at which the passage from the *Gorgias* becomes doubly relevant by its focus on the spectacle of the naked, that is, disembodied soul, scored with marks which reflect its true nature. The passage from the *Gorgias* can be used to argue for a literary positioning of the body as a transparent garment of the soul, so that these marks on the soul become visible through clothing in the world of the novel. Consequently, where the kingly robes of the Great King are expressive of injustice, then they become the garb of the tyrant, and only the unenlightened cannot perceive this subtle shift in meaning.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> For Lucius' curiosity, see 2.6: *At ego curiosus alioquin*; 7.13: *Nam et alias curiosus et tunc latronum captivitatis spectator optabam fieri*; 9.30: *Accipite igitur quem ad modum homo curiosus iumentum faciem sustinens cuncta quae in perniciem pistoris mei gesta sunt cognovi*; 9.42: *curiosus alioquin et inquieti procacitate praeditus asinus*. In Lucius' case, he often admits to his own curiosity. This is a major flaw in his character, as the priest tells him in Book 11 (11.15): *'curiositatis improsperae sinistrum praemium reportasti.'* Of course, curiosity in itself may not be a bad thing, but the type, not to mention the object, of curiosity, may be. On the different types of curiosity, with reference to the *Metamorphoses*, see De Filippo (1990), Deremetz (2002) and Garbugino (2009), especially pages 212-213, where *curiositas* is located within the more complex scheme of the whole novel, which renders the notion positive or negative according to its object and purpose. It is clear in the novel that Lucius came to Hypata seeking something (*cf.* 1.24: *'Quae autem tibi causa peregrinationis huius?'* *'Crastino die scies'* *inquam*), and that this something is related in the novel to magic. Lucius clearly mistook a lower form of enlightenment for the true enlightenment that Isis will bring to him in Book 11. For more on this, see Chapter 8.

<sup>44</sup> Conflating Socrates' speech in the *Gorgias* on the body and soul of the Great King, with what Seneca says (*Epistles*, 114) many centuries later about the ease with which the soul

A discussion about disguise as a category rather of perceptual ignorance than of dress occurs again in Plato's dialogue, the *Sophist*,<sup>45</sup> where Socrates, agreeing with Theodorus that a philosopher is a divine being, points out that it is not much easier to recognise a philosopher than a god. True philosophers appear disguised so as to visit the cities and behold the life of men. Socrates draws on the *Odyssey* for the paradigm of shifting appearances of gods and their purposes for assuming disguise<sup>46</sup> but cuts the paradigm in two by an insertion: gods only appear disguised into all sorts of shapes as a result of the ignorance of the rest of mankind (*διὰ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἄγνοιαν*), an ignorance which distorts man's perception.

Although respectful of his avowed master (Plato), Apuleius develops Platonic ideas in his own way. The judge of character in the *Metamorphoses* is both the characters within the novel, including Lucius on some occasions, and more often, because of his privileged position, the reader. The philosopher of the *Sophist* becomes in the *Metamorphoses* the enlightened spectator of dress and appearance, and even, in Lucius' case, the one in disguise; hence Lucius, in

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can glide from king to tyrant, allows the dual referentiality of dress to become an active participant in the exchange between the perceptions of the judge of dress and the dress itself. All Latin text and English translation of the letters of Seneca used in the thesis are those of Gummere in the Loeb edition (2002).

<sup>45</sup> Plato, *Sophist*, 216C-D. Montiglio's words on the image of the wandering philosopher in the *Sophist* can be used at this point to sum up the function of disguise in the *Metamorphoses* very well: "Plato seems eager to differentiate from the start this figure from the wandering Sophist: later in this dialogue, the wandering Sophist will be called a merchant, while the wandering philosopher is a judge; his disguise, unlike the Sophist's, is not meant to deceive, but depends on the ignorance of the non-philosophers who cannot see his real image. Like a god, the philosopher inhabits too bright a region for mortal eyes to reach" (2000, 97). Apuleius owes this concern with correct perception not only to his neo-Platonist formation, but also to Empedocles, the pre-Socratic (Keulen, 2007, 125). Empedocles taught that sensory perception could lead to knowledge of the Truth, if only correctly used (Fragment 3 D-K). However, ordinary men's perceptions are limited (Fragment 2

DK: *οὕτως οὐτ' ἐπιδερκτὰ τάδ' ἀνδράσιν οὐτ' ἐπακουστά οὔτε νόωι Περιληπτὰ*), an idea which becomes an undercurrent to the novel as early on as the prologue, where Lucius criticises the scepticism of the incredulous recipient of Aristomenes' tale of Socrates (1.3).

<sup>46</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 17. 485-487.

his donkey disguise (*cf.* 9.13: *me suo celatum tegmine*), comes to acknowledge the advantages of his asinine form for the purposes of acquiring knowledge about other characters and their situations, knowledge to which he would not have had access as a man,<sup>47</sup> and to which other characters within the novel are denied access. This privileged access is especially relevant in contexts where the “persona” or assumed identity adopted as part of the disguise retains some link with the true identity of the person who assumes the disguise. The man who is not ignorant will acknowledge that there may *or may not* be a discrepancy between the inner man and the man as he presents himself on the outside.<sup>48</sup> However, very few characters are such enlightened spectators, at least initially; hence the co-existence, sometimes arising gradually, of two readings of dress and appearance in the novel. Where perception is appropriated by the overriding authorial vision, it is more apt to speak of (authorial) perspective, which is merely a higher form of perception within the novel.

Apuleius develops and refines the notion of disguise as merely a false perception of true identity, by collapsing the boundaries that separate disguise from personal nature. That is, the disguise, while intended as such by and for certain characters, nevertheless represents personal truth in some way. The enlightened reader of character, like one forewarned, will be poised to read the outer appearance as expressive of the truth of nature *or* as impersonation. Auctorial Lucius – the enlightened Lucius who has lived through the experiences and is retelling them - controls the whole narrative and allows,

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<sup>47</sup> His first feeble realisation of such an advantage is made at 9.13: *Nec ullum uspiam cruciabilis vitae solacium aderat, nisi quod ingenita mihi curiositate recreabar, dum praesentiam meam parvi facientes libere quae volunt omnes et agunt et loquuntur. Nec immerito priscae poeticae divinus auctor apud Graios summae prudentiae virum monstrare cupiens, multarum civitatum obitu et variorum populorum cognitu summas adeptum virtutes cecinit. Nam et ipse gratas gratias asino meo meministi, quod me suo celatum tegmine variisque fortunis exercitatum, etsi minus prudentem, multiscium reddidit.* Hanson (1989) 2: 151, points out that this is a paraphrase of Homer’s words about Odysseus at the beginning of the *Odyssey* (1.3). Odysseus often travelled in disguise. Lucius, at this point, considers his donkey skin also to be a disguise (*me suo celatum tegmine*).

<sup>48</sup> Good examples of this are the *cinaedi*, whose effeminate dress is used both for ritual *and* personal purposes. *The cinaedi* are studied in Chapter 7.

through his narrative skill, glimpses into the subtle interplay going on between true character and persona through clothing and appearance.

Notwithstanding the difficulties for the characters within the narration in accessing the truth of character, this can still be detected behind the disguise, even if only implicitly. This correct reading of costume may be the result of a perceptually enlightened reading of one character by another or the result of reconsideration of a prior reading of character. Sometimes the two occur together. In the latter case, it is expressed as a presentiment of a breach, such as the situation of Aristomenes vis-à-vis Socrates (1.6), or of Lucius vis-à-vis Pythias (1.25), elucidates. In the latter episode, Lucius' reaction of surprise to Pythias' behaviour in his magisterial costume must be predicated on apprehension of some anomaly, otherwise he would not evince such consternation. Aristomenes' reaction to Socrates' rags (1.6, 8) is a further example of the presentiment of hitherto unrevealed qualities in his friend, whose revelation now expresses a breach in their friendship, expressed through appearance and dress. The reader is less disabled than the novel's characters in the distinguishing of true personal identity from perceived identity, inasmuch as he has access to information not imparted to characters within the text. Embedded narratives, too, contain much cautionary material which the reader receives more fruitfully than the characters in the novel to whom they are often addressed.

## Section 1: Thelyphron

Perception is an important theme in Thelyphron's tale, in Book 2, wherein it surfaces as a type of vision. A cautionary note is sounded against naivety of vision and its corollary, ignorance of self. In this embedded tale, Thelyphron, a guest at Byrrhaena's banquet to which Lucius had been invited, opens by emphasising the fact of his youth (*pupillus ergo*) at the time of the event (2.21). At the time of narration, Thelyphron is trapped in Hypata, unable to return to his home in Miletus because of his facial disfigurement. This disfigurement was inflicted on him by witches in Hypata who had attempted to disfigure a corpse over whom he had been set to watch for a fee. This was a necessary vigil, as the town-crier who alerted Thelyphron to the job tells him, since witches in Hypata were renowned for disfiguring corpses. He then repeats the detailed instructions given him for his role as corpse-guardian by the town-crier, who insisted on the necessity of vigilance against the soporific effects of the witches who appear in the form of animals: should the guardian fall asleep and thus enable the witches to deconstruct the face of the corpse, the witches will replace the parts removed from the corpse with parts of the guardian's face. It transpires that Thelyphron does not recall the warnings of the town-crier when a weasel, really a witch in one of her many forms, enters the cell where he is left with the corpse (2.25). Unfortunately, the corpse had the same name as Thelyphron, so when the witches invoked the name in the expectation that the corpse would arise and come to them, Thelyphron, who had been plunged into a deep sleep by the witch transformed into a weasel, arose in the corpse's place and had his nose and ears sliced off through a key hole by more witches waiting on the other side of the door. These facts, and the truth concerning the manner of death of the corpse, are revealed by the corpse itself the next day (2.30), when wax prostheses put on the living Thelyphron by the witches in place of his own nose and ears, fell off in front of mocking spectators. From that moment on, Thelyphron is obliged to cover his face in public with a *linteolum*, a linen strip, and to let his hair grow long to cover the holes where his ears used to be, thereby concealing his physical disgrace (2.30).

The fact of the tale's setting in a sympotic context changes nothing with regard to the truth-value it contains; whether this is the true story of

Thelyphron's face or whether he is merely telling an entertaining tale and wearing the *linteolum* as a mask for entertainment's sake as a professional *fabulator*<sup>49</sup> is irrelevant for the tale's moral import and cautionary value for Lucius. Thelyphron's name, which is revelatory of his moral feebleness, akin to effeminacy,<sup>50</sup> is tellingly disclosed before Thelyphron undertakes the narration of his tale, when Byrrhaena appeals to him to tell his story in spite of the mockery of the other guests.<sup>51</sup>

### **Thelyphron's *linteolum***

In their analysis of this tale, scholars prefer to focus on the role of the linen facial covering, the *linteolum*, interpreting its place and function in various ways; however, all these readings have a common focal point inasmuch as they interpret the *linteolum* as a type of mask. Therefore, it functions like costume or disguise in the widest meaning of the term, retaining the notion of something put on with intent to conceal. O'Brien who, by focusing on the tale as emanating from Apuleius' philosophical vision sees the linen dressing as a disguise, perceives echoes of certain of Plato's dialogues, especially the *Gorgias* and the *Sophist*.<sup>52</sup> A slightly different reading of the linen facial covering by Ingenkamp, who refers to it as a "face-cloth" ("Waschlappen", 341), a word which also connotes the sissy,<sup>53</sup> adduces a performative interpretation to Thelyphron's presence and facial appearance in the episode.<sup>54</sup> He makes some insightful remarks about the lack of faith placed in Thelyphron's story about his present appearance and situation by the

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<sup>49</sup> On Thelyphron as *fabulator*, see O'Brien (2004), 163 (she also claims that he is "a real sophist", 164), Zimmerman (2008) 149, and Lateiner (2001), 222.

<sup>50</sup> Hanson (1989) 1: 81: "Female-minded"; Winkler (1985) 115: "female animus"; Brotherton (1934) 49: "a man with weak wits"; GCA commentary (2001) 304: "à l'âme féminine", "efféminé"; Kenney (1998) 226: "womanheart". O'Brien (2004) 163, 171-172 says his name means "weak-minded" and has a precedent in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* (111-113: *θηλύφρων*). Ingenkamp (1972) 338 who likewise points to the occurrence of the name in the *Ecclesiazusae*, also invokes the relevance of Vettius Valens.

<sup>51</sup> 2.20: '*Immo, mi Thelyphron, Byrrhaena inquit 'et subsiste paulisper et more tuae urbanitatis fabulam illam tuam remetire.'*

<sup>52</sup> O'Brien (2004) 161-173.

<sup>53</sup> Muret-Sanders (1931), 1096; Langenschedit's Concise German Dictionary (1973), 601.

<sup>54</sup> Ingenkamp (1972).

story's audience inside the text, by adducing the literary support of Martial to demonstrate how Thelyphron's name and mutilation refer rather to his own status as an adulterer and a coward than to the effects of witchcraft.<sup>55</sup> This explains the reason behind the mocking laughter directed at Thelyphron by his fellow diners. Since his fellow-diners know that his mutilation is the result of a punitive measure taken against adulterers, their laughter is directed at Thelyphron as a cowering dissembler. It becomes obvious from Ingenkamp's reading that the facial covering most likely to be associated with the dissembler, a person who seeks to conceal his identity, or aspects thereof, is naturally the mask, and the cowardly man, a veil. In a different take on the importance of this aspect of the linen strip for the episode, Frangoulidis speaks of it as a mask redolent rather of the role-metamorphosis which occurs in the episode.<sup>56</sup> The loosely Freudian reading that he brings to the episode imbues the mutilation of extremities with sexual overtones, as the word *nasus* often served as a metaphor for the male sexual organ;<sup>57</sup> hence, the mutilation of Thelyphron's facial extremities mirrors the "emasculatation" (that is, the cuckoldry) of the dead man of the same name, poisoned by his wife. Although Frangoulidis does not push his argument to this conclusion, Thelyphron's *linteolum* could stand in for a veil and thus be taken to be reflective of aspects of Thelyphron's nature which are akin to effeminacy and inherent in his name. This interpretation sits well with the presence of long hair on Thelyphron, who let his hair grow so as to cover his earless face (2.30).

My own discussion of Thelyphron's tale aims to examine how these arguments can be taken further by inquiring into the face as a mirror conveying the true image of Thelyphron's soul, the linen cloth operating as an extension of it, and how Thelyphron's tale of his physical deformation relates a moral message about perception as much as a warning against magic. From this perspective, the linen facial covering is an expression of Thelyphron's dissimulating nature, one which seeks or has sought to conceal his female or weak spirit (expressed in his name) behind a façade of bravado, rather than merely the mask of the paid performer. Behind the performance lies the truth.

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<sup>55</sup> Martial, *Epigrammata*, 2.83 and 3.85. See also Ingenkamp (1972) 340.

<sup>56</sup> Frangoulidis (2002) 171.

<sup>57</sup> Adams (1982) 35, 98 and Frangoulidis (2002), 170-171.

As the above interpretations by other scholars prove, this reading is inherent in the conjunction of name and facial covering, but these other scholars do not inquire into the perceptual basis of the tale.<sup>58</sup> The co-operation of face and name reinforces the tale's value for understanding the role of perception in interpreting appearance and how it is in turn affected by appearance. It is important to follow the order of the narration itself as this permits an insight into the degree and manner by which appearance unfolds in the story as demanding to be predicated upon perception, that of the reader no less than of the audience of his story.

### **Perception of the Face and Identity**

The instructions given to Thelyphron by the town-crier contain much information that can be deemed relevant to other themes in the novel, especially perception and transformation. Appearance is linked closely to perception in this episode early on at the level of the narrative with the cautionary note made to Thelyphron by the town-crier through whom Thelyphron came to know of the office of guardian of corpses in Hypata. The town-crier attempts to prepare Thelyphron for the job at hand by arming him against the attacks of the witches (2.22). The requisite quality for the position, it appears, is mental fortification, couched in words which relate to perception (2.22):

Perpetem noctem eximie vigilandum est exertis et inconivis oculis semper in cadaver intentis, nec acies usquam devertenda, immo ne obliquanda quidem, quippe cum deterrimae versipelles in quodvis animal ore converso latenter arrepant, ut ipsos etiam oculos Solis et Iustitiae facile frustrentur. Nam et aves et rursum canes et mures, immo vero etiam muscas, induunt. Tunc diris cantaminibus somno custodes obruunt. Nec satis quisquam definire poterit quantas latebras nequissimae mulieres pro libidine sua comminiscuntur. Nec tamen huius tam exitiabilis operae merces amplior quam quaterni vel seni ferme offeruntur aurei. Ehem et – quod paene praeterieram – siqui non integrum corpus mane restituerit, quidquid inde decerptum deminutumque fuerit, id omne de facie sua desecto sarcire compellitur.

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<sup>58</sup> See, for example, the insightful reading of Thelyphron's tale by Winkler (1985), 110-115, who rightly perceives the tale to be about "reflection on self" (115) without however probing with sufficient depth into the text's engagement with this issue at the level of narration.

Although the vision spoken of in the town-crier's explanation is the vision of the eyes, the word *acies* can also express the vision of the mind of which Apuleius speaks in the *Florida* and the *De Mundo*, and which he develops in his fullest treatment of it in the *DDS*.<sup>59</sup> In the context of Thelyphron's tale, it applies to the deeper vision required of whomsoever wishes not to be disarmed by the ever-changing appearance of the witches.

In spite of his rather bold claim to superior vigilance, Thelyphron has to pluck up the courage to undertake the job (2.23): *His cognitis animum commasculo et illic accedens praeconem 'Clamare' inquam 'iam desine. Adest custos paratus.'* The conjunction of *animum* with *commasculo* not only serves to highlight the truth contained in Thelyphron's name but also to focus the reader's attention on the gap that exists between his inherent nature as exemplified in his significant name and the persona of courage Thelyphron presently assumes. His nervousness (*animum commasculo*) and youth (*Pupillus ego*) are offset against the hubristic arrogance with which he seeks to conceal them. Thelyphron's motive of financial gain further shows him to be a man whose necessity for money outweighs his caution.<sup>60</sup> His public persona of bravado is even inflected into his impertinent reply to the crier, when Thelyphron boldly lays claim to the vigilance necessary for the job at hand (2.23): *'Ineptias' inquam 'mihi narras et nugas meras. Vides hominem ferreum et insomnem, certe perspicaciorem ipso Lynceo vel Argo, et oculum totum.'*<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note the different terms used for perception by the two men: the town crier uses the philosophically charged *acies*, whereas Thelyphron's

<sup>59</sup> Apuleius, *Florida*, 2; *DM*, 358; *DDS*, 121, 174-175 (see above, page 17).

<sup>60</sup> 2.21: *Ac dum singula pererrans tenuato admodum viatico paupertati meae fomenta conquiro, conspicio medio foro procerum quendam senem.*

<sup>61</sup> Thelyphron may refer to his custodial abilities in mythical terms, but his knowledge of the stories is merely superficial. In the ancient accounts, Lynceus did not see the Harpies coming, and was inactive when they assaulted Phineus; likewise, it was while Lynceus was on watch that Argus was put to sleep and then mutilated. Even the reader with the most basic grasp of mythology may perceive that Thelyphron is trying to convince himself as much as he is trying to convince the crier. For these comparisons, see Murgatroyd (2004) 494, who also points out that the expression *oculum totum*, used with reference to Argus here, recalls Plautus' *Aulularia*, 555, in which the term is used in a context of inadequate vigilance.

limited understanding of perception keeps it closely tied to the body alone: *oculus*. Thelyphron's reply is totally ironic, as he lacks the sharp perception he lays claim to.

Thelyphron is then led by the *praeco* to the widow whose husband's corpse he is going to guard. He notices the beauty of the woman which is hardly diminished by her grief (*etiam in maerore luculentam proferens faciem*), a remark which, given the recurrence of the motif of the deceitful widow in previous Latin literature,<sup>62</sup> serves not only to foreshadow the woman's infidelity as revealed later by Zatchlas, but also to underscore the importance of facial integrity in the episode, and also, more importantly, how much deceit can be concealed by this. The widow returns his gaze with a warning to fulfil his task well, calling on witnesses and tablets to give visual and written testimony to the physical integrity of her dead husband at that moment. However, not mindful of the warnings of the public-crier, Thelyphron asks for food and wine in addition to the lamp and oil which are reasonable and requisite to his purposes as guard. The widow chastises him for failing to arrange his demeanour to the true nature of the circumstances (2.24): '*Abi' inquit 'fatue, qui in domo funesta cenas et partes requiris...Quin sumis potius loco congruentes luctus et lacrimas?'*' The word used by the widow to express the necessity of matching personal demeanour to circumstances – *sumis* – is from the verb *sumere*, commonly used of the act of dressing as well as of the assumption of a form or demeanour.<sup>63</sup> The word's occurrence in this context foreshadows expressions of the body and especially the face as a mask which occur later in the novel.<sup>64</sup> Ironically, it transpires that this is apt advice not only

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<sup>62</sup> The beauty and respectable demeanour of grieving widows seems to function in the Roman novel as a topos of deceit, as they are later revealed to have been unfaithful to their husbands when they were alive. See also Petronius' *Satyrica* 111, 112.

<sup>63</sup> For its use to express the act of putting on clothes, see the *OLD* (1982) 1870; for the assumption of a form, quality, name or other attribute, as well as a state of mind, disposition or tone, see the *OLD* (1982) 1871.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, the feigned grief and sorrow of Psyche's sisters, 5.11: *comam trahentes et proinde ut merebantur ora lacerantes, simulatos redintegrant fletus*; 5.17: *lacrimisque pressure palpebrarum coactis hoc astu puellam appellant*; Thrasyllus' feigned grief at the death of Tlepolemus, 8.6: *vultu tamen gaudium tegit et frontem asseverat et dolorem simulat*. The use the *cinaedi* make of their effeminate bodies to pass as pious priests

for Thelyphron, who is, at this moment, disassembling, but also for the widow herself, as she is putting on a countenance as part of her public persona as a bereft widow (*proferens faciem*) consistent with the situation and locale. Up to this point in the episode, the entire atmosphere is one of incongruity between demeanour and circumstances, and between inner reality and outer appearance.

### **Witchcraft and Physical Integrity**

Armed with all the necessary equipment for the task at hand, and fully cognizant of what his role demands, Thelyphron begins his vigil by rubbing his eyes, the instrument, as he believes, of vigilance (*perfrictis oculis et obarmatis ad vigiliis*) and attempts to calm his nerves by singing aloud to himself. The deepening darkness of the night, which frightens Thelyphron, does not however obscure from his vision the sight of a small weasel entering the room. Thelyphron notices that the intensity of the weasel's stare is incongruous with its size, which causes him some mental perturbation (2.25): (*mustela*) *contra me constitit optutumque acerrimum in me destituit, ut tantillula animalis prae nimia sui fiducia mihi turbarit animum*. Thelyphron chastises the animal for its improper confidence telling it to return to its own kind (*Quin abis...impurata bestia, teque ad tui similes musculos recondis*, 2.25) recalling the widow's chastisement of Thelyphron for his impropriety of demeanour. If Thelyphron had recalled the warnings of the passer-by and especially the caution to keep his gaze and attention fixed on the object of custody (2.22: *nec acies usquam devertenda, immo ne obliquanda*), he would have known at that moment that the animal was actually a witch in one of her many protean forms.

Thelyphron banishes the creature, but first needs to overcome his discomfiture caused by the animal's unnaturally intense stare; yet it is at that very moment that sleep overwhelms him, precisely because he allowed his vision and focus (*acies*) to be distracted (*devertenda*). As his name suggests, Thelyphron is too weak-minded to stay focussed and withstand the assaults of witch-craft. This aspect of Thelyphron's tale is most relevant to Lucius'

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approximates the function of the mask for concealing purposes (8.27), as does Haemus' capitalising on his prepubescent face to pass for a woman (7.8).

weakness for witch-craft, by which he too will undergo a physical transformation, more drastic than that of Thelyphron.<sup>65</sup>

Thelyphron describes the effects of this magically induced sleep in terms that evoke what was said to him by the passer-by. Just as the witches' transformations elude and delude the watchful eye of Sol and Iustitia, the sleep that they cast on Thelyphron could cause Apollo himself delusion (2.25): *ut ne deus quidem Delphicus ipse facile discerneret duobus nobis iacentibus, quis esset magis mortuus*. By drawing the Delphic god into the story, Thelyphron inadvertently invokes the importance of the "Know thyself" axiom for the episode, although this appears to be ironically missed by him at this moment.<sup>66</sup>

By his own admission, Thelyphron in this state becomes more and more like the dead man whom he set out to watch over. The two men are so like each other, that it is deemed difficult, even for the god, to discern which of the two is more dead (*magis mortuus*) than the other, as if there were degrees of death or life. Thelyphron is as much in need of someone to watch over him as is the corpse (2.25): *Sic inanimis et indigens alio custode paene ibi non eram*. It is at this point that the identities of the two men become merged, with the result that the witches' magic is worked upon the living Thelyphron, the feeble-minded, as both men in the room have the same name. Under the spell of the witches, Thelyphron walks like a lifeless ghost (*in examinis umbrae*

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<sup>65</sup> 2.25: *nec mora cum me somnus profundus in imum barathrum repente demergit*. The "abyss" into which Thelyphron is plunged recalls that produced by Lucius' penchant for magic, as he admits at 2.6: *ut primum artis magicae semper optatum nomen audivi, tantum a cautela Pamphiles afui ut etiam ultro gestirem...et prorsus in ipsum barathrum saltu concito praecipitare*.

<sup>66</sup> The GCA commentary (2001, 345) mentions the Delphic oracle in its connection with Apollo, the god of prophecy and divination. Given the nature of Thelyphron's tale, I believe it is more apt to draw the message of self-introspection to the fore. Lloyd-Jones (1976) 65, refutes this message, claiming that the oracle's meaning is rather "Remember that you are mortal", but I question this on the basis of what Socrates himself says in the *Phaedrus* (229e-230a) where he cautions against investigating (*skopein*) irrelevant things (*allogria*, in this case, the meaning of myth) at the expense of investigating one's own nature. The oracle appears to always convey this sense all throughout the *Metamorphoses*. Where it does recall men's mortality, this too is relevant for Thelyphron, as he dared presume the inner strength to withstand the forces of a lesser kind of divinity, witches.

*modum*, 2.30) up to the door, through which the witches sliced off his nose and his ears in place of those of the dead man (2.30): *per quoddam foramen prosectis naso prius ac mox auribus vicariam pro me lanienam suscitavit*. The dead man over whom Thelyphron has been set to watch both prefigures Thelyphron's own status as a kind of mortuary monument in Hypata and is an expression of his soul which is dead to the philosophical vision which would have prevented his undoing. Thelyphron's enchantment and the witches' surgery on him confuse the boundaries between the living and the dead with the result that, at a deeper level, the two characters named Thelyphron can be read as one ontological reality. Indeed the dead man is a metaphor of the living Thelyphron who, at that moment, did not really know himself or his limits. The temporary suspension in life of the dead Thelyphron is permanently re-enacted on the living Thelyphron.

The deceit enacted upon the body of the living Thelyphron continues until the next day, and miraculously is not uncovered until a dispute arises between the dead man's widow and uncle concerning the means of his death. To resolve the dispute, recourse is had to Zatchlas, an Egyptian prophet and a priest (*Aegyptius propheta primarius; sacerdos*). The description given of Zatchlas matches in several respects that of the priests of the rite of Isis in Book 11.<sup>67</sup> For the first-time reader, who is as yet unaware of what is to come, Zatchlas' priestly vestment is yet a floating signifier - it could be a container of truth or of deception, especially in the light of the story of Diophanes which has just preceded Thelyphron's tale.<sup>68</sup> Importance must be attributed to the fact that Zatchlas' dress, easily recognisable as that of an Isiac initiate,<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> He wears the long linen robe, emblematic of the Isiac priests' and priestesses' purity – 2.28: *linteis amiculis iniectum*, cf. 11.10: *linteae vestis candore puro luminosi... antistites sacrorum procures illi, qui candido linteamine cinctum pectoralem adusque vestigia strictim iniecti*; he has a shaven crown – 2.28: *et adusque deraso capite producit in medium*, cf. 11.10: *hi capillum derasi funditus verticem praenitentes*, 30: *raso capillo collegii vetustissimi*; and Zatchlas' palm-leaf sandals (*palmeis baxeis*) are repeated on Isis' own feet and hinted at in the Isiac procession (11.10,11).

<sup>68</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 2.12-15.

<sup>69</sup> See footnote 67 above. See also the GCA commentary (2001) 374 on the role of impressionistic description in the episode. Mention of the *sistrum* in the old man's plea to the priest (2.28: *sistra Phariaca*) reinforces the rite as that of Isis. For further information on the visibility of the Isiac religion in Apuleius' time, see Gianotti (1986) 94.

interposes itself in a narrative concerned with appearance and perception at a critical moment, the revelation of truth. Closely connected to this fact is the ultimate reality of appearances as symbolised by the role of the corpse named Thelyphron: although the corpse was perfectly intact the next day, against the anxious expectations of Thelyphron when he woke up, the living Thelyphron is only apparently intact; his nose and ears are prosthetic. Only when the truth pertaining to the corpse's demise is revealed through necromancy practised by an Isiac priest, is the truth of the living Thelyphron as a dissembler (an effect of his feeble or sick soul) made visible to the public, howsoever the public may read Thelyphron's disfigured face. People may appear to be respectable, just like the grieving widow; but behind this façade of moral integrity, is a moral fragmentation which must be perceived for justice to be done. Facial integrity is hence linked to moral integrity. Physical integrity or its opposite must be made to serve the ends of truth. This is the function Thelyphron's covered face has in the narrative.

### Perception and Moral Death

The crier's emphatic warning to Thelyphron earlier on in the tale (2.22) to keep his vision focussed on the corpse can therefore be read metaphorically. Apuleius seems to be playing on the double meaning of the word *acies* (sight or vision). Such a double reading imbues the passage in question with an epistemological impetus, thus enabling the reader to read the novel at two levels. It also enables us to make connections between the Thelyphron episode and the themes of curiosity and perception in the *Metamorphoses*. Just as his ocular vision, which was supposed to be fixed on the corpse, was distracted both by the beauty of the widow and the intrusion of the weasel (which was merely a weasel *in appearance*), his mental vision, that is, understanding or perception, is turned away – *devertenda*<sup>70</sup> – or made oblique – *obliquanda* – by

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<sup>70</sup> The occurrence of the gerundival form of *devertere* on this occasion recalls the verb's aptness to the situation of Socrates in Book 1 who claims his troubles began when he turned in at an inn (1.7: *ad quondam cauponam...deverto*) after having been set upon by robbers. It was at this inn that his amorous encounter with Meroe took place. Although in the sense of going off track it is more appropriately transferred to Socrates' distraction from his journey home by the prospect of seeing a show (*spectaculum*), the metaphorical value of the verb is still retained for Socrates' sexual encounter with the inn-keeper. For more on this, see

his curiosity and mental feebleness, the overriding flaws in his character which impeded his focus. The verb *obliquare*, although not associated with perception in Latin, can be used of dissembling speech,<sup>71</sup> also a characteristic of Thelyphron, who lays claim to qualities, such as vigilance, that he does not have. Furthermore, the verb's primary meaning of making something crooked or oblique<sup>72</sup> also makes it applicable to the scene under discussion. Applying the verb to *acies* in this case not only underscores the necessity for Thelyphron to keep his head still with fixed attention on the object of his gaze, but also the importance of not allowing his perception to become confused either by failing to see beyond outer appearances and misread identity (as when he fails to recall the crier's warning about the transformative power of the witches), or having a crooked, bent perception of something, or someone – such as himself.<sup>73</sup>

Embedded in Thelyphron's tale is a message of moral import: the weasel's intense stare and the deconstruction of Thelyphron's face operate as a metaphor for the bewitching, if not benumbing power, of false perception.<sup>74</sup>

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Chapter 3. The moral value of the lesson the word contains in context is also the same for both men.

<sup>71</sup> *TLL*, Volume 9, 99: *ambiguitas, ratio loquendi ambigua et obiecta*. The quote in the *TLL* from Iulius Victor is probably more apt for Thelyphron's case (*Ars Rhetorica*, 22, 435.14): *aliud dicere et aliud velle obliquitas appellatur*.

<sup>72</sup> *TLL*, Volume 9, 99: *obliquum reddere (sc. flectendo, declinando, torquendo)*. The *TLL* understands the passage under discussion from the *Metamorphoses* in a purely physical way (*ibid*): *sc. capite immoto*.

<sup>73</sup> The relevance of this message for the *Metamorphoses*, especially in the context of clothing, is felt most keenly with regard to ritual costume by which the unenlightened spectator can be easily hoodwinked by semblances of the truth. This understanding of the phrase would associate the crier's injunction (*immo ne [acies] obliquanda quidem*) with that of Apuleius himself at the *Florida* (9), where he warns against mistaking one thing for another through deceptive semblances: *et prava similitudo falsos animi habeat, quoniam quaedam, ut saepe dixi, palliata mendicabula obambulant*. For more on this, see my Chapters 7 and 8.

<sup>74</sup> Plutarch tells us that the Egyptians worshipped the weasel because it contained a likeness to the power of the gods (*De Iside et Osiride*, 380F-381A). This can be seen as further proof of how much the witches share in the divine in the novel, whilst still being inferior to it. On the link between weasels and witchcraft in ancient folklore and thought, see Bettini (1998; 2000).

The insistence on vision is important for understanding how the magic is performed in this story. Right vision, or clear perception, is something which Thelyphron lacks. By controlling his soul, the faculty whence perception arises, with a nebula of sleep, the witches, practitioners of evil and de(con)struction, can bring into focus and sharpen Thelyphron's capacity to see things in perspective. Consequently, it is only after his bewitchment that he begins to understand why people react to him in certain ways. His untimely and insensitive remark to the widow is repaid with physical retribution reminiscent, in Thelyphron's mind, of the tearing of clothing and the dismemberment of Pentheus and Orpheus (2.26). Hence a transition is made quite perceptibly from impropriety of speech (another form of incongruity) to dismemberment in such a way as to incur a consequential and moral link between the two. The impact of this realisation is underscored by the terms of reference to it (2.27): *refovens animum...sero reminiscor, merito, consentio*. Additionally, the movement from imperfect perception to a drastic change in appearance when correct perception is acquired cannot be ignored. His womanly fear and youthful arrogance are now exposed to the naked eye, and yet by his facial covering (*linteolo agglutino*) which he puts on for decency's sake (*decenter*) to cover his shame (*dedecus*), he now wears a mask.<sup>75</sup> Yet can we really speak of this mask as of part of a persona? Thelyphron's *linteolum* is a bold assertion of the ugly truth of his nature, an ugliness arising from a sickness in his soul. The connotations of moral sickness in the tale re-appropriate the more surgical connotations of *linteolum* as a surgical dressing.<sup>76</sup> The shameful aspect (*dedecus*) of his nature – a dissembling nature – is therefore written onto his face, whether it is read by all spectators with an understanding of what the true referent is or not.

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<sup>75</sup> *Dedecus* is defined as both a moral and a physical disorder (*OLD*, 1982, 495). The occurrence of the word in this scene from the *Metamorphoses* is associated, in the *OLD*, with the physical referent alone ("shameful or repulsive appearance"). However it is not difficult to see how the moral content of the tale appropriates the moral connotations of *dedecus* ("disgrace, dishonour, shame").

<sup>76</sup> On the medical connotations of the *linteolum*, see Langsow (2000) 344. Rather than speaking of a "medical context" in the Thelyphron episode, I prefer to speak of an environment of moral sickness and disintegration.

## The Face, Perception and (the Deconstruction of) Identity

The story related by Thelyphron revolves around the face, the container of the most important physiognomic indices. No member of the dinner party mentions Thelyphron's face specifically even though the tale is set off by concerns about facial integrity, and Thelyphron's face is not brought into the story until its conclusion. However, clues are scattered throughout the story and also at its inception when attention was drawn to the topic of witches' disfiguration of corpses, and even of the living, at Hypata. At the mere mention of this, all the guests turn to mock Thelyphron who then begins his tale of his guardianship of a corpse. Despite the absence of specific reference to Thelyphron's face, the markers are there. Even within the story, the concern is with the facial integrity of the corpse, also named Thelyphron, over which he has been set to keep guard.

In the town-crier's explanation, the witches' performance of magic both on themselves and on the face of the corpse is couched in language which includes both surgical and sartorial imagery. The point of commonality between surgery and sewing, and its relevance to the episode under discussion, is the image of deconstruction<sup>77</sup> - the means by which the witches obtain the matter from corpses which they use for their incantations,<sup>78</sup> and externalise the truth of Thelyphron's nature - and of repair (2.22): *quod paene praeterieram, siqui non integrum corpus mane restituerit, quidquid inde **decerptum deminutumque** fuerit, id omne de facie sua **desecto sarcire** compellitur*. The repetition of the *de-* prefix, indicating diminution, foreshadows the reduction of Thelyphron's natural face at the hands of the witches. It is natural that the focus of the witches' deconstruction should be the face (*de facie sua desecto*), as this is the most visible part of the body and necessarily the most powerful semiotically, being open to reading. How the

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<sup>77</sup> For the use of sartorial language to express surgical operations, see the GCA (2001) 321, which refers to Celsus and Scribonius Largus. The body is likened to a textile covering, making it the metaphorical equivalent to clothing. Another witch, Meroe, uses ragged clothing to show the reduction in status of another victim, Socrates, in Book 1 (1.7). For more on Socrates' deconstruction and undoing, see Chapter 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 2.21: '*merito ignoras Thessaliae consistere, ubi sagae mulieres ora mortuorum passim demorsicant, eaque sunt illis artis magicae supplementa.*'

face is read depends on the perceptual, hence, interpretative, acuity of the reader.

### **Conclusion to Section 1: Thelyphron**

The necessity of relying upon the vision of the mind first occurs in the *Metamorphoses* in this tale, a tale focussed on the integrity of physical appearance. The link between the two may at first seem tenuous, but as the consequences of Thelyphron's imperfect perception and mental focus are physical degradation, a link must be deemed discernible. Lucius does not appear to learn from Thelyphron's story to connect appearances to what lies underneath, and his lack of reaction to the tale, attests to his failure to grasp the inherent warning; yet the very basis of Thelyphron's tale relates the reason for his present appearance, explaining why he has to go out in public wearing a facial covering. This tale should have worked on Lucius as a warning against the deconstructive power of witches and witch-craft, and serves as a warning to Lucius to adjust his own perception. His appearance too shall be changed as a result of his own lack of perceptual acuity with regard to human-to-animal metamorphosis, the domain of witchcraft in the novel, and his failure to understand his own limits both with regards to his curiosity for witch-craft, and as a mortal attempting to acquire knowledge of its practices.

## Section 2: The Pantomime: Costume, Perception and Philosophical Attainment

Towards the end of the novel, Lucius' perceptive faculties have been honed enough to scent out connections between the inner and the outer man. The basis of this section, therefore, is an examination into how costume in the novel functions to tell a story which underpins a moral truth by focussing, in this instance, on the pantomime re-enactment of the Judgement of Paris in Book 10 which is set in Corinth (a city renowned for its perversion and cruelty <sup>79</sup>). Costume in this case emerges in a theatrical exposition of a myth which has as its base the perversion of values, an aspect of the "shadow of justice" which can be perceived all throughout the *Metamorphoses*, <sup>80</sup> in this instance bribery and the corruption of judgement. Human judgements depend on perception as perception is the basis of judgement. Coming late in the novel, the pantomime confirms the place of costume and physical appearance in it as a reflection of truth, howsoever they may be intended by others to function. Clothing and appearance operate as the expression of moral truth related through myth as opposed to the truth of personal character in this instance, yet it is an expression of truth nonetheless, including a truth of especial relevance to Lucius' personal situation. We see in the pantomime how the moral lesson behind the revelation of the truth of personal identity through clothing which is so salient in other passages in the novel, is developed on a larger and less personal scale to encompass identity as part of a larger concern with acquiring philosophical enlightenment, also expressed through clothing. <sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Mason (1971) 160; Finkelpearl (1991) 222.

<sup>80</sup> Tarrant (1999) 71-89. The phrase "shadow of justice" is used by Tarrant in a Platonist sense as distinct from true justice.

<sup>81</sup> Lucius' explicit acknowledgement of the power of clothing and appearances to reveal shocking truths at this precise moment is very close to the disgust he feels towards the *cinaedi* (Book 8) whose physical ugliness and ritual vestments also function in like manner, and whose appearance in the novel also revive in a most unambiguous way the importance of the perception of these, so these two separate episodes have much in common; yet Lucius' rather more detached sermonising on the moral import of the pantomime renders it apt for separate treatment, especially as it shows Lucius at the apex of his human reasoning powers within the body of a donkey. He becomes aware that the perceptive reader can remind Lucius of his hybrid status (*philosophantem...asinum*) which equates him with the *vulturi togati* and the *forensia pecora* (10.33) he has been upbraiding, especially in light of

In this case, although intended primarily for the diversion of the populace, the pantomime functions at a deeper level as an extension of the stage-as-life motif. Theatrical costume thereby comes to have a metaphorical and moral meaning, even in its performative function on the stage.

### Costume and Performance as Indicative of Persona

The use of costumes to create theatrical personae is emphasised through the use of language: Paris (10.30): *in modum Paridi...pecuarium simulabat* magisterium; Mercury: *adest luculentus puer...quem et virgula Mercurium indicabat*; Juno: *insequitur puella...in deae speciem similis*; Minerva: *irrupit alia, quam putares Minervam*. The reinforcement of these roles as imitation (*simulabat*; *similis*) frames the character depiction, often occurring at the end of the descriptive clause, thence encapsulating the inherently mimetic aspect of the performance; yet the various parts are distinguished appropriately in accordance with specific aspects of character. The distinctiveness of Mercury for example, must be set off against physical factors which could indicate any young man of beauty (10.30): *Adest luculentus puer, nudus nisi quod ephibica chlamyde sinistrum tegebat umerum, flavis crinibus usquequaque conspicuus, et inter comas eius aureae pinnulae colligatione*<sup>82</sup> *simili sociatae prominebant; quem et virgula Mercurium indicabat*. The actor could be any attractive young boy with golden-blond hair, but the golden wings and the rod make the boy Mercury.

Consequently, like many disguises and costumes if they are to be convincing, there must be an aspect of the actor's physique or appearance which cooperates with the imposed persona. The closest thing to physiognomy in a theatrical performance is gesture which has a physiognomic function insofar as the purpose of gesture is *vraisemblance*, capturing the reality of identity in movement. The nodding which occurs in the scene, an action for which the gods in epic are renowned – (10.30): *quid mandaret Iuppiter nutu significans*– (although Isis claims this prerogative as her own; 11.5) recalls the

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his wholly successful copulation whilst still in asinine form with the Corinthian matron (10.22), so he breaks free of his entanglement with the world of mixed realities (10.35). On the different perceptions of the *cinaedi* in their costume, see Chapter 7.

<sup>82</sup> The *F* manuscript has *cognitione*.

etymological function of words expressive of bodily function as desire, or will.<sup>83</sup> A person's will or desire is often an expression and extension of his or her nature.<sup>84</sup> The gesturing that accompanies these actions is interpreted by Lucius in a way akin to physiognomic interpretation as he informs the reader of the facial contortions expressive of anger, delight, or denegation. Natural physical qualities concur in the representation of persona; hence, whosoever plays Juno must have a dignified demeanour: *Vultu honesta*. To play Venus, only a very attractive girl will suffice (10.31): *Super has introcessit alia visendo decore praepollens, gratia coloris ambrosei designans Venerem*. The depiction of Venus is further articulated into her semblance to a virgin (10.31): *qualis fuit Venus cum fuit virgo*. However, nudity (or rather, the suggestion of nudity) is necessary for the portrayal of Venus' youthful virginity and inherent sexuality. This effect is achieved through the use of sheer silk (*tenui...bombycino*), which also, in imperial and later times, carried connotations of extravagance<sup>85</sup> (10.31): *nudo et intecto corpore perfectam formositatem professa, nisi quod tenui pallio bombycino inumbrabat spectabilem pubem*. Although gait is imitative here, in this instance it still replicates truthful aspects of the goddesses which must be retained in the reader's mind if the meaning of the myth is to have any importance; hence Juno's gait is stately, like a queen (10.31): *procedens quieta et inaffectata gesticulatione nutibus honestis*. Consequently, she will give Paris a queenly reward, namely, royal dominion (10.31): *pastori pollicetur, si sibi praemium decoris addixisset, sese regnum totius Asiae tributuram*. Minerva's gait and demeanour are likewise appropriately matched to what the goddess represents – war; likewise, she will reward him with the glory that goes with conquest and victory (10.31): *Haec*

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<sup>83</sup> See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 11. 3.65: *non manus solum, sed nutus etiam declarant nostrum voluntatem et in mutis pro sermone sunt, et saltatio frequenter sine voce intelligitur atque afficit, et ex vultu ingressuque perspicitur habitus animorum, et animalium quoque sermone carentium ira, laetitia, adulatione et oculis et quibusdam aliis corporis signis deprehenditur*. Quintilian's passage provides literary evidence of the readiness of the ancients to see the body as capable of expressing inherent nature.

<sup>84</sup> On this, see Corbeill (2004). The quotation from Quintilian above can also be used to support this argument. Of especial relevance is Quintilian's claim that these facial expressions and mannerisms are expressive of the state of a person's mind/soul: *habitus animorum*.

<sup>85</sup> On these connotations, see Sebesta (2001), 70-74.

*inquieta capite et oculis in aspectu minacibus citato et intorto genere gesticulationis alacer demonstrabat Paridi, si sibi formae uictoriam tradidisset, fortem tropaeisque bellorum inclutum suis adminiculis futurum.* Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, and by far the darling of the attendant populace (*cum magno favore caveae*), likewise enacts through gait and gesture her own nature and promises what she embodies – physical beauty (10.32):

longe suavior Venus placide commoveri cunctantique lente vestigio et leniter fluctuante spinula et sensim adnutante capite coepit incedere, mollique tibiaram sono delicatis respondere gestibus, et nunc mite coniventibus, nunc acre comminantibus gestire pupulis, et nonnunquam saltare solis oculis. Haec ut primum ante iudicis conspectum facta est, nisu bracciorum polliceri videbatur, si fuisset deabus ceteris antelata, daturam se nuptam Paridi forma praecipuam suique consimilem.

Lucius then digresses to expand on the ambrosial colour of the goddess, one of the first aspects of her physique to be mentioned by Lucius, as well as one of the goddess's most distinctive features (10.31): *gratia coloris ambrosei designans Venerem*. The concurrence of colour on the body (pure white) and on the dress (blue, or aquamarine given the provenance of the goddess) reinforces the dual aspect of the goddess's life as at once descending from the heavens and arising from the ocean, as Lucius tells us (10.31): *Ipse autem color deae diversus in speciem, corpus candidum, quod caelo demeat, amictus caeruleus, quod mari remeat*.

Just as the performing body, or persona, capitalises on the natural physique, the element of the wind conspires in the performance to further enhance the teasing effect of the suggestion of Venus' nudity (which for some people, may be more alluring than complete nudity). The transparency of dress had moral currency even prior to Apuleius' time both on and off stage. The wind, described as somewhat playful, prying and naughty (*curiosulus ventus satis amanter nunc lasciviens... nunc luxurians*),<sup>86</sup> undergoes a metamorphosis

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<sup>86</sup> Not only did Zephyr teasingly play with Psyche's dress at the end of Book 4 (4.35: *mitis aura molliter spirantis Zephyri vibratis hinc inde laciniis et reflato sinu sensim levatam suo tranquillo spiritu vehens*), but the motif of a wind lifting the dress of Diana appears in the statuary in Book 2 (2.4): *Ecce lapis Parius in Dianam factus...signum perfecte luculentum, veste reflatum, procursu vegetum*. (Wind cannot, obviously, be depicted in a statue, but it is implied by the movement of the goddess and of her clothing.) Although Diana's

and is personified into a lover, a role which only an element of nature can perform whilst still respecting the goddess's virginity. The breath of wind has the role of making the sheer silken, hence probably transparent (*tenui pallio bombycino*), veil with which Venus otherwise naked body (*nudo et intecto corpore*) is barely covered flap around the goddess's body. Venus' dress and the wind concur in reflecting her dual character as both virgin and the goddess of love (10.31): *Quam quidem laciniam curiosulus ventus satis amanter nunc lasciviens reflabat, ut dimota pateret flos aetatulae, nunc luxurians aspirabat, ut adhaerens pressule membrorum voluptatem graphice liniaret*. This scene is not exactly a strip-tease; yet the teasing effect of the interplay of concealing and non-concealing heightens the erotic appeal of the performance of the goddess of love. In this instance, the lifting of the *lacinia* by a wind which is *curiosulus*, that is, having the same flaw as Lucius, signifies the role of clothing as revelatory of what is underneath; but this only has meaning for those who are curious. What is underneath is what every curious spectator, be it Lucius or the pantomime audience, wants to see – the naked truth. Even when part of a performance, dress is not just a surface. Apuleius is subjugating the descriptive to the metaphoric. In this way, clothing becomes an essential aspect of the inquiry into truth in the novel.

Lucius pays the same attention to costume for the supporting characters, reminding the reader of the professional status of the players (*scaenici pueri*). Juno is accompanied by Castor and Pollux (10.31): *iam singulas virgines quae deae putabantur sui comitabantur comites, Iunonem quidem Castor et Pollux, quorum capita cassides ovatae stellarum apicibus insignes contegebant; sed et isti Castores erant scaenici pueri*; and Minerva by two aspects of what she represents, Terror and Fear (10.31): *at illam quam cultus armorum Minervam fecerat duo pueri muniebant, proeliaris deae comites armigeri, Terror et Metus, nudis insultantes gladiis*. Venus' attendants, the Cupids, Graces and Hours, are also given their due in the performance, even though description for them is limited (in the case of the Cupids) or totally absent (for the Graces and Hours):

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representation in the statue is redolent of the Classical period in its stylisation (van Mal-Maeder, 2001, 91), the parallel of two different passages in which wind occurs, as well as reinforcing and underscoring the sensual element of the novel, adds a metaphorical reading to the pantomime sequence.

*illos teretes et lacteos puellos diceres tu Cupidines verso de caelo vel mari commodum involasse; nam et pinnulis et sagittulis et habitu cetero formae praeclare congruebant.* The only important details we are given of the Graces and Hours are their youth and beauty, the attributes for which they are renowned: *et influunt innuptarum puellarum decorae suboles, hinc Gratiae gratissimae, inde Horae pulcherrimae.*

### **Perception and the Corruption of Judgement**

One of the key motifs of the pantomime, pushed to the point of excess, is beauty – an effulgent, resplendent beauty that draws men away from truth. This brilliant beauty is the effect of a lack of moderation, portrayed in the detail and colour of the performers’ costumes and which appeals to the lack of moderation in men’s appetites and desires. Underscoring the relevance of the pantomime to the theme of the perception of dress and appearance in the novel is the fact that the myth of the Judgement of Paris essentially deals with a beauty contest, perhaps the first to have taken place in recorded human history. The role of Venus therefore, goddess of love and beauty, is essential to a correct interpretation of the myth.

The dress and overall appearance of Venus provide much scope for a discussion of the meaning of costume. Foremost in the discussion is the descriptive space given to the goddess of love and beauty; this is markedly greater than that given to her two female counterparts, Juno and Minerva, which is understandable in a novel whose characters are much preoccupied with beauty and love.<sup>87</sup> It is undeniable that the audience, being aware of the myth, already knows the outcome of the play; but in addition to this fact, Lucius’ attention to detail in Venus’ description can mean only one thing: men in general, as are their judgements, are swayed by physical beauty. Moral issues pertaining to physical appearance and what it means attend the performance, even if they are not foremost in the spectators’ minds at the time.

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<sup>87</sup> See for example the attraction Lucius feels for Photis, and the beautiful Charite. Psyche swoons at the sight of her husband’s beauty. For more on this, see the final section of this chapter.

Aware of the story as a complete historico-mythical unit, Lucius interprets correctly the meaning of the outcome of the story and its consequences for mankind, and rails against the injustice of false judgements (10.34), whilst unaware of his own false judgement of the deeper meaning of the play and how it applies to him in his mistaking magic for proper enlightenment, which stands in for philosophical truth. Broken down into its component parts, the performance delivers the same story but with greater relevance to Lucius' personal situation, the story of man's preoccupation with and choice of things which are beneath his dignity, and with mistaking the semblance of what will bring him happiness with the reality of it. Lucius is correct in his final deduction, but does not make explicit the link (associated by Apuleius with the story of Socrates' trial and execution) between beauty and false judgement. The rewards promised by the various goddesses amount to kingly power over Asia (*regnum totius Asiae*), glory and fame in war (*fortem tropaeisque bellorum inclutum*), and beauty or earthly love (*forma praecipuam suique [=Veneris] consimilem*), which, in the Platonist scheme formulated by Apuleius can be particularly dangerous as it is predicated on and privileges appearances, or apparent good – especially beauty – rather than real good.<sup>88</sup> These are the aspects of life which Socrates deemed *aliena*, extraneous to man, as Apuleius tells us in the *DDS* (174-175):

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<sup>88</sup> Apuleius, *Apologia*, 12: *Mitto enim dicere alta illa et divina Platonica, rarissimo cuique piorum ignara, ceterum omnibus profanes incognita: geminam esse Venerem deam, proprio quamque et diversis amatoribus pollutis*. The lower type of love, a vulgar love, appeals to the masses and is of such a kind as to drag a soul down by the excess it espouses, an excess redolent in the pantomime through the costumes, scenery and use of saffron: *earum alteram vulgariam, quae sit percita populari amore, non modo humanis animis, verum etiam pecuinis et ferinis ad libidinem imperitare, vi immodica trucique percussorum animalium serva corpora complexu vincientem*. The divine love, on the other hand (*alteram vero caelitem Venerem*), lacks adornment and appeals to beauty of soul: *quippe amorem eius non amoenum et lascivum, sed contra incomtum et serium pulchritudine honestatis virtutes amatoribus suis conciliare ... neque enim quicquam aliud in corporum forma diligendum quam quod ammoneant divinos animos eius pulchritudinis, quam prius veram et sinceram inter deos videre*. This explanation of love is a vulgarised version of the theory of Aphrodite Pandemos and Aphrodite Ourania as explained in the speech of Pausanias in Plato's *Symposium*, 180Dff. On Apuleius' use of this theory, see Schlam (1970), 485, Beaujeu (1971), 15 and Hunink (2001), 36.

Similiter igitur et in hominibus contemplandis noli illa aliena aestimare, sed ipsum hominem penitus considera, ipsum ut meum Socratem pauperem specta. Aliena autem voco, quae parentes pepererunt et quae fortuna largita est. Quorum nihil laudibus Socratis mei admisceo, nullam generositatem, nullam prosapiam, nullos longos natales, nullas invidiosas divitias. Haec enim cuncta, ut dico, aliena sunt. Sat Porthaonio gloriae est, qui talis fuit, ut eius nepotem non puderet. Igitur omnia similiter aliena numeres licebit; 'generosus est': parentes laudas. 'Dives est': non credo fortunae. Nec magis ista adnumero: 'validus est': aegritudine fatigabitur. 'Pernix est': stabit in senectute. 'Formosus est': expecta paulisper et non erit. 'At enim bonis artibus doctus et adprime est eruditus et, quantum licet homini, sapiens et boni consultus': tandem aliquando ipsum virum laudas. Hoc enim nec a patre hereditarium est nec a casu pendulum nec a suffragio anniculum nec a corpore caducum nec ab aetate mutabile. Haec omnia meus Socrates habuit et ideo cetera habere contempsit.

The kingly power in the *Metamorphoses* is converted in the philosophical work into an aspect of the fortune in which Apuleius, taking up the ideas of Socrates, expresses such little faith. In the *DDS*, this fortune is expressed as wealth, but wealth is, after all, an aspect of kingly power: '*Dives est*': *non credo fortunae*. The glory in war promised by Minerva can stand, in the *DDS*, for physical strength and prowess, a necessary aspect of the heroic warrior: '*validus est*': *aegritudine fatigabitur*. '*Pernix est*': *stabit in senectute*. A man's good looks, which, just like Venus' beauty, can ensure him success in love, will - unlike Venus' beauty - fade: '*Formosus est*': *expecta paulisper et non erit*.

The sermon to Lucius made by the Isiac priest in Book 11 follows a similar line of argument;<sup>89</sup> Lucius may not have really relied on his genealogy, social status and learning throughout the novel, but in the end, they were of no avail to him, as they were directed towards lower preoccupations such as magic and sexual intrigue, and as they did not outweigh his personal flaws. Social position and advantages can give a false impression of the man who wears them like a costume, or disguise; but he can be stripped of them and judged for his personal qualities, by the powers of mental perception if not

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<sup>89</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 11.15: *Nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles delapsus voluptates, curiositatis impropriae sinistrum praemium reportasti.*

physically. To emphasise this point, Apuleius initiates the discussion in sections 174-175 of the *DDS* by taking up the long-standing topos of horse selection (*DDS*, 172-173) wherein he explicitly likens the *aliena* mortal men are so attached to, the trappings of a horse.<sup>90</sup>

Concluding his outburst of indignation (*indignationis impetum*, 10.33) with a reference to Socrates, Lucius caps his catalogue of the extraneous properties of life, represented in the pantomime and interpreted by Lucius as false judgement brought about through corruption and low priorities, with the traditional means of overthrowing them, philosophy – *philosophia* – especially of a Socratic kind (10.33):

Quid ergo miramini, vilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo vero togati vulturii, si toti nunc iudices sententias suas pretio nundinantur, cum rerum exordio inter deos et homines agitatum **iudicium corruerit gratia**, et originalem sententiam magni louis consiliis electus iudex rusticanus et **opilio lucro libidinis vendiderit**, cum totius etiam suae stirpis exitio? Sic hercules et aliud sequensque iudicium inter inclutos Achivorum duces celebratum, vel **cum falsis insimulationibus eruditione doctrinaque praepollens Palamedes proditiōnis damnatur**, vel virtute Martia praepotenti **praefertur Ulixes modicus Aiaci maximo**. Quale autem et illud iudicium apud legiferos Athenienses catos illos et omnis scientiae magistros? Nonne divinae prudentiae senex, quem sapientia praetulit cunctis mortalibus deus Delphicus, fraude et invidia nequissimae factionis circumventus velut corruptor adolescentiae, quam frenis coercebat, herbae pestilentis suco noxio peremptus est, relinquens civibus ignominiae perpetuae maculam, cum nunc etiam **egregii philosophi sectam eius sanctissimam** preoptent et summo beatitudinis studio iurent in ipsius nomen?

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<sup>90</sup>The traditional motif of judging men the same way as we select a horse occurs just prior to the quoted passage in the *DDS*. After going into some detail on the actual trappings, he reminds the reader of what is important (*DDS*, 173-174): *Sed istis omnibus exuviis amolitis equum ipsum nudum et solum corpus eius et animum contemplamur, ut sit et ad speciem honestus et ad cursum vegetus et ad vecturam validus ... Similiter igitur et in hominibus contemplandis noli illa aliena aestimare, sed ipsum hominem penitus considera, ipsum ut meum Socratem pauperem specta*. This philosophical conceit is the message behind Seneca's letter to Lucilius (80): *omnium istorum personata felicitas est. Contemnes illos si despoliaveris. Equum empturus solvi iubes stratum, detrahis vestimenta venalibus ne qua vitia corporis lateant: hominem involutum aestimas?*

Lucius' interpretative faculties may still be imperfect, but here he explicitly acknowledges the part philosophy should play in men's lives. Philosophy alone teaches men how to read each other accurately, thereby ensuring correct judgements are carried out, unswayed by any extraneous properties that could lead men into corruption.

As well as expressing an essential caution against being swayed by the extraneous attributes and properties of life, the pantomime also shows how much the semblance can deceive by its proximity to the reality. The boundaries between the artificial and the real are collapsed. The confusion between the real and the artificial which results from this collapse supports the moral message of the pantomime in its depiction of men mistaking artificial happiness for true happiness. This is most readily visible in the dual aspect of the goddess Venus, her virginal aspect representing the more philosophical and pure love, and her sexual aspect symbolising the lower kind of love.<sup>91</sup>

This lack of discernment between truth and semblance can be carried to the boundaries between the human and the animal, as Lucius' anxiety stretches even to the wild beasts to which the condemned woman was destined to be thrown, as they will not have the means to discern the guilty woman from the innocent ass and will dismember Lucius as well as the woman in whose artificially-constructed embrace he will be locked. Lucius fails to understand that the wild beasts in the arena are not concerned or programmed by their own nature to distinguish human from beast.<sup>92</sup> However, this, ironically, is also the state of the human spectators, who are unaware of the presence of a man behind the asinine covering, although we are not explicitly told this. Man and beast are assimilated to each other because the spectators cannot see past the outer form. Whilst at the purely narrative level this is understandable, from a metaphorical perspective, such ignorance naturally reflects the low-level preoccupations of such people as are likely to

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<sup>91</sup> See footnote 88 in this regard. Venus' virginity, redolent of a higher kind of love, will necessarily be represented more aesthetically in the pantomime but the moral message is still there.

<sup>92</sup> See Finkelpearl (1991) 235 who, however, misses the metaphorical point about the merging of man and beast.

attend such a performance for mere pleasure's sake.<sup>93</sup> Lucius' subsequent speech leads us to believe that the result of man's low-level priorities is the equalising of man and beast, expressed by a visual image which depicts human activity as undertaken by animals; indeed, man is likened to an animal in man's clothing (10.33): *vilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo togati vulturii*. Man and beast are confused in Lucius' diatribe which is a reference to the bestial in man. Theatrical costume and performance are the spring-board to these reflections and precede the public spectacle of bestiality. Lucius may not have attained perfect knowledge or enlightenment by this point, but his reaction can be taken as testimony that he has achieved a sense of separation from what is lower in man.

### Lucius' Perceptual Enlightenment

Lucius' engagement with the scene before him is comparable to that of the satirist. His more conventionally satiric stance (expressed physically by Lucius' physical placement as spectator yet removed from the other spectators and by the more markedly "discursive"<sup>94</sup> model of speech in his expression of indignation) expresses the moral disdain for what the spectacle represents. The ancient concern with the social and moral degeneracy that underpins the use of artificial dyes and expensive fabrics requiring extensive labour and expense (especially silk and other diaphanous – hence enticing – fabrics)<sup>95</sup> further colours this performance as containing an object of satirical indignation, even though no explicit mention is made of such concerns in the description of the pantomime.

At the end, the whole performance, including the set, is finally swallowed up into an underground chasm after the goats have been sprinkled with saffron and dyed by its yellow hue. The sinking of the set of the performance into the floor of the arena at this particular point highlights the performance's message of artificiality, even if it is ill-interpreted because of the

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<sup>93</sup> See, for example, 10.35 with regard to the slaves alone: *familia partim ministerio venationis occupata, partim voluptario spectaculo attonita*.

<sup>94</sup> Laird (1990) 134-135.

<sup>95</sup> On ancient (male) conventional morality with regard to fabrics, see Gibson (2003), 162. On the moral censure of the use of dyes on the grounds that it connoted extravagance and flattery of the senses, see Plutarch's *Moralia*, 228b (Gibson, 2003, 162; Bradley, 2009, 179).

low priorities of the unenlightened spectator. Lucius however has drawn on the moral content of the popular entertainment and left the playful and the perverse behind, represented in this episode as the pantomime and the public spectacle of bestiality.

### **Conclusion to Section 2: the Pantomime**

Each goddess as she appears in the pantomime espouses a focal point of ethical consideration - kingly power, beauty, glory in war – and the descriptive elements of each character converge towards portraying this. The three most important deities in the pantomime – Juno, Minerva and Venus – help to give visible shape to a moral point made by the figure Socrates, the philosopher, in the *DDS*, concerning the entrapment of men by preoccupations of a low order, such as power, beauty and glory, a message made clearer to Lucius in Book 11, although not necessarily in the same terms. Lucius will need to overthrow his artificial life, evident in his attraction to low-level preoccupations, similar to and embodied in the effulgent lavish costumes and the performance of the pantomime, in favour of an authentic one, expressed in the Isiac rite and its outer manifestation. Lucius may not have pursued kingly power or glory in war, but he was not insensitive to beauty, a sensitivity which led him down a slippery path. One thinks especially of Lucius' erotic entrapment to Photis who introduced him to the secrets of transformation. Luckily for Lucius, Isis' beauty overpowers that of Photis. More relevant to Lucius' situation is the pantomime's overall message of mistaking the shadow for its semblance: leaving behind magic and witchcraft, Lucius from this point becomes attracted to Isis, depicted in the novel as the true shape of Lucius' desires. Perception in this instance arises therefore in the context of Lucius' judgment of the moral meaning of the pantomime. This is far from total philosophical enlightenment; yet despite missing certain connections, Lucius is becoming more contemplative, interpreting dress in a more philosophical context as against the ignorant public, whilst missing the whole import of the message for his own life. Lucius' reaction to the pantomime, which occurs very close to his re-transformation, serves as an explicitly moral derivation of philosophical content from the spectacle of dress presented as life as a stage. The crowd watching the show is portrayed as an example of the ignorant populace, who attend public spectacles merely for the pleasure of it without intending to

draw any moral value from the spectacle, a well-known topos with a long history.<sup>96</sup> Lucius therefore distinguishes himself from the unenlightened crowd in this episode.

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Diogenes Laertius' claims about Pythagoras, who compared life to the Great Games, making distinctions between those who assisted at them based on their motives for doing so: some went to compete for the prize, others went to sell their wares, while the best (representing philosophers) went merely as spectators. The first two groups of attendants he compared to the people in life who had servile natures, greedy for fame and gain (*Vitae Philosophorum*, 8.8). Only the philosophers, likened in this instance to the spectators (*θεαταί*) went seeking truth (*τῆς ἀληθείας*). This anecdote about Pythagoras is also mentioned by Cicero in the *Disputationes Tusculanae*, 5.9. Cicero uses similar terminology to that used by Diogenes Laertius, referring to the philosophically minded spectators as *sapientiae studiosos*. In the pantomime, one must distinguish between two types of spectator – the unphilosophical spectator, and Lucius. Further on in Book 5 of the *Disputationes Tusculanae*, Cicero stresses the importance of having a right regard for the spectacle of life and concentrating one's energies only on things worthy of a wise and lettered man.

### Section 3: Charite and Lucius

At the end of Book 6, Lucius the ass attempts to escape from the robbers' den and takes with him a young noble girl, by the name of Charite, taken captive by the robbers. Charite is a specimen of the character with enlightened vision, a vision which can see beyond outer appearances. It is significant that her name is a variant of the Greek word *charis*, whose original meaning was "brightness" or "light".<sup>97</sup> Charite will certainly shed some brightness on Lucius' life in asinine form, but she can be also be read as a prefigurement of the illuminating power of Isis by reason of her sharper perception and insofar as she is a positive influence on Lucius; hence it is only apt that she should have a becoming appearance. Our vision of Charite's appearance is dependent on Lucius' perception of her, as he recounts to the reader the freeborn and noble mien of the girl. This is the first thing he tells the reader about her (4.23): *unicam virginem filo*<sup>98</sup> *liberalem et, ut matronatus eius indicabat, summatem regionis*. Lucius remarks upon her appearance as such that a donkey of his kind is stirred by it (4.23): *puellam mehercules et asino tali concupiscendam*. In antiquity donkeys were renowned for their lust.<sup>99</sup> Ironically, Lucius at this point in the novel is still a slave to his sensual appetites, so the most salient

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<sup>97</sup> Wagner-Hasel (2002), 20. Wagner-Hasel's chapter looks at the emanation of *charis* from clothes and from other objects which have shiny characteristics. In the epic tradition, *charis* is often a gift of the gods poured like a veil over mortals. *Charis* also conveys notions of gift-giving and gratitude. By her behaviour towards the donkey who saved her, Charite will be an exemplar of gratitude.

<sup>98</sup> Bettini (1996, 191, with references) points out that the word *filum* has special relevance to female physical appearance, occurring in this capacity in Plautus, Lucilius and again in Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae*, 14.4): *forma atque filo virginali*. He also makes reference to its occurrence in this passage of the *Metamorphoses*. Lucius' remark upon Charite's beauty is also evocative of the category of noble heroines, thereby continuing the genealogical line of distinction of the heroines of the Greek novel. The beauty of the heroines in the Greek romances, however, is somewhat more emphasised in the text. In Chariton's romance, Callirhoe's beauty was such that she was mistaken for Aphrodite herself (1.2). In the romance of Xenophon of Ephesus, Anthia is mistaken for Artemis (1.2). The effect of Leukippe's beauty on Kleitophon, in Achilles Tatius' novel, makes him love-sick (1.4-6).

<sup>99</sup> On this aspect of the ancient perception of donkeys, see Griffiths (2006a) 224, Gregory (2007), 204 and of course, the physiognomic treatise attributed to Aristotle (808b35), wherein the author speaks of the "violent sexual excitability, which is found alike in asses and pigs." The translation of the *Physiognomonica* is that of Swain (2007), 649.

characteristic of the donkey is apt for him even as a human being (*asino tali*). On the other hand Charite recognises characteristics in her donkey-saviour which are normally attributed to horses, a higher member of the equine species, if not to a human hero, and responds accordingly.<sup>100</sup> This recognition functions, as shall be seen, as more than just a mark of the behaviour which one could assume to be typical of a well-brought up young girl.

The importance of Charite in the novel as the enlightened character is two-fold. First, her perceptual acuity allows her to see through other characters, especially Thrasyllus, and have the upper hand in her relationships with them, even though this does not prevent her death which, brought about by excessive grief for her husband, contributes towards her depiction in the novel as the ideal, loyal wife. Secondly, it functions to underscore the hybridity of Lucius as both man and donkey at that point in the novel, a hybridity which is magnified in the nature of the promises Charite makes to him. This is the function with which I shall open this section.

At the moment of their joint escapade, Charite appears to perceive a certain underlying nobility in Lucius' nature even as a donkey, and responds to him in a noble way, promising him a due reward for his valour, one which will be appropriate to him both as her saviour and, ironically, as a member of his class. From the moment of their joint attempt at escape, Charite has the effect of further ennobling Lucius and prompting his actions towards good, to the point where Lucius perceives himself to be of a higher species than mere donkey (6.28): *Ego simul voluntariae fugae voto et liberandae virginis studio, sed et plagarum suasu, quae me saepicule commonebant, equestri celeritate quadripedi cursu solum replaudens virgini delicatas vocolas adhinnire temptabam*. By this sentence alone, we see the dual aspect of asinine Lucius; he attempts to escape and save the maiden through his own volition, like a

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<sup>100</sup> This acknowledged perception of something of the human and divine in her donkey saviour is to be differentiated from the statement made by the auctioneer whose remark that the donkey he is wishing to sell, namely Lucius, is so tame that "you would really think that inside this ass's hide dwelt a mild-mannered human being" (8.25). This statement is made out of purely commercial motives and a desire to be rid of the ass which no buyer wanted. Just prior to this hard-sell, Lucius had bitten the auctioneer (8.23). In this case, it is not so much enlightened perception that motivated this remark, but a desire for financial gain, even if the auctioneer ironically and unwittingly spoke the truth about the donkey.

human being endowed with an heroic will - *voluntariae fugae voto et liberandae virginis studio* – whilst at the same time (*simul...sed et*) needing frequent encouragement, true to the indolent nature of the ass: *plagarum suasu, quae me saepicule commonebant*.<sup>101</sup>

This admission acts as a clear manifestation of his hybrid state. Furthermore, since reference to the girl at the moment of their attempt at escape swings between the terms of her noble birth and modesty (evocative of epic or tragedy, appropriate in light of the manner of her death) – *virgo* – and her eligibility as a young and desirable woman (evocative of love elegy) – *puellae* – Lucius’ hybrid nature as both a reasoning man and an instinct-driven animal (expressed by his outer form as a donkey), as well as simultaneously noble and servile, is heavily underscored for the ancient reader who would have picked up on all the resonances (6.28):

Ego simul voluntariae fugae voto et **liberandae virginis** studio, sed et plagarum suasu, quae me saepicule commonebant, equestri celeritate quadripedi cursu solum replaudens, **virgini** delicatas vuculas adhinnire temptabam. Sed et scabendi dorsi mei simulatione nonnumquam obliquata cervice **pedes decoros puellae basiabam**.

Charite responds to Lucius’ facilitating of her escape by promising an honourable outcome. Reacting in accordance with her socio-cultural provenance, she anticipates for Lucius all the comforts a pedigree horse would receive in such a position, and more, as she will see personally to his physical comfort in the manner of a doll (6.28): *iam primum iubam istam tuam probe pectinatam meis virginalibus monilibus adornabo, frontem vero crispatam prius decoriter discriminabo caudaeque setas incuria lavacri congestas et horridas, comptas diligenter mollibo, bullisque te multis aureis inoculatum, velut stellis sidereis relucente et gaudiis popularium pomparum ovanterem*. Charite’s offer to bedeck her donkey-saviour recalls similar touching images from epic, namely Silvia’s donation of her *virginalia monilia* and her curling of the mane of the tragic stag in the *Aeneid* (7.488-489), and the Cyparissus episode in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (especially 10.112-116).<sup>102</sup> The epic resonances in the episode

<sup>101</sup>On the donkey’s perceived indolence in antiquity, see Griffith (2006a) 223, 227 and Gregory (2007) 204.

<sup>102</sup>Finkelpearl (1998) 58-60.

are both curiously misplaced yet truthful as an aside on Charite's character by Apuleius' manipulation of them.<sup>103</sup>

Moving up the honorary scale of gift-giving, she goes on to speak of the food Lucius will be regaled with (6.28-29): *et gaudiis popularium pomparum ovariantem, sinu serico progestans nucleos et edulia mitiora, te meum sospitatorem cotidie saginabo. Sed nec inter cibos delicatos et otium profundum vitaeque totius beatitudinem deerit tibi dignitas gloriosa.* This is finally capped by the greatest honour of them all - inscription into the annals of mythological animal-heroes, in such a way as to imbue credence into the already existing tales of metamorphosis. In her last remark, Charite imbues credibility into mythological stories of transformation (6.29):

nam memoriam praesentis fortunae meae divinaeque providentiae perpetua testatione signabo, et depictam in tabula fugae praesentis imaginem meae domus atrio dedicabo. Visetur et in fabulis audietur doctorumque stilibus rudis perpetuabitur historia 'Asino vectore virgo regia fugiens captivitatem.' Accedes antiquis et ipse miraculis et iam credemus exemplo tuae veritatis et Phrixum arieti supernatasse et Arionem delphinum gubernasse et Europam tauro supercubasse. Quod si vere Iupiter mugivit in bovem, potest in asino meo latere aliqui vel vultus hominis vel facies deorum.

Although Charite's promises of honorific reward appear merely naively charming and humorous given the context, they are buttressed by the truth pertaining to Lucius' identity as understood by the reader. Such promises are totally becoming of Lucius' status as a noble youth even though he is presently in asinine form. Her promises of rewards becoming of a higher equine species are not merely humorous, but ironic, being supported by her presentiment of human qualities in her asinine saviour. This scene is a touching inversion and re-working of the well-known philosophical and literary topos which cautions against being taken in by men in their social and/or civic trappings, through the

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<sup>103</sup> On the epic resonances of Charite's character, see Forbes (1943) 39-40, Frangoulidis (1992c) 435-450 and Finkelppearl (1998) 115, who perceive Virgil's Dido to be a model or exemplar for Charite, Lazzarini (1985), 131-160, and Garbugino (2009), 215. Garbugino also stresses the similarity between Charite's grief and that of the matron of Ephesus in the *Satyricon*. The Milesian colour which underpins Petronius' depiction of the grieving widow need not overturn the nobility of Charite's character, nor overwrite the insistence in Apuleius' text on Charite's ability to see through other characters.

metaphor of horse selection,<sup>104</sup> since Charite is not deceived by her saviour's asinine appearance, perceiving behind his form qualities normally attributed to human heroes. The metaphor of horse selection hence loses aptness for one whose perceptions break down physical barriers. The trappings ennoble Lucius further by acknowledging the truth about him as a youth of elite status. The touching humour of the scene serves a strong moral purpose.

Charite's reading of her donkey-saviour recalls the words of Lucius, the *vir ornatus* who still exists beneath the donkey, to the interlocutor who was incredulous of such tales of transformation (1.20): *Minus hercule calles pravissimis opinionibus ea putari mendacia quae vel auditu nova vel visu rudia vel certe supra captum cogitationis ardua videantur*. The trappings on Lucius, who is both man and animal, thence embody the stuff of many metamorphosis myths, and especially the metamorphosis of which Lucius-the-ass is the object – the fact that a human being, by his soul or nature, can incline to the bestial or the divine or even both at the same time. If Jupiter can “moo” himself into the form of an ox, then her donkey may be a man in another form (6.29): *Quod si vere Iupiter mugivit in bovem, potest in asino meo latere aliqui vel vultus hominis vel facies deorum*.<sup>105</sup> Charite serves as an example of the kind of perception that allows men to see beyond outer layers. Charite does not deny the reality of the donkey she sees before her, but concentrates on the possibility of the human within.

At first sight, Charite may appear to the reader to be as short-sighted as other characters in the novel in accordance with the paradigm set out by Apuleius himself in the *DPD* whereby imbalance in the soul is responsible for sickness, feebleness and ugliness in the body<sup>106</sup>. It never occurs to Charite to

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<sup>104</sup> Apuleius uses the same metaphor in the *DDS*, 172-174. The illustration of the moral scrutiny of man by a metaphor of horse selection has a history which stretches back, in the Latin canon, to the moral epistles of Seneca, Horace's satires and the third book of the *Georgics*. In the Greek canon it arises in Xenophon's *De Re Equestri* 1.2 and his *Memorabilia* Book 4.2.26ff.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Seneca, *Epistles*, 66.1: *posse ingenium fortissimum ac beatissimum sub qualibet cute latere*.

<sup>106</sup> Apuleius, *DPD*, 1.18: *Sed tunc animanti sanitatem adesse, vires, pulchritudinem, cum ratio totam regit parentesque ei inferiores duae partes concordantesque inter se iracundia et voluptas nihil adpetunt, nihil commovent, quod inutile esse duxerit ratio. Eius ad*

consider why a man should be turned into a dirty, ugly donkey, what offence this man may have committed against some god to be turned into an animal in the first place. Yet the emphasis in the novel on Charite's moral steadfastness and on the clear perception which elevates her above both her husband Tlepolemus and Thrasyllus, her violator, and the noble manner of her death, resurrect the ennobling faculty of perception in the novel, whilst leaving momentarily behind the idea of congruity between body and soul or respecting it in a less dogmatic way. (It is, after all, through clothing which reveals Thrasyllus' character that Charite succeeds in mocking his emasculating lust.) Lucius may be a donkey in terms of his appetites and inclinations but he is also noble; both aspects of his present form – the donkey skin and the trappings that Charite promises for him - reflect the truth of both his nature and social identity at that time. Charite's promise to treat Lucius like an animal – for such he is in terms of his inclinations – and yet one of a higher status – such as Lucius enjoys as a man – supports Apuleius' subtle literary examination into Lucius' hybridity, expressed at the level of the body.<sup>107</sup>

### **Charite and Thrasyllus' Cloak of Dissembling**

As has been argued above, Charite's clear perception is an essential aspect of her character. She is one of the more enlightened figures in the novel. Her clear-sightedness, a quality which her husband lacks, enabled her to see through Thrasyllus' ruse, the deceit by which he sought to satiate his lust for Charite by impersonating friendship towards her husband. The story of the Charite/Tlepolemus/Thrasyllus love-triangle is related by a former slave in the service of Charite's household (8.1-15). Thrasyllus is an ex-suitor of Charite, spurned by her parents for his low-life proclivities, who wheedles his way into the Tlepolemus-Charite union with a view to usurping Tlepolemus' place in the marital bed. To do this, he feigns friendship with Tlepolemus, murders him and

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*aequabilitatem partibus animae temperatis, corpus nulla turbatione frangitur. Alioquin invehit aegritudinem atque invalentiam et foeditatem, cum inconpositae et inaequales inter se erunt, cum irascentiam et consilium subegerit sibi que subiecerit cupiditas aut cum dominam illam reginamque rationem, obsequente licet et pacata cupidine, ira flagrantior vicerit.*

<sup>107</sup> This is expressed most clearly in the novel by Lucius' transformation into a donkey at 3.24. See Chapter 2 for my enquiry into this. Lucius' hybridity as both man and donkey, which comes very close to the surface of the text at this point, is to be insisted on.

attempts to break down Charite's moral reserve, but she sees through him and murders him in her turn before committing an act of noble suicide. Although Charite's parents had spurned Thrasyllus as an unsuitable companion for their daughter on the basis of his bad character which was already known to them (8.2) giving Charite an advantage over her husband Tlepolemus, Charite's perceptive faculties are not wholly dependent upon prior knowledge of a person's character, as her ability to detect something more than asinine in the donkey makes clear. Even before her dead husband appeared to her in a dream, warning her against Thrasyllus (8.8), she had already seen through his plan (8.8): *Sed intervallo revalescente paulatim spiritu, ferinos mugitus iterans et iam scaenam pessimi Thrasylli perspiciens, ad limam consilii desiderium petitoris distulit.*<sup>108</sup> The image of sharpening in this realisation (*ad limam*) further enhances the explicit reference to the quality of sharpness in Charite. Through Charite's insightfulness, Thrasyllus' penchant for deceit and concealment of his true character is externalised and becomes visible through the sartorial expression of covering. This specimen serves to show how correct perception brings about truthful appearance at the level of the body.

Thrasyllus is an Apuleian invention and does not appear in the *Onos* or any of the other variant sources for the *Metamorphoses* that have come down to us, a fact which makes his character quite important for the novel critically.<sup>109</sup> Thrasyllus, whose name expresses his rash character,<sup>110</sup> functions

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<sup>108</sup> I retain this argument despite indication in the text that Thrasyllus had a hand in imparting his role in Tlepolemus' death through his own indiscretion (8.8: *non dubitavit de nuptiis convenire et imprudentiae labe tacita pectoris sui secreta fraudesque ineffabiles detegere*; here the *fraudes* undoubtedly refer to the *fraudium opportunum decipulum* at 8.5), on the grounds that this "slip" was most likely not an outright avowal ("I killed Tlepolemus"), but a careless suggestion made in desperation ("Now that Tlepolemus is out of the way..."). Apuleius' choice of word in this instance (*perspiciens*) is telling.

<sup>109</sup> Van der Paardt (1980) 19, 21.

<sup>110</sup> His name is a combination of the Greek adjective meaning 'bold'- *thrasos* – and the Latin diminutive suffix *-yllus* (Barrett, 1994, 79), hence: "little bold man". Van der Paardt (1980) 19, translates his name as "Mr 'Overbold'". Schlam (1992) 75 refers to Thrasyllus as "the Priapic type" and also points to his assimilation to wild beasts by the frequency of "animal images" in the episode. Repath (2000) 627-30 perceives an association between Thrasyllus, the Platonist/Pythagorean philosopher and a certain Adrastus, who was a Peripatetic, claiming that Thrasyllus, in Apuleius' tale, takes the part of an Adrastus-figure. Graverini

as an example of the man who is dissembling and who bends to his own passions, especially his lust, and is ultimately undone by these undesirable aspects of his own character despite his last-minute repentance. It is his rashness, exemplified by his lust and dissembling nature, which makes him go “under cover” (*veste contectus*; 8.10) to have an illicit tryst with Charite by night. Covering as an aspect of disguise becomes associated with secrecy and shame. Whilst no specific item of clothing figures in this episode, the numerous references to actions performed under cover, especially at night under cover of darkness<sup>111</sup> - an image which exemplifies the deceit in Thrasyllus’ character - support the metaphorical reading of Thrasyllus’ disguise as a mere manifestation of his personal nature. The narrator of the Thrasyllus episode, who appears in the frame narrative and recounts the events in the episode as having taken part in them, adopts a moralising tone, wherein authorial intrusion seeps in. In this episode, we can see Apuleius right from the beginning controlling an important aspect of narration, leaving the reader in no ambiguity as to the driving force of Thrasyllus’ character.

Thrasyllus’ lust, always defined as maddening or blind, is made the focal point of investigation into his character.<sup>112</sup> The personal quality of mad rashness is also evident when hunting, where Thrasyllus’ character emerges explicitly as that of a wild, uncontrollable soul. The wildness of the boar, prey of the hunt, matches the ferality of Thrasyllus’ nature (8.4): *sed aper immanis atque invisitatus exurgit toris callosae cutis obesus, pilis inhorrentibus corio squalidus, setis insurgentibus spinae hispidus, dentibus attritu sonaci spumeus, oculis aspectu minaci flammeus, impetus saevo frementis oris totus fulmineus.*

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(1997) 260 points to lexical similarities between Apuleius’ portrait of Thrasyllus and Sallust’s portrait of Catiline in the *Bellum Catilinae*. The root of his Greek name, *thrasos*, is ably discussed by Dowden (2009), 90-92, in relation to the character of robbers in the Greek romances.

<sup>111</sup> 8.10: *Thrasyllus et prolixè consentit de furtivo concubitu, noctemque et opertas ultro tenebras*; 8.11: *Sed ubi sol tandem nocti decessit*. Charite, perceiving this aspect of his character, tells him to come with no lamp so as not to give the game away (8.10): *Nec setius patefactis aedibus acceptum **te nullo lumine conscio** ad meum perducit cubiculum*. I believe that Charite made this injunction with more than just practical considerations in mind.

<sup>112</sup> “Maddening”, 8.3: *spectate denique sed, oro, sollicitis animis intendite, quorsum furiosae libidinis proruperint impetus*. “Blind”, 8.9: *improvidae voluptatis*.

The boar, then, functions as a literary and metaphorical transferral of Thrasyllus' basic nature.<sup>113</sup> This takes the place of the sartorial kind of exteriorisation of a character's basic nature, such as occurs until this point in the novel with other characters, such as Socrates in Book 1 and Thrasyleon in Book 4. Yet textile expression of his character occurs, too. A moral reading of Thrasyllus' character allows us to see how, by assuming a disguise which involves concealing and going under cover, as if under a veil, at the injunction of Charite (8.10: *tu quam probe veste contectus omnique comite viduatus prima vigilia tacitus fores meas accedas*) not only is his dissembling and rash nature externalised and made visible on his body,<sup>114</sup> but Thrasyllus also represents a lower level of obedience, obedience to the passions (8.11): *Placuit Thrasyлло scaena feralium nuptiarum. Nec sequius aliquid suspicatus, **de expectatione turbidus** de diei tantum spatio et vesperae mora querebatur. Sed ubi sol tandem nocti decessit, ex imperio Charites adornatus et nutricis captiosa vigilia deceptus irrepit cubiculum **pronus spei**.*

### Thrasyllus' Disguise as Amatory Stratagem and Gender Reversal

Gender implications of covering are also present in the episode, implications which influence the representation of Thrasyllus' character when he bends to his lust. The narrator makes it clear, by his choice of language, that by covering himself at the injunction of Charite, Thrasyllus has put himself into the passive (that is, female) role and is then undone by the deceit of Charite and her nurse who are both explicitly identified as duplicitous in this episode,<sup>115</sup> where disguise is seen as part of female tactics imposed on men. Although no mention is made in the text of veiling or of a veil, Charite does

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<sup>113</sup> Dowden (1993) 105, also makes this connection: "I stress this implied equivalence, this metamorphosis by substitution, one of a series which the text presents. Morally speaking, Thrasyllus has effectively become what the boar was – just as Thrasyleon had taken on the skin and performance of a bear. And living by the rules of *latrones* and *ferae*, he will die."

<sup>114</sup> 8.2: *amici fidelissimi personam mentiebatur*; 8.12 (with reference to the various masks he wore, that is, the personae that he assumed): '*En'... 'fidus coniugis comes, en venator egregius, en carus maritus.*'

<sup>115</sup> Charite, 8.10: *Promissioni fallaciosae mulieris oppressus succubuit Thrasyllus*; nurse, 8.11: *nutricis captiosa vigilia deceptus*.

order Thrasyllus to come unaccompanied and under cover, as if under a veil,<sup>116</sup> even though the secret tryst is to be held at night. Notwithstanding the fact that the primary purpose of the disguise is concealment of his identity and the preservation of Charite's honour, his covering and dependence on these two women for the outcome of his designs invert the power paradigm which has been in place up to this moment, where Charite has been subject to the importunacy of Thrasyllus. Charite is showing up Thrasyllus as ridiculous by his readiness to quite literally "go under cover" for the sake of his lust. Although Thrasyllus' covering functions as a disguise, since it serves to conceal his identity, at a metaphorical level it expresses the soul which is subservient to the sensual appetites, and whose moral vision and judgement, an aspect of perception, has consequently become obscured, as if under a veil.<sup>117</sup>

The whole scene can then be seen to be a downgraded and inverted variety of disguise as an amatory stratagem. The moral sententiousness of the narrator and the specificities of the gender inversion in this scene make this not merely a reworking of the *amator exclusus* motif of love elegy, but also a humorous parody of the tyrant who seeks to besiege the captive woman's virtue. Inverting the paradigm of disguise as an amatory stratagem in the

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<sup>116</sup> Frangoulidis (1999) 608: "Thrasyllus' head-covering evokes a distant parallel with the bride's prenuptial veiling in the Roman marriage ritual – marking him as a pseudo-bride". (Charite tells of Thrasyllus' death in terms of an inverted wedding at 8.12). Frangoulidis also speaks of Thrasyllus' covering as if "to play the woman" (2001, 93). Men were veiled in the ancient world too, for a variety of reasons (Cairns, 2002). Likewise, scholars have more recently sought to revise traditional scholarly concepts of female veiling in the ancient world, which, up until recently, was seen to be predicated solely upon notions of female chastity and modesty (Hughes, 2007). Thrasyllus' veiling is also an imposed inversion of Tlepolemus' tactic: Tlepolemus' disguise has now been transferred to his enemy who will also be drugged with wine, like the robbers, before being killed. For more on this, see Chapter 6.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Plato's *Gorgias* 523a-d, wherein the soul of the judges, whose judgements are imperfect, is "muffled in the veil of eyes and ears and the whole body. Thus all these are a hindrance to them, their own habiliments no less than those of the judged." The senses and the body impinge on the clear perception of the mind. On imbalance in the soul caused by the preponderance of lust, which quashes the voice of sound counsel (*consilium*) in Apuleius' philosophical output, see the *DPD* 1.18: *cum irascentiam et consilium subegerit sibique subiecerit cupiditas*.

novel,<sup>118</sup> Charite imposes disguise on the “tyrant”<sup>119</sup> who strives to besiege her virtue through her ears which function like a fortress (8.9: *improvidae voluptatis detestabilis petitor aures obseratas de nuptiis obtundens aderat*) whilst appropriating to herself the authority of the tyrant (8.10): *Promissioni fallaciosae mulieris **oppressus succubuit Thrasyllus et prolixo consentit de furtivo concubitu, noctemque et opertas exoptat ultro tenebras, uno potiundo studio postponens omnia.*** Thrasyllus’ covering of his head is not the same thing as feminine costume, yet functions to show his dependence at that moment on a woman, not to mention the emasculating effects of uncontrolled lust on him, making him so zealous for the sexual act that he bends to the instructions of a woman. Thrasyllus saw this cover as mere concealment, a temporary expedient enabling him to come to the object of his lust. Charite is manipulating gender paradigms, including those expressed through dress, as a stratagem to break down the enemy by making him change his appearance, but without changing her own, even though her soul is expressed as manly (*masculis animis*, 8.11; *animam virilem*, 8.14) during the scene of Thrasyllus’ execution at her hands (8.13).

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<sup>118</sup> For more on this aspect of disguise in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, see my discussion of Tlepolemus and Plotina in Chapter 6, where disguise as part of an amatory stratagem is further developed into cross-dressing. Cross-dressing as an amatory stratagem in the preceding literary corpus occurs in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* with the story of Vertumnus and Pomona (14.656) and in other passages where female disguise arises as an amatory stratagem enabling rape: 2.425-433 (Jove), 4. 217-233 (Sol), and 11.310 (Phoebus). An earlier and comic version of the motif appears in Plautus’ *Casina*, although the love-interest which is supposed to support the cross-dressing in this case is not real.

<sup>119</sup> The tyrant from whom Charite was liberated earlier in the novel is the band of robbers, who liken the authority of their lifestyle to that of a tyrant (7.4): *Ad instar tyrannicae potestatis*. The robbers’ intentions towards Charite, however, were never sexual. It is to be remembered that Thrasyllus had in his youth fallen in with a band of robbers (8.1); by this fact, Thrasyllus too is a tyrant. The topos of cross-dressing as a stratagem for removing tyrants occurs in the biographical and historiographical canons, which contain specimens of young boys donning female clothing to gain access to a tyrant so as to kill him: Plutarch, *Pelopides*, 11.1-2; *De Genio Socratis*, 596d; *Solon*, 8.5; Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.10; 5.18; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 5. 4.5-6; 5.4.7. For more on aspects of cross-dressing in the *Metamorphoses*, see my chapter 6.

Additionally, Apuleius shows us how much notional space is shared by the language of covering as a moral defect and the language of covering and assault as part of a stratagem, and presents a scene which recalls veiling as a symbol of the issue of gender identity. Just like weaving, an activity which served both to define and circumscribe women's sphere, the covering that is imposed on women can help a woman to control her own destiny, thereby embodying the duplicity of female tasks and accoutrements. This gendered duplicity may also drive Charite's use of a hairpin to blind Thrasyllus.<sup>120</sup> Implements of feminine accoutrement double as weapons. Similarly, Charite uses her female body like a disguise. Beneath it is concealed a manly spirit. After disabling Thrasyllus through drink (a scheme Tlepolemus used to overcome the band of robbers), Charite overturns the gender role by bursting in with manly spirit (*masculis animis*, 8.11) to avenge both her honour and her husband's murder. Preferring death to dishonour, she kills herself and dies like a man, a male hero (8.14): *perefflavit animam virilem*. It is this manly spirit which conquers Thrasyllus. Hence, we are faced with the superimposition of a common expression of female humility (the "veil" disguise) being used for deceitful purposes, on true female virtue.<sup>121</sup> For Charite, this disguise imposed on Thrasyllus not only reverses the gender paradigm, but confirms it from another perspective. The whole episode functions to question, if not destabilise, assumptions of gender and associated behaviour, and how these are played out in dress.

### The Language of Covering and Perception

Covering as concealment, of which disguise is an aspect,<sup>122</sup> co-operates in this episode with the language of covering as ignorance and moral

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<sup>120</sup> 8.13: *Ad hunc modum vaticinata mulier acu crinali capite deprompta Thrasylli convulnerat tota lumina, eumque prorsus exoculatum relinquit.*

<sup>121</sup> Plotina's actions, including her transvestism, are also described as an extension of true wifely and female virtue by Tlepolemus (7.6): *cunctorum periculorum particeps et pro mariti salute pervigilem curam suscipiens, aerumnas assiduas ingenio masculino sustinebat.*

<sup>122</sup> Thrasyllus' disgraceful and deceitful behaviour is expressed elsewhere in the episode through the language of clothing as armour: *accingitur* (8.6), as play-acting: *personam mentiebatur* (8.6) and as dissimulating physiognomy: *vultu tamen gaudium tegit et frontem asseverat et dolorem simulat* (8.2).

blindness.<sup>123</sup> Thrasyllus' lust is determined by the narrator as thoughtless, having no heed for the future. Thrasyllus' impatience for the consummation of his lust is indicative of the moral blindness by which is stifled the voice of reason in his soul. Ironically, propriety also attends the act of covering in Thrasyllus' case by reason of the long-established topos of covering as related to notions of the preservation of modesty, or a sense of shame, a virtuous state which Thrasyllus lacks but which Charite cunningly seeks to impose on him through its most common sartorial manifestation, covering of the head and/or face.<sup>124</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Thrasyllus' face is at least partly concealed, otherwise the disguise is pointless. Given that Thrasyllus' lust has momentarily emasculated him, allowing Charite to have the upper hand, it is only appropriate that Charite tells him to come to her under cover.<sup>125</sup>

It is by an ironic act of reversal – namely, his blinding – that Thrasyllus will acquire the enlightened vision which will bring him self-knowledge. Before blinding him, Charite shows that she was aware of the various masks that Thrasyllus wore during life (8.12): '*En' inquit 'fidus coniugis mei comes, en venator egregius, en carus maritus'* and promises that she will not make Thrasyllus the equal of her husband by killing him nobly with a sword or spear, instruments worthy of men, but will blind him with her hair-pin, giving him as a permanent gift the darkness he so yearned for and leave him to live. Thrasyllus' covering up at Charite's injunction foreshadows his self-willed entombment at the end of the episode. Being covered up under Tlepolemus' tombstone where he shall starve to death, he believes, is an apt punishment for himself (8.14). His entombment at the end symbolises closure and simplicity. So the covering which he assumes when enacting deceit (*veste contectus*) is not merely allegorical of his soul as a dissembling character, but also, ironically, anticipates

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<sup>123</sup> In Greek thought, there was a thorough-going association between dishonour and concealment and honour and exposure, encountered in its most salient form in epic. On this, see Cairns (2002) 77. The shame associated with covering is explicit in this passage of the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>124</sup> On veiling undertaken as an expression of *aidos* by both men and women in the ancient world, and on the meaning of *aidos* according to context, see Cairns (2002) 73-93.

<sup>125</sup> On the element of emasculation in the episode, see Schlam (1992) 75.

his future manner of death, shut up in a tomb (8.14): *valvis super sese diligenter obseratis*.

### **Conclusion to Section 3: Charite**

The entire Charite-Thrasyllus episode is scored with notions of sight accompanied by images of its moral opposite, blindness; it is replete with images of covering and its moral counterpart, concealment of the truth and ignorance. Both of these require to be revealed and, ultimately, are made visible at the level of the body through clothing. The moral content of disguise and its relation to identity are explored in this episode.

#### Section 4: The Tale of Cupid and Psyche: Invest(igat)ing Identity

Towards the end of Book 4 and until midway through Book 6, the largest embedded narrative in the novel is told, that of Cupid and Psyche. Psyche, a beautiful but mortal princess, is mistaken for the goddess Venus on earth. Venus' altars are neglected as people direct their worship towards Psyche who, as a consequence, unwittingly incurs the wrath of Venus. To punish the girl, Venus orders her son, Cupid, to make her fall in love with the lowest kind of man. Psyche's parents, meanwhile, consult an oracle to determine the reason for their daughter's protracted virginity (as no man pays court to her) and in accordance with the oracle, which they have misunderstood, they prepare her for a wedding which resembles a funeral, leaving her on the summit of a rock for her monster husband to devour. Cupid falls in love with her himself, and saves the girl from the rock, depositing her in a golden palace where she is looked after by invisible servants. He too is invisible to her as he does not wish to disclose his identity to her. Psyche disobeys her husband's injunction against discovering his appearance, and at the insistence of her sisters who persuade her that her husband is a serpent who wants to devour her, attempts to kill him at night. The lamp which she uses to help her see him reveals her husband to be Cupid. As a punishment, Cupid leaves her and Psyche is obliged to complete a number of impossible tasks to win him back. She succeeds and is eventually immortalised. The two have a daughter named Pleasure (*Voluptas*).

The scholarship on the purpose of this tale is vast and scholars disagree on the very nature of the tale. Elegiac echoes in it are easily detectable and have been discussed by other scholars.<sup>126</sup> It has been interpreted variously as an example of *mise en abyme* of the frame narrative (or not, depending on how the term *mise en abyme* is understood),<sup>127</sup> and as a Platonist allegory on

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<sup>126</sup> For the tale's debt to the elegiac tradition and the extent of this, see Esposito (1989) 315-321, Mattiacci (1998), 127-149 and see the perceptive article by Parker and Murgatroyd (2002) 400-404 for further references (especially pages 400-401). For echoes of the elegiac tradition throughout the whole novel, see Hindermann (2009).

<sup>127</sup> See for example the articles of John Penwill (1975, 50-59; 1990, 215 and 219-220; 1998, *passim*, 2008 *passim*) who refutes the idea that the Cupid and Psyche narrative is a *mise en abyme* of the frame narrative, on the grounds of the relationship among narrator, story and reader (a tripartite relationship, rather than the much simpler dual relationship of narrator and story suggested by Dällenbach). Other scholars appear to apply the term *mise en abyme*

love and its relationship with the soul,<sup>128</sup> among other things. It is plausible to take the Cupid and Psyche tale as an embedded allegorical anticipation of the outcome of Lucius' search for knowledge, depending on what that knowledge consisted of. Undeniably, this approach is attractive yet dangerous, as it is difficult to determine how far the allegory can be extended. If we allow the allegory to embrace the detail in the story then we risk establishing parallels that are strained or pervert the nature of the tale and the novel by extension. Notwithstanding this difficulty, there is much to commend predicating a moral support for the frame narrative within the embedded tale; analysing this from the narrower perspective of considerations of perception and identity reduces the scope of the difficulties inherent in allegorical interpretations.<sup>129</sup>

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rather more loosely than Penwill. On the tale's status as a specimen of *mise en abyme*, see further Walsh (1970) 142, Kenney (1990) 10ff and Harrison's introduction (1999) xxxvii-xxxviii, Wlosok (1999) 142ff and Tatum (1999) 157ff.

<sup>128</sup> On the ancient definition of allegory and how the tale fits in with this, see Kenney (1990) 27-28 and van Wageningen (1916) 177-180.

<sup>129</sup> Cupid's name is redolent of desire (*cupidus*). Psyche is the soul looking for the object of her desire. A similar search motivates Lucius' adventures, and it too led him into difficulty (2. 2): *Sic attonitus, immo vero cruciabili desiderio stupidus, nullo quidem initio omnino vestigio cupidinis meae reperto, cuncta circumibam tamen*. Just like Psyche, Lucius mistook the object of his desires, and he got entangled with magic. The outcome of the union of the soul with its desire is pleasure (*Voluptas*) the name of the daughter born to Cupid and Psyche. *Voluptas* can be one of two types, one negative and the other positive; where it is negative, then Psyche's travails undertaken for love of Cupid and the pleasure that is born of this union can be taken as a repetition in mythological form of the pains taken by Lucius to indulge his guilty pleasures of a lower kind, a reading which chimes in with what the priest says in Book 11 (11.15): *sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles delapsus voluptates*. (11.28): *An tu inquit si quam rem voluptati struendae moliris, laciniis tuis nequaquam parceres; nunc tantas caerimonias aditurus impaenitendae te pauperiei cunctaris committere?* On the other hand, *voluptas* of a positive kind can be the result of Psyche's immortalisation so as to become worthy of Cupid. Lucius too must become like unto a god to be worthy of his desire – Isis (11.19): *At ego quamquam cupienti voluntate praeditus, tamen religiosa formidine retardabar*. For the relevance of the Platonic notion of becoming like unto a god (*cf. Theaetetus*, 176b: *homoiosis to theo*) to the *Metamorphoses*, see Chapter 8. We are still left with determining the role of Psyche's helpers in her tasks (such as Pan, the ants, etc), and how to explain Jupiter's humorous imposition of conditions in exchange for allowing his son's marriage to Psyche, in line with the allegory; so the tale of Cupid and Psyche can be allegorical of either outcome. It is up to the reader to determine which it is.

It can even be questioned how far the tale can be considered to have any deeper meaning to it given the nature of its narrator – a drunken old woman (*anus temulenta*) - and her intention, namely, diversion: (4.27): *Sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protinus avocabo*. However, such an intention does not necessarily preclude the possibility of there being any deeper significance to the tale, a possibility suggested by the fact of the tale's provenance, arising as it does not only out of a desire for distraction from Charite's present circumstances, but also out of a brief discussion of the interpretation of visions and dreams (4.27), as the narrator of the tale ensures a positive outcome for Charite's predicament, based on the content of Charite's dream. To Charite's dream of a disastrous outcome to her own situation, the old woman opposes a reading indicative of a happy result based on the oneiromantic and popular supposition of opposite outcomes (*contrarios eventus*, 4.27).<sup>130</sup> And yet the old woman is wrong; the disastrous events of Charite's day-time nap, far from being false (*diurnae quietis imagines falsae*, 4.27), are translated into reality, notwithstanding minor differences in detail.<sup>131</sup> This fact pre-emptes the ultimate truth of the oracle in the Cupid and Psyche episode: whilst what the oracle says is truthful, its interpretation is misunderstood. Misprision is the crux of the whole episode, as this is what underpins the dynamics between identity and its visual and sensual reception.

In this tale, as in others in the *Metamorphoses*, the perception of appearance is closely linked to determining personal identity, yet there is a twist - Psyche is forced through ignorance to give physical shape to her husband's identity using the only method available to her: fabrication of identity through canonical types. In this episode, perception arises in a context

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<sup>130</sup> That the old woman's explanation of oneiromantic reading is an aspect of popular knowledge is evident in what she says to Charite (4.27): *Nam praeter quod diurnae quietis imagines falsae perhibentur*.

<sup>131</sup> These too can be realigned with the real outcome pertaining to Tlepolemus' death. In Charite's dream, it is one of the abducting brigands who kills Tlepolemus (4.27): *quidam de latronibus*. In reality, it is Thrasylus, who had, in his youth, fallen in with a band of brigands (8.1): *factionibus latronum male sociatus*. In Charite's dream, it is a rock hurled by the brigand at Tlepolemus which kills him (4.27): *saxo grandi...arrepto*. In reality, it is Thrasylus' spear thrust through Tlepolemus' right thigh which kills him (8.5): *per femus dexterum dimisit lanceam*. The end result in both cases is the same.

of frustration, as the object of identity-probing, or perception, is invisible. Consequently, since the implications of perception for identity are far-reaching in this tale, I analyse it as part of an inquiry of a larger nature into the implications of the absence of visual markers of identity, that is, appearance and clothing. Cupid's invisibility functions as a costume. The anxiety Psyche endures as a result of her husband's physical invisibility is partly alleviated by the construction or fabrication of identity. Clothing and physiognomy understood in its widest sense and including hair are a large part of this. Additionally, perception will be discussed in its various manifestations in the episode, such as interpretation and the gaze.

### **Oracular Interpretation, Identity, and Ritual**

The link between perception and identity is introduced early on in this episode by the oracle consulted by Psyche's father, the king, as to why his youngest and most beautiful daughter, Psyche, was still unmarried, while her two older and less attractive sisters had married. The king had originally consulted the oracle suspecting that some deity had been offended and fearing the ensuing punishment (4.32): *Sic infortunatissimae filiae miserrimus pater suspectatis caelestibus odiis et irae superum metuens dei Milesii vetustissimum percontatur oraculum*. This is not entirely untrue, as Venus was angered by the homage paid to the girl as a result of her unnatural beauty. However, he is not in a position to understand the inherent concern with identity in the oracle's answer, or rather, the need to have a correct understanding of it, merely taking the oracle at face value and following its instructions. In his concern to know what to do, he goes home to unravel (*enodat*) and explain the oracle to his wife. The oracle, however, looks to the consequence of Psyche's beauty and gives a reply based on the nature of the girl's husband. The husband's nature, as (mis)understood by the king, determines *the form* the marriage ritual will take, in this case, funereal (*feralium nuptiarum*, 4.33). Ironically, the oracle speaks the truth about Psyche's husband, but not in the way in which the king and his family understand it.

Accordingly, ritual dress becomes a marker of ambivalence, a consequence of the king's flawed perception, by its occurring in the episode as having a share in two opposed rituals, a wedding and a funeral. The bride's

costume is the first and most salient sign of ritual mixing, redolent of identity confusion, although no details are given in the oracle of exactly how the costume is to do this: *siste puellam/ ornatam mundo funerei thalami*; rather, Psyche's costume does not reflect this ambivalence in its detail, but expresses it through the ritual gesture of veiling centred on the highly symbolic flame-coloured bridal veil, the *flammeum*, symbol of the Roman bride *par excellence*. The *flammeum* appears to undergo the usual human manipulation, being used for the purpose of covering the face (although this is not explicitly stated in the text), but reflects a funereal reality, being used not to wipe away tears of joy or of sadness at the prospect of leaving her family, nor to coyly peer out at her husband, but to wipe away tears of grief at the prospect of being wed to an unknown beast (4.33): *deterget lacrimas ipso suo flammeo*. The veil's appearance in a context of ritual ambivalence, or confusion, which itself arises out of identity misprision, confutes its value as a traditional marker of the bride's fecundity and of the legitimacy of a union which seemingly, given the bestial nature of the husband, is not contracted with a view to its proper end: the begetting of children.<sup>132</sup> The *flammeum*, although occupying minimal space in the narrative, is essential for exposing the precise nature of the interplay of perception and dress throughout much of the novel: dress is often determined by characters through misprision, yet the actual dress itself does not change; that is, the misreading of the husband's identity does not change the basic nature of the wedding dress and veil themselves into something else, but, in this case, the language of dress and associated behaviours are inflected by perception and identity confusion. The confusion of signs would then

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<sup>132</sup> On the symbolism of the *flammeum* within the scheme of procreation (*liberorum procreandorum causa*), see Boëls-Janssen (2003) 148. Interestingly, in her article on the perversion of nuptial rites in Latin literature, she raises awareness of specimens of this from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, but omits to mention the wedding scene in the Cupid and Psyche tale, preferring to concentrate on the perverse "marriages" of Lucius with the lady from Corinth and the condemned woman. Even if the symbolism of the wedding rite was not uppermost in the reader's mind, the mere context of the scene, a conflation of two rituals normally opposed to each other, and the way it is presented in the text, leave the reader in no doubt that this wedding is taking place out of context.

seemingly forestall the normal apotropaic function of wedding rites, by which ill-meaning spirits are warded off.<sup>133</sup>

Appropriately, every other aspect of the wedding ritual, including the *deductio* to the top of the rock (which obviously replaces the husband's household in the context) is changed, redolent of metamorphosis. The wedding torches (*taedae*) give off a gloomy, black light, which contrasts with (and reinterprets by perversion) the colour symbolism of the *flammeum* (perhaps an imagistic attempt at overthrowing or cancelling out the traditional symbolism of Roman marriage as inherent in the *flammeum*). In a way, this contrast of colours prefigures Psyche's enlightenment of her husband's identity at night (5.22). This may seem to be a rather stretched transference of inherent meaning ("enlightenment") in the colour of the *flammeum*, but I believe that it can work in view of the play of colour and light in the tale.<sup>134</sup> The conjugal flute which is normally played at weddings in honour of Juno in her capacity as joiner (*tibiae Zygiae*) plays the lugubrious Lydian mode, an inappropriate mode for a wedding, and the wedding hymns become lamentations of mourning (4.33): *et sonus tibiae Zygiae mutatur in querulum Lydii modum, cantusque laetus hymenaei lugubri finitur ululatu*. Apuleius is therefore using the common literary motif of the funereal wedding to explore the notion of ambivalence and tease out the implications of this for identity, especially where identity is not expressed in oracular terms and not visual terms, as a body.<sup>135</sup>

### **Deceit and the Fabrication of Identity**

The fabrication of identity is prompted by the necessity for Psyche herself to satiate the impertinent curiosity of her sisters towards her husband's identity. Psyche makes two attempts to construct an identity for her husband. An important part of this identity construction involves the creation of a "body"

<sup>133</sup> On the apotropaic function of nuptial rites, see Boëls-Janssen (2003) 130.

<sup>134</sup> On the meaning behind the colour of the veil, and its history, see the earlier article by Boëls (1988) 19-30. On light and enlightenment in the novel, see de Smet (1987) and Citati (1990), both *passim*.

<sup>135</sup> Such conflations were a regular feature of the pre-existing literary canon, especially Greek tragedy. On this, see Seaford (1987); Rehm (1994) and the GCA *ad loc*. See also for specific reference to Psyche's wedding Szepessy (1972) 341-357.

following a recognisable type. On each occasion, the type is consonant with an occupation. This fact imbues a kind of physiognomising function to her descriptions.<sup>136</sup> The first one is a hunter (5.8):

Nec tamen Psyche coniugale illud praeceptum ullo pacto temerat vel pectoris arcanis exigit, sed e re nata confingit esse iuvenem quendam et speciosum, commodum lanoso barbitio genas inumbrantem, plerumque rurestribus ac montanis venatibus occupatum.

The conjunction of hunting and youth is canonical, in both Greek and Latin literature. The image of the youthful, downy cheek in particular is a stock element in depictions of male youth in poetry,<sup>137</sup> and is redolent of a particular kind of male beauty, youthful and approaching, yet not having reached, complete manhood. This reading comes close to the reality of her husband's physical identity, although Psyche, of course, does not at this moment know this.

Her second attempt at identity construction moves her further towards her downfall as she forgets (*oblita*) her previous rendition of her husband's physical identity and constructs another. This time, her husband is a middle-aged man, involved in business, and starting to lose his hair (5.15):

Sed ad destinatam fraudium pedicam sermonem conferentes dissimulanter occipiunt sciscitari qualis ei maritus et unde natalium, secta cuius proveniret. Tunc illa simplicitate nimia pristini sermonis oblita novum commentum instruit atque maritum suum de provincia proxima magnis pecuniis negotiantem iam medium cursum aetatis agere interspersum rara canitie.

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<sup>136</sup> Applying Psyche's recourse to character fabrication through the medium of recognisable types to the novel as a whole, we can see how her method of identity construction for her husband is redolent of how much the characterisation in the novel owes to the literary canon. It is only through genre and canonical stylisation that Apuleius can transmit the processes of perception. This is also the only way we can create identity in the world of appearances, of which the novel is a microcosm and a product.

<sup>137</sup> See Kenney (1990) 150 for references, of which there are many, in both Greek and Latin literature. The image of down on the cheek of a young man reoccurs in Book 7 when Lucius describes Tlepolemus to the reader. Tlepolemus, too, is a hunter. The smooth cheeks of Philesitherus also mark his youth (9.22). See Chapter 6 for further examination into these characters.

These fabricated appearances, hence identities, respond to the sister's questions about Psyche's husband's moral identity (*qualis ei maritus*) as well as his social identity (*unde natalium, secta cuia proveniret*). On both occasions, Psyche is merely reacting to the absence of visual markers of her husband's identity by assuming the function of clothing in the novel, that is, she invests her husband (*in + vestis*) with an identity through a false appearance. Hence, this investing of identity devolves upon ignorance of it. This fabricated appearance and persona are therefore used to mask or disguise Psyche's ignorance of her husband. Even the loosest allegorical reading of the episode would allow us to see how, in her attempt to invest her husband with an identity, Psyche represents the state of the soul in ignorance of its desires, especially where these are not embodied, hence, visible. Ignorance and perception of appearance, identity and its fabrication are all linked in the episode in a scheme of cause and effect.

The sisters are not deceived by this. Furthermore, they are spurred on in their endeavour to get to the truth of the matter by a base motive: envy.<sup>138</sup> This sickness of the mind lies behind the deceit which they resolve to use to obtain their end, the destruction of their sister. The face occurs in such contexts as a marker of deceit, the lies which the sisters fabricate and which arise in the baseness of their soul being concealed by their faces (5.14): *vulto laeto tegentes*. The face in such cases is truly a mask. Psyche's ignorance of identity is sharply contrasted with her sisters' dissimulation of intention which is in part a product of their ignorance of Psyche's husband. Psyche and her sisters represent two different types of reaction to ignorance: the first, Psyche's, is imaginative and has recourse to the language of physical appearance; the second, her sisters', is dissimulative and draws on the language of weaving and dyeing with its connotations of deceit (5.16): *'Ergo interim ad parentes nostros redeamus et exordio sermonis huius quam concolores fallacias attexamus.'*<sup>139</sup> The notion of colour in this case connotes deceit, yet by the interpretation they give to the situation, the sisters show themselves in their true nature as dissemblers. In accordance with this

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<sup>138</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 5.9: *Quo protenus perpetrato sorores egregiae domum redeuntēs iamque gliscentis **invidiae felle** flagrantes multa secum sermonibus mutuis perstrepebant.*

<sup>139</sup> For an overview of the semiotic value of dyeing in antiquity see Plutarch's *Moralia*, 228b (Gibson, 2003, 162; Bradley 2009, 179).

stylisation, the two women are depicted in the novel as playing roles: *simulatos redintegrant fletus* (5.11); *sorores nomine mentientes* (5.14); *sic affectione simulata* (5.15). Ironically, this role-playing confirms how the sisters see themselves in their own lives (5.10): *Ego vero...nec uxoris officiosam faciem, sed medicae laboriosam personam sustinens*. The depiction of the sisters as Sirens or Furies<sup>140</sup> is driven by this base impulse, arising from jealousy - the necessity to dissemble.

As part of the fabrication of identity, dress is reduced to the language of the activity that creates it: weaving. Rather than being the minimal level of clothing in the novel (this is a function taken over by rags), weaving imagery takes on the function of marker of the process of fabrication and what drives it – deceit. This in turn functions as an aspect of dissembling, emanating from the deceit of its practitioners, Psyche's sisters, women who are subject to attacks of jealousy, and who attempt to disguise their true feelings towards their sister's change in fortune. This is only a small part of the tale, but it is essential that it not be overlooked in view of the central place the tale occupies in the novel, both structurally and thematically.

### **Invisibility, Naked Beauty and Divine Identity**

In the Cupid and Psyche episode, identity is not fully determined by dress alone. Apuleius appears to be focusing specifically on costume and appearance as an inappropriate marker of identity by conceptualising the body both as invisible and as unclothed object, the latter occurring specifically with the disclosure of Cupid's identity. This is because the question of identity examined from a more overtly allegorical perspective in the episode appropriates the novel's sartorial representation of appearance and identity in other chapters. Dress and the clothed body recede in the tale of Cupid and Psyche (although its presence can be sensed if not seen) and is downplayed in favour first of the invisibility of identity markers, and then of the naked body, especially that of Cupid at the moment of Psyche's uncovering of his identity.

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<sup>140</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 5.12: *Sed iam pestes illae taeterrimaeque Furiae anhelantes vipereum virus et festinantes impia celeritate navigabant... cum in morem Sirenum scopulo prominentes funestis vocibus saxa personabunt*. 2.21: *At Psyche relictā sola, nisi quod infestis Furiis agitate sola non est, aestu pelagi simile maerendo fluctuat*.

The importance of sight and visibility to perception is marked. When the body is invisible but can be perceived through other senses, such as touch, it brings in its wake anxiety, and provokes, in the reactions of others, ambivalence and incites curiosity. A cloak of invisibility also guarantees the wearer's immunity, thereby occluding pretence and dissimulation, as Cupid did not have to resort to dissimulating behaviour in order to protect his true identity, a likely necessity had he not put on this cloak of invisibility. Yet he would not disclose his identity to Psyche, preferring instead to cloak himself from her sight, so his cloak of invisibility is used like a disguise. However, concealment in this case is not the same thing as dissembling.

Nakedness in the episode is relative to clothing and costume in the sense that it is what they seek to cover and/or reveal, and is, in particular, the other side of the coin in the currency of dress. Here, as in all occurrences of nakedness in the *Metamorphoses*, it represents the truth of a character's nature. This is particularly effective from the perspective of the episode's placement in the novel, following on from and preceding passages where costume has taken precedence in the text and has been misread by some.<sup>141</sup> Psyche is not presented at the beginning of this tale as being sure of her husband's identity, unlike some of the preceding characters, such as Aristomenes before Socrates, and Lucius regarding Pythias, whose previous certainties about his friend were dissolved; hence the importance of his initial invisibility. Similarly, while Cupid's nakedness reveals his truth as the god of love, it is not a costume; rather, he uses the "cloak of invisibility" as a costume to conceal his true nature from his wife. These two aspects of his representation, the cloak of invisibility and the nakedness which envelops his true nature, co-operate towards the important moment of the revelation of his identity and intensify the impact of this revelation on Psyche.

On several occasions identity, especially Cupid's, is centred on the face (*vultus, facies*) the mirror of emotion: 4.29: *et in humanis vultibus deae tantae*

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<sup>141</sup> The Cupid and Psyche tale is flanked by two specimens of disguise and its dissolution: Thrasyleon's bear-skin, intended as a disguise, dissolves into an externalisation of Thrasyleon's nature as a beast (Book 4), and Tlepolemus' strategic cross-dressing (Book 7) becomes an embodiment of his unstable identity with regards to gender and heroism.

*numina placantur*; 5.11: *meos explorare vultus*; 5.13: *cognoscam faciem tuam...in tuo vultu*; 5.16: *formam mariti...viri sui faciem ignorat*; 5.19: *viri mei vidi faciem*; 5.19: *semper a suis terret aspectibus, malumque grande de vultus curiositate*; 5.26: *vultus eius aspexi*. Where Cupid's representation is concerned, the body and face function as a site of ambiguity and uncertainty (5.19: *maritum incerti status*) hence of identity instability, until the moment of the disclosure of Cupid's true identity.

Personal identity confronts ambivalence most closely in the text at the moment when Psyche contemplates her fate, faced with the necessity of putting an end to her ambivalent husband. She suddenly becomes aware of the possibility of one body's harbouring a dual identity (5.21): *in eodem corpore ... bestiam ... maritum*. The effects of this are inherent in the text itself, as Psyche is represented as being divided between conflicting reactions to this realisation (5.21). The issue of dual identity occupies an important place in the sentence, occurring in a balanced construction right at the end (5.21): *in eodem corpore odit bestiam, diligit maritum*. This is because her husband's perceived dual identity is the primary motivator of Psyche's ambivalence towards her husband, despite the hand of her sisters in giving final definition to the identity of Psyche's husband in accordance with the oracle which was taken to say that Psyche's husband was a beast.

Psyche is imbued with a temporary masculinisation which gives her the strength to perform the murderous task to which she is set by her sisters.<sup>142</sup> Bringing the light close to the bed, she espies her sleeping husband and is struck with the realisation that the oracle spoke the truth; her husband is indeed a winged beast, but of such sweetness that her temporary gender metamorphosis into a man is undone (5.22):

Sed cum primum luminis oblatione tori secreta claruerunt, videt omnium ferarum **mitissimam dulcissimamque bestiam**, ipsum illum Cupidinem formosum deum formose cubantem. Cuius aspectu lucernae quoque lumen hilaratum increbruit et acuminis sacrilegi novaculum paenitebat. At vero Psyche tanto aspectu deterrita et impos animi, marcido pallore defecta tremensque desedit in imos poplites et ferrum

<sup>142</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 5.22: *Tunc Psyche, et corporis et animi alioquin infirma, fati tamen saevitia sumministrante viribus roboratur, et prolata lucerna et arrepta novacula sexum audacia mutatur.*

quaerit abscondere, sed in suo pectore. Quod profecto fecisset, nisi ferrum timore tanti flagitii manibus temerariis delapsum evolasset. Iamque lassa, salute defecta, dum saepius divini vultus intuetur pulchritudinem, recreatur animi.

Psyche's reaction conveys a sense of the appropriateness of the effect of the beautiful spectacle of love, presenting the lover as smitten with illness.<sup>143</sup>

As she gazes further on her husband's beautiful countenance, she is restored in her mind (5.22): *dum saepius divini vultus intuetur pulchritudinem, recreatur animi*. The restorative effect of this vision is contained in the detailed and sensual description of what Psyche sees. Apuleius uses all his rhetorical resources to paint a synaesthetic word-picture. The descriptive scheme begins with the head and moves downwards (5.22):

Videt capitis aurei genialem caesariem ambrosia temulentam, cervices lacteas genasque purpureas pererrantes crinium globos decoriter impeditos, alios antependulos, alios retropendulos, quorum splendore nimio fulgurante iam et ipsum lumen lucernae vacillabat; per umeros volatilis dei pinnae roscidae micanti flore candicant et quamvis alis quiescentibus extimae plumulae tenellae ac delicatae tremule resultantes inquieta lasciviunt; ceterum corpus glabellum atque luculentum et quale peperisse Venerem non paeniteret. Ante lectuli pedes iacebat arcus et pharetra et sagittae, magni dei propitia tela.

### Colour and Hair

The elegiac and poetic echoes of the colours which emerge in the description of the god co-operate with the image of his perfumed hair to support his representation in the passage as the god of love.<sup>144</sup> It is even

<sup>143</sup> Cf. what the speaker tells us in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 1.729: *palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti*. It is only appropriate that Psyche should be seen to "die" for love of her beloved.

<sup>144</sup> On the poetic elements in the description taken from love elegy and other poetic genres, including the poems of Catullus generally, see the GCA commentary (2004) 277-278. Esposito (1989) 319-320 assimilates the depiction of naked Cupid to that of the elegiac *inermis Amor*. I believe Cupid's nakedness as a sign of vulnerability to be downplayed in Apuleius' tale in favour of a reading of nakedness as truth. I cannot agree with Krabbe (2003, 536) who says that "For the most part ... color seems to play only an incidental role in the Cupid and Psyche story." On the contrary, the colour scheme is an essential part of the representation of Cupid's true nature *as the god of Love*. She does however rightly draw attention to the occurrence of the terms *color* (5.18: *exsangui colore lurida*) and *concolor*

permissible to consider the triad of colours used of Cupid's description - gold, white and the red spectrum- to function as a kind of divine colour scheme, further enhancing Cupid's role as the god of love.

Gold is the colour of both divinity and love.<sup>145</sup> The red-white colour scheme occurs in Catullus, Tibullus and Ovid, where it emerges in the context of beautiful young men.<sup>146</sup> The roseate colour of Cupid's cheeks also evokes poetic depictions of gods and heroes.<sup>147</sup> Additionally, the luminosity, or brilliance, of the colours is enhanced by the ineffectualness of natural light when set against the refulgence of Cupid's hair (*pererrantes crinium globos... quorum splendore nimio fulgurante iam et ipsum lumen lucernae vacillabat*). The quality of brilliance is particularly inherent in the adjective *purpureus*, which could convey both hue and underlying brilliance,<sup>148</sup> a quality thoroughly becoming of a god. As descriptive of the god's cheeks, the adjective *purpureus* in this instance tends towards the roseate side of the colour spectrum. Consequently, Cupid's cheeks somewhat coincide with the image of the face of the "blushing bride", which is not only suitable for the youthful god of love, suggestive of his underlying eroticism,<sup>149</sup> but also contrasts with the momentary assumption of the male role by Psyche.

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(5.16: *concolores fabulas attexamus*) yet without giving further notice of their import for character depiction in the episode.

<sup>145</sup> The GCA (2004) points out that the adjective *aureus* was used of both beauty and virtue (213), and that gold belongs to the gods, but that *aureus* is also a "lover's word" (277).

<sup>146</sup> Catullus 64.45-49: *candet ebur soliis, collucent pocula mensae/tota domus gaudet regali splendida gaza/ pulvinar vero Divae geniale locatur/sedibus in mediis, Indo quod dente politum/tincta tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco*; Tibullus on the beauty of Apollo 3.4.30: *et color in niveo corpore purpureus*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3.420 (of Narcissus): *et dignos Baccho, dignos et Apolline crines/ inpubesque genas et eburnea colla decusque/oris et in niveo mixtum candore ruborem*. Cf. André (1949) 98: "c'est donc 'l'éclat vermeil' de la jeunesse."

<sup>147</sup> Tibullus on the god Apollo, 3.4.3: *et color in niveo corpore purpureus*; Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.589-591: *os umerosque deo similis; namque ipsa decoram/caesariem nato genetrix lumenque iuventae/purpureum et laetos oculis adflarat honores*.

<sup>148</sup> André (1949) 97-100; GCA (2004) 278.

<sup>149</sup> Although Cupid is not really blushing in this instance, as he is asleep, depicting the god with a permanent blush could suggest his underlying eroticism. This suggestion of eroticism may be inherent in Ovid's depiction of him in the *Amores* (2. 1. 37-38): *Ad mea formosos*

Cupid's resplendent golden hair, languishing on his milky white neck, is a significant aspect of his divinity.<sup>150</sup> All through the novel hair is an index of the truth of a person's inherent nature.<sup>151</sup> Apuleius has reinforced this role of Cupid's hair in this instance by adding to it the presence of the divine fragrance, *ambrosia*, as well as the notion of liquidity, thereby evoking the senses of smell and touch (the latter indirectly by suggestion). By speaking of Cupid's hair as "drunk with ambrosia" (*ambrosia temulentam*; a possible if not the only reading), the narrator further underscores the idea of all things being in love with every aspect of the god. This idea is continued further on in the scene where the lamp is portrayed as if desirous of kissing the body which it has helped to disclose to Psyche (5.23): *lucerna illa sive perfida pessima sive invidia noxia sive **quod tale corpus contingere et quasi basiare et ipsa gestiebat***. The effect of the spectacle of the god is to personify every inanimate object.

### Perception, the Gaze and the Revelation of Cupid's Identity

The emphasis in the text on Psyche's gaze on the divine countenance of her newly revealed husband (*dum saepius divini vultus intuetur pulchritudinem*, 5.22) is carried into her fascination with his arms, a fascination which is described as curiosity.<sup>152</sup> This quality is further connected with the soul, a connection enhanced by a clever word-play (5.23): *Quae dum **insatiabili animo** Psyche, satis et curiosa, rimatur atque pertrectat et mariti sui miratur arma*. By the emphasis on her reaction as that of a lover gazing on the beloved (5.22), Apuleius places Psyche in turn under the scrutiny of the reader. This has the

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*vultus adhibete puellae/ carmina, purpureus quae mihi dictat Amor*. I do not take this instance of the adjective in the *Amores* to be necessarily connected with brightness or brilliance.

<sup>150</sup>This too has precedents in much earlier Roman poetry: Virgil, *Georgics* 4.337 (on the sea-nymphs): *caesariem effusae nitidam per candida colla*; *Aeneid* 8.659-661: *aurea caesaries ollis atque aurea vestis/ virgatis lucent sagulis, tum lactea colla/ auro innectuntur*. Purser (1910) 57, finds an analogy for ambrosia as a divine unguent in the *Georgics*, 4.415: *Haec ait et liquidum ambrosiae diffundit odorem*.

<sup>151</sup> Compare the hair of the erotic Photis (2.9) with that of the chaste Isis (11.3); of the lusty effeminate Philebus (8.24) with that of the Isiac initiates (11.10).

<sup>152</sup> For Psyche's curiosity, see 5.23: *Psyche, satis et curiosa*. On the relevance of curiosity to the novel, and especially for a study of character in the novel, see De Filippo (1990), Deremetz (2002) and Garbugino (2009), especially pages 212-213.

effect of sublimating the description of both Psyche in love and of Cupid's naked beauty, imbuing the descriptions with deeper meaning and transforming them into a depiction of the soul contemplating its desire, whose form had been previously undisclosed. The purely descriptive role of such ecphrases is downplayed in favour of an allegorical function. This serves to highlight the part of perception in the episode. An application of even the loosest allegorical reading of the Cupid and Psyche tale to the frame narrative can elucidate its function as a story of the soul coming to recognise and be worthy of the truth it has been looking for.<sup>153</sup>

Gazing on the object of one's desire is a motif that runs all through the novel, beginning in Book 2 with Lucius' fixation on Photis' hair, and ending in Book 11 with the transferral of Lucius' gaze onto the image of the goddess Isis, of which there are many examples.<sup>154</sup> On these occasions, the contemplation of an object which brings pleasure to the beholder has a restful effect on his mind. However, in Book 11 there is a difference: what motivates Lucius' contemplation is now religious truth (not magic or desire), contained in the precepts of the rite of Isis. This is appropriate in one whose gaze is now fixed on images of the goddess, a change which, in turn, is the result of his enlightenment. Previously, gazing on women had an altogether different effect on Lucius. His first sight of Photis caused him arousal which he did not seek to avert. Lucius' second gaze on Photis in Book 2, in contrast, although intended to restore calm to his tense spirit, is motivated by his fear of the witch Pamphile and her magic (2.11): *Sed assidue respiciens praeministrantem Photidem inibi recreabar animi*. Ironically, as it turns out, it is through Photis that he has access to the secrets of transformation, one of the privileges of magic. Charite also stirred the erotic in him without, however, having any further effect, as his concentration at that time was on escape from the robbers.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Much like Lucius, who turned to Isis after suffering many disappointments from his encounters with magic. For Meroe, Pamphile and Photis as degraded forms of Isis, see Chapter 8.

<sup>154</sup> See, for some of the most striking, 11.17, 11.19, 11.20, 11.22, 11.23.

<sup>155</sup> Photis, 2.10; Charite, 4.23.

A more metaphorical reading of Psyche's gaze upon her husband allows us to draw an analogy between 5.22 and 11.22, with the former being a prefiguration of the novel's religio-philosophical conclusion, where the naked beauty of the divine face is replaced with that of truth, symbolised in this case not only by the goddess' image (11.17) but also by the religious teachings delivered to Lucius by the goddess herself. Although she must have appeared to him, we are given no imagistic impression of her.<sup>156</sup> Visual description is subordinated to contemplation of the goddess's precepts, but the restorative effect of the contemplation of truth is expressed in similar terms on each occasion:

(5.22)	(11.22)
‘dum saepius divini vultus intuetur pulchritudinem, <b>recreatur animi.</b> ’	Quis et ceteris benivolis praeceptis summatis deae <b>recreatus animi,</b>

On this occasion, the light by which Psyche espies her husband's face brings the truth with it (5.26): ‘*Sed cum primum, ut aequae placuerat, conscio lumine vultus eius aspexi, video mirum divinumque prorsus spectaculum; ipsum illum deae Veneris filium, ipsum inquam Cupidinem leni quiete sopitum.*’<sup>157</sup> The recurrence of shared motifs in the two episodes (the revelation of Cupid to Psyche and the apparition of Isis) modifies the status of the former: the epiphany of Cupid is a lower-level prefiguration of the epiphany of Isis, as the goddess represents what Lucius had really been in search of. Prior to this moment, the reliability of sensory apprehension (of appearance and identity) has been questioned and suspended.

Of no less importance is the consideration that what little knowledge Psyche did have of her husband's physical nature prior to its disclosure, a knowledge arrived at through the senses of hearing and touch,<sup>158</sup> accords

<sup>156</sup> 11.22.

<sup>157</sup> For the role of light in the novel which brings enlightenment and uncovers the truth, see the article by de Smet (1987) 21-49.

<sup>158</sup> 5.5: *namque praeter oculos et manibus et auribus nihilominus sentiebatur.* (I am retaining the reading of *nihilominus* as found in Hanson's edition of the text, against the proposed emendation of Martos: <facil>ius nihil; on which, see his article in *Classical Philology*, 2002, 97.4, 361.) This fact is essential for making the point that sensory perception is not wholly unreliable, merely relatively so.

more with the reality of her husband's beautiful and youthful physical identity than did her character fabrications. This is most obvious where she appeals to her husband, re-emphasising his ambrosial scent, his hair and his youth (5.13): *Per istos cinnameos et undique pendulos crines tuos, per teneras et teretes et mei similes genas, per pectus nescio quo calore fervidum*. This approximation to the truth was severely undone by Psyche's lack of mental firmness, despite her protestations to the contrary (cf 5.13: *nec eo setius approbabitur tibi nunc etiam firmitas animi mei*), in the face of her sisters' suggestions which are motivated by rivalry. Reading this passage from an allegorical perspective allows us to see the sisters as an embodiment of the attacks of jealousy on the soul and the potentially serious implications of this with regard to the perception and reading of identity, as such assaults by the appetites on the soul provoke perceptual ineffectiveness.

Complementary but different to the issue of Cupid's identity, is that of Psyche's own. Both the reader and the characters inside the embedded narrative are aware of Psyche's origins and status as a mortal princess; however, Psyche's beauty is so evocative of the beauty of Venus that she is often mistaken for her. So the main protagonists of the embedded tale play out the issue of outer identity in the measure in which it touches them personally: Psyche's outer identity is mistaken, hence, misunderstood; Cupid's is unknown, hence constructed.

#### **Conclusion to Section 4: Cupid and Psyche**

Identity in the *Metamorphoses* can be deemed to operate within the boundaries of perception. The Cupid and Psyche tale manipulates this seminal issue from the angle of invisibility and its impact on feeble human perceptions. Misprision of identity affects its representation, even in contexts of ritual which can consequently become confused. Hence the symbolism of aspects of ritual dress, such as Psyche's wedding veil (*flammeum*), is perverted. Sartorial symbolism aside, the context in which the *flammeum* appears is heavily marked as a conflation of two separate rites caused by the misreading of an oracle; hence, oracles in the tale are important for a discussion of perception as their interpretation (which is dependent upon that perception) determines representation through dress and appearance, especially that of Cupid. Whereas the oracles always speak the truth, man's interpretative feebleness

means that they will be misunderstood and their meaning misrepresented through visual means. The language of textile fabrication as a metaphor for deceit and the character of deceitful nature underpin the relevance of identity examined from the point of view of the body, clothed and unclothed. Psyche's prolonged gaze upon the naked beauty of Cupid is necessary for ascertaining the degree to which the tale functions as a representation of the yearning of the soul (especially Lucius' soul) for the divine in its purest manifestation. Again, intergeneric echoes from Roman poetry and love elegy arise to confirm Cupid's depiction as the god of love. This tale is allegorical of enlightenment and the revelation of the truth, expressed as Cupid's newly revealed naked body, and the implications of perceptual naivety or ignorance. By extending the allegory further we come to see how it is the tale of the soul coming to know itself by perceiving the true shape of its desires. When faced with a lack of visible signifiers to aid perception, Psyche was driven to invent her own. The consequences of this were far-reaching and noxious, as it led her to lie to her sisters, waver in her resolutions and ultimately break her husband's injunction against any attempt on her part to discover his physical identity. Her discovery of this led to her punishment, which consisted of Cupid's absence and the subsequent imposition of many impossible tasks on her by Venus.

## Conclusion to Chapter 1

To conclude, these four examinations into the role of perception with regard to appearance including dress are essential for understanding how closely connected the two themes are in the novel. Perception is brought to the fore in such cases, acquiring prominence in these episodes by the facilitating role of narration. Lucius himself, whose own consternation at behaviour which is incongruous with appearance is often marked at other places in the novel, comes to understand how this discrepancy arises in the course of his experiences as a donkey, a realisation which becomes clearer in his reaction to the costumed pantomime.

In the episodes discussed in this chapter, discernible incongruities can be attributed in each case to perception-based issues. Thelyphron, at the time he was experiencing these events, could not see beyond false personae and appearances (including his own), but the witches could see beyond his and, accordingly, made the necessary facial adjustments. This lesson is lost on Lucius, who will also undergo a physical transformation which, unlike Thelyphron's, is voluntary, yet not properly understood, as he did not want to become a donkey. However, the donkey is more in line with his character than Lucius can see at the time. On both characters, faulty self-perception is met with a physical realignment in accordance with what they cannot see within themselves at the time of the transformation.

The pantomime presents a panorama of the values which are most prized and sought after by people who have perjured themselves to acquire them. These people are represented in the pantomime by Paris, and the values by the three goddesses- Juno, Minerva and Venus. Lucius finally realises that what appears to be attractive in life may be extraneous to what brings true wisdom and happiness, and sees these things for what they really are. Lucius finally dwells with explicitness on the implications of representation of character through dress and costume, as a specimen of the theatre-of-life motif. The interplay of appearance and its apperception by two distinct audiences at the pantomime – the one enlightened and the other unenlightened - is an essential part of this realisation, a realisation which will be required for his reception into the rites of Isis, especially as one of the elect initiates who approach the goddess in her true form.

Charite's perception of human qualities in her donkey saviour caused him to be treated humanely, rather than as a pack animal. Similarly, her perspicuity gave her the upper hand in her relations with Thrasyllus, with the comic result that his penchant for covering up his intentions becomes visible at the level of the body. The same acuity of perception explains Charite's manner of depicting her husband, beshewing his less heroic qualities, in the mortuary portrait through which she keeps her husband's memory alive.

In the final section, Psyche was analysed as the embodiment of the soul who had to learn to correctly discern her desire, made invisible to her and in the face of competing constructed identities, so as to be made worthy of it by pursuit. Lucius too must apprehend the correct form of the truth and not be lead into ritual error. All four episodes (Thelyphron, the Pantomime, Charite, Cupid and Psyche) thus bring out the complex interrelation of perception and the body, both clothed and unclothed or, in Cupid's case, a "cloak of invisibility."

## Chapter 2

### Physiognomy and Metamorphosis in the Novel

In this chapter I aim to look further into the impact other characters' readings of Lucius' appearance have in the earlier parts of novel as the narrative unfolds, and the degree to which they are indicative of these characters' imperfect perception of Lucius whose personal nature comes to be fully visible only through metamorphosis.

The first section engages with the accuracy of physiognomic readings of Lucius made in the first two books of the novel by the anonymous interlocutor (1.20), Milo (1.23), and Byrrhaena (2.2) whose physiognomic interpretation of Lucius is the most comprehensive. Whilst largely accurate as diagnoses based on first impressions, they all fail to encompass the full complexity of his character. This conclusion is arrived at by examining these moral prognostications of Lucius in the light of evidence which surfaces in the novel itself as well as of cautions arising in the ancient physiognomic tradition directed at the physiognomist, or whosoever stands in his place, to avoid slapdash readings based on brief encounters.

The next section examines the transformation of both Pamphile and Lucius and attempts to explain how Lucius' transformation into a donkey completes the picture of his character. The aim is to show how the two literary methods of character analysis in the novel – physiognomy and metamorphosis - are complementary, as perceptions of Lucius' appearance act rather as a complement than as a foil to his transformation into a donkey, and vice versa. Both his human appearance and his asinine appearance reveal aspects of his hybrid nature. Apuleius' Platonist notions of the presence of mid-way states of the soul are drawn on to explain how two seemingly opposed methods of character reading work alongside each other to bring about this re-appraisal of Lucius' character through transformation.

The following section brings to our attention events which occur in the novel prior to Lucius' transformation which support the claim that Lucius had at that point in time an imperfect knowledge of the truly complex nature of metamorphosis. This claim will be further supported by the evidence of the

Zopyrus anecdote, available through Cicero's writings, which seeks to retain the validity of physiognomic interpretation from an informed Socratic perspective. Although the Zopyrus anecdote concerns physiognomy, it has implications for the question of metamorphosis.

Plato's work, the *Phaedo*, provides an explanation for this determinative rapport between body and soul (which is missed by Lucius), so this work is presented in the final section as a plausible interpretative tool for understanding why Lucius was changed into a donkey, and not a bird, as he wished. The language of putting off and putting on clothing, which is prevalent in both the *Metamorphoses* and Plato's *Phaedo*, becomes strongly relevant for the depiction and/or discussion of metamorphosis, insofar as such language is used in both of the body as a metaphor for textile covering.

### Physical Appearance and Physiognomy

The integral role of appearance and its reception in the *Metamorphoses* materialises in Book 1. Lucius' character is first interpreted from his face early on in the novel by the incredulous traveller in Book 1 who reconciles with difficulty Lucius' appearance (*habitus et habitudo*, 1.20) as a man of culture and refinement (*vir ornatus*)<sup>159</sup> to his willingness to believe such an outlandish story as that told only moments earlier by Aristomenes, their travelling companion (1.20): '*tu autem,*' inquit '*vir ut habitus et habitudo demonstrat ornatus, accedis huic fabulae?*' This first reading of Lucius' appearance is deduced from his *habitus et habitudo*, which, taken as a unit, encompasses both clothing and the body,<sup>160</sup> including the all-important face. By this remark, the speaker seemingly deems the education of his cultured travelling companion to be legible upon his body.<sup>161</sup> By its nature as a question, this first

<sup>159</sup> On the meaning of *ornatus*, see the *OLD* (1982) 1270. Apuleius appears to relate the word, in the *Apologia*, to notions of uprightness in office (101): *Corvinius Celer, vir ornatus*.

<sup>160</sup> On *habitus* and *habitudo* in the novel, see the Appendix.

<sup>161</sup> Bearing in mind the nature of the *Apologia* and the persona adopted by Apuleius therein, the claim made by Apuleius in the *Apologia* that a man of free birth and noble sentiment must bear his soul on his face seems to suggest that such an injunction stems from an ethical ideology derived from his Platonist education (40): *more hoc et instituto magistrorum meorum, qui aiunt hominem liberum et magnificum debere, si quo eat, in primori fronte animum gestare*.

diagnosis of Lucius' character both demands and achieves a suspension of judgment based on appearances. The reader is alerted to keep an open mind on the question of Lucius' identity and character.

The second occasion of Lucius' subjection to something akin to physiognomic scrutiny occurs when he meets Milo for the first time (1.23). Interestingly, the letter of commendation that Demeas had addressed to Milo on Lucius' account, confirms what Milo had instantaneously perceived upon his first encounter with Lucius. The primary visual account is verified by the scripted account of Lucius' character contained in Demeas' letter, as Milo says (1.23): *Et sic 'Ego te' inquit 'etiam de ista corporis speciosa habitudine deque hac virginali prorsus verecundia generosa stirpe proditum et recte conicerem, sed et meus Demeas eadem litteris pronuntiat'*. The text leaves no ambiguity in this regard; the congruity between the (visible) outer man (physical appearance) and the (invisible) inner man (soul), specified in this case as deference (*verecundia*), must be confirmed in a permanent medium, namely, writing (note the shift from the subjunctive to the indicative: *conicerem, sed et... pronuntiat*). Lucius' outer comeliness (*ista corporis speciosa habitudine*) arises from the beauty of his manners (*virginali prorsus verecundia*).<sup>162</sup> This conjunction is deemed by Milo to be the result of his social provenance and, by association, his upbringing (*te... generosa stirpe proditum et recte conicerem*),

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<sup>162</sup> The presence of the particle *prorsus* in this character depiction (*prorsus verecundia*) is not negligible. In addition to its normal function as an intensive particle, *prorsus* often arises – sometimes ironically – in the *Metamorphoses* in places where it underscores at a deeper level the truth in relation to both permanent character and temporary states which can be indicative of aspects of character: 1.24: *habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem*; 1.25: *his actis consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus*; 2.2: *aspectu micantes, prorsus aquilini*; 2.6: *prorsus argutula est* (Photis); 4.15: *prorsus bestiam factum* (on this occurrence of the word, see chapter 5); 5.14: *prorsus Cupido nascetur*; 5.19: *maritum incerti status et prorsus lucifugam*; 6.26: *inepta et prorsus asinina cogitatio*; 8.13: *eumque prorsus exoculatum relinquens* (Thrasyllus); 8.25: *prorsus ut in asini corio modestum hominem inhabitare credis*; (8.27 on the nature of certain gods: *prorsus quasi deum praesentia soleant homines non sui fieri meliores*); 10.21 (with the meaning of *tegmen* in a metaphorical sense: *Tunc ipsa cuncto prorsus spoliata tegmine*); (10.22 ascertaining the closeness of human to bestial even in a physical sense through bodily union: *Artissime namque complexa totum me prorsus, sed totum recepit*); 11.12: *prorsus humano gradu*.

most likely including an education becoming a gentleman of noble station.<sup>163</sup> An association linking personal behaviour through the body back to the soul is no doubt prevalent in Milo's thinking about Lucius, an association that can be predicated upon the interdependence of mind and body.<sup>164</sup> This interdependence may have been a common ancient assumption, giving rise to various forms of physiognomic reading practised by the populace, unschooled in physiognomy as a skill, as a part of their daily life, as well as by the learned.<sup>165</sup>

Overall, then, these first two occurrences prime the reader for expectations of a genteel education and character. Of greater importance for the text is their function as an aside from Apuleius to his reader not to completely mistrust first appearances, howsoever character in the novel may develop. They also serve to underpin and further support the third and most informative reading of Lucius' character from his exterior. This occurs on the occasion of his chance encounter with a relative of his mother (2.2). This woman, named Byrrhaena, gives us the most detailed description of Lucius.

Byrrhaena's prognostication lacks the associated terms used previously, *habitus et habitudo* or *habitudine*. This, however, does not undermine the value of her reading, which conveys details especially of Lucius' facial appearance, but also his manner of walking. The face is a space rich in semiotic potential in the physiognomic corpus, containing all the most salient readable qualities, especially the eyes.<sup>166</sup> Significantly, this portrait also contains the

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<sup>163</sup> On this aspect of Lucius' character, see further Mason (1983), and, for the depiction of rank, social status and esteem in Apuleius' work, and these concepts as they relate to Apuleius himself, see Ifie and Thompson (1977).

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 805a1-10, and Apuleius, *DPD* 1.18, for this interdependence.

<sup>165</sup> On the ubiquity of physiognomic systems embedded in the "face-to-face" culture of the ancient Mediterranean, see Gleason (1990), 389.

<sup>166</sup> The face and the eyes were semiologically important in most aspects of life in the ancient Mediterranean (on this, see Gleason, 1990), and their semiological weight, widespread amongst the less educated, was transferred to more privileged echelons. The rhetorical and forensic tradition played on this importance. Cicero makes this clear in the *De Oratore*, 3.59: *Sed in ore sunt omnia, in eo autem ipso dominatus est omnis oculorum .... Animi est enim omnis actio, et imago animi vultus, indices oculi.*

second instance of remark being made upon the quality of Lucius' nobility or good-breeding (*generositas*), a quality made visible both by physiognomy and associated non-verbal behaviour – namely, good manners, of which blushing and modesty are manifestations. Byrrhaena attributes this reaction to his well-bred behaviour (*generosa probitas*) which he inherited from his mother, to whom she is related (2.2): 'En' inquit 'sanctissimae Salviae matris generosa probitas.' This reading is confirmed by Lucius' own response that he dare not be so forward as to approach a lady he does not know (2.2): 'Vereor' inquam 'ignotae mihi feminae.' Byrrhaena's facial reading of her young relative's character follows a common line of physiognomic procedure, capped with the essential element of the gait (2.2):

At illa, optutum in me conversa, 'En' inquit 'sanctissimae Salviae matris generosa probitas. Sed et cetera corporis execrabiliter ad regulam qua diligenter aliquid adfingunt amussim<sup>167</sup> congruentia: inenormis proceritas, succulenta gracilitas, rubor temperatus, flavum et inaffectedatum capillitium, oculi caesii quidem, sed vigiles et in aspectu micantes, prorsus aquilini, os quoquoversum floridum, speciosus et immeditatus incessus.'

There are several points to be drawn from this moral prognosis. The overall effect of this physiognomic picture of Lucius is one of balance and inaffectedation. Balance is achieved herein in two ways. The adjectives are essential in this, as all the elements required for a physiognomic reading – *proceritas*, *gracilitas*, *rubor*, *capillitium*, *oculi*, *os* and the all-important *incessus* - can be used to indicate both negative and positive qualities. They must be qualified if they are to indicate the truth of the person who is undergoing examination. Byrrhaena is careful to add the determining qualifiers: Lucius' height is not excessive (*inenormis proceritas*), his leanness is not skinny (*suculenta gracilitas*), and his ruddy complexion does not converge on the boundaries of the intemperate man (*rubor temperatus*). A further point is that Byrrhaena appears to be judging Lucius in accordance with a paradigm - *ad amussim*. The balance that Byrrhaena remarks upon in her portrayal of Lucius recalls the mean. The mean was an important concept to the Greeks and was taken up by the Romans.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>167</sup> *Amussim* is an emendation to the *F* manuscript which has only *sim*. I retain this reading, found in most editions of the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>168</sup> Keulen (2006) 179.

The mean encapsulates ideas concerning a mind in perfect symmetry with itself, a psychology which is not given to extremes. This is outwardly expressed by the symmetry of the body.

The first four elements of Byrrhaena's portrait of Lucius, and the importance of a natural gait depicted as an upright posture, also occur in *Anonymus Latinus*, author of a physiognomic treatise composed in Latin roughly two centuries after Apuleius (formerly but erroneously attributed to him), as the essential ingredients of the *ingeniosus* (the man of innate ability).<sup>169</sup> More importantly, Byrrhaena's description confirms the qualities of Lucius as both innate and inherited. The bodily elements of congruity (*congruentia*) recall his mother's noble lineage (*generosa probitas*), further reinforced by moral edification, so that the yardstick (*amussis*) by which Lucius is judged is his already noble pedigree<sup>170</sup> (rather than merely by standards that exist outside the text).<sup>171</sup> This interpretation of Lucius accords with the brief

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<sup>169</sup> *Anonymus Latinus*, 92: *Ingeniosus esse debet non satis procerus nec brevis, coloris albi, cui sit permixtus etiam rubor, capillo flavo non adeo crispo sed nec extensor, corpore recto ... carne moderata, aliquanto molliore*. For the sake of convenience, this treatise shall be referred to in this thesis as *Anonymus Latinus*, following Repath (2007a), 549-635, even though its Latin title in his edition is *Incerti Auctori Physiognomonica*. The title appears as *Anonymi de Physiognomonica Liber Latinus*, in Förster, Volume 2, 1-145. Section numbers are the same in both Repath and Förster. On the history behind the attribution of this physiognomic work to Apuleius, with references and a brief discussion, see Repath (2007a, 549-550). For the *ingeniosus* in particular, see *Anonymus* section 92. The standard elements of the man who represents the "mean" occur in all the physiognomic handbooks. For another example, see pseudo-Polemon, done into Latin from the Arabic (26, Förster, Volume 2, 160). Despite the date of the *Anonymus Latinus*, which puts it later than Apuleius' literary work, the treatise appears to draw on a widely acknowledged ideal, being based on Polemon's work. All translations of *Anonymus Latinus* are from Repath (2007a).

<sup>170</sup> Mason (1984) 307, 309. Mason also makes the connection between the physiognomic portrait of Lucius and the *ingeniosus* of *Anonymus Latinus*, but as has been acutely remarked by van Mal-Maeder (1997), 179-180, these same characteristics occur in the Arabic version of Polemon (one of the sources of *Anonymus*) as belonging not to the *ingeniosus* but to the *vir litterarum amans* (55). Drawing on physiognomy's use for predicting the future, she takes this physiognomic portrait of Lucius to refer to Lucius the future man of letters, predicted by Diophanes the Chaldaean (*Metamorphoses*, 2.12).

<sup>171</sup> *Contra* Keulen (2006) 168-202, who places the expression *ad amussim* (which is Varronian) in the context of the preoccupations of Antonine literature and culture with the

physiognomic judgement of the anonymous and incredulous interlocutor of Book 1 (1.23), who perceives Lucius to be a man of nobility, of good quality (*vir ornatus*), and reignites Milo's illumination of Lucius' innate moral qualities, expressed in similar terms that relate these qualities to shared family traits, especially humility (1.23): *te... generosa stirpe proditum... Nam et maiorem domum dignatione tua feceris, et tibi specimen gloriosum arrogaris, si contentus lare parvulo Thesei illius cognominis patris tui virtutes aemulaveris, qui non est aspernatus Hecales anus hospitium tenue*. Patrilineal and matrilineal descent both converge in Lucius to form a being of innate virtue.<sup>172</sup> The effects of this pedigree are visible both on his body (*ut habitus et habitudo demonstrat*, 1.20; *de ista corporis speciosa habitudine*, 1.23) and in its uncontrolled pathological reactions, such as blushing.

Although considered more a type of involuntary reaction than a category of physiognomy itself, physical signs such as blushing can be considered to be an adjunct to physiognomy proper, even in the physiognomic treatises, a point often overlooked in previous scholarship on the passage. Byrrhaena undeniably attributes Lucius' blushing to his good breeding (*generosa probitas*) which, combined with education, has produced in him qualities which appear on his body in such a way as to align him within the measure of the good and desirable. This is a moral deduction of a type which is in keeping with the physiognomic corpus. If the involuntary act of sneezing can emerge in a physiognomic handbook as uncovering the deceit that lies behind the achieved poise of the dissimulator,<sup>173</sup> by a similar reckoning, it can be claimed that even a temporary and pathological state or emotional reaction, like blushing, can reveal the truth of personal nature, arising as it does from its source, and being

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notion of the *κανών*, the rule by which one can discern the desirable and the sincere from the undesirable and inauthentic within the intellectual, social and cultural milieux that count. Competently dealing with the history of the word and its place in Antonine texts, he applies its value to Lucius' physiognomic scrutiny as having connotations similar to the admissions tests applied by the ancient philosophers to recruits for their schools of philosophy.

Necessarily, the milieu of acceptance is transferred to a civic state, in this case, Hypata.

<sup>172</sup> For a counter-argument, see Opeku (1979) 469 and 471, who argues that the passage under discussion from the *Metamorphoses* is only evidence for Lucius' immediate emotions.

<sup>173</sup> *Anonymus Latinus*, 11: *alius sternutamento subito virum se non esse confessus est*.

involuntary, hence, not under the dominion of dissimulating faculties.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, blushing too must be allowed an interpretative value in situations where character discernment is at stake. As an involuntary pathological reaction, blushing always occurs in the *Metamorphoses*, as in other texts, in contexts of truth. Just as Socrates' blush before Aristomenes (1.6) expresses his shame at being denuded in public, both physically and morally, revealing his true nature to his friend, Lucius' blush confirms his basic modesty without necessarily obliterating his less desirable qualities; hence, it is important that Lucius' blush – the blush of truth no less than of modesty – occur *prior* to his transformation (Socrates' occurred *after* his).

As in many physiognomic portraits, the eyes are the key. All physiognomic texts from antiquity are unambiguous in this respect. Polemon of Laodicea, politician, aristocrat and intellectual of the second century A.D., whose writings on physiognomy form the core of the extant physiognomic literary canon,<sup>175</sup> considers a reading of the eyes to be essential for a correct understanding of character as these are the gateway to the soul.<sup>176</sup> The

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<sup>174</sup> For an extended ancient discussion of the involuntariness of blushing, see Seneca's eleventh epistle to Lucilius (11.7): *ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt nec prohibetur hic nec adducitur ... sui iuris sunt; iniussa veniunt, iniussa discedunt.*

<sup>175</sup> Polemon's work survives in later versions: a much later Arabic translation, and a Greek epitome Adamantius. The text of *Anonymus Latinus* is based largely on Polemon's original work. Schmoelders began the translation of the Arabic version into Latin in the nineteenth century, which Hoffmann took up and revised (Förster, Volume 1, lxxxff; van Mal-Maeder, 1997, 180. According to Gleason, 1990, 413, Hoffmann made the translation). Polemon was not the first to write on physiognomy; the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomy* is of course older. For the fullest and most recent treatment of Polemon and his place in the physiognomic tradition and corpus, see Swain (2007), *passim* but especially 125-201. The Latin text of Polemon used throughout this thesis is that of Förster, Volume 1.

<sup>176</sup> Polemon (Förster, Volume I, 168): *Nam oculus uterque cordis ianua.* I have chosen to translate *cor* as soul because the heart and the soul were, in ancient physiognomic thought, deemed to be interconnected. Polemon makes this connection explicit (Förster, Volume 1, 110): *Scias autem cor, e quo animae studia oriuntur et clam initium capiunt, esse sedem cogitationis. Eodem modo oculus in locum cordis pervenit, quippe quo studia et cogitatio agitentur et cura animae transluceat.* Hoyland (2007) 343, takes Hoffmann's *clam* ("secretly") to mean "an evil" and translates it as such: "from which the cares of the soul rise up and first appear as an evil."

reading of the eyes demanded subtlety, a point where Byrrhaena's prognostication of Lucius' character is flawed, although she does exhibit an awareness of the necessity to be thorough with ocular examination, as her concession allows (2.2): *oculi caesii quidem, sed*<sup>177</sup> *vigiles et in aspectu micantes, prorsus aquilini*. Any adept at physiognomy would be aware of the multiplicity of readings that can arise from the eyes. Byrrhaena appears to be aware of this, but, as the text later reveals, her own defective prognostication lets her down.

To begin with, colour is problematic. Lucius' eyes are blue: *caesii*. Of Byrrhaena's own admission, this sign is unfavourable (*quidem, sed*). The significance of blue eyes may underpin Byrrhaena's caution to Lucius to beware of the power of Pamphile's magic.<sup>178</sup> This brilliant, light blue indicates for the ancient physiognomists a pusillanimous and impudent character given to cowardice and inhumanity.<sup>179</sup> Whilst Byrrhaena praises Lucius' sparkling eyes,<sup>180</sup> the careful (or repeat) reader will be aware that they are also by this

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<sup>177</sup> In spite of the insight of Callebat (1968), 91, into Apuleius' use of *sed*, whereby it functions to introduce an element of amplification (a usage which frequently occurs in late Latin) rather than contradiction or correction, I believe that on this occasion *sed* retains its usual adversative function. The connector *sed* occurs here to realign a negative element in Lucius' appearance within a more positive physiognomic framework. The adversative meaning of *sed* is retained in the translation by van Mal-Maeder (2001), 74: "des yeux bleus, il est vrai, mais vifs et brillants dans leur expression."

<sup>178</sup> Byrrhaena's caution in this regard may be especially relevant if, as we are lead to believe by Aulus Gellius, eyes of this light blue colour, as a sign, bear any relation to the sign represented by the Greek word *γλαυκώπις* (*Noctes Atticae*, 2.26.19): *Nostris autem veteribus caesia dicta est, quae a Graecis γλαυκώπις, ut Nigidius ait, de colore caeli, quasi caelia*. See André (1949) 178; Mason (1984) 308; van Mal-Maeder (2001), 77-79.

<sup>179</sup> Polemon (Förster, Volume 1, 118): *Si vero caeruleum colorem debiliorem habet non clarum, eius possessori timiditatem debilemque animum adiudices; Anonymus Latinus, 81: glaucis nimium adimit fortitudinem, impudentiam relinquit*. See also Mason (1984), 308. The state of stunned suspension of Lucius' senses upon witnessing Pamphile's transformation into an owl (3.22) can be taken as confirmation of his moral weakness before magic and witchcraft.

<sup>180</sup> According to Polemon, luminous and shining eyes are an indicator of good health; however this is normally applied to children (Förster, Volume 1, 108): *Ubi oculos lucentes colatos vides, eorum res bene se habet, cum probitatem caussae possessoris eorum indicent. Cuiusmodi homines plerumque pueri sunt*.

fact a defective quality that he shares with Photis (3.19: *micantibus oculis*) and Venus (5.31: *micantium oculorum*; although in this case Venus' eyes may be flashing with anger) who are both erotic characters depicted for the most part unfavourably in the novel.<sup>181</sup> The physiognomic tradition is also ambivalent with regard to eyes that are brilliant or that sparkle, ascribing either negative or positive qualities. Shining eyes of this colour are received badly in the physiognomic tradition, indicating one who is rash to the point of madness, an apt characterisation of Lucius in his zeal to learn the arcane arts.<sup>182</sup> To have eyes like an eagle's – *aquilini* – as are Lucius' (cf. 2.2: *prorsus aquilini*), is considered enviable by Apuleius in the *Florida*,<sup>183</sup> as men's vision is severely limited only to what they can see on earth (2): *ac si ad oculos et obtutum istum terrenum redigas et hebetem*. The eagle's ability to raise himself above the level of the earthly is what allows the bird to perceive things below him with more acuity and to swoop down on his prey. Furthermore, whilst this acuity of vision, the property of the eagle and a theme of the *Metamorphoses*, is an excellent property in itself, it is somewhat ironic in context, as acuity of vision is a moral property which is imperfectly developed in Lucius, especially in the earlier books of the novel, prior to his transformation into a donkey. Essential to his perceptual (hence, moral) development, his donkey guise will enable Lucius to have the vision which can separate the persona from the true character.

Byrrhaena's reading of Lucius' character, therefore, follows closely the conservative method of physiognomy and shows an awareness of the complexity of the physiognomic skill, a complexity necessary to counteract the subtle measures in which some men school themselves to disguise their true nature. However, Byrrhaena's prognostication is necessarily flawed, being based on such a brief meeting. Given the number of elements available for reading, Byrrhaena's portrait of her relative, whilst dwelling on the most important and visually salient aspects of Lucius, could have been expanded had other physiognomically-charged aspects of Lucius come to light in her presence.

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<sup>181</sup> Mason (1984), 308.

<sup>182</sup> *Anonymus Latinus*, 35: *Lumen autem <non> ita bonum est, si corusci sint. Oculi enim corusci si quidem glauci sint et sanguinolenti, temeritatem indicant et prope insaniam.*

<sup>183</sup> Apuleius, *Florida*, 2: *Ceterum si magis pollerent oculorum quam animi iudicia, profecto de sapientia foret aquiliae concedendum.*

For example, although upon first meeting him she praises his unaffected gait (*immeditatus incessus*), Lucius parts company with her in haste, thinking all the time of magic and the erotic charms of Photis, in spite of Byrrhaena's caution to be wary of Pamphile who uses erotic charms to ensnare men (2.6): *Festinus denique et vecors animi manu eius velut catena quadam memet expedio et, 'Salve' propere addito, ad Milonis hospitium perniciousiter evolo. Ac dum amenti similis celero vestigium*. The text itself makes this connection: the proximity of a quickening of pace (*festinus, propere, celero vestigium*) to the mental state of one out of his wits (*vecors animi, amenti similis*)<sup>184</sup> aligns the physical quality with the mental state whence it derives.

Byrrhaena may or may not have witnessed the speed of his departure (although this is unlikely, as she makes no mention of it later at the banquet to which she invites him), but her physiognomic interpretation of Lucius is based on what she had seen of him *prior to that moment*.<sup>185</sup> In spite of Byrrhaena's

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<sup>184</sup> See slightly earlier, where his desire to see evidence of witch-craft (specifically, transformation) is so strong that it causes him to wander (2.2): *Sic attonitus, immo vero cruciabili desiderio stupidus, nullo quidem initio vel omnino vestigio cupidinis meae reperto, cuncta circumibam tamen*. Wandering and aimless or distracted walking have negative connotations in the novel (see Chapter 3 on Socrates who went "off course" on his way home). Later on, Lucius expresses the desire to fill up his heart – *explere pectus* (2.6)– with stories of marvel, such as those describing transformations (*fabulis miris*; I accept the emendation of *miseris* found in *F* to *miris* on the grounds of what Lucius says at 2.1: *anxius alioquin et nimis cupidus cognoscendi quae rara miraque*. For this textual issue, see van Mal-Maeder, 2001, 134-135). Lucius' intention is his desire, and this lies behind his temporary madness. Cicero is enlightening on this issue (*Disputationes Tusculanae*, 1.9.18): *aliis cor ipsum animus videtur: ex quo excordes, vaecordes concordesque dicuntur*. See also Polemon, who makes this connection explicit (Förster, Volume 1, 110): *Scias autem cor, e quo animae studia oriuntur et clam initium capiunt, esse sedem cogitationis. Eodem modo oculus in locum cordis pervenit, quippe quo studia et cogitatio agitentur et cura animae translucet*.

<sup>185</sup> On Lucius' manner of walking in Book 2, see Keulen (2006), 173, who claims that Byrrhaena had missed Lucius' hurried gait upon the moment of their first meeting. I read the hurried gait as arising on this occasion possibly also from Byrrhaena. However, even if the phrase *accelerato vestigio* does irrefutably signify Lucius' manner of walking, Byrrhaena could not have noticed him, for it was the elderly man who was accompanying her who brought Byrrhaena's attention to Lucius' presence. More importantly, the force of the phrase *accelerato vestigio* is relative, insofar as it qualifies merely a quickening of pace. This

enigmatic statement that what Lucius could see in the atrium of her residence was his (*'Tua sunt...cuncta quae vides'*), a statement which can be taken as referring to his insatiable curiosity, her caution to him is based on the concern she has for him as a young, attractive man under obligation, for his lodging, to an accomplished witch who wheedles her way into young men's affections and punishes them through metamorphosis when spurned. Indeed, Lucius' hasty departure towards the very thing Byrrhaena had warned him against – witchcraft - so soon after having his character read in a positive light may have overturned the reader's expectations; yet for the purpose of bringing the truth of Lucius' character before the reader, it is nevertheless necessary. The physiognomic scrutiny of Lucius by his female relative is framed by Lucius' blushing, an event which exposes to view his modesty (2.2: *probitas*; cf. 1.23: *verecundia*), and by a frank depiction of his haste towards his obsession – magic – merely at the mention of the word (2.6: *ut primum artis magicae semper optatum nomen audivi*). This shift in behaviour marks Lucius' nature as hybrid, encompassing both desirable and undesirable qualities, including dissimulation. Acquired skill in dissimulation is discussed in the physiognomic canon as a reality against which the physiognomist should be on guard. A careful physiognomist will always be aware that some men have schooled themselves in desirable behaviour, especially in public. Consequently, the careful practitioner will await an opportunity for the subject under analysis to be caught off guard, for reactions elicited by surprise or strong emotion will uncover his true nature.<sup>186</sup> Whilst it cannot be claimed that Lucius tried to

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is not the same thing as saying that Lucius, or Byrrhaena, was walking quickly during the few moments that mark the act of recognition.

<sup>186</sup> *Anonymus Latinus, 11: Nam multa signorum et casus fortuiti et conversatio humana et propria indutria nostrae facultatis obscurat et celat. Nam et aetates et aegritudines et dolor et iracundia et tristitia et sollicitudo temporalis licet non omnia signa, nonnulla tamen permiscet atque permutant. Quare artifex rei huius et diutius considerabit, ut a temporalibus naturalia discernat, et non uni vel duobus indiciis se committet, sed plura et potiora semper denotabit et ex improvise nec praecaventem aut se praemunientem considerabit, quamvis et praecaventem attentus artifex detegat. Nam et maledicus qui se latere facilius posse credebat inducto ab aliis maledicendi initio libidinem suam lacrimis prodidit, ut voraces, cum suavitate cibi, temulenti, cum vini copiam nanciscuntur. Alium in balneis vox absque sermone profecta detexit libidinibus subiugatum, alius sternutamento subito virum se non esse confessus est.* Interestingly, just prior to this passage, in a

conceal his haste, and although he was honest in Book 1 with the incredulous interlocutor about his interest in the marvellous and the inexplicable (1.20: *mira et paene infecta*) and his readiness to inquire into such things, he declares himself to be mindful of Byrrhaena's warnings about Pamphile, and even, at Byrrhaena's dinner table, fearful of magic (especially its associations with dismemberment).<sup>187</sup> Notwithstanding these declarations, based on the fear of the evil consequences of magic for himself, he nonetheless expresses to Photis his eagerness to witness the magical act of self-transformation (3.19). Yet the basic value of the physiognomic readings of Lucius made by the anonymous interlocutor and Byrrhaena cannot be entirely refuted, based as these readings are on brief encounters. In spite of his attraction to the magical and erotic arts, Lucius retains his basic nobility, expressed through his indignation at much of the injustice that he witnesses and experiences in the course of his journey as a donkey, and in his experiences as a man prior to his transformation.<sup>188</sup>

### The Metamorphosis of Pamphile and Lucius

In this section, I will concentrate on the metamorphoses of Pamphile and Lucius. Other metamorphoses in the novel occur at the hands of witches, namely those perpetrated by Meroe in Book 1 – her misbehaving lover turned into a beaver; the inn-keeper turned into a frog; the lawyer turned into a ram;

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discussion pertaining to the effects of qualitative and quantitative differences in physiognomy, the authorial voice stresses the importance for the physiognomist of learning to judge the subject under investigation in difficult cases with his mind, rather than with his eyes: [*parva etenim haec magna sunt et effectus vehementes habent,*] *quamquam ita pleraque obscura sint, ut non oculis interdum, sed vix animo comprehendantur et ex accidentibus potius quam ex semet intelligantur.* This injunction recalls the Platonic notion, found also in Apuleius' work (*Florida*, 2; *DDS*, 121) on judging men with the eyes of the soul and not of the body.

<sup>187</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 2.11: *Nam Milonis boni concinnaticiam mensulam rogatus accubueram, quam pote tutus ab uxoris eius aspectu, Byrrhaenae monitorum memor, et perinde in eius faciem oculos meos ac si in Avernum lacum formidans deieceram; 2.20: Sed oppido formido caecas et inevitabiles latebras magicae disciplinae. Nam ne mortuorum quidem sepulchra tuta dicuntur, sed et bustis et rogis reliquiae quaedam, et cadaverum praesequina ad exitiabiles viventium fortunas petuntur.*

<sup>188</sup> An example of the latter is his shock at the excessive harshness of Pythias' treatment of a rather mercenary yet harmless old fishmonger (1.25), and his disbelieving shock at what he considers to be mistreatment by the citizens of Hypata, just after his trial (3.9-10, 12).

the pregnant woman suspended in a state of permanent pregnancy<sup>189</sup> – but these individual specimens will not be dealt with in this section.<sup>190</sup> Inquiring into the basis of the transformations of Pamphile and Lucius is of significant import for a discussion of the link connecting notions of dress to the body as the “garment of the soul” and to metamorphosis. The complication in Lucius’ case is that he does not apprehend the true meaning and nature of metamorphosis. For him, it is the mere exchange of one outer appearance for another, much like putting off one garment for another. The terms he uses of his physical change, being drawn from the vocabulary of dress, make this clear (*se devestit Pamphile*, 3.21; *avem...induero*; *exutis pinnulis*, 3.23).

Lucius’ metamorphosis truly begins at the moment of his spying on the transformation of Pamphile, wife of his host and a skilled witch. He tries to avert danger from himself by using discretion, watching Pamphile transform herself by peering in through a crack in the door (Lucius’ discretion in this instance is merely a bye-word for prying, curiosity being one of Lucius’ most salient moral flaws).<sup>191</sup> His witnessing of the transformation from human to

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<sup>189</sup> All these transformations of state – or, in the case of the pregnant woman, the prolongation of what is normally a temporary state – are mentioned by Socrates at 1.9.

<sup>190</sup> The basis of cause and effect appertaining to the metamorphosis of Lucius (that is: the outer form of the transformed object is determined – even if only partially or by a loose connection – by the personal nature of the transformed object) can be applied to most of them with equal interpretative value. For these metamorphoses, I refer the reader to the commentaries on Book 1 (Molt, 1938, 66-68; Scobie, 1975; Keulen, 2007, 212-221), as well as van der Paardt (1971) 7, and Tarrant (1999), 78 for Lucius’ transformation. Pamphile, just like Meroe, causes metamorphoses of those men who thwart her attempts at amorous assault on them (2.5). Those who are unmoved (*minus morigeros*) are turned into the immovable, such as rocks – *saxa*; those whom she considers cheap (*viles*) by their disgust (*fastidio*) she turns into cattle (*pecua*), animals of a lower species. The link between the outer form and the inner nature which determines it when a metamorphosis occurs is shown quite explicitly by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, at 10.235-242, especially in the last line: *in rigidum parvo silicem discrimine versae*.

<sup>191</sup> Hunter (2008) 849, in an essay which seeks to further explore the grounds of the influence of Plato’s *Symposium* on the traditions of ancient fiction, claims that the desire to witness metamorphosis would seem to be the parodic opposite of the philosopher’s ascent in the *Symposium*, which would enable him finally to perceive eternal, unchanging Beauty through the beneficent effects of *erôs*, and a guide. Although this remark is directed at the

bird causes him to experience something akin to an out-of-body phenomenon (3. 21-22):

lamque circa primam noctis vigiliam<sup>192</sup> ad illud superius cubiculum suspenso et insono vestigio me perducit ipsa, perque rimam ostiorum quampiam iubet arbitrari, quae sic gesta sunt. lam primum omnibus laciniis se devestit Pamphile et arcula quadam reclusa pyxides plusculas inde depromit, de quis unius operculo remoto atque indidem egesta unguedine diuque palmulis suis adfricta ab imis unguibus sese totam adusque summos capillos perlinit, multumque cum lucerna secreto collocuta, membra tremulo succussu quatit. Quis leniter fluctuantibus promicant molles plumulae, crescunt et fortes pinnulae; duratur nasus incurvus, coguntur ungues adunci. Fit bubo Pamphile. Sic edito stridore querulo iam sui periclitabunda paulatim terra resultat ; mox in altum sublimata forinsecus totis alis evolat. Et illa quidem magnis<sup>193</sup> suis artibus volens reformatur. At ego **nullo decantatus carmine, praesentis tantum facti stupore defixus, quidvis aliud magis videbar esse quam Lucius. Sic exterminatus animi, attonitus in amentiam vigilans somniabar.** Defrictis adeo diu pupulis, an vigilarem scire quaerebam.

The juxtaposition of opposites - *vigilans somniabar* – is not really unnatural in the context of magic. The merging of otherwise contrary states – sleeping and staying awake - is indicative of the suspension of normality and, more importantly, of state of reason, that arises in the presence of magic. The moment Lucius claims as the inception of his transformation is this very state, itself dependent on witnessing the metamorphosis of Pamphile. This early phase in his personal transformation is reiterated: being transfixed with astonishment (*praesentis tantum facti stupore defixus*) is merely a variant of, as well as a prelude to, having an out-of-body experience (*sic exterminatus animi*, where *animus* can be taken to represent the soul which has left the

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character named Lucius in the *Onos*, it can be applied with equal value to the case of Apuleius' Lucius.

<sup>192</sup> The words which mark the beginning of Lucius' transformation here are echoed at the opening of Book 11, the transformative book in the novel. Just as Lucius' transformation into a donkey through witch-craft takes place at the time of the night's first watch, his retransformation into a man through the intervention of a goddess, standing in for the transformative power of religio-philosophical enlightenment will also take place at the first watch of the night (11.1): *Circa primam ferme noctis vigiliam*. This may be more recognisable to the second-time reader.

<sup>193</sup> Hanson (1989) 1: 136: "Almost universally emended to *magicis*."

body)<sup>194</sup>. More importantly, Lucius seems surprised to have been so affected by the mere *sight* of the transformation, imputing such extreme effects to those of incantation, of which there is no evidence on this occasion: *at ego nullo decantatus carmine*.<sup>195</sup> In addition to testifying to the importance of sight and vision, corollaries to perception in the novel, his surprise is rather the effect of beholding the truth unfold itself before him. Phrases expressive of astonishment and petrification, akin to out-of-body states, often figure in the *Metamorphoses* in contexts of revelation of the true state of a situation or person.<sup>196</sup>

The ease with which Pamphile assumes her new role has the effect of all but morphing the factitive verb (*fit*) into its copulative equivalent (*est*). On the other hand, Lucius' attempt at turning into a bird is nothing short, given the outcome, of parodic. However, just like Pamphile's transformation which is an extension of her lusty nature (as she is transformed into an animal which will bring her closer to the object of her affections without being caught), the effect of Lucius' is to reveal aspects of his personal nature. His transformation is demonstrative of his character in a way that Lucius does not yet realise.

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<sup>194</sup> Apuleius expresses his belief in such a phenomenon in the *Apologia* (43) where he talks of the effects of incantation, or even of heady fragrances, on the human soul, especially (but not exclusively) on the simple soul of a child.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Apuleius, *Apologia*, 84.4: *mulier obcantata, uecors, amens, amans*.

<sup>196</sup> *Contra* Laird (1993), especially 161-173, who makes the claim that through these specific terms, Apuleius relates an event which Lucius merely *perceived* as happening. Laird locates the *Metamorphoses* as a work in the categories of the fantastic and paradoxography. To counter this claim, one need only remember that Lucius was *consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus* as a result of Pythias' very real behaviour (1.25). The truth of his friend's real character was revealed to him but, contrarily to the character of Pamphile the witch, it was a truth Lucius was not expecting, a situation similar to that of the uncovering of the inflated wine skins at the trial (3.9: *subito in contrariam faciem obstupefactus haesi*,). This is a fact which holds until the end of the novel, where Lucius, having regained his former, that is, 'real' self (11.2: *redde me meo Lucio*; 3.23: *ad meum redibo Lucium*), has a similar reaction to the effects of religion as opposed to magic (11.14): *at ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam*. This fact in no way undermines the asinine form of Lucius as revelatory of his personal character; rather, until enlightened on this by the priest's admonition in Book 11, Lucius cannot see how relevant his asinine form is to his soul. Witches as well as Isis are the greatest truth-tellers in the novel.

Lucius' change into the form of a donkey is magic's response to Byrrhaena's portrait of him (3.24):

Haec identidem asseverans summa cum trepidatione irrepit cubiculum et pyxidem depromit arcula. Quam ego amplexus ac deosculatus prius, utque mihi prosperis faveret volatibus deprecatus, abiectis propere laciniis totis, avide manus immersi et haurito plusculo cuncta corporis mei membra perfricui. Iamque alternis conatibus libratis brachiis in avem similem gestiebam. Nec ullae plumulae nec usquam pinnulae, sed plane pili mei crassantur in setas, et cutis tenella duratur in corium, et in extimis palmulis perditio numero toti digiti coguntur in singulas unguas, et de spinae meae termino grandis cauda procedit. Iam facies enormis et os prolixum et nares hiantes et labiae pendulae; sic et aures immodicis horripilant auctibus. Nec ullum miserae reformationis video solacium, nisi quod mihi iam nequeunti tenere Photidem natura crescebat.

The measure and symmetry that encapsulated the appearance of Lucius *generosus* (cf 1.23; 2.2) are abandoned in favour of an overall image of excess: *grandis*, *enormis* (to be contrasted with *inenormis proceritas*, 2.2), *prolixum*, *hiantes*, *immodicis...auctibus*, and even *pendulae* by comparison with human dimensions. These dimensions, although excessive in Lucius' eyes, give the measure of Lucius' asinine qualities such as his lust, symbolised by his increased *natura* (male sexual organ) and curiosity, expressed by his now oversized ears,<sup>197</sup> which are now visible on his body. The reaction of Lucius - disappointment bordering on shock - is appropriately juxtaposed to what he yearned for, an idea located in the word *gestiebam*.<sup>198</sup> The infinitival form *gestire* is derived from the noun *gestus*. The root sense of the verb - "to make gestures toward" - is the projection of internal desire expressed in body language. The verb commonly accompanies unusually active movement of the

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. 9.15: *isto tamen vel unico solacio aerumnabilis deformitatis meae recreabar, quod auribus grandissimis praeditus cuncta longule etiam dissita facillime sentiebam*. Lucius the ass makes specific reference to this "asinine" quality of his in Book 9. On this occasion it causes the arrest of one of the few characters who had shown kindness to the donkey - the old gardener (9.42): *curiosus alioquin et inquieti procacitate praeditus asinus*.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. 2.6: *tantum a cautela Pamphiles affui, ut etiam ultro **gestirem tali magisterio me volens** ampla cum mercede tradere*. The words in bold type are the consummation of what follows: *ex voto diutino poteris fabulis miseris **explere pectus***. What Lucius so yearns for will occur, literally, at the level of the body.

body where this conveys exhilaration or happiness;<sup>199</sup> in Lucius' case, excitement and expectation. The humour contained in this contrast between expectation and outcome is irrefutable: Lucius fancied himself a plush bird (*plumulae, pinnulae*) whereas he was really just an ass. The ass, in Egyptian myth, is connected with Seth,<sup>200</sup> the murderer of Osiris and hence the enemy of Isis, and its form was detestable to her, an association made explicit at the end of the novel when Isis reminds Lucius of this fact (11.6): *pessimae mihi que iam dudum detestabilis beluae istius corio te protinus exue*. The negative symbolism of the animal, a result of its ancient association with lust, also stands counter to what Isis must represent as well as the chastity that she demands of her priests.<sup>201</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle talks of the "violent sexual excitability" of the ass.<sup>202</sup> Apuleius is careful to show the ease with which Photis arouses Lucius and with which he responds to her advances early in the novel, much prior to his transformation.<sup>203</sup> By its terminal placement in the scene, the seminal phrase, *natura crescebat*, in fact opens a window onto the mechanics of metamorphosis as an adjunct to physiognomy. *Natura*, without a

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<sup>199</sup> For information on *gestus, gestire* with references, see Corbeill (2004) 17-18, who gives information on this word in a chapter which focuses on gesture in ritual and medicine. Conversely, Van der Paardt (1971) 178, refutes the associated desiderative sense of the verb "to desire strongly" (a meaning Corbeill is careful to stipulate as prevalent only when *gestire* takes a complementary infinitive), preferring to retain the etymological sense, *gestus facere*, which is prominent in other occurrences of the verb in the *Metamorphoses* (7. 16, 10.32); however, I believe that on this occasion – imitative magic - the sense of desire coexists with the etymological sense of the verb. On the movements of Lucius as prompted by imitative magic, see Vallette in van der Paardt (1971) 178.

<sup>200</sup> Griffiths (1975), 162. See also Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, 357D and 371B.

<sup>201</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 11.6: *tenacibus castimoniis*.

<sup>202</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle *Physiognomonica*, 808b35. The Greek word which occurs in the pseudo-Aristotelian text, ἕξις, (*hexis*) often functions in the same way as the Latin term *habitus*. On the relevance of *habitus* to metamorphosis in the novel, see the Appendix. On ancient attitudes to donkeys (often prejudiced by the class of whosoever is making the judgment), see Gregory (2007) and Griffith (2006a and b).

<sup>203</sup> 2.7: *Isto aspectu defixus obstipui et mirabundus steti; steterunt et membra quae iacebant ante*; 2.16: *Commodum cubueram et ecce Photis mea...inguinum fine lacinia remota impatientiam Veneris Photidi meae monstrans*; 2.17: *Ad cuius noctis exemplar similes astruximus alias plusculas*.

doubt, refers primarily, and at a physical level, to Lucius' sexual organ.<sup>204</sup> In addition to this, it also underscores his whole personal nature,<sup>205</sup> which, under the influence of bad religion – witchcraft - is becoming increasingly visible – *crescebat* – to the viewer. Clarke sums up the situation succinctly: “Like a clown holding his bauble, a metamorphosis travesties ‘proper dress,’ presenting an improper spectacle, exposing to comic ridicule that which should be concealed. The scene and vehicle of this tragicomedy is at bottom the human genitalia, the pudenda, the *Schamteile*. The inadvertent or penitential public exposure of private parts is an archetype of metamorphic comedy or metamorphic judgment.”<sup>206</sup> The irony is that although Lucius' asinine form may be deemed socially improper, it is the correct reflection of his nature. (Although the word *natura* does not occur in the scene of Pamphile's physical change, it is not unreasonable to assume that her nature as a witch and a shape-shifter facilitates her ability to manipulate her outward form).<sup>207</sup>

Apuleius takes up the tradition of metamorphosis literature by bringing before the reader the transformation in progress, a narrative technique common to the tradition, found in many of the tales in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>208</sup> Lucius' metamorphosis tells us as much about Lucius by what he is leaving behind as by what he is becoming. The result of the

<sup>204</sup> On this common meaning of *natura*, see Adams (1982), 58-60.

<sup>205</sup> For this meaning, see Nicolas (1996), 119-138, especially 123-126.

<sup>206</sup> Clarke (1988) 14.

<sup>207</sup> Behind the scene of Pamphile's and Lucius' physical transformation in the *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius appears to be depicting a degraded manipulation of the procedure described in the *Apologia* 42-44 whereby a young boy, of becoming demeanour and no outward bodily flaw, accedes to union with the divine principle for purposes of divination. There are major differences between this passage of the *Apologia* and the transformation scenes in the *Metamorphoses* which would occlude an extended comparison; however, it is perhaps notable that Lucius' physical transformation in particular seems to provide Apuleius with ripe material for parody via a conscious play on the word *natura*, which occurs in both texts. *Natura* of a divine sort, existing without him, is the object towards which the boy in the *Apologia* is tending in his psychological transformation; in Lucius' case, the *natura* is body-centred, being an embodied expression of his own soul. It exists within him and is the determining factor in his physical transformation.

<sup>208</sup> For the influence of the Ovidian model on the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, see Sarafov (1976), Scotti (1982) and especially, for the transformations of Pamphile and Lucius, Bandini (1986).

transformation is a far cry from the noble symmetry of his facial, bodily and gestural proportions (all of which represent a balanced mind) remarked on by Byrrhaena. Lucius' *cutis tenella* (3.24), with its elegiac resonances,<sup>209</sup> morphs easily into the hard hide of a donkey: *duratur in corium*. The expansion of his face, mouth, nose, lips and ears expresses not only the expansiveness of Lucius' sensuality, hitherto hidden from the public, but also his tendency to curiosity and eaves-dropping, not to mention his present reliance on sensual organs for the acquisition of knowledge and for his survival as a donkey.<sup>210</sup> This shows how far Lucius himself has deviated from the ideals of his education and intellectual pedigree, ideals with which, it is permissible to assume, Lucius had been indoctrinated – directly or indirectly – from his youth. It is not accidental that his record of his transformation terminates with the increase of his sexual organ (*natura crescebat*), for this symbolises much of what distracts Lucius in his life and is what determined the form of his new garment. Even as a donkey, Lucius looks forward to the opportunity of mating with mares.<sup>211</sup> Although no inter-species mating is considered at the moment of his transformation (although horses are higher up in the equine hierarchy than asses), Lucius fails to see, at this point, how apt his present outer form is to his prior human behaviour and appetites.

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<sup>209</sup> Its place in Lucius' amatory repertoire confirms its elegiac colouring. He talks of Photis' tender skin in the manner of an elegiac lover (3.14): *prius a me concisus atque laceratus interibit ipse quam tuam plumeam lacteamque contingat cutem*. When copulating with the Corinthian matron he compares her soft body to his own rough asinine members using elegiac terms of reference (10.22): *delicatam matronam inscendere, vel tam lucida tamque tenera et lacte ac melle confecta membra duri unguis complecti, labiasque modicas ambroseo rore purpurantes tam amplo ore tamque enormi et saxeis dentibus deformi saviari*. Appropriately, elegiac resonances are translated into a bestial image of eroticism - the donkey - to fit the demands of physiognomic realism.

<sup>210</sup> Lucius in his asinine form shares certain physical features with the donkey-man portrayed by *Anonymus Latinus*, 119: *Asinus animal est iners, frigidum, indocile, tardum, insolens, vocis ingratae. Qui ad huius animalis speciem referuntur homines, necesse est sint cruribus crassis, longo capite, auribus crassis longis, labiis demissis, voce deformi: qui sunt tardi, frigidi, penuriae atque iniuriae contemptores*.

<sup>211</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 7.16.

Some may object to making physiognomy and metamorphosis work to the same end on the grounds that they cannot inhabit the same space, or have equal value as interpretative schemes. This is a valid objection, and one that necessitates investigation into the issue of the relationship of the body to the soul, and vice versa, an issue which raises the very objection: Is the relationship between the two one of contiguity, or one of another order?<sup>212</sup> Does not the mere fact that the result of Lucius' transformation into a donkey is the externalisation of his hidden asinine qualities, overturn the physiognomic reading of his character? Can popular, non-philosophical beliefs take the place of philosophy proper in a narrative which is carried along by philosophical undercurrents?<sup>213</sup> Certainly, the fact alone that this transformation is controlled by something greater than the merely mortal practitioners of Lucius' physiognomic scrutiny promotes the transformation as more reliable as an interpretative mechanism, or an identity-probing mechanism; yet here we are faced with a conundrum. On the one hand, it is difficult to ignore the insistence on Lucius' inherently and basically good nature by Milo and Byrrhaena, a nature which is made evident within the text itself;<sup>214</sup> on the other, Lucius' anamorphosis, or retransformation into his human form (11.13), would not be permissible or even likely were there not some pre-existing good qualities on which to build his reinsertion into the human community facilitated by the regaining of his human form.

Of Apuleius' own admission, very few men are categorically only virtuous or vice-ridden. All men come into the world with a natural inclination

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<sup>212</sup> For these considerations more generally, with no direct relevance to Apuleius or the *Metamorphoses*, I refer the reader to the volume entitled *Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy* (2009) edited by Frede and Reis with particular reference to the articles by Inwood and Dillon.

<sup>213</sup> On metamorphosis as a popular belief, see Dillon (2009) 349-356. On the popular aspects of physiognomy, see Reardon (1971), 243-248 and Gleason (1990), 389-390.

<sup>214</sup> In addition to Lucius' humility and politeness, both of which are remarked upon by Milo (1.23) and Byrrhaena (2.2), one notices his concern for his horse (1.24), his professed concern for his host and his eagerness to fulfil his obligations (*officiis integris*) towards his aunt (2.3), and his noticeable if somewhat muted disgust at the lack of restraint shown by Pythias towards the fish-monger (1.25), and by the citizens of Hypata towards himself (3.10-12).

to both good and evil (*DPD*, 2.3): *Hominem ab stirpe ipsa neque absolute malum nec bonum nasci, sed ad utrumque proclive ingenium eius esse; habere semina quidem quaedam utrarumque rerum cum nascendi origine copulata, quae educationis disciplina in partem alteram debeant emicare.* In all men's souls there exists a midway which allows for degrees of virtue and vice (*ibid*): *Eiusmodi quippe medietatis inter virtutes et vitia intercedere dicebat tertium quidam, ex quo alia laudanda, alia culpanda essent. Inter scientiam et inscientiam validam alteram opinionem, alteram falsam pervicaciae vanitate iactatam, inter pudicitiam libidinosamque vitam abstinentiam et intemperantiam posuit, fortitudini ac timori medios pudorem et ignaviam fecit. Horum quippe, quos mediocres vult videri, neque sinceras esse virtutes nec vitia tamen mera et intemperata, sed hinc atque inde permixta esse.*

Notwithstanding Apuleius' admission of shades of virtue and vice - a philosophical insight which is of invaluable benefit to Apuleius the novelist - and of compelling importance when considering the issues of physiognomy and transformation, is the fact that literary verisimilitude must prevail against philosophical rigour for the purposes of the narrative. Moreover, the eclectic climate in which Apuleius lived and worked enabled the rights of *vraisemblance* to assert themselves over the demands of philosophic exactitude.<sup>215</sup>

However, it is not merely in the interests of sustaining the narrative that Apuleius' protagonist kept some of his human sense (for if he could not think like a human being in the course of his journeys, then there would be no story); clarifying the moral premise to Lucius' transformation, Apuleius understood that no anamorphosis, or return to pristine form (in this case, human), was possible for Lucius if he were to lose every aspect of his humanity. For this reason, Lucius, despite having the coarse hide (*corium*) of the animal, retains the sensitivity of his delicate skin (*cutis*), a truth reinforced by the numerous occasions of Lucius' experiences of beating and physical hardship as a donkey,

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<sup>215</sup> On the eclecticism of neo-Platonism, the philosophical tradition in which Apuleius lived and worked, see Dillon (1977) 43-51, Dowden (1998) 3-11, Gianotti (1986) and Finamore (2006) 33.

experiences which cause him much pain.<sup>216</sup> More importantly, he retains his human intelligence, as he tells us (3.26): *Ego vero, quamquam perfectus asinus*<sup>217</sup> *et pro Lucio iumentum, sensum tamen retinebam humanum*. It is precisely this human reasoning that holds Lucius back from behaving like an instinct-crazed animal and killing Photis, lest he should lose his sole means of recovery (3.26): *Diu denique ac multum mecum ipse deliberavi an nequissimam facinosissimamque illam feminam spissis calcibus feriens et mordicus appetens necare debem. Sed ab incepto temerario melior me sententia revocavit, ne morte multata Photide salutare mihi suppetias rursus exstinguerem*. Lucius is therefore a total hybrid – bestial by the lower faculties of his soul which cause him the loss of his human body, yet still human enough to retain his reasoning and interpretative capacity, howsoever imperfect this may be, as well as a distinctly human sense of indignation.

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<sup>216</sup> This is in direct contrast to what Pseudo-Aristotle says of the insensibility to pain of the ass (808b37): *ἐπι δὲ τῶν ὄνων τὸ ἄλυπον*. This is further proof of Apuleius' innovative skill as a story-teller.

<sup>217</sup> Turpin (2002), 48, points out Apuleius' clever use of word-play here. This is a pun, since Lucius is now a "complete jackass" in both the literal and the figurative sense. In addition to this, I point out that Apuleius uses the prefixed form of the verb, *perfecit* instead of the simple *fecit* for another reason: now he is a *complete* donkey, that is, at the physical level as well as at the psychological and moral level, and not just half a donkey. This play on meaning further reinforces the hybridity of Lucius' nature. Later in Book 9, the same word-play occurs (9.15): *quae me dum avem fabricat perfecit asinum*, that is, whilst Photis' stated intention was to turn Lucius into a bird, she rather finished off, or completed, the donkey in him. The following sentence, in which he turns his physical deformity to his advantage (his outsized ears enable him to eavesdrop better) reinforces Lucius' donkey skin as at once disguise and garment of truth (9.15): *isto tamen vel unico solacio aerumnabilis deformitatis meae recreabar, quod auribus grandissimis praeditus cuncta longule etiam dissita facillime sentiebam*. By this honest pronouncement, Lucius' deformity is shown to be as much still a property of his soul as his body. Cf. for example, the entry in the *OLD* (1982), 502-503, where *Deformitas* is defined as: 1 *The quality of being malformed or otherwise lacking in beauty, ugliness, unsightliness*, 2 *The state of having one's appearance spoiled, disfigurement. B a disfigurement (suffered by, or arising from)...* 3 *Disgrace, degradation.*

## Lucius' Perception of Appearance and Metamorphosis

Does Lucius deduce moral content from outer appearance? Taking his previous consternation before Pythias' outburst (1.25)<sup>218</sup> as indication of awareness of interconnectedness between appearance and character expressed through behaviour, it would appear so; but at this stage, it is important to insist yet again on the imperfection of Lucius' own perceptions. Given his perception of anomalous behaviour in Pythias' outburst, it is all the more surprising that Lucius on occasion appears to be unmindful of the fact that garments, like faces, can be expressive of a much deeper reality and are not mere surfaces, lessons contained in the stories which precede his transformation, especially those of Socrates and Thelyphron. Faced with an object of metamorphosis, he is aware that outer appearance may belie inner nature, but he does not probe into the very basis of metamorphosis as *starting from* the premise of personal nature, so he fails to see how his own devolution into asinine form is nothing more than a mirror image of the truth of his own nature. He does not follow through consequential transformations in his mind - his excitement at being surrounded in Hypata by elements of nature possibly containing souls of men (2.1) was not tempered by any consideration of interdependence, of how the inner man and the outer (seemingly) incongruous form lived alongside each other or determined each other; indeed, his terms of reference are indicative of his ignorance of the subject, as he speaks of natural forms surrounding men, in the sense of men's bodies (2.1): *Nec fuit in illa civitate quod aspiciens id esse crederem quod esset, sed omnia prorsus ferali murmure in aliam effigiem translata, ut et lapides quos offenderem **de homine duratos** et aves quas audirem **indidem** plumatas et arbores quae pomerium ambirent similiter foliatis et fontanos latices **de corporibus humanis** fluxos crederem.*<sup>219</sup> *Homo*

<sup>218</sup> 1.25: *His actis consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus*. For a detailed analysis of the Pythias episode, see chapter 4.

<sup>219</sup> The character of the same name in the *Onos*, whom some scholars would deem to be Lucius' literary prototype, does however express a desire to understand how metamorphosis works; he clearly states that he would like to see if his soul becomes that of a bird along with his body as a result of inter-species transformation (*Onos*, 13): *ἠβουλόμεν γὰρ πείρα μαθεῖν εἰ μεταμορφωθεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὄρνις ἔσομαι*. No desire to understand the consequential link between body and soul at the moment of such transformations is made so explicitly by Lucius in the *Metamorphoses*. The Greek narrative

for Lucius in this case, indicates merely the outer form, now changed. His notion of metamorphosis, mostly of an imaginative nature, appears to be fed on mythology, in spite of his prior acknowledgement (made in riposte to the incredulous travelling companion) of the part of Fate in such transformations, an acknowledgement which must be based in part on philosophical instruction to some degree.<sup>220</sup> He will come to understand the truth of metamorphosis in the course of his journey. This will happen indirectly, through associations he shall come to make between the body and clothing as reflective of a deeper reality. The *cinaedi*, the pantomime and the intended but forestalled union between the donkey and the condemned woman, all events that are part of the frame narrative in which Lucius is a participant,<sup>221</sup> promote and convey this realisation, a realisation which he has not at this point achieved.

Although Lucius denies that he had been affected by any incantation in Pamphile's ritual (3.22: *at ego nullo decantatus carmine*), the effect of the sight of the transformation on Lucius is the same, testifying to the importance of sight and perception in the novel. Furthermore, despite the seriousness of his claims to sincerity, Lucius continues to treat magic carelessly and its operations such as metamorphosis like an item of clothing which he can put on and off, with ease and confidence, and at will. These considerations instil in him such excitement that he is in thrall to them (2.2: *Sic attonitus, immo vero cruciabili desiderio stupidus*) arising from his nature as given to such preoccupations (*desiderio*). Yet metamorphosis, by its very nature, can never be only a disguise or temporary cover, even if it is articulated and manipulated as such by Lucius or others. Metamorphosis in the novel may rely on the language of clothing and related practices such as dressing for its expression (*cf.* 3.23: *cum semel*

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uses variations of the term metamorphosis in various forms to speak of Pamphile's transformations (*μεταμορφωθεις*), but in the novel Apuleius uses the more generic phrase *cum reformatur* (*F: reformatu*), at 3.19 and the more specific *in avem sese plumaturam* at 3.21.

<sup>220</sup> 1.20: 'Ego vero' inquam 'nihil impossibile arbitror, sed utcumque fata decreverint, ita cuncta mortalibus provenire.'

<sup>221</sup> For Lucius' experiences with the *cinaedi*, see Chapter 7; for the pantomime and the forestalled union with the condemned woman, see Chapter 1. The inset or embedded tales contain the same truth vis-à-vis the search for identity via clothing and appearance (see for example, the stories of Socrates and Thelyphron), but they function to ensure that the reader's perception anticipates that of Lucius.

*avem talem perunctus induero; exutis pinnulis*), but this does not mean that it (or clothing for that matter) exists at merely a surface level. Even when it is related, in the text, to exterior form (1.9: *deformavit (bis)*; 3.22: *volens reformatur*; 3.24: *miseræ reformationis*), its relation to form is predicated on structures that go deeper than the surface. Metamorphosis is not just a change of dress with no connection to what is underneath. Consequently, Lucius' metamorphosis into an ass cooperates with Byrrhaena's prior physiognomic analysis of his character as an assessment tool, to ensure that the undesirable aspects of Lucius' complex character,<sup>222</sup> especially his lust and curiosity, be understood as motivating much of what befalls him in the novel.

The force of Lucius' passion for magic approximates madness; this is made clear in the novel.<sup>223</sup> As a result, Lucius re-enacted Pamphile's transformation ritual in the most perfunctory manner possible, hastening it through to its conclusion with no proper regard for form, reversing the order of the rite, haranguing the gods with his request that he should be turned into a bird with actions mimetic of the species and hastily throwing off his clothes with no consideration of the ritual aspect motivating such a gesture. He fails to understand that, for Pamphile, this is not just a performance in the manner of a theatrical role. As a shape-shifter, although changing her outer form is merely a basic part of her protean powers and nature as a witch, there is nonetheless an attendant ritual to this. This is why she carefully removes her clothing prior to her transformation. Lucius notices that this is the first thing she does: *Iam primum omnibus laciniis se devestit Pamphile*. Lucius shows no such care for ritual stripping, as he carelessly and perfunctorily casts off his clothing in his haste to achieve his object of transformation: ***abiectis propere***

<sup>222</sup> Lucius' eventual redemption and initiation could not take place were there no redemptive qualities in the character at all, even if only incipient. This fact helps to explain the relevance of Lucius' illustrious matrilineal descent as supporting the words of the priest to Lucius in Book 11 with regard to extraneous qualities (such as wealth and noble birth), rather than as refuting or working against them. Whilst these things are good, they are not sufficient. They must support the development of knowledge and the perfection of character.

<sup>223</sup> See, for example, what Lucius says at 2.6: *At ego curiosus alioquin, ut primum artis magicæ semper optatum nomen audivi, tantum a cautela Pamphiles afui ut etiam ultro gestirem tali magisterio me volens ampla cum mercede tradere et prorsus in ipsum barathrum saltu concito præcipitare ... et vecors animi ... Ac dum amenti similis.*

*laciniis totis*. Lucius confuses ritual for gesture, thereby achieving nothing more than an imitation of what Pamphile does, a confusion made explicit in the text by the vocabulary used to depict his undressing made in haste (*propere*), and by hyperbaton (*abiectis...laciniis*). Such a lack of ritual decorum has the effect of making the magic work, but not in the way that he would like. Because Lucius fails to understand the true nature of metamorphosis, and has a feeble knowledge of his own self, he also fails to see that the tegument most suited to his nature is that of the donkey. His ignorance is made doubly ironic by the fact that he has put on the garment of a donkey, a member of the equine species which comes low down in the hierarchy, in Thessaly, a province renowned for its fine horses.<sup>224</sup>

Where Lucius' presence as an embodied soul in the novel can be taken as symbolic of the story of a soul's journey towards self-knowledge, howsoever imperfectly this may be acquired, the physiognomic scrutiny of Lucius and his metamorphosis into an ass, taken together, operate as the reverse of the story of Zopyrus' reading of Socrates' character from his face.<sup>225</sup> The philosophical message behind the Zopyrus anecdote is the same in Lucius' case but applied to different circumstances. Zopyrus' reading of Socrates was not flawed but invalidated by the effects of philosophy; hence, physiognomy came to have no relevance as an interpretative tool for Socrates.<sup>226</sup> The

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<sup>224</sup> Cf. 10.18: *equis etiam Thessalicis et aliis iumentis Gallicanis, quibus generosa suboles perhibet pretiosam dignitatem*.

<sup>225</sup> For versions of this story in Latin, see Cicero's *De Fato* (10.9) and *Disputationes Tusculanae* (4.81.2). Zopyrus was a physiognomist (*physiognomon*) who judged Socrates to be dim-witted because he had no hollows in the neck above the collar-bone, and that he was addicted to women, an interpretation which made Alcibiades laugh. Socrates claimed that he had overcome these vices by sheer will and self-discipline. In the Greek tradition the story is told in Alexander of Aphrodisias, *de Fato* 6. An anti-physiognomic reading of Socrates is entertained in Plato's *Symposium*, 221e-222a, and Xenophon's *Symposium*, 4.19-20; 5.2-7.

<sup>226</sup> Which is not the same thing as saying that physiognomic scrutiny is of no avail at all. Socrates did not refute the validity of Zopyrus' reading of his basic nature, as the Ciceronian texts explain. In the *De Fato* (10.9), Cicero states that vices which are the result of natural inclination can still be uprooted by constant application to self-discipline. In the *Tusculan Disputations* (4.81.2), Socrates is quoted as confirming that certain vices are natural to him, but that he has eradicated these through the imposition of order on his soul: *cum [vitia] sibi*

readings of Lucius by the anonymous interlocutor, Milo and Byrrhaena's are, mostly accurate, but still flawed; however, this fact is secondary to Lucius' present lack of self-mastery and right perception. Just as Socrates owned his personal inclinations but disowned subjection to them, a freedom he attributed to philosophy, Lucius is ultimately compelled to acknowledge his disordered passions, even though this acknowledgement comes very late in his experiences (11.15). Prior to this acknowledgement, he was compelled to, quite literally, wear his disordered passions.<sup>227</sup> At this point in his development as an embodied soul then, Lucius' nobility (*generosa stirpe*, 1.23; *generosa probitas*, 2.2) is one of the extraneous elements which the philosopher Socrates, the key figure in Apuleius' work on Socrates, deemed to be of little value (*DDS*, 175): "*generosus est*": *parentes laudas*. Similarly, the learning to which Lucius dedicated himself has been either of the wrong kind,<sup>228</sup> or to no avail. The priest in Book 11 is Apuleius' mouth-piece on this point (11.15): *Nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit*. The bond that truly links physiognomy and appearance to metamorphosis is therefore the soul, whatsoever Lucius may think. Necessarily, this link is posited on a fluid body-soul inter-relationship, rather than on any kind of antithesis between the two. The severance claimed by Socrates between the inner man and the outer - that is, that the condition of the body may not necessarily follow the condition of the soul, and is therefore not always

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*sic nata, sed ratione a se deiecta diceret*. These anecdotes serve to prepare Socrates' disciples for the possibility that outer appearances may serve to express some basic truth upon which to base early relations with a person until further evidence arises to confirm or contradict the physiognomic reading. The physiognomic treatises warn the student of physiognomy to beware of the potential of the human body, even the ideal body, as a mask. See, for example, the cautionary note in *Anonymus Latinus* (11).

<sup>227</sup> Apuleius makes the state of the body follow the state of the soul in the *DPD* 1.18. The realignment of Lucius' body to match the state of his soul is a literary expression of this.

<sup>228</sup> Recall what Photis says to Lucius (3.15): '*Paveo*' inquit '*et formido solide domus huius aperta detegere et arcana dominae meae revelare secreta*. Sed melius de te doctrinae tua praesumo, qui praeter generosam natalium dignitatem, praeter sublime ingenium, sacris pluribus initiatus profecto nosti sanctam silentii fidem. Photis' words incarnate much of what witchcraft is all about, namely, to uncover – at the level of the body – what has been covered: *operta detegere*.

expressive of it - is not yet valid for the case of Lucius. This is a truth which will be revealed in his transformation into a donkey.

### ***Induo* and the Language of Dressing**

For the informed reader, Apuleius may appear to be humorously showing up the protagonist of his novel by comparing Lucius' ignorance of the true meaning of metamorphosis to notions of the relationship of the body to the soul under the influence of bodily transformations as professed by Plato in the *Phaedo*, one of the best known of Plato's treatises at the time of the Second Sophistic. Other scholars have indeed pointed out the relevance of Plato's *Phaedo* for the scene of Lucius' transformation.<sup>229</sup> That Apuleius had at some stage made a close reading of Plato's *Phaedo* is not only a probability resulting from his education but also proven by the existence of two extant fragments of a Latin translation he is said by Sidonius Apollinaris to have made of the Platonic text.<sup>230</sup>

In the *Phaedo*, section 81e-82a, Socrates speaks to Cebes of what happens to the souls of men after death. Following a Pythagorean line of thought, Socrates explains how the souls of the just – those who have lived a life of detachment from their body and have repelled the attacks of its assaults upon the soul – return to the divine principle, whereas the souls of those who did not exercise such detachment return into the body of the animal which they most resemble by their lifestyle. Such souls have been infected by their body and its sensual appetites, and are therefore trapped therein. The thinking that this passage contains appears to inform the idea behind the process of Lucius' transformation in particular. It is interesting to note the language of dressing, at the end of the scene especially, which Socrates uses to explain how this works (*Phaedo*, 81d-82a):

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<sup>229</sup>Schlam (1970) 480; Gianotti (1986) 1-31, especially page 20.

<sup>230</sup>Sidonius Apollinaris (II. ix). It has been argued that a Latin translation of *Phaedo* 66b5 – 67a5 reproduced by Claudius Mamertus is that of Apuleius, an argument which gains credence by his transcription of a sentence of Apuleius' *DPD* (1.9) only a few lines previously. This argument has been rejected by some scholars on stylistic grounds. On this question, see Beaujeu (1973) 173.

Εἰκὸς μέντοι, ὧ Κέβης· καὶ οὐ τί γε τὰς τῶν ἀγαθῶν αὐτὰς εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τὰς τῶν φαύλων, αἱ περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀναγκάζονται πλανᾶσθαι δίκην τίνουσαι τῆς προτέρας τροφῆς κακῆς οὕσης. καὶ μέχρι γε τούτου πλανῶνται, ἕως ἂν τῆ τοῦ συνεπακολουθοῦντος, τοῦ σωματοειδοῦς, ἐπιθυμία πάλιν ἐνδεθῶσιν εἰς σῶμα· ἐνδοῦνται δέ, ὡσπερ εἰκός, εἰς τοιαῦτα ἤθη ὅποῦ ἄτ' ἂν καὶ μεμελετηκυῖαι τύχῳσιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ. Τὰ ποῖα δὴ ταῦτα λέγεις, ὧ Σώκρατες; Οἶον τοὺς μὲν γαστριμαργίας τε καὶ ὕβρεις καὶ φιλοποσίας μεμελετηκότας καὶ μὴ διηυλαβημένους εἰς τὰ τῶν ὄνων γένη καὶ τῶν τοιούτων θηρίων εἰκὸς **ἐνδύεσθαι**. ἢ οὐκ οἶε; Πάνυ μὲν οὖν εἰκὸς λέγεις.

Whereas other scholars have focused solely on the recurrence of shared imagery and the thematic *rapprochement* between this passage from the *Phaedo* and the scene of Lucius' transformation in the *Metamorphoses*, I would add that lexical similarities that occur between the two texts are particularly noteworthy. The verb at the end of section 81e of the *Phaedo*, *ἐνδύεσθαι* (*enduesthai*), is the middle form of the Greek verb *ἐνδύω* (*enduo*), used for the action of putting on clothes,<sup>231</sup> and is both homonymous with and graphically similar to the Latin verb *induo*, which occurs in the *Metamorphoses* with relation to Lucius' transformation: he intended to put on the form of a bird, like Pamphile (3.23): *cum semel avem talem perunctus induero*. In the middle form of the verb, with the preposition *εἰς*, the Greek verb appropriates the idea of entering into or being pressed into something, in this case, the forms of asses and other wild animals.<sup>232</sup> However, I believe the etymological force of the basic verb – putting on something – is retained. In the passive and middle forms, it approximates the notion of assuming or putting on another

<sup>231</sup> Héran (1987) 398, in a study on the dual referentiality of *habitus* (by which it means both dress and state of soul), explains the linguistic process by which notions of *habitus* and *hexis* – the Greek equivalent of *habitus* – determine the use of the middle voice in verbs expressive of dressing, including donning specific items of dress (such as *hupodesthai*, *hoplisthai*, and other like verbs): as is well-known, the use of the middle voice in Greek implies that the object of the verb is not entirely exterior to the verb but relates to its person (“*touche à sa personne*”). As I see it, this analysis of the relationship between the (transforming) subject and his moral dispositions can be applied with equal validity to the case of the man whose disposition of soul determines his transmuted bodily form, exemplified both by the subject under discussion in Socrates' speech in the *Phaedo*, and Lucius in the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>232</sup> See LS, (1996), 562.

form in contexts of transformation.<sup>233</sup> The important question here is whether the rebirth of the soul is ultimately the subject's responsibility, as this determines this interpretation of voice. Plato is unequivocal that the agent's own prior practices are the cause. Thus *enduesthai* can be interpreted as “gets him (or her)-self incorporated” (more literally, “gets himself placed into”), so the voice is ultimately middle. The similar sounding Latin verb, *induo*, occurs in the passive voice in contexts of transformation (that is, a change of outer bodily form) as well as of putting on clothing, although it occurs merely in the active voice in the passage of the *Metamorphoses* under discussion.<sup>234</sup> The nuance privileged by the function of voice in the Greek language is lacking in the future perfect of the Latin, but this can function to further enhance Lucius' lack of understanding of what metamorphosis is really about. For him, it is merely a change of form, like a change of garment, at the superficial level (3.23): *cum semel avem talem perunctus induero*. The brachylogical expression evident in Lucius' statement - *avem induero* (for *avis formam induero*)<sup>235</sup> – does not modify or mitigate Lucius' limited understanding of the basis of transformation.

It could be that Apuleius, in his mind, had established an etymological link between the two verbs – *ἐνδύειν*, used in the middle voice in the *Phaedo* passage (*ἐνδύεσθαι*) and *induo* – based on a precarious analogy. Ernout and Meillet deny any formal etymological connection between *induo* and *ἐνδύω*, but state the possibility of semantic interference.<sup>236</sup> However, even despite the potentially false etymology, the two passages can be compared on the grounds of similarity of thought and process, as well as image, for it is into the body of an ass that Lucius' soul passes. The Neo-Platonist reading of

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<sup>233</sup> In the *Republic*, the word occurs in the myth of Er to describe the case of Thersites' soul clothing itself in the body of an ape (10.620c): *πίθηκον ἐνδυσμένην*.

<sup>234</sup> See occasions where *induitur* is used of putting on another form in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 2.425; 2.850; 11.203.

<sup>235</sup> On the use of brachylogy in Lucius' statement, see Van der Paardt (1971), 172-173, who also points to a similar use of brachylogy in Thelyphron's tale (2.22): *nam et aves et rursum canes et mures, immo vero etiam muscas induunt*.

<sup>236</sup> Ernout and Meillet (1979), 207: “Mais le verbe grec a pu influencer sur les emplois qui ont été faits de *induo*. » Potthoff (1992) 122, on the other hand, does see some sort of parallel between the Greek and Latin lexemes.

metamorphosis retains the Platonic bias of “the metamorphic devolution of the human body” taken as a “symbol for the moral devolution of the immortal soul.”<sup>237</sup> The mere likelihood (εἰκός) of such an outcome in Socrates’ speech in the *Phaedo* is stamped with the seal of proof by Lucius’ example.

Objections that any ideological or procedural similarity is undercut by major differences in context that separate the *Phaedo* from the *Metamorphoses* – namely, that Lucius and Pamphile, indeed most of the characters who undergo a metamorphosis in the novel, are still alive, whereas Socrates’ concern in the *Phaedo* passage is with the souls of the dead – can be countered by the fact that in both instances of metamorphosis in the passage from the *Metamorphoses* under examination, the soul is, as in death, separated, albeit momentarily, from its vessel and garment, the body. The context of the separation of the immortal soul from the body after death, as expressed in the *Phaedo*, is represented in fictionalised form by the momentary exteriorisation and suspension of the soul in life under the influence of witchcraft and incantation. The operation and effects of the soul re-entering a body is the same in both cases.

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<sup>237</sup> Clarke (1988) 13.

## Conclusion to Chapter 2

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how the physiognomic analysis of Lucius in the novel works to establish him as a personage of inherent nobility of character as well as of high social provenance; physiognomic ideas circulating at the time have been drawn on to support this reading. Yet the desirable qualities which are associated with a man of his background and education are not developed to the point of quashing his inherent weaknesses, of which prying into matters beneath his personal and social dignity (such as magic), and lust, are the two most salient features in the novel. These are not visible to, or read by, his physiognomising audience, namely Byrrhaena and Milo, but are suspected by the anonymous interlocutor who charges Lucius with credulity in Book 1 (1.20). In this respect, Apuleius does not show a slavish dependence on the physiognomic canon or tradition, but adapts it for the purposes of his novel. Nevertheless, the physiognomic corpus remains helpful in determining the accuracy of Byrrhaena's reading of Lucius' character, as well as illuminating the more asinine qualities, such as his curiosity, which determined Lucius' transformation into a donkey. Of compelling importance is Apuleius' own admission, in the *DPD*, of degrees of virtue and vice in men, a revelation which is invaluable for appreciating the more subtle and realistic portrayal of Lucius.

Herein enters the necessity of metamorphosis. It is only when Lucius exchanges one outer appearance for another - that is, his body and face which are expressive of his high social status and the nobler qualities associated with this, which are in turn exchanged for the body of a lust-driven and curious donkey - that his undesirable qualities are made visible to the reader and to himself. Metamorphosis, rather than working against the physiognomic reading of his character by characters who are themselves flawed, is physiognomy's complement. Its operation on a complex or dissembling being completes the externalisation onto the body of the properties of the soul which remain less perceptible to the eye of the beholder and, therefore, more difficult to detect (with the exception of the witches in the novel, whose perceptive faculty is sharper). Lucius' transformation is necessary for a more complete portrayal of his character and a deeper insight into his soul and its properties. Lucius' appearance, formerly appraised for its reflection of moral

balance and nobility, desires from a higher perspective to be re-appraised. Lucius' bodily proportions are now grotesquely distorted to reflect his appetite for arcane knowledge and sexual distraction. The transformation into a donkey which Lucius undergoes also presents a challenge to his own understanding of the rapport between body and soul, and the measure in which metamorphosis itself is a reflection of this.

Long before the seminal transformation scene, the reader is already aware of Lucius' attraction to magic, but Lucius' transformation brings the complexity of his character closer to the reader, who is then further empowered to compare the readings characters in the novel make of Lucius, with what *he* knows about Lucius. The fact that Lucius has merely exchanged one garment – his physical body – for another, whilst retaining his human sense, makes the transformation properly speaking a “re-incorporation” or metensomatosis.<sup>238</sup> A hybrid soul, one that has a share in the beast as well as in the human, is visible in the permanently bi-form creatures of myth, such as centaurs or satyrs, but with human beings, parts of the soul can remain hidden. The physiognomic treatises warn the student of physiognomy to beware of the potential of the human body, even the ideal body, as a mask, a fact which makes his task so much harder.<sup>239</sup> One of the functions of metamorphosis is to remove this mask, to uncover what is hidden. Lucius appears to relate his metamorphosis merely to external form, refuting any closer connection between the form (clothing, the body in this case) and the soul. The passage from the *Phaedo* can be read as supporting the idea that the body-soul link is tighter than Lucius may at this point think. The language of clothing removal or exchange in both the *Phaedo* and the transformation scenes in the *Metamorphoses* thereby serves to consolidate the foundations of the

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<sup>238</sup> These terms of reference are taken from Cumont (2002) 182, who points out that “re-incorporation” is a direct translation of the Greek word *μετενσωμάτσεις*. Whilst there are attendant issues to the use of this terminology, I prefer metensomatosis (or, to a lesser degree, metamorphosis, the word used of Lucius' transformation in the *Onos*, 13: *μεταμορφωθείς*) or transformation, to metempsychosis. On the philosophical associations with these various terms, including “palingenesis”, another way of referring to the transmigration of souls, see Bacigalupo (1965) 284. Bacigalupo speaks of metensomatosis as the “exact” term (“esatto”) for the process of the transmigration of souls.

<sup>239</sup> See *Anonymus Latinus*, 11.

argument that clothing is a mere extension, like the body which is a kind of clothing, of the condition of the soul. This in turn reflects the echoing motif in the novel of the body as the soul's garment; a transparent garment.

## Chapter 3

### Socrates and the Ragged Garment

In this chapter, the focus of analysis is the ragged garment as it appears on a character who functions as the spring-board into an extended enquiry into rags in the novel, named Socrates, one of the most evocative of all the speaking names in the novel.

I open the chapter by analysing how Apuleius' ragged character evokes the philosopher Socrates by way of contrast through his name and his appearance, especially his ragged cloak. The effect of this is to demarcate the difference between the historical philosopher and the novelistic character, who functions as an embodiment of much that the historical Socrates repudiated. I shall analyse Apuleius' Socrates from the perspective of essential aspects of the philosopher which are lacking in the novelistic figure, by concentrating on what Apuleius has to say in his own writings on the philosopher whom the character of his novel evokes by way of contrast.

The next section is concerned to show how the ultimate function of rags on Socrates is the exteriorisation of soul, the nature or "truth" of the person whose psychology they embody. This interpretation will be supported by passages from Apuleius' philosophical writings<sup>240</sup> on the nature and conditions of the soul.

In the ensuing section, Aristomenes, Socrates' friend through whom we come to know the story of Socrates, takes on a critical function as a vehicle for the expression of surprise before the revelation of the truth. Starting from this premise I undertake an enquiry into Socrates' rags as symbolic of the dissolution of his previous public persona, by incorporating the social and civic significance of dress and physical appearance.

The ragged garment as it appears on Socrates foreshadows much of what is connoted by rags in the novel, colouring (and in turn being coloured by)

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<sup>240</sup> I include Apuleius' *Apologia* amongst his philosophical works despite its being a specimen of forensic oratory, as it contains many philosophical conceits and Apuleius' more personal thoughts appertaining to philosophical issues. The question of whether or not the speech was actually delivered or not is of no relevance to my application of the work in my thesis.

the occurrence of such garments in the subsequent books. Therefore, some space in this chapter will also be given to the *centunculus*, one of the words used of Socrates' ragged garment, such as it appears in the section introducing the mill slaves (9.12), whose rags, by the context of their appearance in the scene, merge from a marker of slavery as a social category into slavery as a moral category (relevant to Socrates' case), and the female ghost (9.30) whose rags reinforce the surreal and the liminal state of Socrates, whose moral death anticipates his physical death .

The interpretation I embrace stands in stark contrast to those of other scholars who persist in seeing behind Socrates' appearance and story a mere performance, promoted by dissimulation and deceit. One of these scholars is Wytse Keulen, whose arguments will be examined as antithetical to mine in the next section.

The study of Socrates' rags then moves on to include a brief discussion of Odysseus, as his presence in the Socrates episode, evoked through rags, is undeniable. I shall engage with other scholarly interpretations of the Socrates-Odysseus analogy. Notwithstanding the similarities between the character of Apuleius' novel and the Homeric hero, especially in the area of appearance and disguise, I aim to draw a different reading out of the ragged garment in the *Metamorphoses*.

Given that both characters, Odysseus and Apuleius' Socrates, are connected in some way with metamorphosis, I shall then include a section which looks into the very notion of metamorphosis as an act occurring at the hands of witches, such as Meroe in the novel and Circe in the epic poem, or of goddesses, such as Athena in the *Odyssey* and Isis in the *Metamorphoses*, and as a process enacted at the level of the body and by which the true nature of a character is externalised.

Finally, I shall conclude this chapter with two interdependent yet separate sections focussing on Socrates as a programmatic character in the novel. The first is summative, resuming very briefly the way in which the portrayal of Socrates in the *Metamorphoses* is pivotal for determining the interpretation of clothing in its various manifestations (especially rags) and physical appearance in the subsequent books of the *Metamorphoses*. The

following and final section of the chapter consists of an examination of the programmatic function of Socrates' rags through the characters of Milo and Chryseros. The rags on these characters of the novel function to exteriorise servile aspects of their moral characters, thereby becoming a marker of moral beggary or poverty. Apuleius' ideas on the soul, expressed through sartorial imagery in his *Apologia*, are conflated with the satirical topos of the miser, to facilitate the fictionalisation of the over-arching premise and image of dress, like the body, as garment of the soul.

### **Socrates' Name and Rags as Indices of an Un-Socratic Character**

Socrates' name can be taken to underpin, if not impose on the interpretation of the tale, a certain paradigm. The philosophical resonances of the name are unmistakable. Reinforcing the philosophical connotations of Socrates' name is his dress, consisting aptly of a ragged cloak (1.6), recalling the dress of the philosopher Socrates. Dress and gesture have a large part in determining the readings other scholars have brought to Socrates' character, as being derived from pre-existing literary sources.

We first meet Socrates in the novel through his close friend Aristomenes (1.6) who relates the tale to Lucius and the anonymous interlocutor who, in contrast to Lucius, is diffident towards Aristomenes' tale, as he considers it to be rather tall (1.2-3; 1.20). At least a good year has passed since Aristomenes and Socrates last saw each other, when Socrates left home to undertake business in Macedonia. Aristomenes is surprised to see his friend (whose household has been mourning him as dead) and is shocked at the sight of him, as he is dirty, emaciated and dressed in rags. Aristomenes takes Socrates to the baths where he personally administers to him, and then to an inn where he persuades him to explain how he came to be in such a state. Socrates' tale is that of a veritable fall from grace: a travelling merchant, Socrates was on his way back home from Macedonia, when he decided to stop off on his way to Larissa to see a gladiatorial game. He walked off into a by-way where he was set upon by bandits who robbed and stripped him. From there, Socrates stopped at the house of a female inn-keeper who is also a witch who inflicts physical transformations on her enemies. She helps him and he sleeps with her. By this one act, he is now her slave and cannot leave (1.7). Socrates attributes his present predicament, both moral and physical, to the witch, Meroe.

At first incredulous and disparaging, Aristomenes comes to accept Socrates' tale of Meroe's witchcraft, so promises to help his friend escape from her the next day (1.10-11). They go to sleep but Aristomenes is troubled by a dream in which he sees Meroe and her friend, Panthia, kill Socrates by ripping out his heart through his neck, and then staunch the wound with a sponge (1.12-13). The next morning he awakes to see his friend well (1.17-18). They leave the inn and have breakfast next to a stream, but as Socrates leans forward to slake his thirst, the sponge with which the witches staunched his wound falls out and Socrates dies (1.20). Aristomenes can no longer return home.

When Aristomenes unexpectedly encounters his long-absent friend, he is shocked at the state of physical and moral degradation into which he has fallen, referring to him as a *larvale simulacrum* (1.6), an expression which conveys ghostly connotations by the adjective *larvale*, derived from the noun *larva*. Two further indicators of this degradation are Socrates' location at a cross-roads, which is testimony to how much of a social outcast Socrates has become, and his tattered cloak and emaciated, bedraggled physical appearance, described to the reader by Aristomenes in terms that reinforce the utter abjection of Socrates' state at the moment of Aristomenes' unexpected encounter with him. More importantly, Aristomenes' shock at the state of his friend is couched in terms expressive of identity (*'quae facies!'*, 1.6).

Socrates' rough cloak, called in Apuleius' text a *palliastrum* (1.6) and later, when Aristomenes moves closer to him, a *centunculus* (1.6), is a key element in this description of him. Although both these terms are used of the same garment, they recall different aspects of Socrates' cloak. Together they conspire to reinforce the surreal aspect of his position as a *larva*, which is the root of the adjective Aristomenes uses to describe Socrates – *'larvale'*. *Larva* in this case expresses an embodied and exteriorised soul. The dress itself recalls not only the original Socrates but also the ensuing Cynic-Socratic tradition, which pushed the *askesis* for which Socrates was renowned to excess,<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Kindstrand (1976) 61. For ancient evidence of the criticism of this excess, see the disparaging remarks of Epictetus in his *Discourses*, 4.8, 15-16 and 4.11, 33-34. For the reported remarks of the philosopher Socrates to Antisthenes when the latter turned

thereby bringing disrepute upon the school and its adherents in some cases. Such interpretations of Socrates' dress and appearance are valid, but it is important to engage with the ethical material that underpins the Socratic flavour. In the case of Apuleius' character, for example, the issue is rather one of the opposite of *askesis*, the excess of self-indulgence, embodied, like its opposite, as rags.

That we are expected to recall, at least initially, the historical Socrates by the *palliastrum* is conveyed by the use of the root of the word *pallium*, which signified to a Latin-speaking audience the garb of the Greek philosopher, and by the pejorative suffix *-astrum*. Scobie's suggestion that the *-aster -astra -astrum* suffix is imitative, so that the word *palliastrum* would then mean 'a cheap imitation of a cloak', is not an inappropriate idea given the circumstances.<sup>242</sup> By a clever derivation from a word which connotes Greek philosophy, Apuleius evokes the *himation phaulon*<sup>243</sup> or the *tribon*<sup>244</sup> associated with the eponymous Greek philosopher. The Socratic connotations behind the *palliastrum* will recur in a modified form later on in the novel in Lucius' satiric-styled outburst in Book 10 (10.33), this time referring specifically to the historical personage (although not his clothing), and again, by implication, in Book 11 where the Socratic-Cynic type is suggested by the figure of an old bearded man with a stick and a cloak in the *praeludia* to the Isiac procession (11.8);<sup>245</sup> yet Aristomenes' description of Socrates' cloak takes us

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outwards to view a tear in his cloak ("I can see your vanity through your cloak"), see Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 9. 34-35, and Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 2.36 and 6.8.

<sup>242</sup> Scobie (1975) 92, who also refers the reader to Molt (1938) 53. The *palliastrum* also occurs in *Florida* 14 (*procinctu palliastris*), in a scene also of shameful exposure, although the critical stance is directed as much at the gaze of the public onlookers, prompted by their improper curiosity.

<sup>243</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.6.2.

<sup>244</sup> Ameipsias *apud* Diogenes Laertius, 2.28. Plato, *Protagoras*, 335D; *Symposium*, 219B. Maximus of Tyre, *Orationes*, 1.10e.

<sup>245</sup> If this last example of the *pallium* in the novel is indeed meant to embody the Socratic-Cynic type or school, then it does so in order to stress the merely performative aspect of it, that is, in its aspect, on that occasion, as a costume as this was understood in the social context of the time. By this, I mean those who adopted the philosopher's dress and insignia, and wandered around preaching a false philosophy. Apuleius was sensitive to this usurpation of the philosopher's dress and dignity, and his remarks on these types leave us in

beyond Socrates the philosopher. The very roughness of the cloak as described by Aristomenes suggests a state of raggedness that could degenerate into shreds at any moment. This is borne out especially by the addition of the adjective *scissile* which seems to function like the past participle passive of the verb *scindere*, denoting the action of tearing, ripping, cleaving in two.<sup>246</sup> *Scissilis* is a rare and technical form of the adjective *scissus*, and has been infrequently attested in its present form (*scissile*). Saint Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, gives an apt definition of the adjective *scissilis*, one which conveys the visual impact of the cloak on Aristomenes: *qui cum frangitur, in multas partes fit scissilis*.<sup>247</sup> This definition, although originally intended for more solid objects (it occurs in a section entitled *De aromaticis arboribus*), can be applied equally well to a piece of fabric or a garment which is so threadbare that it threatens to disintegrate at the slightest touch.<sup>248</sup> This information serves to show how far his friend has fallen. The negative connotation in the suffix *-aster* in *palliaastro* and the adjective *scissile*, combine to reinforce the embodied type that it represents.

Aristomenes tells us that Socrates replies to his enquiry into the cause of this reversal of fortune, by attributing the blame for his present state to a witch, named Meroe (1.6-8). However, the ensuing information Socrates gives to explain his reversal of fortune permits the reader to understand that

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no ambiguity how he feels about them (*Florida*, 9.9): *Nec tamen vos parva quaedam et prava similitudo falsos animi habeat, quoniam quaedam, ut saepe dixi, palliate medicabula obambulant*; (*Florida*, 8.13) *Quis ex rupiconibus, baiolis, tabernariis tam infans est, ut, si pallium accipere velit, <non> disertius maledicat?* The figure in Book 11 who appears in this guise may not be pretending to be a philosopher for deceitful purposes, but just like those who donned all the trappings of philosophy with a false or misleading intention, this figure wears his *pallium* merely as a costume (*philosophum fingeret*, 11.8) as part of a performance. See, for more on this, Chapter 8, in the section on the *anteludia*.

<sup>246</sup> *Scissilis* is a technical adjective. See LHS (1977) 1.348.

<sup>247</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri* 17.8.13. The text of the *Etymologiae* is that of Lindsay (1911).

<sup>248</sup> The same adjective occurs in the pseudo-Apuleian *Herbarium*: *scissili umbraculo*. It is also found 23 times in the work of Celsus, a medical writer of the first century AD. There it is applied to *alumen*, where it is used as a translation of *σχιστος*. The medical connotation of the word (*scissilis*) has a role in explaining Socrates' basic nature as embodied in the *palliastrum*, that is, as a sick and fragmented soul in need of care.

Socrates' present appearance is indicative not only of his enslavement to the witch Meroe but also of his basic nature, a moralising reading which Aristomenes too is at first inclined to espouse. Both Socrates' liminal social status and his inner state as a man half-alive and half-dead<sup>249</sup> are deflected onto his physical appearance, thereby becoming an expression of his *habitus*. Two particular passages contain a key to the interpretation of Socrates' true nature. His most salient moral flaw is his inability to withstand the allurements of *voluptas*, worldly pleasure, or desire. It was through the desire to see a renowned gladiatorial show that he went off-track on his way home (1.7): '*Me miserum*', *infit*, '*qui dum voluptatem gladiatorii spectaculi satis famigerabilis consector, in has aerumnas incidi ... modico prius quam Larissam accederem, pertransitum spectaculum obiturus, in quadam avia et lacunosa convalli a vastissimis latronibus obsessus atque omnibus privatus tandem evado.*' This is a Socrates who has a penchant for pleasure and gain, far from the *askesis* his historical name-sake was renowned for. Interestingly, his business had taken him to Macedonia, a place the philosopher refused to go to.<sup>250</sup> The words *quadam avia* - a kind of out of the way place - carry connotations of deviation, as does the word *devorto*, used of his turning in at Meroe's inn after the robbery (1.7). *Devorto* is a variant of *devertere*, and strictly means *deflectere de via*, "to go off the track, to go off course", which is true of this Socrates in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, for he deviates from his proposed journey home to his wife and children. This is a far cry from the actions of a man who listens to the voice of his moral conscience. Socrates the philosopher,

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<sup>249</sup> Socrates' liminal state is also recognised in this manner by Caprettini (1986) 112, following the perspective of Pennacini, who recognises in certain passages of Book 1 elements of foreshadowing ("prefigurazione"): "In questa prospettiva, terremo presente l'iter di Socrate che in un primo tempo appare morto ma è vivo e, in un secondo, appare vivo ma è già morto." He recalls the mortuary connotations behind veiling the face and head (*devotio*), a gesture Socrates performs (1.6), expressive, Caprettini says, of his moral status as "dead" (114).

<sup>250</sup> See Plato's *Gorgias*, 470d and *Crito*, 46c ff; Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, II.23.8. Dowden (2006, 49) finds tempting the suggestion made by Thibau (1965, 106-107) that Apuleius' Socrates is dead as a result of following the recommendations of Crito, an interlocutor in Plato's text of the same name (*Crito* 45c, 53e), to Plato's Socrates, that he should abandon his home and run away to Thessaly. There, Socrates would have to change his appearance (*Crito*, 53d), as Apuleius' Socrates clearly has (1.6): *paene alius*.

however, is presented by Apuleius in his philosophical writings to have been most conscious of his inner voice, this disembodied *daemon* which descends into our minds to act as a conscience in the manner of a properly cultivated personal *daemon* (which is akin to the individual soul), such as that of Socrates (*DDS*, 156): [*daemon*] *omnia visitet, omnia intellegat, in ipsis penitissimis mentibus vice conscientiae deversetur.*<sup>251</sup>

Socrates also succumbs to sex (*voluptatem Veneriam*, 1.8). It was as a consequence of his going off-track that he ended up in the inn and the bed of Meroe. Lust is the moral defect which leads to his final moral lapse. The intercourse which took place between him and Meroe he deems to be the act by which he became bewitched by Meroe and enslaved to her (1.7): '*Et statim miser, ut cum illa adquevit, ab unico congressu annosam ac pestilentem contraho.*' This is also the act which Socrates deems is responsible for his present physical degeneration (1.7): '*et ipsas etiam lacinias, quas boni latrones contegendo mihi concesserant, in eam contuli, operulas etiam, quas adhuc vegetus saccariam faciens merebam, quoad me ad istam faciem, quam paulo ante vidisti, bona uxor et mala Fortuna perduxit.*'

Aristomenes' moralising reply puts the responsibility for Socrates' present state back on him, but Aristomenes' surprised outburst upon seeing Socrates in such a state is ironically truthful, without his knowing it. The surreal *larvale simulacrum* that he says Socrates is, is exactly that, whether Aristomenes was cognizant of the fact or not. This reading can be opposed to

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<sup>251</sup> Note that *deversetur* in the *DDS* (156) is cognate with the verb used of Socrates' deviation in the *Metamorphoses* (*devorto*), a semantic link which further reinforces the role of the character in the novel as metaphorical of a perversion of the Socratic values espoused by Apuleius. Although Apuleius, in this section of the *DDS*, is making a distinction between the eternally disembodied *daemon* and the *daemon* who was attached to a human being and has since become freed, the function of the first is akin to that of the second where this has been properly cultivated, like the *daemon* of Socrates. On the complexity of notions of the *daemon* (demonology) in the second century A.D. and of Apuleius' notion of *daemon* in particular, see Beaujeu (1973) 195-203 (*Cf. Apologia*, 43: *ut in eo aut divina potestas quasi bonis aedibus digne deversetur*, with notes by Hunink *ad loc.* 1997, II: 130-131) and Sandy (1997) 196-213. On the confusion between daemons as disembodied and external to the individual soul and the *daemon* as individual soul in Apuleius, see Portogalli (1963), 235-236 and Sandy (1997), 205-207.

Aristomenes' immediate criticism of Socrates' story as histrionic (1.8), a criticism which is couched in theatrical terms.<sup>252</sup> Lateiner, in a study on the language of imagery in the *Metamorphoses*, notes that on two occasions, *simulacrum* is used to convey a 'non-statue' meaning, but shares nonetheless the sense of "something less satisfactory than the normal individual, someone socially or physically dead to the world."<sup>253</sup> Apuleius' Socrates is both disenfranchised from his previous social connections and physically much reduced, a *simulacrum* of himself. Meroe has merely succeeded in turning Socrates inside out. This is not the traditional and complete kind of metamorphosis that consists of changing people into animals, like the inn-keeper turned frog, but a metamorphosis nonetheless, effected still *at the level of the body*, that is, with what covers it - clothing, as both Aristomenes and Socrates admit.<sup>254</sup> Months of begging have made things worse, but the witch still had a poor specimen of a human being (and soul) to begin with. If Meroe's intention was to make mockery of this un-Socratic Socrates by keeping him in a garment that recalls the philosopher's garment, then the truth-value of the statement *larvale simulacrum* is particularly bitter, even if it is lost on Socrates himself. It makes little difference to the outcome and what it signifies, however, if she did not. Just like Antisthenes' torn patch,<sup>255</sup> Socrates' rags reveal a lot about the wearer's personal inclinations.

The *palliastrum* that Socrates is depicted wearing perhaps caused Aristomenes to think of the *pallia mendicabula* of whom Apuleius speaks in the *Florida* (9) and who were widespread at the time. Writers of Apuleius' time

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<sup>252</sup> Caprettini (1986) 109 claims that Apuleius, in the *Metamorphoses*, purposely plays on the double meaning ("duplicità") of *larva* as *both* spirit or phantasm ("spirito, fantasma"), *and* mask, or disguise ("maschera"). Further on (113) he claims that the *larva* by its appearance in context approximates a "death mask." I believe that this authorial manipulation of polysemy is also inherent in the use of the cognate adjective, *larvale*, in this instance.

<sup>253</sup> Lateiner (2001) 240.

<sup>254</sup> Aristomenes (1.6): *Quae facies!* Socrates (1.7): *quoad me ad istam faciem, quam paulo ante vidisti ... perduxit.* *Facies* and *faciem* in these instances refer to the overall appearance.

<sup>255</sup> On the story of Antisthenes' turning a patch in his cloak outwards to prove his poverty and material independence, see Aelian's *Varia Historia* 9. 34-35, and Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae Philosophorum* 2.36, 6.8.

and earlier, such as Aulus Gellius, Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus,<sup>256</sup> wrote about these types who seem to be associated with the fraudulent Socratic-Cynic beggar philosophers of the time, an association which would implicate Socrates in their deviant practices.<sup>257</sup> (Plato also wrote about the pretenders to philosophy in the *Republic* 6, 489d). Such fraudsters often performed at cross-roads and may have been the inspiration behind the fraudulent pseudo-priests of the Dea Syria encountered later in the *Metamorphoses* (8.26-29), but there is no indication in the present passage under study that Socrates asked Aristomenes for money or sought to abuse him (charges levelled against the beggar philosophers at the time),<sup>258</sup> let alone discuss philosophy with Aristomenes, unless one counts as philosophical discourse his caution to his friend to beware the fickleness of Fortune. It is perhaps worth noting that Aristomenes immediately likens Socrates to those who have been ill-treated by Fortune and who now beg at cross-roads (1.6): *qualia solent Fortunae decermina stipes in triviis erogare*. Yet by his reaction to Socrates' story, it appears that Aristomenes thought that this begging and tall story were part of a performance, a sentiment borne out by his use of theatrical terminology in his riposte (1.8), thereby aligning Socrates with the false philosophers of the time. However, Apuleius teaches us, through Aristomenes, to look more closely at what lies beneath surfaces, by making his character inspect further the cloak of his friend. Clothing bespeaks an inherent truth- it is only when he looks more closely at the cloak that he notices its exact constitution, namely, patchwork. This is where applying notions of clothing as expression of the soul allows us to penetrate the truth of character at the level of the body: his friend's soul, just like his dress, is in tatters.

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<sup>256</sup> Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 9.2.4; Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes*, 32.9; Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.11.19-26, 31-36.

<sup>257</sup> For this interpretation of Socrates in the *Metamorphoses*, see Keulen (2007), 162. Hunink thinks the *palliata mendicabula* spoken of in the *Florida* may be Cynics. Apuleius' discussion of those false philosophers who go about in soiled *pallia* in the *Florida* 7 may be a reference to such types: *neu rudes, sordidi, imperiti pallio tenus philosophos imitarentur et disciplinam regalem tam ad bene dicendum quam ad bene vivendum repertam male dicendo et similenter vivendo contaminarent*.

<sup>258</sup> On accusations of abuse and violence levelled against these false philosophers, see Kindstrand (1976), 61-62.

To emphasise further its poor state, Aristomenes refers to it as a *sutili centunculo* (1.6); so Socrates' basic tegument – a rough tattered cloak – is later declared, upon closer inspection, to consist of pieces of patchwork<sup>259</sup> (*centunculus*) sewn together (*sutilis*). However, although Socrates the philosopher is said to have gone without a *chiton* (χιτων) and to have worn a rough cloak,<sup>260</sup> there is no indication that it was made specifically of patchwork, nor that it was so flimsy as to turn its wearer into a peep-show, as it does on Apuleius' character.<sup>261</sup> The cloak on Apuleius' Socrates is so scanty that when Socrates tries to recover his dignity by covering his face with it and blushing very deeply he succeeds only in baring more of his already half-clad body from the navel downwards, a fact of considerable importance as is attested by the postponement of the verb expressive of nakedness, *renudaret*, to the end of the sentence (1.6): *Et cum dicto sutili centunculo faciem suam iam dudum punicantem prae pudore obtexit ita ut ab umbilico pube tenus cetera corporis renudaret*. This is significant, as *renudare* is as connotative as it is denotative. All through the novel, nudity functions as a marker of truth. This is made quite explicit, both textually and visually, in Book 10 (2-12) when a boy, previously presumed dead, publicly comes back to life and is brought before an entire court to bear living testimony to the truth, the *nuda veritas* (10.12), of his untimely demise. The boy in this episode is described at the moment of truth as wearing burial clothes – *feralibus amiculis instrictus atque obditus* – but these coverings serve rather to expose the truth concerning the boy's death than to conceal it.<sup>262</sup> The association of death with nakedness, or near nakedness, has a close association with truth. It is often through death – whether physical or moral, as in Socrates' case - that one arrives at the truth of a character or a situation.

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<sup>259</sup> Molt (1938) 56: “*Cento vestis est e pannis confecta. Vide P.W. III, p.1932.*”

<sup>260</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.6.2.

<sup>261</sup> In fact, the dress and appearance of Apuleius' Socrates is more akin to that of the Cynic, Antisthenes, who had been a pupil of the philosopher. Many Cynics took the *askesis* for which Socrates and Antisthenes were renowned and practised it to the extreme; some Cynics even went so far as to advocate begging as a means to support oneself (Kindstrand, 1976, 61).

<sup>262</sup> On the range of connotations behind the words *nudus* (and its Greek counterpart, γυμνος) see Bonfante (1989) 543-570.

Socrates is so dirty, that Aristomenes has to take him to the baths and personally minister to him, wiping the filth and grime off his body, an act which is significant in itself, as redolent of reciprocity motivated by friendship;<sup>263</sup> and yet Plato tells us in the *Symposium*<sup>264</sup> that Socrates could bathe and dress appropriately to the occasion, even putting on new sandals, as he did for dinner at Agathon's. Epictetus, a Greek Stoic writer of the Neronian period, spurning Aristophanes' depiction of Socrates as a sloven in *The Clouds*, tells us that both Socrates and Diogenes (another of his pupils and also a Cynic), were agreeable in their person, and that those who deliberately pervert the philosopher's dress by bemiring themselves and not washing their cloaks, are like beasts.<sup>265</sup> They merely succeed in perverting philosophy itself and turning people away from it. The squalor of Apuleius' Socrates, therefore, is not the product of self-fashioning but of true moral and physical degradation, a state which cannot have been ascribed to the philosophical personage.

The *palliastrum* details the philosophical colouring of the whole episode, whereas the *centunculus* adduces, at least superficially, a theatrical element, but also a social one as emblematic of poverty and slavery. Rather than taking these two garments as mutually exclusive, by which reading the philosophical would be coloured if not superseded by the theatrical, I see them both as pointing to specific but not divergent aspects of Socrates' soul.

### **Socrates' Rags as an Emanation of his Soul**

Socrates' claim that his present physical and moral state is a result of his infection by intercourse with Meroe, whose name is evocative of associations with wine and magic,<sup>266</sup> is not entirely true, a fact which Aristomenes points

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<sup>263</sup> The act of clothing the naked is a topos of much literature both prior to Apuleius' time, contemporaneous with it, and after his time. A good example is the insistence on clothing the naked in the New Testament. Cf. James, 2.15; Matthew 25.36; Luke, 3.11 and Isaiah, 58.7 and Ezekiel, 18.7, from the Old Testament, for merely a few examples.

<sup>264</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, 174A. Xenophon too reiterates Socrates' rigorous care of his body (*Memorabilia* 1.3.3; 1.6.7; 1.20.4; 3.12.2-8; 4.7.9; *Symposium* 2.17-19).

<sup>265</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses*, 4.11.19-26, 31-36.

<sup>266</sup> Scobie (1975) on 1.17 sees a possible pun on *vinum merum* (undiluted wine), and a possible Meroitic link. Likewise, a drunken old woman is named Meroe in one of Ausonius' epigrams, *In Meroen anum ebriosam* (21, in the edition of Kay, 2001). Could Ausonius have

out to him. The key to what determines Socrates' present appearance lies in Socrates' soul. Uncultivated, it does not enable him to withstand the onslaught of temptation. This lack of cultivation of his soul is therefore reflected in his bedraggled appearance, especially his rags.

Rent garments are a common outward sign in Latin literature of inner schism or rupture, whether personal, the effect of a trauma or disgrace such as bereavement or being charged with crime, both of which are expressed through the rending of garments, or societal,<sup>267</sup> as in a division in the state i.e. civil war. An example of this is Discord as both harbinger of civil war and sower of dissent among men. In the *Aeneid*, she is depicted as one who rejoices in the

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had Apuleius' character in mind? Socrates, who cannot hold his liquor, is drowned out by Meroe (*insolita vinolentia*, 1.11, although this could be taken to refer to the length of time Socrates has gone without wine). Meroe was an aging but still quite attractive (*admodum scitulam*) inn-keeper, who received him kindly, giving him food and wine after he had been set upon by robbers on his way to a renowned gladiatorial show, and then enticed him into bed. After that, he had to give her everything he had with him, including the garments the robbers left him with and his meagre earnings, as if by way of payment.

<sup>267</sup> Seneca makes the connection between the health of the state and men's dress as an outer manifestation of this state, quite explicit (*Epistles*, 114): *Quomodo conviviorum luxuria, quomodo vestium aegrae civitatis indicia sunt, sic orationis licentia, si modo frequens est, ostendit animos quoque, a quibus verba exeunt procidisse*. Yet this correlation between the state and dress can work for the minimal part of the state, that is, the individual man, and can hence be equally applied to the individual soul, whereby dress is as much an index of the state of the individual soul as of an entire city state (*Epistles*, 114): *Non potest alius esse ingenio, alius animo color ... Quanto hoc magis accidere ingenio putas, quod totum animo permixtum est; ab illo fingitur, illi paret, inde legem petit... Non statim ... hoc tibi occurret, hunc esse, qui solutis tunicis in urbe semper incesserit? ... signum a discincto petebatur*. (For the connotations of "loose" clothing redolent in *solutis tunicis* and *a discincto* see Chapter 7). Although Seneca does quite categorically state that this fault of disorder and carelessness can be attributed sometimes to the man, sometimes to the epoch (*Quod vitium hominis interdum, interdum temporis solet*), it is undeniable that, in the latter case, the man has allowed contemporary fashion to affect his thinking and perceptions, assimilating them to those of a man whose soul is disordered. Apuleius himself compares a well-ordered state to a well-ordered soul, wherein the best part (*pars optima = prudentia sapientiaque*) has overall dominion (*DPD*, 2.24): *Res publicas eas demum fundatas ratione dicebat [scil. Plato] esse, quae ordinatae ad instar animarum forent, ut pars optima, quae prudentia sapientiaque praecellit, imperitet multitudini*.

rupture which she brings with her, symbolised by her torn dress, expressed by the *palla*, a quintessentially female garment: *et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla* (8.702); in Eumolpus' poetic account of the 'Civil War' in the *Satyricon*, Discord with her *scisso crine* displaces Concord, whose torn dress (an unnatural manifestation of Concord) mirrors Discord's torn hair (natural for Discord) and who covers her face for shame: *Iustitia ac maerens lacera Concordia palla* (124, line 253). The dress – *palla* – is symbolic, in these texts, of the Roman state; but both Concord and Discord wear the *palla*, expressive of the Roman state itself.<sup>268</sup> Hence, the torn dress symbolises the state that has been torn in two by civil unrest and faction.

Extending the textile imagery of discord to the personal and psychological level, we can see how rent garments can similarly be expressive of rupture and schism in the soul. Concord's torn dress (*lacera palla*) in Petronius' novel resembles the *scissili palliastro* in Aristomenes' depiction of Socrates. The hair of the goddess Discord appears to have been torn by herself in an act of self-determination, expressive of her mourning. Socrates' dress and demeanour draw attention rather to the effect of the tearing *as embodying a permanent state of Socrates*, and not who actually tore the cloak. Even in the every-day life of antiquity, it makes no difference to the civic status of the *sordidus* whether he tore his own clothes or acquired the *sordes* ready-made for the purpose of mourning.

Additionally, it is not difficult to detect wherein Socrates' flaws lay, namely, his penchant for spectacle which caused his deviation from the object

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<sup>268</sup>In Lucan, Discord figures not so much as the mythical 'goddess', as rather a permeating spirit of unrest in the underworld. However, her proximity in the prophetic passage to the spinning Fates and to the eruption (*ruperunt* - a word in itself evocative of schism or rupture) of 'civil war' amongst the shades, continues the spinning and sartorial image, and lends weight to my argument of inner turmoil in Apuleius' Socrates (Lucan, *De Bello Civili*, 6. 777-781): *Tristia non equidem Parcarum stamina dixit/Aspexi tacitae revocatus ab aggere ripae;/Quod tamen e cunctis mihi noscere contigit umbris,/Effera Romanos agitat discordia manes,/Inpiaeque infernam ruperunt arma quietem*. As an example of the causes and effects of ripping and tearing (in this case, the tearing in two of a state), this passage contains much that can be relevant by a metaphorical transfer of the idea to the individual soul. The Underworld can be likened to the soul in turmoil. Additionally, Socrates as a *larva* can be assigned to the province of the *manes*.

of his journey, and lust (1.7). It seems that Socrates, the antithesis of the eponymous philosopher, does not know his limits. All the appetitive parts of his soul must therefore be waging war against the higher faculties and the constituent parts of his soul are not in harmony. This then must be Socrates' inner rupture or division. His rags seen in this light seem to invoke the *rhakoi* of ancient medical texts.<sup>269</sup> Socrates' *scissile palliastrum* is therefore an embodiment of his sick soul. In addition to this, as an embodied soul in thrall to witchcraft, Socrates is fixed in a liminal state, a state of suspension between the two states of life and death. This state accounts also for his deathly pallor. The rags merely show that the man, like his outer garment, needs repair, if not total reconstruction.

To understand how this outward manifestation of inner nature through clothing works in this episode, we may recall what Apuleius says about Socrates the philosopher. Several points that he raises in the *DDS* can help us towards a clearer perception of how Socrates, the fictional character of Apuleius' novel, has come to his present situation. In the philosophical work, Apuleius talks of the soul of the philosopher. He considers a discussion of *daemones* to be essential for understanding how Socrates acquired his great wisdom.<sup>270</sup> Tracking the function of the *daemones* as he sees them from something which is external to men through to something which is essential to men, Apuleius begins with a discussion of *daemones* as disembodied beings, intermediary spirits between man and the gods (*DDS*, 147): *sunt enim inter nos ac deos ut loco regionis ita ingenio mentis intersiti*.<sup>271</sup> These intermediary spirits are the means by which our prayers are taken up to them and their answers and rewards brought down to us, since it is not becoming of the gods,

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<sup>269</sup> From the fifth century B.C. onwards, rags often occurred in Greek medical texts as a metaphor for decaying flesh (Milanesi, 2005, 75-86). The semantic shift in the word *rhakos* from meaning rag to mask (the normal word for which in Greek is *prosopon*) can be tracked quite clearly in Aristophanic comedy.

<sup>270</sup> *DDS*, 150: *Id potius praestiterit Latine dissertare, varias species daemonum philosophis perhiberi, quo liquidius et plenius de praesagio Socratis deque eius amico numine cognoscatis*.

<sup>271</sup> Given the context in which the words *mens* and *animus* occur in this section of the *DDS*, it is evident that they are practically interchangeable, referring to the mind understood as (an aspect of) the soul.

Apuleius says, to do this (135-136): *quae omnia, ut dixi, mediae quaequam potestates inter homines ac deos obeunt. Neque enim pro maiestate caelestium fuerit, ut ...* (137): *non est operae diis superis ad haec descendere: mediorum divorum ista sortitio est.* The *daemones* are immortal, a quality they share with the immortal gods, although they have not their impassibility (148): *Quippe, ut fine comprehendam, daemones sunt genere animalia, ingenio rationabilia, animo passiva, corpore aera, tempore aeterna ... quartum proprium [animalia..tempore aeterna], postremum commune cum diis immortalibus habent, sed differunt ab his passione,* but their existence comes about with the birth of a human being. In this respect, Apuleius equates the *daemon* to the Roman *genius*, the guardian spirit which attached itself to each person at birth (151): *certe quidem meo periculo poteris Genium vocare, quod is qui est animus sui cuique, quamquam sit immortalis, tamen quodam modo cum homine gignitur.* As long as one's *daemon* is correctly acknowledged and cultivated, one can rely on it to act as a guide through life in times of moral uncertainty, almost like the voice of conscience, the *vocem quamquam divinitus exortam* (163) that Apuleius says Socrates used to hear, translating the term *τινα φωνήν* used of the *daemon* in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 242 c.2.

As a natural consequence of the role of the correctly cultivated *daemon* as a guide through life, Apuleius considers it to be the equivalent of the human soul still attached to the body while the latter is alive (150): *Nam quodam significatu e animus humanus etiam nunc in corpore situs daemon nuncupatur.* Using a Virgilian quotation to support his argument,<sup>272</sup> Apuleius goes on to explain that a virtuous state of mind, called a virtuous desire of the mind, is a good god (150): *Igitur et bona cupido animi bonus deus est.* Those whose *daemon* is good are called by Apuleius in this book the *ευδαίμονες*, in Latin, *beatos*, or, happy. The Socratic ideal of happiness, according to Apuleius, is a good *daemon*, that is, a mind or soul perfected in virtue (150): *Eudaemonas dici beatos, quorum daemon bonus id est animus virtute perfectus est,* the result, we can say, of a correct acknowledgement and cultivation of one's *daemon*. Indeed the philosopher Socrates is held up by Apuleius as the model of correct interaction with one's *daemon*, saying that he served his in justice

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<sup>272</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 9.184-185: *dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt/Euryale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?*

and innocence (156): *ita ut a Socrate iustitia et innocentia cultus est*, and that he both recognised and revered the god within him (157): *Socrates...hunc deum suum cognovit et coluit*. Socrates' daemon is a personal entity which exists within him. The case is no different for the average person: the *daemon* is the *Genius* and the *animus*, identical with the mind and soul of each and every person.

In sections 152-154 of the *DDS*, Apuleius continues to discuss the *daemon* in its function as soul of the dead. This, he says, was commonly known in old Latin as a *Lemur*. This is divided into two kinds: the *Lar familiaris*, whose life on earth was good; to this are assigned, as its special sphere of care, its descendants and the peaceful governance of their home. The other was the *Larva*, whose earthly existence was marked by predominantly bad behaviour; this is punished by a kind of exile of uncertain wandering. The *larva* produces only a mild terror for the virtuous on earth, but it can inflict harm on the evil.<sup>273</sup> *Larva* and its associated adjective, *larvale*, have negative connotations all through the novel.<sup>274</sup> Now in the Socrates passage, Aristomenes ominously

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<sup>273</sup>Apuleius, *DDS*, 153: *qui vero ob adversa vitae merita nullis [bonis] sedibus incerta vagatione ceu quodam exilio punitur, inane terriculamentum bonis hominibus, ceterum malis noxium, id genus plerique Larvas perhibent*. See also O'Brien (2002) 22.

<sup>274</sup>In Book 6 of the *Metamorphoses*, when Charite and Lucius are intercepted by the robbers in their attempt to flee, the robbers use the term *larvae* and *manes* of the two fugitives, both terms occurring in a surreal context of night-time and cross-roads (6.30: '*Quorsum istam festinanti vestigio lucubratis viam nec noctis intempestae Manes Larvasque formidatis?*') The robbers' mocking tone, however, is ironically self-reflective: earlier on in 4.22, the same robbers had disguised themselves as *Lemures*, the more neutral type of undead, or wandering soul: *partim gladiis armati, partim in Lemures reformati, concito se gradu proripiunt*. The *Lemures* costume, although intended to be a costume by the robbers, ironically befits the nature of the band of wandering souls, living in self-imposed exile on the edge of the law, and as souls who do not know themselves. In Book 9, the *pistor*, who, during his lifetime presented an honourable face to the public world, was visited by an avenging *larva* which I take to be an externalised symbol of his soul, just prior to his death, a fact which reads against his respectable public demeanour and is very telling of the state of his soul. Again, in Book 11.2, Lucius' invocation to Isis includes an aretalogy. One of her epithets under the name of Proserpine is *triforma facie*, and her associated function is explained in the participial phrase: *larvales impetus comprimens*. In this guise, Isis' restrains the attacks of *larvae*, just as a *genius*, if properly acknowledged and nurtured, would repel the attacks of one's own passionate nature.

calls Socrates a *larvale simulacrum*, *larvale* being the adjectival form of *larva*. The expression was, presumably, inspired by Socrates' demeanour of pallor and thinness, qualities associated with ghosts.<sup>275</sup> Whilst Socrates is not strictly dead nor in exile proper, he does appear to be in a sort of limbo, an association reinforced by the conjunction of his humble position seated on the ground (*sedebat*), his rags, and his appearance of one who begs at cross-roads portrayed in categorising terms expressive of a type: *qualia solent fortunae decermina stipes in triviis erogare*. Apuleius' Socrates was a wanderer, seeking after business and money. Now, however, he is in permanent exile, yet immobilised. As far as his family is concerned, Socrates is dead and mourned.

Socrates' name, then, as has been discussed in the previous section, is used ironically in its evocation of the philosopher. Given the state of his soul, his outer appearance cannot be indicative of the historical personage except insofar as it shows how far from the Socratic ideal Apuleius' character has fallen, especially in light of what Apuleius says about the philosopher's relationship with his *daemon*, which functions in this instance as the equivalent of the human soul.<sup>276</sup> This moral death symbolises and foreshadows Socrates' imminent physical demise which occurs at the end of Aristomenes' story, and which had been foretold in his dream. Indeed, Aristomenes' dream merely indicates the death of Socrates' soul in a way which Aristomenes cannot understand. While his friend is still physically alive at the level of consciousness, he is dead in a way which cannot be clearly perceived by Aristomenes.

In Aristomenes' opinion, Socrates deserves all he gets if he is going to put sex with a 'leather-skinned whore' before his legally married wife and his legitimate children. His disgust is reflected in the heavy alliteration of the line (1.8): '*Pol quidem tu dignus, inquam, es extrema sustinere, si quid est tamen novissimo extremius, qui voluptatem Veneriam et scortum scortum Lari et*

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<sup>275</sup> On pallor as a quality of the inhabitants of the Underworld in Latin literature see Winkler (1980, 163), who can find no equivalent for it in Greek texts. In this same article, which focuses on the bandits in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Lollianus' *Phoinikika*, he suggests that, in the Latin tradition, *lemures* are associated with black, and *larvae* with white (163). In accordance with Winkler's reading, Socrates' pallor is an extension of his state as a *larva*, the disembodied soul of one who lived unwisely.

<sup>276</sup> On this aspect of demonology in the *Metamorphoses*, see particularly Portogalli (1963) 235-236, 238 and Sandy (1997) 205-207.

*liberis praetulisti.*' By referring to Meroe in material, especially fabric, imagery (*scorteum*), Aristomenes, ironically, both confirms and perpetuates the link that binds witches (and wicked women generally) to metamorphosis, and clothing. *Scorteum* is more apt as a description of Meroe's true nature than Aristomenes is aware. Varro tells us of the etymological link made between whores and leather based on notions of impurity inherent in the material: *Scortari est saepius meretriculam ducere, quae dicta a pelle; id enim non solum antique dicebant scortum, sed etiam nunc dicimus scortea ea quae e corio ac pellibus sunt facta; in aliquot sacris ac sacellis scriptum habemus "ne quod scorteum adhibeatur," ideo ne morticinum quid adsit.*<sup>277</sup> Like wool, it is one of the residual products of an animal, and, as such, is unsuitable as a material for the purposes of worship.<sup>278</sup> Likewise, it cannot be worn inside a temple because it would be a reminder of death.<sup>279</sup> Consequently, in light of Apuleius' division of *Lemures* into categories of good and bad, Aristomenes' insightful remark can be seen to act as a critical tool in ascribing Socrates' actions to one who was already morally dead, even before sexual contact with the witch Meroe. Socrates, of course, does not see it in the same light as Aristomenes; as

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<sup>277</sup> Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, 7.84 (quoted in Quasten, 1942, 207). The reader of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* may recall what Oenothea says of Encolpius in the *Satyricon* (134): *Iorum in aqua, non inguina habet* (although her reasons for calling him a strap of leather are not concerned with the moral undertones of the fabric in question but with what it symbolises with regard to the male anatomy). Leather retains its negative metaphorical value even in the Greek canon. Plutarch, in his *Comparatio Lycurgi et Numae*, censures Numa's populist-based style of government by using a leather metaphor for indiscriminate mixing (2.3).

<sup>278</sup> On wool and its unsuitability for religious worship, see Apuleius' own comment in the *Apologia* (56), where he claims the primacy of linen over wool as the most becoming fabric for covering priests or objects of religious devotion: *Quippe lana, seignissimi corporis excrementum, pecori detracta, iam inde Orphei et Pythagorae scitis profanes vestitus est. Sed enim mundissima lini seges inter optimas fruges terra exorta non modo indutui et amictui sanctissimis Aegyptiorum sacerdotibus, sed opertui quoque rebus sacris usurpatur.*

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 1.629ff: *Scortea non illi fas est inferre sacello, ne violent puros exanimata focos.* See, for further references, Quasten (1942) 207-208, who cites the passage from Apuleius' *Apologia* as a commentary to St. Jerome's sixty-fourth epistle to Fabiola on baptism (*Epistles*, 64.19, C.S.E.L., LIV, p.610 Hilberg, in Quasten, *op. cit.*, 207). Alternatively, linen can also be associated with prostitutes, as Isidore of Seville says (*Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, 19.25.5): *amiculum est meretricum pallium lineum.*

far as he is concerned, it is the evil alliance of a witch and Fortune that has degraded him.

### **Aristomenes and the Revelation of Truth: Socrates' Rags as Emblematic of the Dissolution of Public Persona**

Socrates' story is also necessarily intertwined with that of Aristomenes, both by his professional acquaintance with him and since it is through Aristomenes that we come to learn of his present situation, his background and his fate. It is also through Aristomenes that we see the social implications of change in appearance in cultures and societies which placed great store by physical appearance and how these perceived changes impact on social relationships. Since such concerns are transmitted through appearance and its perception, then two parties are necessary to activate them. It is as a unit that the two men cooperate in inaugurating concerns in the novel which bear upon truth and credulity (of which perception is a determining factor) and the social importance of dress in the *Metamorphoses*. Apuleius cleverly uses a couple of friends to engage the reader in this story of the implications of appearance and change of appearance for interpersonal relationships.

Aristomenes tells Socrates that his children have been assigned a new legal guardian and his wife has been ordered to remarry in order to restore peace to the family (1.6). This last piece of information helps us to establish Socrates as a man, if not of considerable social standing, then of enough to merit the intervention of the *iuridicus provincialis* on behalf of his wife and children during his absence, thereby throwing into relief his new appearance before his friend. We are also told that Socrates is an old friend (*contubernalem*, 1.6) of Aristomenes, so we know that they are on an equal social footing. This information is important for establishing the degree of moral dissolution of which the rags in which Socrates is clad are an embodiment.

Aristomenes' doubling up of exclamations at 1.6 – '*Quid istud? Quae facies? Quod flagitium?*' – shows the surprise he evinces at the degree of degeneration into which his friend has slipped. Emphasis is placed on Socrates' lowliness at a physical level, as expressive of his new status: '*humi sedebat*'. The juxtaposition of *facies* with *flagitium* tells us much about the connection

made by Aristomenes, appearance at both the bodily and sartorial level is important. As reinforcement of such connections, the social implications behind Aristomenes' remark at 1.7 are notable: *'Effeci sequatur et simul unam e duabus laciniis meis exuo eumque propere vestio dicam an contego, et illico lavacro trado'*. This remark functions less as an indication of Aristomenes' own dress than it does of his attitude, appearing to imply that only a man of standing can be properly clothed (*vestio*), whereas mere covering (*contego*) is adequate for those of a lesser degree of dignity and worthy of less regard. Indeed, Aristomenes' choice of the word *contego* in this context adequately conveys the degree of Socrates' loss of humanity, for only a human being, a *homo* – as opposed to an animal - can actually be clothed.

Cognate forms of the verb *contego* frequently occur in the novel in contexts of covering as an aspect of disguise, where a character intends to conceal his identity and commit evil.<sup>280</sup> In Socrates' case, this association of covering with evil intentions is somewhat diluted as the evil (adultery) has been done, although the source of this evil still resides in his soul. Awareness of the negative connotations of covering in certain social contexts - in this case, humiliation and public nudity - may determine Aristomenes' desire that his friend should be kept out of sight, for fear of the shame it may bring upon them both. Under the circumstances, however, even disguise is impossible. Socrates' body, the garment of his soul, permeates everything and determines the interpersonal space between Socrates and Aristomenes. Aristomenes' outburst in front of his friend's appearance is testimony to his perception of a breach in their friendship. Civic and social dress and attendant practices such as dressing have become assimilated to disguise insofar as they have functioned, thus far, to disguise the wearer's true nature. Socrates' prior inability to surmount his impulses has been allegorised, by his rags, as servility.

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<sup>280</sup> For some examples which show this connection most clearly, see 4.14, where covering facilitates robbery: *pelle illa contectus ursae subiret effigiem*; 8.10, where it is used to facilitate the violation of a woman's fidelity: *quam probe veste contectus omnique comite viduatus prima vigilia tacitus fores meas acceda*; 9.18, where it serves to facilitate adultery: *quippe cum uespera solus fide tenebrarum contectus atque absconditus introrepere et intra momentum temporis remeare posset*.

Aristomenes' presence and reaction provide the reader with the critical yardstick by which to measure this imagery.

If the language of covering often occurs in the novel in contexts of deceit and dissimulation or functions to convey the ability to maintain a position or a persona, then Socrates' gradual loss of clothing not only reflects his gradual reduction in status, but his gradual inability to maintain that persona. Assuming that Socrates was dressed appropriately for a business-journey, the *laciniae* which the robbers gave him were a rather one-sided exchange, as his previous clothing had been either removed by force by them or were left in bad condition after the attack.<sup>281</sup> Expressive of Socrates' diminished status, they foreshadow the further humiliation he shall undergo. These *laciniae*, which gave him some modesty, he handed over to Meroe. This is an act of exchange, as is evident in the commercial language which colours the transaction (1.7): *ab unico congressu annosam ac pestilentem coniunctionem **contra**ho; et ipsas etiam lacinias quas boni latroni contegendo mihi **concesserant** in eam contuli*. This exchange serves as a sign of his slavish bondage to her, as well as payment for sex, and is likewise an unequal exchange. Socrates the merchant, who left his family to go on business for such little gain, quite effortlessly passes into the possession of another member of the mercantile class, an inn-keeper and a woman, symbolised merely by his handing his clothes over to her.<sup>282</sup> Clothing is actually an essential part of this commercial imagery, both in terms of language and metaphor. Clothes, being so close to the body and an extension of it, are the physical embodiment of his relationship with Meroe. Socrates has gone from adequately clad, to inadequately clad but with a modicum of modesty, to near

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<sup>281</sup> Robbers in the ancient novel are traditionally depicted dealing in stolen clothing. The robbers in Book 4 return from one of their trips with precious garments. One cannot rule out the possibility that these may have been the same robbers that set upon Socrates. For examples in previous novels and romances see the attempt to sell the stolen cloak in the *Satyricon* (12-15), and the exploits of the robbers in *Chaireas and Callirhoe* (see especially 1.11). There are many examples of robbery in the Greek romances.

<sup>282</sup> Leinweber (1994), who also looks at the role of clothing in the episode, convincingly equates the witches in the *Metamorphoses*, of which Meroe is a specimen, with Lamiae as they "represent the dark underside of popular culture" (81-82), of which inn-keepers are a sample.

naked. By handing over to Meroe the garments which the robbers had left him as mere tegument he has also handed over his ability to control his own clothing and dressing, the symbolic act by which human beings can effect changes of clothing to suit their own inclinations and needs and more importantly, their own pretensions, whether dictated by mood and whim, or social circumstances. This ability to control our own persona, our public face, is one of the distinguishing marks of humanity, as both human in contrast with animal, and human in terms of civic dignity.<sup>283</sup> Just as, in the past, slaves often relied on the generosity of their master or mistress for their clothing, so Socrates now depends on his “good wife” (*bona uxor*) for his. The longer he stays enslaved to Meroe, one of the embodiments in the novel of false values and perceptions, the tatter his cloak will become, to the point where it crumbles into dust, a reflection of the fragility of Socrates’ moral state (his fractured soul), and physical dependence and degradation.

The affection between the two men is made evident by Aristomenes’ use of the words *contubernalem* and *necessarium*. This coequality makes approaching Socrates in his present state all the more difficult for Aristomenes, a point reinforced by his reticence to approach Socrates, reflected strongly in the correlative doubling of *quamquam* and *tamen* (1.6): ‘*Ecce Socraten contubernalem meum conspicio...Hunc talem, **quamquam** necessarium et summe cognitum, **tamen dubia mente propius accessi.***’ Aristomenes, like Socrates a travelling salesman and purveyor, is keenly aware of the potential of outer appearances as a key not only to social advancement but also to social, hence, by connotation, moral character. Upon first sight of Socrates, Aristomenes erects a social barrier predicated upon apparent moral meanness.<sup>284</sup> He is acutely aware of the moral degeneration into which his

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<sup>283</sup> Leinweber (1994) makes some pertinent remarks about this aspect of dress (81): “Clothes conceal man’s base physical body, emphasising instead his pretensions to civilisation.”

<sup>284</sup> Physical degradation in the *Metamorphoses* is reflective of moral degradation, in spite of Apuleius claims’ about the necessity to overlook a friend’s physical ugliness in the passage where he discusses the nature of friendship in the *DPD* (2.22): *Bonos omnes oportet inter se amicos esse, etsi sunt minus noti, et potestate ipsa, qua mores eorum sectaeque conveniunt, amici sunt habendi; paria quippe a similibus non abhorrent. Unde inter solos bonos fidem amicitiae esse constat. Sapientia amatorem boni adolescentem facit, sed eum qui probitate*

friend, whose children merit the attentions of the *iuridicus provincialis*, has slipped, and who is not even morally intact enough to be adequately clothed, not to mention the degeneration into which he, Aristomenes, could be personally drawn by association with Socrates (1.6: *At tu hic larvale simulacrum cum summo dedecore nostro viseris*). He takes his friend to the baths and personally administers servile works to him. The anaphora of the first person verb in final position does more than produce a patterned sonorous effect. It serves to reflect the effort made by Aristomenes to restore his friend to his social circle: *'et illico lavacro trado, quod unctui, quod tersui, ipse praeministro...lassus ipse'*. Aristomenes' rhetorically structured remarks, therefore, prove that he is aware of how he may be judged by Socrates' semi-nudity at that point. Yet, by his choice of word, *praeministro*, Aristomenes also shows himself to be one who is conscious of his role (rendered pathetic in this case) as friend to Socrates.<sup>285</sup>

This in turn draws the reader to reflect on Aristomenes' view of himself as being instrumental (albeit unsuccessfully) in Socrates' social reintegration. Given the cultural value attached to the social obligations of friendship it seems likely that Aristomenes is aware that his ability to confer even a basic service in accordance with the constraints of friendship on his friend is, on this occasion, limited. This insistence on Aristomenes' services to Socrates shows us the close bond of friendship between the two men; yet at this point, Aristomenes is in a position of power over his former equal. By the change in

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*ingenii sit ad artes bonas promptior. Nec deformitas corporis talem abigere poterit appetitum; nam cum ipsa anima conplacita est, homo totus adamatur.* His reasons for making the body and soul categorically independent of each other in this passage of the *DPD* should not undermine the validity of any posited close intermingling relationship between the two, as the circumstances which give rise to using these separate paradigms and the audience they serve, are different. Apuleius seems to manipulate the equation of physical appearance with moral character for the purposes and meaning of the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>285</sup> Molt (1938) 57-58 *ad loc.*: "*ei comparo, priusquam rogavit*"; Scobie (1975) 94 *ad loc.*: "render a service unasked". Both Molt and Scobie point to the fact that *praeministrare* does not have this meaning prior to the time of Apuleius and that it occurs, in this sense, only here and in Aulus Gellius (1.11.10; 10.3.19). Keulen (2007), *ad loc.*, quoting Callebat, stresses the colloquial nature of the word. On ancient thought on the offices of friendship which have relevance to the scene under discussion, see Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, 2.4-5.

the personal relationship between the two men and by Aristomenes' sudden realisation of his friend's true character, this essentially servile function places Aristomenes in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis his relationship with Socrates. Cicero speaks of the implications of such revelations of a friend's true nature in his treatise on friendship (*De Amicitia*, 21): *Erumpunt saepe vitia amicorum quum in ipsos amicos, tum in alienos; quorum tamen **ad amicos redundet infamia***. Socrates' vices have broken through his persona (*De Amicitia*, 21; *Erumpunt saepe vitia*), and Socrates has become severed from all previous socially sanctioned ties. Socrates' rags, then, are emblematic, from this perspective, of the fragility of the bond that exists at the heart of socially constructed human relationships.<sup>286</sup> He is seemingly not able to perform basic bodily functions on himself or by himself, so disabled is he by his own shame and squalor and by Meroe's immobilising power over him. Aristomenes' emphasis on the fact that he gave Socrates half of the clothing that he was wearing at the time (1.7: *unam e duabus laciniis meis*) alerts us to his awareness of the inadequacy not only of his own clothing at that moment, but also of a basic vestimentary propriety even for those of a lower class; by giving Socrates one of his garments, Aristomenes is trying to reintegrate his friend into their social circle.

Aristomenes' washing of the filth off Socrates both looks forward to and contrasts strongly with the ritual purification of Lucius at the end of the novel (11.23). Lucius, on that occasion, will be a sign of the correct values of service, although it is Lucius who undergoes purification. Servility has been re-inscribed right at the end of the novel into the parameters of true freedom, where perverted values have been replaced with religious values, expressed by the most human, yet servile, of activities - washing. The antithesis of Socrates the

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<sup>286</sup> Sartorial language could even inform the expression of the rituals of interpersonal relationships. For example, Cicero evokes Cato as saying that friendships, where they must be ceased, should rather be severed by unstitching rather than suddenly rent (*De Amicitia*, 21): *Tales igitur amicitiae sunt remissione usus eluendae et, ut, Catonem dicere audivi, dissuendae magis, quam discindendae.*

philosopher versus Apuleius' Socrates is overthrown to allow a true disciple of Socrates to assert his new status: Lucius.<sup>287</sup>

The place of Socrates' rags in the story of his moral undoing helps to show the process of stripping away layers to reveal what lies beneath. The moral function of clothing, whereby it constructs and builds up a social and civic body (which in turn symbolises the dignity of the city-state), is undone. Rags are, therefore, the dissolution of the dress of the citizen. This episode points as much to a social and civic inversion as it does to an ethical or literary one.

### **The Image of the *Centunculus* in the *Metamorphoses***

One of the words used to describe Socrates' ragged garment is *centunculus*. This garment in particular becomes symbolic in the *Metamorphoses* of a specific type of character embodying servility. Other scholars who have examined Socrates with respect to his ragged appearance in the novel concentrate on the determination of his character as largely comic. This interpretation is based on the associations of the *centunculus* with the mime, or comedic actor,<sup>288</sup> made by Apuleius himself in the *Apologia*.<sup>289</sup> Other interpretations of the garment consider it to be reminiscent of tragedy, but with undertones of satire and comedy or of insincerity.<sup>290</sup> This generically based focus on the *centunculus* has led to a bias in the reading of the novel as a whole; yet it is possible to discern a deeper, psychological meaning inherent in the notion of raggedness behind the word *centunculus*, as well as the word *pannuli*, which conveys the same meaning and occurs in similar contexts as the *centunculus* in the novel. It is undeniable that Socrates can be deemed a

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<sup>287</sup> Lucius' respect for Socrates the philosopher is made explicit in his indignant outburst at the sentiment of injustice stirred up in him by the pantomime of the Judgement of Paris (10.33). Likewise the two specimens of unjust conviction which figure in the pantomime are also used by Socrates in Plato's *Apology* (41b).

<sup>288</sup> Winkler (1985) 126, 163; May (2006), 133, does point out the ambiguity inherent in Socrates' depiction, as rags are traditionally associated with tragedy, but remarks that for all his "tragic posturing, Socrates wears the outfit of a *mimus*."

<sup>289</sup> Apuleius, *Apologia*, 13.7. In this passage, garments are strictly associated with genres: *tragoedi syrmate, histrionis crocota, [orgia] mimi centunculo*.

<sup>290</sup> Keulen (2003) 118-120; (2007) 172.

ridiculous or comic figure, because of the connotations of mime behind the *centunculus*, or even a tragic figure because he is in rags; nevertheless, this genre-based reading, as well as being restrictive, only has value in a rather more general way, as I believe that it is possible to look beyond the genre of comedy to the ethical import of the *centunculus*, and to establish in what way Socrates evokes tragedy, or rather, as I prefer to see it, the surreal. This deeper probing into the connotations of the *centunculus* becomes doubly relevant when Aristomenes sees himself obliged to back-track on his original reading of Socrates' appearance and emotional speech as mere theatrics (1.8): '*Oro te' inquam 'aulaeum tragicum demoveto et siparium scaenicum complicato et cedo verbis communibus.'*'<sup>291</sup> By this remark, Socrates' rags are located in Aristomenes' mind, at that point, with performance based on a rather grandiose story-line or representation. Yet by the unexpected turn of events, this remark is the first instance in the novel of theatrical language serving as a spring board into considerations of a deeper nature pertaining to appearances and dress. What may at first appear to be a tragi-comic garment becomes, by its reiteration in more tragic and surreal contexts in the novel, an indicator of something occurring at a deeper level. Through Socrates' own story, we can apprehend the gradual process of stripping which Apuleius' (anti-)philosophic figure has endured at the hands of others, all instrumental in paring him down to his basic self. Socrates has degenerated from a properly clothed member of the citizen body, to a basically clad victim of robber enterprise, to a semi-naked figure, an embodiment of his loss of civic status that also reflects his own civic fragmentation and the chaos in his own soul.

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<sup>291</sup> Indeed, Aristomenes may have made this comparison with the theatre upon seeing the *centunculus*. However, a different reading of the *centunculus* is also suggested in Seneca's letter to Lucilius, in which he tells Lucilius, just before developing the Socratic trope of judging a man in the same way as we would a horse, to look beyond the surfaces (*Epistles*, 80, 7-8): *Saepius hoc exemplo mihi utendum est, nec enim ullo efficacius exprimitur hic humanae vitae mimus, qui nobis partes, quas male agamus, adsignat. Ille, qui in scaena latus incedit ...Servus est, quinque modios accipit et quinque denarios; ille qui superbus atque inpotens et fiducia virium tumidus ... Diurnum accipit, in centunculo dormit.* Seneca associates the *centunculus* with the actor as the man in his true and natural state: a mere slave. Seneca's garment of social slavery becomes in the *Metamorphoses* the garment of social and moral slavery.

As corroboration of this particular value of the *centunculus*, we can look ahead in the novel to Book 9. There the same garment appears on a *larva*, a ghost (also referred to as an *umbra*, 9.29), conjured up by yet another witch to exact revenge on a stubborn, disobedient husband. The aspect of the ghost is similar to that of Socrates, sitting outside the baths:

Socrates (1.6-7)

*larva/umbra* (9.30)

*ad miseram maciem deformatus*

*miraque tristitie deformatis*

*(semiamictus) sutili centunculo*

*flebili centunculo semiamicta*

*paene alius lurore*

*lurore buxco macieque foedata*

*(nudis et intectis pedibus)*

*sordium enormem illuuiem*

*comae semicanae sordentes inspersu  
cineris*

*sutili centunculo faciem suam*

*iam dudum punicantem prae pudore*

***obtexit***

*(comae) pleramque eius anteventulae  
contegebant faciem*

The most obvious and important shared qualities are the change in aspect (*deformatus/deformatis*), the pallor (*luror*), their thinness (*macies*), the state of

being only half-clad (*semiamictus/semiamicta*), and in tatters (*sutili/flebili centunculo*), and the covering of the face out of shame (*sutili centunculo faciem suam iam dudum punicantem prae pudore obtexit/comae...anteventulae contegebant faciem*). Although there is no explicit indication in the text that Socrates is unshod, it is not far-fetched to assume that he is so by implication.<sup>292</sup> The female ghost is specified as a *mulier reatu*, and as having died by violent means. The legal terminology, the soiled hair, and the *sordes* – the soiled garment worn by defendants in a criminal prosecution - contextualise her appearance as indicative in some way of culpability and her present situation (as a ghost) as liminal, a metaphorical extension of the guilty verdict of a capital charge which inflicted the punishment of exile.<sup>293</sup> The woman whose ghost appears may even have been put to death.

However, there is one important difference. Socrates is depicted as blushing out of shame; the ghost, however, is deathly pale. This difference serves to remind us that Socrates is figuratively dead, whereas the ghost is properly dead. And yet, just like the ghost who has been removed, albeit temporarily, from her natural abode, Socrates is in a liminal state, not yet dead, but no longer an integrated member of society, a fact reflected in his rags which keep him on the confines of society as one who is infected, as if they were decaying flesh. In this case, the disease is moral.

A further example of the *centunculus* as the dress of psychological schism and moral servility arises in Book 9 where Lucius, still in asinine form, is taken to work at a mill. It is significant that Lucius the donkey is set to work in the traditional way, with his face blinkered (*velata facie*), as this sharpens both the visual and psychological impact that the sight of the slaves has when the blind-fold has finally been removed. It is through the eyes that perceptions are made. Physical veiling in this case is a metaphor for psychological and moral blindness to the truth. Lucius is now faced with the truth about abject slavery.

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<sup>292</sup> The historical Socrates is often described as going without shoes. See for examples of this Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (1, 6) and Aristophanes' *Clouds* (362).

<sup>293</sup> On the use of the *sordes* in Roman court cases, and the related question of exile, see Heskell (2001) 141-142, 145.

The utter moral and physical abjection of these wretched people is borne out in the exterior signs of their slavery on their bodies.

There are many similarities between the slaves' outer aspect and Socrates' to testify to this. The constant is the double aspect of nakedness and transparency:

Slaves (9.12)

Socrates (1.6,7)

*scissili centunculo*

*scissili palliastro*

*sutili centunculo*

*(magis inumbrati quam obtecti)*

*(semiamictus)*

*(nonnulli exigui tegili) tantum modo*

*ab umbilico **pube** tenus*

***pubem** iniecti*

*cetera corporis renudaret*

*(cuncti tamen **sic tunicati ut essent***

*(semiamictus)*

*per pannulos **manifesti**)*

*tum **lurore** deformes*

*paene alius **lurore** ad*

*miseram maciem deformatus*

*farinulenta cinere **sordide** candidati*

***sordium***

This exaggerated depiction of abject and degrading servitude can also figure as a metaphor for slavery at more than just a social and civic level. Other slaves in the novel are not depicted in such a degraded manner.<sup>294</sup> The very enclosed and private space in which the slaves are restrained may be extended into a metaphor for the inherent moral reality of slavery. Even at the linguistic level their status as slaves is pre-eminent. The diminutive, *homunculi*, which is found nowhere else in Apuleius, is not only an expression of the pity which Lucius clearly feels for these people but also reflects the reduced social and civic status of the slaves. Again, terms redolent of a reduced, incomplete or liminal state occur in the contexts of tattered clothing to reinforce the image of pathos and the concept of disintegration or incompleteness, the result in this case of being stripped of one's human dignity. This state, however, can also be self-inflicted at a moral and psychological level, as it was in the case of Socrates. The state of the slaves in half-dress is not expressed in as clearly linguistic terms as is that of Socrates and the ghost by the use of the adjective *semiamictus/semiamicta*, but is rather evoked by the image of their bruised and broken bodies being shaded (*inumbriati*) rather than covered (*quam obtecti*) by their rags. As with Socrates, their metaphorical counterpart, their pubic region is visible. As a marker of civic dress, the tunic stresses their status as men who perform servile work; the adjective *tunicati* on this occasion is ironic, serving to express the inadequacy of their undergarment, the *tunica* (likened to rags: *pannulos*), to function as such. Dress again seems to produce, in the *Metamorphoses*, the opposite effect of what it is meant to do – cover up and conceal. Transparency, moral as well as physical, is the metaphorical adjunct to the presence of rags in this episode.

This compact image of the mill-slaves recalls the surreal manner in which Socrates appears in the novel. Whilst the image of the mill-slaves is not surreal in itself, being a rather more realistic representation (that is, realistic within the confines of the narrative) of an everyday reality, slavery, the private setting miniaturises the representation in such a way as to inflect it with an aura of something more than real, and most definitely undesirable. The insistence on

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<sup>294</sup> See, for example, Photis' colourful domestic costume in a private setting (2.7) and the waiting staff (*pueri calamistrati pulchre indusiati*, 2.19) at Byrrhaena's banquet, although the latter are most likely decorously decked for their very *public* role as waiting staff.

the diminished moral status of the slaves further inflects their representation in the light of previous illustrations of slavery as a moral category, of which Socrates is the foremost example, and the associated moral connotations of reduction of status. It is as if by this descriptive manner an element of reality has been momentarily suspended, held up for scrutiny and judgment. The surreal functions to highlight the absurdity of the real and rams home inherent but hidden truths.

For his part, Lucius seems to be forcefully struck by the outward signs of slavery alone.<sup>295</sup> Lucius presently lacks awareness that his asinine form is as much an outward sign of slavery as are these slaves' tatters and bruises, and that his own present status as chattel and pack animal is a form of self-inflicted slavery, in contrast to the situation of these slaves, who have been stripped of their human dignity by their legal master.<sup>296</sup> The hermeneutical value of the surreal representation of the mill-slaves for a correct interpretation of rags as a metaphor for moral servility cannot be denied.

In 9.30 the word *centunculus* functions to close the gap between the dead and the living, embodying the liminal state of the ghost suspended between life and death; Socrates too is suspended between life and death, being alive physically, but dead morally and in his spirit. In 9.12 *centunculus* is the equivalent of the slaves' *pannuli*, sitting torn on their bruised backs. It is as

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<sup>295</sup> The terms in which the demoralising truth about slavery hits Lucius for the first time when the slaves are revealed to him (9.12) – *Dii boni, quales illic homunculi* – recall the effect of the revelation of the truth of the slain corpses at his trial (3.9): *Dii boni, quae facies rei!*

<sup>296</sup> This moral message is no less than what Seneca says in his forty-seventh epistle to Lucilius, instigating an inquiry into the true meaning of servitude, by analysing common attitudes towards slaves as a social group (and, therefore, a stigma), reminding us that we are all slaves to one passion or another, if not to ourselves, regardless of our social status. Subjection to a human master is deemed to be no more humiliating or degrading than the tyranny of the passions when we have not learned to keep them in check. The priest who was present at Lucius' anamorphosis, or re-transformation back into human form, addresses him in quite similar terms just moments after the transformation takes place (11. 15): *'nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles delapsus voluptates, curiositatis improsperae sinistrum praemium reportasti'*.

reflective in both episodes of the true nature of the wearer as slaves, be it physically or morally. Rather than dismissing this acquired meaning of *centunculus* in the novel as the privilege of successive readings, an attitude which says more about the modern reader distanced from the reading experience of the past, we can (cautiously) claim that it did not escape the sensitive ancient (and modern) reader upon first confrontation.

### Keulen's Reading of the Socrates Episode

*Centunculus* is used by Apuleius in his *Apologia*, a self-defence against accusations of witch-craft, to refer to the costume of the mime.<sup>297</sup> This most certainly is one meaning of the word; however, as has been said, reading *centunculus* in the same way in the *Metamorphoses* has led certain scholars to ascribe a satirical or parodic purpose to the novel in a manner which underplays the value of any sincere philosophical content in the book. Wytse Keulen,<sup>298</sup> for instance, leans towards the theatrical connotation behind *centunculus*, thereby interpreting Socrates as programmatic of a satiric or parodic Lucius. This is a common reading of the scene and the novel as a whole. Basing his interpretation of Socrates as foreshadowing Lucius on two literary traditions – the Socratic-like figures who appear in Old Comedy and the Socratic-Cynic tradition, and the contemporary satire of Plutarch and Lucian – he considers that both characters, Lucius and Socrates, are “literary projections” (107) of Apuleius himself as the author of a “comic autobiographical fiction” (107). Socrates’ pallor and emaciation merely serve to represent his “evasive, slippery nature” (108) and for this reason cannot be read at face value. Socrates’ covering of his head and consequent baring of his lower body, he reads as, among other things, iconic of “cynic self-exposure”<sup>299</sup> (114) having a close parallel in the exhibitionism of Cynic philosophers like Diogenes and Crates.<sup>300</sup> This self-exposure he claims to have been unavoidable

<sup>297</sup> Apuleius, *Apologia*, 13.19: *mimi centunculo*.

<sup>298</sup> Keulen (2003), 107-135.

<sup>299</sup> Previously (110) Keulen spoke of Socrates’ “exhibitionistic gesture” as an “icon of satirical self-exposure, an emblem of the novel.”

<sup>300</sup> Covering the head out of consideration for one’s dignity is one of the familiar gestures shared by both Plato’s and Apuleius’ Socrates which other scholars have remarked on. Plato’s Socrates covers his head in the *Phaedrus* (237A), just prior to embarking upon his first speech into the nature of *eros*, and in the *Phaedo* (118a). Keulen (2003) 112-113, takes

due to the rough state of the cloak, yet Keulen admits that it is not clear whether the exhibitionism was intentional or not (114).

Keulen also draws on the imagery of sewing and rags as a comic symbol of tragedy.<sup>301</sup> Socrates' ragged costume, he claims, involves a comic representation of tragic behaviour, a device going back to Aristophanes. In the *Frogs*, Aristophanes has Aeschylus call Euripides a "creator of beggars and a stitcher-together of rags" (*Frogs*, 842). Euripides often used the beggars' disguise with rags for several of his characters, for example Telephus, and he was ridiculed for this by Aristophanes. Keulen claims that the ghost in Book 9 contains similar Aristophanic imagery, *flebili centunculo semiamicta*, which recalls the expression *esthet' eleinei* from the *Acharnians* (413), a reference to tragedy (in apposition to *rhakia*, rags).<sup>302</sup> This garb is worn by Euripides, which implies that the dramatist's characters reflect their creator's habits, in this case Euripides' wearing of rags and purposeful neglect of exercise. As well as evoking the costume of the mime, *centunculus*, he reminds us, is connected by derivation to the word *cento* which occurs in the expression *centones sarcire*, a metaphor for deceiving someone, taken from Plautus' play, *Epidicus*.<sup>303</sup> Pushing his argument to its etymological limits, Keulen claims that Apuleius "elaborates on the notions of fabrication and theatricality by using adjectives that suggest that the rags have been torn intentionally (*scissili*) and stitched together (*sutili*) by some *sutor*" (119). Drawing on the argument that the

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this gesture of the Apuleian character to refer rather to the Aristophanic Socrates in the *Clouds* (728), wherein Socrates accepts Strepsiades' fraudulent concoction of a Thessalian witch who can draw down the moon, thereby attributing a satiric function to the character of the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>301</sup> Keulen (2003) 118-120; (2007) 161.

<sup>302</sup> May (2006) 198-199, challenges Keulen's reading of Apuleius' allusion to Aristophanes on the grounds that Menander was the preferred playwright of the Second Sophistic, and not Aristophanes, and that knowledge of the *Clouds*, especially of Socrates as he is depicted therein, could have been merely anecdotal, accessed through the use of *compendia* rather than through close reading of the actual text.

<sup>303</sup> Plautus, *Epidicus*, 429-430.

adjectival suffix *-tilis* is derived from the *nomen agentis*,<sup>304</sup> he claims that *sutilis* means, quite literally, “having a *sutor*”, “resulting from a patcher”.

Finally, Keulen claims that Socrates’ demeanour is the result of self-fabrication. Therefore, the actor in the *anteludia* at the end of the novel, just prior to Lucius’ retransformation into human form, merely echoes the programmatic function of Apuleius’ Socrates in accordance with Keulen’s view that the attributes of philosophy in the *Metamorphoses* become the stage props of a religious charade.<sup>305</sup>

In refutation of these points concerning Socrates’ dress, I would argue that with the appearance of the *larva* in Book 9 the *centunculus* undergoes a kind of sublimation. It is lifted out of the world of reality and into the surreal. This fact corroborates the force of rags as an element of the surreal in the novel and not as an agent (and especially not of a metaliterary type) of parody. The surreal aspect, in turn, reiterates the function of clothing in its revelatory capacity, ironically uncovering the truth. Linked to this is the use to which certain notions are put in the novel: deceit in the *Metamorphoses* is often undone. It ultimately comes apart like a badly constructed garment. Badly sewn together shreds of fabric allow glimpses into personal truth; in Socrates’ case, it is the truth of Socrates’ nature as a dissembler. Furthermore, it could be objected that the adjective *sutilis* merely intensifies the diminutive suffix in *centunculus*. It is after all, only in the nature of a *centunculus*, a shred of a *cento* (patchwork), to be *sutilis* (sewn together).

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<sup>304</sup> Keulen, (2003) 119 (quoting Leumann 1917, 145). He refers the reader to *LHS* (1977, 1.348) for a more recent discussion. Keulen contrasts this adjectival form with the past participle passive used with noun. Examples of the latter usage can be found in Juvenal’s *Satires*, 3.148: *scissa lacerna*, and in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, 12. 609: *scissa veste*. The torn dress in the *Aeneid* can be seen to be an example of clothing torn by the wearer, especially given the context of mourning in the passage.

<sup>305</sup> Keulen (2003) 130: “Lucius’ Milesian narrative turns out to be the public confession of a professional superstitious charlatan with a shaven head who narrates his tragic misfortunes and ensuring salvation by a divinity.”

Nor can Socrates' plea for mercy be deemed mere play-acting. His deep blush testifies to the truth.<sup>306</sup> Seneca the Younger, in his eleventh epistle, is enlightening on the power of involuntary pathological reactions to convey the truth. Even the most skilled actor, he tells us, cannot reproduce a blush (*Epistles*, 11):

Artifices scaenici, qui imitantur affectus, qui metum et trepidationem exprimunt, qui tristitiam repraesentant, hoc indicio imitantur verecundiam: deiciunt enim vultum, verba summittunt, figunt in terram oculos et deprimunt. ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt nec prohibetur hic nec adducitur; nihil adversus haec sapientia promittit, nihil proficit : sui iuris sunt; iniussa veniunt, iniussa discedunt.

Pallor, too, such as that of the ghost, can have a physiognomic function, expressive of the state of a man's soul, especially where it is a permanent feature of his physique, as it now appears to be for Socrates, and not an involuntary reaction.<sup>307</sup>

Keulen's view of the rags' function as programmatic of the fabrication of a satiric persona runs counter to the reading advocated in this chapter which sees them as emblematic of the dissolution of persona. I maintain that the word *centunculus* derives critical value from the context in which it occurs. In the *Metamorphoses* rags are actually a mere covering rather than a costume, an extension of the body itself and an embodiment of Socrates' nature, which he may have wanted to conceal from others when he was an integrated member of his social and economic class. By the impulses Socrates was trying to shield from his peers, he invokes the type Apuleius seems to deplore in the *Apologia*, that is, the man who fails to check himself after a first fall. If he persists in sin, he becomes shameless, wearing his shame as he does a well-worn, much used garment (*Apologia*, 3): *Pudor enim, veluti vestis, quanto*

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<sup>306</sup> See also on this Lateiner (1998) 173, 187, who has much to say that is pertinent to my argument. Although he does not discuss the encounter between Aristomenes and Socrates in his article, his general statements on blushing corroborate the argument that Socrates' rags, in Apuleius' novel, reveal the truth of his nature.

<sup>307</sup> Tertullian on Cleanthes (*de Anima*, 5), is enlightening on what these involuntary pathological reactions tell us about the nature of a person: (*Vult Cleanthes*) *porro et animam compati corpori, cui laeso ictibus, vulneribus, ulceribus condolescit, et corpus animae, cui adflictae cura, angore, amore coaegrescit per detrimentum scilicet vigoris, cuius pudorem et pavorem rubore atque pallore testetur.*

*obsoletior est, tanto incuriosius habetur.*<sup>308</sup> We have no way of knowing if this was Socrates' first fall or not, but his soul (*larva*, the basis of Socrates as a *larvale simulacrum*, 1.6) appears to have been in a state which preconditioned the circumstances of his fall, a state which is the result of poor cultivation of the soul. Socrates' rags are figurative of his lack of *pudor*. Socrates then is no descendent of the philosopher who claims amongst his most memorable tenets a grasp of the oracle "Know Thyself." Apuleius' Socrates was ignorant of his own nature, which is his soul.

### Socrates as anti-Odysseus

For the educated ancient reader, the mere mention of the name Socrates also evoked images of Odysseus. The origin of this analogising of the philosophical character can be traced back to Plato's own work. In the *Symposium*, Alcibiades likens Socrates to the Homeric hero, slightly misquoting the text.<sup>309</sup> The Socrates of Apuleius' novel, too, shares some features with the hero of Homer's epic. Many scholars have teased out the Odyssean resonances

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<sup>308</sup> Expressions like this, confirming the metaphorical value of expressions making a close connection between the body and the soul, evoke what Cebes says in the *Phaedo* (87d-88b), where he speaks of the relation of the soul with the body as a weaver who wears out many cloaks. The point made in the Socratic dialogue is of course different and seeks to make a point concerning the nature of the relationship of the body (mortal) to the soul (immortal). Its relevance for the passage from Apuleius' *Apologia* resides in the kind of imagery Apuleius uses – sartorial – to make a point about moral qualities. Hunink (1997, II), 18 cites Hildebrand's reference to Plautus' *Mostellaria* to support his argument that the comparison is not new (162-3): *modestiam ... detexit ... tectus qua fui*. Apuleius' phrase lacks, however, the comic aspect which marks the Plautine passage.

<sup>309</sup> Hunter (2008) 854, with references: Montiglio (2000) and LévyStone (2005); Plato, *Symposium*, 220C: *οἶον δ' αὖ τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ*; Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.242: *ἀλλ' οἶον τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ*. Interestingly, in both passages, attention is being drawn to the appearance and self-discipline of the man in question. In the *Odyssey*, it is the readiness with which Odysseus beat his body and donned tatters so as to deceive the enemy by appearing to them under the guise of a slave and then a beggar. In the *Symposium*, it is the asceticism by which Socrates was able to withstand the rigours of the climate and the demands of his body. Neither of these qualities adheres to the anti-hero of Apuleius' novel: Socrates' rags are not a costume (rather, the antithesis), nor is his minimalism in dress, on this occasion, the result of inurement to demands exerted on him from inside or outside his body, a fact attested to by his emaciation.

behind the characterisation of Apuleius' character: Socrates' ragged dress recalls the beggarly state to which Odysseus is reduced at the intervention of Athena for the purposes of disguise;<sup>310</sup> both characters are difficult to recognise at first sight;<sup>311</sup> both are believed to be dead in their homelands, a circumstance which has dire consequences for their wives,<sup>312</sup> and both cover their heads out of shame when recalling their fate.<sup>313</sup> Socrates indeed recognises himself as the victim of Fortune's many twists and turns (1.6: *Aristomene, inquit, ne tu fortunarum lubricas ambages et instabiles incursiones et reciprocas vicissitudines ignoras*) thereby indirectly aligning himself (knowingly or not) with Odysseus, the man of many turns, *polytropos*, an epithet which refers as much to his character as to his wanderings. Yet the idea behind any Homeric colouring to the character of the novel can really only refer to Socrates' own perception of his situation, not to his own character, nor is there any indication in the text that he perceived himself to be, at that specific moment, like the Homeric hero. The Apuleian character's wandering is due to a source of a different nature, namely, deviation, a going off course to see a gladiatorial show, which is merely the

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<sup>310</sup>Homer, *Odyssey*, 13.429-438, and see James (1987) 48. But see the reference to Book 4 of the *Odyssey* above (4.242) where Odysseus beats his body and puts himself in rags.

<sup>311</sup>Hunter (2008) 854.

<sup>312</sup>James (1987) 48; Münstermann (1995) 9-11; Hunter (2008) 854.

<sup>313</sup>Hunter (2008) 854. Hunter sees a further Odyssean reminiscence behind Socrates' sighs, specifically his drawing "a pained sob from the depths of his heart" (*cum ille imo de pectore cruciabilem suspirium ducens*, 1.7) referring to the expression as recalling Odysseus in the *Odyssey* 8.535, 540 and 9.13. Keulen (2007) 172 and Graverini (2007) 152 compare this instance of covering the face through shame to the episode in the *Phaedrus* (237a) where Socrates covers his head before he begins his first speech on *eros*. Graverini (2007) 152 also compares Socrates' behaviour in this instance with that of Odysseus when he covers his head and face to conceal his tears and shame from the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey* (8.83-85), but Odysseus' cloak in this passage of the poem is intact and purple. Both scholars fail to recognise behind the Socrates of Apuleius the Hector of Virgil, who is also of dishevelled appearance and who also draws a groaning sigh from the depths of his heart (*Aeneid*, 2.288): *sed graviter gemitus imo de pectore ducens*. The similarity between both characters is that they are dead and temporarily suspended in life. Aeneas also expresses the same disbelief and surprise before the state of Hector as does Aristomenes when face to face with his friend.

result of his uncontrolled lower preoccupations, not divine intervention or a quest for knowledge.

More importantly, scholars have failed to approach Socrates' appearance in rags with a proper understanding of the complexity of the issue. For example, it could also be argued, that since ruse and cunning are an essential aspect to Odysseus' nature, then his rags become merely emblematic of his nature too.<sup>314</sup> As a deceitful person, his nature permeates his clothed body. Deceit is merely an aspect of the naturally dissembling identity, a notion contained in the epithet often attributed to Odysseus: *polytropos*. Similarly, by following the Homeric paradigm of appearance as expressive of social reality,<sup>315</sup> then Socrates' rags verily become emblematic of the servile state in which he lives not only presently as Meroe's slave but also of the servile state in which he lived in his previous mercantile occupation and when he lived a non-philosophical life, attracted to low-level pleasures.

A more relevant point of departure for a comparison between Apuleius' Socrates and Odysseus within the text itself is the Homeric colouring given to the relationship made between Socrates and the witch to whom he is in thrall, Meroe. This comparison is made by Meroe herself when she likens her relationship with Socrates to that of Odysseus and Calypso (1.12):

Hic est, soror Panthia, carus Endymion, hic Catamitus meus, qui diebus ac noctibus illusit aetatulem meam, hic qui meis amoribus subterhabitis non solum me diffamat probris, verum etiam fugam instruit. At ego scilicet Ulixi astu deserta vice Calypsonis aeternam solitudinem flebo.

This is not the same thing as comparing Socrates to Odysseus; rather, it is the present relationship between Socrates and Meroe which is compared. Of especial note is Meroe's reference to the well-known cunning of Odysseus (*Ulixi astu*) applied to Socrates in his attempt to throw off the shackles of his bondage to her. Socrates is kept bound to Meroe as Odysseus was to Calypso, but Odysseus left at the bidding of the gods, with his life intact and with

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<sup>314</sup> On this aspect of Odysseus and its connection with his raiment, see Block (1985).

<sup>315</sup> Block (1985), 2.

Calypso's blessing and help.<sup>316</sup> Meroe is aware of the traditional attribute of Odysseus, although her self-styling as the Homeric victim is comic given the difference between the liquid elements which form the women's respective habitats: for Calypso, it was water (the sea); for Meroe, it is liquid of another sort – wine. It is not only ironic, but also pertinent to the issue of identity and self-perception in the novel that Meroe sees herself as a goddess rather than as a witch.

### **Socrates, Odysseus and Metamorphosis**

Related to these considerations is the important fact that by the sartorial metamorphosis she will enact on Socrates (and the "heart operation" she performs on him; 1.13), Meroe becomes in turn less like the goddess and rather more like the witch of Homer's epic, Circe. Socrates referred to Meroe as a '*femina divina*' and cautioned Aristomenes against Meroe's powers as a witch. Yet Circe could not transform Odysseus into another embodied type. His companions, however, she could, a fact which assimilates Socrates rather more to Odysseus' companions than to Odysseus. Through a later scholiastic tradition, Circe's transformation of Odysseus' comrades into swine acquired a moral reading, in that her metamorphosis of the men was made possible through undesirable qualities inherent in them.<sup>317</sup> Circe's transformations of these men were a metamorphosis proper, whereas Meroe's transformation of Socrates consists of a mere extroversion of character enacted through the exchange of clothing and making him physically dependent on her. The basis of Meroe's comparison of Socrates as a character is actually Ganymede ('*hic Catamitus meus*'), Jupiter's lover boy, to whom Odysseus cannot be compared. Whereas Odysseus, by the protection of Hermes as much as by his

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<sup>316</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 5. 160-161.

<sup>317</sup> For the Odyssean reading of the Socrates-Meroe relationship, see Harrison (1990b) 194-195. For the parallel with Circe, see Harrison (1990b) 194-195 and James (1987) 48. Schlam, on the other hand (1992, 15), equates Photis with the Homeric Circe, because she, like the witch in the epic, transforms men into lower species of animal. Montiglio (2007) 94, in a perceptive article in which she seeks to redress the Lucius-Odysseus equation, adduces a further parallel: just as Circe blinds Odysseus to his return home (*Odyssey*, 10. 463-465, 472), so Photis makes Lucius forgetful of his journey home.

prudence,<sup>318</sup> prevented his being unmanned (*άνήνορα*)<sup>319</sup> by Circe, Socrates' masculinity is retained intact at the physical level, but is challenged at the moral level as he is now dependent on Meroe. More importantly, Socrates' bodily dependence on Meroe, symbolised by an exchange of garments, recalls by way of inversion the scene in the *Odyssey* where Circe welcomes Odysseus and gives him clothing (10.365): *άμφι δέ με χλαῖναν καλήν βάλεν ήδέ χιτῶνα;* in the case of Apuleius' characters, it is not so much a guest-gift as a transaction.<sup>320</sup> Furthermore, the cloak that Circe gave Odysseus was beautiful (*καλήν*) as was the fragrant raiment which Calypso gave to Odysseus when she let him depart.<sup>321</sup> Meroe, in contrast, strove to keep Socrates enslaved to her, and Socrates' rags are neither beautiful nor an example of epic-styled reciprocity.

By likening herself and her situation to Calypso, Meroe betrays a rather romantic perception of herself and her relationship with Socrates. The humorous attempt of a witch to align herself with a goddess by (false) self-perception has the effect of blurring the boundaries between these two species, in turn causing their points of convergence to come into focus, so as to more sharply draw a contrast between them. If Meroe's perspective of her relationship with Socrates is coloured by mythology, then it is this flawed perception rather than anything else that projects an Odyssean reading onto the character of Socrates and their life together. Meroe can be likened to so many of Apuleius' characters insofar as she has an inaccurate perception of herself, even if she has read aspects of Socrates' character correctly. Epic comparisons, induced by the creation of epic tone or resonance, often serve in the *Metamorphoses* to show how far from an ideal a character so often is.

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<sup>318</sup> On the equation of *moly* with rational *logos*, and the roots of this reading of the Homeric passage, see Hunter (2008, 859 with literature).

<sup>319</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.341.

<sup>320</sup> The metaphor of exchange through the medium of clothes in the *Metamorphoses* is unequivocal. This is obvious through Socrates' choice of mercantile language: *contraho*, *concesserant*, *contuli* (all these words occur at 1.7).

<sup>321</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 5.264.

The final word on Apuleius' figure of Socrates can best be left to Apuleius. The relevance of Socrates' bedraggled state in rags and metamorphosis for the rest of the novel can be summed up by Apuleius' reflection on Odysseus as a philosophical figure. Since this reflection on metamorphosis occurs in Apuleius' book on the god of Socrates it therefore combines the two aspects of Socrates discussed in this thesis (Socrates as an anti-Socrates and an anti-Odysseus) and adds the third but by no means less important dimension of metamorphosis, of which the Socrates' tale is a specimen (*DDS*, 24):

laudis huius propria Ulixi possessio est. Nec aliud te in eodem Ulixe Homerus docet, qui semper ei comitem voluit esse prudentiam, quam poetico ritu Minervam nuncupavit. Igitur hac eadem comite omnia horrenda subiit, omnia adversa superavit ... Circe poculum bibit nec mutatus est.

Needless to say, the Socrates of Apuleius' novel is an inverted specimen of both the philosopher and the epic hero whose appearance could not be changed. Once Socrates had tasted of the tid-bits of Meroe's table (*cenae gratae atque gratuita*, 1.7), he made himself putty in her hands to be shaped and remoulded (albeit in a less drastic way than metamorphosis) as she fancied.

### **The Programmatic Function of Socrates and his Rags**

It can be said that the rags of Apuleius' Socrates embody a reversal of the historical Socrates, in that they are a sign of moral enslavement rather than of freedom; of dependence, rather than independence; as against philosophical *askesis*, they are a sign of moral feebleness and beggary; whereas Plato's Socrates by his knowledge and teaching was a citizen of the world, Apuleius' Socrates was stateless – he had lost his home and his family, and he was in exile; whereas the philosopher donned simple, rough clothing by choice, Apuleius' Socrates, whose rags go further than the sartorial simplicity which was the signature of the philosopher, had no choice in the matter; whereas the historical personage was in touch with his inner voice and, hence, would not have found himself in this state, the Socrates of Apuleius' text listened rather to his sensual impulses and personal inclinations and did not have the will-power to withstand assaults on his virtue. The philosopher's distinctive *tribon* which signified his disembodiment, his ordered soul, un-

assailed by temptation, does not find its equivalent expression in the *palliastrum* of Socrates, a garment which signifies embodiment, bodily attachment to a disordered soul which had no moral voice and which could not withstand the assaults of the appetites. (Nor is the *palliastrum* an outward sign of sectarian adherence or loyalty.) The Socrates of the *Metamorphoses*, then, is an inverted exponent of the “Know Thyself” precept of which the philosopher speaks, whether directly or by implication, in many of the Socratic discourses that have come down to us.<sup>322</sup> A reading of true Socratic values is deflected through inversion onto Apuleius’ Socrates by the media of dress and metamorphosis. Moreover, when Aristomenes comes across Socrates in his rags which are the result of a sartorial kind of metamorphosis, it is permissible to think of the rags as being more than metaphor; they are a kind of metonym, not merely an imagistic and visible expression of, but also a tangible and visible part of both Socrates’ soul and body in their servile state. This function of rags as unintended index of true moral and social character is programmatic of one way in which clothing and appearances operate in the novel.

This section of the chapter therefore is an analysis of the manner in which the rags of Apuleius’ non-philosophical character are programmatic of the function of clothing, especially the tattered garment, in the *Metamorphoses* on other non-philosophical types.

### **Chryseros and Milo: The Rags of (Moral) Poverty**

Thus far, the study of the character Socrates, focused on his ragged garment, has led us through Aristomenes’ primary reading of his friend as at

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<sup>322</sup> Scholars have pointed out the possibility of intertext with Plato’s *Phaedrus* in the Socrates/Aristomenes episode by way of the recurrence of the plane tree in both texts (*Phaedrus*, 229a; *Metamorphoses*, 1.18). I reiterate the importance of the same Socratic dialogue for this scene in the novel as residing in the “Know Thyself” doctrine specifically mentioned by the philosopher. Socrates the philosopher rightly reiterates the necessity for men to occupy themselves with self-knowledge rather than with knowledge of things with which they have no business, irrelevant things (*Phaedrus*, 229e-230a). Socrates’ precise concern with self-knowledge is the discernment of what he is made of, whether he is a complex creature like Typhon, or a simpler creature. This section from the *Phaedrus* coupled with the assimilation of Typhon to the donkey (cf. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 362F, 371C) is helpful for confirming the hybrid nature of Lucius as a donkey, for whom the precept in question also has great relevance.

first a living ghost (*larvale simulacrum*), then, because of his bedraggled state and pathetic replies, a stage act, and finally, with the revelation of the truth of Socrates' claims and his subsequent death at the hands of witches, finally, a living corpse - a ghost. Aristomenes' journey from incredulity to belief must provide the model by which to read Socrates' rags and pleas for pity for his plight as the embodiment of something more than mere costume and histrionic display, the domain of performance. This interpretation, initiated with an elemental focus on Socrates' ragged garment, has been supported in the previous sections of analysis by a specific concentration on the recurring rag motif in other surreal contexts, such as that of the miller visited by the ghost, and the sight of the bedraggled mill-slaves.

Contrarily, most modern readings of Socrates which focus on him as the replica of a highly-stylised Cynic-Socratic satire, have taken up Aristomenes' initial incredulity and turned it into a viable critical tool which can explain every fantastic or mystic experience in the novel. Such readings fail to appreciate the broader scope of the Aristomenes-Socrates narrative, which is undeniably surreal. Satiric elements are subsumed into the surreal experience and demand to be read differently in this context and by the operations of metamorphosis. We can see how Apuleius plays with genre and generic expectations to transmit his message. One of the functions of the character Socrates has been to show how genre is made subservient to the intentions of the author. By the upshot of Socrates' predicament, any satiric expectations are left behind. The same kind of operation is visible in other ragged characters in the novel, showing how Socrates' ragged appearance in the first book becomes programmatic of rags in later sections of the novel as expressive of an undesirable psychological state, consisting of moral fragmentation, such as servility to one's passions. With the characters Milo and Chryseros, Apuleius performs a similar trick on his reader, compressing a recognisable topos of satire into his philosophic vision to produce another sartorial figure of moral meaning – the ragged miser.<sup>323</sup> In the *Metamorphoses*, two different reasons are given for the miserliness of these characters; Milo's meanness is the effect of fear of robbery, whereas Chryseros' is based on misanthropic motives.

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<sup>323</sup> Gianotti (1986), 57-63; Zimmerman (2006), 87-104.

However, Apuleius' thoughts on moral poverty as expressed in his other writings show how these motives are symptomatic of the same moral sickness.

The satirical figure of the miser in rags occurs in its fullest expression in Horace's *Satires* 1.1.41-91.<sup>324</sup> He shares several points with Milo and Chryseros, although more so Milo, who, like Horace's miser, benefits from a more extended description. Like both he is a wealthy miser who keeps his wealth concealed and intends to disguise his wealthy status on his person through the use of rags: (*Satires*, 1.1.96-97): *ita sordidus, ut se/non umquam servo melius vestiret*. Like Milo in particular, Horace's miser lives in fear of being robbed and is hated by his neighbours and family, who are only too aware of his excessive parsimony. There is no evidence in the text that Milo's wife "hates" him as such, but she is deemed by Lucius in ironic terms to be his companion in suffering (1. 21: *cum uxorem etiam calamitatis suae comitem habeat*)<sup>325</sup> and he is depicted in a rather misogynistic light, making his wife yield her lowly place on the floor to Lucius, their guest, who is clearly embarrassed by the rather discourteous kind of favour shown him (1.22-23): *Intuli me eumque accubantem exiguo admodum grabatulo et commodum cenare incipientem invenio. Assidebat pedes uxor... Et cum dicto iubet uxorem decedere, utque in eius locum assidam iubet, meque etiam nunc verecundia cunctantem arrepta lacinia detrahens*.

Lucius' first-hand and embarrassed testimony of Milo's meanness only confirms the jaundiced explanation given of it by the female inn-keeper from Hypata who directs Lucius to Milo's house. She claims that Milo is excessively mean, and she attributes his slovenly appearance to mere excessive parsimony,

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<sup>324</sup> On the thematic interrelations between the *Metamorphoses* and Roman satire, see Zimmerman (2006) 91-92, who also picks up on the features shared by Horace's miser and Milo, but, interestingly, does not include Chryseros as another specimen of the satiric miser, which is surprising considering that Chryseros' salient moral feature is miserliness (an aspect of the omnipresent theme of *avaritia* which exists in both satire and the *Metamorphoses*) represented expressly through rags (*pannosus alioquin ac sordidus*). Horace's miser too is deemed *sordidus* (1.1.96). For two more satirical images of the miser see the satires of Persius (6), and Juvenal (14).

<sup>325</sup> I am retaining the emended reading of the *F* manuscript - which has *cum uxorem etiam calamitatis suae comitem habeat* - although either reading fits in with my interpretative scheme. Molt (1938) 99 is informative in respect of the nuances behind each reading.

as Milo and his wife seek to conceal their wealth (1. 21): *'Inibi iste Milo deversatur, ampliter nummatus et longe opulentus, verum extremae avaritiae et sordis infimae infamis homo. Faenus denique copiosum sub arrabone auri et argenti crebriter exercens, exiguo lare inclusus et aerugini semper intentus, cum uxore etiam calamitatis suae comite habet, neque praeter unicam pascit ancillulam, et habitu mendicantis semper incedit.'* This interpretation of Milo's situation gains credence in the light of the maid-servant's demand for money as a surety when Lucius first calls on Milo's household (1.22): *'Heus tu, inquit qui tam fortiter fores verberasti, sub qua specie mutuari cupis? An tu solus ignoras praeter aurum argentumque nullum nos pignus admittere?'* However, Milo claims that it is fear of being robbed which drives his habits (1.21): *'Asside inquit istic. Nam prae metu latronum nulla sessibula ac ne sufficientem supellectilem parare nobis licet.'* Although no mention is made of what they are wearing at this point, Lucius does not fail to notice the meagre fare on which Milo and his wife are dining. This is all they have to offer him (1.22): *assidebat pedes uxor et mensa vacua posita, cuius monstratu 'en' inquit 'hospitium.'* It transpires that both the inn-keeper and Milo are right, as we learn in Book 4 that the robbers' booty is much increased as a result of the robbery of Milo of Hypata, which indicates that he is a man of some means (4.8): *'Nos quidem' inquit 'Milonis Hypatini domum fortiter expugnauimus. Praeter tantam fortunae copiam, quam nostra virtute nacti sumus, et incolumi numero castra nostra petivimus et, si quid ad rem facit, octo pedibus auctiores remeavimus.'* Both perspectives, that of the inn-keeper and that of Milo, tell the same important truth - Milo and Pamphile conceal their riches *for fear of losing them,*<sup>326</sup> yet this fact changes nothing from the perspective of the metaphorical reading of Milo's state as a man who is poor in soul because he is dependent on his material wealth, a dependence which has cost him his peace of mind.

Fear of being robbed of one's material goods is often symptomatic, in philosophical speech, of the non-philosophical man. In the *Apologia*, a defence speech replete with philosophical common-places, Apuleius clearly states that

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<sup>326</sup> For a Socratic view of wealth and fear of its loss, see the article by Schaps (2003), 131-157, especially 146-147, where he discusses the Socratic concept of the "moneyloving souls" (*philochrematai*, and *philochrematoi*) and their suspicious natures.

wealth is a state of mind and that a mountain of wealth cannot satisfy the greedy man who will always be a beggar (20): *divitiae non melius in fundis et in fenore quam in ipso hominis animo aestimantur, qui si est avaritia egenus et ad omne lucrum inexplebilis, nec montibus auri satiabitur, sed semper aliquid, ante parta ut augeat, mendicabit*. This, then, is the true confession of poverty, the admission of an acquisitive spirit (20): *Quae quidem vera confessio est paupertatis; omnis enim cupido acquirendi ex opinione inopiae venit, nec refert quam magnum sit quod tibi minus est*. The issue in case is not so much the moral value of wealth or poverty, but on attitudes to these.<sup>327</sup>

The section of the *Apologia* which contains the digression on the true nature of poverty and wealth is framed at the beginning and the end by sartorial imagery used to express states of mind and soul. Just prior to this explanation, Apuleius refers to excess of material wealth as a cumbrance, in sartorial terms. A man should reduce his fortune to his needs, and his needs to circumstances, just as he cuts his tunic to size. Too much reliance on material security, just like too long a garment, can impede a man's movement (19): *fortunam velut tunicam magis concinnam quam longam probare; quippe etiam ea, si non gestetur et trahatur, nihil minus quam lacinia praependens<sup>328</sup> impedit et praecipitat. Etenim <in> omnibus ad vitae munia utendis quicquid aptam moderationem supergreditur, oneri potius quam usui exuberat*. Whilst this functions in the context of a defence speech merely as an effective image, the simile draws on a wider philosophical context and comes to show how easily and aptly states of the soul match bodily expression. Physical movement has been used to represent ideas of spiritual and moral progress. In the case of his novel, Apuleius has chosen to depict the man whose wealth is an encumbrance to him through the satirical image of the rags of the miser. This man shall continue to be a beggar as long as his desires are never satisfied.

Following on from the digression on notions of wealth and poverty, Apuleius pertinently refers to moral weakness, of which this kind of poverty

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<sup>327</sup> Apuleius, *Apologia*, 20: *Quod si nihil in animo deest, de rebus extrariis quantum desit non laboro, quarum neque laus in copia neque culpa in penuria consistit*.

<sup>328</sup> Butler and Owen (1983) 56, quote Floridus on this section who is citing from Xenophon, but they are unable to trace the reference.

can be considered an example, using an adjective taken from the sphere of dress (21.4): *Namque animi ita ut corporis sanitas expedita, imbecillitas laciniosa est, certumque signum est infirmitatis pluribus indigere.*<sup>329</sup> Just like a heavy or too-long garment, a soul laden with insatiable desires is a hindrance to the man who would progress on the way to moral enlightenment and self-perfection.

The inn-keeper's statement about Milo is then correct; yet by the presence of robbers in the area, Milo and his wife are quite justified in their concern to appear in pared down apparel. The motivation for their resorting to wearing rags is determined by more than one perspective from a social standpoint, yet from a higher perspective, relates a truth about their moral state.

The miser of satire also resonates in another of Apuleius' figures, Chryseros, the gold-loving miser who goes about dirty and in rags, trying to conceal his wealth so as to avoid spending it for the benefit of the people (4.9): *'Chryseros quidam nummularius, copiosae pecuniae dominus, qui metu officiorum ac munerum publicorum magnis artibus magnam dissimulabat opulentiam: denique solus ac solitarius parva sed satis munita domuncula contentus, pannosus alioquin ac sordidus aureos folles incubabat.'* Rags on Chryseros appear to be connected with dissimulation (*dissimulabat opulentiam*); yet rags can cease to function as a costume of dissimulation where the character wearing them is of a psychological disposition that is drawn to dissimulation. Chryseros is the embodiment in the novel of one of the four blameworthy types of men (*culpabilium...hominum*) and of the wealthy citizen who spurns his public obligations to the city which Apuleius talks of in his treatise on the teachings of Plato (*DPD*). Chryseros comes under the category of the avaricious man (*sequens abstemiorum*), whose vice, called by Apuleius an "oligarchy" (Apuleius uses the Greek word in his text) occupies not only the parts of the soul which are the receptacles of reason and anger,

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<sup>329</sup> Butler and Owen (1983), 59, point out that this metaphorical use of the adjective *laciniosa* is late and compare its appearance in this context with Tertullian's *adversus Marcionem* 4.29: *succingere debemus lumbos, id est expediti esse ab impedimentis lacinosae vitae et implicitae*. Apuleius' influence on Tertullian's work on the Greek mantle, *De Pallio*, is discussed by Hunink in his commentary on the *De Pallio* (2005).

but even the receptacles of the epithymetic part which excite unnecessary desires. Apuleius records Plato as saying that such a man is eager for gain and a hawk, keeping a beady eye on his possessions (2.15): *hunc talem Plato lucricupidinem atque accipitrem pecuniae nominavit*. Although Chryseros is not described in specifically bestial terms, his manner of coveting and concealing his wealth puts the reader in mind of any brooding animal hunched over its bundle: *incubabat*.<sup>330</sup> Giving shape to Apuleius' reception of Plato's thought on the wise man, Chryseros' rags stand as the material embodiment of the rich man who uses his riches unwisely (2. 21):

divitem hunc solum quidem recte putat, quippe cum thesauris omnibus pretiosorem solus videatur possidere virtutem. opes etiam quia solus sapiens potest in usibus necessariis regere, videri ditissimus debet. nam ceteri quamvis sint opibus adfluentes, tamen quod vel usum earum nesciant vel deducant eas ad pessimas partes, inopes videntur. egestatem namque non abstinentia pecuniae sed praesentia immoderatarum cupidinum gignit. philosophum oportet, si nihil indigens erit et omnium contumax et superior iis quae homines acerba toleratu arbitrantur, nihil sic agere quam ut semper studeat animam corporis consortio separare, et ideo existimandam philosophiam esse mortis affectum consuetudinemque moriendi.

A little later on in the same book, Apuleius reiterates Plato's lesson on the duties of munificence which are incumbent on the wealthy citizen (2.25):

Moribus et huiusmodi cunctos cives inbuendos esse dicit, ut iis in quorum tutelam et fidem res publica illa creditur auri atque argenti habendi cupido nulla sit, ne specie communi privatas opes adpetant, nec eiusmodi hospitia succedant, ut ceteris non reclusa sit ianua; cibos victumque ita sibi curent, ut acceptam mercedem ab his, quos protegent, communibus epulis insumant.<sup>331</sup>

Chryseros is not given to such munificence. The earlier passage explains clearly how this happens; the cause of the appetitiveness of such non-philosophical types is the corrupting action of the body on the soul. This is unequivocally

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<sup>330</sup> Cf. for the image of the miser as a hawk, Plautus' *Persae*, 3.3.5: *labes populi, pecuniae accipiter*, and for a similar idea of the miser's being bent over his hoarded wealth, Persius' *Satires*, 6.15-16: *usque recusantem/curvus ob id minui senio aut cenare sine uncto*. As usually happens in the *Metamorphoses*, the philosophical aim of the narrative appropriates the comedic elements. For a non-comic image of the rapacious hoarding miser, see Virgil's *Georgics*, 2.507: *condit opes alius defossoque incubat auro*.

<sup>331</sup> For Plato's discussion of this idea, see the *Republic*, 4. 429a-c; 440a-441c.

brought to the attention of the reader through Apuleius' development of the argument to the necessity of embracing the philosophic practice of detachment from material goods. Attachment to material goods is in the *DPD* expressed as the attachment of the soul to the body; he who would strive for psychological freedom, should seek to liberate his soul from his body: *philosophum oportet, si nihil indigens erit et omnium contumax et superior iis quae homines acerba toleratu arbitrantur, nihil sic agere quam ut semper studeat animam corporis consortio separare.*

If virtue is the ideal dress of the soul,<sup>332</sup> what can be said about the rags on the body of the rapacious miser, except that, in common with the rags of the slave as a social phenomenon, they express his servility, in his case, to his appetitive nature? That they merely show his moral mendicity? Chryseros is not rich in virtue (*virtutem ... ditissimus*); hence he is poor (*inopes*) in the only way that matters from a philosophical perspective. The rags of the wealthy miser posing as a poor man can be intended as disguise as much as can the trappings of wealth of the poor man, in that they both can be used to conceal the truth of a man's moral as well as social identity. The body of a type like Chryseros is bound closely to his infected soul; this, in turn, is inflected onto his outer garment (*habitus*), which is *pannosus* and *sordidus*. His immoderate desire for wealth keeps his soul suffocatingly close to his body. Hence they affect and infect each other.<sup>333</sup> Rags, the rotting flesh of the sick soul, are an appropriate skin or body for such a type.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Apuleius, *DPD* 2.5: *Virtutem Plato habitum esse dicit mentis optime et nobiliter figuratum.*

<sup>333</sup> This state of affairs is akin to the statement made at the beginning of pseudo-Aristotle's *Physiognomonica* (805a1) that the body and the soul affect and infect each other. Apuleius follows this line of reasoning in the *DPD* 1.18.

<sup>334</sup> It is a piece of rather ironic fun on Apuleius' part that robbers and brigands, outlaws who live on the fringe of respectable society, should in this case exhibit the benefits of the perceptive mental vision of the Apuleian wise man (*cf. Florida, 2: mentis acie et animi obtutu*), without actually having it, for these are the same men who will not be able to see through Tlepolemus' disguise, which was intended for their destruction, and who cannot know themselves properly. It is through the narratorial complexity of the novel and its playful co-operation with the overarching philosophic vision of the text that the boundaries between dress as garment of truth and dress as disguise constantly shift and merge into one another.

Clothes figure on both men as a character index of a soul infected by the needs of the body. Hence the state of mind of Milo and Chryseros, the result of undesirable attachment to material wealth for whatever reason, is also a subject of philosophical enquiry, and is expressed sartorially. By its role in the depiction of character in the *Metamorphoses*, dress is as much an index of inherent moral character as of social character.

Rags on such characters embody, from a social perspective, their liminality as citizens as much as souls, by showing how their mind-set and behaviour betray them as a part of the citizenry yet apart from it.<sup>335</sup> Milo's concern to preserve his gold, in addition to the fear of being robbed, a fear which, as it turns out, is not misplaced, is also an expression of the mental imbalance, spoken of by Apuleius. As a result of this, he goes through life (*incedit*) in the dress (*habitus*) and the state of mind (hence, soul: *habitus*) of a beggar: *habitu mendicantis semper incedit*. His dress is an exteriorisation of his soul. Likewise, the terms by which Chryseros is described, *pannosus* and *sordidus*, reflect his soul which has been soiled and fragmented by his avarice. Literary topos and social necessity are used to make a moral point.

These considerations of the perception of the rags of Milo and Chryseros can in turn be deflected onto Aristomenes' situation as a spectator of the (unexpected) dress-habits of his old friend: whereas the robbers are enlightened as to Chryseros' true motive for wearing rags, Aristomenes, until he too is taken into Socrates' surreal world, cannot see Socrates' rags as indices of truth. He tells his friend to "remove the tragic curtain and fold up the stage drapery" (1.8): '*Oro te...Aulaeum tragicum dimoveto et sipariam scaenicam complicate et cedo verbis communibus*'. Yet, as so often happens in the *Metamorphoses*, the language of theatre holds up to show, for diversion and learning, the macabre theatre of life.

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<sup>335</sup> This is made more obvious in Milo's case, as his home is located on the outskirts of the city; yet by this very location, he is also liminal, as he lives on the periphery of the city yet not entirely outside it.

### Conclusion to Chapter 3

The aim of this chapter has been primarily to establish Socrates as a programmatic figure of clothing, especially ragged clothing, and appearances in the novel, and, to a lesser but by no means less important degree, Aristomenes as an example of a type of readership of appearance. Perceptions change with the current of the narrative: as the truth emerges more clearly, Aristomenes' initially faulty perception of Socrates' rags and what they mean is rectified, as is the perception he had of his friend Socrates prior to his fall. The surreal aspect to Socrates' depiction overthrows any reading of his rags as trappings - in the sense of their being an adjunct to his histrionic outburst - predicated upon insincerity. So Aristomenes, at first incredulous and dismissive of Socrates' story as dramatic and exaggerated, comes to the realisation that his friend was speaking the truth.<sup>336</sup> Socrates' dress, interpreted as a prop in a performance, comes to reflect the surreal truth of Socrates' present state as a living-dead man and his past state as one who attempted to conceal the true figure of his desires.

Attendant upon this approach is the subject of the second section of this chapter which has attempted to show how Socrates' overall outer appearance, including his dress and gestures, are a reflection of his inner state and his present existence as a *larva*. Apuleius' other works have been drawn on to argue this. The genesis of his character depiction therefore owes as much to Apuleius' own views on the soul, as to intertextuality with the satiric and dramatic genres. His rags come to embody his fragmented psychological state, his present liminal status – both social and psychological - the undoing of his persona, and the truth of his nature.

The third section took up the consequences of this demonological function of the bedraggled state of Socrates to emphasise how Socrates' rags

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<sup>336</sup> Cf. Winkler (1985) 85-86: "In Aristomenes' tale [the essence of the fantastic] is, as so often, a stage on the way to a definition of reality."

are therefore interstitial, occupying the space shared by dress as index of both public persona and private truth. They are expressive of both Socrates' fragmented soul and the decomposition of the face that he formerly presented to the world with all the concomitant problems associated with losing face. Aristomenes was an essential part of this enquiry into the particularly social dynamics of clothing.

The following section focused on the surreal aspect of Socrates' appearance, a consequence of his liminal status at that moment. The expression *larvale simulacrum* and subsequent images of the *centunculus* occurring on other types on the fringes of society, such as slaves (the mill-slaves in Book 9), or liminal, such as the ghost who appears later in Book 9, lift Socrates out of a tangible social type which was embedded in the real world. The rags of Apuleius' Socrates become interstitial, that is, they embody the crux between his emaciated body and the poor state of his soul, foreshowing the state of one whose suspension in a liminal state between life and death remains to be released through the physical death which is imminent and that they portend. The body as the soul's garment and the clothing which covers the body have become one.<sup>337</sup> Only an intact and ordered soul can be dressed (cf. 1.20: *vir ornatus*) in a becoming garment.

The following brief section was a refutation of the argument of certain scholars, of whom Keulen is representative, who persist in taking Socrates as programmatic of the satirising strain of the whole novel. In contrast to this reception of Socrates, these few paragraphs argued that the emphatic image of Socrates' tatty cloak and his generally bedraggled state, including his liminal spatial placement at a cross-roads, goes beyond mere categorisation of the character as a certain social type, namely the wandering false Socratic-Cynic philosopher, who lived off begging and whom the figure of the novel is perceived to satirise.

Socrates' metamorphosis from integrated member of civic society to ragged beggar exiled to its confines not only expresses the condition of his soul

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<sup>337</sup> For Socrates' emaciated body as that of the man who gives himself over to lust, I refer the reader to Beaujeu's note (1973, 298) on Moreschini's detection of the Platonic source of a passage in the *DPD* 2.17.

but also inscribes him in the novel's catalogue of victims of transformation motivated by a firm moral concern (driven by the overarching philosophical vision of the novel) with realigning semblance (the outer man) with truth (the inner man). The ensuing section therefore took up Socrates' metamorphosis and analysed it in the light of Neo-Platonist readings of the *Odyssey* which interpreted the transformation of Odysseus' companions into swine from this moralising perspective, a reading which has value for the case of Socrates. Examination of Socrates as an extension of an Odyssean paradigm is necessitated by the various points of similitude shared by Socrates and Odysseus, perceived and real. In the *Metamorphoses*, the transformation of Socrates is a sartorial operation by which witchcraft seeks to externalise the inner person at the level of the body through clothing, specifically rags. This may seem to be a downgraded version of metamorphosis, but sartorial transformation continues the notion of the body as the garment of the soul.

Socrates' rags have a programmatic function; subsequently, much clothing in the novel comes to be expressive of truth of character, howsoever it may be apprehended. Similarly, the rags of Milo and Chryseros, who formed the object of study in the final section, reflect the state of their embodied soul as mortals attached to their wealth, as well as their civic status as misers who attempt to conceal their wealth from their fellow citizens. Apuleius conflates the satiric genre with his own philosophic reception of such soul-types. Poverty as a moral rather than social condition is a concern which appears also in Apuleius' *DPD* and *Apologia*, in which Apuleius talks at length on poverty and beggardom as states of the man who is never satisfied with what he has, howsoever much this may be. The rags of Milo and Chryseros also have a thematic link to Socrates' rags by what they signify: the moral poverty which kept them enslaved to concern for their material well-being is on the same level as the moral poverty of Socrates who could not control his desires.

It is not merely fortuitous that Apuleius portrays his characters as sartorial types, given the prominence of sartorial imagery in the philosophical common-places found throughout the *Apologia* and that the other literary traditions which are recalled by his characters, such as ancient drama and satire, also draw heavily on clothing to convey types. Apuleius' personal Platonist perspective hangs heavily over his writings. By the portrayal of

Socrates, the slaves, the ghost and the misers, and the redolent ragged garment that they all have in common, the *Metamorphoses* proves itself to be no exception to his method.

## Chapter 4

### Pythias and Insignia

A practical approach to costume in the *Metamorphoses* is to define it from the perspective of its social function as dress made or worn for a specific purpose or event, be it religious, civic, or theatrical. The habiliment of citizens of both servile and elite status functions as an aspect of civic costume insofar as it marks their rank in society. Insignia and jewellery can be included amongst such aspects of costume. In this chapter I aim to study costume as it appears in the *Metamorphoses* articulated as magisterial dress and insignia, with particular reference to how it reflects upon the character Pythias and the magistrates who assist at Lucius' trial at Hypata, and the mourning costume of the participants in his trial. Mourning costume is put to serve a perverted end whilst serving a civic function.

The chapter will open with an examination into how Pythias' magisterial dress is a reflection of the inner man as well as of the civic ethos of the city of Hypata. This is achieved in the first section by close inspection into the function of magisterial dress and insignia on Pythias and how these both give form to his lack of magisterial decorum and reflect on Pythias' understanding of it. Lucius' presentiment of a breach of decorum is the medium through which competing perceptions of magisterial decorum are relayed to the reader.

The following section will show how the same function of dress can be applied to the whole magisterial and civic body. This particular analysis is applied to the magistrates and mourners at Lucius' trial. The manner in which they wear and "act out" their civic and magisterial costume on this occasion expresses their civic ethos, an ethos which Lucius can neither comprehend nor appreciate.

Lucius' response to the sight of the insignia in the episodes under scrutiny will be first briefly located within the general sphere of the emotive impact of insignia. This brief study applies indications found both within and

without the text, and drawing on both the Latin and the Greek modes in the text, of an emotive content in the scene, directly motivated by the role of insignia.

The same issue will then be subjected to an enquiry of a more specific nature into the role of magisterial dress in another of Apuleius' works, the *Florida*. Herein, the speaker manifests a concern similar to that of Lucius in the *Metamorphoses*, that the outer man should be a reflection of the inner man, that is, that the office of the magistrate, subsumed into its sartorial expression, should be a reflection of his innate qualities as a man. Reference to the relevant sections of the *Florida* will be adduced to explain Lucius' instinctual perspective on Pythias' lack of decorum, and his shock at his treatment at the hands of the populace.

Further contextualising for the ideal role (from Lucius' perspective) of magisterial dress and insignia will be provided by two works of Cicero: (i) the *De Officiis*, a handbook on the correct deportment of men in their civic function in society, and (ii) Cicero's letters to his brother Quintus, who was proconsul in Asia from 61-58. The purpose of these texts is to provide a wider Roman social (and literary) context for Lucius' reaction to the behaviour of Pythias and the magistrates in their insignia. The Pythias episode's function as an inquiry into official duty is further underscored by the presence of legal terminology in the episode.

The chapter will then be closed by a critical examination of other scholars' readings of the Pythias section, with a particular focus on those who seek to keep the episode embedded strictly within the satirical canon, a literary code in which the episode undeniably has roots, but from which it departs in a considerable way.

### **Pythias' Civic Costume as *Habitus***

The scene takes place on the day of Lucius' arrival in Hypata. Lucius has just taken leave of his host, Milo, and set off for the provision-market, the *forum cupidinis*,<sup>338</sup> to purchase some fish for supper (1.24). He sees some fish

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<sup>338</sup> This is the reading in F. Hanson's emendation to *cuppedinis* on the grounds of Apuleius' archaising preferences and is supported by Keulen (2007) 430, on the further grounds of the

there at a marked up price - one hundred sesterces - and haggles with the vendor, a little old man (*seniculum*), until he gets them for twenty *denarii*. He just leaves the marketplace and meets unexpectedly a friend, a former school-pupil (*condiscipulus*), called Pythias, whom he has not seen for many years. Pythias embraces Lucius warmly and the two men engage in conversation. The first thing that Lucius notices about his friend is his magisterial rank, described in terms of the magistracy's trappings and dress. The polysyndeton helps to reflect through sound and image the impression that the sight of Pythias' dress has on Lucius (1.24): *Sed quid istud? Voti gaudeo. Nam et lixas et virgas et habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te video*. Pythias specifies what his office is - he is administrator of food-supplies and market-inspector, and aedile: *Annonam curamus...et aedilem gerimus*. Pythias' use of the plural person contributes to his pompous characterisation. He offers to help Lucius with his shopping, an offer which Lucius declines politely as he has already purchased fish enough for supper. Pythias, overriding Lucius' polite refusal, shakes Lucius' basket to look more closely at the fish and asks how much he paid for these *quisquillas*, that is, overpriced rubbish. Upon being told the lower price, he seeks to know who sold Lucius the fish. Lucius points to the vendor, the little old man, who was sitting quietly in a corner. Pythias berates the old man for deceiving visitors to their region by marking up prices, thereby reducing it, the flower of Thessaly (*florem Thessalicae regionis*), to a state of barrenness. To Lucius' surprise, he then overturns the basket, and orders one of his attendants, probably a *lictor*, to trample into the ground the fish Lucius had just bought. Satisfied with this show of authority, he advises Lucius to move along, leaving him in a state of utter bewilderment and worse off than he was prior to their unexpected encounter.

Magisterial costume and insignia operate by way of inversion, that is, as arising from the inverted world of Hypata where the reversal of values appears to colour most aspects of civic life. This can tell us much about not only the wearer of the garment, but also Lucius, whose reaction to the insignia is

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saturation of comic elements in the whole Pythias scene. Keulen adduces a second advantage to retaining Hanson's emendation: as Keulen points out (430), the *forum cuppedinis*, Delicacies Market, no longer existed in Apuleius' time; however, he prefers to retain it in the novel as it helps to characterise Lucius as an example of the "Theophrastian sponger" (427).

marked in the text. Lucius' reaction of consternation before his own friend Pythias' behaviour in costume picks up on that of Aristomenes before his friend Socrates' transformed appearance, insofar as they are both expressive of anxiety caused by the revelation of something undesirable in their friend's nature, hitherto hidden from the public vista. Lucius' consternation at his friend's excessive show of authority suggests a presentiment on his part of a breach of propriety expressed by Pythias' behaviour, as well as a breach in the relationship between the two men. Presentiments are an aspect of perception, as they are an instinctual reading of a clash between the inner man as he was previously known and the present outer semblance (as the case of Aristomenes' shock before Socrates proves). In the case of Pythias, the particular magistracy whose dress and insignia are evaluated as character indices are those of the aedile, bearing in mind that Apuleius is transferring a Roman term of public administration to a Greek setting in Hypata, Thessaly,<sup>339</sup> nonetheless, the basic point remains the same.

In line with the concept of seeing the clothed body as a reflection of the soul, the interpretation of the Pythias scene that follows runs counter to that of other scholars who have overlooked the ethical importance of Pythias' *habitus* in the episode, that is, the effect of the combination of his dress and demeanour, how it is reflective of his nature, and the degree to which its semiological function propels the inherent humour and satire in a certain direction; satire is, after all, nourished by a moral ideology. Keulen on the other hand believes that Lucius takes the *habitus* of Pythias merely to be the "external and removable characteristics that form part of a 'role'"<sup>340</sup> acknowledging *habitus* as identifying characters by their outfit, in terms of a social role; yet Apuleius hints at the dual referentiality of the word "*habitus*" in this episode, by the words that he puts in his protagonist's mouth (1.24): *Nam et lixas et virgas et habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te video*. The words *habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te*, are capable of

<sup>339</sup> This episode is not found in the pseudo-Lucianic *Onos*, a fact which points to the scene as having an important place in the novel.

<sup>340</sup> Keulen (2007) 438, and later (364) on the terms *habitus* and *habitus* where they lead to conclusions about "identity and status." Elsewhere, however (2006, 168-202), Keulen does probe more deeply into the term *habitus et habitudo* with reference to Lucius as he is described to us in Book 2 by Byrrhaena.

reflecting Pythias' state of mind and soul as well as his dress and magisterial office. Rather than merely reiterate the satiric interest of this passage without taking it further,<sup>341</sup> it is more illuminating to concentrate on how the moral ideology that underpins the satire is inscribed into the surrounding narrative of the text, and how it is transformed by the impact and import of perspective in the passage. Whilst Pythias' behaviour in his dress certainly accords with the typologised behaviour of the pompous official as it is depicted in the satirical tradition, *habitus* in this vignette seems to embody the conjunction of dress and the body's over-all demeanour, and a condition of mind. *Habitus*, as well as representing his social and civic type, also represents Pythias' nature. It is essential to note that the occurrence of the word *habitus* in this section of the novel, especially with reference to Pythias, seems to approximate most closely the modern appropriation of the word by the twentieth-century French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu;<sup>342</sup> however, the strictly Roman meaning of the word whereby it refers to the outer appearance of a person as well as to the condition of his or her soul retains its value all throughout the episode, as it does elsewhere in the novel. Undeniably, the Pythias episode stands alone; it can be removed from the novel without drastically changing the storyline. Given that the Pythias episode is not directly related to nor necessary for Lucius' transformation, and that it provides insight into character rather more than causative action, its *raison d'être* in the novel must be sought elsewhere.

Lucius' prior acknowledgement of his friend's office alerts us to the importance the exterior symbols are going to play in the representation of his character, as these are the first thing that Lucius notices about his friend and the only thing that Lucius reveals about his friend's appearance: '*Nam et lixas*

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<sup>341</sup> See the final section of the chapter, which deals with the reception of the Pythias episode by other modern scholars, most of whom circumscribe it within the rigid confines of a mere specimen of Roman comedy or satire.

<sup>342</sup> In its loosest sense, *habitus* comes to take on the sense of "beliefs embodied" (Koortbojian, 2008, 88 quoting Corbeill, 2004, 109-110, after Bourdieu, 1977). See my Appendix on *habitus* and related notions for further discussion of its relevance to the *Metamorphoses* and for Bourdieu's debt to the Classical tradition for his appropriation of the word. Koortbojian also speaks (73) of the "quintessentially Roman double sense of identity, at once individual and institutional" a notion of magisterial identity which is entirely fit for Pythias in his magisterial dress and insignia.

*et virgas et habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te video.* More pertinently, the sartorial silences are important. One of the most important features of Lucius' reading of his friend's uniform is that he needs to be told what office they represent (1.24): *'Annonam curamus,' ait, 'et aedilem gerimus'*; it appears that the exact magistracy represented by the uniform is not clear at first sight. The language of dress acknowledges the power of silence and of ambiguity or concealment. The preceding *'Voti gaudeo'* emphasises the emotional response elicited by Lucius to his friend's success. This is important, as it gives us an insight into Pythias' personal character as that of a man who had harboured aspirations earlier on in his life of ascending the sequence of magistracies.<sup>343</sup> This fact does not detract in any way from the value of Pythias' *habitus* as an expression of cultural values, despite Pythias' likely provenance from another geographical area.<sup>344</sup> In fact, surreal Hypata may have presented attractive prospects to Pythias in his determination to ascend the social ladder, inasmuch as Hypata is founded on a perverted notion of civic values. Lucius' congratulatory remark also anticipates the depiction of Pythias as being in some way an embodiment of his insignia as symbols of magisterial officiousness, a negative and degenerate form of authority, yet Pythias makes it clear that he and Lucius read these signs quite differently. This fact points towards a possible ironic reading behind Lucius' remark concerning Pythias' berating of the old fish-monger (1.25): *pro aedilitatis imperio voce asperrima increpans*. Lucius may have been aware of the discrepancy between the outward signs and expression of *imperium* and the limits of the authority of aedileship, as if Lucius were whispering an aside into his remark: "In

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<sup>343</sup> Cf. Molt's note *ad loc.* (108): *voti gaudeo: "laetor quod optatum impetravisti."* Perhaps Pythias' name is ironically evocative of that of the oracle of Apollo, and what it connoted to the ancient reader. Cicero is a good authority on this (*De Finibus*, 5.44): *iubet igitur nos Pythius Apollo noscere nosmet ipsos. cognitio autem haec est una nostri, ut vim corporis animique norimus sequamurque eam vitam, quae rebus iis ipsis perfruatur*. This quote is apt for Pythias, as it picks up on the oracular notion as awareness of one's own limits as an aspect of self-knowledge. On the suggested link between Pythias' name and the Pythian oracle, see Fick-Michel (1991) 320 and Krabbe (2003) 14-15 who says that Pythias and the *sors Pythica* are both enigmatic.

<sup>344</sup> Lucius tells us they both studied together at Athens (2.24): *Pythias condiscipulus apud Athenas Atticas meus*.

accordance with his *imperium* as aedile (as if he actually had any).” It is rather the case that Pythias sees his office as imbued with *imperium*.

It is perhaps the power ascribed to such signs, that induces Pythias to make an aggressive display of his magisterial authority before Lucius and the elderly merchant who sold Lucius his fish. According to Pythias, Lucius has still been overcharged, despite his haggling, for these *nugamenta* (1.25):

‘Et a quo’, inquit, ‘istorum nugamenta haec comparasti?’ demonstro seniculum : in angulo sedebat. Quem confestim pro aedilitatis imperio voce asperrima increpans: ‘Iam iam,’ inquit, ‘nec amicis quidem nostris vel omnino ullis hospitibus parcitis, quod tam magnis pretiis pisces frivolis indicatis et florem Thessalicae regionis ad instar solitudinis et scopuli edulium caritate deducitis? Sed non impune. Iam enim faxo scias, quem ad modum sub meo magisterio mali debeant coherceri’ – et profusa in medium sportula iubet officialem suum insuper pisces inscendere ac pedibus suis totos obterere. Qua contentus morum severitudine meus Pythias ac mihi, ut abirem, suadens: ‘sufficit mihi, o Luci’, inquit, ‘seniculi tanta haec contumelia.’

It is clear that in his role as magistrate Pythias gives the personal stamp of authority to his injunctions (*sub meo magisterio*). This indicates what he deems to be the correct way of fulfilling his duties of office. Pythias’ sense of judgement is unbalanced and his condemnation of the old man is disproportionate to the infraction. Pythias’ reduction of the fish to a pulp is an overreaction which is telling of his perception of his authority. The merchant’s overpricing of the fish has unreal consequences for Pythias. Accordingly, the elderly merchant is accused of reducing Hypata from the flower of the region (*florem Thessalicae regionis*) to a barren desert (*ad instar solitudinis et scopuli*). In fact, compared with Lucius’ management of the underhand tactics of the old man, it is Pythias’ reaction which is disproportionate, not only to his authority but also to the charge.

Lucius’ bewilderment at Pythias’ excessive abuse of the old man leads him to rethink the terms of his affectionate remembrance of his friend. Just as the elderly merchant, who was ready to part with his wares at a reduced rate, has been threatened with imminent punishment, Lucius has been deprived in fact of both his dinner and the wherewithal to purchase another one. Whereas his exchange with an old man of inferior social status had, after some haggling,

been mutually satisfactory – the old man got his money, Lucius got his dinner – his encounter with one of his equals left him bewildered, hungry and poorer. If Lucius had assumed Pythias' honorific and magisterial appearance to be both the culmination and outward sign of moral character, then he was wrong. This awakening to the truth motivates Lucius' remark on his friend's official competence, expressed with a keen sense of irony, as there is nothing wise (*cf. prudentis*, 1.25) about his friend's management of the situation (1.25): *His actis consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus ad balneas me refero prudentis condiscipuli valido consilio et nummis simul privatus et cena*. Lucius repays Pythias' divergence of reading of official insignia with his own. This is particularly salient given the meaning of *acta* (in the phrase *his actis*) as "official acts, enactments of a magistrate."<sup>345</sup> The language of insignia, as an extension of the language of dress, can also express irony. More subtly, the repetition of the prefix *con-*, a repetition which under normal circumstances would underscore the ties of companionship (*consilio...condiscipuli*), becomes, by inversion, ironic, underscoring their severance. Lucius discovered in his friend one of those who misappropriate and pervert the insignia of an official because he is unworthy of them. His final remark serves to highlight the difference in perception that ultimately fractures their friendship.

### The Magistrates and Mourners at Lucius' Trial

Pythias' perception of his magisterial entitlements as residing uniquely in his magisterial *habitus* and trappings, a perception which itself reflects wider the topsy-turvy world of Hypata, is similar to the perverted notion of civic values of the magistrates, the spectators and the other participants who are present at Lucius' trial in Book 3. Dress on the magistrates and the mourners especially also functions to reflect a perverted notion of *civitas*. This is a trial which turns out to be a mock trial, consisting of trumped-up charges of triple homicide laid against Lucius and instigated as part of the annual festivities in honour of Risus, the *genius* of the city.<sup>346</sup> Whilst returning late at night, and

<sup>345</sup> On this meaning of *acta*, see Keulen (2007) 452, who still favours the theatrical connotations of *his actis*.

<sup>346</sup> In reality, the three men Lucius had been charged with killing the night before, whilst returning drunk from the banquet held by his aunt, turned out to be inflated goatskin bladders, a fact divulged by Photis (who was responsible for animating them). In Photis'

rather drunk, from Byrrhaena's banquet, Lucius saw three men attempting to break into Milo's house. He charged at them and killed them. Fully aware of the seriousness of his actions, he awaits dawn and his subsequent arrest. The magistrates duly arrest him early the next day.

Lucius continues to suffer the ignominy of having hands laid on him, a freeborn citizen (*immissa manu*);<sup>347</sup> yet he repays this ignominy with the humility becoming of the obedient citizen: *me sane non renitentem*. Lucius' arrest follows a traditional pattern. It is undertaken with all the pomp and loud ceremony which accompanies the exaction of justice in an hierarchical society (3.2):

Quati fores interdum et frequenti clamore ianuae nostrae perstrepit. Nec mora cum, magna irruptione patefactis aedibus, magistratibus eorumque ministris et turbae miscellaneae frequentia cuncta completa, statimque lictores duo de iussu magistratum immissa manu trahere me sane non retinentem... iamque sublimo suggestu magistratibus residentibus, iam praecone publico silentium clamante.

Likewise, Lucius' account of the trial (not devoid of irony) attests to the hierarchical structure of the society which tries him (3.2): *iamque sublimo suggestu magistratibus residentibus, iam praecone publico silentium clamante*. Nevertheless, this hierarchy, despite the importance of the trial, concedes to popular demand for greater access to the *spectacle* of justice, as the trial has to be transferred from the *tribunal* to the theatre. This fact alone should have alerted Lucius to the possibility that all is not what it seems; this is Hypata, a city where the impossible (including the coexistence of opposites) is the norm. Hence, the shadow of justice replaces its reality.<sup>348</sup> Consequently, the usual

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version of events, dead human bodies take breath (3.18, *illa corpora, quorum fumabant stridentes capilli, spiritum mutantur humanum et sentiunt et audiunt et ambulant*) and become goatskin bladders, making Lucius an utricide! (3.18): '*sed longe fortius qui tres inflatos caprinos utres examinasti, ut ego te prostratis hostibus sine macula sanguinis non homicidam nunc, sed utricidam amplecterer.*'

<sup>347</sup> No such forcefulness is exacted on him in his service of Isis. Lucius is unequivocal on the point of the freedom of will with which he served the goddess (11.22; 11.24; 11.28; 11.30).

<sup>348</sup> For further discussion of the shadow of justice in the novel, see the section on the Pantomime in Book 10, in Chapter 1. See also Tarrant (1999) 71-89, especially 76-78 and 87 for Lucius' mock trial, and 79 for the Pythias episode which he claims to be an example of justice "which operates through shameful spectacles" in the *Metamorphoses*.

procedure of bringing forth the victim in mourning garb or rags was nothing more than part of a spectacle with Lucius as the main actor, ignorant of his role (3.8):

Inter haec quaedam mulier per medium theatrum lacrimosa et flebilis, atra veste contacta, parvulum quondam sinu tolerans decurrit, ac pone eam anus pannis horridis obsita paribusque maesta fletibus, ramos oleagineos utraeque quatientes. Quae circumfusae lectulum quo peremptorum cadavera contacta fuerant, planore sublato se lugubriter eiulantes.

Despite his eloquent self-defence (3.4-6), Lucius loses ground and is threatened with torture. The instruments of torture are brought out (3.9) and Lucius is forced at the injunction of the magistrates to uncover the bodies and look upon the victims of his crime (3.9): *et illico me magistratus ipsum iubet corpora...detegere*). Lucius struggles to do this, so the lictors compel him (3.9): *lictos issu magistratum quam instantissime compellunt*, but he is confronted with a sight which transfixes him: the bodies are actually wine-skins. Although Lucius speaks of the sight before him as of a transformation, what he beholds is the reality (3.9):

Dii boni, quae facies rei! Quod monstrum! Quae fortunarum mearum repentina mutatio! Quamquam enim iam in peculio Proserpinae et Orci familia numeratus, subito in contrariam faciem obstupefactus haesi. Nec possum novae illius imagines rationem idoneis verbis expedire. Nam cadavera illa iugulorum hominum erant tres utres inflati variisque secti foraminibus et, ut vespertinum proelium meum recordabar, his locis hiantes quibus latrones illos vulneraveram.

Lucius' stupor is repaid by the Hypatans with their mocking laughter, true to the style of the god in whose rites they are participating (3.10): *Tunc ille quorundam astu paulisper cohibitus risus libere iam exarsit in plebem. Hi gaudii nimietate gratulari, illi dolorem ventris manuum compressione sedare. Et certe laetitia delibuti meque respectantes cuncti theatro facessunt*. Apuleius in this episode uses the trial and the theatre setting as a frame, showing the emblems of status and the rags of mourning as inverted, dislocated from their proper moral and social purpose. The inversion of civic values inherent in the use of insignia and mourning-dress can be seen as reflective of a soul devoid of notions of proper proportion or values.

Once the trial is over, still reeling from the realisation that he has been the unwitting subject of a sick prank, Lucius is astounded to see the magistrates attempting to explain themselves, going so far as to visit him in Milo's house with this aim, while still wearing the insignia of office (3.11): *Ecce ilico etiam ipsi magistratus cum suis insignibus domum nostram ingressi talibus me monitis delenire gestiunt*. Here too, we see the exactors of justice with their emblems of status and attendants, especially lictors, having a perverted notion of their status and its authority. The gentleness they use with Lucius (*delenire*) contrasts with the harshness of Pythias' dealings with the fish-monger, yet also serves a perverse purpose, explaining a cruel joke on cultural and ritual grounds. The conspicuousness of their insignia (*ipsi magistratus cum suis insignibus*) seems to clash with their reasoning, despite their frequent reference to Lucius' noble lineage and their claim that this is the reason for their choice of victim on that day (3.11). In a conciliatory and memorial gesture the magistrates offer to set up a statue in Lucius' honour, and beg him to remove all fear, promising him that the god Risus will accompany him through life and bring him joy; yet by the time of the trial's conclusion, civic justice, as Lucius understands it, will have been undone and replaced by a justice which is totally alien to him. Lucius declines the offer of an honorary statue, claiming that he is unworthy of such an honour, and assumes, with effort, a more cheerful countenance in terms redolent of artifice (3.12).

The whole trial and the demeanour of the magistrates and the populace all through it is a reflection of the state and of the citizens of Hypata, where normal values are reversed or set to work against themselves and the very purpose they are meant to serve in a normal society, possibly a result of the associations of the city with witchcraft.<sup>349</sup> The emblems of status, although not

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<sup>349</sup> Witchcraft, the opposite of religion, and the inversions it brings into effect seemingly permeate every aspect of Hypatan society, notwithstanding the official ban placed on witchcraft in Hypata, at least, according to the barber as he threatens Photis (3.16): *'Tune, ultima, non cessas subinde lectorum iuvenum capillamenta surripere? Quod scelus nisi tandem desines, magistratibus te constanter obiciam.'* Even Lucius' bewilderment at the splendour of Byrrhaena's sumptuous banquet projects more than just a notion of the woman's wealth; it also conveys a sense of the magic and the surreal, expressed in the manner of an *adunaton*, that pervades Hypatan society (2.19): *hic vitrum fabre sigillatum,*

so visible in the trial episode, serve as markers of civic values, in a manner similar to Pythias' magisterial appearance as a marker of personal character. Lucius appears to regard these values from the perspective of deeper and higher, more ethically oriented criteria. Such inversions, indeed, perversions, are expressed through magisterial dress and insignia, since the nature of any social unit is expressed through its *habitus*, both collective and individual. The trial of Lucius by which the festival of Risus is celebrated is proof that Hypata can be considered an inverted society, marked by inverted values extended even so far as to permeate the rules of hospitality, the relations between the social classes, and the dress of the citizenry. In this respect, Pythias' behaviour in his magisterial costume embodies and expresses the inverted values of a state not only infected by the inversions resulting most likely from witchcraft but also of a state which acknowledges the god of mocking laughter as its founding deity and *genius loci*. Where proper civic values are inverted, any material or textile expression of those values will necessarily reflect the inversion that underpins them.<sup>350</sup>

### **Lucius' Response to Magisterial Insignia**

There is a double strain to the manner in which Lucius responds to Pythias' behaviour. In one way, Lucius' reaction to the language and spectacle of dress is in no way unusual or remarkable for the time and place in which he

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*ibi crystallum impunctum, argentum alibi clarum et aurum fulgurans et sucinum mire cavatum et lapides ut bibas; et quidquid fieri non potest ibi est.*

<sup>350</sup> Pythias' vestimentary behaviour and identity can possibly be considered to deviate from a different norm implied by the education he received when he was a fellow student with Lucius at Athens (1.24): *Pythias condiscipulus apud Athenas Atticas meus*. Summers (1970) 520 claimed: "Apuleius has made the subtle point that these magistrates in their Roman aspect bred terror and injustice, while in their municipal aspect they are genial and just" and that it is Roman justice and not Lucius which is the butt of satire. However, he forgets to locate the trial episode within the larger context of the topsy-turvy world that Hypata occupies and that Lucius derives no satisfaction from the sentiment of good-will extended to him by the magistrates. The magistrates' behaviour during the trial therefore becomes an extension of a pervasive civic attitude (not the only one, but an important one) which they have incorporated.

lived. Anthony J. Marshall,<sup>351</sup> aware that “the Romans’ perception of their emblems of office remained lively and evolved in response to changing social and political conditions” (128), reinforces the fact of official insignia’s ability to affect people psychologically and arouse strong emotions in them when ill-used: “We may begin by emphasizing that the Romans clearly expected a high level of dignity in the bearing and external decorum of their magistrates” (120). Although Marshall deals mainly with the *fasces* as part of the “spectacular in public administration”, much of what he says with regard to official insignia has bearing on this episode in the *Metamorphoses*. He warns against the narrow-sightedness of scholars in the tradition of Mommsen, who, in treating lictors and *fasces* as numerical clues to help towards a reconstruction of constitutional law from the earliest period, “must pass over a salient feature of our sources, namely that reference to magisterial regalia is often made in an emotional or emotive, rather than an objective or purely descriptive, manner” (129).<sup>352</sup> Certainly in the *Metamorphoses*, the sight of magisterial insignia and dress evokes strong reaction based on the connotative value they contain. The emotive language that underpins the Pythias scene especially in the *Metamorphoses*, both at the moment of the reaction (*gaudeo, consternatus, obstupidus*) and the more tempered expression of Pythias’ actions once they have occurred (*morum severitudine*), locates the scene within the expected cultural context of the visual impact of insignia and magisterial dress. In accordance with social paradigms in place in the novel, Pythias plays on the

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<sup>351</sup> Marshall (1984) 120-141.

<sup>352</sup> Lucius’ fictional reaction to insignia appears then to be based on social reality. Cicero is illuminating in this regard; in his letter to his brother, he refers to Quintus’ province as a spectacle, or rather, a theatre, reminding Quintus that all eyes will be on him at all times when he is out on his public duties, so he must act his part well (1.41-42): *Ea nostra ratio est ut omnes boni cum faveant tum etiam omnem a nobis diligentiam virtutemque et postulent et expectent...qua re quoniam eius modi theatrum totius Asiae virtutibus tuis est datum, celebritate refertissimum, magnitudine amplissimum, iudicio eruditissimum, natura autem ita resonans ut usque Romam significationes vocesque referantur, contende, quaeso, atque elabora non modo ut his rebus dignus fuisse sed etiam ut illa omnia tuis artibus superasse videre*. Acting a part, in this case, is ideally an extension of his nature as opposed to just an assumed role. On Cicero and the spectacle of power and authority generally, see Bell (1997), especially page 19 for the role of insignia in expressing political *virtus*, (preferably, predicated on personal *virtus*).

hierarchical structures which his rank and its insignia visually embody and support and manipulates it accordingly: whereas he *orders* his *lictor*, a subordinate, to trample on the fish - *iubet* - he *persuades* his former school-friend, hence his social equal, to move away - *mihi ut abirem suadens*. Pythias, without a doubt, is behaving as one who is aware of the emotive effect that the spectacle of power as exhibited in his magisterial dress and retinue can have, especially on those of a lower rank than his. This awareness, evident in other ancient texts, including novels,<sup>353</sup> induces him to act accordingly.

On the other hand, Lucius' reaction is articulated within the context of the surreal, a context in which everything goes contrary to expectations. Clearly, Lucius' reaction, whilst not arising out of fear, is nonetheless indicative of strong feeling; yet Lucius' awareness that Hypata was the city of magic does not encompass an awareness of the pervasiveness of the structures that underpin the surreal. By insisting on his Athenian education Lucius imparts information which helps the reader to interpret Pythias' behaviour in the light of certain civic paradigms. The Roman concern, of which Marshall speaks, with the immoral manipulation of insignia, is infused into the sense of an Athenian education which imparts and promotes strong Athenian civic values.<sup>354</sup> Clearly,

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<sup>353</sup> See, for an example taken from the Latin literary canon alone, the *Satyricon* (65) where Encolpius, upon seeing Habinnas for the first time, mistakes him for a magistrate as he is wearing a white robe and not the *synthesis* which one is accustomed to wear to dinner. He immediately arises unshod, unsettled by the man's rank. It is Habinnas' *maiestas*, reflected in his white dress, that causes Encolpius to fear him (although this fear could relate, in some way, to some possible misdemeanour perpetrated by Encolpius which has not come down to us in the extant corpus; yet this would change nothing with regard to social reality). Lucius however does not feel fear (as he is Pythias' equal) but consternation. Again, the *Satyricon* provides another point of contextual value: one thinks also of Eumolpus' feigned concern at losing face before the inhabitants of Croton concomitant with the "loss" of his belongings and household slaves after a shipwreck at 117. His lack of attendants detracted from his dignity.

<sup>354</sup> On the clever overlay of Roman perspectives on the Greek setting of the novel (the latter afforded by the Greek prototype and reinforced in the novel's prologue), an overlay which sometimes results in a clever conflation of Greek and Roman perspectives, see the insightful article by Svendsen (1978) especially 102 and 104. Harrison and Winterbottom (2001) 15 point out that the prologue (*fabulam Graecanicam*, 1.1) indicates the overlay of cultural voices which is an essential aspect of the novel: "*Graecanicus* here seems to echo the

Pythias' behaviour is not consonant with these values. By his education, Lucius appears to sense that Pythias deviates somewhat from an ideal of proper magisterial behaviour.

The magistrates at the mock trial, in contrast, put their insignia to a more obviously perverse use, yet one that is nonetheless an expression of an aspect of their civic values. Although the Risus festival is reminiscent of other ritual inversion pranks, such as those expected during the Roman *saturnalia*,<sup>355</sup> its functions in this episode as merely an extension of the normal values of the city of Hypata. For the Hypatans, the surreal is what is real, inasmuch as surreal phenomena (such as transformation) appear to be everyday events. Consequently Lucius' humiliation at the mock trial, although surreal for him, is normal for the citizens of Hypata. Theirs is a city renowned for witch-craft and founded on a deity (Risus) whose honour seems to reflect inverted values.<sup>356</sup> In spite of its taking place on a set date, the mock trial underpins a permanent aspect of Hypata and its citizenry. The city's magisterial insignia are the visible sartorial manifestation of this and Lucius' reaction expresses his perplexity before this fact.

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technical use at Varro, *Ling.* 10.70, where it means 'Greek in origin but adapted for Latin use' (of words). This is literally true, since the *fabula* which ensues is Greek in origin, Latin in language, and Roman in setting." This melting-pot of codes does not, however, preclude the possibility of one cultural and linguistic mode having pre-eminence, on specific occasions in the text, over another.

<sup>355</sup> Robertson (1919) 114-115, suggests that the festival of Risus was based on a real spring festival, and further conjectures that it took place during the *Hilaria* associated by Macrobius, Julian, Damascius and others with the worship of Attis and Cybele.

<sup>356</sup> There is evidence from Plutarch that a festival of the god *Gelos* was held in Sparta. Lycurgus is said to have dedicated a little statue of laughter "and introduced seasonable jesting into their drinking parties and like diversions, to sweeten, as it were, their hardships and meagre fare" (*Lycurgus*, 25.4; translation by Bernadotte Perrin in the Loeb edition). This does not seem to be the objective of the Hypatans' festival, which also appears to be the opposite of that of the Lacedaemonians, according to the account given us of the latter by Plutarch in *Agis et Cleomenes* (9.1-2, 3-4). The Lacedaemonians have temples dedicated to Death, Laughter and Fear but are careful to pay honour in a special way to Fear, on the grounds that Fear, they believe, is the mainstay of their civil polity. Fear precedes and begets apt reverence and bravery. One can tell a lot, it seems, by whichever deity or deities a city pays most reverence to.

## Magisterial Dress in the *Florida*

Pivotal to the issue of magisterial dress and trappings is their socio-political embedding; that is, they often emerge as the focus of socio-political texts and contexts pertaining to magisterial propriety or lack thereof. Discussions of the improper use of magisterial dress and insignia, either by usurpation or the abuse of status, are endemic to ancient Roman society.<sup>357</sup> Insignia, in the Pythias episode, are the object of moral scrutiny appertaining to use and abuse of status symbols, arising out of Apuleius' concern with a perceived rupture between the signifier and the signified, the lack of correspondence that there so often is between what a garment purports to signify and what it actually does signify. As so often happens in the *Metamorphoses*, bodily tegument reflects a dual reality, exposing how far removed it is from the ideal yet how close it is to the truth of the wearer. Indeed Apuleius, in the Pythias episode, appears to be extending into his novel concerns which are scattered throughout the rest of his literary corpus, especially excerpts in the *Florida*. The panegyric nature of these speeches, rather than causing them to be seen as potentially insincere as individual specimens,<sup>358</sup> does not undermine their interpretative value for the *Metamorphoses*. The moral point that they contain does not change. The semiological content in references to insignia in Apuleius' other work is largely of a moral nature. In fragment 8 of the *Florida*, apparently addressed to a magistrate, he talks approvingly of the man who owes more to himself than to the office which he occupies, however deservedly: *Hic enim plus sibi debet quam dignitati, quamquam nec haec illi sit cum aliis promiscua.*<sup>359</sup> Magisterial

<sup>357</sup> See, on this, the article by Reinhold (1971) 275-302 on the usurpation of status and its symbols in the Roman Empire.

<sup>358</sup> See, for example, Hunink's note on fragment 9 as replete with virtues which are part and parcel of the "conventional ideal of the Roman magistrate" (2001, 120), namely *gravitas*, *austeritas*, *constantia* and *vigor*. Apuleius attempts to personalise this image of conventional austerity, he says, by tempering it with the softer epithets he brings in: *iucunda*, *mitis*, *placida* and *blandus*.

<sup>359</sup> Cf.  $\varphi$ : *tibi* for *illi*. The change of addressee demanded by the  $\varphi$  manuscript does not change the basic argument about the ideal marriage of merit with nature and intellect. The footwear (*calceatus*) mentioned in this passage is of a higher magistracy than the aedileship, most likely referring to the outfit of senators: a toga and tunic with a broad purple stripe

dress appears in the passage to serve a moral function; it is not to be assumed lightly, nor by any man who is careless of the dignity of the office: *Sed ut loquar de solo honore, non licet insignia eius vestitu vel calceatu temere usurpare.*

Lucius' reaction to Pythias' dress also recalls, by way of contrast, Apuleius' panegyric portrayal of Severianus, the proconsul of Carthage, to whom he dedicates the speech which forms fragment 9 of the *Florida*.<sup>360</sup> Severianus is good by nature, but Apuleius particularly appreciates Severianus' devotion to *cultivating* his good nature (*studium*).<sup>361</sup> He uses moderation in his dealings with the people of the province by his cheerful earnestness (*gravitas iucunda*), mild austerity (*mitis austeritas*), quiet firmness (*placida constantia*), and friendly energy (*blandusque vigor*), all of which place him firmly within the scope of the wise man as defined by Apuleius in his philosophical works. Severianus checks crime in the province by inciting respect rather than fear in the provincials: *plus pudor quam timor valuit*. He stands out as the magistrate who actually leads by example: *nam et beneficio multis commodasti et exemplo omnibus profuisti*. Transposing such knowledge of clothed magisterial propriety onto the hero of Apuleius' novel shows how Lucius has a better understanding of what behaviour befits the magisterial dress than does Pythias. Moreover, Pythias serves as a literary extension of negative figures which emerge in Apuleius' works of a more overtly ethical nature as a specimen of the man who sets his sights no higher than civic function,<sup>362</sup> represented by

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(*latus clavus*) and shoes having a crescent-shaped buckle (*calcei lunatici*), but the essence of the argument does not change. (For the senatorial dress in this fragment of the *Florida*, see Hunink (2001) 102.

<sup>360</sup> I agree with the insightful remarks of Vallette (1971, 139) on the vexed question of the meaning of the passage marked in his edition as opening section 33 of the fragment. This need not be taken as indicative of insincerity on Apuleius' part.

<sup>361</sup> See my discussion in Chapter Three on Socrates, and the importance of the cultivation of the soul and how this is expressed through clothing.

<sup>362</sup> Pythias resembles closely Apuleius' depiction of the man who is thirsty for honours, including the important ingredient of the mental instability which subdues reason and provokes anger. This description occurs in Apuleius' discussion of men who are given over to faults, of which there are four types (*DPD*, 2.15): *Culpabilium autem virorum quattuor formae sunt, quarum prima honorip[ro]jetarum est...Evenit quapropter primum illud mentibus*

civic dress, in this case, the aedile insignia. This fact places him in counterpoint to the man who sets his sights on higher ground, namely, that of philosophy, a higher preoccupation which is also vulnerable to misrepresentation by the (mis)use of its dress, a misrepresentation which Apuleius deems lamentable and dangerous.<sup>363</sup> By the fact alone of his attraction to a lower life Pythias is fixed in Hypata, the domain of witchcraft.

### Cicero and Magisterial Propriety

Further moral investment of magisterial behaviour in the Pythias scene is provided both by Cicero's *de Officiis* and his letters, mostly those written between 60 and 59 to his brother Quintus, who was proconsul in Asia from 61 to 58. The proconsular office is of course a higher ranking magistracy than the office of aedile and one which enjoys a greater degree of authority (*imperium*), and the geographical location and period of its tenure are far removed from the time and geographical location in which are set the *Metamorphoses* and Apuleius' rhetorical and philosophical works, but the advice Cicero gives his brother I believe can be applied to throw light on Roman attitudes to official dress of all periods. Moreover, as merely one of the degrees on the *cursus honorum*, an unpopular aedileship does not bode well for the man who wishes to go further up the honorary scale.

The Pythias episode does not appear in the *Onos*. Apuleius' insertion of this scene may be ascribed within the limits of its Greek setting to the perceived "Romanizing" aspect of the *Metamorphoses*, whether this perception is expressed explicitly or implicitly.<sup>364</sup> Certainly the silence and stupefaction of

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*vitium, cum vigor rationis elanguerit superiorque et robustior fuerit animae portio in qua ira dominator.*

<sup>363</sup> Aware also of the usurpation of the philosopher's dress by those who are least worthy of wearing it, he refers, in the *Florida*, to the *palliata mendicabula* who aim to deceive those who are unsure in their own mind (that is, have a wrong perception, *Florida*, 9.9: *nec ... prava similitudo falsos animi habeat*) of what a true philosopher is. Such men are only philosophers as far as their dress (7.10): *imperiti pallio tenus philosophos imitentur*.

<sup>364</sup> On the Romanizing voice in the *Metamorphoses*, see Summers (1970), 521-522 who uses Roman law as an indication of the Romanness of the justice depicted in Pythias' tale, Svendsen (1978), especially 102 and 104, and Harrison (2000), 2-3. *Florida* 9 provides another analogue, one more philosophical, in the figure of Hippias of Elis, discussed earlier on in the excerpt. It seems that for Apuleius, Hippias' *autarkeia* resided rather too closely in

Lucius before Pythias' behaviour, a silence which speaks volumes, can be taken as indicative of a preordained and inculcated sense of magisterial propriety, such as occurs in Latin texts of a cautionary and prescriptive nature. Cicero stands as one of the best examples of this Romanizing voice.

### (i) The *De Officiis*

Other scholars have noted the relevance of the *De Officiis*<sup>365</sup> to the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>366</sup> James and O'Brien perceive a connection between the *De*

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its external signs (namely, his shoes, his home-spun purple tunic, his elaborately wrought baldric, his white *pallium*, his *crepidae*, his gold ring and his oil flask), all work of his own craftsmanship. Epictetus too, in his *Discourses* (4.11.19-26, 31-36), speaks of those philosophers whose philosophy exists merely at the level of their dress.

<sup>365</sup>The relevant passage from the *De Officiis* (3.58-60) is given here in its entirety: *Quod si vituperandi, qui reticuerunt, quid de iis existimandum est, qui orationis vanitatem adhibuerunt? C. Canius, eques Romanus, nec infacetus et satis litteratus, cum se Syracusas otianti, ut ipse dicere solebat, non negotiandi causa contulisset, dictitabat se hortulos aliquos emere velle, quo invitare amicos et ubi se oblectare sine interpellatoribus posset. Quod cum percrebuisset, Pythius ei quidam, qui argentariam faceret Syracusis, venales quidem se hortos non habere, sed licere uti Canio, si vellet, ut suis, et simul ad cenam hominem in hortos invitavit in posterum diem. Cum ille promisisset, tum Pythius, qui esset ut argentarius apud omnes ordines gratiosus, piscatores ad se convocavit et ab iis petivit, ut ante suos hortulos postridie piscarentur, dixitque, quid eos facere vellet. Ad cenam tempore venit Canius; **opipare** a Pythio adparatum convivium, cumbarum ante oculos multitudine; pro se quisque, quod ceperat, adferebat, ante pedes Pythii pisces abiciebantur. Tum Canius: "Quaeso", inquit, "quid est hoc, Pythi? tantumne piscium? tantumne cumbarum?" Et ille: "Quid mirum?" inquit, "hoc loco est Syracusis quidquid est piscium, hic aquatio, hac villa isti carere non possunt." Incensus Canius cupiditate contendit a Pythio, ut venderet; gravate ille primo; quid multa? impetrat. Emit homo cupidus et locuples tanti, quanti Pythius voluit, et emit instructos; nomina facit, negotium conficit. Invitat Canius postridie familiares suos, venit ipse mature; scalmum nullum videt, quaerit ex proximo vicino, num feriae quaedam piscatorum essent, quod eos nullos videret. "Nullae, quod sciam," inquit; "sed hic piscari nulli solent. Itaque heri mirabar quid accidisset." Stomachari Canius; sed quid faceret? Nondum enim C. Aquilius, collega et familiaris meus, protulerat de dolo malo formulas; in quibus ipsis, cum ex eo quaereretur, quid esset dolus malus, respondebat: cum esset aliud simulatum, aliud actum. Hoc quidem sane luculente, ut ab homine perito definiendi. Ergo et Pythius et omnes aliud agentes, aliud simulantes perfidi, improbi, malitiosi. Nullum igitur eorum factum potest utile esse, cum sit tot vitiis inquinatum. The Latin text is that of Miller (1913).*

*Officiis* and the *Metamorphoses* on the observation that Cicero's text contains within it an expressed concern with *dignitas*: "*Dignitas* is associated with the status necessary for and accruing from the status of office holding (for instance *dignitas consularis* – a person worthy of being a consul)." <sup>367</sup> Certainly, as a book dealing with the moral obligations imposed on man in and by his socio-cultural milieu, the application of the *de Officiis* to the codes of behaviour circumscribing magisterial function and authority link the two passages over time and geographical space, especially as a considerable part of Cicero's treatise treats of the duties of the magisterial sphere, including the aedileship (2, 57-60; although in this case, Cicero concentrates rather on the duty of public *largitio*). The similarities between Apuleius' novel and Cicero's treatise on obligations reside superficially in the coincidence of the name of a significant character, Pythias, and the role of fish. In both texts the character named Pythias serves as a negative type, a counter-exemplum. In the *Metamorphoses* the character named Pythias is not a businessman, but an official whose office is concerned with matters of food-supply and commercial accountability and regulation. He too, in his capacity as aedile, would confront people of all social ranks. The fish are the visible and tangible object through which are played out the polemics of the episode – in Cicero's case, commercial morals, in Apuleius' case, power and perception. The basic issue of the two texts is therefore quite different, yet there are similarities. In both texts, the character under scrutiny is depicted negatively; they both have the same flaw, externalised differently in accordance with the different priorities and natures of the texts concerned. Both texts deal with the issue of appearances and behaviour – in the case of Cicero's Pythius - spelt slightly differently, 'Pythius' - he is the epitome of the hypocritical businessman whom

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<sup>366</sup>Both Krabbe (2003, 15, 160-161) and Norden (1912, 173) also perceive connections between the *Metamorphoses* and the *De Officiis* (Krabbe also detects a generic link between the two characters of the same name), but the connecting elements which they perceive to exist between the two texts are different to those which I perceive to connect them, and neither focuses on the importance of the spectacle of dress in the episode.

<sup>367</sup>James and O'Brien (2006), 236. The concern of James and O'Brien in this article is focussed rather more on Lucius' attempts at retaining his own dignity in the face of assaults on it. Given that the word *dignitas* has connotations that can be located in the sphere of public duty I suggest that their argument about notions of *dignitas* in the novel can be applied to perceptions of correct magisterial behaviour in the novel.

Cicero so despises in the *De Officiis*, appearing to be one thing and being another (3.25): *Ergo et Pythius et omnes aliud agentes, aliud simulantes perfidi, improbi, malitiosi*. Cicero states clearly the influence that Pythius has in his capacity as banker with all ranks of society: *qui esset ut argentarius apud omnes ordines gratiosus*. This association inflects his character with an undesirable quality. In the case of Pythius, his dealings with the people are determined not by money but by force. The empty words of the businessman – *orationis vanitatem* – are matched by the hollowness of the magistrate’s insignia and the boorish, overbearing pomposity of Pythias’ speech to the old man who sold Lucius the fish (1.25): *voce asperrima increpans*. Both men degrade their position of privilege; Lucius’ character, however, more so by indulging in behaviour which is deemed unbecoming of it. Confirming this depiction, the ideal magistrate as portrayed by Apuleius in the *Florida* and as implied (namely by his absence) throughout the *Metamorphoses*,<sup>368</sup> is the sum of the advice given by Cicero to his brother on this (see below).

The *De Officiis* can also be deemed relevant to the Pythias episode because of the occurrence of the rare word *opipare*<sup>369</sup> in both texts. Certainly, it cannot be denied that the *piscatum opiparem* selected by Lucius and intended for a

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<sup>368</sup> See in Book 10, where Lucius, in asinine form, bemoans the ease with which judges, termed *vulturi togati* (10.33), are seduced into pronouncing false judgement for personal advantage.

<sup>369</sup> *Opiparis/opiparus* reappears in various forms throughout the *Metamorphoses*: 2.19; 5.8; 5.15; 6.19; 7.11; 9.33. Cicero uses it again in his letter to Atticus (13.52.1). It is also found in Plautus’ play the *Bacchides* (373) of a richly decorated house. On the particularly rich and manifest occurrence of Plautine language in the episode, see Shanzer (1996) 450 who analyses the scene in the light of what it owes to “New Comedies”. She argues strongly for both linguistic and thematic parallels between the Pythias scene and the various comedies she adduces as part of her argument. Keulen too (2007) 431 insists on the comic register of the word, and refers the reader to the GCA commentary on Book 10 (2000) 206 for more on the linguistic and generic register. I do not deny the strong influence of Plautus and comedy on Apuleius’ novel. My argument is not a refutation of this source of influence, but I wish to infer the infiltration of other genres. Given the inversions that take place in Hypata, Apuleius appears to be recontextualising genre. In spite of the words’ comic overtones (Keulen, 2007, 452), the use of *obstupidus* and *obstupesco* is appropriate to the surreal setting. Generic promises are often overturned in the *Metamorphoses* in order to privilege priorities of another sort. Hence, this scene moves from comedy to something else, just as the story of the wicked stepmother does at 10.2.

dinner worthy of one of his and his host's social status is not converted into the *opipare...convivium* laid out by Pythius, the banker of Cicero's story. Instead, the fish are turned into a mashed pulp by the magistrate. Moreover, in both texts, the fish function as part of a performative display, in Pythius' case, designed to dissimulate the truth about a business deal; in Pythias', designed to underscore the force of his authority and intentions. Furthermore, the occurrence of this relatively rare word in this episode imbues it with an interpretive function inasmuch as the word serves as a tool of perceptual leverage. It is not without significance for the interpretation of the passage and of the characters involved that the fish are deemed *piscatum opiparem* by Lucius, but are termed *quisquillas* and *nugamenta* by Pythias, a change in appreciation of the value of the fish which is consonant with the competing perceptions in the story.<sup>370</sup> Ironically, by the end of the scene, the fish have indeed become trash. Whether he uses these terms sincerely or merely in a theatrical sense, wishing to make a display of his invested authority, the fish operate as indices of power-struggle and as affirming of hierarchical structures, although it must be pointed out that Pythias is the only one of the two men engaged in this "status anxiety". Certainly, in light of the juridical connotations of *postliminio*<sup>371</sup> and the highly evocative gesture of laying hands on a person,<sup>372</sup> Pythias appears to engage in a power play by forcefully and

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<sup>370</sup> *Contra* Keulen (2007) 23-26, who sees these terms as engaging the text in a metaliterary discourse, and as programmatic of the novel as a metaliterary text, by their occurrence in contemporaneous authors, like Fronto and Aulus Gellius. He continues this line of argument in his analysis of the recognition scene between Lucius and Pythias where he claims Lucius to be "an expert" at "the recognition of stock types" of which Pythias is an example (2007, 436). Moreover, where such terms are indicative of some point to be made that occurs in texts outside the *Metamorphoses*, I tend to see them as evocative of the moral point made by Apuleius himself in the *Apologia* where the fish function as a secondary concern which has been given undue importance in the trial by his detractors (34.7). Interpreted in this light, the fish become metaphorical of Pythias' preoccupations, hence, reflective of Pythias' own character. Pythias, then, is an example of the type of man whose priorities in life are misplaced.

<sup>371</sup> On *postliminio* see Norden (1912) 84-86; Molt (1938) 109; Gianotti (1986) 27; Krabbe (2003) 156-257; Keulen (2007) 279, 444.

<sup>372</sup> On *manus inicere* in the *Metamorphoses* see Norden (1912) 5 (and 78, note 2), and Molt (1938). By the act of putting your hand on someone (*manus iniectio*), you are enacting your

physically relocating Lucius within a locus of exchange and negotiation. Moments later, Pythias withholds from Lucius his right to negotiate, a right which he had only moments previously enjoyed by haggling with the old fishmonger to mutual satisfaction. Ultimately, for all his show of status, Apuleius' Pythias, without becoming a hypocrite, lowers himself to the moral if not social level of Cicero's banker, thereby reinterpreting Cicero's tale in the light of issues of status and duty and what these mean.

The two texts part company when we look into the driving force of the characters. Cicero portrays his Pythius as being typical of his class, and is hence indignant. The basis of his indignation is clearly stated (*et omnes aliud agentes, aliud simulant*). Cicero's reaction to Pythius the banker is consequently less tempered than Lucius' reaction to Pythias the magistrate;<sup>373</sup> but Lucius' reaction of consternation to Pythias' behaviour seems to arise out of an understanding of the duties of Pythias' office which, apparently, diverge from Pythias' own sense of what those duties consist of - mere abuse (*contumeliae*), and what they promise to be under his aedileship: *Sed non impune. Iam enim faxo scias, quem ad modum sub meo magisterio mali debeant coherceri*. Whether Pythias is typical or atypical of the provincial magistrate in Hypata is irrelevant; Lucius is shocked at his behaviour. The overriding thrust of the Apuleian narrative is therefore a concern with the connection between signs and power.

## (ii) Cicero's Letters to Quintus

Reviving the concern with power and its expression in external symbols, we need only turn to the second Ciceronian source, his letters to his brother, Quintus, who was proconsul in Asia from 61 to 58, in which Cicero expresses a concern over the correct and incorrect way to compose oneself as magistrate and wear the magisterial insignia.

In his letters to his brother, Cicero stresses the necessity to resist the temptation of becoming a slave to official rank and its visual symbols,

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right to seize a person in your *potestas* (for this, see Quintilian 7.7.9; Valerius Maximus 5.4.5).

<sup>373</sup> This reaction could also be the result of afterthought; but this is a reading which is not necessary for the interpretation I make of the scene.

expressing concern over the correct and incorrect way to compose oneself as magistrate, especially in the company of lictors, and to wear the magisterial insignia. Cicero stresses the importance of the value of meekness in his brother's dealings with the provincials and Romans under his governorship, whether they are of an official capacity or not. We see him in the letter promote the importance of *continentia*,<sup>374</sup> subsumed under the various guises of *lenitas*<sup>375</sup> and *humanitas*,<sup>376</sup> and praising his brother for improving himself in this respect;<sup>377</sup> to behave otherwise – that is, in accordance with the dictates of *iracundia*, the vice to which Quintus has fallen victim - is the sign, Cicero believes, of a disordered mind. Apuleius' Pythias may or may not have actually succumbed to *iracundia*, preferring merely to keep people in their place by making a very public display of his authority. Lucius' calm negotiation with the fish-monger, as becoming a gentleman of his social rank, compared with Pythias' unrestrained and harsh display of his authority, places him above the official dignity of his friend. Interiorly, it dislocates the mental relationship of equality which Lucius presumably had with Pythias, making Lucius feel uncomfortably ambiguous about his friend. Although both Lucius and Pythias are equal in terms of their social league and have had the same education, they are separated at the psychological level by a great distance. Pythias' *habitus* as both dress and condition of soul reflects *imperium* and embodies this fracture in their relationship. Similarly to the case of Aristomenes' friendship with Socrates, the bond between the two men is brought under

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<sup>374</sup> Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1.7: *Quid est enim negoti continere eos quibus praesis, si te ipse contineas?* All quotations from this letter are taken from the Loeb edition, 2002, edited and translated by Shackleton Bailey. I follow the letter number in Arabic numerals and the section in the letter.

<sup>375</sup> Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1.13: *Sit lictor non suae sed tuae lenitatis apparitor, maioraque praeferant fasces illi ac securae dignitatis insignia quam potestatis*; 1.22: *Quod si haec lenitas grata Romae est, ubi tanta adrogantia est, tam immoderata libertas, tam infinita hominum licentia, denique tot magistratus, tot auxilia, tanta vis populi, tanta senatus auctoritas, quam iucunda tandem praetoris comitas in Asia potest esse!*

<sup>376</sup> Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1.21: *Haec illius severitas acerba videretur, nisi multis condimentis humanitatis mitigaretur.*

<sup>377</sup> Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1.39: *Atque in hoc genere multo te esse iam commodiorem mitioremque nuntiant.*

scrutiny and its foundations are tested.<sup>378</sup> The visual medium of clothing is a spring-board to these considerations, underpinned in Pythias' case by what Lucius appears to think of as behaviour incongruous with rank.

Pythias' *lixae* and *virgae* and his magisterial dress (*habitum...magistratui congruentem*) are an outward manifestation rather of *potestas* than *dignitas* (1.1.39-40). By his public and brash abuse of the elderly fish-monger Pythias exhibits the behaviour of one who has succumbed to a fault (*vitium*) which Cicero believes to be the sign of a disordered, or rather, feeble mind (*Quod vitium... levis esse animi atque infirmi videtur*),<sup>379</sup> of particular importance in the public domain where it is seen in its worst light.<sup>380</sup> Apuleius too, in his exposition of the teachings of Plato, considers such boastful, arrogant behaviour to be a manifestation of imbalance in the soul,<sup>381</sup> an imbalance

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<sup>378</sup> Apuleius' Pythias serves also as an example of the damaging effects of the changes in personal fortune on friendships, a concern expressed in Cicero's treatise on friendship (*De Amicitia*, 11, where the trappings of office can be subsumed under *Fortuna*).

<sup>379</sup> Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1. 37: *Omnes enim qui istinc veniunt ita de tua virtute, integritate, humanitate commemorant ut in tuis summis laudibus excipiant unam iracundiam. Quod vitium cum in hac privata cottidianaque vita levis esse animi atque infirmi videtur, tum vero nihil est tam deforme quam ad summum imperium etiam acerbiter naturae adiungere.* Cicero goes so far as to claim in his letter that, where his brother must err, he would prefer it to be on the side of leniency, as the opposite tendency is unbecoming a man of Quintus' rank (*ibid*, 1. 39-40): *Quae (sc. Maledicta et contumeliae) cum abhorrent a litteris, ab humanitate, tum vero contraria sunt imperio ac dignitati... summa levitas, quae tamen ut in malis acerbitati anteponenda est.*

<sup>380</sup> Seneca weaves a connection among dress, physiognomy, rank and psychological servility to all these into his famous letter to Lucilius on style as reflective of character (*Ep.* 114). If the soul is weak, so will our style be, and since the soul is our king (*Rex noster est animus*), it is our duty to see to it that the kingship which it represents does not slip into tyranny. The slightest imbalance in our soul can lead to this: *animus noster modo rex est, modo tyrannus...Ubi vero inpotens, cupidus, delicatus est, transit in nomen detestabile ac dirum et fit tyrannus.* Insignia of rank can represent one or the other of two things: the benign influence worthy of a wise king or other leader who is willing to listen and enact justice, or the despotic scare tactics of a tyrant. The tyranny which Seneca has foremost in mind in this letter is the tyranny of soul associated with pleasure-seeking activities associated with the tyrant; yet any imbalance in the soul can cause it to grow weak, and this can be manifested in many ways.

<sup>381</sup> Auerbach, in his discussion of the scene (2003) 60-63, is tempted to attribute Pythias' behaviour to insanity, claiming that the "gruesome distortion suggests the consistency of

which leads men to boast of a knowledge which they in reality do not have (DPD, 1.18): *Sed aegritudinem mentis stultitiam esse dicit eamque in duas partes dividit; harum unam inperitiam nominat,...et inperitiae morbum ex gloriosa iactatione contingere, cum eorum, quorum ignarus est, doctrinam aliquis scientiamque mentitur.*<sup>382</sup> By transferring a specifically theoretical knowledge to a rather more practical sphere of action, such as commercial transaction, we can see how Pythias claims for himself knowledge of how to deal with fraudulent fish-merchants (2.25): *Qua contentus morum severitudine meus Pythias ac mihi, ut abirem, suadens: 'sufficit mihi, o Luci', inquit, 'seniculi tanta haec contumelia.'* In contrast with Pythias' brand of severity, the severity of the lictor of C. Octavius who was Praetor in 61, was tempered by kindness (*Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1.21): *Haec illius severitas acerba videretur, nisi multis condimentis humanitatis mitigaretur.* (The food metaphors seem quite apt in context.) The *severitas acerba* which Cicero says he so deplores is unambiguously reflected in Pythias' *morum severitudine*, harshness of manner, or dealing. It is perhaps worthy of note that *severitudine* (from *severitudo*) is Lucius' term for the behaviour exhibited by his friend; Pythias unapologetically refers to it as *contumelia*, abuse or humiliation, a particularly harsh form of *severitudo*. Cicero says in the same letter to his brother, that such *maledicta* and *contumeliae*, abuse and insults, cannot coexist with the dignity of his brother's rank (*Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*, 1.39): *contraria sunt imperio ac dignitati. Imperium and dignitas* obviously must be mutually reflexive, and share some of the same semantic space.

Whilst Pythias' behaviour may not accord with his proper magisterial power, it is certainly consonant with his perception of his role, embodied in his magisterial costume and insignia. It is impossible to imagine what went through Lucius' mind when he saw his friend berate the old man, *pro aedilitatis*

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insanity" (60-61) but cannot wholly embrace the idea due to the lack of evidence in the text. Pythias is either "wilfully malicious (which he had no reason to be) or insane (but there is no reference to his not being quite right in his mind)" (62). He leaves it up to the reader to decide: "Is it silliness, is it malice, is it insanity?" (63).

<sup>382</sup> I take mind (*aegritudinem mentis*) and soul (*levis esse animi atque infirmi*) to refer to the same thing on this occasion. The Latin words *mens* and *animus* can be interchangeable in such contexts.

*imperio*.<sup>383</sup> Was Lucius, perhaps, and behind him, Apuleius, being ironic, and expressing this irony through oxymoron? Or was he referring to *imperium* as Pythias perceived it? It is an important point, as Pythias' claim to *imperium* is legally absurd, *imperium* being technically the privilege of senior magistrates like consuls and praetors,<sup>384</sup> as well as military command. This being the case, Pythias' use of *lictors* (where *lixa* and *officialem*, especially attended by *virgae*, can be seen to infer a *lictor*) is a reflection of a self-perception (or rather, anxiety) by which he gives himself the status and attitude of a senior magistrate, to which he does not by right have a claim.<sup>385</sup> In the present case, in writing *pro aedilitatis imperio* Apuleius is exploiting the conflict between the general meaning of *imperium* (power) and the technical and legal sense of the word. The latter, more specific meaning seems likely in the light of the topical content of the scene and the context of the various occurrences of *imperium* in the juridical and rhetorical writings of Cicero, wherein doublets like *cum imperio ac potestate*, which usage smacks of the *lex Cornelia de repetundis*, occur in contexts of coercion and threats. This usage is applicable to the case in the Pythias episode, likewise replete with juridical terms, such as *postliminio*,

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<sup>383</sup> It is interesting to discern the shades of connotation that translators read into these words, *pro aedilitatis imperio*. Addlington translates them "by reason of"; Hanson, "befitting the authority of his office". By his translation, Hanson appears to understand that Pythias' behaviour is consonant with his office. He therefore takes no account of Lucius' reaction nor seeks to explain it by any note. Such a reading is, in actual fact, inconsistent with the attitudes of the period towards the symbols of status and the authority they are meant to represent, at least in the eyes of Cicero and Apuleius. This has been shown in the texts we have looked at.

<sup>384</sup> Keulen (2007) 446; see also Summers (1970) 521-522, who seems to suggest that Pythias' behaviour is in some way in keeping with that of a hybrid literary and social type: "Lucius speaks to us of this aedile's *imperium*, and, of course, this chief magisterial power of Rome is not suited to the office. It is suited to the overbearing Pythias, however, and consequently Lucius is the victim of this at once Roman and at the same time provincial magistrate whose friend he supposedly was. The satiric point is obvious."

<sup>385</sup> Molt, however, points out (1938, 108) that there exists an inscription which appears to suggest one case, notably in the colony of Nemausus, where an aedile *did* have the use of *lictors*. Molt takes this to suggest that aediles *did*, on rare occasions, and only in the provinces, have the use of *lictors*, which indicated a kind of temporary *imperium*: "*Fortasse hoc iis contigerat, quod interdum imperium quoddam habuerunt.*" The extent of inversion in Hypata may have encompassed even magisterial offices.

*consilium* and *co(h)erceri*.<sup>386</sup> Some could maintain that Pythias' overbearing reaction to the fishmonger was justified in the light of what we are told to be the aedile's duty in Ulpian's *Digest*, 21. 1. 37: *ubique...curant aediles, ne emptores a venditoribus circumveniantur*.<sup>387</sup> Numerous ancient sources, such as Seneca's *De Vita Beata*,<sup>388</sup> inform us of the fear associated with the more police-like function of the aedile. However Lucius was not frightened but shocked by his friend's behaviour. Whether Pythias did have *imperium* or whether he was illicitly aspiring to a rank which held *imperium* which would have permitted harsher measures, the effect is the same: the *lixas et virgas et habitum* have become conflated metonymically into *imperium*, especially of a military kind, and he is using the authority invested in him as aedile in a manner unbecoming of his position.<sup>389</sup>

The co-existence of higher and lower registers of language and tone (especially comic, juridical and commercial *versus* moral, with specifically

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<sup>386</sup> On *postliminio* see footnote 371; on *consilium* (used ironically, and somewhat divorced from a proper legal context) see Norden (1912) 149 and Summers (1970) 513, 518-519 and 521 on *coercitio* in this scene. On *indicare* see also Norden (1912) 173.

<sup>387</sup> "The aedile's duty in every place is to see to it that the buyer is not manipulated by the seller." Translation is mine. Domitius Ulpianus, the compiler of the *Digest* and of other works treating of official duties, was himself made a *praefectus annonae*. He is attested as holding this function in March 222 AD, early in the reign of Severus Alexander (*OCD*, 1996, 240). Krabbe (2003, 388), points to passages from Plato's *Laws* which could justify Pythias' behaviour. Keulen (2007, 438) likewise analyses Pythias' role as parallel to that of the *agoranomos*.

<sup>388</sup> Seneca, *De Vita Beata*, 7.3: *voluptatem latitantem saepius ac tenebras captantem circa balinea ac sudatoria ac loca aedilem metuentia*. Perry (1929b, 395, note 3) remarks on fear of the law as a motif that runs all through the *Metamorphoses*. Picking up on the legalistic inferences in the novel, Summers (1970, 531) analyses the role of crime and punishment to show how they constitute a pattern which works as a unifying element in the tales.

<sup>389</sup> Cf. Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem* 1.35: *ut remoto imperio et vi potestatis et fascium publicanos cum graecis gratia atque auctoritate coniungas*. However, the injunction against the use of harsher forms of control could in this case be reflective rather of the esteem in which the *publicani* as a class are held: *ut commemores quanta sit in publicanis dignitas, quantum nos illi ordini debeamus*. The exclusively military *imperium* which Pythias embodies by his actions reminds the reader of the military connotations behind his name. For this connotation, see Seneca's *Epistles*, 82.24 and Frontinus' *Strategemata*, 4.7.37 (which recalls an anecdote recounted in Plutarch). This kind of *imperium* becomes him.

Ciceronian overtones) underpins the surreal aspect of the Pythias scene<sup>390</sup> while confirming the cautionary nature of this episode in the *Metamorphoses*. The bones of satire are exposed. Its location in a market-place keeps it entrenched firmly in the sphere of commerce and status and all that this so often connotes in Apuleius' novel – servility to trappings and unequal exchanges; (evident for the first time in the novel by Socrates' handing over his clothes to Meroe, 1.7), and which is resumed at the novel's conclusion when Lucius exchanges his former life for a new one, symbolised by an exchange of clothing and the dedication of clothes in the temple (11.28-29). Notwithstanding this fact, the mercantile setting of the scene also serves to express the inversion of philosophical values in a city which is infected by the pervasive practice of witchcraft, for all its supposed legislation designed to counter this. Magisterial dress and insignia reflect liminality in this world, where *dignitas* and *imperium* vie for the same space, and both claim ownership of the magisterial *insignia*. The cautionary resonances highlighted by comparison with Cicero's theoretical writing and correspondence cooperate towards the subtle ethical tone that Apuleius gives to a scene which is apparently concerned only with commercial exchange and appearances. Pythias appears to be trapped in a world of signifiers which are false, even deviant, by his perception and application of them. In his mind, the expression of power amounts to one-upmanship. A position of responsibility and service to the people and the Empire has therefore become little more than an opportunity of self-aggrandizement. Pythias' dress, behaviour and speech converge to exteriorise his pompous nature and servility to the trappings of power.<sup>391</sup>

### Other Approaches to the Pythias Episode

The Pythias passage has attracted a lot of scholarly attention and scholars have previously attempted to explain it by reference to a variety of

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<sup>390</sup> Nethercut (1968, 115) also focuses on the surreal effects of the mirth of the Hypatan populace jarring against Lucius' humiliation: "the juxtaposition of icy horror and *risus*."

<sup>391</sup> Although this aspect of the magistracy is invisible in the *Metamorphoses*, the fact that one of the aedile's functions was to enforce the sumptuary legislation of the time makes Pythias' behaviour seem all the more surprising.

contexts. Shanzer,<sup>392</sup> May,<sup>393</sup> and Keulen<sup>394</sup> for example, look at this episode in the light of what it owes to literary precedents in the field of comedy. Pythias becomes another example of the “over-officious aedile”, to be compared with the pushy slave Pinacium in Plautus’ play entitled *Stichus*, 288-289<sup>395</sup> whose zeal Pythias shares, or the fussy aedile to whom Neptune is compared in another of his plays, the *Rudens* 372-374<sup>396</sup> (a particularly apposite analogy given the motif of the rejection of rubbish which occurs in both texts), and Lucius is established on a parallel with the comic parasite whose efforts to provide a meal of fish for himself come to nothing. Ciaffi<sup>397</sup> analyses the character of Pythias from the perspective of “contaminazione” with characters from the *Satyricon*. Winkler on the other hand speaks of a “veiled Isiac allusion”<sup>398</sup> and Derchain and Hubaux, much like Grimal, who brings Pythias’

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<sup>392</sup>Shanzer (1996) 445-454.

<sup>393</sup>May (2007) 153.

<sup>394</sup>Keulen (2007) 438; 448.

<sup>395</sup>Plautus, *Stichus*, 288-89: *lascivibundum tam lubentem currere? harundinem fert sportulamque et hamulum piscarium*. The correlation between Pythias and Pinacium appears to be based on the combination of fish and zeal in the play.

<sup>396</sup>Plautus, *Rudens*, 372-4: *Novi, Neptunus ita solet, quamvis fastidiosus aedilis est: si quae improbae sunt merces, iactat omnes*.

<sup>397</sup>Ciaffi (1960) 111. He sees a connection between Pythias’ outburst and the angry, vocal explosion of Bargates, the *procurator insulae* before Eumolpus (Petronius, *Satyricon*, 96,5): *rabiosa barbaraque [voce]*. However, taking up a suggestion made by Segebade (1880, 327) on a direct linguistic parallel between the two texts, he sees, in Apuleius’ novel, a conflation of Bargates with Marcus Mannicius in the *Satyricon*. As Segebade points out, the *sed non impune: iam enim faxo scias* of Pythias (1.25) is a literal transference of the *sed non impune: iam enim faxo sciatis* of the *deversitor* in the *Satyricon* (95.3). *Faxo* is found elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* (1.12; 8.12), as is *iam faxo* (4.25; 4.30; 5.30), but its being preceded by *sed non impune* (also found in the *Satyricon* at 81.6) ensures a Petronian link. Rosenblüth, on the other hand, sees a connection between Pythias and the aedile from the *Satyricon*, Safinius, spoken of so glowingly by Ganymede (44.12). In this case, as Ciaffi says (111), we are dealing with an anti-Safinius. Under Safinius, Ganymede says, things went well in the province (*Itaque illo tempore annona pro luto erat*); but now, because of soaring food prices, business is bad: *Haec colonia retroversus crescit*. In the *Metamorphoses* it is rather the aedile Pythias who accuses the old man of reducing Hypata, the flower of Thessaly, to a barren rock.

<sup>398</sup>Winkler (1985) 317-318.

name to bear on the whole episode,<sup>399</sup> detect a cryptic allusion to an Egyptian rite, prefiguring Lucius' salvation by Isis.<sup>400</sup> Pythias' name has been interpreted in various ways by different scholars, often with a view to explaining the relevance of his character to the rest of the novel.<sup>401</sup> Auerbach, in his monumental study on mimesis in literature, highlights the entirely surreal aspect to the scene, relating his impression of it as a "haunting and gruesome distortion of reality."<sup>402</sup> The surreal is an aspect which I believe underpins how dress in the episode must be read.

Pivotal in many of these readings of the episode is the satirical element. This is obvious and undeniable. Scobie locates the episode firmly within the "Roman satirical tradition in which the exposure of the pretentious airs and graces of municipal magistrates is a topos", as do Zimmerman and Keulen who compare the scene of Pythias' appearance with similar images of magisterial pomposity in Horace, Persius and Juvenal.<sup>403</sup> The satirical tradition, too, often makes specific mention of the dress of whichever magistrate is under discussion as eliciting an emotional response (although there are differences as

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<sup>399</sup> Grimal (1971) 343: "Nom pastophore, qui semble donner à l'événement une valeur de présage. »

<sup>400</sup> Derchain and Hubaux (1958) 100-104. They also interpret the whole episode as having a religious significance because of Pythias' name and the presence of fish.

<sup>401</sup> Krabbe (2003, 15) suggests a possible connection with Pythagoras, by reason of the consonance of the names (*Pythias*, *Pythagoras*), but also detects irony and points to the possibility of "multiple overtones" with regard to Pythias' name. Any allusion to Pythagoras, she says, would naturally be ironic. Pythagoras' association with fish in Apuleius' *Apologia* (31.2ff) is, as May suggests (2006, 90), most likely to be determined by Pythagoras' belief in metempsychosis, although this is not explicitly stated in the *Apologia*. A link between Pythias and the Pythian oracle has also been suggested (Fick-Michel, 1991, 320; Krabbe, 2003, 14-15). The name Pythias occurs in the *Ars Poetica* of Horace as a slave's name, as it does in Terence's play, *Eunuchus*. The comical side of the whole scene is further enhanced by the militaristic overtones of the name: in the Loeb collection (2006) of Seneca's letters a note to the translation by Gummere informs us that "pythius" was the name given to a large machine used for knocking down walls. It is a nickname, much like the modern "long Tom" (see Seneca's *Epistles*, 82.24; and also, Frontinus' *Strategemata*, 4.7.37). Pythias, in his overweening zeal to be perceived in a certain way, certainly manages to knock down reputations, and override the personal wishes even of a former school-friend.

<sup>402</sup> Auerbach (2003), 60-63.

<sup>403</sup> Scobie (1975) 127; Zimmerman (2006) 94-95; Keulen (2007) 436.

the magistrates in the satirical tradition are often of a higher grade ), and focuses narrowly on the magistrate's behaviour.<sup>404</sup>

Certainly, Lucius' reaction is close to that of the traditional figure of satire: the sneer of the satirist is driven by ridicule and scorn; Lucius, although he neither laughs nor sneers, is undeniably scornful. He also seems to express shocked surprise. At this point he parts company with the sharply moralising speaker of Juvenalian satire who expresses fierce indignation (*indignatio*), reserving such an outburst later in the novel, at Book 10, where he watches, at a safe physical distance, the pantomime.<sup>405</sup> Lucius does, at this early point, appear to be using irony;<sup>406</sup> but this is not only the tool of the satirist. In Book 10 the direct address to a specific audience (at least in Lucius' mind) points to a more socially aware and thoughtful response to the spectacle before Lucius. Lucius' reaction to Pythias' behaviour is not that of the fiercely indignant satirist. Other things have to happen to him before he reaches the point, and the consciousness, of *indignatio*.

However, I take issue with those scholars who focus too narrowly on the perceived influence of satire on the episode. These scholars fail to understand that the sense of immediacy in Apuleius' novel is lacking in the satiric tradition. In the previous satirical expressions of officious magistrates the speaker writes as if he *anticipates* the officious actions of the magistrate. This does not appear to be the case for Lucius. In spite of the novel's authorship, being written by

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<sup>404</sup> Behaviour alone - Persius, 1.129-130: *sese aliquem credens Italo quod honore supinus/fregerit heminas Arreti aedilis iniquas*. Dress and behaviour - Horace, 1.5.34-36: *Fundos Aufidio Lusco "praetore" libenter/linquimus, insani ridentes praemia scribae,/praetextam et latum clavum prunaeque vatillum*; Juvenal, 10.33-40: *perpetuo risu pulmonem agitare solebat/Democritus, quamquam non essent urbibus illis/prametextae, trabeae, fasces, lectica, tribunal./quid si vidisset praetorem curribus altis extantem et medii sublimem pulvere Circi/in tunica Iovis et pictae Sarrana ferentem/ex umeris aulaea togae magnaue coronae/tantum orbem, quanto cervix non sufficit ulla?*

<sup>405</sup> 10.33: *Quid ergo miramini, vilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo vero togati vulturi...Sed ne quis indignationis meae reprehendat impetum secum sic reputans 'Ecce nunc patiemur philosophantem nobis asinum' rursus unde discessi revertar ad fabulam.*

<sup>406</sup> Keulen (2007) is perceptive on the issue of irony and sarcasm in the Pythias scene. A good discussion of this aspect of the Pythias episode can be found on page 450 with regard to the phrase *contentus morum severitudine* (1.25).

auctorial Lucius, the event is related as it occurred at the time, and as though Lucius were not expecting this disproportionate outburst (*his actis consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus*).

An additional factor is that the attention to the clothing of the magistrates in the satires is focussed on specific and recognisable items of magisterial dress, attendants and trappings (Horace, 1.5.36: *praetextam et latum clavum prunaeque vatillum*; Juvenal, 10.35, 37, 38: *praetextae, trabeae, fasces, lectica, tribunal; pictae Sarrana... aulaea togae magnaеque coronae*) as opposed to a close connection between the magistracy and personal acquaintance with the individual who undertakes the incumbent duties of office. As has been established, Apuleius makes this connection quite clear in the text (*'habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te'*) down-playing any itemisation of dress which promotes the conspicuous appearance of the magistrate in his dress. The conspicuous authority which the magistrates in satire appear to seek, visible in the excessive number of items of dress and trappings listed, is made evident in the *Metamorphoses* rather by direct speech, namely Pythias' outburst. The satirist merely glances at the magistrate, then quickly moves on. They are depersonalised in the service of satire. On them, dress and the emblems of status and authority overtake the person. On Pythias, in contrast, these things are a reflection and extension of his personality, the magistrate being made the focus of attention. He is a flesh and blood character, known to Lucius who establishes a link between the dress and the man (*habitum ... magistratui congruentem; congruentem in te*). Lucius also appears to associate Pythias in his civic duty with the instruments of (punitive) authority (*virgas*, rods), thereby further tightening the connection between Pythias the person and the punitive and awe-inspiring function of the aedile.

Narratorially, Lucius does not at the beginning of the novel adopt the overtly acid stance or tone of the satirist, recounting the tale for a protreptic purpose. An important element of the satire in Book 10 is the speaker's direct, reasoned response; the contest of perceptions in the Pythias' scene detracts from focus on one voice and highlights the sense of the surreal.

Keulen<sup>407</sup> also imposes on Lucius and certain other characters in the novel a metaliterary role, an awareness of themselves as literary and fictional constructs, programmatic of the satirical intentions of the author. He claims Lucius to be an adept at recognising stock-types, including the mocked in satire; hence Lucius recognises the typical miser in his host Milo,<sup>408</sup> and the typical arrogant official in Pythias. Accordingly, by acknowledging the visual characteristics of the magistrate, Lucius recognises a typical object of mockery in Roman satire, that is, the satirising of the pretensions, and pretentiousness, of the small-town official. This take has its merits; however, by claiming for the characters of Apuleius' novel awareness of themselves as deriving from a literary stereotype, Keulen traps the characters inside that stereotype, limiting the reading of the novel to one derivative from only one genre. I argue that Lucius' reaction of bewilderment to his friend's behaviour is sincere and not to be read exclusively against satire, howsoever much Pythias' behaviour in his costume may recall any long-standing topos. As a consequence of the numerous elements that differentiate the depiction of the over-zealous official in the *Metamorphoses* from the satirical precedents, it would appear that Apuleius, by refocussing Pythias' behaviour as consonant with a certain psychological type, is using the satirical topos to point to the very philosophical message from which the satire derives its impetus and black humour.

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<sup>407</sup> Keulen (2007), 436. Whilst I acknowledge that certain characters in the novel have been steeped in the literary tradition as a result of their education and class, I do not believe that they react to their surroundings in quite the same way as the "mythomaniac narrator" as understood and described by Conte (1996).

<sup>408</sup> 1.21: *Atque parsimoniam ratiocinans Milonis*; 1.26: *Milonis abstinentiae cognitor*. It is true that Lucius had been forewarned of Milo's abstemiousness beforehand, but his personal testimony corroborates the hearsay as truth.

## Conclusion to Chapter 4

On both occasions where magisterial dress occurs in the first three books of the novel (Pythias in Book 1 and the magistrates in Book 3), competing perceptions arise as part of an inquiry into social and personal identity in their most material expression. Pythias and the magistrates appear to Lucius to be the embodiment of the inverted values of Hypata, values which are inscribed onto their civic costume and become the expression of *habitus*. The re-articulation of the symbols of magisterial power in the *anteludia* at the end of the novel (11.8) will give a new twist to their appearance in the early books of the novel by showing up the lower aims which they have been made to serve in the episode under discussion.<sup>409</sup>

The emotive effect of the trappings of office is articulated into shocked surprise rather than fear, motivated by Lucius' sense of a breach of propriety. The ideal moral value of magisterial dress, for which Apuleius' other works, especially the *Florida*, and certain of Cicero's writings, offer ample evidence, can be perceived behind this reaction. The *Florida* provides an historical specimen against which to read the fictional character's magisterial behaviour in the personage of Severianus, proconsul of Carthage. The *De Officiis* permits a comparison between Pythius the banker and Pythias the magistrate which points up shared qualities between the two men, and the role of fish in both texts pinpoints these. The letters to Quintus, Cicero's brother, who was proconsul of Asia from 61-58 B.C. are of a cautionary tone and contain exemplars of model magisterial behaviour. Pythias' arrogance towards the old

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<sup>409</sup> 11.8: *Nec ille deerat qui magistratum fascibus [F: facibus] purpuraque luderet*. For the meaning of this passage from Book 11 and the textual issues surrounding the manuscript reading and emendations, see my final chapter. (423-453).

man may not have been extended to Lucius (as Lucius is Pythias' equal), yet it is undeniable that Lucius was left in an undesirable position because of his friend – he lost his dinner, and consequently, his money. Lucius' surprise at his friend's treatment of the old man further seems to suggest that he expects the clemency which is demanded (in the aforementioned texts) of a proconsul to fall within the province of the aedile (howsoever the aedile may have been represented in the preceding canon). Apuleius' own writings on the link between the dress and duties of office as well as those of Cicero have been central to understanding Lucius' reaction. Additionally, the awe-inspiring effect of the magistrates' insignia in Book 3, embedded in a surreal setting provided by the mock-trial instigated by a social and ritual tradition, reinforces the Pythias scene in Book 1 in line with the concerns of Apuleius, concerns about magisterial propriety. For Lucius, mourning dress at the trial is also perverted from its proper significance by the morally questionable use to which it is put, motivated by the ludic sensibilities of the citizenry and sanctioned by its hierarchy. The fact that the founding deity of Hypata is Risus suggests that the cruel pranks enacted on the day dedicated to the deity are embedded in the local consciousness.

Ultimately, dress and insignia in the Pythias scene and that of the trial must be understood to have more than a merely intertextual function. The insertion into the novel of a scene recalling a topos of Roman satire and the attested subservient fear of the aedile's authority reflects more than a preoccupation with official pomposity and arrogance. The Pythias scene especially can be deemed to stand alone from the main narrative, inasmuch as Lucius' meeting with Pythias is unnecessary for his transformation. This fact in itself speaks for its value as a specimen of a moral lesson which *does* relate to the themes of appearance and perception and its corollaries in the novel. No matter how incongruous a man's clothed appearance to his behaviour may seem to be in the novel, this incongruity can itself be only a matter of perception; from another perspective, Pythias' magisterial costume is perfectly in line with his magisterial behaviour in the context of Hypata. Carter sums it up nicely: "For the nature of apparel is very complex. Clothes are so many things at once...the system of signals with which we broadcast our intentions; often the projections of our fantasy selves (a fat old woman in a bikini); the formal uniform of our life roles (the businessman's suit, the teacher's tweed

jacket with leather patches and ritual accessory of pipe in breast pocket.”<sup>410</sup> Pythias’ insignia are all these things: a civic costume which circumscribes his behaviour within a prescribed set of rules, which also happens to be an expression of his self (both real and fantasy) and his intentions towards his fellow citizens in Hypata. Without denying the obvious similarities the episode has to certain of the satirical specimens which Pythias evokes, the focus in this chapter has been on the magisterial garment as a marker of the magistrate’s perverted perception of what the magistracy means; hence, Lucius’ understanding of appropriate vestimentary behaviour clashes with the use which magisterial dress and insignia are made to serve in this particular instance.

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<sup>410</sup> Carter (1982) 85.

## Chapter 5

### Thrasyleon

The focus on dress in this chapter encompasses non-textile bodily covering, as the disguise in question is made of the pelt of a bear.<sup>411</sup> The chapter consists of an examination into how disguise in the tale of Thrasyleon the robber, in spite of the robber's intentions of concealment, comes to reveal his true identity by dissolving into the garment of truth. It is an examination into the body as the soul's garment, or the embodied soul. This revelatory function of disguise also occurs in spite of the perception of the robber narrator who had personally witnessed the events of the story and who relates the events and the disguise as if they were merely part of a theatrical performance.

The first section opens the chapter by giving a brief exposé of the plot of the whole episode, retold by a former comrade of the dead hero, and shows how, at a surface level, the level of the narrator from whom we receive the tale, Thrasyleon's place in the episode is indeed that of a performer, as he does perform as a character in costume. The language used by the narrator to relate the tale will be analysed, as it combines both theatrical and military terminology, emphasising the degree to which costume as disguise and deceit are part of the robbers' strategic arsenal and since it allows an initial insight into how the robbers see themselves.

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<sup>411</sup> Compare the pelts which are covered under the term "dress" by Justinian (*Digesta Iustiniani*, 34.2): *Item pelles caprinae et aginae vestis erunt.*

The next section is brief but essential as it analyses the dual function of Thrasyleon's name. At the surface level, the level of the narrator, it reinforces the robbers' heroic, almost epic, vision of themselves, but at a deeper level, it conveys the inherently bestial nature of Thrasyleon and, at this deeper level, prefigures his dissolution into the animal that he is.

Naturally, the ensuing section resumes and elaborates at length on this dissolution, prefigured by Thrasyleon's name, by focussing on how language in the episode can be used to prove the truth of the claim that this disguise actually reflects Thrasyleon's true nature. Texts of a philosophical and physiognomic nature which are relevant to this interpretation of the tale, especially those which are concerned to underline the similarities between men and certain animals, will be adduced to reaffirm the moral value of the episode as a specimen of the truth of personal identity. This reading of the episode takes the epic motifs which recur in it to another level. The imagistic use of language occurring not only in this episode but also in earlier scenes where the robbers appear, and later in the novel, also underscores the reading of the tale from a higher, specifically authorial, perspective. The philosophical and physiognomic discourse not only brings an understanding of the metamorphic potential of Thrasyleon's costume once it coincides with Thrasyleon's personal appearance, but also supports the argument for a reading which sees in the narration of the tale the imposition of an authorial perspective on that of the tale's narrator.

A key element in the crucial moment when Thrasyleon becomes what he seeks to imitate through disguise is the stock phrase *vultu sereno*. Apuleius' original and highly ironising use of the phrase in this context is evaluated against preceding canonical occurrences of the phrase. Once again, the epic and philosophical resonances in the phrase are downgraded by Apuleius to suit the subject it identifies.

I shall then briefly engage with Apuleius' writings, as well as, to a lesser degree, the physiognomic canon and Aristotelian writings, on matters pertaining to Fate as a counterbalance to the narrator's vision of Thrasyleon's demise as driven by factors extraneous to Thrasyleon's own nature.

The following section briefly takes up the issue of perception in the tale. Perception in the story of Thrasyleon's disguise, performance and death as a bear is an effect of the embedded nature of the tale. This fact is essential for understanding how the robber who relates the tale perceives Thrasyleon's actions and fate, and how this remains to be gauged from a higher (authorial) perspective.

Disguise is also important in this episode for what it brings to the issue of the revelation and reinforcement of personal identity and its misinterpretation. Consequently, the final section engages with this function of disguise: the narration of Thrasyleon's tale, whilst it relates at the surface level the robbers' vision of themselves as epic-styled heroes, also promotes, through polysemy and imagery, a reading of Thrasyleon's actions and demise based on philosophical notions about the nature of the body and its relation to the soul, and physiognomy. This section, whilst introducing new comparative material by which to judge Thrasyleon's fate, is also a summing up of the preceding sections. Examples of epic allusion merely serve to show how far the robbers are from any heroic ideal.

### **Thrasyleon's Tale: Costume and Performance**

The tale of Thrasyleon is the longest of three robber-narratives, the first being that of the exploits of the robber Lamachus (4.10-11), the second of Alcimus (4.11-12), and the final one, of Thrasyleon (4.13-21). In the final and longest tale, Thrasyleon figures in the story as part of a quite risky and complicated plot to rob Demochares, a wealthy man of Plataea, who is given to throwing lavish spectacles with wild animals, including bears, for the entertainment of the local populace. A volunteer is sought from amongst the band of robbers to disguise himself as a bear, using a real bear's pelt obtained from one of Demochares' bears who had died, and to be taken to Demochares' house and kept inside. They resort to espionage to wheedle their way into Demochares' trust by fabricating a letter which contains the deeds of the gift of a bear. This forged letter and the gift it promises claim to be from a certain Nicanor whom the robbers had discovered, in the course of their regulatory scout-work, to be in a close bond of friendship with Demochares. The intention thereafter was to gain entry to Demochares' household through the volunteer

who, still in disguise as a bear, would let in his comrades waiting outside. This tactic would enable them to acquire as much booty as they could before removing it to a predetermined lair, in this case (quite appropriately), a tomb (*monumentum*).<sup>412</sup> However, Thrasyleon's disguise and performance as a bear are so convincing that he is set upon by Demochares' hounds and ripped to shreds.

The narrator is a comrade of the now dead Thrasyleon, who repeats the tale for the sake of his comrades who were absent at the time of the event. He tells the story like a drama, with all its associated features: the devising of a plot, the selection of the appropriate actor for the role on the criteria of physical and moral aptitude for the part, the making of the costume and its fitting, the stage setting, the backing team, and finally, the performance which was so convincing that the actor died in his costume. Although disguise for offensive or invasive purposes occurs as an aspect of military stratagems and brigandry and necessitates survival tactics based on cunning and deceit, the language used for relating the backdrop to Thrasyleon's exploits is drawn from the sphere of theatre, and the associated fields of stage and costume design; hence, strategic disguise and costume are conflated in this episode.

The requisite qualities of the volunteer who would don the disguise consist of both the physical and mental strength necessary to perform the deed (4.14: '*ut unus e numero nostro, non qui corporis adeo, sed animi robore ceteris antistare*'; 4.16: '*Qui [Demochares] miratus bestiae magnitudinem...*'; 4.18: '*Quis enim, quamvis fortis et intrepidus, immani forma tantae bestiae...visitata, non se ad fugam statim concitaret...?*') and, of course, sheer

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<sup>412</sup> Tombs are often associated with pirates and robbers in the ancient novel, as robbers are constantly despoiling the dead of their grave-goods. However, the role of the tomb in this story is not merely topical; the tomb on this occasion puts one in mind of what Socrates says to Cebes in Plato's *Phaedo* (81c-e) on the fate of the non-philosophical soul which hovers around its grave, menacing passers-by. The robbers in the *Metamorphoses* are not dead and the tomb is not theirs, but the correlation of the non-philosophical soul (of which the robbers in the *Metamorphoses* are representative) to tombs in the *Phaedo*, is applicable to the image of Apuleius' menacing robbers. Their comical attempt to account for their lifestyle in a form of popular or low-level philosophising at the end of the Thrasyleon episode (4.21), gives further substance to the philosophical connotations and the moral import of the tale.

will-power (4.14: *'atque is in primis voluntarius, pelle illa contactus ursae subiret effigiem'*). Of all the volunteers, Thrasyleon is chosen for the plan by a unanimous decision (*'factionis optione delectus'*), as he is deemed to have the requisite physical, mental and moral qualities for the role. The element of will on Thrasyleon's part to take on his role is reiterated further on in the narrator's account of Thrasyleon's sustained performance in the face of imminent death by savage dogs (4.20): *'Scaenam denique, **quam sponte sumpserat**, cum anima retinens, nunc fugiens, nunc resistens, variis corporis sui schemis ac motibus, tandem domo prolapsus est.'*

The carcass of one of Demochares' dead bears provides the costume. The robbers select the biggest carcass they can find and bring it back home to prepare its pelt. The sense of collegiality which they bring to the deed imbues the scene with a touching and humorous note. The preparation of the bear-skin to be converted into a tailor-made costume is rendered in detail. The scene of the costume's creation is necessarily replete with terms which refer specifically to an animal's empty carcass and which recall the primitive act of skinning (4.14): <sup>413</sup>

Unam, quae ceteris **sarcina** corporis praevalerat, quasi cibo parandum portamus ad nostrum receptaculum, eiusque probe **nudatum carnibus corium**, servatis sollerter totis unguibus, ipso etiam bestiae capite adusque confinium cervicis solido relicto, tergus omne **rasura studiosa tenuamus** et **minuto cinere perspersum soli siccandum** tradimus.

His comrades then proceed to fit him into the costume. The sartorial language (emphasised in bold type in the passage below), emerges and intensifies in the fitting scene, mixed in with a military image (*machinae*). This is appropriate, as the reader will later witness a kind of military scene of invasion. Costumes (including skins) used as disguise, like a military stratagem, are designed to deceive, to break down resistance or at least a defence, by gaining the confidence of the other party, a common function of disguise in a military

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<sup>413</sup> The anticipated but not realised replication of these acts on Lucius at 7.23 – of skinning the animal, keeping its pelt and using its flesh for food – in the frame narrative, gives a reality to the act and makes the underlying themes of the embedded tales relevant to the action in the frame narrative. The embedded tales provide more than mere entertainment helping to reinforce any moral point that needs to be made.

context.<sup>414</sup> Inverting the normal order of description in the novel, the narrator *ends* with the head (*caput*), thereby directing the reader's attention to this part of Thrasyleon's anatomy (4.15):

Quorum prae ceteris Thrasyleon factionis optione delectus ancipitis<sup>415</sup> machinae subivit aleam, iamque habili corio et mollitie tractabili<sup>416</sup> vultu sereno sese recondit. Tunc **tenui sarcimine** summas oras eius **adaequamus**, et **iuncturae rimam**, licet gracilem, **setae** circumfluentis densitate **saepimus**. Ad ipsum confinium gulae, qua cervix bestiae fuerat **exsecta**, Thrasyleonis caput subire cogimus, parvisque respiratui circa nares et oculos datis foraminibus,<sup>417</sup> fortissimum socium nostrum prorsus bestiam factum immittimus caveae modico praedestinatae pretio, quam constanti vigore festinus irrepsit ipse.

This "dressing" scene unfolds amongst much humour as the robbers try to fit Thrasyleon's great bulk into the bear carcass: *caput subire cogimus*. The fitting is so successful that nothing but a metaphor for total assimilation suffices for

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<sup>414</sup> For one of the most obvious specimens of disguise used as part of a military tactic in the Latin canon, see the *Aeneid* (2.389-393) where it is used to gain entry into the midst of the enemy. In the *Aeneid*, too, this is a failed attempt (2.402, 411-412). For an example of an animal skin used as disguise in the Greek tradition, see Euripides' *Rhesus* (208-215) with enlightening notes by Porter (1916), and Elderkin (1935). Cross-dressing for the same purposes occurs in the Greek historiographic and biographic literary tradition (see Chapter 6), and also in the handbooks on warfare which flourished in the second century A.D., especially Polyaeus in the Greek canon and Frontinus in the Latin. For more on this, see Chapter 6.

<sup>415</sup> The etymology of the word *anceps*, *ancipitis*, being derived from *am(bi)* and *-ceps* (*OLD*, 1982, 126) a suffix derived from *caput* (*OLD*, 1982, 300), allows us to see how this war weapon (*machinae*) really is two-headed, having the head of a man inside the head of an animal which most closely reflects the present dual identity of the beast-man inside it.

<sup>416</sup> Note the chiasmic arrangement of the phrase: *habili corio et mollitie tractabili*. The noble and epic flavour of the line's structure fits ill with the lower social and moral type that Thrasyleon represents.

<sup>417</sup> Similar lexis occurs in Cicero's *Disputationes Tusculanae* in a discussion on the body-soul relationship, and, in particular, sensory apprehension (1.46): *Atque ea profecto tum multo puriora et dilucidiora cernentur, cum quo natura fert liber animus pervenerit. Nam nunc quidem, quamquam foramina illa, quae patent ad animum a corpore, callidissimo artificio natura fabricata est, tamen terrenis concretisque corporibus sunt intersaepta quodam modo: cum autem nihil erit praeter animum, nulla res obiecta impediet quo minus percipiat tale quidquid est.*

the effect – Thrasyleon is now a bear: *socium nostrum prorsus bestiam factum*. The favouring of metaphor over simile to drive home the totality of this transformation, simile being the preferred method for human-animal comparison in epic par excellence,<sup>418</sup> is important. From this moment, it should be obvious to both the narrator and the reader that Thrasyleon's subsequent destruction by hunting hounds in his bear-costume cannot be attributed solely to a compelling performance or Thrasyleon's respect for the irrefragable oath of loyalty to the group. This unshakeable loyalty is the reason given by the narrator for his dead comrade's refusal to retreat or reveal his human identity under attack (4.21): '*Enimvero Thrasyleon, egregium decus nostrae factionis, tandem immortalitate digno illo spiritu expugnato magis patientia, neque clamore ac ne ululatu quidem fidem sacramenti prodidit.*' In spite of the narrator's inability to perceive the true reason for Thrasyleon's prolonged bravery in the face of inevitable destruction, various factors conspire to show how the disastrous yet still glorious demise of Thrasyleon emerges as an aspect of his nature as opposed to mere performance. This in turn leads to a revision of Thrasyleon's appearance at that point as a bear. How far can we speak of this costume's likeness to the real thing when, being the skin of a real, albeit dead, animal, it *is* the real thing? *Species*, appearance in costume, in this instance is doubly *sollers*, clever, signifying at once costume at a superficial level, and the reality of Thrasyleon's nature at a deeper one. A metaphor for the total transformation into a beast of a man whose name evokes the qualities of the lion should nudge the reader in the direction of expecting a different cause for this transformation to that understood by the narrator.

### Thrasyleon's Name

This is the point where the speaking name becomes an essential aspect in such considerations. Thrasyleon's name means "bold lion" (some scholars suggest "lion-heart"), and as such is suggestive of the type of epithet attributed to warriors and heroes in the epic tradition.<sup>419</sup> As a personal name,

<sup>418</sup> For a slightly more detailed analysis of the saturation of epic motifs in Thrasyleon's tale, see the later section entitled Thrasyleon's Disguise and the Robbers' Epic vision (page 239).

<sup>419</sup> For merely one example taken from the *Iliad*, Hercules, the father of Tlepolemus, is known as the "lion-hearted" (5.639): *ἔμὸν πατέρα θρασυμέμνονα θυμολέοντα* ("Heracles, staunch in fighting, the lion-hearted").

*leon* (λέων), and compound formations of it were by no means uncommon in antiquity.<sup>420</sup> On this occasion, it is a most telling name, saying something about Thrasyleon's previous brave exploits, which earned him the name (or he could have been given the name at birth or slightly older as a consequence of his appearance and the qualities he displayed).<sup>421</sup> The symbolism of prowess or the lion's spirit may have been a determining factor in its selection, but it is possible that the name's original use may have been a consequence of belief in transmigration.<sup>422</sup> Thrasyleon's tale can be read as an expression in literary form of the transmigration of a soul into another body, without the intervention of the magic which effected the transformation of Pamphile and Lucius into animal form. More importantly, the name suggests that, unlike Lucius' case of transformation and then re-transformation brought about through the intervention of a goddess, Thrasyleon's transformation cannot be undone. Once he dissolves into the wild animal that he is, he cannot return to his human form. Thrasyleon's name is also, rather aptly, the name of a foolish soldier who gave the title to one of Menander's plays, *Θρασυλεον*,<sup>423</sup> of which we have now only fragments. One of these fragments contains a remark (made by the play's title character himself, Thrasyleon) on the relevance of the Socratic axiom "Know Thyself"; namely, that the saying "Know Thyself" should be rewritten to say "Know Others."<sup>424</sup> Ironically, the oracle of Apollo referred to in the play of Menander reflects on Apuleius' Thrasyleon as a member of a social group - that is, brigands - which does not cultivate correct relations with human society and is flawed in its self-perception. Apuleius' definition of such

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<sup>420</sup> Dyson (1929) 194.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, about the lion (8.19): *Vis summa in pectore...Generositas in periculis maxime deprehenditur*. These qualities will become evident at the moment of Thrasyleon's fight to the death (4.21).

<sup>422</sup> Dyson (1929) 194.

<sup>423</sup> It is also the title of one of the *palliata* of Turpilius Sextus, of which we have only fragments.

<sup>424</sup> *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* 240 (Kock, 1884, Volume II, 69). The Menandrian character is mentioned also by Plutarch in the *Moralia* (*Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum*, 1095). Plutarch's reference bears on the inherent unbridled wildness in the character, as well as that of a character in another of Menander's play, the *Rejected Lover*, with the same onomastic prefix – Thrasonides.

a type is given in the *DPD*, 2.16.<sup>425</sup> Taking name and costume as an expression of inherent character provides depth to a situation which would otherwise be read at only a superficial level.

### From Disguise to Garment of the Soul

With the support of Thrasyleon's name, the dead bear's carcass (4.14: *sarcina corporis*) not only serves the practical purpose of providing Thrasyleon with the stuff of his disguise, but also becomes Thrasyleon's new body. Used to reinforce an essential element of character, the word *sarcina* occurs in book 8 where it is applied to wolves whose marauding is likened by Lucius to robbers (8.15): *lupos enim numerosos, grandes et vastis corporibus sarcinosos ac nimia ferocitate saevientes, passim rapinis assuetos infestare cunctam illam regionem...et in modum latronum praetereuntes aggredi*. This simile compares the underlying appetites of the robbers to those of instinct-driven animals by way of inversion so that in this case the animals are compared to a lower type of human being. This comparison, in the same vein as Lucius' likening of the robbers to Centaurs and Lapiths (4.8), occurs at a remove from the scene of Thrasyleon's transition from man to bear, yet is of undeniable metaphorical value, providing a critical perspective not dependent on the expressed opinion of the narrator of the individual tales. To be contrasted with

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<sup>425</sup> Apuleius, *DPD*, 2.16: *Qui sit autem pessimus, eum non solum turpem et damnosum et contemptorem deorum et inmoderatum et inhumanam atque insociabilem vitam ait vivere, sed nec cum proximis secumve congruere atque ideo non a ceteris modo, verum etiam a se discrepare nec aliis tantum, sed sibi etiam inimicum esse et idcirco hunc talem neque bonis nec omnino cuiquam nec sibi quidem amicum esse*. By a subtle application of the following section of the passage in the *DPD*, Thrasyleon can be read as a specimen of the unbalanced character who, by his lack of self-knowledge and his inability to extricate himself from human affairs, dies trapped in his true state as an animal: *hunc talem numquam in agendis rebus expedire se posse, non solum propter inscientiam, sed quoque ipse etiam sibimet sit ignotus et quod malitia perfecta seditationem mentibus pariat, impediens incepta eius atque meditata consilia nec permittens quicquam eorum quae volet*. Although in the treatise Apuleius does not state clearly how this type of man undermines himself, the robbers quite ironically come close to a similar conclusion after Thrasyleon's death when they reflect on their lifestyle and the frustration of their plans (*sollertibus coeptis*, 4.12) and assaults which brought them mixed success. Notwithstanding these reflections, they still attribute much of their misfortune to forces outside themselves, such as *Invidia* (Envy, 4.14) and *scaevus Eventus* (Bad Luck, 4.19).

his flawed vision is the manner in which the robbers are perceived by Lucius who refers to them in terms of hybridity, emphasising the part of the animal in their appetites, hence, nature (4.8): *Clamore ludunt, strepitu cantilant, conviciis iocantur, ac iam cetera semiferis Lapithis Centaurisque similia*. Reaffirmation of this aspect of the robbers' nature, perceived through their appetites, is made also *after* the narration of the tale (6.30): *ferinis invadunt animis*. The use of the word *animus* in this latter reference to the robbers locates their appetites as arising from the soul.<sup>426</sup> By framing Thrasyleon's tale at either end with such explicit judgements of the robbers' behaviour in terms redolent of their inherent bestiality and which call into question their own self-perception as heroes, Lucius enables other paradigms of judgement to be adduced. The reality of what Lucius sees must be measured against the idealism and romanticism of what he hears. Thrasyleon's transformation into the bear that he is, shows how far the robbers are from any grandiose ideal, howsoever glorious they may see themselves.<sup>427</sup> Although this method of characterisation particularly privileges successive readings of the text, the careful reader may be sensitive to the hints scattered throughout the text.

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<sup>426</sup> The *animus* is the seat of both virtues and vices. For two attestations made by Apuleius of this fact, see the *DPD*, 2.9: *Virtutes eas doceri et studeri posse arbitrabatur, quae ad rationabilem animum pertinent, id est sapientiam et prudentiam*; and the *DDS*, 12: *nullo angore contrahi, nulla alacritate gestire, sed ab omnibus animi passionibus liber nec dolere umquam nec aliquando laetari nec aliquid repentinum velle vel nolle*. In the *DDS*, Apuleius deplores the fact that so many men do not cultivate their soul, seat of virtue, although this is what they know they must do (21): *Et nihil aequae miror quam, cum omnes et cupiant optime vivere et sciant non alia re quam animo vivi nec fieri posse quin, ut optime vivas, animus colendus sit, tamen animum suum non colant*.

<sup>427</sup> Von Fleschenberg (1913) perceives a gnome, a maxim or aphorism, in the robbers' speech which takes place during their dinner. He refers specifically to the claim made by one of the second gang of robbers that larger and wealthier households are easier to break into than smaller, poorer households by reason of the domestic staff's sense of self-preservation which wins over their loyalty to the master (4.9). Von Fleschenberg looks at this gnomic concept in the context of the wider "ethopoeia" of the robbers (629). The presence of any kind of philosophically-styled speech from the robbers colours the context of their discussion and appearance in this scene as a kind of low-level symposium. For the educated reader, especially the reader who has cognizance of the idea discussed as a gnomic saying, this can only have a comic effect.

The primary meaning of the word *sarcina* is “baggage”. It recurs with this meaning many times in the *Metamorphoses*. On three occasions, it refers to pregnancy.<sup>428</sup> It is also used to express the bulk of the body, a sense which is not lacking in the present scene. In this instance, furthermore, the preparation of the bear’s body as a pelt, the animal’s flesh having been removed and preserved for food, imbues the skin with a mock ritualistic relevance.<sup>429</sup> The pelt also recalls the state of primitive man in his rough clothing, an image very apt for the robbers. However, the word *sarcina* appears also in philosophical contexts. In the *DPD* (1.18), Apuleius uses the word with reference to the excessive ingestion of food by the man who is intemperate in his eating habits.<sup>430</sup> This insight into eating habits occurs in a discussion of the balance between body and soul, the suggestion being that intemperance in food is reflective of an imbalance in the soul. Lucius had previously remarked upon the gluttony of the bandits (4.8). Seneca had used the word to refer to the weight of the body and its appetites on the soul: *Animum, qui gravi sarcina pressus explicari cupit et reverti ad illa, quorum fuit. Nam corpus hoc animi pondus ac poena est.*<sup>431</sup> Hence, he advised Lucilius to put constraints on the flesh. This would allow the soul to move more freely: *Adice nunc, quod maiore corporis sarcina animus eliditur et minus agilis est.*<sup>432</sup> Just as Lucius’ many burdens (also called *sarcinae*) weigh him down in his various journeys, the *sarcina* is the baggage of the body that presses down on the soul. In Thrasyleon’s case, the bulk of the new body he has put on expresses his attachment to the lower appetites as a member of a lower type of being. The metaphorical potential of the word, provided by the context of the bandit tales, contributes to motivate the transformation and matches the new meaning and function the pelt acquires as it is fitted onto Thrasyleon.

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<sup>428</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 1.9; 12.4; 10.23.

<sup>429</sup> On the role of animal skins in ancient sacrificial ritual, see Schibli (1990), 7.

<sup>430</sup> Apuleius, *DPD*, 1.18: *At enim hominem tunc esse perfectum, cum anima et corpus aequaliter copulantur et inter se conveniunt sibi que respondent, ut firmitas mentis praevalentibus corporis viribus non sit inferior; corporis vero tunc nativis incrementis augetur, cum validudinis ratio procurata salubriter modum necessarii victus nescit excedere nec validudo obteritur magnitudine externorum laborum nec pabuli sarcina inmoderatus invecti vel non, ut oportet, digesti distributique per corpus.*

<sup>431</sup> Seneca, *Epistles*, 65.16.

<sup>432</sup> Seneca, *Epistles*, 15.2.

In spite of the narrator's biased theatrical rendition of the lead-up to Thrasyleon's tactical entry into Demochares' house, based on a certain perspective of his and his comrades' *modus operandi* in disguise as necessitated by the demands of the job, successive readings of the episode show how the language of theatre becomes transformed into the theatre of language, both figuratively and literally, by the impropriety of the robbers' vision of themselves,<sup>433</sup> which becomes comic. The tale is narrated in such a way as to lead the reader into thinking of Thrasyleon's strategy as a temporary performance of expedience, yet that performance dissolves, and becomes an expression of the permanent and inherent truth of Thrasyleon's nature.

The fact that the fabrication of the costume precedes both the oath which the robbers made amongst themselves (*'sic instanti militia disponimus sacramentum'*) and the selection of the volunteer is important, as it proves that the very fabrication of the intended disguise has a motivating function in the ensuing action. That is, the body was ready and expecting a soul. The likeness of the costume to the real thing also has a motivating role in it (4.15): *'Nec paucos fortissimi collegii sollers species ad munus obeundum arrexerat.'* Yet this brings up an important question with regard to the issue of sartorial mimesis: the coupling of the words *bestiam* and *factum* is only apparently oxymoron; in reality it is assimilation. Even the linguistic distinction that contrasts feminine (*bestiam*) and masculine (*factum*) no longer has value.<sup>434</sup> The total transformation is underscored by the important word *prorsus*, an adverb which arises frequently in the novel in contexts of metamorphosis.<sup>435</sup> The emphatic position of *ipse* reiterates the ease with which Thrasyleon climbs, unaided and bear-like, into the cage which has been set up for the purpose of conveying him, in his costume, to Demochares' house. The confusion of boundaries between performance and natural behaviour,

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<sup>433</sup> See, for example, the robbers' grandiose manner of speaking, highly inflected by generic stylisation and entirely divorced from all reality of their low-level lifestyle (4.20): *'O grande' inquam 'et extremum flagitium!'* The narrator of the tale appears to be aware of the inefficacy of this mode of speech (4.21): *'Nec tamen nostri sermonis artes infelicissimo profuerunt iuveni.'*

<sup>434</sup> Likewise, the huge Thrasyleon steps into the carcass of a female bear (*ursa*) as female bears are bigger than their male counterpart (GCA, 1977, 109).

<sup>435</sup> See GCA commentary *ad loc.* on *prorsus* in this passage.

disguise and natural body, is summed up in the word *cavea* which can also convey figuratively the body entrapped in the soul.<sup>436</sup> In this case, Thrasyleon is not leaving his body; rather, as an embodied soul he is taking on his correct form by stepping into the body that he should really have, and then into a contraption that resembles the captive bear's typical environment. The reader is confronted with a metaphor of levels: a soul is inserted into a body which is in turn put into a cage. In like manner, the preparation of a pelt is followed by the insertion into it of a man who degenerates back into an animal.

The narrator describes Thrasyleon in a manner which recalls the thinking that underpins much of physiognomic discourse<sup>437</sup> which insists on the correlation to each other of both body and soul, a correlation which brings physiognomic thought in line with philosophical discussion. This episode may therefore seem initially to be merely a narrative investigation into the implications of the physiognomic premise that the body can also work on the soul, a notion of philosophical resonance which occurs in physiognomic writings,<sup>438</sup> or a literary manipulation of the more philosophical notion of the

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<sup>436</sup> Cf. Seneca, *Epistles*, 88.34: *Innumerabiles quaestiones sunt de animo tantum: unde sit, qualis sit, quando esse incipiat, quamdiu sit; quomodo libertate sua usus, cum ex hac effugerit cavea*. Courcelle (1965c) 109 rejects Husner's reading of *cavea* in this letter as "a cave." However the word *cavea* by its etymology (*cavus*) evokes caves and lairs, as much as cages, and also gives cognate words, such as *caverna*. The word *cavea* may have kept its immediate meaning for the reader (see *TLL* 629), but its etymology may have resonated behind this. As a neuter noun, *cavum* functions as equivalent to *spelunca*, or *antrum*. (See Plautus' *Menaechmi*, 159: *Etiam nunc concede audacter ab leonino cavo* and the Scholia on Horace's epistle 1.1.70: *[ferae] intrantes ad se [leonem] in caveam*.) Moreover, is it really so incorrect to see here a bear ambling naturally and gracefully (*constanti vigore*) into its lair, the natural abode of the bear? Thrasyleon has no reason to be intractable given that he is among like-minded souls and that he is returning to his own element.

<sup>437</sup> The phrase *fortis et intrepidus* (4.18) has a scent of categorical terms that recur in physiognomic treatises. Forms of the adjective *fortis* occur eighteen times in *Anonymus Latinus* alone.

<sup>438</sup> See *Anonymus Latinus*, 2: *Ceteri autem tam figuratricem corporis animam esse arbitrantur [per συμπαθειαν], quam ex qualitate corporis animam speciem mutuari*; and pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 805a1-805a15 (bearing in mind that in the case of some characters, such as Lucius, we are dealing with a hybrid identity) and 808b11-808b25. I follow Förster's retention of Molinius' gloss *per συμπαθειαν*.

body as the soul's prison, a notion with which Apuleius was very familiar as is evidenced by his discussion of it in the *DPD*.<sup>439</sup> In the case of Thrasyleon, of course, the notion is perverted, as it applies to a flawed type, rather than to the wise man, and a life lived badly. This conclusion can be drawn by examining the effects of putting a bear skin onto a man who is assimilated, even if by jest within the society of his peer group, to the lion. These are two different animals,<sup>440</sup> so the natural conclusion would be that Thrasyleon dies by being imprisoned in the wrong body. Hence, any supposed irreconcilability of the lion and the bear has implications for the cause of his death: either Thrasyleon died because his lion soul was imprisoned in the wrong body or because it escaped. However, the lion and the bear often occur in paired combinations in ancient literature and elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* as a conjoint metaphor for ferality and strength.<sup>441</sup> In fact the two animals appear together to form a basic unit of ferality at an earlier point in the novel (4.4): *Tunc igitur procul dubio iam morti proximus, cum viderem canes et modo magnos et numero multos et ursis ac leonibus ad compugnandum idoneos in me convocatos exasperari*. Indeed, it can even be claimed that the fatalism of Thrasyleon's total transformation into a bear and demise as one is doubly determined by the pairing of the two animals in whose qualities he can be deemed to have a share. His name, which is of Greek derivation and meaning,

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<sup>439</sup> Apuleius, *DPD*, 2.20. This could be considered a less doctrinal way in which the Empedoclean/Pythagorean formula was understood by less educated people at the time. Beaujeu claims that Apuleius in this passage of the *DPD*, just as nowhere else therein, makes no allusion to metempsychosis. On the other hand, the Thrasyleon episode is evidence that Apuleius does entertain such considerations in the *Metamorphoses*, albeit loosely and literarily.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. pseudo-Aristotle *Physiognomonica* (805a10), who says that no animal can have a mind proper to it and a body proper to another animal, as the body and the soul are connate (*sumphuōs*) with each other.

<sup>441</sup> This must have been a common pairing of the two animals in antiquity. Both animals appear in the Homeric Hymn to Dionysus (7 in the Loeb edition, 2003), wherein the god transforms himself, on a pirate ship, into a lion (*leōn genet'*) and creates (*epoiēsen*) a bear to signal his power (*sēmata fainōn*). Both animals occur in the *Book of Lamentations* as opposite ends of a single misfortune or temptation (3.10.1): *deleth ursus insidians factus est mihi leo in absconditis*. This same parallelism occurs also in the *Book of Amos* (5.19). In these contexts, the two animals appear to replicate a shared quality residing in and emanating from the notions of besiege and deceit.

reveals that he has the boldness (*θρασύ-*) of a lion (*λεων*), and his costume, that he has the appearance (*effigies*) of a bear (*ursae*). Ferality especially is Thrasyleon's basic nature; the elements that work towards the discernment of the truth of his nature are his disguise and, as so often in the *Metamorphoses*, his name.<sup>442</sup>

In addition to this, ancient physiognomical treatises attribute common qualities to both animals; where there is a divergence in attributes (often quite subtle), this too can be applied to Thrasyleon. Physiological differences do not counteract the overriding importance of physiognomy where inner-outer correspondences can be made through congruity, or over-all appearance. For example, the *Physiognomy* of Adamantius the Sophist relates that "the character of a lion is spirited and brave and such is its appearance, ... (and) The character of a bear is savage-thinking, deceitful and clumsy."<sup>443</sup> That Thrasyleon is courageous and strong is well attested.<sup>444</sup> Savagery of thought (in Adamantius' text, *ώμόφρων*) is provided by Thrasyleon's lifestyle of brigandage and violence; and disguise, apparently a regular part of the robbers' strategy, contributes to a large part of the deceit (*δολία*). Ironically, the bear disguise is nothing more than a perfect physical match for his life-style. These same violent characteristics, matched by an exterior which reflects these, are contained in the physiognomy of *Anonymus Latinus* (46): *nec dubium erit pronuntiare de eo qui ursae est similis, crudelem quidem esse et insidiosum; de*

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<sup>442</sup> It makes no difference whether or not Thrasyleon, like Lamachus and Alcimus, is a nickname or code name, as these are often used among members of a group - such as the robbers - and appended on certain members as an expression of their most salient moral qualities or physical attributes.

<sup>443</sup> The *Physiognomy* of Adamantius the Sophist, B2. The English translation is that of Repath (2007b). The character of bravery in the lion (*ethos ... alkimon*), not only applies to Thrasyleon, but also, through a cunning etymological play on his name, to Alcimus, the robber who lacked the deceit (*dolia*) of Thrasyleon, and was undone by the cunning (*callido deceptus astu*) of an old woman (4.13). His grand plans (*sollertibus coeptis*) were not matched by the tactical discernment necessary for the success of his undertaking, as is acknowledged by the robber-narrator (4.12). This attests to the ultimate short-sightedness of this band of robbers, in spite of their self-perception as great warriors.

<sup>444</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 4.14: *non qui corporis adeo, sed animi robore ceteris antistaret.*

*eo autem qui leoni est similis, quod violentus, quod fortis, quod simplicior.*<sup>445</sup>

The same treatise testifies to his aptness for the part as both animal and man, even though we are given no indication in the text of his facial or overall appearance as a man (8; 122):

Nam leo... ad masculinum genus refer[un]tur (8);

Leo animal est edendi avidum magis quam bibendi,<sup>446</sup> saevum cum irritatur, quietum cum non impellitur, vehemens cum cibo indiget, tranquillum cum satiatum est, forte et invictum cum dimicat. Qui ad huius animalis speciem referuntur homines, erunt capite grandiore, oculis perlucidis, rescisso ore, naribus capacibus, cervice solida,<sup>447</sup> humeris et pectore ingentibus, ilibus angustioribus, femoribus siccioribus, pedes imos et manus habebunt discretas atque seiunctas, rubei aliquantum, refracto capillo (122).

Thrasyleon does not share all these qualities with the lion, or other lion-men; like his comrades for example, he is just as fond of drinking as of eating. Notwithstanding some few deviations from the model, there are yet numerous affirmable correspondences. Again, in pseudo-Aristotle, “pride of soul” (*μεγαλόψυχοι, μεγαλόφρονες*) is a common attribute of the lion (and many are the physical signs of the man who shares this with the animal),<sup>448</sup> as is “boldness of spirit”.<sup>449</sup> The lion’s roar recalls the deep voice of the courageous man,<sup>450</sup> and the lion exhibits the male type in its most perfect form.<sup>451</sup>

<sup>445</sup> *Anonymus Latinus*, 46. Thrasyleon is not really *simplicior*, but the qualities of violence and strength are applicable to him.

<sup>446</sup> Cf. Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, 4.34: ἄδηφάγος ... πίνει δὲ ὀλίγα.

<sup>447</sup> Aspects of Thrasyleon’s description which match the physiognomic rendition of the girth and solidity of the lion-like occur in chapters 14 and 15 of Book 4 in the *Metamorphoses*; 4.14: ‘*ipso etiam bestiae capite adusque confinium cervicis solido relicto*’; 4.15: ‘*ad ipsum confinium gulae, qua cervix bestiae fuerat exsecta, Thrasyleonis caput subire cogimus*.’ Ironically, *Anonymus Latinus* expresses the mouth of the man who resembles a lion in sartorial imagery: ‘*rescisso ore*.’ This has the effect of making the bear’s costume match the physiognomic portrait more closely.

<sup>448</sup> For the man who has pride of soul in Pseudo-Aristotle’s *Physiognomonica*, see 811a15, a well-sized neck, not too thick; 811a20, pendulous upper lips; 811b27, slightly deep-set eyes; 811b34, a square and well-proportioned forehead; 813a14, on rolling the shoulders forward to stoop a little.

<sup>449</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 812b24.

<sup>450</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 807a19.

In another of his works, the *Historia Animalium*,<sup>452</sup> Aristotle establishes an analogical relationship between certain limbs of man and those of the bear on the basis of similarity of function and operation. The two front legs (πόδες) of the bear are like hands (ὅμοιοι χερσίν, 498a, 33); the bear can stand upright (τοῖν δυοῖν ποδοῖν ὀρθή, 594b, 16) and walk (albeit not for very long) on its two hinder legs (Βαδίζει δ' ἐπί τινα χρόνον ὀλίγον, 594b, 15). This fits perfectly with Thrasyleon's ambling into the cage and his attempt at letting his comrades into Demochares house while still in disguise, yet standing upright, and wielding a sword (4.18). Analysing Thrasyleon's facility of movement in disguise as emanating from the dual aspect of his nature at the moment when he is still hybrid (that is, before his death) and from the point of view of the character and the movement of animals, dispels the "inconsistencies and supposed lacunae"<sup>453</sup> in the text detected by the commentators on Book 4, who emphasise the fact that "we are not told how Thrasyleon managed to obtain a sword, nor how, in his bear suit, he could have wielded it."<sup>454</sup> The obtaining of the sword can be put down, as they say, to "foreshortened narrator's perspective",<sup>455</sup> but there is in reality no difficulty behind Thrasyleon's ability in his disguise to handle a sword with dexterity. An

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<sup>451</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 809b14-15.

<sup>452</sup> Apuleius was familiar with the works of Aristotle on animals (*Historia Animalium*, *De Partibus Animalium*, *De Motu Animalium*, *De Incessu Animalium*, *De Generatione Animalium*) as can be deduced from what he says in the *Apologia* (36, where he gives the titles of three of these works in Greek). He also refers to other philosophers of Platonist strain who wrote on related matters, namely Theophrastus, Eudemus and Lycon, as testimony that his own studies of fish and other topics relating to the natural world (some of which he claims to have written in Greek) have nothing sinister or shameful for a philosopher about them. He even claims to have improved upon these researches of his illustrious predecessors, by clarifying points by way of explanation or even addition (*Apologia*, 36): *Quae tanta cura conquisita si honestum et gloriosum illis fuit scribere, cur turpe sit nobis experiri, praesertim cum ordinatius et cohibilius eadem Graece et Latine adnitar conscribere et in omnibus aut omissa acquirere aut defecta supplere?* Such a bold claim can only be based on more than a passing acquaintance with the works of the aforementioned philosophers, especially Aristotle.

<sup>453</sup> GCA (1977) 4.

<sup>454</sup> GCA (1977) 138.

<sup>455</sup> GCA (1977) 4.

application of the *Historia Animalium* undermines any sense of contradiction between the disguise and Thrasyleon's posture and actions, based on physiological similarities between man and bear. By his hybrid nature at this point as both man and animal – and as an animal, both lion and bear at the same time - Thrasyleon is fitted for the job.

### ***Vultu sereno***

The possibility that Thrasyleon has found his rightful body is hinted at through the narrator in an expression which existed prior to Apuleius' time in texts of a widely varying nature: *vultu sereno*. Referring to the demeanour with which Thrasyleon stepped into his new skin, it also reflects his state of mind at that very moment: Thrasyleon's serene countenance arises from the calmness with which he takes on his new role as a bear. A difficulty arises with regard to facial expressions, as they could be an outward sign of either a permanent state of the soul or a merely temporary state or movement of the soul. The latter is, of course, not strictly speaking physiognomy which aims to read innate character from bodily and facial characteristics rather than facial expressions; however, some branches of the skill do believe that facial expressions, including but not only those brought about by transitory states or movements of the soul, can also tap into permanent states, or at least conditions of mind.<sup>456</sup>

A further difficulty arises from the coexistence of a physical state - namely, the bear costume which reflects Thrasyleon's leonine, that is, instinctual nature – with a countenance which expresses emotional detachment. I argue that the serene countenance in this instance is imbued with a meaning which is less dependent on prior canonical examples of it (although its occurrence here may recall these), but that Apuleius, in this case, is using the phrase in a way which reminds the reader of the original cluster of

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<sup>456</sup> See, on this, *Anonymus Latinus'* exposition (9) of the ancient physiognomists' claim that the angry expression of a man reflects a man who is prone to anger even though he may not be angry at any particular moment. He later (11) seems to cast some doubt on the efficacy of this method following pseudo-Aristotle, who refutes the efficacy and even validity of this method, claiming that the number of inferences that can be made from facial expression alone is small (805a30- 805b10).

meanings surrounding it,<sup>457</sup> to reinforce the image of body/soul congruity expressed by Thrasyleon's new appearance, and the peace of mind which comes with this congruity.

The adjective *serenus/a*, when used in conjunction with *vultus*, *mens*, and *frons* (occasionally *os*), and in the ablative case, is used to designate a calm, peaceful demeanour. It often appears in contexts where the expression of serenity is an outward manifestation of a calm, tranquil mind wherein all the parts of the faculties of the soul are in harmony. This serenity shines forth on the face, like the sun on a calm, cloudless day. The resolution of Lucius' struggle and his anamorphosis or re-transformation, are marked by such a day in Book 11, chapter 7. It is only natural that serenity in the natural environment should precede the revelation of truth:

gestire mihi cuncta videbantur, ut pecua etiam cuiusce modi et totas domos et ipsum diem **serena facie** gaudere sentirem. Nam et pruina pridiana dies apricus ac placidus repente fuerat insecutus, ut canorae etiam aviculae prolectatae verno vapore concentus suaves adsonarent, matrem siderum, parentem temporum orbisque totius dominam blando mulcentes adfamine.

Although originating in texts treating of or deriving from questions of astronomy where it is applied to calm, unclouded weather (such as occurs in the aforementioned passage), the concept of *serenitas* transfers readily to philosophical issues by the material proximity of the two topics. Apuleius defines *serenitas* as a meteorological phenomenon in the *DM* (306) his own Latin paraphrase of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Περὶ κόσμου*: *Nec aliud est serenitas, quam aer purgatus caligine et perspicue sincerus*. The purity spoken of here, as of a lack of opaqueness, could translate in physiological (or physiognomic) terms into a countenance which does not foreshow dissembling or the presence of disturbing passion.

Of greater relevance to the very particular meaning the expression has in the instance of Thrasyleon's incipient transformation from man to beast, is the place of the face in the robber's description of his comrade. Where the

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<sup>457</sup> Although this is not the same thing as re-etymologising (which is impossible for a stock phrase), Apuleius does appear on this occasion to wish to remind the reader of some of the contexts in which the phrase occurs in earlier Latin literature. On Apuleius' skill in etymology and word-play under various guises in his novel, see Nicolini (2007) 148-154.

face, the *vultus*, behaves as a mirror of the embodied soul by metonymy, the *vultus* as identity-marker tightens the connection between embodied soul and truth.<sup>458</sup> Ending his description with a note on Thrasyleon's face reaffirms the place of the face in physiognomic discourse as well as in the *Metamorphoses* but, more importantly, it confirms Thrasyleon's essentially hybrid status as both man and animal at this most seminal of moments. It is a commonplace of philosophical discourse, that the only animal that possesses a face is man.<sup>459</sup> By having the body of a bear and the face of a man, and a face which recalls the stock image of the sage, Thrasyleon is the picture of the truth of himself as a man with bestial appetites and lifestyle. The calmness of the sage who knows how to keep his passions and emotions in check is transformed into the calmness of the man who has finally found his true self.

As a consequence of this re-application of the phrase, the force of its irony resides in the type that Thrasyleon embodies. This must be understood if the expression is to have significance as embodying the truth in its new application. *Vultu sereno*, in Thrasyleon's case, relates to Thrasyleon's personal nature (that is, his soul) as having attained its ultimate status and its most valid outer manifestation. Since the robbers are an example of one of the four blameworthy types of mankind which Apuleius holds up to critical scrutiny in the *DPD*,<sup>460</sup> a close application of this analysis of types would allow an insight into the robbers' behaviour as based on their psychological state. The imbalance in their life-style has arraigned them as beings akin to tyrants.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> The serene countenance, expressed as *serena facie*, of the *pistor* in Book 9 (9.14-28) upon discovering the infidelity of his wife is another specimen of this in the novel. The long-suffering and mild-mannered husband becomes a wronged husband bent on revenge against his wife by indulging in homosexual relations with his wife's young boy-lover. Here, too, the serene countenance (*serena facie*) can be seen to function as a truth-marker, insofar as it precedes and marks the revelation of the *pistor's* true (homosexual) nature, hitherto concealed from Lucius (and presumably the *pistor's* wife).

<sup>459</sup> Cicero, *Laws*, 26. The applicability of the notion of face only to man and not to animals also occurs prior to this in Aristotle, in the *Historia Animalium* (491b.9).

<sup>460</sup> Apuleius, *DPD*, 2.15.

<sup>461</sup> Cf. 7.4: *ad instar tyrannicae potestatis* and *DPD*, 2.15: *Tyrannidis genus ex luxuriosa et plena libidinis vita, quae ex infinitis et diversis et illicitis voluptatibus conflata mente tota dominatur*. On Apuleius' debt to Plato for his ideas on the tyrannical man, see Beaujeu (1973), 297. Although the robbers are not depicted as lusty in the novel, they are money-

Thrasyleon's manner of demise is truly the highest a man of Thrasyleon's kind (and of the robbers' as a group) can aspire to. The philosophical basis of *vultu sereno* has been downsized, if not degraded, yet its truth-value remains intact.

As it appears in the passage under discussion, the phrase *vultu sereno* reflects the state of a soul which has found its true home in the body to which it is most suited. Fabian Opeku claims rightly that Apuleius uses the fixed expression as the literary equivalent of the artist's copy which portrays the ideal of a character.<sup>462</sup> The case in point may not be the same kind of fixedness as is used of Cupid as he is depicted in the *Metamorphoses*, sleeping peacefully (5.22), but, just like Cupid as he is being spied on by Psyche, Thrasyleon too is the object of another's descriptive gaze and he is not being disturbed by any strong emotion. Ironically, the robber-narrator's attribution of the phrase to a comrade who is perfectly at ease with wearing an animal pelt that will cover him entirely helps to confirm the value of the expression for Thrasyleon's identity. In earlier texts of an ethical bent, the phrase is often applied to the countenance of the Stoic sage or, more generally, the man who has learned to keep his emotions in check despite adverse circumstances.<sup>463</sup> This resonance would not have been lost on the educated reader. In epic, it figures also as an epithet for the noble warrior; but on such occasions, it reflects a merely temporary state of the warrior, such as he enjoys when not in the thick of a

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hungry (prepared to hand Charite over to a brothel-keeper for the financial advantage this would bring them; 7.9), and are attracted to low-level pursuits such as theft, especially of luxury items (4.8) and carousing. The narrator's insistence on the frightening aspect of Thrasyleon in his bear disguise at 4.18 recalls the rhetorical motif of the tyrant as a huge beast (cf. Livy *AUC*, 29.17.11-12: *immanis belua*, and see on this Dunkle, 1971, 17).

<sup>462</sup> Opeku (1979) 467-474. Furthermore, can we really speak of the serene countenance as of a *facial expression*? Unlike the face of a man who is smiling, laughing, sniggering, or showing surprise, disappointment, lust, anger or confusion, etc, the serene countenance does not seem to be dependent on any kind of muscular contraction, or gesturing of any kind. It is precisely the absence of these which makes the expression one of serenity, as if lack of expression can come close to the disembodiment that the philosophical man strives for.

<sup>463</sup> Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 1.2.3-5; Cicero, *Disputationes Tusculanae*, 3.31 and *De Officiis*, 1.90; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 3.292-293. For a more literary expression of the same idea, see Horace's Cleopatra Ode, 1.37.25-28.

battle.<sup>464</sup> Following this paradigm, on Thrasyleon it would befit the noble warrior at rest before going out to perform his *aristeia* with the household hounds, when his epic quality as a warrior, hinted at in his name (lion-heart), would come to the fore. However, to arrive at a correct understanding of how the phrase works in this episode, it is essential to retain that it functions both ironically and sincerely in Apuleius, as on no occasion in the novel does it refer to one who enjoys a philosophically grounded or sound equanimity; yet it reveals the truth about the wearer, howsoever desirable from an ethical perspective this truth may be. Consequently, by metaphorical transference of the expression, Thrasyleon's serene countenance can be said to mark the beginning of the resolution of his earthly term of life as he finally wins the body which is rightfully his. The *vultus serenus* contains the essence of his (personal) heroic status, a fact reinforced by the noble if not epic sounding chiasmus that accompanies the transformation which it caps: *habili corio et mollitie tractabili vultu sereno sese recondit*. The hero is at his apogee. From then on, it is only a matter of degeneration. This is not down to the body operating on the soul, but to the body *cooperating with* the soul. Balance between the two has finally been achieved. Just as the epic hero has the glorious death, the beautiful death, that marks his heroic status, a death prompted and set in motion by concerns of a higher nature, the robber will have the inglorious and merely natural death, prompted by self-preservation, of the animal that he is.<sup>465</sup> Hence, Thrasyleon's *true* identity as an animal only comes to the fore from the

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<sup>464</sup> But see also the *Aeneid*, 2.285-286, and the section Thrasyleon's Disguise and the Robbers' Epic Vision. For the epic warrior at rest, see Statius, *Thebaid*, 5.422-427. This is certainly the way it is interpreted by Tatum (1969) 505, who, however, does not elaborate on the connotations behind the expression: "Thrasyleon, "Bold-lion," submits himself to this ordeal with the calm face of a noble hero ("vultu sereno" 4.15)." In objection to Tatum's argument, we could ask to what degree this can be considered an "ordeal" given the confidence that the robbers had in their plan. If the phrase reflects in the *Metamorphoses* nothing more than the equanimity of the sage about to face death, then this implies that Thrasyleon expected to die. There is no evidence of such an expectation in the text. He did not even expect to have to do battle, as the plan was simply that he should let his comrades into Demochares' house once he had been let in as a bear.

<sup>465</sup> See, for example, Lucius' later comparison of marauding, ravenous wolves with robbers (8.15): *lupos enim numerosos, grandes et vastis corporibus sarcinosos ac nimia ferocitate saevientes, passim rapinis assuetos infestare cunctam illam regionem...et in modum latronum praetereuntes aggredi*.

moment of his assumption of the bear skin that helps to define his nature as the lowest kind of warrior animal – the robber. His serenity arises from the (implied) recognition and assumption of his true nature. His fate as an animal under attack can now be fulfilled; this is achieved by the conjunction of fate and Thrasyleon's part of will in the undertaking.

### Fate and Predestination

Although the narrator is aware of his dead comrades' flaws, he fails to make the link between personal flaw and professional failure, attributing everything rather to Fortune or Fate. Space, howsoever brief, must be given to these considerations as they confirm the transformation of Thrasyleon as similar to that of Pamphile and Lucius insofar as it is a mere externalisation of his personal qualities. Thrasyleon misses out on the retransformation which Isis, who has ultimate control over Fate, bestows on Lucius.<sup>466</sup> Isis is the goddess who can control Fate, but in the context of the *Metamorphoses*, this does not rule out personal responsibility. The fulfilment of Thrasyleon's fate was the culmination of both external forces - the need to penetrate inside Demochares' house and to use, for this, disguise in the *ursae effigies* (also known as the *sollers species*, and the *ancipiti machinae*<sup>467</sup> ...*aleam*) - his own nature both physical and mental, and his own part of will in the undertaking.<sup>468</sup> However, once the animal skin is on him, human will dissolves into animal instinct.<sup>469</sup> The irony is that Thrasyleon has redeemed his true nature as an

<sup>466</sup> Compare Isis' claim to control Fate at 11.16 with sections 55 and 56 of the Memphis-Kyme aretalogy (Streete, 2000, 373-375).

<sup>467</sup> It really is a two-headed disguise in more ways than one: it has the head of a bear and contains the head of a man. See footnote 415. *Anceps*, in one form or another, is also found in Book 5.26 where it is used of the razor with which Psyche determined to kill her husband: '*ut bestiam...ancipiti novacula premerem*' and in *Florida* 18 where it is used of a dilemma: *anceps argumentum ambifariam proposuit*. Apuleius appears to be re-etymologising for effect.

<sup>468</sup> Cf. Apuleius, *DPD*, 1.12, on fate: *Nec sane omnia referenda esse ad vim fati puta[n]t sed esse aliquid in nobis et in fortuna esse non nihil*.

<sup>469</sup> Given Apuleius' familiarity with the texts of Aristotle (see footnote 452), it is permissible to bring Thrasyleon's act of self-preservation in line with Aristotle's discussion, in the *De Motu Animalium*, of what moves animals. Every animal is moved by intellect, imagination, purpose, wish and appetite (700b), which are all reducible to mind and desire. However, will, impulse and appetite are all forms of desire alone whereas purpose belongs to both intellect

animal; yet, as an animal which was only reacting in accordance with his instinct as opposed to human *voluntas*, he can have no proper claim to any rational role in this. This, however, is the effect of the ambiguity that resides in hybridity. As both man and animal, the philosophical and ontological boundaries are slippery and can easily become blurred. At this point, however, in his struggle to survive, he is mere beast acting under the impulsion of his instinctual nature. Throughout his performance, Thrasyleon both sets in motion and enacts the dictates of fate by bringing to the fore his nature without his or his colleagues' being aware of this; he was a willing partner to the transformation (which he understood to be merely temporary) but he misread the objective. In the end, by willingly undergoing the transformation into a bear through the tangible medium of its pelt, Thrasyleon performed a transformation upon himself, without the aid of supernatural intervention of any kind.

Thrasyleon's demise in no way diminishes his claim to honorary status, as the narrator also tells us: '*gloriam sibi reservavit.*' In the robbers' eyes, the glory resides uniquely in Thrasyleon's sustained role-play due to his oath of loyalty to the group. Even at the point of death, he was so loyal and so convincing as a bear, they claim, that he never relinquished his role. The upshot was that none dared touch the carcass, even on the next day, except a butcher, who used caution before approaching the beast (4.20-21). The narrator also tells us, in the manner of an inscription, that by his death, Thrasyleon surrendered his life to fate: '*vitam fato reddidit.*'<sup>470</sup> Yet not much

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and desire (700b). Thrasyleon at this point, where he is mostly animal, is moved by will and impulse. It is the objects of desire and intellect which initiate movement. Thrasyleon's refusal to betray the robbers' code at this point, whilst attributable in his comrade's eyes to purpose as intellect, could also be related to his purpose as desire, that is, the animal's impulse towards self-preservation. Ironically, the narrator's insistence on Thrasyleon's stoutness of heart recalls what Gryllus says to Odysseus in Plutarch's *Moralia* in the section where the two epic characters discuss the rationality of beasts. Gryllus tells his former companion (987D) that wild beasts maintain with a stout heart an indomitable spirit to the very end, and they are never conquered, never giving up in their hearts even when physically overpowered.

<sup>470</sup> The GCA commentary (1977) 161, gives the exact inscriptional formula: *vita(m) fato reddidi* (CE 1901 = CIL XI 7376). The epigraphic tenor and provenance of the expression do

prior to this, Thrasyleon's demise is attributed by the robber-narrator to the machinations of bad luck, personified as *scaevus Eventus* (4.19): '*His omnibus salubri consilio recte dispositis occurrit scaevus Eventus.*' It seems that in the mind of the narrator, *scaevus Eventus* and *Fatum* may be two faces of the same entity.<sup>471</sup> In contradiction to the opinion that Thrasyleon's demise was due to his imitation of something he was not, it can be argued that his demise is a direct result of the emergence of his true nature, that he attempted to imitate a being which, in reality, he already was. Thrasyleon's will in this episode (*cf. voluntarius* at 4.14) is determinative of much of the ensuing action. Furthermore, the importance of will takes on a philosophical dimension by its function in the narrative insofar as it determines the degree to which Thrasyleon's role and demise had been preordained. Individual will and collective decision-making conspire in the actions of Fate. The figurative meaning of *scaena* in this episode – role, or performance – and the theatrical connotations of the phrase *schemis ac motibus* (4.20) retain and promote the superficially theatrical image;<sup>472</sup> but *schemis ac motibus*, as a phrase, also recalls the expression of movements and gesture in the pseudo-Aristotelian work on physiognomy (806b, 35): *τὰς κινήσεις καὶ τὰ σχήματα*, a type of resonance which further substantiates the demise of Thrasyleon in costume as in some way preordained. Thrasyleon's acceptance of death as an animal seems to suggest that surrendering one's life to fate may be the same thing as to die *in accordance with* fate, that is, to die a natural death and at the appointed term. Thrasyleon indeed died as a lion may die in the state of nature, instinctively defending himself from a pack of hungry wild dogs, also driven by pure instinct. Likewise, the other robbers are wrong to impute their other failures to Fortuna (4.12).

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not overthrow any further value it may have for shedding light on the manner of Thrasyleon's death as linked to his nature.

<sup>471</sup> The GCA commentary (1977) 161, points out that it is difficult to pin *fatum* down to an exact meaning: "It seems to be a general notion of the inescapability to which people, but understandably the relevant dead person in particular, are subject."

<sup>472</sup> The GCA commentators (1977, 151) reinforce the theatrical meaning by comparing the phrase to Nonnius, 56M (=79L): *Petauristae a veteribus dicebantur qui saltibus vel schemis levioribus moverentur* and 61M (=85L): *Sanniones dicuntur a sannis qui sunt in dictis fatui et in motibus et in schemis.*

Thrasyleon's personal body as a man acted as a floating signifier which came to be stabilised by the collision and collusion of his name with his newfound appearance, both of which reflect his identity. Close to this phenomenon is the divine operation of which Apuleius speaks in the *DM* (352-353):<sup>473</sup>

Nec illud dissimile exemplum videri oportet, si quis pariter patefacto gremio animalis simul abire patiatur, volucrum, na[ta]tilium atque terrestrium; enimvero ad suum locum quaeque, **duce natura**, properabant: pars aquam repetent, illa inter cicures atque agrestes legibus et institutis suis adgregabuntur, ibunt per aeris vias praepetes, quibus hoc **natura** largita est.

The important issue here is the role of nature in all this. Thrasyleon, like a wild animal by his lifestyle and impulses (*cf* above: *duce natura*), hastened to his death (*cf* above: *properabant*) and died in an environment suited to his nature: a hunt. Furthermore, the fact that the hunting dogs reacted to him *as an animal*, using their olfactory senses to aid them in this, means that the human part of Thrasyleon by this time was much reduced. The dissolution of Thrasyleon's intended disguise is extended into the dissolution of the perceived dramatic frame (*scaena*) as Thrasyleon dies, contrary to all expectation and in a way which upset the robbers' plans. This fact in turn questions the merely performative perception of Thrasyleon's actions. The theatrical language used by the narrator (*scaena*) is merely a decoy of the author.

### Perceptions of Thrasyleon's Disguise and Performance

Thrasyleon's tale is fruitful for a discussion of true identity read against perceived identity. As has already been established, the prophetic impact of the metaphor *bestiam factum* is lost on the narrator, who continues all throughout Thrasyleon's enactment of a hunted bear to see it as nothing more or less than a performance, sustained by the actor Thrasyleon with a mind to the integrity of his pact of loyalty to his part, a pact made with the group with which Thrasyleon identifies (4.21). Thrasyleon's glorious demise through loyalty is in reality merely the behaviour of animals in the wild, like bears and

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<sup>473</sup> Just prior to this passage in the *DM* (351-352), Apuleius compares the divine apparatus which sets nature in motion (*machinatores fabricarum*) to a puppeteer. Aristotle uses similar imagery in his work on the movement of animals, *De Motu Animalium*, 701b.

lions, which live purely by stealth and instinct for self-preservation (much as the robbers do). Moreover, robbers, like bears and lions, are often hunted,<sup>474</sup> and it is through a “hunt” that Thrasyleon meets his end, that is, a “natural” setting. His reflexes to the assaults of the pack animals and hunting implements are those of the roaring wild beast (4.21): *‘sed iam morsibus laceratus ferroque laniatus, obnixo mugitu et ferino fremitu praesentem casum generoso vigore tolerans gloriam sibi reservavit, vitam fato reddidit’*. No similes are used to portray this performance.<sup>475</sup> The intended performance becomes a natural and instinctive reaction, the reaction of the beast in the wild (*ferino*). Nature gains the upper hand, and the natural courage (4.14: *animi robor*) which made Thrasyleon the man most desirable for the role of a bear, translates into instinct and comes to dominate the bear disguise (*effigies ursae*). Once Thrasyleon is dead, his fellow robbers see him as a man again, although they continue with the pretence of seeing him as a bear in order to safeguard their plan; again, the lion metaphor is applied to Thrasyleon the hero when the narrator tells how Thrasyleon’s body lies untouched until dawn, when a butcher comes to dissect the carcass for meat, thereby depriving the glorious robber - assimilated to an epic hero - of his spoils, in this case, the bear-pelt which is the hero animal’s natural armour (4.21): *‘tandem pigre ac timide quidam lanius paulo fidentior, utero bestiae resecto, ursae magnificum despoliavit latronem.’*<sup>476</sup>

It matters that the robber narrator continues to speak of the relationship between the actors in this scenario as a continuation of the normal human-beast differentiation. Curiously, given the convincing performance of Thrasyleon, it is surprising that the terms of the relationship are not inverted, so that the reader would be left with the image of the

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<sup>474</sup> 7.7: *‘Tota denique factione militarium vexillationum indagatu confecta atque concisa, ipse me furatus aegre solus mediis Orci faucibus ad hunc evasi modum.’*

<sup>475</sup> The comparable Homeric simile of Hector in the manner of a lion or boar fending off the hounds and huntsmen is marked as such (*Iliad*, 12.41-42). Just like Thrasyleon (*praesentem casum generoso vigore tolerans*), Hector’s heart does not fail him and his strength is his bane (*Iliad*, 12. 45-46).

<sup>476</sup> On the textual problems of this passage, see the GCA. It also makes little difference whether the case of *ursae* is a Greek genitive or a Latin dative, as the end result is the same (unless one prefers to see specifically Homeric resonances behind the use of a Greek case).

butcher depriving the magnificent bear of the robber (*latronis magnificam despoliavit ursam*). Yet the narrator's perspective can be explained by the normal requirements of the literary portrayal of despoliation of a warrior hero: the spoils are merely the outer covering, for all their moral worth to the comrades of the fallen, and since this is how the narrator sees the bear pelt, he cannot describe the act from another perspective. Yet Apuleius rarely relinquishes an opportunity to allow an alternative reading to come through: by the extended context in which the warrior's despoliation takes place, and by the entire episode's framing at either end by reference to the robbers' bestiality (*cf.* 4.8 and 6.30), the primary sense of *spolium* as "skin" resurfaces to further corroborate the conflation of the heroic with the bestial.<sup>477</sup>

The resolution of the discrepancy between how the people of Plataea see Thrasyleon as an animal and how his comrades see him as a warrior is never fully played out in the text. From the perspective of the robbers, the weapon has pierced a man of lionesque proportions and qualities in the costume of a bear; from the Plataeans' point of view, the weapon has merely pierced a bear. We are not informed of the reaction of the butcher upon discovering that the carcass before him merely covers the body of a man and is not that of a beast. In addition to this observation, it can be noted that the (dramatic) cycle of disguise-recognition<sup>478</sup> is thus broken, and the issue of the bear's "true" identity as Thrasyleon is suspended and left unresolved (as if there is really no identity issue at stake). In fact, we are not told of any such discovery; it may never have come about. The episode's relevance to questions of identity appears to have been exhausted by this time; so such a discovery may no longer contain the possibility of repercussions.

The absence of any uncovering of the disguise and the discovery of the true identity beneath it (that is, true from the perspective of the robbers) may be a deliberate attempt on Apuleius' part to down-play the importance of such a theatrical motif for this episode.<sup>479</sup> This fact alone resists any attempt by the reader to read Thrasyleon's disguise as having in any way a merely theatrical

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<sup>477</sup> On the primary and acquired meanings of the verb *despoliare* derived from its root, *spolium*, see Brachet (2001), 45.

<sup>478</sup> Muecke (1982b), 31.

<sup>479</sup> See Muecke (1982b) for the motif of disguise and recognition in ancient drama.

function, that is to say, as part of a temporary performance with a predetermined outcome. From the robbers' perspective, what is clear about the "uncovering" of Thrasyleon from under the bear-skin, referred to as spoils of war, is that it functions as a restabilisation of category boundaries which had become momentarily blurred during the climax of Thrasyleon's struggle with the pack-animals; but with regard to his actions, it can be questioned how far we can speak of a merely mimetic or theatrical performance.<sup>480</sup> Upon closer inspection into the narrative, by bearing in mind the metaphorical value of the descriptions of the robbers made by Lucius and the narrator's use of metaphor to describe Thrasyleon in his costume (*prorsus bestiam factum*), we come to discover that, in reality, no boundaries have been blurred.<sup>481</sup> At the time of his death, Thrasyleon the actor only appears to be a human being in disguise.<sup>482</sup> Apuleius' insight into the reality of people works at a deeper level than that of his own characters. Throughout the episode, Thrasyleon is not overtly *depicted*

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<sup>480</sup> Shelton (2005) also questions the validity of reading the scene in theatrical terms, referring to scholars – the majority - who persist in this view. Rosati (2003) 288 is one of a number of scholars who relate the episode to wider issues of hybrid identity in the *Metamorphoses*: "Esemplare, in questo senso, quella replica interna della metamorfosi animale di Lucio che è il travestimento in forma di orso del brigante Trasileone (4, 15-21), il quale realizza così appieno quel destino di coraggiosa 'ferinità' cui il suo nome richiama." Rosati's suggestion of preordained character (*destino di coraggiosa 'ferinità'*) comes close to my understanding of the part of fate in Thrasyleon's demise (see the preceding section: Fate and Predestination). Shumate (1996) 67, also tracks the dissolution of disguise in the passage and remarks with perspicacity: "The entire episode, for all its comic and mock-heroic tone, is constructed in such a way as to encourage the reader to reflect not only on the persuasiveness of illusion, but even on whether illusion is a valid category in view of the truth-value that it frequently acquires."

<sup>481</sup> Bringing this perspective to bear on the episode may help to resolve some of the seeming inconsistencies or "awkward questions" brought up by certain scholars. The GCA commentators (1977, 154), for example, question the likelihood of Thrasyleon's being torn apart by dogs at chapter 20 given Thrasyleon's appearance in costume. I argue that, by this stage, of course, it is no longer a costume. Apuleius allows narrative flexibility to override *vraisemblance* in order to carry this idea. Behind this scene is the important presumption that Thrasyleon obviously *smells* like a bear to the dogs.

<sup>482</sup> The possibility of there being an animal behind the man in a metaphorical sense is hinted at by Lucius in another passage where an enormous she-bear devours a young boy, whose character is just as savage as the bear's (7.24): *ex summo studio fugiens immanem ursam ursaque peiorem illum puerum*.

as a hybrid species, inhabiting a world of ontological slippage in the same manner as Lucius, even though he does. This is the effect of the embedding of the story within the frame narrative - the primary narrator of the episode (that is, the robber who is recounting the tale) is not Lucius. Any judgement to be imposed on Thrasyleon's story must be imposed by the reader. For the reader versed in Plato and Platonist philosophy, the equation of the tyrannical man with unrestrained passions and appetites would be accessible in the robber narratives.

In spite of the robbers' perception of Thrasyleon's bear costume and performance as a temporary and expedient stratagem, it is only fitting that the pelt of a well-fed bear should cover one whose nature as a fierce, appetite-driven brigand is so close to that of a wild animal that the two merge into each other. The pelt, the new garment of Thrasyleon's soul, becomes imbued with his nature. In fact, the death of the bear, its excoriation and the refitting of its pelt onto a new owner of lionesque proportions and appetites appear to become, in this light and from a higher perspective, a literary analogy for the transmigration of the soul after death, known commonly as metempsychosis, metensomatosis (perhaps a more apt term for Thrasyleon's transformation as it occurred before his death), or even palingenesis.<sup>483</sup> Re-assimilation underpins and drives the transformation, Thrasyleon's soul re-animating the carcass of the dead bear.

### **Thrasyleon's Disguise and the Robbers' Epic Vision**

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<sup>483</sup> Metensomatosis is a more accurate reading inasmuch as its premise is the retention of Thrasyleon's bestial soul which merely relocates itself into a body which more closely resembles it. Gianotti (1995) 111, claims that the Neoplatinists would have preferred the term metensomatosis for the symbiosis between man and animal (although this point is made in reference to Lucius' transformation). On metensomatosis ("reincorporation") as another form of metempsychosis, see Cumont (2002), 183. Metempsychosis, as a term, is perhaps more aptly applied to examples where bodily transformation follows death. Thrasyleon's transformation occurred *before* death. For a good but brief note on the distinctive connotations of these terms, see Bacigalupo (1965) 284.

The behaviour of the robbers is marked in the text by the narrator himself as military;<sup>484</sup> but the robbers' perception of themselves as warriors of heroic, even epic, proportions, can only be comic when judged against their lifestyle and dismal failures.<sup>485</sup> Hence, animal disguise in the episode can also figure as an investigation into the propriety of the robbers' attributing an epic vision and mode of expression to themselves in spite of the fact that both the lion and the bear figure as elements of philosophical and physiognomic repertory as much as of martial, specifically epic, imagery (although the bear does not figure in the martial epic of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, but does figure as the object of a transformation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 2.401-507).<sup>486</sup> Epic

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<sup>484</sup>4.8-9 (note the military connotations behind the adverbs *aggratim* and *agminatim*; on this, see Garraffoni, 2004, 374); Apuleius' robbers admit to their self-perception as kings and generals, much like a warrior king from epic (4.8): *Sed illum quidem utcumque nimia virtus sua peremit; inter inclitos reges ac duces proeliorum tanti viri memoria celebrabitur*. At 4.26, Charite talks of the robbers' martial tactics, referring to the robbers as gladiators, a common way of speaking of bandits in antiquity (GCA, 1977, 184): *cum irruptionis subitae gladiatorum impetus ad belli faciem saeviens, nudis et infestis mucronibus coruscans...denso conglobatoque cuneo cubiculum nostrum invadunt protinus*. See also the robbers' discussion of the meaning of martial valour in their mock symposium (4.7-9). The bandits' tales themselves (4.9-21) figure as part of this discussion.

<sup>485</sup>The robbers' martial tactics recall the take of Troy in the *Aeneid*, where the Greeks took advantage of the torpor of the Trojans to gain access to the city (4.18): *Et ex disciplina sectae servato noctis illunio tempore, quo somnus obvius impetus primo corda mortalium validius invadit ac perimit, cohortem nostrum gladiis armatam ante ipsas fores Demochares velut expilationis vadimonium sistimus*. This is known to the robbers as the "robbers' time of night": *capto noctis latrocinalis momento*. The comparable moment in the *Aeneid* occurs at 2.250-269.

<sup>486</sup>The object of transformation is the nymph Callisto, who was transformed into a bear by Juno. Even as a bear, Callisto retains her human sense, an important element stressed in the text (2.485, 493). In contrast, vestiges of Thrasyleon's humanity when he is under attack from the hounds are difficult to detect in the novel, in contradistinction to the claims of his comrade who narrates the story, attributing Thrasyleon's realistic defence as an animal to the oath of loyalty he made to his group (4.21). A rather more apt comparison can be made between the robbers of the novel and the bears in Pythagoras' pro-vegetarian speech in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (15.85-90), especially as the robbers had eaten the flesh of the bear whose pelt was to provide Thrasyleon with his disguise. The old man Acestes wears a bear pelt in the *Aeneid* (5.37), but he is neither warrior nor hero. It appears that the bear skin conveys notions rather of rusticity, on him. On Thrasyleon, it signals his brute strength as an animal, and as nothing more than an animal.

heroes are often compared to wild animals, a fact which confirms the epic resonances in the scene, especially the animal disguise and Thrasyleon's epithet-like name. Much has been written on epic language and themes in the Thrasyleon episode,<sup>487</sup> such as the *aristeia* of the epic hero, in this instance transposed onto the criminal underworld.<sup>488</sup> Thrasyleon's costume could then be seen to be an exteriorisation of his heroic nature, best seen when he engages in battle with the hounds who will kill him, a veritable metamorphosis of the robber into a living expression of the comparison of the hero to an animal through the use of simile in epic. This reading has induced scholars to inquire further into how epic values, especially martial values, are conceived and manipulated in the novel by Apuleius.<sup>489</sup> It is perhaps not irrelevant that,

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<sup>487</sup> My use of the term "epic" is that of other scholars, but I am aware that "epic" as they use the word is restricted to Homeric (especially the *Iliad*) and Virgilian epic.

<sup>488</sup> Echalié (2008) 153, speaks at length of the robbers' self-perception as epic heroes and valiant soldiers ("héros épiques et militaires valeureux"). Mackay (1963) 151-152, refutes any claim that the robber tales are "burlesques of the epic *ἀρετή*" on the grounds that confrontations with unsuitable enemies and the concern of the individual robber not to betray the gang have no place in such a tradition. He has failed to notice that elements found in the Thrasyleon episode which are extraneous to the epic tradition are a part of the burlesque. I would add that the robbers' perception of themselves as epic heroes is indeed perverted. For every aspect of epic life there is a robber's (low-level) counterpart. A pertinent example is the epic warrior's accrual of material wealth, a self-justified reward for fighting nobly. In the robber's canon, the epic motif is downgraded, as the robbers' possessions are often achieved by outright theft (see 4.8), the object of their attacks are often humble dwellings (4.9: *parva sed satis munita domuncula*; 4.12: *perfracto tuguriolo*), and the enemy is often a single person (4.9: *contempta pugna manus unice nullo negotio*). Occasionally, they are beaten by the single enemy, including elderly women (4.12).

<sup>489</sup> On this point, see particularly Cooper (1980), who claims that Apuleius creates an "anti-epic" (437) novel in response to the male-dominated epic tradition, and that he "invokes certain traditional features of the epic ... so as to transform the epic's positive outlook regarding man's place in the physical world to a highly negative one" (437). In her opinion, the many allusions to epic in the *Metamorphoses* "are always treated in such a way as to subject them to criticism, if not ridicule" (437). She claims that Apuleius considered "questionable" the "virtues" of aggression, lust, rapacity and greed that abound in the epic world. This revisionist aspect of the *Metamorphoses* is taken up and analysed by later scholars, among whom see Finkelpearl (1998, although she focuses rather more particularly on Apuleius' "correction" of Virgil's view of Dido, 131-148) and Echalié (2008, 728-729). I believe that Apuleius' intention in the robber narratives is not to parody epic but those who

ordinarily, the Greek use of leonine symbolism, including in epic, was complimentary.<sup>490</sup> In the *Aeneid*, the lion is used of the anger of warriors, especially Turnus, whose anger, recalling the undesirable and bestial aspect of *Furor* in Book 1, gives him heroic strength in fighting.<sup>491</sup> Thrasyleon's name appears to have been also, presumably, complimentary, especially where it can be seen to be a nick-name given to him by his comrades; although this need not be necessary for the inherent connotations to ring true to Thrasyleon's physical and mental qualities. But the attribution of an exclusively epic vision of the lion alone to Thrasyleon is misplaced; hence his reality is expressed through the form of another wild animal, the bear, one which rings true to Thrasyleon from a rather more physiognomic basis of comparison.<sup>492</sup> As a consequence, there is nothing glorious about Thrasyleon's death; it is merely natural.<sup>493</sup>

Ultimately, the robbers represent deviant forms of martial prowess. Any clothing that they wear will be an expression of as well as an adjunct to this. Their various costume changes – a necessary part of their lifestyle - are merely another form, more prosaic and practical, of shape-shifting, embodying their status as deviant or perverted forms of a noble ideal, much as the shape-shifting which gives mobility to the witches in the novel is a downgraded version of the transformative power of the goddess Isis. Heroic flourishes by the robbers, like the donning of an animal skin, reflect the bestial colouring given to epic martial values in the scene by reason of their improper

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erringly or undeservingly ascribe to themselves heroic qualities, as do the bandits in the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>490</sup> Dyson (1929) 186.

<sup>491</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 9.792-6; 10.454-6; 12.4-9. *Furor* in Book 1 of the *Aeneid* is described as roaring with a bloody mouth, 1.296: *fremet horridus ore cruento*. Turnus, compared in a simile to the lion (12.4, 6: *qualis...tum demum movet arma leo*), behaves in a similar manner (12.8): *fremet ore cruento*.

<sup>492</sup> See the preceding sections, especially the section entitled From Disguise to Garment of the Soul.

<sup>493</sup> Lucretius uses an epic simile comparing the warrior at war to a lion (*De Rerum Natura*, 3.294-298): *sed calidi plus est illis quibus acria corda/iracundaque mens facile effervescit in ira./quo genere in primis vis est violens leonum,/ pectora qui fremitu rumpunt plerumque gementes/nec capere irarum fluctus in pectore possunt*. The down-playing of any kind of noble warrior sentiment is pre-empted by Lucretius' rational account of anger.

abrogation to those who have no real claim to them. The well-known epic simile undergoes a complete metamorphosis into metaphor to reflect the metamorphosis into the truth that Thrasyleon embodies. The simile by which the epic warrior is compared to an animal is not the same thing as being an animal or becoming the animal to which one is compared. This fact alone takes further the traditional assumption that by putting on the animal's skin one became identified with the victim and took on some of its characteristics, namely, strength. This was the motivation behind the assumption of pelts by early Greek epic warriors or heroes, such as Heracles and Agamemnon, who donned lion-skins, and Paris, Menelaus and Jason who wore leopard-skins.<sup>494</sup> In Thrasyleon's case, however, the qualities were already there. Given the right environment, Thrasyleon can fully take on his proper role in life as an animal.

As a more compelling caution against reading too much of a merely superficial comparison with the epic hero by means of animal pelts, I point to the most salient point of divergence: whereas the epic hero is sometimes depicted to be merely clad in a pelt, in Thrasyleon's case, the "hero" is completely enveloped in the animal's entire carcass. He is completely swallowed up by the animal, a fact which serves to show his submission to the animal appetites inside him.<sup>495</sup>

The expression *vultu sereno* also occurs, as has been said, in the Latin epic tradition. In the *Thebaid*, *serenus* qualifies *frons* to express that heroic magnificence which exists as a necessary quality of the noble warrior who shares in the mysticism of the gods, once the justified anger of the warrior

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<sup>494</sup> Heracles: Euripides, *Hercules Furens*, 360-364; Agamemnon: Homer, *Iliad*, 10.23; Paris: *Iliad*, 3.17; Menelaus: *Iliad*, 10.29; Jason: Pindar, *Pythia*, 4.81. See also Schibli (1990) 7 n.15 and Bremmer (1993) 235. The degree of heroism amongst these figures of course varies. Krabbe (2003, 224) implausibly sees the bear-skin as functioning to represent Thrasyleon as a Herculean figure. Her interpretation is based on the depiction of Thrasyleon as a strong man (*non qui corporis adeo, sed animi robore ceteris antistaret*), the occurrence of the word *labor* (*nihil indigemus labore isto vestro*, 4.17) and the image of the bear-skin.

<sup>495</sup> This all-over animal disguise, designed to conceal the robber from sight, could also be read as a perverted version of the divinely generated cloud which covers the epic hero, and which affords him privacy and safety. Thrasyleon, of course, got neither privacy nor safety from his covering.

which incites him to great and noble deeds has abated.<sup>496</sup> In the *Aeneid* it occurs in the plural, this time with reference to the noble Hector who appears in a dishevelled and bloodied manner after his ignoble death to Aeneas. Aeneas' timely remark on the change in the dead warrior's countenance confirms the dead hero's formerly sedate bearing as the mark of a noble character in the Latin epic canon (*Aeneid* 2.285-286): '*quae causa indigna serenos/foedavit vultus? aut cur haec vulnera cerno?*' On this occasion in the *Aeneid*, the nobility and *virtus* of a Trojan hero and scion are pitted against their lack of visibility on his face in its present state. We are reminded of the importance of these values for the characterisation of Hector when we recall the terms with which Achilles referred to Hector in the *Iliad* (22. 391-394): "*We have killed great Hector, the god-like.*" There is no irony on Achilles' part when he says this. However, such resonances can only appear to act as farce when applied to Thrasyleon about whom there is nothing god-like or noble.

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<sup>496</sup> Statius, *Thebaid*, 5.422-427: *quingaginta illi, trabibus de more revinctis,/eminus abrupto quatiunt nova litora saltu,/magnorum decora alta partum, iam fronte sereni/ noscendique habitu, postquam tumor iraque cessit vultibus. arcana sic fama erumpere porta/caelicolas.* The expression occurs also in the plural with reference to Jupiter in Book 6 of the *Metamorphoses*, where its function is, of course, wholly ironic and comic (6.22): *serenos vultus meos sordide reformando.* On Jupiter, the plural form reflects not so much dignity (which is applicable to the case of the epic hero, Hector) as the god's propensity to change form for the sake of satiating his carnal appetite.

## Conclusion to Chapter 5

The import of the tale of Thrasyleon for the rest of the novel, articulated along the axis of perception and its relation to identity, cannot be overlooked. To begin with, Thrasyleon's tale does not occur in the extant *Onos*. It is the longest and most elaborately worked of all three robbers' tales told by the second gang of robbers (4.9-4.21). It is the only one in which we have a picture of the robbers as creators, and the only one in which the fabrication of disguise as a military stratagem is given prominence. By its length and detail it appears to cap the preceding two stories which deal with the (from the robbers' perspective) glorious demise of the bandits Lamachus and Alcimus. This fact, coupled with the aspect of the bear disguise as at once ineffectual and too effectual - as it contributes to Thrasyleon's death - and the ultimate failure of all the robbers, gives Thrasyleon's tale a specifically critical function in the robber narratives and the novel as a whole, insofar as it confirms the robbers' role in the novel as a metaphor for flawed perception and the consequences of this. Ultimately, the story points to one overriding theme which ties it in to the rest of the *Metamorphoses*: the role of the perception of self and others and the far-reaching consequences of this. The tale's status as an inset tale cannot be separated from considerations of this kind: the story of Thrasyleon and his demise is framed at both ends by remarks made within the frame narrative by Lucius pertaining to the nature of the robbers as beasts. These more truthful and insightful remarks circumscribe the robbers' self-perception within their own flawed moral code, and allow the reader to apply other canonical and imaginative voices to his judgment of the robbers. Philosophical and physiognomic discourse can provide this voice and counteracts the epic image with the bestial. The moral import for the rest of the novel of Thrasyleon's disguise as a bear is attendant upon how his disguise is perceived.

To sum up, it is useful to reiterate how the process of devolution from human to animal leading ultimately to Thrasyleon's demise has been tracked in this chapter. Thrasyleon's appearance and behaviour in his disguise, reminiscent to the robbers of their heroic self-vision, descends to the level of

the moral analogies between men and animals as found in the physiognomic and philosophical canons. The phrase *vultu sereno* has an important role in this. The occurrence of the phrase in a variety of genres does have some currency for its emergence in the *Metamorphoses*. Philosophical discourse and epic provide the most resonating strands in the expression's emergence in Thrasyleon's tale; but in the novel it is further articulated into an extension of the identity structures that underpin the novel. In Thrasyleon's tale, it highlights the truth of Thrasyleon's nature not as a man, least of all a sage or hero, but as an animal. Recalling the references to the innate bestiality of the robbers privileges the primary sense of the verb *despoliare*, with its meaning of removal of skin (*spolium* originally meant "skin") over its acquired, literary meaning of despoiling of arms. The robbers' short-sightedness likewise prevents their reading correctly the part of Fate and determinism in their comrade's downfall. This limited vision can be corrected by comparing it with Apuleius' own ideas about fate, ideas that support a reading of the outcome of Thrasyleon's heroic undertaking as predetermined. Adducing the evidence of epic texts, especially the epics of Homer and Virgil, as well as physiognomic and philosophical texts to prove these claims has been fruitful, but the evidence within the novel itself must not be overlooked; hence, I have also attempted to show the process by which perceived identity must be analysed against the testimony given by Lucius of the robbers' behaviour as comparable to that of beasts of a lower moral level. The evidence is scattered throughout the story and the novel in a fragmentary albeit recognisable way, yet points to the undeniable truth-value of Thrasyleon's costume as a visible expression of his soul which remained to be released through death at the moment of the realisation of his nature. Ultimately, in spite of any imposed perception of it, the performance becomes merely the enactment of his nature, and the outcome, rather than being an example of one's becoming what one imitates, becomes a tale about re-assimilation, that is, acting in accordance with one's true nature, exteriorised and made visible on the body. For this reason, Thrasyleon's external appearance, which includes gesture and overall demeanour, is a direct reflection of his basic nature, or soul. Costume and disguise, in this scheme, will inevitably come undone, and the problems associated with slippery boundaries persist until the end of the episode.

Similarly, it can be claimed that the transition of Thrasyleon's disguise to "garment of the truth" elicits identity-consciousness in the *Metamorphoses* from the perspective of the novel's underlying philosophical vision: Thrasyleon's wholly fierce nature, which is mistaken by the robbers for heroic valour, prevents his moving forward to a higher goal than robbing and killing. In contrast, Lucius' animal nature was counterbalanced by the positive qualities in him and his ever-sharpening perceptive faculties, especially with regard to his own situation. This realisation gave Lucius access to communion with the divine, which can be achieved only by acquiring self-awareness, a corollary to issues of perception.<sup>497</sup> This is a lesson that can be learned if Thrasyleon's story is approached as a kind of cautionary tale, warning against the double danger of not knowing one-self and one's own limits as a mortal and overreaching one-self as a result. Thrasyleon's inner-outer realignment is a negative counterpart to Lucius' metamorphosis into a donkey insofar as Thrasyleon's reward for his lifestyle is death, but it also functions as a necessary precursor to the manifestation of his proper identity and death as the animal that he was. Thrasyleon's physical transformation into an expression of his soul is a negative parallel to Lucius' transformation. Just like Lucius' donkey skin, Thrasyleon's costume is misread, but whereas Lucius can move on to a higher plane and regain his human form, Thrasyleon's ultimate state as a being has been reached so he must die.

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<sup>497</sup> Similarly, Lucius' accession to communion with the divine must be preceded by his physical realignment by re-assuming his former physical self, reflective of his inner self (11.2: *redde me meo Lucio*) and a stern moral lesson, provided by the priest, about getting his priorities right. Only then can he move on to a higher plane of existence as a servant of Isis, before undergoing union with the invisible godhead in the novel, Osiris. See Chapter 8 for an elaboration of this idea.

## Chapter 6

### Tlepolemus/Haemus, Plotina and Cross-Dressing

Nowhere does the obfuscation of the boundaries separating the performative and concealing functions of dress as disguise from its truth-value as garment of the soul emerge more subtly than in Book 7 with the double cross-dressing sequence. The transvestism in this episode may be only virtual, a projection of the imagination, as it may not have actually occurred, yet is also profoundly real at a metaphorical level. Transvestism in this episode is further complicated by the web of connections: a real character, Tlepolemus, assumes the persona of a famous bandit with a name and costume, Haemus, who, in his turn, assumes another persona in disguise as a female donkey-driver (*asinaria*), at the same time as evoking (if not fabricating) a character also with her own name - Plotina - and who assumes male disguise. Both these costumed personae reflect on the degree of heroism in Tlepolemus. In this chapter my aim, therefore, is to show how transvestite disguise and bodily appearance in this episode form the crux between what Tlepolemus promises as an heroic character and what he delivers, and to what degree this is projected onto the personae he creates for strategic purposes – Haemus and the female donkey-driver. In addition to this nexus of relationships, perception contributes another richness to the text: the perception of the robbers is not as privileged as that of the reader, whose insight into the character Tlepolemus/Haemus, is further enhanced not only by multiple levels of narrative, but by episodes that come later in the novel. The hypothesis of this chapter is that Tlepolemus' heroism lacks development, a flaw which contributes to his downfall, even though it allowed him to exploit his oratorical skills to have the upper hand over the robbers, whose perceptive acuity is flawed, especially with regard to Haemus' appearance.<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> This is of course not the only reason for his demise, as he is treacherously deceived and murdered, yet can be considered a contributing factor. This is a flaw which cannot be

The chapter opens on an investigation into how rags on a strong and youthful body raise the issues of perception and interpretation of identity. This investigation occurs as a consequence of Haemus' emergence in the novel as it is recounted by three different narrators – the robber-scout, Lucius and Haemus himself. All three versions reveal the truth about Tlepolemus, the character who creates and impersonates Haemus, but in different ways, through a focus on Haemus' appearance.

The second section probes into the manner in which the episode reflects issues of perception and gender as they arise in the episode itself as well as in the wider context of the whole novel, by a focus on the specimens of cross-dressing – female to male (through the character named Plotina) and then male to female (Haemus).

The chapter's third section takes up again the motif of the duplicity of rags (and clothing, more generally) by illustrating on this occasion their capacity to reveal and conceal simultaneously the true identity of Tlepolemus, the noble youth, behind his self-imposed identity as Haemus, the brigand. Tlepolemus appeals to his ragged appearance in a speech which evokes a "forensic" setting to play on divergent perceptions of himself.

The focus of the first three sections on the polysemous content of rags and their divergent reception naturally gives rise to considerations pertaining to what Tlepolemus actually is. The struggle between the heroism that he promises and the rather more lack-lustre performance that he delivers is analysed against the meaningful backdrop of his body and his disguise.

The chapter then closes on an attempt to account for the complexity of Tlepolemus' character in the context of literary creation. Genre and allusion (and, possibly, intertext)<sup>499</sup> in the episode cooperate towards this end and can be drawn upon to provide an interpretive tool for the educated (ancient) reader's reception of Tlepolemus. I then discuss other scholarly readings of the episode with particular reference to what it owes to preceding literary canons.

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attributed to deviation or error which are the undoing of the robbers (see Chapter 5) whom Tlepolemus seeks to infiltrate as Haemus.

<sup>499</sup> For an example of this, see the section entitled *Disguise, the Body and Tlepolemus' Heroic Ambivalence* for a possible intertext with Valerius Maximus.

Ultimately, in spite of the obviously canonical aspects of Tlepolemus'/Haemus' character, he remains a unique fictional construct, whose true identity is accessible even to the less educated reader.

### The Strong-Man in Rags: Haemus' Lies – Tlepolemus' Truth

Haemus appears for the first time in the novel when he is brought to the robbers' den by one of their band who had accompanied them after they had robbed Milo's house. The scout had then become separated from them when he took up his position as spy.<sup>500</sup> After the usual exchange of pleasantries and news, the robber-scout suggests that they look for new recruits, so as to regain the appearance of a cohort of Mars, such as they had previously (7.4): *ad pristinae manus numerum Martiae cohortis facies integraretur*. Martial appearance and its maintenance are obviously important to the robbers. The scout had taken it upon himself to find some fresh blood for them and describes the new recruit he has found, emphasizing the young man's physical qualities which will most likely persuade them to take him on board. Haemus' first appearance in the novel then arises in the context of maintaining a persona which coincides with the robbers' perception of themselves (7.4):

Se quoque iam dudum pro sua parte quendam convenisse hominem et **statu procerum** et **aetate iuvenem** et **corpore vastum** et **manu strenuum**, eique suasisse ac denique persuasisse, ut manus hebetatas diutina pigritia tandem referret ad frugem meliorem bonoque secundae, dum posset, frueretur valetudinis, nec manum validam erogandae stipi porrigeret sed hauriendo potius exerceret auro.

Such a carefully balanced description, underscored by polysyndeton and anadiplosis, would most likely set up expectations in the minds of the robbers as they listen, and exposes the robbers' prerequisites for their band: *status*, *aetas*, *corpus*, *manus*. More importantly, he is careful to end the description with an element which the robbers place great store by: the new recruit's hands. Hands appear to have almost physiognomic value to the robbers inasmuch as they reflect a man's character. The story of Lamachus, the robbers' comrade who preferred death to the loss of his arm and hand, functions as

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<sup>500</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 3.28: *unoque de sociis ad speculandum, qui de facinoris inquisitione nuntiaret, relicto.*

proof of the importance of the limb to the robbers in the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>501</sup> A thief cannot maintain his dignity without his hands, as they support him in his purpose in life; therefore a robber who is not strong of hand is a contradiction in terms and cannot exist. The military meaning of the word *manus* is relevant to this case. As a military-styled brotherhood, the robbers associate with and are assimilated to the *manus* in both senses (although they do not appear, in the novel, to excel at hand-to-hand combat, preferring to work in formations). Lamachus' story serves to show how their attachment to their hands is a miniaturised copy of their adherence to the group. By their attachment to the hand as emblematic of their *raison d'être* the brigands manifest their bestial nature expressed in military imagery.<sup>502</sup> Similarly, the notion of wholeness as a group is important to them. This comes through in the scout's turn of phrase: the root of *integretur* (7.4) is *integer*. The body of the social group is inscribed onto the body of the group's members.

The scout then goes outside the den, where Haemus had been waiting, to bring him in, and Lucius, still at this point in asinine form, describes both his physical appearance and seemingly incongruous dress. It is also of no little consequence that two initial accounts of Haemus' appearance – that of the scout who introduces him and that of Lucius - should occur in juxtaposition with each other, for it is in this passage that divergent readings of appearance surface so directly and in a way as to set up opposing expectations of the outcome of the episode: the robbers will indeed read Haemus' present

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<sup>501</sup> 4.11: *querens adhortatur per dexteram Martis, per fidem sacramenti, bonum commilitonem cruciatu simul et captivitate liberaremus. Cur enim manus, quae rapere et iugulare sola posset, fortem latronem supervivere? Sat se beatum, qui manu socia volens occumberet. Cumque nulli nostrum spontale parricidium suadens persuadere posset, manu reliqua sumptum gladium suum diuque deosculatum per medium pectus ictu fortissimo transadigit.*

<sup>502</sup> This fact in itself recalls Aristotle's statement in the *Historia Animalium* (497b) regarding the use quadrupeds make of their 'hands' (that is, the limbs which serve as hands) for many purposes. Wielding weapons can be one of these purposes, as it transpires later in the story (4.18). The robbers are frequently evoked through animal imagery. See the previous chapter for more on this.

appearance as disguise (as he asks them to), but to their own detriment<sup>503</sup>  
(7.5):

Tunc profectus et paululum commoratus ille perducit immanem quendam iuvenem, uti fuerat pollicitus, nescio an ulli praesentium comparandum - nam praeter ceteram corporis molem toto vertice cunctos antepollebat et ei commodum lanugo malis inserpebat- sed plane centunculis disparibus et male consarcinatis semiamictum, inter quos pectus et venter crustata crassitie reluctabant.

Lucius' visual rendition of the new recruit's physical identity accords in almost every aspect with the scout's verbal record, especially at the level of the body: he is a big man and a young man. His size and his girth are particularly salient features of the new recruit. However, Lucius' account also introduces two further indices of the recruit's personal identity, this time sartorial and somatic. The sartorial index is headed by an adversative connector, *sed*, which is correspondingly marked in the scout's oral record by way of inversion through the negative conjunction *nec* (*nec manum validam*) which introduces the scout's injunction against begging. In addition to confirming the contradictory picture of the recruit's heroism, the presence of the adversative connector and the idea it brings with it lead the reader to surmise that Lucius' account expresses surprise or at least awareness of discrepancy.<sup>504</sup> Wherein lies this discrepancy? The answer rests in the physical and the moral value of rags, the contradictory element in his description of Haemus. The verb *reluctabant* colours further the depiction of Haemus' tattered dress, which covers his strong body, as in some way contradictory or belying a latent reality that seeks

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<sup>503</sup> *Contra* Finkelpearl (1998) 104: "The story of Plotina calls attention to what Haemus should wish the robbers not to consider: disguise." He calls their attention to disguise because he knows that they will not read it as the instrument of their undoing. This is ironic given that Thrasyleon died while in disguise. However, as has been established (see Chapter 5), the robbers fail to connect disguise with death because they have a superficial understanding of its function and efficacy. As Gianotti puts it (1995, 122) to them, Haemus' rags are the remnant of his "veste di brigante sanguinario."

<sup>504</sup> In contradiction to Callebat (1968), 91, who claims that Apuleius uses the connector *sed* to bring in an element of amplification rather than of contradiction or correction, a usage which is common to late Latin. I believe that Lucius detects a sartorial, hence identifying, element which jars with the image of youthful strength which Haemus presents.

to modify the reading Haemus imposes on his audience, the robbers.<sup>505</sup> Firstly, rags appear to be associated in Lucius' mind, at the physical level, with emaciation. Secondly, a result of the first, and as part of a moral code expressed frequently through clothing, rags are the outward sign of indigence and low-living. Neither of these values pertains to the truth of the recruit's situation: he is not emaciated, nor does he claim to be a beggar, in spite of the statement of the scout (7.4: *nec manum validam erogandae stipi porrigeret*). Lucius clearly does not associate such youthful, vigorous beauty which promises prowess of an heroic stature, with rags.

The new recruit's explanation does not totally correspond with the scout's account of how he came to meet him. The latter's version of the story would lead the audience to think that the promising new recruit who was to restore the band to a cohort of Mars, *had* been begging. More tellingly, he implies in his speech that he had to use rather forceful persuasion and promises of great reward to encourage the new recruit to join the new gang (7.4):

Se quoque iam dudum pro sua parte quendam convenisse hominem et statu procerum et aetate iuvenem et corpore vastum et manu strenuum, **eique suasisse ac denique persuasisse**, ut manus hebetatas diutina pigritia tandem referret ad frugem meliorem bonoque secundae, dum posset, frueretur valetudinis, **nec manum validam erogandae stipi porrigeret sed hauriendo potius exerceret auro.**

Haemus, the new recruit, attempts to correct, if not to cover up, the picture of softness by taking the scout's story further: he is not only not idle, but actively willing, and he would prefer to receive wounds on his body than gold in his hands (7.5): '*virum magnanimae vivacitatis **volentem uolentes accipite, libentius vulnera corpore excipientem quam aurum manu susipientem ipsaque morte, quam formidant alii, meliorem.***' This claim, of course, runs counter to fact, when at the end of his story he gives the robbers his travelling money (*viaticulum*) which is actually gold coins. Aware that his dress does not quite coincide with his bodily appearance and the pedigree to which he lays claim, Haemus attempts to account for this discrepancy and begs them not to

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<sup>505</sup> For this interpretation of the verb, see the GCA (110) and Echaliier (2007) 144. For the saliently Homeric echoes of this scene, see the section of this chapter entitled Generic Resonances of Clothing and Appearance, and the Creation and Interpretation of Character.

judge his moral worth and strength from his rags, which he not incorrectly assumes they associate with begging, denying categorically that he is a member of society's indigent class. He refers to himself as a man (*virum*) as opposed to a person (*hominem*) whom the scout had only recently and randomly met (7.5):

Havete inquit fortissimo deo Marti clientes mihique iam fidi commilitores, et virum magnanimae vivacitatis volentemque volentes accipite, libentius vulnera corpore excipientem quam aurum manu susipientem, ipsaque morte, quam formidant alii, meliorem. Nec me putetis egenum vel abiectum, neve de pannulis istis virtutes meas aestimetis.

Accordingly, he begs his potential comrades not to judge his martial prowess (*virtutes*) by his rags. This is a somewhat redundant request as is made clear by the visual record attesting to Haemus' strength given by Lucius: *pectus et venter crustata crassitie*, underscoring a physical attribute, musculature, which is sure to have appealed to the robbers at first sight of Haemus. The story Haemus goes on to tell gives the lie to the scout's assertion that he had to apply some pressure to get the new recruit to join. Haemus tells a tale likely to appeal to the robbers' tactical sense, thereby deflecting any variants in the story which could be read to his dishonour away from him. By his version of events, the pressure applied on him by the scout makes him seem like a desirable addition, a robber of pedigree who is aware of his own worth and selective in his choice of band, rather than a man who preferred to beg.

As it transpires, Haemus himself, in the following part of his speech, provides the second element, another perceptual layer which does not seem contradictory to the strong-man image given of Haemus by Lucius, but which Haemus himself seeks to explain in his own speech.<sup>506</sup> This is the somatic marker, the first down (*lanugo*), often associated with youthful beauty and hardly consonant with the rugged image which Haemus wishes to portray. Without Lucius' knowing so at this point in time, these two elements

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<sup>506</sup> See his exploitation of his down to justify his cross-dressing in his account of how he came to be in rags. Haemus obviously perceives a need to pre-empt any prejudicial reading of this aspect of his youth by the bandits. The *lanugo* is associated in Lucius' mind at this point with youth alone. Later, in the tale of Philesitherus (9.22), it arises in a context of eroticised youth and works as a counterpoint to the heroism which has been falsely ascribed to him by the bawd.

sit ill with the image Haemus wishes to portray of himself, but are totally accurate reflections of the character of Tlepolemus.

What part of the truth do these variant tales contain? The argument can be made that the whole truth relating to Tlepolemus' identity is not only contained within Haemus' tale but also stretches beyond the confines of Haemus' tale, extending into the preceding and subsequent books of the novel (Books 6 and 8). All three versions, including Lucius' instinctual perception of a variant contained in the rags that cover the youth's strong body, contain elements of the truth. The retrogressive and progressive accumulation of details that pertain to this particular episode has a critical value for the reading of dress and disguise throughout the whole novel, insofar as the correct reading of dress is often the result of drawing together elements that occur scattered throughout the novel.

Significantly, it would appear that perceptual incongruity accounts for the different names being appended to the same object. Haemus refers to his costume rather generically as "rags" (*pannulis*), whereas Lucius, at this point, describes Haemus' costume as an "ill-fitting and badly stitched together patchwork" (*centunculis disparibus et male consarcinatis*). They may appear to be the same thing - rags after all are the opposite of wholeness and symmetry in dress; but the detail in Lucius' rendition is important. Lucius picks up on the little sartorial details, as is evident in his choice of language (*consarcinatis*), whereas the robbers did not, despite the experience they gained in tailoring when making Thrasyleon's costume (assuming that these are the same robbers). The possibility that Haemus (therefore Tlepolemus) is dissembling, comes through the conjunction of *centunculis... consarcinatis*, a possible intertext with Plautus' play, the *Epidicus*: "*Proin tu alium quaeras quoi centones sarcias*" (455), where the expression *centones sarcire*, which means "to tell lies" (an elaboration on the weaving-as-deceit metaphor)<sup>507</sup> lies behind the diminutive form in *centunculis* as qualified by *consarcinatis*. In the collocation of words in the *Metamorphoses* there may be a pun on the meaning of *cento* as patchwork and the expression *centones sarcire*.<sup>508</sup> Lucius'

<sup>507</sup> On the origins of this metaphor, see Giannakis (1998 and 1999).

<sup>508</sup> May (2006) 263. The translation of the line from the *Epidicus* is also taken from May. Hijmans *et al.* in the GCA (1981) 110, also compare this passage with Plautus' *Amphitryon*

etymologising and more accurate description implies that the rags are actually the handiwork of construction rather than the result of the decay which begging or rough living and pillaging would inflict on one's clothing. In this case then it is Lucius' instinctual perspective, expressed in language that picks up on the constructed origin of Haemus' rags- hence his story - that probes the truth, irrespective of Lucius' own awareness of this fact or otherwise.

Finkelpearl points out that on this occasion the image conveys that the lies are badly put together,<sup>509</sup> a consideration which would set up a correspondence between dress and text inasmuch as they enact each other. Rags therefore become emblematic of mendacity. Yet fabrication does not preclude truth. I would suggest that the lies are not so much badly put together as constructed in a way that would allow different aspects of Tlepolemus' nature and identity, both social and psychological, to seep through the cracks onto his body which reveals the truth about Tlepolemus' nature as Haemus; hence, the ragged costume arises in this scene as a marker of dual reference, signifying lies and deceit as much as the truth, and from there, to a conflation of the two.

### **Gender and Perception: The Cross-Dressing of Haemus and Plotina.**<sup>510</sup>

Haemus then goes on to give a brief account of his pedigree, saying that he is a Thracian<sup>511</sup> nursed on blood and raised among robbers as the son of

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367, *Captivus* 692, *Casina* 95 and *Pseudolus* 353, 340. See also Finkelpearl (1998) 105. May (2006) 263 additionally sees the possible influence of the features of impersonation in some Euripidean tragic-comedies, such as *Helen*, and mentions the *Miles Gloriosus*, wherein Pleusicles assumes the costume of a ship's captain to free his fiancée from the wrongful captor, who is a soldier. In neither case, however, is there an example of cross-dressing. She also sees behind this scene a possible influence from the *Charition* mime.

<sup>509</sup> Finkelpearl (1998) 105.

<sup>510</sup> Hanson, (1989, 2: 14) says that the only famous bearer of the name Plotina was the childless wife of the emperor Trajan. Echaliér (2008) gives other historiographical (and literary) references. Müller-Reineker (2008) in an article which seeks to establish connections between Lucius' salvation and the role of female characters in the novel, sees behind Haemus' female construction the empress Pompeia Plotina.

<sup>511</sup> Thrace was renowned for its associations with brigandage and barbarism. This association is taken up and continued by the physiognomic tradition. *Anonymus Latinus* (9) reminds the reader of the common ancient association of Thracians with injustice, laziness and drunkenness: *hic Thraci est similis, Thraces autem sunt iniqui, pigri, temulenti*. The robbers match this ethnic stereotype perfectly.

Theron, a renowned robber whose very name conjures up images of hunting (7.5): *'Nam praefui validissimae manui totamque prorsus devastavi Macedoniam. Ego sum praedo famosus Haemus ille Thracius, cuius totae provinciae nomen horrescunt, patre Therone aequae latrone incluto prognatus, humano sanguine nutritus interque ipsos manipulos factionis educatus heres et aemulus virtutis paternae.'*<sup>512</sup> The robbers of course cannot be privy to the motives of the man behind the persona, the nobleman Tlepolemus, whose intention is to impersonate a Thracian inured to blood-shed and descended from a hunter, to hunt the robbers down and destroy them. Haemus' own name suggests a life-time of bloody warfare and endurance.<sup>513</sup> It is therefore

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<sup>512</sup> Robbers in disguise are a common motif of the ancient novel. There is a bandit in Chariton's novel *Chaireas and Callirhoe* named Theron, who passes himself off as a merchant (*εμπορος*) in order to avoid the customs' officials (*τηλωννας*) in Ionia (1.13.4, and 2.1.3). Given the means of Tlepolemus' death (8.5), it is ironic that Theron is derived from the Greek word for hunting; yet the name can be read as having two referents: Haemus will hunt down the robbers whom he is duping and his creator, Tlepolemus, will be killed treacherously in a hunt at the hands of a man who has many of the robbers' worst qualities.

<sup>513</sup> All etymologies of proper names in this episode are taken from Hanson (1989, 2: 12, 14, 26, 60). Frangoulidis (2001) 73, also underscores the reference to blood in Haemus' name. Fick-Michel (1991) 319, remarks that the name also means "expert" (*l'expert*). This meaning has dual referentiality insofar as it characterises both Haemus as adept at banditry and Tlepolemus as adept at ruse and deceit. The name Tlepolemus also has Iliadic connections. Hijmans Jr's article on Haemus' name (1978) 407-414, contains many valid criteria of comparison, which can be adduced here. Literary evidence shows Mount Haemus' associations with Mars directly (Callimachus, *In Delum*, 63ff; Silius Italicus, *Punica* 11.464; Statius, *Thebaid*, 7.42; 12.733, and Claudianus, 1.120) and indirectly (Virgil, *Georgics*, 1.491; Lucan's *De Bello Civili*, 1.678ff and again the *Thebaid* of Statius at 1.273). Violent associations with Bacchus/Liber, to whom Tlepolemus is assimilated in Charite's mind (8.7), occur in Lucian's *De Saltatione* 51, and in the Latin tradition in Pomponius Mela, 2.17, Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 1.726ff, and again in the *Thebaid*, 4.652. In mythology, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (6.87ff) are relevant as they present the transformation of a character named Haemus into a mountain. Apuleius' Haemus is the result of another kind of transformation. In Philostratus' *Heroicus*, Haemus, not mentioned by Homer, comes to the aid of Tlepolemus, but is killed (23.11-23, in the edition of Maclean and Aitken). Haemus is also the name of an actor mentioned in Juvenal's *Satires* in two places, at 3. 99 and at 6.198. The first of these occurrences is pertinent to the case of Apuleius' character, as Juvenal is speaking of Greeks whose aptitude at mimicking women is so great that they actually are the women they act (3.95-96): *mulier nempe ipsa videtur, non persona loqui*. Haemus himself is deemed "mollis" (3.99): *cum molli...Haemo*, and referred to in terms indicating the

doubly ironic that he allows his persona, Haemus, to admit to having himself been hunted down. What is more interesting is Haemus' explanation of how his own band was undone - all through the machinations of a noble woman, Plotina, who disguised herself as a man to help her ousted husband recover his name and position, and to support him in his trials. Haemus, who actually admires Plotina despite what she did to him, produces a litany of her wifely virtues: she is unusually faithful (*rarae fidei*), extraordinarily modest (*singularis pudicitiae*), fruitful in offspring, having produced ten children (*quae decimo partus stipendio viri familiam fundaverat*), simple of taste (*spretis atque contemptis urbicae luxuriae deliciis*) self-effacing and supportive of her husband in his trials (*fugientis comes et infortunii socia*, 7.6). Without a break, he prolongs his litany of wifely virtues by including the ends to which Plotina went to support her husband throughout his trials. This includes cross-dressing (7.6):

tonso capillo, in masculinam faciem reformato habitu, pretiosissimis monilium et auro monetali zonis refertis incincta, inter ipsas custodientium militum manus et gladios nudos intrepida, cunctorum periculorum particeps et pro mariti salute pervigilem curam suscipiens, aerumnas assiduas ingenio masculo sustinebat.<sup>514</sup>

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quality of a feminine kind of softness (6.198): *mollius Haemo*. Braund (1996b) points out that it "may imply effeminacy and/or a penchant for female roles" (192). Haemus' impersonation as an *asinaria* was obviously convincing to the robbers. Hijman's thorough article gives other literary evidence, but the examples cited above show most saliently aspects of Apuleius' character which come under investigation in this thesis, namely, the interplay of heroism and passive tendencies in Tlepolemus. He also mentions (412) a series of coins from the period of Julia Domna and Macrinus showing the name *AIMOΣ* and on the reverse a young beardless hunter. This series of coins evokes the youth of Tlepolemus and his death during a hunt.

<sup>514</sup> Haemus' glowing terms of reference to Plotina recall Valerius Maximus' praiseworthy account of the deeds of Hypsicratea who disguised herself in male attire also to support her husband. His account is related in very similar terminology in respect of motive, behaviour and dress (*Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, 4.6, ext. 2): *Hypsicratea quoque regina Mitridatem coniugem suum effusus caritatis habenis amavit, propter quem praecipuum formae suae decorem in habitum virilem convertere voluptatis loco habuit: tonsis enim capillis equo se et armis adsuefecit, quo facilius laboribus et periculis eius interesset*. On the thematic and verbal parallels between the two texts, see Mueller-Reineke (2008). If we can rightfully

The inclusion of such seemingly drastic actions in a direct and unbroken line following on from a list of her virtues leaves the audience (the hearer and reader respectively) in no doubt that these virtues are a natural consequence of such extraordinary qualities; in short, that the female to male cross-over constitutes a denial of gender only at a superficial level. Plotina's cross-dressing is not part of a performance; rather, it emanates from her nature, as Haemus appears to think. Indeed, as Haemus points out, it is the perfection of Plotina's wifely (hence womanly) duties which has inverted the vestimentary paradigm by which the sexes are distinguished, but not the gender paradigm itself. This may be hinted at by Haemus in his use of the verb *reformare*, which can mean "restore" as much as "reform".<sup>515</sup> The placement of the significant word *ingenio* to the end, used with the verb *sustinere*, adds weight to the possibility that such actions derive largely from an inherent masculine virtue, and are not merely prompted by temporary necessity.<sup>516</sup> True wifely virtue, for a woman who desires to live up to it, requires masculine strength,<sup>517</sup> an idea hinted at in the loosely chiasmic structure of the sentence: '*..in masculinam faciem...ingenio masculo sustinebat.*' There is also no indication that she continued to wear men's clothing when her husband was restored to his former dignity. She remained respectful of the hierarchy and had recourse to the proper channels to have her husband's position restored to him (7.7). A fact which corroborates the argument that Plotina, far from denying her gender, kept within the rigid boundaries of gender-coded behaviour, is the lack of evidence in the text that she took part in any fighting. By supporting her husband in this way, she is not subverting the paradigmatic code of womanly decorum, but confirming it through gender-inverted *habitus*, where *habitus* means both dress and inner nature. This is not just dress acting on the wearer and prompting a life-like performance in the theatrical sense of the word. Her manly spirit, or nature (*ingenio masculo*), has come to the surface, so she must wear male dress.

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claim any nod on Apuleius' part to the text of Valerius Maximus, then it is permissible to claim that Apuleius has taken the image further to suit the purposes of his own text.

<sup>515</sup> See GCA (1981) 213 for references.

<sup>516</sup> "*Ingenium is composed of in and gigno*" (OLD, 1982, 905). TLL: "*Ab in et gignere*" (7.1. 1522-1535).

<sup>517</sup> Cooper (1980) 463.

Haemus' account of Plotina is, like his own persona, a complete fabrication;<sup>518</sup> and yet neither the robbers, nor Lucius nor even the reader has, up until now, any reason to doubt it. His true identity as Tlepolemus will be revealed later (although only to Lucius and the reader), in chapter 12. The seminal issue at this point is that Haemus seems to have taken his cue from Plotina, as her transvestism precedes Haemus'. This in itself can colour the reading we bring to his character. He could have deplored Plotina's actions and branded her as an unnatural woman, thereby deflecting attention away from his failure and on to her abnormality. This alone is significant; Haemus appears to be using her cross-dressing to excuse his own, thereby providing an explanation for his unusual dress and behaviour. Additionally, Apuleius wants us to see how the robbers' position is disadvantaged by their very limited perception of disguise (a practice to which they resort for merely tactical advantage) as well as their vision of women and womanly attributes. The robbers' perception of womanhood appears to be steeped in stereotypes which confine women to beings of passivity, feebleness of mind and strength; hence the possibility that their undoing could come in the guise of a woman – the most salient message motivating the story of Plotina - never occurs to them. The bloodiness of Haemus' band is merely Tlepolemus' fictitious expression of the robbers' perception of themselves and their prowess.<sup>519</sup> Yet the implications behind the cross-dressing motif in this episode extend beyond the narrow frame of the cross-dressing itself.

To explain this, it is necessary to retain the possibility that behind Haemus' explanation lies an assumption which the robbers are apparently expected to make, that the rags in which Haemus appears when he first meets the robbers are the remnants of the dress he put on to evade the emperor's troops (7.8):

Tota denique factione militarium vexillationum indagatu confecta atque concisa, ipse me furatus aegre solus mediis Orci faucibus ad hunc evasi modum. Sumpta veste muliebri florida, in sinus flaccidos abundante, mitellaque textili contecto capite, calceis feminis albis illis et tenuibus indutus et in sequiorem sexum incertatus atque absconditus, asello spicas hordeacias gerenti residens per medias acies infesti militis

<sup>518</sup> *Contra* Millar (1981), 66-67, who uses the story for historical evidence.

<sup>519</sup> Haemus' story about the dissolution of his band should have sounded a cautionary note to the robbers, as he readily admits that his band was cut down to a man (7.7).

transabivi. Nam mulierem putantes asinariam concedebant liberos abitus, quippe cum mihi etiam dunc depiles genae levi pueritia splendicarent.

However there is nothing in the rags themselves which would indicate that they were once specifically female dress. No markings of colour, fabric or pattern (unless we take *florida* to signify a highly patterned fabric or ornate motif) are related by Lucius. It appears that Haemus is planting the idea that the rags are the remnants of female dress in the minds of the robbers. This is a fact of some significance; after all, why would Haemus tell the robbers a tall tale about cross-dressing, both female to male and male to female, when he could have fabricated a much simpler story involving the costume of a male slave or any other personage?

Not insignificantly, both these occasions of cross-dressing are virtual, arising out of the imagination of Tlepolemus, posing as Haemus. They are both accompanied by an elaborate albeit fictitious story about their *raison d'être* and both occur at the literal level as a performance, that is as the enactment of a persona. The female-to-male cross-dressing is presented by the narrator in a favourable light; however, so is the male-to-female cross-dressing, and in a manner which establishes both transactions as being of equal value. It is even questionable whether the transvestism in this episode can be considered, from the perspective of the entire novel, properly transgressive of moral boundaries where these are exemplified by gender-specific dress, in contrast to the mock but ritually motivated transvestism of the *cinaedi* whom Lucius will encounter at a later point in his travails, and whose gender transgression is matched and driven by their moral turpitude, known only to Lucius. In the Haemus-Plotina episode what can be termed “tactical” transvestism (see below) constitutes a cross-over as much into the territory and code of the robbers as into the territory and code of woman, and the robbers would have seen nothing amiss in the necessity of disguise for Haemus’ survival. In fact, by its retrospective colouring, this episode presents cross-dressing as an act which remains to be understood (and accepted) as a fluid, ambivalent object of ethical consideration. From another angle, Tlepolemus’ ethopoesis as a bandit man temporarily adopting the dress of a woman for evasive purposes fits within the

paradigm of the “transvestite ambush”<sup>520</sup> narratives which contain episodes of cross-dressing for the purpose of ousting a tyrant or enemy.

However, Haemus does refer to the guest payment he must make as a dowry (*dotem*) at a point where his performance as a woman is no longer necessary, and before he learns of Charite’s presence in the robbers’ cave. I read this not only as Tlepolemus’ merely keeping in character at this point in his own fabricated drama, but also as a reminder of the disarming power of women even in their proper (that is, socially sanctioned) sphere.<sup>521</sup> This is the point where cross-dressing acts as a springboard into issues pertaining more widely to gender in the novel. It was, after all, dressed as a woman that Haemus managed to save his skin. Later when he knows that Charite is in the den, Tlepolemus begins his womanly administrations to the robbers, which were all part of his act.<sup>522</sup> Not only was he hoping that the robbers, by forgetting his feminine role-play and concentrating on the money and his renown, would let down their guard thereby facilitating his own plan, but, more importantly, his womanly administrations gave him access not only to Charite but also to the cooking quarters, where presumably the robbers kept the wine with which Tlepolemus would disarm the robbers.<sup>523</sup>

Hence, from the complexity of Tlepolemus’ double disguise as both another man and a woman, it can be concluded that disguise surfaces in the *Metamorphoses* yet again in a context of perception and raises questions appertaining to *vraisemblance*. Scholars have focussed on the perceived inconsistencies or unlikely elements in this part of Haemus’ tale of escape, disguise being seminal to the point under consideration,<sup>524</sup> namely, that Haemus claims to have worn an outfit unsuitable for practical work, consisting of an elegant turban, a floral dress and delicate white slippers, made out of rich fabric, while trying to pass for a female ass-driver (*asinaria*) and that the details of his feminine dress appear to be unnecessary for the point to be

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<sup>520</sup> For this paradigm, see Leitao (1999), 247-277.

<sup>521</sup> See also the following section for another explanation of Haemus’ use of the word *dotem* in this instance.

<sup>522</sup> Charite’s own masculine strength has already been discussed in this thesis; see Chapter 1.

<sup>523</sup> 7.11.

<sup>524</sup> See, for example, the objections raised in the GCA (1981) 135.

made; yet this description can be made to serve the further aim of showing up the robbers' credulity, especially as they do not question the probability of an ass-driver wearing such elaborate work-a-day clothing. On the other hand, a less luxuriant or flowing guise may have revealed other aspects of his maleness. Haemus then is thumbing his nose at the robbers, whose own reliance on disguise makes them no better than himself. Haemus' excuse for the assumption of this disguise was that he was the only one left of his band and that escape was difficult. Indeed, his terms of reference to this fact conjure images of his band's total annihilation (7.7): *confecta atque concisa*. This would naturally lead to the presumption that Haemus would have been easily recognised by the troops whose occupation it was to capture him, a likely possibility in light of Haemus' alleged fame as a brigand, thereby providing a source of necessity for such an elaborate costume. Haemus also attempts to reinstate his masculinity by speaking pejoratively of the object he wished to pass for, a woman, in terms of the sex that comes second after men: *in sequiorem sexum* (7.8); *habitus alieni fallacia* (*idem*).<sup>525</sup>

The objection still stands however, that Haemus' story forms a stark contrast to Plotina's single-handed attempt to rouse the entire household to prevent the escape of Haemus and his band from her house, without any thought of the consequences for herself.<sup>526</sup> Plotina's male attire appears to have given her male strength, just as Haemus' female disguise appears somewhat to have emasculated him, for such is the force of transvestite disguise; yet it is all the more odd that this contrast arises from Haemus' own account. He may make no comparison, but the contrast in behaviour between him and Plotina can be only too obvious to his audience, more so to the reader. Surely, his status as lone survivor would have presented opportunities not

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<sup>525</sup> On the meaning of the expression *in sequiorem sexum* in this passage, see Hildebrand in the GCA (1981) 134. The GCA commentators fail to notice how ironically apt is the inversive genitive in *habitus alieni fallacia*, in the context of cross-dressing (1981, 136).

<sup>526</sup> 7.7: *'..invadimus et diripimus omnia. Nec tamen periculo levi temptati discessimus. Simul namque primum sonum ianuae matrona percepit, procurrens in cubiculum clamoribus inquietis cuncta miscuit, milites suosque famulos nominatim, sed et omnem viciniam suppetiatum convocans, nisi quod pavore cunctorum, qui sibi quisque metuentes delitiscabant, effectum est ut impune discederemus.'* The woman's steadfastness throws into relief the fear (*pavor*) of the men.

deemed practicable for a group. Yet the robbers would have understood this assumption of feminine dress as being a necessary consequence of the bandit lifestyle, as well as a tactical advantage provided by the spoils of Haemus' labour. Tlepolemus in describing these elements of his disguise is appealing to the robbers' senses and priorities, not to mention tactics: disguise, booty, money, blood.<sup>527</sup> Robbers only take the richest cloth and items of dress which they could sell or exchange for a profit.<sup>528</sup> The richness of the clothes, then, could be merely a ploy by Tlepolemus to show how successful his persona is; Haemus, the son of Theron, robs the affluent of the East and traffics only the best goods. This detailed log of articles of feminine dress is nothing more than an aspect of the robbers' daily routine; they are accustomed to attacking wayfarers and assaulting homesteads, and would have come to recognise individual items of dress, including feminine. The lack of probing into the reality of the donkey-driver's guise by Caesar's troops is deflected therefore onto the robbers, whose own perceptual short-sightedness does not allow them to see beyond appearances. The consequences of this fact go further than the episode itself yet are necessary for its reception. The moral implications of this credulity underscore the robbers as specimens of the type of man who fails to probe into the moral meaning behind first appearances, or strip away outer layers, as a result of his own perverted priorities.<sup>529</sup>

Tlepolemus has a share in both Haemus the man and Haemus the woman *and* Plotina, yet this commonality functions by way of both inversion and reaffirmation of the normal gender paradigm. At one level, Haemus in disguise provides the passive aspect as redolent in the *tle-* prefix of Tlepolemus' name and Plotina the active part: *polemos*. However, Plotina's motive – wifely

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<sup>527</sup> Upon discovering that Charite is in their den, Tlepolemus cunningly conceals his intention to preserve Charite behind a façade of appealing to the robbers' perverted values and conceited vision of their own judgments (7.9).

<sup>528</sup> The visiting group of robbers had brought rich cloth with them (4.8.)

<sup>529</sup> The privileged insight the robbers have into Chryseros (4.9) as a miserly rich man who goes about in rags for purposes of deception so as to satisfy his greed, is the result not so much of morally or intellectually superior perception as of their skill in espionage. For the necessity of the sight of the mind, see Apuleius' *DDS*, 174-175. The type of acuity Apuleius speaks of therein must be re-articulated, requiring that the robbers apply caution to their reception of Haemus' rags as a sign of his prowess.

devotion – and non-martial tactics keep her firmly within the realm of female propriety, and Haemus' subsequent assault on farmsteads realigns him within the masculine model of behaviour. Hence, the cross-dressing is a reminder to both audiences that outer layers can be deceptive – behind a woman there may be a man - and yet real. Both fabricated personae reflect the truth of Tlepolemus' dual nature which is inherent in his dual name. The elements of the hero have, seemingly, been split and analysed. Such alternating between two strategic models – passive and active - has the effect of enhancing the heroic ambivalence of which Tlepolemus is a model, especially when viewed in light of the total absence of equivocation on Plotina's part (7.6: *intrepida*), from whom Haemus seems to have taken his cue.<sup>530</sup> The double aspect of Tlepolemus becomes the privileged vision and insight of the reader. The robbers can and will only ever see the strategically-minded son of Theron. The *semi-* prefix, inherent in Tlepolemus' impersonation of Haemus at the level of both costume – *semiamictum* (7.5) - and performance – *semitrepidus* (7.8) - thus far bars any integrative reading of his personal identity.

### **The Duplicity of Rags: Haemus Nobleman and *orator***

Haemus' audience, consisting of both the robbers and Lucius, is unaware that behind the protestations of Haemus the brigand reside the protestations of Tlepolemus the noble youth. Tlepolemus' birth and upbringing as a nobleman and the education that goes with this are inflected into his manner and expressed in his stylised speech and appeal to the robbers not to judge him by his appearance. This appeal, a motif common to much forensic literature, is not only an extension of Tlepolemus' impersonation as Haemus but also an emanation from Tlepolemus, the noble youth whose education may have included the learning of such speeches. For Tlepolemus, this becomes a tactic that allows him to have the upper hand over the robbers, whose perception of themselves, made visible by their councils and their

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<sup>530</sup> Echalié (2008) 731, also takes Tlepolemus' female disguise to be inspired by Plotina ("Tlépolème, devenu ainsi Plotine, montre en fait ce qu'il croit être ou voudrait être et comment il voudrait que se règle l'affaire »), but further sees in this female figure a rewriting of the story of Odysseus based on a less negative vision of epic values: Odysseus removed his wife's suitors through ruse; Plotina uses justice to restore her husband.

elevated manner of expression,<sup>531</sup> is incongruous with their lifestyle of pillaging and violence. As we have already seen, Tlepolemus, aware of the ludicrous perception that the robbers have of themselves and that the robbers are likely to judge new recruits by their appearance, manipulates the robbers' concern with maintaining their persona in such a way as to deflect culpability *away* from his own persona by providing an explanation for his appearance before the robbers. Haemus consequently does not ask the robbers not to judge him for having taken up female dress in order to escape; his concern is that they should not judge him *by his rags*. Rags, a sign of beggary and indigence, must be abhorrent to the robbers whose life code is based on martial values, made visible in *virtutes*. A subtle irony is detected behind the terminology Tlepolemus' persona chooses, however: *virtus* signifies at once martial prowess *and* moral excellence as an aspect of nobility.<sup>532</sup> The rags which are the focus of attention embody, therefore, two referents: both Tlepolemus *and* Haemus. Haemus appeals to the robbers not to judge his *virtutes*, that is, his martial prowess, a major preoccupation of the robbers, by his *pannuli*, rags; yet behind Haemus' concern that his martial prowess be obscured if not belied by his rags, which are symbolic of beggary, is Tlepolemus' appeal that the rags should not conceal his noble status as a *vir* (the root of *virtus*), as he calls himself (as opposed to *hominem* used by the scout, 7.4). Tlepolemus deploys a subtle strategy of word-play against his enemies emphasising his qualities as a man in opposition to the bestial qualities that the robbers display. Ironically, in spite of the robbers' ignorance of the true identity of Haemus as a nobleman, their perception of themselves as citizens rather than outlaws and as men who embody a higher dignity and occupy a higher social sphere than the reality would allow, is what necessitates Tlepolemus' nobly styled mode of appeal to the robbers through his persona, Haemus.

It is therefore a remarkable instance of irony that the robbers, convinced of Haemus' aptitude, unhesitatingly and of one accord confer upon him the title of general (7.9: *calculis omnibus ducatum latrones unianimes*) and a more becoming attire to match his new position. This consists of a more

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<sup>531</sup> Cf. 4.8-9, and see Chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis of their self-perception.

<sup>532</sup> See the *OLD* (1982) 2073-2074 for meanings of the word *virtus* which express qualities found in both Tlepolemus and Haemus.

becoming dress, *lautiusculam vestem*,<sup>533</sup> out of which he pulls two thousand gold sesterces, what he claims to be his *viaticulum*, his travelling money.<sup>534</sup> Behind this honouring of Haemus as a chieftain is a similar act of honour bestowed upon Tlepolemus as a young noble. This is more than just a literary expression of cultural values pertaining to the giving of garments; by doing this, they not only honour Tlepolemus, albeit unknowingly, as scion of a noble family and a young man of means who will ultimately be their undoing, but also reintegrate him into his proper social station among them, an insight hinted at by (auctorial) Lucius in the same breath behind a word used also of Plotina,<sup>535</sup> *reformatus* (7.9): ***sic reformatus*** *singulos exosculatus et in summo pulvinari locatus cena poculisque magnis inauguratur*. Furthermore, this highly significant act of conferring a garment on a person who has been accepted into a group both breaks down and confirms class and social barriers, although in a way which the robbers cannot be aware of: by honouring Haemus the brigand, they are honouring Tlepolemus the noble youth, whose illustrious ancestry is momentarily converted into the bloody patronage of the son of Theron.<sup>536</sup> This new dress, then, ironically, tells a double truth.<sup>537</sup> This is not just an actor behind a persona; this is a conflation and blurring of two identities, one true and another imposed on the true one and perceived in the desired manner, which are both separate yet have roots in common ground: the pedigree, howsoever this may be understood, of the new recruit.

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<sup>533</sup> *Lautiusculam* is a *hapax legomenon* (GCA 1981, 138). Frangoulidis, claims (2001) 75 in his examination of role-shifting in the novel, that this new garment “must be interpreted as a ‘costume’ for this new role”, that is, Haemus’ new role as leader of the gang. Compare this conferral of a garment which marks Haemus’ new position with Eumolpus’ request for supporting material in his plot in the *Satyricon*, amongst which costume is necessary (117): *utinam quidem sufficeret largior scaena, id est vestis humanior, instrumentum lautius quod praeberet mendacio fidem*.

<sup>534</sup> It is likely that these gold pieces are the ransom money mentioned by the robbers in book four. The potential gold promised by the scout (7.4; see also 4.23) has been converted into real gold, apparently without his knowing about it.

<sup>535</sup> 7.6: *in masculinam faciem reformato habitu*.

<sup>536</sup> For interesting parallels in the Odyssean paradigm of appearances, see Block (1985).

<sup>537</sup> Upon Haemus’ investiture as chieftain, Lucius, somewhat ironically and prophetically, refers to the discarded rags as a *centunculo divite*. These rags are not only rich because they contain Haemus’ gold coins (his *viaticulum*), but also because they belong to and are worn by a rich man, Tlepolemus.

The conjunction of money and dress adds a further note to the depiction of Tlepolemus' noble character, albeit one that operates by inversion and is introduced with humour. The war between persona and nature makes itself felt as Tlepolemus inadvertently makes reference to his higher social status and then hurriedly seeks to cover it up with a term which relates to his brief impersonation as a woman, *dotem* (7.8): '*En' inquit 'Istam sportulam, immo vero dotem collegio vestro libens meque vobis ducem fidissimum'*. The *sportulam* which Tlepolemus as Haemus gives to the robbers, suggests the largesse lavished upon the young male subject of the *toga virilis* ceremony,<sup>538</sup> the civic dress being replaced in this instance by the generically termed *vestem lautiusculam* (7.9). Ever mindful to keep up his performance, the youthful Tlepolemus hides behind Haemus as *asinaria* and jokingly redefines his contribution as a dowry (*dotem*). A downgraded reworking of a civic ceremony, the inauguration of Haemus as the robbers' new chieftain demands, of course, to be read differently to its civic counterpart. The fact that it is Tlepolemus, the recipient of the new dress, who is contributing financially to the robbers' guild, shows up not the civic ceremony from which the act takes its cultural and moral value, but the robbers as being of a lower class, morally if not always socially,<sup>539</sup> than Tlepolemus. The evocation is based upon a deviated version of the civic ceremony, but it is nevertheless suggested.

Tlepolemus further exploits his superior education by making Haemus deliver his appeal to the robbers in the manner of a defence speech in a court. Indeed, he is on trial by a group of peers, at the superficial level at least. It is in his interest to turn his present appearance to his advantage by elaborating an

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<sup>538</sup> For some examples of the donning of the dress of manhood in the Latin canon, see, for example, Seneca's *Epistles* (4.2) and for a more literary expression, Horace's *Odes* (1.36.9), Catullus (68.15), and Persius (5.30-37). For examples of the giving of *sportulae* at *toga virilis* ceremonies, see Pliny's *Epistles*, 10.116, where they are discussed also in their relevance to a boy's marriage, as *sportulae* were also given at marriage. This practice is mentioned by Apuleius' in the *Apologia* (87.10) with regard to his own wedding.

<sup>539</sup> If these robbers consist, even only some of them, of members of the "insane gang of young aristocrats" (2.18: *vesana factio nobilissimorum iuvenum*) that had been disturbing the peace at Hypata, then Tlepolemus is their moral superior. However, given the association of ancient robbers with gladiators (GCA, 1977, 184), an association repeated in Charite's claim that she was abducted by "gladiators" (4.24: *inter tot ac tales latrones et horrendum gladiatorum populum*), then Tlepolemus is their superior socially and morally.

incredible story which would account for his physical – hence, moral – condition. By doing this, Haemus reiterates the message of the second band of robbers who point to the idea of skill and stealth as being equal to outright assault, and to petty objects of assault (*villas seu castella*) as being of equal value to grand objects of assault.<sup>540</sup> (Although disguise is not mentioned in this discussion, it can surely rank amongst the specimens of stealth which the robbers may have had in mind. This seems ever more likely to be the case after the story of Thrasyleon, the robber who used disguise to gain entry into a rich household, 4.13-21). Luckily for Haemus, these points of consideration, coming before his entry, prime the robbers to receive his story, by making it seem more credible. The robbers’ “symposium” and the individual elements of Haemus’ fabricated story help to construct a re-examination of what constitutes true *virtus* from the perspective of a bandit. Haemus can then present himself in his rags with a view to wooing his audience to his side.

In the Greek and Roman forensic canons, reference to the physical appearance of both defendant and accused was common.<sup>541</sup> The face and the mouth were the prime focus of attention in Roman practice, but the over-all body could also be an essential witness to hardships endured for a noble cause. Adding weight to the forensic frame is the function of Haemus’ appeal in his rags,<sup>542</sup> for the purpose of arousing the robbers’ admiration. It is an aspect of “ocular demonstration”, a figure, spoken of by both Cicero and Quintilian, which seeks to appeal to the eye rather than to the ear.<sup>543</sup> This combination of factors – ragged dress which is the result of many successful exploits and the

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<sup>540</sup> 4.8-9.

<sup>541</sup> There are too many occurrences of this in Latin and Greek literature to list them, but for a good insight into how this motif was set to use, I refer the reader to Corbeill (1996, 2004 and 2007) for the Latin canon alone. In certain respects, Haemus’ defence speech recalls the setting and turn of phrase of Mantitheus’ defence speech for himself in the *Pro Mantitheo* (18-19) of Lysias. Apuleius too was subject to moral scrutiny on the basis of his appearance as he informs us at his trial in the *Apologia* (4).

<sup>542</sup> For merely two specimens of the forensic motif of showing rags with a view to arousing pity in the Latin canon, see Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2. 124, 196; [*In Verrem*, 2.5.3, 32] and Livy, *AUC Periochae Librorum*, 70.3. Lazzarini (1985), 158, shows how elements of Haemus’ speech of introduction, recalls the oratorical practice as set out by Cicero (*Partitiones Oratoriae*, 82).

<sup>543</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.53. 202; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 9.2.40.

robbers' previous discussion of *virtus* - dulls the robbers' mental faculties, and resolves any inconsistencies in Haemus' self-representation before the robbers through speech. By this fact they are circumscribed and circumvented by their own flawed nature.<sup>544</sup>

### Disguise, the Body and Tlepolemus' Heroic Ambivalence

Tlepolemus' body and the transvestite disguise of his persona, Haemus, can both be deconstructed to examine a salient feature of Tlepolemus' nature, namely, his "heroic ambivalence", reflected in his shifting between passive and active codes of behaviour emanating from both himself and his persona. A discussion of heroism in this episode necessarily demands that we understand Haemus, even in costume, to be a mere extension of Tlepolemus, whose disguise (as both Haemus and the woman he impersonated) works with aspects of his body to foreshadow the implications of heroic ambivalence.<sup>545</sup> This ambivalence can be detected in Haemus' admission to feeling fear during his ordeal, albeit to a small degree, despite his claim to early inurement to blood and martial violence (7.8): '*Nec ab illa tamen paterna gloria vel mea virtute descivi quamquam **semitrepidus** iuxta mucrones Martios constitutus, sed habitus alieni fallacia tectus, villas seu castella solus aggrediens, viaticulum mihi corrasi;*'; yet Haemus tries to realign his behaviour within the paradigms of his martial pedigree by stressing how close he came to the swords: *iuxta mucrones Martios constitutus*. The robbers, too, may have viewed this differently. As an essential part of his evasive tactic, the trepidation Haemus confesses to can also be put down to the efficacy of his disguise as a woman, a creature whose inferiority Haemus is careful to recall to the robbers (7.8: *in sequiorem sexum*). Hence, Tlepolemus feels secure in the exteriorisation of an

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<sup>544</sup> Recall what Apuleius says of Socrates, in the important passage in the *Florida* (2.2-4) where Socrates insists on the importance of judging men by the sight of the mind, and not of the eyes. An important part of this is hearing, listening closely to what men have to say. The robbers failed to pick up on the subtle discrepancies between the two versions of the story explaining Haemus' present situation – that of the scout and that of Haemus himself.

<sup>545</sup> Consequently, where I speak of Haemus in this section, it must be understood that I speak of Haemus as an aspect of Tlepolemus and that it becomes increasingly difficult to speak of the two characters as separate identities. They are, in fact, one identity under two manifestations. For this reason it is permissible to speak of Haemus as Tlepolemus' alter ego.

aspect of his identity, an identity which, for the purposes of gaining access to the robbers, he temporarily deflects onto the other sex as an aspect of its inferiority, through the mediation of his alter ego. The robbers may have also overlooked the anomaly of attacking places (*aggrediens*) disguised as a woman on the grounds of expediency, especially in light of the ensuing section of Haemus' tale when he then claims, once out of harm's way, to have made assaults single-handed (*solus aggrediens*) on estates or fortifications (*villas*<sup>546</sup> *seu castella*), whilst still in disguise as a woman (*habitus alieni fallacia tectus*). This is some achievement, given that such holdings, as Lucius tells us later in Book 8, were used to facing onslaught by bands of robbers.<sup>547</sup> The residents of these estates, after all, on the alert for brigands, will most likely have let down their guard upon seeing a woman approaching them as, under this guise, Haemus probably appeared harmless. Pillaging villages and acquiring booty are, for the robbers, the priority, and must take precedence over escaping the notice of the soldiers by recourse to disguise. Hence, by the more masculine motive of offensive strategy and of recourse to stealth, Haemus then rewrites himself into the robbers' canon of manly and soldierly propriety. This is reinforced by the fact that the holdings which were the object of his assault were quite large agrarian settlements or even estates.<sup>548</sup> Behind Haemus' escape, we can see Tlepolemus thumbing his nose at the robbers without their knowing, and detect the truth of an heroic Tlepolemus behind the lies of Haemus. Tlepolemus, just as his alter-ego claims not to have fallen away from

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<sup>546</sup> The F manuscript has *villa*, in the singular. This reading is retained by Callebat (1978) 172 who sees it as an example of semantic transformation, whereby it would come to mean "village".

<sup>547</sup> 8.17: *Villae vero, quam tunc forte praeteribamus, coloni multitudinem nostrum latrones rati*. The same kind of settlement is mentioned by Frontinus, expressed by the same collocation of words as found in the *Metamorphoses*, in his discussion of ambush (*Strategemata*, 2.5.11): *villas castellaque*.

<sup>548</sup> The GCA on Book 8 (1985) 240 takes the *villa* at 8.17 to be a "reasonably large agrarian estate" and the *villam possessoris beati* at 8.27 to refer to an "'estate' (including the mansion), possibly 'village' as at 190, 10 [*scil.* 8.17]". In any case, they say it refers to a "large, prosperous settlement with many inhabitants" (1985) 240. The GCA on Books VI 25-32 to VII translates the term "country-houses and castles" (1981) 135. Given the size of the dwellings under discussion, surely such a feat would be impossible for one man. The robbers may believe that large private establishments are easier to break into than small ones (4.9), but settlements are another thing altogether.

his martial paternal pedigree, has not deviated from his noble and less martial paternal pedigree: *'Nec ab illa tamen paterna gloria vel mea virtute descivi.'* Tlepolemus/Haemus has remained true to both identities. As a consequence, both aspects of the character feel only *a little* afraid to be amidst such war-like creatures which are, for Haemus, Caesar's soldiers, and for Tlepolemus, the robbers themselves: *quamquam semitrepidus iuxta mucrones Martios constitutus.*<sup>549</sup> Just like Odysseus, to whom his alter ego has been compared, Tlepolemus attempts to disguise the truth as much through his language as through his body. Tlepolemus is heroic, albeit in a non-martial way, even in his female impersonation.

In spite of any rationalisation of Tlepolemus'/Haemus' behaviour based on the information imparted by the text itself, it must still be allowed that his admission to feeling a degree of fear (*semitrepidus*) throws into favourable relief the fearless prowess of Plotina (described as *intrepida*) and questions the notion of intended deceit contained in the phrase *habitus alieni fallacia tectus*. By this acquired nuance, the connotations of concealment in *tectus* merge from basic disguise into concealment as protection.<sup>550</sup> By reading the phrase in

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<sup>549</sup> Mars is the robbers' favoured god (4.22; 7.10).

<sup>550</sup> On the role of word-play in the *Metamorphoses*, and with particular reference to Lucius' donkey-skin, see Nicolini (2007, 148). Although the disguise spoken of in this case is female dress, the heroic ambiguity which marks Tlepolemus who is hiding behind Haemus hiding behind the female ass-driver, makes the simultaneous emergence of two meanings of a word quite apt on this occasion. One also thinks of the terms in which Valerius Maximus denigrates those who deem it necessary to resort to disguise in order to save their own skin (*Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, 7.3): *Veniam nunc ad eos, quibus salus astutia quaesita est. M. Volusius aedilis pl. proscriptus adsumpto Isiaci habitu per itinera viasque publicas stipem petens quisnam re vera esset occurrentis dinoscere passus non est eoque fallaciae genere tectus in M. Bruti castra pervenit. quid illa necessitate miserius, quae magistratum populi Romani abiecto honoris praetexto alienigenae religionis obscuratum insignibus per urbem iussit incedere! o nimis aut hi suae vitae aut illi alienae mortis cupidi, qui talia vel ipsi sustinuerunt vel alios perpeti coegerunt!* The occurrence in Valerius Maximus is not part of a tactical issue (although it does take place in a context of war) and the transvestism is not gender-based, being the exchange of magisterial dress for priestly (specifically Isiac) dress; but it is an exchange of outer appearance, with attendant assumptions that can, by verbal resonances, clarify for us the context of Haemus' assumption of female guise as a less than desirable act. If behind this we can perceive a likely intertext, Apuleius borrows the language of this instance in Valerius Maximus to highlight ethical considerations behind

this way, as a reflection on gender identity and associated notions of bravery, *habitus*, even in this occurrence, can refer to a state of the soul. It is even plausible to wonder why Haemus told the story of Plotina, as this could induce the robbers to compare Haemus' downfall with Plotina's success and ponder on the cause and implications of this.

As further substantiation of the equivocal nature of Tlepolemus, his relationship with Charite can offer much information. On many accounts the prenuptial relationship between Charite and Tlepolemus is unconventional, stretching to the occupation of the same bed by the young couple since early childhood without any physical union ever having taken place. Consequently Charite is a virgin at the moment of her abduction, consummation of the *de facto* marriage appearing not to have taken place until the redemption of the bride by her groom.<sup>551</sup> Hence, one might also read Haemus' adoption of disguise as a manipulation of male-to-female cross-dressing as an amatory stratagem; by avoiding capture as Haemus, Tlepolemus was able to make his way to Charite. By this reading, the cross-dressing of Tlepolemus (but not of Haemus on this occasion) becomes a test of the endurance of his love for her, a test which is inherent in his name,<sup>552</sup> and which he passes. Yet it seems permissible to surmise that Charite was disappointed in some respects with Tlepolemus. She has occasion at least once to deplore the lethargy of her fiancé and his household with respect to the honour that she sees as due to herself as his spouse. For example, little or no resistance was made to the robbers when they abducted her, a point that causes Charite chagrin (4.26). The mention of the closeness of the two families in this passage leads us to presuppose the presence of Tlepolemus' household staff in this event, even though Tlepolemus was, at the time, sacrificing victims at the public temple and shrines accompanied by some of his kinsmen (4.26): *'Nec ullo de familiaribus nostris repugnante ac ne tantillum quidem resistente, miseram,*

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Haemus' tactic. Valerius Maximus deplores the necessity that drives people to such ignominious deeds, and thus locates those who are driven by this need within a moral paradigm.

<sup>551</sup> 7.13-14.

<sup>552</sup> Tlepolemus' name conveys connotations of persistence in war. In Roman amatory poetry, love is a type of war (see, for example, Ovid, *Amores*, 1.9).

*exanimem saevo pavore, trepido de medio matris gremio rapuere.*' The abduction took place before the act of consummation; but even after the abduction happened, Tlepolemus remains marked by the passivity in his nature which he does not relinquish. It is notable that the passivity of the household is thrown into fierce relief by the explicitly military terms with which Charite describes the invasive tactics of the robbers, speaking of them as gladiators, a common synonym for bandits in antiquity<sup>553</sup> (4.26): *cum irruptionis subitae gladiatorum impetus ad belli faciem saeviens, nudis et infestis mucronibus coruscans, non caedi, non rapinae manus afferunt, sed denso conglobatoque cuneo cubiculum nostrum invadunt protinus.* On the grounds of evidence within the story as it unfolds, this passivity could be put down to the preference for cunning and trickery preferred by Tlepolemus (and possibly his whole household) rather than outright physical resistance, and Tlepolemus was not close by to Charite as he was sacrificing at the temple (4.26: *templis et aedibus publicis victimas immolabat*); yet the same passivity could also be attributed to an ambivalent state in Tlepolemus' nature, externalised in the down on his face, expressive of a liminal stage in youth: *lanugo*.<sup>554</sup> Although slightly different in themselves, the first down or beard of incipient manhood, and youthful beardlessness, often serve the same end when they occur in an heroic (sometimes erotic) setting, marking the transitional period between boyhood and manhood. On the face of a young man, it is a sign of incipient manhood, of youth at the liminal age between boy and man with all the instability that this promises (psychological, emotional and heroic). Tlepolemus' youthfulness, exemplified in his beardlessness (*depiles genae*, 7.8)<sup>555</sup> and which, as a great boon to him in his disguise,<sup>556</sup> he projects onto his

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<sup>553</sup> GCA (1977) 184.

<sup>554</sup> In the *Apologia*, *lanugo* is used with reference to the beautiful statue of Mercury expressed in similar language (63, 7): *quam hilaris dei uultus, ut decenter utrimque lanugo malis deserpat, ut in capite crispatus capillus sub imo pillei umbraculo appareat.* The motif of down is also an epic image, occurring in the *Odyssey*, 11.320 and the *Aeneid*, 10.324. Cf. also Statius' *Thebaid* (6.586-7): *deserpitque genis nec se lanugo fatetur/ intonsae sub nube comae*; and *Silvae* (3.4.65-66): *olim etiam, ne prima genas lanugo nitentes/ carperet et pulchrae fuscaret gratia formae.*

<sup>555</sup> There is no real inconsistency between Tlepolemus' age as a *iuvenem* with down just starting to spread over his cheeks (7.5: *ei commodum lanugo malis inserpebat*) and Haemus' beardless cheeks which are a result of his boyhood, or rather, incipient manhood (7.8: *mihi*

persona Haemus, helps in this instance to question the validity of relating his cross-dressing (virtual or real) to the function of disguise as concealment of personal identity. The same claim could be made for the cross-dressing of Plotina, as it merely allowed her pre-existing male strength to become visible at the level of the body. Tlepolemus then becomes an expression of the youthful male as an ambiguous nature and character. Haemus' transvestism is therefore not just the prop in a temporary performative act, but occurs as a manifestation of Tlepolemus' ambivalent nature.

Another example of beardlessness or the beginnings of the beard as a marker of ambivalence, this time sexual, in the *Metamorphoses*, occurs on Philesitherus (Book 9), whose beardlessness functions primarily as a sign of undeveloped manhood, then as a corrective of boastful misinformation given with a view to deception.<sup>557</sup> As in the story of Tlepolemus' ultimate failure, the

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*etiam tunc depiles genae levi pueritia*). Cf. the note of Kiessling-Heinze (GCA, 1981) 135, with regard to this: "*levis* nicht = *imberbis*...sondern von der glatten Haut der frischen Jugend." The beardlessness which Tlepolemus ascribes to his persona is probably intended to lead the robbers to think that some time has passed between the loss of Haemus' band, the various incursions he made after that time and the moment of his appearance before them. Cooper (1980) 451, who assumes that the tale of Haemus is not a fabrication, picks up on this discrepancy and relates it to the "play between symbolism and reality": "This is all quite odd since it would seem to imply that the manly Tlepolemus could really pass for the boyish 'Haemus.'" Even if this were not the case, the down on Haemus' face at the moment of his appearance before the robbers testifies to his physical and heroic immaturity.

<sup>556</sup> This function comes close to Frances Muecke's definition (1982b) 24 of disguise as "a change in personal appearance assumed or exploited in order deceptively and deliberately to conceal identity and maintain two roles."

<sup>557</sup> Philesitherus' fictitious representation by the old woman (*anus*), a friend to the wife of the miller/baker (the word *pistor* referred to both trades in Apuleius' time; see GCA *ad loc.*) as a bold and quick-thinking stud, runs counter to his appearance (described by Lucius) as a timid and dim-witted young man. Philesitherus' smooth cheeks are an essential part of this counter-identification (9.22): *ecce nequissimae anus adhaerens lateri temerarius adulter adventat, puer admodum et adhuc lubrico genarum splendore conspicuus, adhuc adulteros ipse delectans*. Smooth cheeks, or the presence of the first beard (*lanugo*), occur in the novel to mark a youthful, non-heroic (or passive) character. In Philesitherus' case, the absence of the beard is explicitly mentioned by Lucius as indicating youth and sexual inexperience, bordering on ambivalence by his passive role in the sexual act with the *pistor* (although this was an involuntary act on Philesitherus' part). The boy's youth is later

*lanugo*, here too, promises an unheroic outcome for Philesitherus and is an aspect of physique that seeks to counter deceptive and false interpretations of character. A sign of ambivalence, beardlessness and the *lanugo* are an inscription on the body of a character caught between two states, with all the concomitant complexities that this implies. This state marks, by metaphorical extension, heroic and manly identity in flux, or at least, not fully developed, just like the body that it marks as lacking full maturity. A subdued and ambivalent eroticism seems to lurk behind this physical attribute. The Philesitherus episode reinforces the *lanugo* on Tlepolemus and Haemus as not merely a physical property which can be used to tactical advantage.<sup>558</sup>

The extended resonances of this character index and its implications for the Tlepolemus episode arise especially in the hunting scene (8.4-5)<sup>559</sup> and

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referred to by the *pistor* in somewhat more poetic terms bordering on the epic (9.28): ‘...**mollis ac tener et admodum puer, defraudatis amatoribus aetatis tuae flore...**’ (On the *lanugo* as representing in poetry and inscriptions the *flos aetatis*, see Makowski, 1989, 13-14. I add that the *flos aetatis* which the *pistor* finds so attractive in Philesitherus could be taken to suggest homosexual tendencies in the *pistor* himself.) More tellingly, the *pistor* ends his tirade by making reference to the boy’s over-reaching himself: *intempestivum tibi nomen adulteri vindicas*. One could be led to wonder if the timid youth introduced to the *pistor*’s wife by her companion in drunkenness and debauchery is actually the Philesitherus who was the hero of the embedded tale. It is ironic that the narrator begins her tale by insisting on the difference in character between the wife’s lover and Philesitherus (9.16): *Audi denique et amatorum diversum ingenium compara*. The word *ingenium*, referring to innate qualities, is misplaced on this occasion as it bears little resemblance to the truth of Philesitherus’ nature, inscribed unambivalently on his body. The youth’s name, meaning “fond of woman-chasing” (Hanson, 1989, 2: 154), or “lover of the chase” (Bechtle, 1995, 107) is totally ironic, especially since the boy later becomes the *pistor*’s passive and unwilling lover, a role imposed on him by way of punishment (9.28). Once again, physical appearance acts as a corrective to false oral accounts made of character.

<sup>558</sup> It is used to tactical advantage in other narrative traditions like historiography (Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.17-20), and biography (Plutarch, *Solon*, 8.5).

<sup>559</sup> Indeed, the *lanugo* and hunting are connected earlier on in the novel through Psyche’s fabricated identity of her invisible husband (5.8: *commodum lanosos barbitio genas inubrantem*; 5.16: *Tunc adulescens modo florenti lanugine barbam instruens*). Frangoulidis (1997) 18 also establishes a connection between this physical aspect of Tlepolemus and Cupid, insisting on this similarity as extending to the representation of their “real identities”, without however, looking at how it is a marker of inner nature. Instead, he seeks to establish patterns of “double identities that generate thematic and narrative

Charite's honouring of her dead husband in the guise of Liber. This part is narrated by a member of Charite's household, who had been present at Tlepolemus' death. Critically, the game in question is the boar. The hunting of the boar is associated with the relinquishing of boyhood and the passing into manhood.<sup>560</sup> The boar hunt is prominent in the particular scene depicting the death of Tlepolemus, but in a markedly deviated way as it is accidental. Here, the object of the hunt is a less aggressive animal, the mountain goat. The narrator of this part of the tale of Charite and Tlepolemus remarks on this fact, explaining it as the terms of a particular injunction imposed by Charite on her husband (8.4): *Die quadam venatum Tlepolemus assumpto Thrasylllo petebat indagaturus feras, si quid tamen in capreis feritatis est; nec enim Charite maritum suum quaerere patiebatur bestias armatas dente vel cornu.*<sup>561</sup> When a boar does appear, Tlepolemus and his household take cover. Thrasyllus exploits the situation to taunt them all with a charge of servile or womanish fear (8.5):<sup>562</sup>

Et nos quidem cuncti pavore deterriti et alioquin innoxii venationibus consueti, tunc etiam inermes atque immuniti, tegumentis frondis vel arboribus latenter abscondimus; Thrasyllus vero nactus fraudium opportunum decipulum sic Tlepolemum captiose compellat: 'Quid stupore confusi vel etiam cassa formidine

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interconnections" (1997) 21. To what end? Elsewhere (1992, 440-441), he speaks of the Homeric resonances of the image of the down (a resonance picked up on also by the Groningen commentary on Book 7, 1981, 110) also without delving further into how this motif is adapted by Apuleius into a tool of inquiry into identity.

<sup>560</sup> Vidal-Naquet notes (in Goff, 1991, 262) that the boar hunt is a hunt of adult heroes that is capable of inculcating the skill in corporate activity that is essential in warfare. In relation to the latter, it is worth recalling that Charite deplores the ease with which the robbers, in military formation, abducted her from her home, with no resistance from her household or Tlepolemus.

<sup>561</sup> Compare Ovid's *Fasti* on Hyas (5. 173-178): *dum nova lanugo est, pavidos formidine cervos/terret, et est illi praeda benigna lepus/at postquam virtus annis adolevit, in apros/audit et hirsutas comminus ire leas/ dumque petit latebras fetae catulosque leaenae/ipse fuit Libycae praeda cruenta ferae.*

<sup>562</sup> "Mr Overbold" as he is called by Van der Paardt (1980) 19. This is a charge which confirms the robbers' vision of slaves and women as inferior to free-born men. It must be borne in mind that Thrasyllus had fallen in with bad company in his youth, including the company of bandits (8.1).

similes humilitati servorum istorum, vel in modum pavoris feminei deiecti, tam opimam praedam mediis manibus amittimus?

The slowness of Tlepolemus and his men to take action in this episode is a reiteration of the statement made by Charite at the beginning of her tale when she was recounting the story of her abduction (4.26). It is at Thrasyllus' prompting that Tlepolemus attempts to assume his proper station as a man, that is, that he attempts to kill the boar. Killing the boar would be the definitive act which would distinguish Tlepolemus from his companions as a man, a suggestion reinforced by Thrasyllus' choice of weapon for Tlepolemus in this definitive act (and assertion) of manhood: '*...Quin equos inscendimus? Quin ocius indipiscimur? En cape **venabulum** et ego sumo lanceam.*' Tlepolemus has no trouble undertaking this test of manhood, as he strikes the boar in a crucial place, but its culmination is thwarted by the interference of Thrasyllus who disables Tlepolemus' horse, thereby enabling the boar to rip Tlepolemus to shreds when he falls (8.5): *Sed prior Tlepolemus iaculum quod gerebat insuper dorsum bestiae contorsit. At Thrasyllus ferae quidem pepercit, set equi quo vehebatur Tlepolemus postremos poplites lancea feriens amputat. Quadrupes reccidens, qua sanguis effluxerat, toto tergo supinatus invitus dominum suum devolvit ad terram. Nec diu, sed eum furens aper invadit iacentem ac primo lacinias eius, mox ipsum resurgentem multo dente laniavit.* Haemus' incipient manhood which, written on his face as the adolescent male's first down, helped him to escape an unreal danger, could not help Tlepolemus in reality, who, by attempting to hunt a boar – a very real danger - over-reached himself.<sup>563</sup>

Although it is undeniable that Tlepolemus' untimely death, a death which forestalled his heroic development, is due to the treachery of Thrasyllus who was posing as his friend in order to enjoy closer relations with Charite,

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<sup>563</sup> Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, 13.753) tells us that the *lanugo* marks a boy of sixteen years of age. In the *Odyssey*, the strength of the sons of Iphimedeia and Poseidon is marked on their face by the first beard; Zeus slew them before they could reach full maturity because of the over-confidence it gave them (11.311-320). Echaliier (2008), 732, following a similar line of thinking to mine, puts this failure down to the essential theme ("thème essentiel") in the novel of self-knowledge ("jugement sur soi-même"), although what Tlepolemus thinks of himself is rather more implied than made explicit in the novel. Furthermore, Tlepolemus' actions are also essential for throwing into relief how the robbers see themselves.

Tlepolemus' inability to see through Thrasyllus must necessarily be contrasted with Charite's perceptual acuity, a depth of perception which enabled her to see beyond appearances and perceive relatively quickly the truth of personal character (see Chapter 1). In addition to marking the arrested state in the development of his heroic potential, Tlepolemus' liminality, expressed on his body by his down, can also be taken as a sign that Tlepolemus had also not yet reached that level of perceptual development and maturity which could have prevented his undoing, in spite of his ability to manipulate the robbers with ruse.<sup>564</sup> By bringing into focus the information about Tlepolemus garnered before and after his appearance in the narrative as Haemus, it becomes possible to see how Tlepolemus' lack of development in this regard caused his undoing as much as the treachery of Thrasyllus, the impersonator of friendship. Tlepolemus, the long suffering man whose cunning was greater than his underdeveloped boldness and who died in the most bloody and shameful manner having been gored by a boar, was outdone by the man whose very boldness, inherent in his name - *Thrasyllus* - was excessive.

Whereas Thrasyllus attempted to fulfil the proper development of manhood in Tlepolemus, Charite's memory of her husband confirms him in his passive state. This aspect of Tlepolemus' character is carried into Charite's response to the memory of her dead husband which brings to the surface aspects of his nature when she dresses images of Tlepolemus as the youthful god Liber: *imagines defuncti, quas ad habitum dei liberi formaverat*. What drove this perception of Tlepolemus as Liber and what would such a portrayal consist of?<sup>565</sup> Several things could underpin this parallel between Tlepolemus and the god, determining the nature of the portrayal. Uppermost in the

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<sup>564</sup> In Plato's *Symposium*, the beginnings of a beard are the sign of the beginnings of intelligence (181d). The Platonic corpus is replete with references to beautiful youths (like Tlepolemus) and Socrates' predilection for these. Boys-Stones (2007) 35, makes insightful remarks on the significance of this beauty, which is often portrayed as being of a liminal type.

<sup>565</sup> For the discussion in this section I am indebted to the information provided by Hijmans, Jnr (1986) and to a lesser degree Frangoulidis (1992a). Hijmans, Jnr (1978, 409-410) also makes reference to occurrences in literature where Bacchus, the Greek counterpart of Liber, has perceptibly stronger martial overtones. In spite of these more martial overtones, I persist in seeing ambivalence in Tlepolemus behind his representation as Liber, in view of the associations of the god with youth.

reader's mind would be the god's assumption of disguise, his ambivalent sexuality inherent in his literary depiction as an *imberbis*, one without a beard, and, of course, his association with wine.<sup>566</sup> These may all have been prominent in Charite's mind at the moment she elected this particular manner of decorating Tlepolemus' image as he too was at a liminal age (a characteristic expressed through his down, *lanugo*, linking him further to the god who was often depicted without a beard), and he also resorted to disguise and wine to achieve his end. Undeniably, Tlepolemus combined passive tactics with those of a more recognisably martial kind by inebriating the robbers prior to hurling some over a cliff and slaughtering others; but the text indicates the degree to which the robbers had been utterly disabled by the wine, thereby downplaying Tlepolemus' need for physical mastery to rid the area of the robbers.<sup>567</sup> As a consequence, Charite would probably have encircled her husband's image with a crown of vine leaves.<sup>568</sup> Tlepolemus' assimilation to Liber corroborates the young noble's passive heroics in the novel, a passivity sustained in the young man's characterisation all through the Tlepolemus-Charite episode by three different narrators: first of all Charite, then Tlepolemus as Haemus referring to himself (although the self-portrayal is also controlled in this case), and one of

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<sup>566</sup> For the disguises assumed by Dionysus, see Horace's *Carmina* 2.19.23-24 and Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* 11, 13, 18 and passim, but especially 45 and 105ff. For the god's gender ambiguity and his beardlessness, see Aelian Aristides' *Dionysius*, 52. For more on the ancient literary sources for these attributes, and further details which expose the thematic interest of the parallel for the *Metamorphoses*, see Hijmans, Jnr (1986).

<sup>567</sup> 7.13: *Quos quidem colligatos adhuc vino magis quam vinculis deprehendimus. Totis ergo prolatis erutisque rebus et nobis auro argentoque et ceteris onustis, ipsos partim constrictos uti fuerant provolutosque in proximas rupinas praecipites dedere, alios vero suis sibi gladiis obtruncatos reliquere.*

<sup>568</sup> On the vexed issue of the material out of which the *imagines* were made, and whether or not they were three-dimensional, see Hijmans, Jnr (1986) 353-355. If Charite's representation of her husband does include a crown of vine leaves, such a depiction recalls her image of Tlepolemus as he appeared to her in her dream directly after her abduction, wherein he is wreathed with flowers, as befits a groom (4.27): *adhuc unguentis madidum, coronis floridum*. In Charite's dream, Tlepolemus, calling upon the people to help him, also fails to prevent her abduction and is killed by the robbers. The repetition of his doom in real life confirms the image of Tlepolemus, at least in Charite's mind, as a lover, not a fighter.

the domestic staff of Tlepolemus' household.<sup>569</sup> Tlepolemus' nature is transferred to his *habitus* as appearance which in turn is modelled on that of the god Liber (*habitus dei*), with whom Tlepolemus shares both physical and psychological characteristics. By shaping (*formaverat*) the images of her deceased husband into that of Liber, Charite is not just fixing the image of Tlepolemus in his physical state at the time of his tragic death; she is also depicting his nature which prefers ruse and more passive tactics to outright martial aggression.

This leads us to the plausible conclusion that dress and the body cooperate to produce in Tlepolemus the concentrated image of a nature which is equivocal in terms of heroism.<sup>570</sup> This can be detected even before his first appearance in the novel, and is reinforced later. His cross-dressing as Haemus and his natural appearance therefore draw from information about Tlepolemus which comes to light before and after his cross-dressing. It seems permissible then to make the claim that half-dress and the body in this episode, lacking the intervention of surrealism and magic which circumscribe the functions of half-dress in Book 1, is about incompleteness as a man. Lucius draws the reader's attention to the inconcinnity – as he sees it – between the promising youthful masculinity, and the rippling, glistening muscle which bursts through his rags. The question is why he should perceive any incongruity in the first place. Is it not normal for a hero's muscle to burst through his rags? But it shall be soon afterwards revealed that these are not real rags. So what is

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<sup>569</sup> Lack of swiftness to take aggressive action at the moment of his fiancée's abduction (4.26); Charite's dream of her husband calling for help and dying (4.27); Haemus' *lanugo* and evasive tactics (7.5; 7.8); Tlepolemus' use of wine to disarm his enemy (7.12); his hesitancy interpreted as womanly or servile fear (8.4) and treacherous murder during a fateful and failed boar hunt (8.5).

<sup>570</sup> Another somatic give-away, which has already been summarily examined, of Tlepolemus' nature lurking behind Haemus, is his hands. The scout drew attention to the softness of Haemus' hands, a softness which he put down to protracted indolence (7.4): '*ut manus hebetatas diutina pigritia tandem referret ad frugem meliorem...nec manum validam erogandae stipi porrigeret, sed hauriendo potius exerceret auro.*' All this runs contrary to Haemus' own claim that he was a willing partner (7.5): '*et virum magnanimae vivacitatis volentem*' who prefers to fight to the death rather than take up begging: '*libentius vulnera corpore excipientem quam aurum manu susipientem, ipsa morte, quam formidant alii, meliorem.*'

the significance of them, especially for the reader who, alone of the three audiences of Haemus' tale, will be privy to the revelation of Haemus' true identity as Tlepolemus?<sup>571</sup> His rags are not redolent of the process of undoing, but of that construction which reveals while seeking to conceal. Although Lucius notices half-dress or dress incongruities, as he does in this episode, it is not through him that the implications of these incongruities are unfolded and played out. It is on his journeys throughout the novel that Lucius comes to have personal experience of the levels of being through his own visual testimony.<sup>572</sup> It is through Lucius' passive mediation that the reader comes to experience the truth of Tlepolemus' personal ambivalence: Tlepolemus is both himself and his alter ego, Haemus, posing as a donkey-driver (*asinaria*). The conjunction of the *semi-* prefix used with reference to his disguise (*semiamictum*) and the *lanugo* on his face promote his identity as not integrative, but liminal. Tlepolemus' male identity is not fully developed.<sup>573</sup> The suggestion of ambivalence extends beyond the immediate frame of Haemus' tale into the preceding and subsequent chapters and brings depth to the colouring of Tlepolemus' character.

### **Generic Resonances of Clothing and Appearance, and the Creation and Interpretation of Character.**

The preceding section concluded that the reasons for Tlepolemus' untimely demise can be found within the text itself. The reader is invited to supply the necessary cultural context for its proper meaning. Some previous scholarly interpretations of the tale have focussed on elements within it which are in some way indicative of the tale as a heavily allusive literary construct. The manner of Tlepolemus' death in particular understandably leads to explanations of it from the perspective of *contaminatio*. Such biases also

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<sup>571</sup> The three audiences are the robbers, the donkey (Lucius) and, of course, the reader.

<sup>572</sup> If Lucius merely perceives without understanding the presence of incongruous identity markers at this point in the novel, he will come to understand the implications of this in the following books of the novel when he passes into the possession of the *cinaedi* posing as priests (although in the case of the *cinaedi* the identity markers are incongruous with the persona they impose on themselves but not with their true nature).

<sup>573</sup> Compare this interpretation with Bassi's reading (1998) 123 of Odysseus' rags in the *Odyssey* as a sign of his "compromised masculinity" and as "antithetical to the heroic ethos."

extend to the creation of character in the episode. Rather than undermining the collective cultural consciousness, textual allusion can support it, inasmuch as literary allusions and resonances help to give credibility to the text, to show how meaning and reality are created in the text. Additionally, analysing the episode against the backdrop of some of the adduced literary influences only confirms the literary richness of the *Metamorphoses*, a richness which contributes to the text's originality.

Epic has been the predominant model against which Tlepolemus and his alter ego have been interpreted, especially the character Odysseus, thereby directly invoking the Homeric heroic model.<sup>574</sup> Haemus' rags and appearance before the robbers are of course, the most obvious starting point for a comparison between him and Odysseus: just like Odysseus, they belie a strong body;<sup>575</sup> they convey the truth behind the lies of his tale;<sup>576</sup> they function, like many of Odysseus' disguises, as a stratagem, an emanation of the "trickster figure".<sup>577</sup> Odysseus' rags also caused him to be mistaken for a beggar, and Tlepolemus, sensitive to suspicions of beggary, attempts to forestall any such interpretation of himself in his present guise.<sup>578</sup> Tlepolemus undertakes a boar hunt, but, unlike Odysseus, he is unsuccessful.<sup>579</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Winkler (1985) 165 sees the figure of Odysseus running through the novel as an "axis of unity", along with the figure of Actaeon. For the role of Haemus' rags and (Tlepolemus') body in this character determination, see GCA (1981) 110, Echali er (2007) 144, Harrison (1990b) 200 and Hunter (2008) 854. For the epic motif of the boar hunt, failed in Tlepolemus' case, see Graverini (2009), 70. As evocative of epic more generally, see Harrison (*op. cit.*), Frangoulidis (1992a), and Echali er (2008). Finkelpearl (1998) 101-107 makes a comparison between Tlepolemus and Sinon in the Latin epic canon.

<sup>575</sup> On the interpretation of the verb *reluctabant* which would permit this reading, see the GCA (110) and Echali er (2007) 144. Harrison (1990b) 200, and Hunter (2008) 854, both point out the Odyssean echo in the contest between rags and the heroic body that cannot contain them by recalling the *Odyssey*, (18.66ff). However, the somatic-sartorial struggle appears to be more marked in the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>576</sup> On the role of lies and truth in the *Odyssey*, specifically with regard to Odysseus and his disguises, see Block (1985), *passim*.

<sup>577</sup> On Odysseus in his disguises as a trickster figure, to which Tlepolemus in his disguise as Haemus can be compared, see Russo (1993), 54.

<sup>578</sup> Athena disguised Odysseus as a beggar at 13.429-438. It is notable that scholars have not picked up on the epic resonances behind the locale of the scene in the *Metamorphoses*:

A qualification or refutation of these comparisons would begin by accepting that, indeed, Odysseus may have worn the rags of a beggar and fabricated a tale which, true to Odyssean tactics, both concealed and revealed the truth about his identity,<sup>580</sup> much in the manner of the tale told by Tlepolemus in the guise of Haemus; but Tlepolemus' disguise lacks the divine intervention by which Odysseus appeared in the rags of a beggar, and then, later, in a more heroic form.<sup>581</sup> Also when disguised as a slave, Odysseus beat and subdued his own body to make it appear emaciated and more servile, a treatment which Tlepolemus does not inflict upon himself to appear as the rugged Haemus.<sup>582</sup> On the other hand, favouring comparison with the more heroic aspects of the Homeric character, Tlepolemus' acting as Haemus does undeniably contain two parts of an Odyssean identity, consisting of cunning and strength (8.2: *astu virtutibusque*) and residing in his disguise (rags concealing his true physical valour, 7.5: *neve de pannulis istis virtutes meas aestimetis*). Tlepolemus' favouring of underhand tactics through the use of disguise and disarming the enemy by wine over explicitly martial tactics does encapsulate his skill at guile (8.2): *ac die quo praedonum infestis mucronibus puella fuerat astu virtutibusque sponsi sui liberata*. This guile can be likened to the ruse of Odysseus.

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Haemus claims his adventures took him close to Zacynthus (7.6-7), an island which has associations with Odysseus (*Odyssey*, 1.246; 9.24; 16.123, 250; 19.131).

<sup>579</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.393-466. Odysseus killed a wild boar when he still had his ἡβη (*cf. Odyssey*, 19.410: ἡβήσας, translated, perhaps wrongly, by Murray/Dimock in the Loeb edition as "a grown man") the Greek equivalent of the *lanugo* and marking "the time when the first beard appears" (Goff, 1991, 262), therefore not yet a fully grown adult male. Although some time may have passed between Lucius' liberation by Tlepolemus from the robbers and the account of Tlepolemus' boar hunt, we must assume that Tlepolemus was still very young when he went hunting, otherwise Charite would not have depicted her dead husband as Liber (8.7). Therefore, the fatal boar-hunt of Tlepolemus with his *lanugo* may be contrasted with Odysseus' successful boar-hunt, undertaken when he did not yet have the first down, and which left him with a permanent scar, the result of a wound inflicted on him by the boar he killed. Tlepolemus' down which reflects his undeveloped masculinity throws into relief Odysseus' scar of virility.

<sup>580</sup> Block (1985) *passim*, and for a close reading of this paradigm reflected in the character of Tlepolemus, see Echalié (2007), 141-157.

<sup>581</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 13.429ff; 16.172-176; 16.445-456; 18.69-71; 23.155-158.

<sup>582</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.244-246.

However, it can also be argued that Tlepolemus is a dual character insofar as he deviates from the Homeric model whilst evoking it. This argument can be supported by approaching the character from the perspective of an Iliadic-Odyssean opposition, an opposition which accounts for the heroic flux in Tlepolemus' psychology and the final "degeneration" of Tlepolemus into the less heroic model of action remarked on by Thibau.<sup>583</sup> Apuleius' character therefore invokes the Homeric epic canon by way of inversion (a frequently occurring procedure in the *Metamorphoses*),<sup>584</sup> leaving the lasting impression of his deviation from an heroic model. To begin with, his name sets up certain expectations: the first part of Tlepolemus' name, *τλη*, appears in the epithet attributed to *Odysseus* as he appears in the *Iliad*, "Odysseus of the enduring soul" (*Iliad*, 5.670): Ὀδυσσεὺς **τλήμονα** θυμὸν ἔχων. In what way can Tlepolemus be said to be "enduring"? One thinks at first of the trial of separation that underpins the love interest in the Greek romance; but this parallel is easily overturned by the evidence of the text: the two journeys that Tlepolemus made – one to return Charite to her village and the other he made back to the robbers' den – are presented in the text as having taken place within a short space of time, even though the undiluted alcohol which Tlepolemus had given to the robbers was enough to keep them in a state close to death when Tlepolemus arrived back at the den to kill them (7.13). The constructed appearance (*consarcinatis*) of Haemus' rags at the moment of his first meeting with the robbers further strengthens the suggestion that his appearance was not due to rough living attendant upon peregrination in his search to win back his fiancée. It appears, at the end, not to have been so much of an ordeal to get Charite back to her family. His quality of endurance and long-suffering, expressed in his name, was not tested to the same degree as it is in the Greek romances, nor even in epic. In this respect, Tlepolemus is neither completely an Odyssean nor a romantic character.<sup>585</sup> His name cannot be said to testify to any great endurance in fighting – *polemos* - for her sake.

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<sup>583</sup> Thibau (1965) 126.

<sup>584</sup> See Chapter 3, for example, for how Apuleius handles the Socratic legacy in his character of the same name, Socrates, in Book 1.

<sup>585</sup> Romantic is meant in the sense of having the qualities of a lover from one of the Greek romances. In the *Onos*, the girl's fiancé actually shows the soldiers where the robbers live (26).

However, where hunting down and disbanding or killing robbers can be assimilated to the act of war,<sup>586</sup> then Tlepolemus has indeed undergone a war to regain his bride, and he does die during the hunt in a most bloody manner at the hands of his enemy (albeit unrecognised as such by Tlepolemus); yet his bloody death at the hands of the enemy occurred in defiance of his wife's injunction against hunting boars. A further test of his endurance, one that points towards Tlepolemus' more heroic side, lurks behind the name of Haemus' fictitious father, Theron, a renowned brigand whose name evokes hunting.<sup>587</sup> Haemus, the bloody brigand,<sup>588</sup> is hinting at the destruction of the robbers through his hunting them down, and then slaughtering of them when they are rendered powerless through drink. Similarly, just as Haemus was hunted down by Plotina in the guise of a man and the Emperor, Tlepolemus shall hunt down his enemy, the robbers, not openly through fighting as his own self, but in the guise of a woman.

It is also worth noting that the point under discussion from the *Iliad* (5.670) permits further insight into Apuleius' tactics of inversion in the *Metamorphoses* whereby a character with a resonant name becomes an inversion of an eponymous character in a prior literary canon or text. At this point in the *Iliad*, Odysseus is suffering because Tlepolemus, the epic character, has been killed by a spear thrown by Sarpedon (5.659-660). Apuleius' Tlepolemus therefore has a share in the Homeric tradition by the instrument through which he died (*venabulum/iaculum*) and by the fact that, through his name and his alter ego, he is half of one aspect of Odysseus (*τλή* = enduring) as well as the son of a strong-man, Theron; the father of the epic Tlepolemus, however, is the deified hero, Hercules, and not a lowly marauding robber. In the *Metamorphoses*, therefore, Tlepolemus comes to evoke a downgraded version of the epic strong-man with the name Theron, an accomplished brigand who stops at nothing in his quest for blood-shed and material gain (7.5). Homer's hero (Hercules' son), just like Apuleius' character, is valiant and tall. These two features mark him out in the *Iliad* (2.653): *Τληπόλεμος δ'*

<sup>586</sup> In the ancient tradition hunting was considered an appropriate method of military training (Plato, *Laws* 763b; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 12.1-5).

<sup>587</sup> Hanson (1989) 2:12.

<sup>588</sup> On the connotations of blood inherent in Haemus' name see, Hijmans, Jnr (1978 and 1986).

*Ἡρακλεΐδης ἡϋς τε μέγας τε;* (5.628) *Τληπόλεμον δ' Ἡρακλεΐδην ἡϋν τε μέγαν τε.* The strength and size of Apuleius' character mark him, therefore, as Iliadic with regard to the physical aspect alone of heroic characterisation,<sup>589</sup> but the Tlepolemus of the *Iliad* is associated with the spear as his weapon of predilection and aptitude and he strikes his enemy Sarpedon through the left thigh and in the thick of glorious battle, not a hunt. Apuleius' character dies also as a result of the spear wound inflicted on him by an enemy, but he dies through a spear wound in the *right* thigh (8.5: *per femur dexterum dimisit lanceam*), and he does not recognise the enemy in Thrasyllus. Likewise, Tlepolemus' thrust of the hunting spear (8.5: *venabulum...iaculum*), whilst hitting its target, the boar (8.5: *iaculum quod gerebat insuper dorsum bestiae contorsit*), does not kill it.

Again, the hunting connotations in the name Theron are deflected onto Apuleius' character, Tlepolemus, through the very boar hunt in the *Metamorphoses* by which Tlepolemus is further assimilated to an Odyssean prototype whilst evoking the Iliadic warrior of the same name. This too occurs by way of inversion, as the Homeric hero, as we have seen, dies as the result of a spear-wound (*Iliad*, 5. 659-660) just like the character of the novel, albeit under different circumstances. The character in the novel who promised epic Odysseus in so many ways, delivered epic Tlepolemus, and war has been downgraded to the hunt, which can only temporarily replace proper warfare. Can we take it by this that for Apuleius' Tlepolemus the boar hunt was cognate with war? If this is so, his heroism is not of the Iliadic kind, not being fully developed for warfare.

Another anti-Odyssean reading can also be corroborated by the linguistic and sartorial indexing of Haemus/Tlepolemus as *semiamictum*. Haemus' half-dress is analogous to his divided gender, as half-man and half-woman, the feminine aspect of his character coming through also in the soft down and soft hands of his creator, Tlepolemus, who, unlike his imaginary projection, is not used to rough living. The prefix which best describes Odysseus in his spirit and life is the Greek prefix *πολυ-*, meaning "many", which marks its subject as

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<sup>589</sup> Tlepolemus calls his father "Heracles, staunch in fighting, the lion-hearted" (5.639): *ἄμὸν πατέρα θρασυμένονα θυμολέοντα*. The family of Apuleius' eponymous character is neither staunch in fighting, nor lion-hearted, a fact to which Charite attests (4.26).

multiplicitous, especially with regard to his predilection for ruse, *polumetis* (“of many devices”) and endurance, *polutlas* (“much enduring”).<sup>590</sup> The language of clothing in the Tlepolemus/Haemus episode reduces Tlepolemus to an unresolved, almost dual character,<sup>591</sup> lacking the richness of the Homeric character whilst evoking him in certain respects. Haemus’ rags, unlike Odysseus’, embody duality, not multiplicity.

Unlike Achilles, another epic hero whose heroism *was* developed from a liminal state of transition, Tlepolemus’ heroic ambivalence in the novel is unresolved. Like Tlepolemus’, Achilles’ sexual and heroic ambivalence was also marked by the down on his face (Statius, *Achilleid*, 1.161-3): *et tamen arma inter festinatosque labores/dulcis adhuc vis/...necdum prima nova lanugine vertitur aetas*. Just like Tlepolemus, the transvestite Achilles also engages his transvestism as a tactical manoeuvre (*Achilleid*, 1. 560, 567-568): *At procul occultum falsi sub imagine sexus...blanque novas nil tale timenti/admovet insidias*. Like the transvestite Achilles, Tlepolemus brings forward traps to the unwary in the guise of a sex which is not his (7.8: *habitus alieni fallacia*), deploying his strategic cross-dressing for an amatory end as Haemus.<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Finkelberg (1995), 11, states that not all of Odysseus’ adventures fit the pattern of labours and cites (14) Rutherford’s attempt at a *rapprochement* of Odysseus’ cunning and endurance by pairing them as an aspect of development in his character. Whilst this may at first sight result in a tightening of the connection between Tlepolemus and Odysseus, in fact, the very focussed concentration on these specific physical and sartorial aspects of Tlepolemus and Haemus in the *Metamorphoses* circumscribes the two men (who are one character) within the bounds of duality, and not multiplicity as in the case of the epic character.

<sup>591</sup> Cf. *OLD* (1982) 1730: “*semi-* is prefixed to nouns and adjectives with the sense of ‘half-’ (in varying degrees of precision).”

<sup>592</sup> Another legendary hero renowned for his size and strength who wore female clothing out of love was Hercules, but here too there are differences. According to Sophocles (*Trachiniae*, 248-280) the slavery into which he was sold to queen Omphale was a divinely inflicted punishment; yet according to Ovid (*Heroides*, 9.26) the cause was love: *vincit amor*. The striking difference between the brawny hero and the now effeminate man (*molli...viro*) is seminal to the tone of the letter in which Omphale is deemed to be more of a man (*Heroides*, 106: *vir illa fuit*) than Hercules himself, in the jaundiced view of the letter writer, Hercules’ wife Deianira. The manner of Haemus’ introducing himself and his pedigree (7.5: *Ego sum...ille*) whilst in rags, is reminiscent of Propertius’ portrait in his elegies of Hercules with a dirty shaggy beard (4.9. 31) introducing himself by detailing his exploits to the

However, Achilles distinguishes himself from his prosaic counterpart by his successful removal out of his state of boyhood to become the male warrior *par excellence* and he leaves the erotic attachment behind him. The down (*lanugo*) in both works is an erotic marker, but keeps pace in the epic text with the development of the hero.

In addition to epic, scholars have mined other genres to seek explanations for Tlepolemus' behaviour, although less so his dress and appearance. Resonances from Platonic philosophy have also been assigned a generative role in the creation of character in the episode. Thibau, who concentrates on strands of Platonist theory on Eros in the *Metamorphoses*, attempts to argue, rather implausibly, that with the introduction of Haemus into the robbers' cave comes the introduction of Orphism, as Dionysus, the god with whom Tlepolemus shares certain features, was born on Mount Haemus in Thrace,<sup>593</sup> and that Haemus' character "degenerates" after his marriage as Tlepolemus to Charite, a change in his heroic character no doubt due to his associations with Dionysus.<sup>594</sup> However, Thibau does not specify the degenerative cause of this Orphism.<sup>595</sup> The suggestion has also been made that the death of Tlepolemus, a consequence of what Thibau refers to as his "degeneration", occurs by a generic shift in the novel, by Apuleius' lifting his

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priestess of the Bona Dea (4.9. 38): *ille ego sum*. However, Haemus' exploits are not of the same kind as Hercules' and they are not Tlepolemus' exploits. Haemus' manner of introducing himself also recalls Aeneas' manner of introducing himself to the Carthaginians (*Aeneid*, 1. 378-380) and, prior to that, Odysseus' introduction to the Phaeacians (*Odyssey*, 9.19ff). On these epic models of introductory speech, see also Lazzarini (1985), 157-158.

<sup>593</sup> On these shared features, see Hijmans, Jr (1978), 404-417 and (1986), 350-363. Put succinctly, the most salient features he shares with the god are his strategic disguise, his beardlessness and his associations with wine. Although Liber came to his aid in putting an end to the robbers, he was of no avail to him during the hunt when he was treacherously murdered by Thrasylus, an event in which Hijmans claims to detect chthonic undertones (1986, 356).

<sup>594</sup> Thibau (1965) 126: "Avec l'arrivée de Haemus (sic) dans la grotte, l'orphisme s'annonce...mais après son mariage avec Charité, dans le personnage de Tlepolemus (sic), il semble dégénérer."

<sup>595</sup> According to Graverini (2009, 64), Thibau (*op. cit.* 126) perceives traces of feminisation ("tracce di una femminilizzazione") in Tlepolemus. However, Thibau does not explicitly say this.

character out of the genre of romance with its lovers' reunion after trials and separation and replacing him in the generic locale of tragedy, with the attendant deaths.<sup>596</sup> Contradicting this interpretation is the undeniable fact that the labours Tlepolemus undertook to regain his fiancée do not amount to much, an argument which has already been illuminated in this chapter. The miniature aspect of these labours can of course be attributed to the episode's status as a mere vignette alluding to the novelistic topos; but notwithstanding this fact, Tlepolemus' separation from Charite and his trials to win her back are not so grand as to merit being classed among the love ordeals of the Greek romances. Graverini subjects to scrutiny the hunting scene in the episode (8.4-6) with a view to determining the value of any supposed putative source common to the *Metamorphoses* and Achilles Tatius' novel, *Leucippe and Clitophon*. The love interest and the hunt in the two novels are seminal to his analysis. Graverini's view is opposed to mine, as he believes that Apuleius intended, in this scene, to mark the transition to a more noble and heroic type of hunt, undertaken on horseback, although he does recognise the impact of gender issues for the scene, speaking of the threat of love to a man's heroic ambitions, the risk to his own virility.<sup>597</sup> He also acknowledges the *lanugo* in preceding Latin literature as a marker of a pre-adult state, but does not tie this into the cross-dressing scene, concentrating instead on the more literarily

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<sup>596</sup> For this reading, see James' review of Frangoulidis' book (2001) in the *Classical Review* (2004) 413. The manner of Tlepolemus' death keeps him more closely within the bounds, as a literary construct, of the epic code, where such bloody and treacherous deaths abound. Yet the taunts of Thrasyllus which in part cause Tlepolemus' death seem to undermine the epic tone in the death scene by the gender implications that they contain. Alternately, Salles (1981) 18 sees in this change in Tlepolemus' character an echo of the husband of the popular "conte": "la faiblesse, la sujétion à sa femme, le défaut d'acuité psychologique."

<sup>597</sup> Graverini (2007), 69-70. He makes the claim that the epic code of hunting threatens an elegiac mode of life, thereby reducing the element of epic influence: "Nel testo di Apuleio, l'inizio è chiaramente influenzato da convenzioni di tipo elegiaco: I cacciatori sono maschi adulti, ma è una donna, Charite, che detta le regole...gli uomini si adattano ad un tipo di caccia che meglio si converrebbe a donne e giovani...è il mondo dell'epica che minaccia la vita elegiaca, e con ciò stesso fornisce la spinta necessaria a mettere in moto la trama." The love interest thereby puts an erotic spin on Tlepolemus' down, turning him into a figure recalling the "eromenos" (78). My argument against Graverini is that Tlepolemus' heroism lacked development, and that this is reflected in his *lanugo* and the fabricated rags of his alter ego which match the liminality arising from the dualism of Tlepolemus.

obvious association of the *lanugo* with hunting, referring to Ovid's story of Hyas in the *Fasti* (171-174).<sup>598</sup> Herodotus' story of Atys and the boar hunt, is also deemed to have had an influence on the hunting scene in the novel,<sup>599</sup> yet it lacks the love interest which strongly determines the outcome of the hunt in the *Metamorphoses*, as Croesus' concern is with the meaning of an oracle, and the cautionary note against hunting the boar is sounded by a parent (Croesus) and not a wife. Ovid's mythological tale of Venus and Adonis (*Metamorphoses*, 10.519-739) has also been suggested for comparative value.<sup>600</sup> Indeed, this tale appears to have closer associations through the love which Venus has for her lover: Adonis' beauty and youth are attractive to the goddess; Venus warns Adonis against hunting animals renowned for their boldness, such as the boar (550-552); Adonis pays no heed to her warnings and injures a boar (as Tlepolemus does) and is killed by it (709-713). However, the structure of the hunting subplot is more complex in Apuleius' novel, as there is a third party (Thrasyllus) who turns Tlepolemus away from his wife's injunctions, taunting Tlepolemus and his household with charges of servile and womanish fear. Thrasyllus' character introduces issues of gender into the episode.

These comparisons and suggested influences do not seek to establish any link connecting Tlepolemus'/Haemus' dress to body and behaviour, more especially, the behaviour he exhibited before Charite's abduction; yet it is quite plausible to approach the appearance, clothed or unclothed, of a character as determinative of his actions, and where the body exhibits seemingly contradictory qualities - enormous size and musculature co-existing with the first down and soft hands – it is normal that readings of this body will be equally contradictory. In the case of Tlepolemus, it is necessary to take the disguise of his alter ego, Haemus, as interpretative of Tlepolemus also. Readings of Tlepolemus' character must be inclusive of the context of the whole story about Tlepolemus and Charite, and not be circumscribed by

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<sup>598</sup> Graverini (2009), 66.

<sup>599</sup> The story of Atys is told by Herodotus (1.34-45). For a comparison between the two texts, see the GCA on Book 8 (1985), 47 where the reader is referred to Westerbrink's claim (1978, 70) that Apuleius sought to parody Herodotus.

<sup>600</sup> GCA (1985), 47.

certain scenes within it. Lucius' presentiment of an anomaly from the moment of his first sight of Haemus (7.5), must also count for something.

In addition to the aforementioned paradigms, other models can be adduced as possible influences on the characterisation of Tlepolemus and other characters in the episode, such as the military tactical historiographical and biographical works, that have left us with literary evidence of cross-dressing as part of a military stratagem directed towards the removal of an enemy, or a tyrant. These models give a more prosaic reading to the rags of Tlepolemus posing as Haemus as they score Haemus' rags definitively as the remnants of his transgendered dress, not of divine intervention, like Odysseus' rags. Such accounts of tactical transvestitism appear in the *Histories* of Herodotus and in Plutarch's biographies.<sup>601</sup> The youth of the cross-dressing liberators, symbolised by either beardlessness or the first down of youth – a somatic index of character mentioned twice in relation to Tlepolemus - is a recurring element in many of these records. The robbers of the *Metamorphoses* claim for themselves the power of a tyrant (7.4): *nec paucos humili servilique vitae renuntiantes ad instar tyrannicae potestatis sectam suam conferre malle*. Many of the elements which appear in the historiographical and biographical record<sup>602</sup> also occur, minus the tyrant, in the genre of Greek romance, notably in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* (2.18), where the abducted female victim is bride and also half-sister to Clitophon, thereby reflecting the element of chastity in the relations between Tlepolemus and Charite (although Clitophon does not desire to marry Kalligone). Cross-dressing also arises in *Leucippe and Clitophon* (2.6.1) where Melite dresses Clitophon in her clothes, likening him to Achilles in her garb; but the love interest between Melite and Clitophon is not replicated in the relationship between Haemus and Plotina (although an argument could be made for Tlepolemus' having Charite in mind when speaking of Plotina in the persona of Haemus).

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<sup>601</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.17-20. In Plutarch's, *Pelopides*, 11.1-2 and *De Genio Socratis*, 596a, the youthful down or lack of beard is not mentioned. In the *Solon*, 8.5, however, it is. See also Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae*, 4.4.2-3.

<sup>602</sup> Mainly, the liminal territory (that is, the beach), cross-dressing, and smooth-cheeked male youths concealing weapons under their feminine attire.

Declamation, cross-dressing and tyrannicide as a unit make their first appearance in Latin in pseudo-Quintilian's *Minor Declamations*, 282 (*Tyrannicida veste muliebri*), close to Apuleius' time, and are repeated a couple of centuries later than Apuleius in a declamation of Choricus of Gaza, who wrote in Greek.<sup>603</sup> Comparison with the pseudo-Quintilian shows up several common points: the youth of the male hero (expressed as down on the cheeks of Tlepolemus/Haemus), the transgendered dress, and the chaste relationship between the young hero and the abducted female. In the declamatory tradition, the female victim is the liberator's sister; Tlepolemus and Charite had enjoyed chaste relations until the time of her abduction. The brigands are the tyrant,<sup>604</sup> and Charite, although not kept in a citadel, is kept enclosed in a confined space.

Closer to Apuleius' own time, cross-dressing occurs frequently as a stratagem in the genre of military tactical writing, in Frontinus,<sup>605</sup> who writes in the Latin tradition, and Polyaeus<sup>606</sup> - exactly contemporaneous with Apuleius - for the Greek. Instructional writings on warfare owe a lot to Homeric epic, possibly mediated through the preceding historiographical and biographical records, and military stratagems are a common feature of the Greek romances.<sup>607</sup> This model seems to accord well with the presentation in the novel of cross-dressing as a stratagem, as cross-dressing is classed amongst stratagems in the instructional writings on warfare; however, in the novel it is more complex. Haemus uses cross-dressing for *evasive* purposes (7.7: *evasi*), whereas cross-dressing in the historiographical, biographical and tactical

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<sup>603</sup> Choricus of Gaza, *Declamation 11* (in the edition of Penella, 2009). Similar elements occur in the tale of Aspalis and Astygites, one of the stories of metamorphosis (13) of Antoninus Liberalis, roughly contemporary with Apuleius, but there are numerous differences: Astygites, a young boy puts on the clothes of his sister to deceive and kill the tyrant who abducted her. However, Aspalis had killed herself before the tyrant could ravish her. Aspalis' body was never found, but a statue of her miraculously appeared next to a statue of Artemis.

<sup>604</sup> That is, they abrogate the power of the tyrant (7.4): *ad instar tyrannicae potestatis sectam suam conferre malle*.

<sup>605</sup> Frontinus, *Strategemata*, 4.7.33.

<sup>606</sup> Polyaeus, *Strategemata*, 2.3.1; 5.1.3.

<sup>607</sup> For a mere few, see Chariton, 7.4-6; Achilles Tatius, 4.13-14; pseudo-Calisthenes (Alexander Romance), 2.13.

records facilitates penetration into enemy quarters, and invasion. On the other hand, from Tlepolemus' perspective, cross-dressing does give him access to the robbers' quarters.<sup>608</sup> There is also definitely a trail of cross-dressing as an amatory stratagem which figures in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with the story of Vertumnus and Pomona (14.656) and in other passages of the poem where female disguise arises as an amatory stratagem enabling rape: 2.425-433 (Jove), 4. 217-233 (Sol), and 11.310 (Phoebus). Tlepolemus' intentions, however, are honourable, compared with those of the cross-dressing male figures in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and his status as a mortal corroborates the more prosaic flavour of cross-dressing in the novel. An earlier and comic version of the motif appears in Plautus' *Casina*, although the love-interest which is supposed to support the cross-dressing in this case is not real. This dual function of transvestite disguise – lover and warrior - makes Tlepolemus' name doubly relevant to the motif of cross-dressing as an amatory stratagem; yet the putative base of the latter is undone by the fact that Tlepolemus has already done the wooing, despite the fact that Charite is still a virgin, as she had been abducted on the day of her wedding. From this perspective, perhaps Tlepolemus' seduction of Charite is incomplete; his beardlessness, or *lanugo*, is therefore perhaps as much a marker of his not yet fully eroticised youth as of a lack of heroic development.

Given the plethora of modern readings of the ancient literary evidence for cross-dressing,<sup>609</sup> it is easy to rule out some of these as inapplicable to the double specimen of virtual transvestism as it is presented in the Tlepolemus story. For example, the concurrence of certain elements of female dress joined to the emphasis on the image of a strong, young man could be taken to point

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<sup>608</sup> See the note on this by Martos (2002) 362-363. Most texts emend the manuscript reading at 7.8, *aditus*, to *abitus*; yet, as Martos says, from the perspective of the robbers, *aditus* is quite logical. Also, stratagems can be deemed a more appropriate tactical action for Haemus insofar as they can also be used, so Frontinus tells us, for evasive purposes: *horum propria vis in arte sollertiaque posita proficit tam ubi cavendus quam opprimendus hostis sit* (preface to Book 1), which is exactly how Haemus uses his stratagem of cross-dressing in this instance.

<sup>609</sup> Leitao (1999), 247-277, gives a good summary of these theories (Vidal-Naquet's "inversion thesis" for example, 253), and applies them with a good dose of nuance to the seven Transvestite Ambush narratives which form the basis of his study.

in the direction of a ritual frame of reference to the cross-dressing. It is incontestable that the markers which have been taken to indicate a ritual or an initiatory colouring, if not function, to Tlepolemus' whole disguise and subsequent actions in it (*lanugo*, male-to-female cross-dressing, and penetration into an enclosed space) are there.<sup>610</sup> This might seem a plausible analogue in the light of Tlepolemus' subsequent failure in the boar-hunt, a failure which was not entirely his fault; however, Tlepolemus' cross-dressing does not take place in a festival context, a necessary element in most of the historiographical and biographical examples.<sup>611</sup> In the case of Tlepolemus/Haemus, what promises to go in one direction often turns in another. Moreover, recent scholarship has sought, quite convincingly, to overthrow previous readings of male-to-female cross-dressing as indicative of (archaic) initiation ritual, or as a rite of passage, enacting the passing from boyhood to manhood.<sup>612</sup> Rather than evoking ritual explicitly the specimens of cross-dressing in the episode can be seen to play out gender relations as they exist in Tlepolemus' mind, whilst showing up the priorities of the robbers, especially if we can take it that one of the functions of literary allusion is to evoke certain contexts by way of motif.<sup>613</sup> This facilitates better understanding of the world that Tlepolemus moves in and his perception both of himself and of that world.

The interpretations of Haemus' rags based on intertextual echoes proposed by other scholars do not help much towards understanding Tlepolemus as an ambiguous being who exists in both his projected personae, Haemus (man and woman) and Plotina, and as therefore of an ambivalent nature. I do not seek to overthrow the previous scholarship, especially with regard to the epic resonances that have been detected in the episode; I merely seek to direct it towards another aspect of Tlepolemus' identity, the dual aspect of his character as at once passive and active, cunning yet lacking foresight. The ancient reader well versed in epic would have appreciated the jumbled epic construct that Apuleius' character manifests by his behaviour.

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<sup>610</sup> On this, see Leitao (1999), 247-277.

<sup>611</sup> Leitao (1999), 263-271.

<sup>612</sup> See, for example, Heslin (2005) 205-231.

<sup>613</sup> Echali er (2007) 42, claims that Apuleius deals rather with reminiscences and « elements of inculturation» (my translation) than with overt allusion in the *Metamorphoses*.

The critical role of the *combination* of the *semi-* prefix, the rags and his body and evidence within the text elucidating his qualities before Charite's abduction (4.26) must be brought into any consideration of Tlepolemus' characterisation.

### **Conclusion to Chapter 6**

The purpose of this chapter has been to show how the whole character of Haemus is, of course, a disguise (not just his rags); yet just as Tlepolemus peeps through Haemus' rags, the rags of his transvestism which both revealed and concealed aspects of his nature, the truth peeps through the cracks in Haemus' story. Likewise, Plotina serves to illuminate the unenlightened vision of the robbers who cannot see beyond surfaces and fail to appreciate both the destructive and redemptive capacity of woman, as she both destroyed Haemus' band of robbers and restored her husband. The gender implications behind cross-dressing have been analysed against what scholars bring to the episode by way of comparative genres, all to dispute Apuleius' entire reliance on any preceding canonical fabric in the creation of characters. By focussing on the details in Tlepolemus' physique which Lucius alone picks up on, such as his soft hands, or his soft down, I have brought into investigation the ambivalence in the nature of Tlepolemus. The polysemous content of rags co-operates with divergent readings of them to show both the complexity of Tlepolemus' nature and the complexity of the readings of his nature. The saturation of allusive material in the episode with specific regard to the character of Tlepolemus and his alter ego Haemus serves only to confirm the freshness of the character of the novel. As in the case of many of his characters, Apuleius' nod to other genres and contexts must not lead us to presuppose an entire reliance on them. Moreover, Apuleius leaves traces of Tlepolemus' complex nature all throughout the whole Charite episode, stretching from Book 4 to Book 8. All these indices must be brought together in order to arrive at a complete picture of Tlepolemus, even when in disguise as Haemus. This episode constitutes an example of Apuleius exploring different levels of being and perception at his best. Rather than the "reidentification" that Winkler spoke of, this is

reconfirmation of different aspects of identity, or identity at different levels.<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> Winkler (1985) 86-89. I also disagree with him when he claims that “the story is not presented to the reader as a quest for identity” (89). What is the purpose of juxtaposed variant readings if not a desire for probing into their common base and points of divergence? Finkelpearl (1998), as I do, links the episode with the general concern of identity in the novel, as well as its (partial) dependence on perception; in the case of this particular episode, that of the robbers: “Obviously, lying, deception, and disguise are crucial ingredients in the tale, but these themselves branch out into the related issues of the naïveté of the audience who is finally deceived, issues about the true identity of the one in disguise, and perhaps issues of identity in general” (101). “Since Haemus’ speech has two explicit audiences within the text, the robbers and Lucius, neither of whom ‘hears’ him, we are perhaps again entitled to see naïve audience response – like that of Sinon’s audience – as one of the major themes of the episode” (106). “These issues of disguise, identity, and naïveté are all, of course, interconnected” (106). I see audience response as one of the major concerns of the whole novel. The complexity concerning audiences is also acknowledged by Hijmans, Jnr (1986), 350, and Echalié (2007).

## Chapter 7

### Religion and Costume A: The *cinaedi* and the Dea Syria

The basis of the next two chapters is an examination into the representation and interpretation of religious costume in the *Metamorphoses*. The moral import of this is the resultant gulf that Lucius comes to perceive between the rite of the Dea Syria and the rite of Isis. Whilst he does not make explicit comparison between the two rites at the moment he encounters them, the differences are so salient as to invite and facilitate comparison between them by the reader despite the narrative gulf that separates the episodes. This chapter in particular consists of an analysis of the *cinaedi*<sup>615</sup> and the rite of the Dea Syria as expressed in its visible trappings such as costume and the ritual Bacchic-styled frenzy for which the cult of the Dea Syria was renowned.<sup>616</sup> These costumed ecstatic rites are depicted negatively in the *Metamorphoses*.

This chapter will begin with a study of Philebus as a preliminary figure, since he is the leader of the *cinaedi*. By focussing on his hair and effeminacy, a foretaste of what the *cinaedi* embody in the novel can be acquired.

Next the priests' ritual costume will be analysed in detail. As a ritual garment, the costume conveys connotations of effeminacy and eastern luxuriousness, connotations which are accessible through the preceding canon, and the collective (literary) consciousness. The dichotomy royalty/tyranny is also visible in the colour scheme and style of the costume. Likewise the components of colour and fabric are key interpretive elements, recalling other specimens of colour and fabric in the preceding literary corpus which in turn further colour the priests' reception in the mind of the reader. The priests' use of make-up is an extension of this function of colour and fabric.

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<sup>615</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, I shall mostly retain the Latin term *cinaedus* throughout, translating the word only on occasion to avoid repetition. On the question of options for translating *cinaedus*, see the GCA (1985) 205-206 and Richlin (1993) 530-531.

<sup>616</sup> It is of pertinence that, although the cult of Isis also had such rites for which it was condemned in other sources, Apuleius has chosen to eliminate this aspect of the cult of Isis from his novel. On this, see Witt (1971) 41-45; Heyob (1975) 54-56; Schlam (1992) 56. In this respect the two cults, that of the Dea Syria and that of Isis, are contrasted in the novel.

This leads naturally to considerations about the place of gender in the novel, and its role as a tool of discrimination between true and false perceptions of god and true or false (or flawed) rites. Consequently, perception arises as the focus of the ensuing section by its role in this discrimination.

The following section therefore shows how the physiognomic corpus enables a directed reading of the *cinaedi* as men who use their inherent nature as a disguise with which to hoodwink those who lack the perceptual tools to form a correct judgment of them. Apuleius' *cinaedi*, who both coincide with and depart from the *cinaedus* who figures in the physiognomic canon, function as an allusion to cultural context rather more than as intertext. Although the portrait of the *cinaedi* of the *Metamorphoses* also coincides with that of *cinaedi* in preceding canons, including the Greek counterparts of the *cinaedi* in the *Onos*, Apuleius does not slavishly follow the canonical description of the *cinaedus*.<sup>617</sup>

The chapter will then be capped by an emphasis on the philosophical and psychological type embodied by the *cinaedi* in their ritual costume. This particular section draws together all the undesirable aspects of the *cinaedi* to show how they are the continuation and concentration of pre-existing sartorial types by comparing Apuleius' characters with a psychology given to hedonistic tendencies already studied by other authors such as Dio Chrysostom, Seneca and, before them, Apuleius' own master, Plato.

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<sup>617</sup> For this reason, although I make comparison between the *cinaedus* of the physiognomic canon and the *cinaedi* in the *Metamorphoses*, I shall allude to specimens of other literary sources only insofar as they serve as reinforcement of a negative reading of the *cinaedus* as he appears transferred from the real world to the world of the novel. Similarly, regarding parallels that can be detected in the pseudo-Lucianic *Onos*, I shall infer comparison between the two texts only inasmuch as the similarities reinforce the importance of certain aspects of the cult of the Dea Syria which I believe to have force in Apuleius' depiction of the *cinaedi*. The *cinaedi* in the preceding Latin canon often do not have the detailed focus on their dress which is so important in the *Metamorphoses*, especially where the term *cinaedus* is used merely of a sexual deviant and is not confused with any priestly or ritual office. For example, see the term in the vocative case, used for invective purposes in Catullus' poems (16.2; 25.1; 29.5; 29.9; 33.2).

### Philebus, Hair and Gender Ambiguity.

Towards the middle of Book 8, Lucius, still an ass and after innumerable misfortunes is restored to the overseer of horses from the estate of Charite's family (8.15). He is taken along with some other animals and the remaining domestic members of the household who travel through a terrible terrain beset with evils of every imaginable shape. Finally, they decide to settle in a town where they would be safe from pursuers (8.23). The animals, including Lucius, are taken to the city's market to be sold off. Whilst his animal companions are purchased by wealthy owners, Lucius, the last of the animals to be purchased, is passed over in disgust, and finally purchased by an old *cinaedus* named Philebus, who provokes repulsion in Lucius by his very appearance.

It is through Philebus' physical appearance that Lucius immediately draws the reader's attention to the link between ignorance and ritual (8.24). He does this by explicit reference to the man as a *cinaedus*, a word which would have resonated strongly in the ancient reader's mind through its connotations of effeminacy, and by drawing the reader's attention to an aspect of Philebus' physiognomy, his hair. No mention is made of dress at this point. For Lucius then, Philebus' outer aspect is resonant of the negative type he embodies – the lover of pleasure - and of which he and his fellow *cinaedi* are a literary projection. Connection is made between the nature of the man and his outward form from the moment of his first appearance in the novel.

Lucius is particularly struck by Philebus' effeminacy and age, instantly referring to him not only as a pervert (*cinaedus*) but, further to this, an old one: *cinaedum et senem cinaedum*.<sup>618</sup> The disgust which Philebus' appearance causes Lucius motivates the harshness of tone behind Lucius' description of him, which opens with a striking future imperative directed at the reader (8.24): *Scitote qualem: cinaedum et senem cinaedum, calvum quidem, sed cincinnis semicanis et pendulis capillatum*. The qualitative adjective/pronoun, *qualis/e*, often occurs in the *Metamorphoses* in emotive situations, occasionally with the

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<sup>618</sup> Cf. pseudo-Lucian, *Onos*, 35: *κίναϊδος γὰρ καὶ γέρων*.

undertones of an identity-marker.<sup>619</sup> The repetition, alliteration and climactic structure of the sentence draw the reader's attention to the oddity of the man's appearance. Hair, a significant aspect and marker of religious and/or philosophical sympathies or affiliation in the ancient Mediterranean,<sup>620</sup> is an important aspect of Philebus' portrayal. It functions in this passage as a primary focus of moral identification.

Lucius appears to make a close connection between Philebus as a *cinaedus* and the hair-style which is associated with rites which attract such men (*quidem*), whilst insisting on the distinguishing features of Philebus' hair (*sed*) (8.24): *cinaedum et senem cinaedum, calvum **quidem**, **sed** cincinnis semicanis et pendulis capillatum*. The paradox of having a bald head surrounded with long curly tresses – a masculine style of hair coupled with a feminine one - is also borne out and reinforced by the antithetic hyperbaton: *calvum **quidem**, **sed**...**capillatum***.<sup>621</sup> This not only draws attention to the ridiculous aspect of one who would wear his hair in this manner, but also serves to contrast Philebus' baldness, most likely natural baldness which is the result of his age, with the ritualistic shaving of hair associated with true

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<sup>619</sup> See, for example, how the adjective is used by Lucius in his description of the slaves, both human and animal, in the mill-house in Book 9, chapters 12 and 13: *Dii boni, quales illic homunculi...Quales illi muli senes vel cantherii debiles!*

<sup>620</sup> GCA (1985) 206, 288-289.

<sup>621</sup> Lucius' depiction of the dignified procession of the ritually shaven initiates and acolytes of Isis in Book 11, by contrast, has nothing ridiculous about it (11.10): *hi capillum derasi funditus verticem praenitentes*. It is in this way that we should interpret Lucius' baldness, the result of pietistic measures, mentioned at 11.30: *non obumbrato vel obtecto **calvitio***. Again, by the similarity of terms, *calvus* and *calvitium* (albeit separated by a considerable textual gap) referring to two different kinds of baldness – one natural and the other artificial - Lucius draws the reader to learn to apply discernment in his judgment of others by their outer appearance alone. For the disciples of the Dea Syria baldness was obligatory for certain occasions. There is no evidence in the passage in the *Metamorphoses* that Philebus' baldness at that moment was the result of preparation for a religious occasion connected with the cult (unless we count the frenzy and visibility associated with the public confession of sins as one of those occasions). Even in the Isiac cult, baldness is one of the standard elements, in the satirical canon, of descriptions of worshippers of Isis: Martial, 12.28.19; Juvenal (about a priest representing Anubis, who was connected with the Isis-Osiris rite) 6.533.

religious consecration. The religious significance of hair in this passage is introduced subtly, but since hair was one of the most visible features of religious appearance in the ancient Mediterranean it is not presumptuous to presuppose that even the lowest echelons of society perceived hair as capable of interpretation, even if this were not required on every occasion.<sup>622</sup>

Additionally, the juxtaposition of terms which seem to cancel out each other (*calvum quidem, sed...capillatum*) hints at the double life of the priests, their dual nature as dissimulators and *cinaedi*, half-men and half-women, especially if like *galli*<sup>623</sup> they are castrates (though there is no evidence of this in the text). On Philebus, the hair-style would indicate to the spectator and the reader that he is both effeminate by nature, as well as (possibly) a *gallus* for the purposes of the rite. Philebus' hair-style is particularly hybrid, containing elements of the masculine (baldness) and the feminine (long tresses attached as a wig, a sign of dissembling as much as of affectation).<sup>624</sup> The overall effect is that of a clown,

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<sup>622</sup> GCA (1985) 288 (also for the issue of mandatory baldness in religion).

<sup>623</sup> *Cinaedi* were often assimilated to *galli* in the ancient consciousness rightly or wrongly (Bremmer, 2004; Nauta, 2004, 612 with references: Martial 3.81 and 9.2.13; Juvenal, 2.110-116. I do not accept Plautus' *Poenulus*, 1317-8 as an example of this). This confusion often accompanied the confusion of the rite of the dea Syria with that of Cybele. For this confusion, see the GCA (1985) 286 and 292 and Nauta (2004) 602: "*Galli* were castrated devotees of Cybele (or a similar goddess)." For evidence from a later writer, see Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis*, a work likely to antedate his conversion to Christianity (7.25.4): *Gallos abscisos dicito et cinaedos*.

<sup>624</sup> Priests in Egypt, the country of provenance of the cult of Isis, did not wear wigs (Griffiths, 1970, 268). The wearing of wigs is also a sign of affectation. An apt comparison can be made with the statements of Polemon, politician, aristocrat and intellectual of the second century A.D., whose work on physiognomy has come down to us in later Arabic, Greek and Latin versions. The Latin version was done by Schmoelders and Hoffmann in the nineteenth century (49): *Scias tria simulationis capita esse. E quibus est crine non sponte nato vestiri et eius qui crevit tonsura et occultatio*. Polemon says the object of such external affectation (*aliam figuram*) is ease of access to certain groups, including the deluded pious: *qua principem adeat vel optimatum societatem quaerat vel devotorum et humilium et magnificorum speciem induat*. The last section of the sentence is particularly apt for the *cinaedi*, in spite of the fact that the extant versions postdate the novel. For the complex history of Polemon's text and its considerable place in the literary physiognomic tradition, see Swain (2007), 1-16, 125-201. For translations of the Arabic versions, see Hoyland (2007), 329-463 (the Leiden Polemon) and Ghersetti (2007), 465-486 (the Istanbul Polemon). The Latin text of Polemon is taken from Volume 1 of Förster (1994 reprint), 256-258.

with his bald pate surrounded by curling locks. The co-existence of elements that normally would cancel each other out will be revealed to be an aspect of the soul that is irrational, chaotic, and in the case of gender identity, ambivalent.

Philebus probably intended that his hair-style be interpreted by others as a mark of religious devotion; this is likely, in the light of what we are told about the hair-style of the other catamite devotees at the moment of their trance (8.27): *diuque capite demisso cervices lubricis intorquentes motibus crinesque pendulos in circulum rotantes*. The hanging hair of the catamite devotees contrasts strongly with the depiction of hanging tresses which are the result of natural beauty, such as those of Photis (2.9), and are an expression of ritually determined transvestism manipulated for a personal end. The ritual coiffure of the *cinaedi* will furthermore be contrasted with the hair of the Isiac devotees. From the moment of his first appearance, Philebus is drawn by Lucius in a bad light. So, by association, are Philebus' fellow devotees.

The auctioneer whose object it is to sell the ass is wearied by the priest's importunacy. Picking up on his effeminacy (perhaps, as implied by the scurrilous nature of the jest - *scurrilibus iocis* - even sceptical of Philebus' piety), he mocks Philebus by suggesting that he make a trial of the ass's docility by placing his head between the animal's thighs. Philebus reacts, Lucius tells us, with feigned indignation (*similis indignanti*), invoking the goddess by some of her names and fabricating a religious motive for his incessant questioning (8.25). However, this feigned religious sincerity is immediately counterposed with the priest's self-depiction as a mourning woman (*misera*), and his appropriation of feminine modes of ritual practice, including loosening the hair (8.25): *'An me putas, inepte, iumento fero posse deam committere, ut turbatum repente divinum deiciat simulacrum, egoque **misera** cogar **crinibus solutis discurrere** et deae meae humi iacenti aliquem medicum quaerere?'* Religious insincerity is at the start of this episode closely aligned with effeminacy and a reversal of preconceived gender associations. Philebus, whose hair marks him as a sexually ambivalent character as much as a priest, further inverts the roles between goddess and devotee by presenting the goddess as needing medical assistance; rather, it is the goddess who should bring healing, a point made explicitly by Lucius when he witnesses the *cinaedi*

torturing themselves during a feigned religious trance (8.27). From the moment of his first appearance, Philebus sets the tone of the role-reversal which will be associated with this rite.

Philebus purchases Lucius and takes him home to present him to his fellow devotees, all the while keeping up his feminine role (8.26): *'Puellae, servum vobis pulchellum en ecce mercata perduxī.'* However, the retention of the feminine gender in the participle (*mercata*) in a private setting serves to question whether or not the priests' lifestyle is really part of a role. When the priests arrive at the estate of the wealthy landowner, they begin their performance the moment they step onto his property: *ab ingressu primo statim*. This swiftness to embrace a performance appears, given the context, to be motivated by pecuniary greed (8.27): *Nec paucis pererratis casulis ad quondam villam possessoris beati perveniunt et ab ingressu primo statim absonis ululatibus constrepentes fanaticè provolant*; yet the same swiftness of action marks the revelation of Philebus' inherent sexual nature as ambivalent and perverse when he first brings Lucius home to be shared amongst all the men (8.26): *At ille susceptum noviciū famulum trahebat ad domum statimque illinc de primo limine proclamāt: 'puellae, servum nobis pulchellum en ecce mercata perduxī.'* The dissonant shrieking required of the rite (8.27: **absonis** *ululatibus constrepentes fanaticè provolant*) is merely a continuation into the public domain of the shrillness of their own effeminate voices (8.26): *exsultantes in gaudium fracta et rauca et effeminata voce clamores absonos intollunt*. The language of crossing the threshold (*de primo limine; ab ingressu primo*) is used with equal value of the public enactment of a performance motivated by greed as well as for the expression of personal nature in a private context. The very act of crossing the threshold (*limen*), be it of their private residence (8.26: *de primo limine*) or of the boundaries of another (8.27: *ab ingressu primo*), is reflective of the liminality of the priests' lifestyle as at once performative yet natural; that is, they are merely capitalising on their inherently effeminate nature for the purposes of passing for sincere and devout priests. Since their effeminacy occurs in both a public and a private setting, acting and nature are not totally distinct from each other in these men.

By Lucius' ensuing remarks we learn that the girls are in reality catamites, excited by the prospect of having a new boy around the house to service them

as a replacement for their previous sexual slave (8.26): *Sed illae puellae chorus erat cinaedorum, quae statim exsultantes in gaudium fracta et rauca et effeminata voce clamores absonos intollunt, rati scilicet vere quempiam hominem servulum ministerio suo parato*. Disappointed with the ass that Philebus has brought them, they answer him – using the masculine form – complaining that he has rather brought home a husband for himself (8.26): *Sed postquam non cervam pro virgine, sed asinum pro homine succedaneum videre, nare detorta magistrum suum varie cavillantur: non enim servum, sed maritum illum scilicet sibi perduxisse. Et ‘Heus’, aiunt ‘cave ne solus exedas tam bellum scilicet pullulum, sed nobis quoque tuis palumbulis nonnumquam impertias’*. Clearly, then, the terms of reference which the *cinaedi* use of themselves and each other would suggest that they refer to themselves and each other sometimes as women (perhaps when maintaining a role in public), sometimes men. This gender ambivalence which the *cinaedi* use as a role is echoed in all aspects of their appearance, both at the level of the body (physiognomy) and dress.

### **Costume: Make-Up, Colour and Fabric**

The next day, the priests vest themselves for a ritual procession made (nominally) in honour of the Dea Syria. This vesting however only serves to bear testimony to the falseness of the devotees (hence, by extension, the rite) a fact which is borne out by the detailed description given of their vestments and make-up neatly aligned within the context of Bacchic-styled (hence, non-Isiac) cult and ritual behaviour.<sup>625</sup> Colour and fabric mixing bordering on discord is predominant. Lucius seems to want to draw the reader’s attention to this aspect of the priests’ dress and overall appearance (8.27):<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> No amount of text is given in the *Onos* to the priests’ dress. Apuleius is therefore exaggerating to a certain end, in a highly descriptive manner, contemporaneous accounts of a rite and its priesthood already predisposed to effeminacy and/or gender ambiguity.

<sup>626</sup> Verbal echoes of the ‘disguise’ of Tlepolemus as Haemus resurface in this description of the priests’ vestments, thereby reinforcing a feminine aspect to their clothing and nature. However, the conjunction of social context and (the language of) clothing brings to the fore a different aspect of feminine behaviour in each situation: in Haemus’ case it is fear (*pavor*); in the priests’ it is a kind of exalted madness of the type exhibited by Maenads (*evantes, lymphaticum*).

Die sequenti variis coloribus indusiati et deformiter quisque formati, facie caenoso pigmento delita et oculis obunctis graphice prodeunt, mitellis et crocotis et carbasinis et bombycinis iniecti, quidam<sup>627</sup> tunicas albas, in modum lanciolarum quoquoversum fluente purpura depictas, cingulo subligati, pedes luteis induti calceis. Deamque serico contectam amiculo mihi gerendam imponunt, brachiisque suis umero tenus renudatis, attollentes immanes gladios ac secures, euvantes exsiliunt, incitante tibiae cantu lymphaticum tripudium.

The primary impression that Lucius strives to create by his description of these priests is that of attractiveness (*formati*) via deformation, that is, deviation - *deformiter* - as these men have deviated from their natural role as men in society. The prefix, *de-*, is especially potent. Used with a variant of *forma*, *de-* carries different connotations with it to *re-*, as in *reformatus*, variants of which occur all throughout the novel.<sup>628</sup>

The use of make-up as an aspect of this rite only serves to fuel Lucius' disgust,<sup>629</sup> and reinforces the reader's afterthought that this particularly orgiastic cult is based on error, in contrast to that of Isis, which prizes purity. Make-up was not uncommon on effeminate men in ancient times, although it was not socially accepted.<sup>630</sup> Recourse to the use of cosmetics and women's dress was considered the sign of an effeminate in antiquity. In this respect too the priests are using ritually sanctioned practices for personal gain. On their already effeminate nature, make-up does not serve as a ritual mask. This consideration can accrue deeper moral connotations if by the use of make-up

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<sup>627</sup> Perhaps the men marked out by the particularly colourful priestly dress – *quidam* – are the *archigalli*. See the *De Syria Dea* by Lucian for this and the excellent commentary on Lucian's text by Lightfoot (2003) 86-91.

<sup>628</sup> Indeed, *reformatus* as it appears in relation to other characters in the *Metamorphoses* would be both inappropriate and unnecessary were it appended to the *cinaedi*, as they present themselves in their true colours even when engaging in their ritual performance.

<sup>629</sup> GCA (1985) 236. See for other disparaging records of the *cinaedi* in antiquity in respect of make-up, Saint Augustine's account (possibly exaggerated) in the *De Civitate Dei*, 7.26.

<sup>630</sup> GCA (1985) 236. Make-up would also appear to have been associated with the *cinaedus* in the ancient literary imagination, if we can take Petronius as an authority. In his novel a *cinaedus* is also depicted having some sort of make-up on his face (*Satyricon*, 23-24): *perfluebant per frontem sudantis acaciae rivi, et inter rugas malarum tantum erat cretae, ut putares detectum parietem nimbo laborare.*

the *cinaedi* seek to attract other men, as the rape of the sturdy young farm-hand by the *cinaedi* suggests (8.29).<sup>631</sup>

The priests' deviation is further inscribed onto their dress through certain colours which smack of effeminacy, such as the yellow-spectrum (*crocotis; luteis*). But this is not the only effect of the colour spectrum; the multiplicity of colour on these men (*variis coloribus*) referring to the combination of yellow, purple and white, not to mention the make-up on the men's faces, creates the impression of ugliness and denaturalisation (*deformiter...formati*).<sup>632</sup> This is the first impression to confront the reader. But

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<sup>631</sup> See the later section on Physiognomy and Dissimulation.

<sup>632</sup> Krabbe (2003) 544, deals with the question of colour symbolism in the *Metamorphoses*, focussing on whether or not Apuleius follows in the novel a traditional and pre-set system of colour symbolism or establishes his own, and comes to the following conclusion: "Beyond the values associated with the restricted palette and the contrast between *colores austeri* and *colores floridi*, however, there is little compelling evidence of symbolic significance in specific colors. Individual colors, as Apuleius uses them, can be multivalent and do not seem to be freighted with symbolic significance. The *Metamorphoses* is not so much color-coded as color-coordinated (*concolor*)." She then goes on to give examples of this conclusion by pointing out that white and yellow figure in the description of Isis and of the *cinaedi*. One way of resolving the issue is to look at how Apuleius manipulates generic and canonical instantiations of colour in the earlier books of the *Metamorphoses* and how these undergo a radical change in Book 11, the transformative book of the novel. See my Chapter 8 for more on this. Additionally, Krabbe could have drawn on cautions made by Apuleius himself in his other writings against misreading appearances, to show how colour works in the novel. Even in his less strictly literary works, Apuleius manifests a concern with perception, especially the mistaking of one thing for something else by the appearance of shared elements. The *Florida* contains three specimens of this concern. At 4.3, the flutist Antigenidas asserts that points of similarity can lead the unenlightened to mistake one thing for its opposite. The discussion concerns practitioners of the flute and the use to which they put their skill. The speaker in the *Florida* refers to this shared semantic space as *nominum communionem*. At *Florida* 9.9, Apuleius' caution to beware of the *palliata mendicabula* whose dress can deceive the ignorant finds its religious expression in the *Metamorphoses*. Multi-coloured dress in particular, music and sexual ambivalence also occur at *Florida* 15, where Apuleius is concerned to insist upon the error of those who ascribe the statuette depicting the youthful figure of a cithara-player (*citharoedicus status*) in a multi-coloured tunic (*tunicam picturis variegatam deorsus ad pedes deiectus ipsos*) worn in the Greek manner (*Graecanico cingulo*), and a floating *chlamys* (*chlamyde velat utrumque brachium ad*

Lucius' vivid description further channels the priests' effeminacy into a religious concern, so the effeminate and the religious elements of the garments are conflated in the text in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that such conflation is a reflection of the rite, that is, a suggestion seems to be made between the lines that certain rites attract certain psychological types. Apuleius draws on pre-established social and literary phenomena to do this.

For example, the mitre (*mitra/mitella*) was already in use by the acolytes of orgiastic cults, and the priests of Cybele and the Dea Syria.<sup>633</sup> The diminutive form used here – *mitella* – aptly conveys the effeminacy of the priests, even though the diminutive value of the inflection had been mitigated over time.<sup>634</sup> *Indusiati*, a word which appears early on in the description and referring to an article of clothing worn by women indoors,<sup>635</sup> further underscores the effeminacy of the pseudo-priests, especially in conjunction with make-up.

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*usque articulos palmarum, cetera decoris striis dependent*) - that is, in an overtly colourful and sinuous mode -, to the philosopher Pythagoras. It is in fact Bathyllus.

<sup>633</sup>See Propertius' *Carmina* 4.7.62 and GCA (1985) 237 for further examples, along with Lightfoot (2003) *passim*. On the *mitra* and multi-coloured garments as female clothes characterising masculine behaviours that blur traditional gender boundaries, see Hopman (2003) 568.

<sup>634</sup>GCA (1985) 236-237. The *mitella* on this occasion also recalls the disguise of Tlepolemus when he went under the persona of Haemus. Tlepolemus is another character in the novel whose typological and personal ambivalence predestined – both literarily and psychologically – his downfall. The downfall of *cinaedi* will come about with their apprehension upon the revelation of their true nature to the ignorant populace.

<sup>635</sup>For the *indusium*, which is apparently an overtunic, see Varro, *De Vita Populi Romani*, fr.46.1, *De Lingua Latina*, 5.131 and Nonius 870L. It appears with reference to women's dress also in Plautus' *Epidicus*, 231. The adjective occurs twice more in the *Metamorphoses*, on both occasions to refer to boys or men who are dressed splendidly, referring first to the serving boys who wait at table at Byrrhaena's feast (2.19) and then the young man costumed as Paris, in the pantomime (10.30). Given the insistence on Paris as an Asian, a Phrygian shepherd (*Phrygii pastoris*) decked out in foreign clothes (*barbaricis*), it seems likely that Apuleius wishes to conflate the dual aspect of these pseudo-priests as both effeminate and foreign, in view of the provenance of the rite.

The *crocata* which is a saffron-coloured garment also has a precedent in the previous literary canon where it appears in Cicero's *De Haruspiciis* with regard to the feminine dress with which Clodius disguised himself so as to participate in the mysteries of the fertility goddess Bona Dea, a deity to whom the Dea Syria was often assimilated. Many of the same items of dress occur also in Cicero's depiction of the cross-dressed Clodius, including the combination of yellow with purple, a fact which further underscores the dress of the *cinaedi* as (outwardly) a religious garment, but also conveying an aura of negativity, perhaps by reason of the oriental origin of the rite of the Bona Dea (*De Haruspiciis*, 44): *Publius Clodius a crocata a mitra, a muliebribus soleis purpureisque fasceolis...est factus repente popularis*. Saffron was considered to be a feminine colour, worn by women and effeminate men. These priests not only wear saffron-coloured garments (*crocotis*) but even yellow shoes (*luteis..calceis*). The GCA commentators, quite aptly, take the *calcei* worn by the *cinaedi* as the indoor-shoes worn by women by assimilation to the context of Haemus' choice of shoes in his disguise as a donkey-driver (7.8, *asinaria*): *calceis femininis albis*,<sup>636</sup> a fact which further reinforces the priests' effeminacy.

The portrayal of the priests' costume resembles in several respects other literary expressions of priestly dress.<sup>637</sup> The wearing of tunics by cult priests has a religious source and significance, being the regular dress of an initiate or acolyte.<sup>638</sup> However, the tunic, or whatever garment functioned as such and

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<sup>636</sup> GCA (1985) 238. Cf. also GCA (1981) 133 with regard to the shoes worn by Haemus (the *calceoli*, the virtue of diminutiveness being expressed through Haemus' description of them: *calceis femininis albis illis et tenuibus*). The commentators align these *calcei* with the *calcei Sicyonii* mentioned by Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.231: *si mihi calceos Sicyonios attulisses, non uterer, quamvis essent habiles et apti ad pedem, quia non essent viriles*. Such explicitness with regard to the shoes' gender propriety is absent in this passage but the same conclusion can be drawn by context (even though *calcei* were not only women's indoor shoes; see Goldman, 2001, 101-129).

<sup>637</sup> See the head-gear on the *gallus* and his demand for female clothing in Juvenal, 6.511-522. See also Lucian's *De Syria Dea*, 42, on the *pilleos* which is like the *mitella* worn by the *cinaedi*, and the priestly robes, and the *Aeneid* 4.215-217 and 11. 768, 775-777 and Varro's *Saturae Menippeae*, 133: *stolam calceosque muliebris propter positos capio* and 136: *partim venusta muliebri ornati stola* (Cèbe, 1977, 531-532).

<sup>638</sup> On this, see Lightfoot's commentary on the *De Syria Dea* of Lucian (2003) 42 and Mills (1984).

was so termed in the Roman consciousness, is also the sign of the luxurious Easterner, especially when it is long and offset by an elaborate colour scheme. The very foreignness of the rite, a foreignness inscribed on its ritual vestments, may also account for any undertones of censure.<sup>639</sup> The whiteness of these tunics - white being a colour which in religious contexts in the novel often suggests purity - is over-scored with a rampant decorative pattern in purple, purple being a priestly colour.<sup>640</sup> However, the purity and dignity suggested by the whiteness of the tunics and the purple decorative motif are cancelled out on the vestments of the *cinaedi* by the connotations of effeminacy and hedonism.<sup>641</sup> The religious and the effeminate are conflated. The use of colour on the dress sounds therefore both a semiotic and a cautionary note, serving to show how the truth can be easily polluted when it is put to serve error.

In antiquity, fabrics too were often distinguished by their semiotic value, and certain fabrics were reserved for set purposes, especially in religious dress. The insincerity of the honour which the priests bring to their goddess is marked in the scene where they cover the goddess's image with a silk garment,

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<sup>639</sup> Compare, for example, the distinction made in Lucan's *De Bello Civili* between war-like men from the North and unwarlike men from the East. Dress is a sign of what distinguishes them from each other (8.363-368): *Omnis in Arctois populus quicumque privinis/Nascitur, indomitus bellis et mortis amator:/Quidquid ad Eoos tractus mundique teporem/Ibitur, emollit gentes clementia caeli./Illic et laxas vestes et fluxa virorum/Velamenta vides.*

Another example can be drawn from the dress of Chloreus, the Cretan archer and priest of Cybele in the *Aeneid*. Chloreus' priestly dress recalls the vestment worn by the *cinaedi* during their ecstatic rite in several respects (although the *cinaedi* do not wear trousers) (11.768; 775-777): *Forte sacer Cybelo Chloreus olimque sacerdos/...tum croceam chlamydemque sinusque crepantis/carbaseos fuluo in nodum collegerat auro/pictus acu tunicas et barbara tegmina crurum.* Cf. also Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas is compared to the Phrygian adulterer, Paris. Dress is an essential part of this metaphor (4.215-217): *et nunc ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu/Maenonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem/subnexus, raptu potitur.* Whilst the *cinaedi* are not adulterers, their lust has emasculated them. Lucius also speaks of the *cinaedi* as "half-men" (8.28: *semiviris*).

<sup>640</sup> Lightfoot (2003) 486 with references; see especially Ovid's *Fasti* (339-340): *illic purpura canus cum veste sacerdos/Almonis dominam sacraque lavit aquis,* and Varro's *Saturae Menippeae*, 212 (Cèbe, 1977).

<sup>641</sup> See, for these connotations behind purple and yellow, Cèbe (1977) on Varro's *Saturae Menippeae*, 319.

while they indulge in their frenzied ritual. Lucius uses a striking example of hyperbaton to underscore the separation of elements of worship which would normally be conjoined, were the devotional practices predicated upon a sincere devotion (8.27): *Deamque serico contectam amiculo*. The fact that the goddess's image was wrapped in silk, a gesture which should serve to show the priests' respect for the goddess, seems to jar with the degree of devotion with which this act was performed. In terms of the priests' ritual dress, the polysyndeton (*mitellis et crocotis et carbasinis et bombycinis*) enhances the effect of mish-mash (of both colour and fabric) and overload, despite the sentence's balanced construction. If the connective between *carbasinis* and *bombycinis* links these two terms as signifying a single garment made of two fabrics, that is, a vestment of both linen and silk, this combination does not reflect order; yet the text does not make this clear (perhaps intentionally), using polysyndeton to enhance the effect of motley even at the level of fabric.<sup>642</sup> The kind of linen which appears in the dress of the *cinaedi* is not necessarily that which signifies purity,<sup>643</sup> being a cloth of linen-cotton mixture.<sup>644</sup> Unlike plain linen, the *carbassus lina*, a fibre combination which resulted in a more pliant material than pure linen yet which could also have a smooth and semi-lustrous surface when pressed,<sup>645</sup> was easy to dye, which explains its use in the fabrication of theatre awnings and curtains.<sup>646</sup> The spectator may, however, have seen this simply as linen, with the concomitant associations of purity. The purity in this case would point to the mere semblance of purity which is assumed by the priests, while the silk, which would be an appropriate material with which to reverence a deity were this reverence predicated upon sincerity, becomes an embodiment of the

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<sup>642</sup> On the difficulty of how to read the fabric combination in the sentence, see the GCA (1985) 237. A further possibility is that we are dealing with an example of silk-linen cloth, a luxury product from Egypt (Sebesta, 2001, 71).

<sup>643</sup> On linen as representative of purity, see my next section. The combination of appropriate and inappropriate materials seems to hint at a notion that the rite of the Dea Syria may contain some elements of the truth. On this, see my next section. On the importation and fabrication of linen in ancient Rome (especially during the Republic), see Sebesta (2001) 67.

<sup>644</sup> Sebesta (2001) 68.

<sup>645</sup> Sebesta (2001) 68.

<sup>646</sup> Sebesta (2001) 68 with references: Nonius M548 and Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 4. 75-77.

hedonism that exists within them.<sup>647</sup> Whilst such artificially constructed fabric mixtures might be deemed appropriate on a kingly figure, or a person of elite status, naturalness and plainness of fabric would appear to be the ideal for purposes of devotion and ritual.<sup>648</sup> Nor does the coupling of this cotton-linen mixture with silk indicate a balanced mind. Hybridity of fabric and combination of colour can in context translate readily into a psychological state of ambivalence and chaos. A further possibility is that some *cinaedi* are wearing vestments of one fabric and some of others, the tunics being reserved perhaps for the equivalent of the *archigalli*. The overall visual effect is one of a swirling palette of colour and texture in contrast with the monochromatic, controlled and stately procession of the Isiac initiates.

The presence of the girdle belted high up (*cingulo subligati*) reinforces the reading of the tunic as an aspect of (Eastern) religious dress. In the Roman sartorial consciousness, it was the free-flowing tunic which smacked of effeminacy.<sup>649</sup> The girdle on the priests is worn high up, as suggested by the prefix *sub-*, a fact which reinforces the dress as religious.<sup>650</sup> Notwithstanding this fact, the priests misuse religious vestments for their own gratification.

Scholars have debated the correct interpretation of *depictas* which could mean ‘painted’ ‘decorated’ or ‘embroidered’. The application of paint can be

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<sup>647</sup> Compare the appearance of silk in this context with another scene in which silk occurs on a goddess: the pantomime in Book 10, where silk is associated with the earthly, sensual Venus (10.30): *nisi quod tenui pallio bombycino inumbrabat spectabilem pubem*.

<sup>648</sup> See the explanation for the use of linen in the Isiac rite in the next chapter, and Chapter 3.

<sup>649</sup> For merely one specimen of literary confirmation of this, see Seneca’s *Epistle* 114, 4-6 in which Maecenas’ effeminacy is directly written onto his sartorial style. On the use of the adjective *discinctus*, “loose-belted”, as a synonym for effeminate in Latin literature, see Richlin (1993) 531 and 542.

<sup>650</sup> Cf. Lucan, *De Bello Civili*, 1.596 and 612. However, the colourfully dressed *cinaedus* in the *Satyricon* is also high-girt for sexual activity (in a manner which recalls the rape of the sturdy young farm hand in the *Metamorphoses*, 8.29) (21): *cinaedus supervenit myrtea subornatus gausapa cinguloque succinctus*. Quartilla, “priestess” of Priapus, decides to join in by hitching up her dress (*Satyricon*, 21: *alteque succincta*). For a more erotic reading of the high-girt tunic in the *Metamorphoses*, compare Lucius’ description of Photis at 2.7: *Ipsa linea tunica mundule amicta et russea fasceola praenitente altiuscule sub ipsas papillas succinctula*. Apuleius could be conflating two different associations behind the image of girding for especial effect.

reasonably ruled out on the grounds that this method of decoration was not much used in antiquity.<sup>651</sup> The question of the method of decoration is important, as the subsequent effects of whichever method was used in the construction of the garment and its decorative details can have semiotic value. For example, the priests' dress itself is not overtly depicted as flowing, which leads to the supposition that, true to Roman style, the pattern has been sewn or embroidered on, which makes the dress fall heavy and stiff. However, the dress must not impede the priests' movement too much, or they would not be able to perform their ritual of self-laceration (although there is no suggestion in the text, even implicit, that the priests were thrashing around; vigorous motion must be induced by comparison with the behaviour of Maenads, to whom they are compared by Lucius at 8.27- 28). If the dress is of Greek fabrication it seems likely that the pattern has been woven into the fabric, which would make the dress fall more softly, making it easier to wear. It is interesting that the only aspect of the priests' dress which is indicated as 'flowing' (or rather, 'running', 'darting') is the decoration itself, which consists of purple darts which resemble the points of lances. For the Roman consciousness, the purple pattern flowing in all directions (*quoquoversum fluente purpura*) contrasts strongly with the static purple border of the senatorial toga, which is evoked by the substantival use of the adjective (*purpura*) without necessarily inviting comparison with senatorial dress (as purple was also a priestly and kingly colour); rather, it can be suggested that such static-versus-fluid paradigms may have arisen unconsciously in the mind of the reader aware of texture- and colour-based connotations. On the likely assumption that the overall effect of the dress is that it is fluid (if not diaphanous), then it has connotations of hedonism and effeminacy. Even the dress of the *cinaedi* is as errant as their lifestyle and nature, in contrast with the uniformity of Isiac dress and rites.

### **Ritual, Gender and Truth**

Lucius' reaction makes it clear to the reader that he believes that any rite which requires a man to falsify his appearance (by implication, his sex) into that of a woman, must be predicated upon false values, if not a false god. The onlookers, on the other hand, may have rationalised the priests' dress and

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<sup>651</sup> GCA (1985) 238 with references.

over-all appearance as mere deference to the cross-dressing prescribed by the rite, or have excused its seeming effeminacy on the grounds of its Eastern origin, or may not have given any thought to the matter. Lucius, on the other hand, already suspects a degree of insincerity in the priests' vested ritual. He uses his privileged position as enlightened spectator, in contrast to the unquestioning populace, to reiterate the part of deceit in the priests' performance (8.27, 28):

Inter haec unus ex illis bacchatur effusius ac de imis praecordiis anhelitus crebros referens, velut numinis divino spiritu repletus, simulabat sauciam vecordiam, prorsus quasi deum praesentia soleant homines non sui fieri meliores, sed debiles effici vel aegroti. Specta denique quale caelesti providentia meritum reportaverit. Infit vaticinatione clamosa conficto mendacio semet ipsum incessere atque criminari, quasi contra fas sanctae religionis dissignasset aliquid, et insuper iustas poenas noxii facinoris ipse de suis manibus exposcere.

The scoffing and indignant tone of Lucius, marked by words he uses to underscore the insincerity of the religious ritual *qua* religious ritual (*velut, simulabat, prorsus quasi, conficto mendacio*), cannot but stamp the priests' behaviour as undesirable and dissembling. Behind this, the reader can detect, on Lucius' part, the very questioning of such rites as would require self-mutilation.

The conjunction of the imperative (*specta*) with a categorising adjective (*quale*) in this section echoes the use of these same descriptive elements in the opening section of this episode, where Lucius gives a description of Philebus, reinforcing the link between appearance and character. They also focus the reader's attention on the priests' religious performance, framing and reinforcing it as a performance before an audience. Yet is it merely a performance, predicated on fraud and dissembling? Ironically, Lucius' sour rendition of the spectacle leads us to believe that the credulous bystander perceives the priests' Bacchic-styled frenzy to be real, that is, inspired by the divinity (8.27: *velut numinis divino spiritu repletus*). Lucius, as he is recounting the tale after the event, seems concerned to pin these men down as types, yet types that are determined by their own deviant nature. The proximity of such role-playing to the dressing-scene seems to restrict the priests' vestments to

their apparent role as costumes, but where vestments are redolent of the truth of the rite which they visually embody (that is, the rite's role in bringing men closer to god), this leads us to question the validity of that same rite. Lucius' ensuing remark that such practices cause illness and not spiritual wholeness (*homines non sui fieri meliores, sed debiles effici vel aegroti*), which can also be taken as an aside on the credulity of the spectator, reinforces his alignment of such practices with false worship.

### Ritual and Perception

This highlights the role of perception in ritual performance. An important aspect of the bond between sincerity and religious ritual (and rite) is brought to the fore by Lucius' own perspective on the priests' performance. To an unenlightened onlooker, divine inspiration can be the only plausible motive for self-mutilation, as ritual necessity is the only socially sanctioned motive for cross-dressing within the constraints of religion. Lucius discredits this motive. By implication it can be deduced that the deity driving it must be undesirable. By Lucius' own admission, it is in the nature of such "eunuchs" or "half-men" (*semiviris*) to perform such acts on themselves (8.28): *Arrepto denique flagro quod semiviris illis proprium gestamen est.*<sup>652</sup> The very blood of such men is effeminate (8.28: *spurcitia sanguinis effeminati madescere*),<sup>653</sup> proving that their nature is, in Lucius' eyes, inherently perverse, or, at the very least, unbalanced. Blood also appears in certain works on physiognomy as an

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<sup>652</sup> On *semiviri* and the instruments which appear in this ritual, see also Varro, *Saturae Menippeae* 140 (Cèbe, 1977); Seneca, *Epistles*, 108.7; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 17.20; Martial, *Epigrammata*, 3.91, 9.20; Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.511-516. Juvenal associates the *semiviri* with Bellona (invoked by Philebus, 8.25), as well as the *mater Idaea*, who is Cybele, to whom the *semiviri* of Martial are associated. They were both similar the *dea Syria* but were not merged into her worship (GCA, 1985, 293). The term *semivir* also occurs in Apuleius' *DM*, 17.28. See Cèbe (1977, 4. 649) for references to the *semivir* where the term refers to a man who is effeminate or merely of loose morals. In the *Metamorphoses*, its occurrence appears to be etymologising, as Lucius appears to retain the value of the prefix (*semi-*) for the purposes of making a secondary point concerning the deviating and perverting effects of religious error.

<sup>653</sup> Cf. pseudo-Lucian, *Onos*, 37: *μαλακοῦ αἵματος*.

essential part of inherent nature;<sup>654</sup> yet Lucius' marking of the priests' behaviour as emanating from their perverse nature rather than ritual protocol is inherent in the text itself and awakens any philosophic or physiognomic consciousness the reader may have. Lucius appears to desire to draw the reader's attention to the indisputable fact of the priests' blood as proof that the behaviour of the *cinaedi* is an expression of the innate nature of the men and not the result of any daemonic or divine influence exerted on them from without.

Lucius also seems to hint, by his choice of a verb with sexual connotations (*satiare*)<sup>655</sup> at the possibility that sexual gratification is as much at stake for the priests as their financial gain (8.28): *Sed ubi tandem fatigati vel certe suo laniatu satiati pausam carnificinae dedere*. Lucius invites us to believe that the crowd interprets the priests' performance as a sincere expression of piety and inspiration. Lucius does not say explicitly that the spectators are moved by any awareness of religiosity on the part of the priests; indeed, their gift-giving can be seen to be motivated rather by a sense of enjoyment of the spectacle (8.28). However, the type of gifts given to the priests, as well as telling us much about the subsistence level of the people, leads us to believe that the spectators assume that the priests live a simple life and that they are sincere in their practice of their devotion. More pointedly, by the reaction of the people to the subsequent revelation of the priests' impurity, we can be certain that the people also expected the priests to be chaste (8.29-30). Once

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<sup>654</sup> Loxus' opinion, reported in *Anonymus Latinus*, is that blood is the seat of the soul (2: *animae habitaculum*) and its importance is such that its "temperament" determines the character (*ingenium*) of the soul, hence of the body (12): *unde medium temperamentum corporis perfectum animum indicat, is autem perfectus est animus, qui pari virtute est atque sapientia, et ita fit, ut omne ingenium ex modo et temperamento sanguinis originem sumat*. To this last remark, compare Apuleius' definition of the good daemon in the *DDS* (15.9): *daemon bonus id est animus uirtute perfectus est*. In the *DDS*, Apuleius, in several places, assimilates the daemon with the individual soul. See Chapter 3, Portogalli (1963) 235-236 and Sandy (1997), 205-207, for more on this. This information must be retained for understanding the priests' frenzy as arising from their soul and not just religious insincerity for lucrative purposes.

<sup>655</sup> For *satio* in the sense of gratifying passions or desires as well as of satiating or wearying, see the *OLD* (1982) 1693.

again, Apuleius appears to expect the reader to garner information about characters from various points in the narrative.

From Lucius' point of view, the spectacle is mere pretence. His opinion is clarified by his use of certain terms, such as *velut, prorsus quasi*, and the verb *simulare* to describe the spectacle before him.<sup>656</sup> Of course, he is correct in thinking this, where his opinion is a reaction to the likelihood of true and sincere inspiration by a healing deity. Moreover, if we can consider the priest truly filled with the divine spirit of the godhead (*numinis divino spiritu repletus*), we must consider the nature of the deity which would fill his or her devotee with such a frenzied madness. Such a deity does not bring wholeness with him/her (*sauciam vecordiam*). Lucius, whilst merely intending to be disparaging, comes close to the truth when he speaks of the performance as of a Bacchic revel (*unus ex illis bacchatur effusius*). Lucius' reference to the priests' behaviour as "Bacchic" need not lead to the assumption that the priests are at that moment driven by an external deity reacting on them, as the ritual behaviour of such priests was commonly described in terms of Bacchic frenzy.<sup>657</sup> By his constant affirmations of disgust and his numerous asides Lucius appears to perceive a constant factor underpinning the frenzied state of these men, their ritual dress and practice, and their behaviour in private: their inherent nature. The source of this frenzied inspiration then, instead of arising from the mediation of a deity, is their own soul or spirit located within the *cinaedi* but externalised by the effects of the ritual music, the ritual counterpart to the incantation in the metamorphosis ritual which caused

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<sup>656</sup> The GCA commentary (1985) 243 compares Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, 3.9 .118 on the frenzy of the worshippers of Sabazius and Cybele caused by the music of their rite, and Florus' *Epitome*, 2.7. In Philebus' invective against the auctioneer (8.25), Sabazius and Cybele are assimilated to the Dea Syria. I believe that the passage from Iamblichus does not adequately convey the psychological complexity driving the priests' frenzy, as Iamblichus attributes the inspiration to human imitative skill, rather than to divine intervention. For the comparison with Florus, see also Graverini (2007, 214; however, Eunus, unlike the pseudo-priests of Apuleius' text, is not a *cinaedus*).

<sup>657</sup> Cf. Nonius, p.119, 1.1: *Gallare ut est bacchare*. Varro *Eumenidibus*: "*cum...studio*" in Cèbe (1977, 4:531) with regard to the *galli* in the service of Cybele (see especially fragments 132-143). Of course, the *cinaedi* are merely pretending to be *galli*.

Pamphile's transformation.<sup>658</sup> It allows them to capitalise on aspects of this particular rite so as to mask their true nature, thereby allowing any manifestation of their irrational and excitable nature to pass for religious inspiration. They are wearing their own nature as a disguise, overlooking the possibility of the very transparency of the disguise to one who has gradually learned how to look beyond outer appearances, in this case, the ass, Lucius. Lucius' interstitial position between the incredulous spectator and the insincere *cinaedus* posing as a *gallus* in the service of the Dea Syria, hones Lucius' perceptual powers.

### Physiognomy and Dissimulation

As the enlightened audience of the priests' dissimulation, Lucius on this occasion is allowing his knowledge to guide the reader's judgement of the priests towards a certain colouring and conclusion. His critical judgments of the priests' behaviour therefore serve a distinctly moralising purpose, a purpose which is obvious in Lucius' focus on specific elements in the priests' appearance, including their very physiognomy. This fact is of importance, as it suggests that Apuleius wished the costume, and overall appearance of the mock priests, to be readily recognisable in the reader's mind. Although the *cinaedus* was often the sport of the satirist,<sup>659</sup> the depiction of the *cinaedi* who are posing as priests of the Dea Syria coincides in many respects with the portrait of the *cinaedus* in the ancient physiognomic traditions. The loose and sinuous movements of the priests especially recall the cautionary passages

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<sup>658</sup> Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Orationes*, 37.7: "Hearing is the swift one among the senses ... So it is that unmusical and discordant souls, which surrender to any appearance of pleasure, could never come to participate in the right melodies, and instead give the name 'music' to their own pleasure." One of the Greek words for frenzy is *enthousiasmos*, which is composed of two words ("en", "theos") meaning "having a god within" (Boisacq, 1950, 254). For this scene in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, 3.7: "and the *enthousiasmos* is no longer true, nor authentically divine" (translation mine, based on the edition of Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum* of des Places, 1966, 107). I consider the "god" that drives these *cinaedi* into frenzy to be nothing less than their own nature, in accordance with Apuleius' own system of demonology, on which, see Portogalli (1963), 235-236 and Sandy (1997), 205-207. See also Chapter 3.

<sup>659</sup> As deviants: Catullus, 10.24, 57.1, 10; Juvenal, 2.10, 6.Ox3, 14,30; Martial, 6.16, 6.50,7.34, 7.58, 12.16; As *galli*: Catullus, 63; Juvenal, 2.110-113; 6.511-516; Martial, 3.91, 9.2.

found in physiognomic treatises which deal with dissimulating types, amongst which the effeminate man can be classed. It is not necessary that the *cinaedi* match the physiognomic portrait in every respect for them to be received by the reader as a recurrent type in the physiognomic canon. Apuleius manipulates this topos in his own way; indeed, his *cinaedi* are characters who are performative by nature, that is, as sexually ambivalent men who exploit this very ambivalence in the manner of a role to achieve their own ends. The characterisation Apuleius gives to his effeminate mock priests both accords with and departs from the physiognomic tradition.

The *Anonymi de Physiognomia Liber Latinus*, also known as *Anonymus Latinus*, a physiognomic treatise once held to have been written by Apuleius on the grounds of similarity of style,<sup>660</sup> provides compelling support for the argument that the priests' ritual, which takes place the following day, is merely an expression of their nature projected onto ritual.<sup>661</sup> In section 74 of the treatise the author discusses bodily gesture and movement (*motus corporis*) as arising from two distinct sources: nature (*naturalis*) and affectation (*affectatus*). Of the schooled kind (*affectati*) there are three types (*tres sunt species*). The *cinaedi* can be seen to have a share in the last two of these types: the second type is the man who seeks to take the woman's part in order to attract men to him; the *cinaedus* who attempts to hide his true nature occupies the third category.<sup>662</sup> This dual categorisation recurs in many of the ancient

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<sup>660</sup>On this idea, now defunct, see Repath (2007a) 549-550. It is true that certain words appear in both the physiognomic text (*subitus et gaudium improvisum*) and in the *Metamorphoses* (*exsultantes in gaudium*), but such similarities can be equally ascribed to the shared pool of ideas and words occurring in physiognomic contexts. I am retaining the title of the work as it is in the book edited by Swain (2007).

<sup>661</sup>Heine's explanation for the priests' behaviour at this point, is that of a type of "mask" which they can put off and on at will and which temporarily changes the priests' nature, to the degree that play-acting and reality merge temporarily: "befremdlich sich verselbständigende Maske" (1962) 309. I find this unlikely. I believe that there is no temporary performance involved; rather, that the priests are using their own nature as lust-driven men with no limits to what they will do to capitalise on the credulity of the unenlightened bystander for the sake of satiating their lust.

<sup>662</sup>*Anonymus Latinus*, 74: *sed et qui in pueros dementes sunt aut mulierum loco se ipsos constituunt, quo viros in se provocare possint, affectatum atque elaboratum corporis motum habent*. The sinuosity of the ritually prescribed motions can be classed amongst this, even if

physiognomies.<sup>663</sup> The rape of the young farm-hand brought home after one of their religious rounds, leans towards a reading of the *cinaedi* as occupying both types (8.29):

Probeque disposita cenula balneas obeunt, ac dehinc lauti quendam fortissimum rusticanum, industria laterum atque imis ventris bene praeparatum, comitem cenae secum adducunt. Paucisque admodum praegustatis holusculis ante ipsam mensam, spurcissima illa propudia ad illicitae libidinis extrema flagitia infandis uriginibus efferantur, passimque circumfusi nudatum supinatumque iuvenem exsecrandis oribus flagitabant.

The priests' rape of this young man further recalls the kind of affectation of piety by effeminate men, including *cinaedi*, whom Polemon<sup>664</sup> discusses in his

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it is merely an extension of their nature. (*ibid*): *Tertia species est eorum qui cinaedi quidem certa fide sunt, verum suspicionem a se remove conantes virilem sumere speciem sibimet laborant. Nam et incessum pedum iuvenilem imitantur et semet ipsos rigore quodam confirmant et oculos et vocem intendunt atque omne corpus erigunt, sed facile deteguntur vincente se ac nudante natura. Nam et collum et vocem plerumque submittunt et pedes manusque relaxant aliisque temporariis indiciis facile produntur. Nam et timor subitus et gaudium improvisum ab imitatione eos procurata excutit atque ad suum ingenium revocat.* Of particular note is the language which depicts the behaviour as naturally determined, as opposed to schooled. Nature comes to the fore when the deceit is dropped: *deteguntur vincente se ac nudante natura; ad suum ingenium revocat.* *Natura* and *ingenium* are key words. Cf. *Metamorphoses*, 8.26: *quae statim exsultantes in gaudium* of the catamites in a private setting.

<sup>663</sup> Other physiognomic treatises from antiquity have the same terms of reference and caution: imitation of women to attract men, and those who are sexually ambivalent by nature who seek to conceal their effeminacy, which concealment can always be undone when the men are taken by surprise. One of the main objectives of the equivalent passage from the Leiden Polemon in Arabic (Hoyland, B38=TK 3207, fo. 70a8-b15; TK 3245, fos.62b4-63b4) on which the Latin translation is based, is to make the student of physiognomy understand that one of the forms of affectation is the adoption of poses and attitudes. These however are often undone when the dissimulating character reacts to an event which takes him by surprise. The physiognomy of Adamantius the Sophist takes up the same caution with regard to affectation (B38).

<sup>664</sup> Polemon, 49: *Sunt alia horum signorum non ad formae simulationem pertinentia sed quae in ornatu et pulcro vestitu fingantur quibus homines aliorum hominum et mulierum gratia se exornant, ut eis ea re placeant. Alii eorum ea re pueros quaerunt; alii quorum cupiditas cupiditas feminarum est, ut cinaedi, mulierum scortantium instar ad viros (capiendos) comendi artificiis utuntur.*

treatise, as it is not extreme to suggest that the priests may have used pretence of piety to appeal to the young man to get him home.

As well as reinforcing the importance of the theme of the ultimate inefficacy of disguise for the enlightened spectator in the novel, the physiognomic texts' relevance for the passage from the *Metamorphoses* is rendered ironic by the fact that, unlike the *cinaedi* spoken of by *Anonymus Latinus*, the *cinaedi* in the *Metamorphoses* are *not* attempting to hide their true nature. As a consequence of this, there are no betraying signs that could give the game away. Through Lucius, the reader can see how the *cinaedi*, posing as priests, are merely manipulating their true nature in a socially and ritually sanctioned way, deflecting it onto a type of behaviour which passes as ritual praxis. The softness of the body spoken of in the physiognomic text and which is an indication of the true nature of the *cinaedus* (*submittunt...relaxant*) matches the priests' flowing ritual dress and sinuous movements.<sup>665</sup> The function of dress in this instance recalls the notion of the body as the soul's garment. As well as enabling the enlightened spectator to apprehend the manipulation of the natural body for purposes of dissimulation, the physiognomic tradition is instrumental in revealing the inalienable rights and irreversible strength of nature. This scene of the novel does the work of the physiognomic canon.

### **The *Cinaedi* as Figures of Irrationality and Disorder**

The divergent perception which promotes the acid tone of Lucius vis-à-vis the mock-priests arises from authorial perspective. Behind the undeniably recognisable tone of the narrator's contempt, is a deeper insight into the causes of the confusion of disordered motley with ritual garb, a vision accessible to the knowledgeable reader, who would most likely have been

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<sup>665</sup> *Anonymus Latinus*, further on, reaffirms the association of *cinaedi* with certain physiognomic habits, especially the broken voice, and inserts the type firmly within a sartorial paradigm of effeminate behaviour by stressing how they wear their tunic (115): *Cinaedi autem, quos Graeci quidem κιναιδους dicunt, ita sunt: inclinatio ad latus capite...qui vocem tanquam perfractam habent...qui movent corpus ut mulieres, qui brachia perversa habent et qui tunicam circa lumbos tendunt, qui cum rident clamant.* (I follow Repath's retention of the word *cinaedi* at the beginning of the passage.)

aware of the negative connotations of the rite and its associated vestments.<sup>666</sup> Were this not the case, however, Lucius' very disparagement of the priests and their public humiliation which earns their loss of favour with the erstwhile credulous populace, would still leave the reader with an unmistakably sour taste in his mouth vis-à-vis these characters. Given Lucius' expression of incredulity of the likelihood of divine inspiration behind such displays of self-mutilation and that he believes the very blood of these men to be effeminate, we must assume that he believes their effeminacy to be an essential aspect of their innate character. Following this logic, their innate character must therefore be irrational.<sup>667</sup> The chaotic dress they don for (mock) ritual purposes is merely an expression of the chaos that exists within them. Such men will naturally be attracted to such a barbaric rite.<sup>668</sup>

Apuleius is only one of a long line of writers who associate innate nature with clothing. The extent of the description of these men in their ritual garments dissociates the episode from mere extensions of a figure of satire (more specifically satirical specimens of *semiviri* in the service of goddesses

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<sup>666</sup> For this likelihood in other than a satiric context, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus who postulates a rigid Greek-Roman dichotomy with regard to the dress of these rites. In his reading of Roman history in the early Augustan period, the "spangled robe" is deemed un-Roman: "But it is contrary to the law and the senate's decree that any native Roman should process in a spangled robe begging alms to the music of the pipes, or celebrate the goddess's orgies in the Phrygian manner" (2.19.3-5). On Apuleius as an inherently "Roman" writer, see Harrison (2000) 2. The translation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus is that of Cary in the Loeb edition (1968).

<sup>667</sup> On the role of the irrational in the scene of the transformation of the *cinaedi* into frenzy-driven madmen, see Moreschini (1993), 111. Although he correctly reads the episode as an aspect of irrationality in the *Metamorphoses*, Moreschini seems to be unaware that the irrational exists in the literary canon preceding Lucius' time as a sartorial figure. Plato's *Alcibiades* and *Ion* and Dio Chrysostom's fourth Kingship oration all contain proof of the figure's status which is already established by Apuleius' time.

<sup>668</sup> Furthermore, reference to the stolen chalice only a few sections on in the narrative serves to challenge, retrospectively, any imprint of sincerity in the priests, as the disclosure of this fact may lead the reader to question the means of acquisition of the vestments, a fact which reduces further any notion of sincere devotion in these men towards their goddess.

whose devotion has an orgiastic bent to it), and of mime.<sup>669</sup> The authorial perspective brings other models to bear on the representation of the *cinaedi*. With regard to the priests' vestments alone as reflective of the spirit of these men, Apuleius appears to have drawn on and conflated several models. One of these is the bipartite colour scheme, the white tunics scored with a running purple pattern, which is worn by some of the priests (*quidam*) possibly the *archigalli*, redolent of their internal disorder and which anticipates the rampant madness of the Mediaeval fool.<sup>670</sup> In addition to this, he has added the highly connotative yellow colour to reinforce their effeminacy. The combination of these results in motley: *variis coloribus*. This too must be opposed to the use of single colours on semiotic grounds.<sup>671</sup> The motley of the *cinaedi* is merely reflective of their mental instability as little more than bacchants and effeminates. In this function it shares the negative metaphorical aspects of its Greek precedent, the *poikilia*.<sup>672</sup> Reinforcement of this reading of their dress is provided by Lucius' own statement at the beginning of the novel when he objected to the incredulity of the anonymous interlocutor. Lucius claims to have seen in front of the Stoa Poikile of Athens, a beautiful and effeminate young boy slide up the shaft of a sword inserted into the bowels of

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<sup>669</sup> The most obvious satiric depictions of the *cinaedi* occur in Juvenal (2.110-113) and Martial (3.81; 9.2). On the *cinaedi* as objects of satire, see Kirichenko (2010) 129. On the *cinaedi* in ancient mime, see GCA (1985), 214 Panayotakis (1995) 45ff and Kirichenko (2010) 18.

<sup>670</sup> Gifford (1974) 337: "the lack of symmetry which goes with the lack of reason." Gifford's fascinating article traces the development of the image of the fool from its ancient metaphorical extraction (including the "trickster tradition with especial reference to Seth-Typhon", 341) through to its final form in the Middle Ages. According to the structuralist reading of the fashion system set out in Barthes (1967) 171, costumes that are bipartite or bicoloured, such as those worn by the Fool of the Middle Ages and the clowns of Elizabethan theatre, wore a costume which symbolised a rupture or division in their spirit: "dont la dualité symbolisait la division de l'esprit."

<sup>671</sup> Isis' variegated dress is however, exceptional, signifying the syncretic aspect of her rite. On this, see the next chapter.

<sup>672</sup> On the varicoloured dress (*ποικιλία*) under the Athenian democracy and its later perception, see Villacèque (2008) 443-459, but with particular reference to its metaphorical accretions discussed on pages 455-459.

a street-performer – to whom the *cinaedi* can be assimilated<sup>673</sup> - via his mouth. Two aspects of this claim in close proximity to each other reinforce the subsequent image of the *cinaedi* as irrational – the term *Poecilen* and the sinuous shinnying of a beautiful (hence, by implication either effeminate or sexually ambiguous) boy (1.4).

But the yellow spectrum and motley also convey effeminacy as an effect of giving the spirit of pleasure the upper hand in one's soul. The priests' dress is recognisable as Eastern and as adherent to a rite which is the butt of much parody and satire; but the very overload of the highly semiotic individual elements (such as colour and fabric) and the conflation of effeminate and religious dress, joined to the extended description of these, must surely give a more ethically piquant flavour to the description.

### **Dio Chrysostom and Seneca on Reading Character**

Where then is the best place to turn for an exegetical parallel to the *cinaedi* in their frenzy and ritual vestment? Even in priestly garments, Apuleius' *cinaedi* are an example of a type of spirit (*daemon*) akin to the spirit discussed by Dio Chrysostom in his Fourth Discourse on Kingship, namely, the weak and effeminate spirit (*ὕγρὸν τε καὶ μαλθακόν*, 109). Dio Chrysostom's discourse can serve almost as an exegesis for the *cinaedi* in their ritual garb and frenzy as the elements of dress which he selects for a description of his types not only recur in Apuleius' characters, but constitute, as he insists, the true image of the spirit which this type embodies, and are not a disguise. More importantly, the viability of Dio Chrysostom as a comparative model is further confirmed by reason of the shared features which connect him to Apuleius. These shared

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<sup>673</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 1.4: *Et tamen Athenis primo et ante Poecilen porticum isto gemino obtutu...aspexi... puer in mollitiem decorus insurgit inque flexibus tortuosis enervam et exossam saltationem explicat*. Rather than reading this strictly as another example of the satirising of the Stoics (Keulen, 2007, 133-134), I take it that it recalls the "religious market place' of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD" (Egelhaaf-Gaiser, 2011, 1, unpublished paper delivered at the RICAN 6 Conference in Rethymnon in May, 2011) in which the *cinaedi* can be located at a superficial level. At a deeper level, the word *poikile* resonates with other connotations. Given the terms of the description one can deduce by implication that beautiful (*decorus*) in this case carries connotations of either effeminacy (*mollitiem*, *enervam*) or sexual ambiguity. The boy's shinnying (*flexibus tortuosis*) is replicated in the priests' sinuous motions when under the influence of the deity.

features arise from the fact of their writing in the same time and literary culture, that of the Second Sophistic.<sup>674</sup>

Dio Chrysostom opens his discourse by speaking of types (4.83). He insists on the necessity to imitate the physiognomists,<sup>675</sup> and to depict men in their true colours.<sup>676</sup> Although he begins by speaking of each type as a man and his attendant spirit, referring to the notion of daemons as guardian deities that exist outside us, his notion of this spirit occasionally shifts in the course of his speech and comes to resemble the individual human soul.<sup>677</sup> This aspect of the spirit comes close to Apuleius' vision of the daemon as the embodied human soul.<sup>678</sup>

Dio Chrysostom's spirit when dressed in his proper attire (that is, shown in his true colours; cf. *Oratio*, 4.109) and Apuleius' *cinaedus* as a metaphorical figure<sup>679</sup> resemble each other in several respects: they are both presented as disordered spirits; they both wear sweeping robes,<sup>680</sup> saffron robes,<sup>681</sup> or

<sup>674</sup> On this, see Elsom (1984), especially page 5 for Apuleius' similarity to his contemporaries in his use of the figures of Socrates and Odysseus, figures which also occur in Dio Chrysostom (*Orationes* 7, 13, and 43) and page 41 for Dio's use of "literature as an essential part of ethical education: he uses famous pieces of Platonic dogma to educate the emperor, and he uses Homer and tragedy for the same purposes for lesser audiences."

<sup>675</sup> As physiognomists "can determine and announce a man's character from his shape and appearance (4.87-88: ἀπὸ τῆς μορφῆς καὶ τοῦ εἴδους τὸ ἦθος γινώσκουσι καὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν); while we propose to draw from a man's habits and acts, a type and shape that will match the physiognomist's work." The Greek text and English translation of Dio Chrysostom used in this chapter are those of Cohoon in the Loeb edition (2002).

<sup>676</sup> A weak and effeminate appearance (4.109: εἶδος ... ὑγρόν τε καὶ μαλθακόν) befits this spirit rather than a manly and grave one. Therefore, this spirit should be dressed up in his proper attire (οἰκεῖον αὐτῷ σχῆμα).

<sup>677</sup> Dio Chrysostom, 4.101: ὁ δὲ δὴ **δεύτερος ἀνὴρ** τε καὶ **δαίμων ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀνδρός**, ...105: ἔτι δέ τινας **οὗτος** τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κρατουμένων εἰς γυναικεῖον **μετέβαλε** βίον τε καὶ **σχῆμα**. Although intended for ritual purposes, the vestments on the *cinaedi* function as female dress, especially in conjunction with make-up.

<sup>678</sup> Apuleius, *DDS*, 150-152 and see also Portogalli (1963), 235-236, and Sandy (1997), 205-207. This aspect of Apuleius' conception of the human soul is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>679</sup> Heine (1978) 30 thinks along similar lines: "The priests of Cybele, on the contrary, are reality witnessed at close hand with all their ugly appearance."

<sup>680</sup> Apuleius, 8.27-28 (context); Dio Chrysostom, 4.102: ἐσθήτων τε μαλακῶν ἔλξεις.

motley,<sup>682</sup> and both resemble a drunken reveller in some way; in the case of Chrysostom's type, by his gait, dancing and singing of effeminate and tuneless songs. In the case of Apuleius' *cinaedus*, his intoxication is of another kind, brought about by a frenzied ecstasy; yet by his dress, gait and the discordant noise which accompanies him, he is an extension of this type. The women and effeminacy of which the speaker in Dio talks can be brought, by metaphorical extension, to evoke Philebus' chorus of *puellae* whom he has led astray (4.112): *αἱ δὲ μετὰ πολλοῦ πατάγου κυμβάλων τε καὶ αὐλῶν φέρουσαι μαινόμενον αὐτὸν σπουδῆ προΐτωσαν*. These dissolute women are known as certain of the sensual lusts each of which pull the spirit of this man in a different direction.<sup>683</sup> As an extension of this type, the *cinaedi* in their varicoloured dress bespeak the spirit of the man given to pleasure, however he may choose to disguise it. Dio Chrysostom provides a good description (both outer and inner) of such a character, making the connection between the state of the soul and the material expression of it very clear. The *cinaedi* embody, then, the spirit which is incontinent and enslaved to pleasure (4.103: *ἀκόλαστον καὶ δεδουλωμένον ὑφ' ἡδονῆς*). Effeminate Philebus' very name draws forth and embodies the spirit which is attracted to the goddess Pleasure, which the speaker describes as "a truly feminine being."<sup>684</sup> This fact reinforces the reading of these men as manipulating an orgiastic rite, meant to bring healing, for personal pleasure.

This spirit has often changed those who are possessed by it into the life and the garb of women, a change likened by Chrysostom to the mythical transformation of human beings into birds or beasts if the human undergoing the transformation has had the misfortune to become enslaved to the appetites of such animals.<sup>685</sup> The spirit which drives men to do this can be likened, as a literary expression, to the men's nature. In this case, it is the spirit

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<sup>681</sup> Apuleius, 8.27: *crocotis ... iniecti; lutesi induti calceis*; Dio Chrysostom, 4.110: *ἐν κροκωτῶ*; 115: *τοῦ κροκωτοῦ* (although, on this occasion, the guiding spirit is Delusion, who is companion to Pleasure).

<sup>682</sup> Apuleius, 8.27: *variis coloribus indusiati*; Dio Chrysostom, 4.101: *ποικίλος καὶ πολυειδής*.

<sup>683</sup> Dio Chrysostom, 4.111.

<sup>684</sup> Dio Chrysostom, 4.101: *ἀτεχνῶς γυναικείαν θεόν*. The man who admires this goddess is "of many hues and shapes" (*ποικίλος καὶ πολυειδής*).

<sup>685</sup> Dio Chrysostom, 4.105-106.

which determines the behaviour and dress of the wearer, not the inverse,<sup>686</sup> even though the men's ritual behaviour starts after they have donned the ritual vestment. This ritual behaviour is merely a recognised and accepted outer manifestation of the sensual behaviour in which the men indulge themselves in private.<sup>687</sup> The argument for a Platonic prototype behind this recollection of the "dress habits of the *daimon* of hedonism"<sup>688</sup> is strong; hence, Apuleius' depiction of the *cinaedi* as embodying this *daemon* is not entirely an innovation, but he does elaborate on the model for the *cinaedi* that exists in the *Onos* by emphasising the assumption and wearing of elements of dress which have feminine associations for the purposes of ritual. The *cinaedi* of the *Metamorphoses*, in their ritual appearance, become a metaphor for deviant intentions and perverted lifestyle. Dio Chrysostom's discourse paints not only a physiognomic picture of the soul that inhabits such a dress, but also, by its purpose and setting, aligns it with sartorial expressions of the soul as either king or tyrant, a reading reinforced by the presence of the colour purple on the (pseudo-)priests' robes in the *Metamorphoses*. Although also a kingly and priestly colour, purple appears in this instance on a dress which surfaces as part of a sartorial paradigm of hedonism and excess.<sup>689</sup> The king has become a tyrant.

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<sup>686</sup> *Contra* Heine (1962), 309.

<sup>687</sup> See, for example, the disgraceful behaviour of the *cinaedi* in private at 8.29.

<sup>688</sup> Trapp (2000) 227. The Platonic echo occurs in *Alcibiades*, 1. 122c: ἐσθήτας ἱματίων θ' ἔλξεις. Cf. Dio Chrysostom, 4.102: ἐσθήτων τε μαλακῶν ἔλξεις. By way of further philosophical reinforcement, it may be worthwhile adducing what Socrates says in the *Ion* (535b-c, d) of the multi-coloured dress. The context is a discussion of the pathetic effects of the recitation of certain types of poetry before an audience on the speaker. Socrates questions the rationalism behind these effects (which he deems to be akin to *enthousiasmos*). The variegated dress may be the standard dress for such recitals (ἐσθήτι ποικίλῃ), but in context it takes on a figurative meaning and function.

<sup>689</sup> For purple as a symbol of despotism to the Romans, see Dunkle (1971), who quotes Livy (24.5.3-6) and Plutarch (*Tiberius Gracchus*, 14.2). Although in Discourse 4 the dominant negative colour is yellow, Dio Chrysostom's 62<sup>nd</sup> Discourse (*On Kingship and Tyranny*) is also appropriate for comparison with the *cinaedi* in their Eastern aspect and the spirits of Discourse 4 by reason of the image of Sardanapallus, the Assyrian king, which functions in this case to emphasise the physiognomic portrait of effeminacy as an aspect of tyranny. Purple trappings are an essential part of this portrait in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Discourse. Apuleius gives his opinion of such soul-types in the *DPD* (1.15): *Tyrannidis genus ex luxuriosa et plena*

The same concern arises in Seneca's epistle to Lucilius on the link between personal style and mental states (114). Herein, too, a similar parallel between soul and its sartorial reflection is suggested. Whilst the letter's primary preoccupation is with a man's style of verbal expression, this naturally extends into (just as the style of speech is an expression of) the state of a man's soul. Sartorial expression is an aspect of *ingenium*, which is interwoven with the soul: *Quanto hoc magis accidere ingenio putas, quod totum animo permixtum est*. How a person presents himself both at the level of language and the body is determined by the predominance of one or other of two states of the soul, expressed in terms of statecraft: the king and the tyrant. This analogy can be aptly adduced to support the view of the *cinaedi* as an expression of the soul which has come under the domination of pleasure; subjection to pleasure is akin to living under the detestable rule of tyranny: *Ubi vero inpotens, cupidus, delicatus est, transit in nomen detestabile ac dirum et fit tyrannus*. Earlier on in the letter, Seneca adopts the tone of a physiognomist. He compares a man's style of expression to his gait, referring to well-known physiognomic types. One of these is the effeminate, whose traits he takes up and associates with dress, including the dress of "inappropriate" colour (*coloris improbi*), designed to draw the gaze of other men to them. Seneca is silent on the particular colour or colour scheme he has in mind, but the passage serves to underscore the moral undertones conveyed by certain colours, or colour codes, in the ancient consciousness. These indications of a feeble soul are also present in the extensions of the body, such as gait and speech: the effeminate gait is merely the physical expression of the womanish soul, and the looseness of the speech of such a man matches his ungirt attire: *Non vides, si animus elanguit, trahi membra et pigre moveri pedes? Si ille effeminatus est, in ipso incessu adparere mollitiam? ... Non oratio eius aequae soluta est quam ipse discinctus?* The priests in this scene of the *Metamorphoses* are high-girt (in accordance with the sartorial code of priests of their rite) and not ungirt (*discinctus*) like the effeminate man that Seneca speaks of,<sup>690</sup> and there is no

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*libidinis vita, quae ex infinitis et diversis et illicitis voluptatibus conflata mente tota dominatur;* (2.18): *et est sane melius talem regi nec ipsum regendi habere alios potestatem nec dominari, sed servire servitium, inpotem ipsum aliorum addici potestati parendi potius quam iubendi officia sortitum.*

<sup>690</sup> See Seneca's *Epistles*, 114. 4-7.

place here to undertake a detailed examination of the speech of the *cinaedi* in the light of Seneca's theory of speech set out in this letter; however, the priests are marked in the novel by a shrillness of pitch which is recognisably the stamp of the effeminate, as is their self-determination in their speech as women.<sup>691</sup> It is easy to see how their high-girt priestly attire does not impede the suppleness and fluidity of motion which inscribe them as effeminates. In another letter, letter 122.7, Seneca puts it more bluntly: *Non videntur tibi contra naturam vivere qui commutant cum feminis vestem?*

Lucius continues to be their pack-animal, carrying around the effigy of their goddess from village to village, never ceasing to be shocked by their behaviour. The priests persist in their debauchery and their deceit, making up false prophecies, and even going so far as to fabricate an all-purpose prophecy with which they could swindle the credulous. Their uncovering as unchaste sodomites (8.29) forces them out of one of the towns where they had temporarily settled, but they are not entirely stopped until they are arrested for theft and incarcerated (9.10). Lucius is then purchased by a baker and sent to work in his mill. Crucially, the impact of the sight of these half-men in their ritual garb which is a composite of every kind of negative sartorial and bodily figure – effeminate hair, voice and gait, flowing robes, Easternness (and its associations with tyranny), bipartite colour scheme, motley and the yellow spectrum, all in a context of fluidity and gender ambivalence – will feed his ritual consciousness in preparation for his accession to the Isiac rite.

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<sup>691</sup> Cf. *Metamorphoses*, 8.25: 'egoque misera cogar crinibus solutis discurrere'; 8.26: 'Puellae, servum vobis pulchellum en ecce mercata perduxit.'

## Conclusion to Chapter 7

By way of summation, it can be stated categorically that Lucius wants the reader to see the congruity of the lifestyle and nature of the priests to their cult, the cult of the dea Syria. The presence of the *cinaedi* necessarily brings with it a set of predetermined descriptive elements: colourful and feminine dress and make-up; the ass with the image of the goddess; wild music and frenzied gesturing and an emphasis on specific details of movements made in the area of the neck, and the hair. Apuleius' *cinaedi* perpetuate these associations by their sinuous dance, the theft of the chalice dedicated to the mother of the gods, and their voracious appetite for both food and sex.<sup>692</sup> Apuleius, however, does bring a variation to some of these, one of the most important being the priests' striped robes.<sup>693</sup> He also innovates by portraying biting as part of the ritual and draws on rare words or word-forms, some of which pertain to their ritual dress (*indusiatus, carbasiniis, lanciola, fanaticae*) and sound-effects (expressive word endings and rhyme) to heighten the emotional and descriptive intensity of the scene.<sup>694</sup> The nature of these men is thus clearly marked by Lucius' choice of descriptive terminology. He describes them in language from the world of performance, both theatrical and musical (*chorus, exsultantes, voce, clamores absonos*) as well as language which occurs in earlier literary contexts, both satirical and physiognomic, to depict the effeminate (*fracta voce*).<sup>695</sup>

Their vestments are the crucial link between the inner man and the outer persona, as their lifestyle is an extension of their chaotic nature. Religious error and skewed perception enter into the equation through the ignorant and credulous spectator of the ritual of these *cinaedi* posing as priests

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<sup>692</sup> For their dance, 8.27; their theft, 9.10; their gluttony (which is tied in with their theft by the deceitful means with which they often obtain their food), 8.29.

<sup>693</sup> GCA (1985), 238. This fact corroborates Apuleius' innovatory and significant use of the specifically dual colour scheme in the episode.

<sup>694</sup> GCA (1985), 238, 242. The biting which Apuleius' *cinaedi* indulge in is additional to the depiction of weaponry and self-mutilation which is already in the pre-existing literary expression of the *cinaedi* (GCA, 1985, 238).

<sup>695</sup> Cf. Juvenal, 2. 110-111: *hic turpis Cybeles est fracta voce loquendi/libertas*; Anonymus Latinus, 115: *qui vocem tanquam perfractam habent*.

and assuming the mantle of religious piety. It is ironic that Lucius should interpret their ritual performance as play-acting, since the nature of the ritual is depicted as corresponding to the nature of the men. On the other hand, the unenlightened spectator of their frenzies, impressed by their seemingly genuine penitence, will not see this as play-acting either, although for different reasons. Apuleius therefore seems to be drawing our attention, through the perceptual discrepancy of the two main spectators at this pseudo-performance – Lucius and the unenlightened onlooker – to the need to be on the guard against false religion, and especially, ignorance. With the uncovering of the deceit of the *cinaedi* comes the uncovering of the credulity of the unenlightened spectator of the rite, so that false perceptions are ultimately broken down. Religious dress and personal identity collide in a way which can only be read correctly by the enlightened few: effeminate dress, mistaken by some to be priestly, or ritual dress, becomes therefore an outward display of the irrational in man. Even their use of make-up is a mere exteriorisation of their nature as, on them, putting on make-up is less about putting on a ritual mask as it is about showing their true countenance.<sup>696</sup> This particular style of character portrayal, and the context in which it occurs, is deeply negative, resonant of Bacchic revelry and discord (*absonos*), and accounts for their depiction as effeminate (8.26). Lucius' emphasis on their voices in musical terminology will later draw attention to the difference between the erroneous rite of the Dea Syria and the beneficence of Isis, whose music is sweet and pleasing to the ear.<sup>697</sup> Apuleius' caution in the *Florida* (9.28) to beware of the

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<sup>696</sup> Heine (1962) 309 comes close to this view: "An diesem Punkt setzt die Verwischung der Grenzen zwischen Maske und Gesicht, zwischen Unwirklichkeit und Wirklichkeit ein".

<sup>697</sup> For the role of music in the two rites see also the GCA (1985) 269. Lucius does indeed make a distinction between the cult of Isis and the Dea Syria through music (that of the Bona Dea is *mulcens*, caressing and persuasive and enchanting like magic, whereas that of Isis is most sweet and unaffected, *dulcissimus*. The post-positive position of the adjective - *modulis dulcissimis* – underscores the essential difference between the two rites). But an uncritical hearer, such as the *vir principalis* who has a strong devotion for the goddess and who welcomes the priests into his home (8.30; I embrace Hanson's acceptance of the emendation of *F's deum* to *deam*), may confuse the two cults.

*palliata mendicabula* whose dress can deceive the ignorant finds its religious expression in the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>698</sup>

Behind Lucius' explicitly typologising description of the *cinaedi* is an evident desire on the part of an enlightened Lucius to keep the body-soul connection tight where there are grounds to do so, namely, to prevent the unenlightened reader from being taken in. As a disguise, the motley of the *cinaedi* allows them to maintain two identities, one natural and the other assumed. It reflects the nature of the men both in their role as men adopting a costume for deceitful purposes, and as embodied spirits of hedonism. Isis' variegated dress must however be apprehended differently as embodying the all-encompassing aspect of her rite, as shall be shown in the next chapter. The multi-coloured dress of Isis does not occur in a context of irrationality; indeed, the use of colour in her robe is not free, being controlled in accordance with the catholic and holistic nature of the rite, as it is represented in the novel. The very dress of her rite encapsulates all that differentiates it from the rite of the Dea Syria; this is a difference which goes further than the level of the body and what goes on it.

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<sup>698</sup> Multi-coloured dress, music and sexual ambivalence also occur at *Florida* 15, where Apuleius is concerned to insist upon the error of those who ascribe the statuette depicting a youthful *citharoedus* in a multi-coloured tunic (*tunicam picturis variegatam deorsus ad pedes deiectus ipsos*) worn in the Greek manner (*Graecanico cingulo*), and a floating *chlamys* (*chlamyde velat utrumque brachium ad usque articulos palmarum, cetera decoris striis dependens*) to the philosopher Pythagoras. It is in fact Bathyllus. Apuleius seems to abhor the notion of depicting a philosopher in such a mode: colourful and sinuous.

## Chapter 8

### Religion and Costume B: Isis and Osiris

The purpose of this chapter is to show how religio-philosophical truth is expressed materially by ritual dress, hair and tonsuring, and demeanour in Book 11 and, finally, by the complete lack of description of Osiris at the very end of the book, the point of the novel's termination. Book 11 is the book where philosophical allegory is expressed through religion.<sup>699</sup> Clothing imagery is an effective visual medium for this. Book 11 is the transformative book of the novel, so items or aspects of clothing which exuded a negative reading in the previous books, embrace positive connotations in this one. The semiology of religious dress in this book is also stabilised insofar as variant readings are lacking.

The chapter will open with analysis of the particularly descriptive mode of representation given to Isis' appearance in Book 11 which reinforces her cult as the correct one. Emphasis will be given to Isis' hair and dress, including the important function of colour. The static and monumental appearance of Isis ("Isis Robed") will be considered in the broader context of sartorial expressions of ritual in the *Metamorphoses*.

The *anteludia* will then be studied in their function of marking Lucius' transition from his previous life to his new one. The carnivalesque costumes resurrect images and costumes that have previously appeared in the novel and are an important reminder of the roles people play in life and of what Lucius must leave behind.

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<sup>699</sup> The same claim could be made for the appearance of the *cinaedi* in Book 8 who also, in their ritual vestments, function as a kind of philosophical allegory expressed through religious rite. However, Book 8 is not taken up solely with figures expressive of religious rite, as is the case with Book 11. On the use of mystic religion to transmit philosophical ideas, see Fick (1987) and Méthy (1999) 48-49. Like the cult of the Dea Syria, the cult of Isis also had an ecstatic aspect to its rite for which it was condemned in the ancient world. On this, see Witt (1971) 41-45; Heyob (1975) 54-56; Schlam (1992) 56. Since the ecstatic aspect is lacking in the depiction of the cult of Isis in the *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius has clearly chosen to present it as a counterpoint to the cult of the Dea Syria.

Lucius' re-transformation into human form and his nakedness will then be set against his transformation into a donkey in Book 3 to show how they recall notions of perception and judgement of men by their exterior. Lucius' re-transformation will also be studied as a reflection of his resurgent humanity.

The Olympian stole in which Lucius is enveloped as a new initiate will be analysed as expressive of Lucius' re-ordered soul and of his enrolment in the rite of Isis. Focus will be put on the animal imagery on the stole and the crown in the shape of the sun because of what they bring to this interpretation of Lucius as he appears in the stole. Lucius' role as spectacle on this occasion also reflects his new status.

Osiris' disembodied revelation to Lucius will then be taken up for study in its allegorical function as an immaterial expression of philosophical attainment, as far as this is possible for a mortal. The god's lack of visibility and speech are an emanation of his allegorical function in the novel of the Platonic god.

The final image in the book and the novel is of Lucius proudly showing his tonsured head as an initiate of both Isis and Osiris. This image will be briefly analysed from the perspective of other scholars' interpretations, and then will be reinterpreted to promote a reading of the function of description in the novel as a whole, and the image's connection with the change of descriptive mode in the final book.

Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* provides valuable information on aspects of the Isiac rite as it may have been practised or viewed (at least in its Greek appropriation) in the second century A.D. This information includes the role of clothing in the rite, and the dress of Isis. Hence, recourse shall be had to Plutarch's work to explain certain aspects of the rite and its dress as they appear in the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>700</sup> Additionally, Apuleius' philosophical works also arise to support arguments made in this chapter.

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<sup>700</sup> The Greek text and English translation of the *De Iside et Osiride* are those of Babbitt in the Loeb edition (1993), unless otherwise stated. Plutarch's intention in writing this was to expose the process of arriving at knowledge of the truth (351 E): "Therefore the effort to arrive at the Truth, and especially the truth about the gods, is a longing for the divine." On Apuleius' synthesis of Platonism with Isiac religion in a manner similar to Plutarch's, see the

## Isis: The Visible and Material Expression of Ritual Truth

When Isis appears for the first time in the novel (1.5), it is at the prompting of Lucius' prayers. Lucius has just fled from the theatre in which he witnessed the pantomime re-enactment of the myth of the Judgment of Paris, and where he was intended as part of a public spectacle of the copulation of an ass with a condemned woman (10.29-34). This last prospect was the limit for Lucius, so he bolted from the theatre gates, and sped all the way to the shores of Cenchreae, where he promptly fell asleep. At the beginning of Book 11, Lucius has been woken from his slumber at about the first watch of the night, and immediately set to thinking about a goddess, whom he calls the "supreme goddess" (*summatem deam*) associated with the moon, which he sees in its resplendent fullness shining above him. Although the goddess's identity is not explicitly disclosed at this moment, this goddess will turn out to be Isis.

It is worthwhile to consider what makes Lucius think of the supreme goddess in particular, whosoever she may be, at that time. The most likely answer lies in the physical surroundings Lucius finds himself in at that moment, surroundings which point to Isis' revelation as the supreme goddess in view of Isis' role in the ordering of the universe. It is important to acknowledge this role, as it is an aspect of her divinity which will be written onto her dress when she appears to Lucius. The conditions of the night recall to him the goddess's august presence and power (11.1):

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informative article by Heller (1983), and Griffiths (1970). Reference to Plutarch's text does not presuppose that Apuleius adhered strictly to the treatise of Plutarch, or relied on it in an overly dependent way, as there are still many points of divergence. However, Lucius' claim in the prologue to descent from Plutarch through his mother's blood-lines (1.2) promotes the suggestion that Lucius may have had some understanding of what the Isiac and Osiriac rites are about, if not an innate leaning towards the rites. Lucius' education and upbringing may in part explain his appeal to the Queen of Heaven at the beginning of Book 11 after having plunged his head under the waves on the shore at Cenchreae seven times, following the prescription of the "divine Pythagoras" (11.1: *divinus ille Pythagoras*). The meeting of Plutarchan and Pythagorean knowledge at this point in the novel would seem to direct its conclusion to a philosophical end. Whilst Lucius' maternal blood-lines originate in Thessaly, this does not make Plutarch a Thessalian (he was from Boeotia). I take it rather that Lucius' maternal family merely had settled some time in Thessaly.

Circa primam ferme noctis vigiliam<sup>701</sup> experrectus pavore subito, video praemicantis lunae candore nimio completum orbem commodum marinis emergentem fluctibus. Nantusque opacae noctis silentiosa secreta, certus etiam summam deam praecipua maiestate pollere resque prorsus humanas ipsius regi providentia, nec tantum pecuina et ferina, verum inanima etiam divino eius luminis numinisque nutu vegetari, ipsa etiam corpora terra caelo marique nunc incrementis consequenter augeri, nunc detrimentis obsequenter imminui, fato scilicet iam meis tot tantisque cladibus satiato et spem salutis, licet tardam, sumministrante, augustum specimen deae praesentis statui deprecari.

Fate itself, personified in this scene, has a hand in this revelation of the goddess's presence, adjoining itself to the redemptive power of the divinity (11.1): *fato scilicet iam meis tot tantisque cladibus satiato et spem salutis, licet tardam, sumministrante*. This has important implications for the disclosure of Isis as the supreme goddess, as the conjunction of Fate and Isis at the terminal point of the novel promotes Isis as the divinity to which he has been directed throughout the novel, a function lacking in the manifestations of other deities elsewhere in the novel. Isis pertinently recalls to Lucius her function as controller of his individual fate at the end of her address to him (11.6): *scies ultra statuta fato tuo spatia vitam quoque tibi prorogare mihi tantum licere*.<sup>702</sup> This picks up on and explains the reference to Fate made at the beginning of Book 11, just prior to Lucius' invocation to the goddess: Isis is the ultimate Fate, the controller of all individual fates. Additionally, the inversion of the forces of nature which is associated with witches in the novel is overturned in this book both by the fixity of the elements through which Lucius can pass without harm to himself, and the co-existence of opposites, namely sunshine occurring

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<sup>701</sup> It is significant that Isis appears to Lucius at exactly the same time at which he had witnessed the transformation of Pamphile a year earlier (11.1): *Circa primam ferme noctis vigiliam*; (3.21) *Iamque circa primam noctis vigiliam*. Isis' divinity is going to undo what Pamphile's magic has done.

<sup>702</sup> Fate is subordinate to Isis in the aretalogies. This is how Fate appears in the Kyme-Memphis aretalogy (the earliest of all known Isis aretalogies dating from the first or second century B.C.): [55] "I conquer fate" [56] "Fate obeys me." See also the Hymn to Isis from Andros (a variant of the Kyme-Memphis aretalogy) and the Isis aretalogy of Cyrene (c. 103 A.D.). On these, see Streete (2000) 369-383. In the *Metamorphoses*, Fate is removed from the formulaic frame of the aretalogy and is subsumed into the Goddess's divinity.

during the night.<sup>703</sup> As we shall see, the expression of this natural stability will be reinforced in the motifs of the Olympian stole which Lucius shall wear as his initiation garment.

Significantly, Lucius' prayer to the goddess, made just after this description of his natural surroundings at that point, pivots on appearance and identity and resurrects them as a major theme of the *Metamorphoses*, realigning them with the philosophically based concern with identity and its physical manifestation as this has occurred elsewhere throughout the novel. The standard formulaic plea - *quoquo nomine, quoquo ritu, quaqua facie te fas est invocare* - in which Lucius seeks to ascertain, among other things, the correct ritual and physical, identity of the goddess, thereby takes on an importance that embraces more than just the religious significance of the formula. Lucius' request for a proper understanding of the goddess is reciprocated by Isis in a reply which emphasises the syncretistic nature of her worship (11.5): *En adsum...cuius numen unicum **multiformi** specie, ritu **vario**, nomine **multiiugo** totus veneratur orbis;*<sup>704</sup> yet despite this syncretism, expressed as pluriformity (*multiformi, vario, multiiugo*) there exists, of the goddess's own admission, a perfected form of her worship and a correct form of address to the goddess. The knowledge of this is the privilege of the Egyptians (11.5): *priscaque doctrina pollentes Aegyptii, caerimoniis me propriis percolentes, appellant vero nomine reginam Isidem.* By this revelation, variant perception and ritual form are to become subjugated to true and correct perception and ritual form. The placement of the goddess's preferred or true name (*vero nomine*) at the end of this revelation appears to privilege the name

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<sup>703</sup> 11.23: *nocte media vidi **solem** candido **coruscantem** lumine.* The hyperbaton reinforces the complementary interlocking of the two heavenly bodies. Restored to the context of truth, the sun and the moon act as complements to each other. Chaos is replaced by stability. The elements are no longer mobile, remaining in their divinely assigned place; but Lucius now has the power to move through them. Fick (1987, 45) emphasises the undertones of awe behind the verb *corusco* in this context, where it conveys the same sense of awe before the revelation of philosophical truth as does the Greek verb *μαρμαρύσσω*, variants of which occur in Plato's *Republic* (7. 515c and 518b).

<sup>704</sup> Of note is the inversion of the order of vocabulary - Lucius: *nomine ... ritu ... facie*; Isis: *specie ... ritu ... nomine.*

Isis over all the other names by which she has been known.<sup>705</sup> Nor does ritual inclusivity rule out any hierarchical structure to worship. In this book, inclusivity appears to be predicated on opposing notions of correct to incorrect or flawed ritual understanding and practice, such as we have seen with the *cinaedi* acting as priests in the service of the Bona Dea, whose error is made visible through the media of clothes and physiognomy,<sup>706</sup> to which must be compared the sartorial decorum of the Isiac rite. The goddess's disclosure of her true name as the final element, far from equalising her epithets, arranges them in an hierarchical structure. This highly significant admission of her preferred name caps the disclosure of her identity to Lucius. Isis then moves on to disclose the purpose of her appearance to him, namely, his reintegration into the human world (embodied as retransformation) and subsequent redemption, that is, accession to a higher life. This cannot take place without Lucius' regaining of his human form, something which he cannot achieve on his own.

When Isis appears to Lucius at the liminal moment between sleep and wakefulness, her beauty is of such kind that Lucius warns the reader of the inadequacy of his description which will, necessarily, be given in human terms, therefore, unequal to the task (11.3): *paupertas oris humani*. Lucius' description of Isis emphasises her beauty and majesty, and his description of her costume and headdress, most likely a synthesis of several costumes and

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<sup>705</sup> If Lucius, or behind him, Apuleius, wishes the reader to recall Plutarch's etymology of Isis' name, the "one who hastens with understanding", then two aspects of Isis' role in the novel are contained and foreshadowed therein: firstly, the goddess's role in the conveying of correct knowledge of (divine) Truth; secondly, her function as co-redeemer, or intermediary, with Osiris.

<sup>706</sup> This error can also be ascribed to the non-initiated adherents of the rite of the dea Syria. Whilst the *cinaedi* themselves are shown to be incontrovertibly bad, the unsuspecting and gullible spectators are shown to be merely deluded, a state which can be extended to the *vir principalis* (8.30) who had a special devotion for the goddess. Upon hearing the distinctive music of the rite, he rushes out excitedly (*excitus*) to meet the priests. Although he is depicted to have a sincere devotion to the goddess, the sexual connotations behind *excitus* perhaps come to the fore, especially in the context of the kind of music used in Bacchic rites. See on this the GCA for book 8 (1985) 269. Auctorial Lucius does indeed make a distinction between the cult of Isis and the Dea Syria and he uses music to do so; but an uncritical *vir principalis* may confuse the two cults.

headdresses and impressionistic rather than wholly realistic,<sup>707</sup> reiterates these aspects of the goddess. Any elements of Isis' dress which are replicated in the dress of the initiate acolytes later in the religious procession proper (*pompa*), will be discussed at this point (as will any dissimilarity). The most salient feature their dress has in common with Isis' dress is the notion of brightness and purity,<sup>708</sup> but their dress is of course less decorous than Isis' which reflects her office as cosmic goddess (11.7): *mater siderum, parens temporum orbisque totius domina*. Lucius' description of the goddess, following the traditional pattern of beginning with the head and moving downwards,<sup>709</sup> is long and detailed. An important aspect of the ecphrasis is its suggestion of luminosity, movement and also of sound (11.3-4):

Iam primum crines uberrimi prolixique et sensim intorti per divina colla passim dispersi molliter defluebant. Corona multiformis variis floribus sublimem destrinxerat verticem, cuius media quidem super frontem plana rotunditas in modum speculi, vel immo argumentum lunae, candidum lumen emicabat, dextra laevaue sulcis insurgentium viperarum cohibita, spicis etiam Cerialibus desuper porrectis ornata. Tunica<sup>710</sup> multicolor, bysso tenui pertexta, nunc albo candore lucida,

<sup>707</sup> Walters, (1988) 17. I support Fick's claim (1987, 32) that Apuleius ignores realism in his depiction of Isis in order to promote Lucius' striving to express a reality and beauty of another nature ("Réalité 'inassimilable' ... beauté d'une autre nature").

<sup>708</sup> 11.10: *Tunc influunt turbae sacris divinis initiatae, viri feminaeque omnis dignitatis et omnis aetatis, linthae vestis candore puro luminosi, illae limpido tegmine crines madidos obvolutae, hi capillum derasi funditus verticem praenitentes - magnae religionis terrena sidera - aereis et argentei, immo vero aureis etiam sistris argutum tinnitum constrepentes; et antistites sacrorum proceres illi, qui candido linthamine cinctum pectoralem adusque vestigia strictim iniecti potentissimorum deum proferebant insignes exuvias*. The initiates carry the distinctive sistra (*aureis ... sistris*), which Isis has with her when she appears to Lucius (11.4: *aereum crepitaculum*), and the high priests (*antistites ... proceres*) also carry with them the distinctive golden boat (11.10: *aureum cymbium*) which appears hanging over Isis' left hand at the moment of her address to Lucius (11.4: *Laevae vero cymbium dependebat aureum*).

<sup>709</sup> On the traditional mode of description in ecphrases in the *Metamorphoses*, see Zimmerman *et al* (2004) 276; Kenney (1990) 169.

<sup>710</sup> With Gwyn Griffiths (1975) 126, I support Robertson's restoration of the word *tunica* which the *F* manuscript omits (as well as *ornata*). I suggest also the possibility that the word *stola* could be supplied, in connection with the description of Isis' robes as *stolai poikilai* in the *De Iside et Osiride* (382c). *Poikilai* would then be reflected in the adjective *multicolor*, descriptive of Isis' dress in Apuleius' text. This suggestion gains further credence given that

nunc croceo flore lutea, nunc roseo rubore flammida; et quae longe longeque etiam meum confutabat optutum palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore, quae circumcirca remeans et sub dexterum latus ad umerum laevum recurrens, umbonis vicem deiecta parte laciniae, multiplici contabulatione dependula, ad ultimas oras nodulis fimbriarum decoriter confluctuabat. Per intextam extremitatem et in ipsa eius planitie stellae dispersae coruscabant, earumque media semenstris luna flammeos spirabat ignes. Quaque tamen insignis illius pallae perfluebat ambitus, individuo nexu corona totis floribus totisque constructa pomis adhaerebat. Iam gestamina longe diversa. Nam dextra quidem ferebat aereum crepitaculum, cuius per angustam laminam in modum baltei recurvatam traiectae mediae paucae virgulae, crispante brachio trigeminos iactus, reddebant argutum sonorem. Laevae vero cymbium dependebat aureum, cuius ansulae, qua parte conspicua est, insurgebat aspis caput extollens arduum cervicibus late tumescentibus. Pedes ambroseos tegebant soleae palmae victricis foliis intextae.

### A: Isis' Hair

The introductory sentence of the description, replete with soft liquids and sibilants consolidates the essentially feminine aspect of Isis, simultaneously drawing focus to her hair, the most important aspect of feminine beauty for Lucius. Inscriptional evidence attests to the significance of Isis as goddess of hair, a significance which seems to originate in the story, told by Plutarch, of Isis' cutting off a lock of her hair and putting on a mourning garment upon hearing of the death of Osiris, at Coptos.<sup>711</sup> Isis' hair reappears in Egyptian funerary literature in connection with her battle to repress Seth,<sup>712</sup> with whom the donkey was associated. Isis' hair in her epiphany before Lucius recalls Lucius' digression on women's hair in Book 2, despite the narrative and

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the only other occurrence of the word *stola* (similar to the Greek word used of the same garment) in the novel is at 11.24, in reference to Lucius' Olympian stole: *Olympiacam stolam*. The word is therefore reserved for religious significance in the novel.

<sup>711</sup> For the inscriptional evidence for Isis as goddess of hair, dating from the first century A.D., see Bernard (1982) 103-104. For the story of Isis' mourning for her brother-consort, see Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 356D-E. Griffith's note on this passage in the *De Iside et Osiride* (1970) 314, tells us that there is no allusion in the Egyptian texts to Isis' cutting a lock of her hair in mourning. This is further substantiation of the importance of the Greek transmission of the cult.

<sup>712</sup> Selden (1998), 345.

temporal gulf that separates the two descriptions.<sup>713</sup> The hair of the goddess, free of any artifice, flows luxuriantly but naturally, not unlike the hair of the maid Photis who in several respects, including her hair, can be considered a downgraded prefiguration of Isis.<sup>714</sup> However, in contrast to the encounter between Lucius and the slave-girl, on this occasion a seemingly erogenous point of departure merely serves to lead into a picture of divinity. Isis' hair, whilst similar in appearance to Photis', incites merely wonder and admiration.

The connection between ritual truth and hair, is retained in the image of the initiate priests and priestesses of Isis as they make their way along in the procession in her honour, the women's hair natural, but lightly covered, the men's shaven crowns gleaming like stars (11.10):

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<sup>713</sup> The language used to describe Photis' coiffure recurs to describe the hair of the goddess (2.9): *Sed in mea Photide non operosus sed inordinatus ornatus addebat gratiam. Uberes enim crines...per colla dispositos sensimque*. Lucius insists, in Book 2, on the natural, unaffected condition of women's hair as the only attractive option. Hair is what gives a woman her beauty and her status as woman. Were she bald, she would not be a woman, let alone desirable. This fact is important, as, of his own admission, Lucius imparts great importance to the head and its covering as these are the first thing to strike our vision, and they function like clothing (2.8): *vel quod praecipua pars ista corporis in aperto et perspicuo posita prima nostris luminibus occurrit, et quod in ceteris membris floridae vestis hilaris color, hoc in capite nitor natus operator*. The perceptive reader will soon see how hair also becomes, for Lucius, indicative of the nature of a person. Accordingly, when aroused by the sight of Photis, Lucius kisses first her head, as her setting Lucius aflame is a manifestation of her essentially erotic nature (2.10): *Nec diutius quivi tantum cruciatum voluptatis eximiae sustinere, sed pronus in eam, qua fine summum cacumen capillus ascendit, mellitissimum illud savium impressi*. The head was often perceived to be the seat of the soul in antiquity. For references from antiquity to this idea, see Onians (1951), 129. Onians makes the further point (130) that the location of the soul in the head is the motive for Apuleius' reference to the hair of Cupid as *genialis*, the adjective derived from *genius*, *genius* being the Latin equivalent of the Greek word for the soul - *psyche*.

<sup>714</sup> Many scholars have seen Photis as a low-level prefiguration of Isis, a conception I tend to accept. (Lucius suspects Photis of competence in magic; 3.19). For more on this correlation see the insightful remarks of Citati (1990). Photis continues to provide comparative material by which to judge the picture of divinity that is Isis. The knot on the crown of her head (2.9: *[crines] conglobatos in summum verticem nodus astrinxerat*) is replaced by the crown on Isis' head and the Isiac knot on the dress of the goddess. The erotic connotations of Photis' *fasceola* (2.7) which functions like a breast-band (*strophium*) are overthrown in favour of a textile configuration of purity.

Tunc influunt turbae sacris divinis initiatae, viri feminaeque omnis dignitatis et omnis aetatis, linetae vestis candore puro luminosi, illae limpido tegmine crines madidos obvolutae, hi capillum derasi funditus verticem praenitentes – magnae religionis terrena sidera – aereis et argenteis, immo vero aureis etiam sistris.

More importantly, as the hair, so the woman; hence just as Lucius' desires are inflamed by Photis' luxuriant, free-flowing hair, they are restrained by the sight of the hair of Isis' female initiates, who keep their hair lightly bound up, yet natural.

### **B: Isis' Dress**

If Isis and her rite represent the correct religious practice, then any garment she wears must reflect this. Lucius tells us that Isis' dress is made of finely-woven linen (*tunica ... bysso tenui pertexta*). Linen in the Isiac rite represents purity, information imparted by Apuleius himself in the *Apologia*;<sup>715</sup> but this linen is not only of a sheer kind (*tenui*), but worked until it is fine, as we are led to believe by the intensifying prefix *per-* (*pertexta*), a fact which permits us to believe Isis' dress is made of Egyptian linen, which was a luxury item by virtue of its fine quality;<sup>716</sup> hence, its aptness also for the initiates of Isis in their "garment of immortality"<sup>717</sup> as Isis can prolong life beyond its natural term (11.6). Egypt also produced a silk-linen cloth, often decorated with panels depicting mythological figures, especially for use on tunics and mantles.<sup>718</sup> If Isis' tunic is made of this cloth, then the fabric combination may account for the sheerness of Isis' tunic. Sheerness on this occasion is to be contrasted with transparency, such as that of the dress which barely covered Venus in the pantomime. Such softness of fabric is also thoroughly becoming

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<sup>715</sup>Apuleius, *Apologia*, 56. The true reason is also given in the *De Iside et Osiride*, 352D, namely that wool, fur and hair are excrementitious or surplus matter. One of the other reasons given in the Plutarchan text is that the colour which the flax displays when in bloom is like to the heavenly azure which enfolds the universe. Her dress relates, like a woven text, every aspect of her divinity.

<sup>716</sup>Sebesta (2001) 67. Fredouille (1970) 51, points out that this is the first attestation of a calque from the Greek word *bysos* (βύσσοϛ), and quotes Saint Isidore of Seville on the fabric (*Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, 19.27.4): *Byssum genus est quoddam lini nimium candidi et mollissimi*.

<sup>717</sup>Quasten (1942) 211.

<sup>718</sup>Sebesta (2001) 71.

of the goddess who will restore calm to Lucius' soul along with his human form. Likewise, her feet are shod in sandals made of victory-palm (*Pedes ambroseos tegebant soleae victricis foliis intextae*). Both these elements – the linen robe and the palm sandals – figure in the vestments worn by Zatchlas, the Isiac priest of Thelyphron's story. He was instrumental in bringing to light the truth about the demise of the dead Thelyphron,<sup>719</sup> and a mediator to aspects of the true nature of the living Thelyphron. Likewise the consecrated priests and priestesses of Isis who appear in the procession in honour of Isis later on (11.10) are clad in linen. Lucius explicitly elucidates the link between linen and purity in his description of them (11.10): *lintheae vestis candore puro luminosi*. The high priests of the religion wear their white linen robes cinched at the breast, perhaps to recall the knot of Isis' cloak (11.10): *qui candido lintheamine cinctum pectoralem*. One of these priests carries a finely gilt palm branch: *palمام auro subtiliter foliatam* (11.10). The palm is a symbol of victory, reinforcing and tightening the connection between the Isiac rite as truth and victory over error. The use of fine linen for the goddess's robe is significant of the purity of which it is symbolic and which is one of its component elements and cannot properly cover those whose bodies are vessels of impurity, containing a soul which has been sullied. This purity is carried into the goddess's rite which requires carnal abstinence of its priests.<sup>720</sup>

Isis' crown and dress are also scored with many motifs (*corona multiformis*)<sup>721</sup> which replicate in textile form the various aspects of her nature. The focus Apuleius gives to the variation (*multiformis, multicolor*) that scores her dress as an emanation of aspects of the goddess and of her varied reception, must also be contrasted with the occurrences of half-dress in the novel, all of which are signalled by the prefix *semi-* and which occur on

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<sup>719</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 2.28: *Et cum dicto iuvenem quempiam lintheis amiculis iniectum pedesque palmeis baxeis inductum et adusque deraso capite producit in medium.*

<sup>720</sup> Isis insists on the importance of this purity in her address to Lucius (11.6): *Quodsi sedulis obsequiis et religiosis ministeriis et tenacibus castimoniis numen nostrum promerueris.*

<sup>721</sup> Griffiths (1975, 124) says that the crown is *multiformis* "in the sense that it contains many elements."

characters who lack moral development of some sort.<sup>722</sup> The variegation that scores Isis' garment, the *tunica multicolor*<sup>723</sup> must be understood as lacking the irrationality driving the variegation in the ritual dress of the *cinaedi* in the service of the Dea Syria. The cosmic motif, redolent in the appearance of the moon, stars and fiery elements on her frock, reinforces her role as queen of the universe.<sup>724</sup> The presence of ears of corn, fruit and flora both on her crown and her dress manifests her Hellenistic identification with Ceres and associates the goddess with fecundity.<sup>725</sup> The associations with the sun are fixed also in the Isis-knot, which was the equivalent of the *ankh* from which were often depicted the life-giving rays of the sun, another manifestation of the goddess.<sup>726</sup> Light imagery reflects her role in the enlightenment of Lucius (*emicabant, lucida, coruscabant*). The white light which emanates from the middle of her crown<sup>727</sup> co-operates with the stunning black of her cloak, blinding inasmuch as it strikes and encloaks Lucius' dull human perception with the enlightenment that she brings with her: *meum confutabat optutum palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore*.<sup>728</sup> White and black on the goddess Isis, whose rite is the true form of worship, are apposite rather than opposed to each other. The co-existence of colour on her dress is similarly redolent of a vision of harmony, and must be examined with a keen eye on Lucius'

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<sup>722</sup> See for example, Socrates (1.6) and Tlepolemus posing as Haemus (7.5). The *semi-* prefix serves to draw attention to the moral fragmentation of the wearer (Socrates) and lack of heroic development (Tlepolemus).

<sup>723</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 382c: *στολαὶ ποικίλαι*. On the connotations of *poikilia* in the ancient world, see Villacèque (2008, 2010). Context is essential for determining the value given to notions of *poikilia* in any given occurrence.

<sup>724</sup> On the assimilation of Isis to the moon, see Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, 372D. For her role in the ordering of the universe, see the Kyme-Memphis aretalogy, 9, 12-14 (Streete, 2000).

<sup>725</sup> Cf. Kyme-Memphis aretalogy (7): "I am she who discovered fruit for mortals".

<sup>726</sup> On the association of this aspect of the *ankh* with the Isis-knot, see Streete (2000) 381. The Kyme-Memphis aretalogy has "I am she who is in the rays of the sun" (44; Streete, 2000, 375). The *ankh* was a hieroglyphic sign which denoted life, and was depicted as a cross surmounted by a loop (Shaw, 2000, 473).

<sup>727</sup> The disk of her crown reflects the moon, with which Isis was associated, even in the Greek appropriation of her rite (Fick, 1987, 33-34). The moon too will recur on her dress.

<sup>728</sup> Cf. Apuleius' statement on the limited vision of man in the *Florida* (2): *ad oculos et obtutum istum terrenum redigas et hebetem*.

perception of what distinguishes colour in this instance from colour in the preceding books, especially in the robes of the *cinaedi* (8.27).

### C: Colour

Whether or not the individual colours have any symbolic meaning has been debated. Fredouille believes they do, stating that each of the colours that make up the palette which figures on Isis' dress has its own valency that qualifies Isis (or her consort, Osiris, to whose cult Isis' is closely enjoined) in some way.<sup>729</sup> Krabbe, on the other hand, refutes any unique symbolic function to individual colours in the *Metamorphoses*, claiming that looking for a fixed symbolism of colour will necessary lead to contradiction and confusion. Apuleius' novel is "color-coordinated" rather than "color-coded".<sup>730</sup> Griffiths, amongst the detail which scores his commentary on various aspects of the appearance of Isis in Book 11, offers insight into previous artistic and literary depictions of Isis without committing himself to any particular interpretive system of colour.<sup>731</sup> In his book on Isis and Osiris, which Apuleius was most likely familiar with, Plutarch does seem to ascribe a colour symbolism to elements of the cults of Isis and Osiris,<sup>732</sup> but he does not go into detail in the matter of their dress, stating simply that Isis' robes are variegated and Osiris' robe is the colour of light alone.<sup>733</sup> Elsewhere, he speaks of the custom of clothing statues of Osiris in a flame-coloured garment as the Sun is considered to be the visible substance of the power for good.<sup>734</sup> The use of black in the

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<sup>729</sup> Fredouille (1975) 52.

<sup>730</sup> Krabbe (2003) 544.

<sup>731</sup> See, for example, with regard to Isis' black cloak, the information he imparts on the use of colour, especially black and white, on previous representations of the goddess (1970, 128).

<sup>732</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 375 E. Two cocks are sacrificed to Osiris at the same time. They both appeal to aspects of his divinity inherent in his name: a white cock is sacrificed to Osiris in recognition of his function as container of things which are sacred, and a saffron cock in recognition of his function as container of things which are merely holy. The white cock stands for things which are clear and simple, and the saffron-coloured cock for those things which are combined and variable.

<sup>733</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 382C and D.

<sup>734</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 372 F.

Osirian rite could be ascribed to the god's dark colouring.<sup>735</sup> However, it is not implausible to suggest a function of colour in the *Metamorphoses* which is mid-way. Taking up both Fredouille's insistence on a fixed colour-code, and Krabbe's argument for a colour scheme in the novel based on co-ordination rather than code, we can see how the transformative role of Book 11 directs the interpretation of colour.<sup>736</sup> Colours which exuded largely negative connotations in the preceding books assume a positive and joyful meaning here. This is a narrative technique which engages both kinds of reader: for the learned reader, colours on Isis' dress may come with a pre-existing code, fed by the preceding literary canon. Yet even for the less literate reader, the perfection of Isis' (and Osiris') rite is made readily discernible in the transformative use of colours on Isis' dress. This sits well with the role of the reader's perception in determining the message of the novel. Moreover, the fact that no other perceptions arise in the description of Isis – we have only Lucius' – determines the fixity of the colour symbolism in this case.

More crucially, as I see it, colour in the *Metamorphoses* is subject to the kind of concern expressed in the *Florida* by the flutist Antigenidas that points of similarity can lead the unenlightened to mistake one thing for its opposite.<sup>737</sup> This approach to colour in clothing must be retained wherever comparison of the cult of Isis must be made with that of the Dea Syria. Whatever on the *cinaedi* caused Lucius to feel disgust undergoes a radical change when transferred to the goddess; so the yellow spectrum on the clothes of the *cinaedi*, which reflects their effeminacy, accrues positive value on the dress of Isis. Consequently, although Lucius does not impart information on the colours in it, the detailed description of her dress and the tone of ineffable wonderment at the goddess's appearance<sup>738</sup> underscore the sense

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<sup>735</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 364 B.

<sup>736</sup> The same claim can be made for fabric in Book 11. Cf. Mazzoli (1986), 205: "E il *linteolum* che in Il 30, 9 nasconde la vergogna dello sfigurato Telifrone faserà, *lintea lacinia* (XI 14, 3 s.), il nudo riemergere di Lucio alla dignità umana."

<sup>737</sup> Apuleius, *Florida*, 4.3. The discussion concerns practitioners of the flute and the use to which they put their skill. The speaker in the *Florida* refers to this shared semantic space as *nominum communionem*.

<sup>738</sup> Lucius expresses his frustration at not doing justice to Isis' beauty (11.3): *et ecce pelago medio venerandos diis etiam vultus attollens emergit divina facies; ac dehinc paulatim toto*

that Lucius perceives Isis' rite to be founded on truth and purity. Nor does he recoil from the colour scheme on her dress, for in this case, the co-existence of many colours is redolent of truth and goodness.

The variegated (*multicolor*) dress of Isis contains what was known to the artists of Greece and Rome as the four-colour palette: white, yellow, red and black.<sup>739</sup> The four-colour palette has its origins in aesthetic, cultural and philosophical values which were prized by the ancients. It is important to note that the concentration of these particular colours is found only in this passage (11.3-4) in the *Metamorphoses*: *tunica multicolor...nunc albo candore lucida, nunc croceo flore lutea, nunc roseo rubore flammida; et quae longe longeque etiam meum confutabat optutum palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore*. The intensive use of this restricted palette is thereby reserved for Isis and appears therefore to be intended as an honorific depiction redolent of harmony in some way. Apuleius' use of the four-colour palette in this instance underscores the thematic significance of Isis in the *Metamorphoses* and strengthens the connection of Book 11 to the preceding books, even if only by way of tonal contrast. The same four-colour combination is mentioned also with praise by Apuleius himself in the *DM* (334-335). This is an addition to the Aristotelian text on which the *DM* is based.<sup>740</sup> Apuleius particularly insists on the use in art, which strives to imitate nature, of discordant colours being combined to create an effect of concordance: *artesque ipsae, naturam imitantes, ex imparibus paria faciunt: pictura ex discordibus pigmentorum coloribus, atris atque albis, luteis et puniceis, confusione modica temperatis, imagines iis quae imitator similes facit*. The combination of otherwise discordant colours on Isis' dress

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*corpore perlucidum simulacrum excusso pelago ante me constitisse visum est. Eius mirandam speciem ad vos etiam referre conitar, si tamen mihi disserendi tribuerit facultatem paupertas oris humani, vel ipsum numen eius dapsilem copiam elocutilis facundiae sumministraverit.*

<sup>739</sup> This, and all information in this section concerning colour and colour-combinations in the *Metamorphoses* are taken from Krabbe (2003, *passim*), and Bruno (in Krabbe). However, both authors fail to include Apuleius' own observations on colour in the *DM*.

<sup>740</sup> In Aristotle's text, no mention is made of the use of discordant colours to produce harmony (Beaujeu, 1973, 327).

reinforces her unifying function, both in the novel and in accordance with the ancient Isiac aretalogies.<sup>741</sup>

Given the context and placement of the occurrence of the palette in the novel, a philosophical motivation for its occurrence at this point seems as valid as any cultural and aesthetic reasons for the choice, especially since Empedocles and Democritus set up an analogy between the four primary elements – earth, air, fire and water – and the four primary colours.<sup>742</sup> The elements become relative to Isis through her role as queen of the universe. What constituted these four primary colours was not based, by the philosophers, on actual artistic practice. Rather, the philosophers used a free hand in making up a kind of “poetic inventory of metaphysical properties, strange combinations of material and supernatural attributes that characterized each of the colours.”<sup>743</sup> Democritus chose to base the palette on white, red, green and black. Artists, on the other hand, retained the ideal of a restricted palette whilst choosing what colours went into it, mostly white, yellow, red and black,<sup>744</sup> the same combination of colours as is found in Isis’ dress. The restriction of pigment for the purposes of artistic expression to four colours only was praised by Cicero and Pliny the Elder.<sup>745</sup> Both men express admiration for the colour palette as one of the most important elements in the history of Greek painting. It later became associated with the Golden Age of Rome by its evocation of the Golden Age of Greek art.<sup>746</sup>

Colours in the *Metamorphoses* can also be perceived as having value insofar as they are relative to what is signified by their absence, especially where this is represented by white. The robes of the consecrated are white, a

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<sup>741</sup> Cf. Apuleius, *DM*, 334: *Et, ut res est, contrariorum per se natura amplectitur et ex dissonis fit unus idemque concentus. Sic mare et femineum secus iungitur ac diversus utriusque sexus ex dissimilibus simile animal facit.* The last line recalls the unitive function of the goddess revealed in the Kyme-Memphis aretalogy: [17] I drew man and woman together.

<sup>742</sup> Krabbe (2003), 524.

<sup>743</sup> Bruno (1977, 66 in Krabbe, 2003, 524).

<sup>744</sup> Bruno (1977, 74, in Krabbe, 2003, 524). See Bruno also on the exclusion of blue from the ideal palette.

<sup>745</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 18.70; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, 35.32.

<sup>746</sup> Krabbe, (2003) 524.

colour representing purity.<sup>747</sup> Isis' own dress is multicoloured, yet white also occurs on it. White is the colour of the light of the Sun triumphant (Isis-Osiris). The colour variegation in Isis' dress need not negate or question any notion of truth, variegation in this case not being the equivalent of motley; hence, the connotations of purity in white are not ruled out on Isis' dress, nor on that of her initiates.

Saffron-yellow testifies to the magical power of the crocus plant, symbolic of Isis the magician. This colour, whilst considered by the Romans effeminate on men,<sup>748</sup> is neutral on women and thoroughly becoming of the goddess who controls all aspects of nature. Red is the colour of the flame, an important symbol of immortality in the myth of Osiris.<sup>749</sup>

The symbolism of black in this instance can be explained in various ways, none of which need necessarily cancel each other out, as they all relate to aspects of the goddess. Black is reserved for one of the goddess's most important material attributes: her knotted and fringed "deep black cloak"

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<sup>747</sup> It can also function as the colour of truth and transparency. In Book 11, Lucius rejoices to see his name restored (at least, partially) when the servants he had left behind in Hypata came to discover the truth of his misfortunes, and returned his white-marked horse to him (11.20). The white horse becomes a symbol of the revolutions of truth and its changing aspect in the novel.

<sup>748</sup> See my previous chapter (Chapter 7) on the *cinaedi*.

<sup>749</sup> I draw this information on the symbolism of saffron-yellow and flame-red from Fredouille (1975) 52. Fredouille's sources of information appear to be André's book on colours in the Latin language (*Etude des Termes de Couleur dans la Langue Latine*, 1949), Lucian's *De Iside et Osiride*, and various other modern authors. The conclusion drawn by Fredouille is that Isis' robe in the *Metamorphoses* is not that of the variegated dress depicted by Plutarch in the *De Iside et Osiride* as the colour combination on Isis' dress in Plutarch's text symbolises the power of Isis over changing and changeable matter. However, I fail to see why the detail and the colour scheme on Isis' dress in the *Metamorphoses* cannot also be symbolic over-all of this same power of the goddess over changing and changeable matter as an extension of the individual symbolisms inherent in the individual colours. Fredouille perhaps reads *poikilia* as having a different slant to *multicolor*, possibly taking the adjective *multicolor* to indicate what would be considered today an effect of stripes along side each other. This may be the case; but we cannot rule out the possibility of the shimmering iridescent effect of different colours which are suffused into each other, much like shot silk. Different shades would therefore come to dominate in accordance with the light in which the fabric is seen.

(*palla nigerrima*). This garment, as depicted here, is typical of representations of the goddess in the Roman Empire,<sup>750</sup> especially of the Alexandrine-Roman type as portrayed in statues and portraits.<sup>751</sup> The cloak's black colour can be taken to refer to various things: black is the colour of the Nile or the Underworld, and of the goddess herself in mourning for her brother. It can relate to the fertility of the Nile valley (the black country), the role of Isis as Queen of the Underworld,<sup>752</sup> or even to the grief of the goddess at the time of her search for Osiris,<sup>753</sup> an idea contained in certain of the goddess's Greek epithets, such as *μελανηφορος*,<sup>754</sup> and *μελανοστολος*,<sup>755</sup> and in the specific collocation *palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore*, to the brilliance of the moon.

Lucius' particular choice of terminology for describing the black cloak, terms which embody the notion of light as well as of brilliancy and hue, leads to the supposition that Apuleius may be transferring the robe of Osiris, which is the colour of light, to Isis' cloak for the purposes of his novel.<sup>756</sup> However, Isis' black cloak is also reflective of the function of the goddess as illumination and enlightenment.<sup>757</sup> This role may not appear at a superficial level to be the most salient feature of the goddess, given that no indication is made of this in her name, as it is in the speaking name of Photis;<sup>758</sup> yet she illuminates Lucius both

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<sup>750</sup> Walters (1988) 16-18.

<sup>751</sup> Fredouille (1975) 50.

<sup>752</sup> Isis discloses this role of hers to Lucius during her apparition to him (11.6): *Quam vides, Acherontis tenebris interlucentem Stygiisque penetralibus regnantem*.

<sup>753</sup> Fredouille (1975) 52.

<sup>754</sup> Bernand (in Fredouille, 1975) 52. We also know that colleges of *μελανηφοροι* existed (Dunand III, and Malaise, both in Fredouille, 1975, 52).

<sup>755</sup> Bernand (in Fredouille, 1975) 52; Griffiths (1970) 501.

<sup>756</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 382C. This instance in the *Metamorphoses* is, of course, a literary rewriting and manipulation of the injunction against using the robe of Osiris more than once.

<sup>757</sup> On the role of illumination in Isis' robe, see Citati (1990) 174-175. Isis is the all-seeing Fortuna (*Fortunae, sed videntis*; 11.15) who brings correct perception with her. On the figure of Isis in the novel as the synthesis between religion and philosophical reflexion, see Méthy (1999) 48-49.

<sup>758</sup> Citati (1990) 168.

by her personal epiphany and her admonitions to him.<sup>759</sup> The chiasmic arrangement of the phrase (*palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore*) has the effect of balancing the elements in it in the form of a chiasmus, so that the *ater nitor* is just as important as the *palla nigerrima*.<sup>760</sup> It also confirms the cooperation of both aspects of colour as hue and luminosity, or brilliance. The *palla* and *nitor* are both objects which have, as function, the adornment of the wearer, fulfilling more than a merely perfunctory role as covering. This confirms Isis as at once goddess and, especially in comparison with most other female characters in the novel, archetypal woman.<sup>761</sup>

The black cloak could also be taken as a reference to the lower aspect of Isis as she has appeared in the novel, the necromantic aspect which she embodies in the figures of Meroe and Pamphile in Thessaly.<sup>762</sup> Magic and witchcraft therefore become low-level, degraded aspects of the knowledge which Lucius was seeking. The witches then can be seen to function as low-level figures or ministers of that knowledge, a degraded form of it, caused by misprision and which must be overthrown by Lucius as he approaches what he was seeking in its correct form.

Apuleius' choice of this palette is a reflection of the time in which he was producing his literary art, the Second Sophistic; but his decision to reserve the four colour palette for Isis alone appears to be less dependent on

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<sup>759</sup> Fredouille (1975) 50.

<sup>760</sup> Given the previous use of chiasmus in the novel, it appears that Apuleius uses it for a specific purpose, imbuing it with interpretative value wherever it occurs. See, for example, the particularly significant use of chiasmus in the important passage in Book 4, where the chiasmus is followed by a stock phrase (*vultu sereno*) in the ablative case (4.15): *'iamque habili corio et mollitie tractabili vultu sereno sese recondit.'* Fick (1987, 33) states that normally the terms *nitor* and *ater* would cancel each other out, but that here the contrast is used to create a harmony that manifests the goddess's divinity.

<sup>761</sup> Joël Thomas (1986), 199, sees Isis' dress as an example of the embodiment of the feminine in the novel. Isis stands in contrast to all other female characters in the novel: where Photis lets Lucius down by her erotic entrapment of him, Isis sets him free of his carnal passions. Isis' transformative power can counter the effects of witchcraft. Even the most virtuous woman in the novel, Charite, lacks the beauty and power of Isis. Plotina does not count as she was most likely not real.

<sup>762</sup> Citati (1990) 169, points out also that Meroe is the name of a city linked to the cult of Isis, and that Panthea, Meroe's companion, is an epithet of Isis.

diachronically or synchronically imposed tastes than on considerations of the allegorical potential of the colours in the novel. Plutarch provides relevant information in this regard: “As for the robes, those of Isis are variegated in their colours; for her power is concerned with matter which becomes everything and receives everything, light and darkness, day and night, fire and water, life and death, beginning and end.”<sup>763</sup> “All things therefore are resolved in Isis, and all the colours of the spectrum are refractions of her radiance.”<sup>764</sup> Isis’ shining robe gives an impression of depth and of changing hues or shades, an impression given by the anaphora *nunc...nunc...nunc*,<sup>765</sup> and not of colours which sit alongside each other in the static manner of stripes. This changeable aspect of the colours on her dress, relates a beauty of another order, one which imposes on Lucius the task of relating that which cannot be related.<sup>766</sup> Isis’ colour-varying dress is likewise the expression of the varied form given to her in her cult and her apperception by others (11.5): *En adsum...deorum dearumque facies uniformis*. All colours are subsumed into the perfect aspect, and emerge from this.

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<sup>763</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 382C.

<sup>764</sup> Krabbe (2003) 545. Emily Gowers follows a similar line of reasoning, and likewise reads the colour symbolism, or coding, as inherently tied in with the obsession with hybridity as well as the overarching religio-philosophical thrust of the novel: “Both satire and the ancient novel present the world as a hybrid place. For Persius ‘Man is multiform and life is multicoloured’ (*Satire* 5.52: *mille hominum species et rerum discolor usus*); Apuleius is full of descriptions of harlequin clothes, rotating machinery, and kaleidoscopic goddesses. For both, there is one overriding system of belief – for Apuleius Isiac Neoplatonism, for Persius Stoicism – that clarifies all this and transforms it into brilliant white. But that is not the general colour of either work, and both writers combine their picture of an imperfect world with an authorial personality that is hybrid to match” (2001) 83. Gowers’ main concern, however, is not with showing how this process of clarification works.

<sup>765</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 11.3: *nunc albo candore lucida, nunc croceo flore lutea, nunc roseo rubore flammida*. Cf. Fredouille’s note (1970), 51: “prenant différentes couleurs.”

<sup>766</sup> Fick (1987), 32. Fick also points out that the dress contains contradictory elements, such as the combination of two types of white, the matt white (*albus*) and the brilliant, shining white (*candidus*).

### “Isis Robed”

As has been established, Isis’ appearance to Lucius in natural surroundings (11.1) <sup>767</sup> overthrows her degraded semblances in the form of witches such as Meroe and Pamphile, the slave-girl Photis, and lesser forms of her cult such as that of the Dea Syria. <sup>768</sup> It is therefore appropriate that she should appear in her most majestic manifestation as “Isis Robed.” Isis’ appearance before Lucius as static, monumental and robed serves to confirm her role in the novel as redemptive by comparison with depictions in the novel of other deities. A robed statue of Isis, known as the Isis of Sais, elucidates the connection between religious truth and the goddess’s clothing, especially her mantle, by insisting on the goddess’s role as container of the secrets of nature: “I am all that has been and is and will be; and no mortal has ever lifted my mantle.” <sup>769</sup> The variegated dress of Isis Robed contrasts with the motley that embodies a shifting mind and a lesser manifestation of her godhead. Consequently, the motley of the *cinaedi* is merely reflective of their mental instability arising from their giving themselves over to their passions and can be contrasted with the variegation on Isis’ dress on the grounds that it is a lesser manifestation of the goddess which has lead people into error and attracted deviant types. Isis Robed appears more dignified than Venus as she appears in the pantomime in her cosmetic retinue and revealing, fluid and diaphanous silk dresses, the statue of Diana in her billowing garment (2.4: *veste reflatum*) and Jupiter in his trickster disguises (6.23; 6.29). Venus’ thinly veiled eroticism, embodying the earthly behind the celestial appearance, and

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<sup>767</sup> Especially nature which is not artificially constructed, such as the scenery in the pantomime. This aspect of Isis’ revelation to Lucius has already been discussed on the opening pages of this chapter.

<sup>768</sup> On these lesser forms, see Fick-Michel (1991) 324, and Citati (1990) 174 who refers to these previous manifestations as “Iside mascherata e degradata.”

<sup>769</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 354C. The translation I have used is that of Gwyn Griffiths, who points out in his commentary on the *De Iside et Osiride* that the reference to the lifting of the mantle is “clearly sexual” (1970, 284). Ziolkowski (2008) 75 claims that the sexual implication ascribed to the inscription in antiquity acquired a different meaning for the German philosophers of the eighteenth century (Kant, Schiller, Novalis and the Romantic generation), referring rather to the secrets of nature. This reading can be adduced for the portrayal of Isis in her mantle at this point in the *Metamorphoses*, a portrayal which has nothing sexual about it.

Jupiter's bodily proteanism, are countered by Isis Robed, an idea contained in the speaker's insistence that her countenance is deemed worthy of veneration even by other gods: *venerandos diis etiam vultus*. Isis' variegated dress must be apprehended differently. If *vestis* exists as the parallel to form, then Isis' changing dress reflects the different forms in which she has been depicted as a result of divergent perceptions of her (11.5).<sup>770</sup> This kind of transformation, which is merely the result of flawed perceptions of the goddess, must be seen as contrastive with that of the Olympian deities as they appear in the *Metamorphoses*, most especially Jupiter, whose metamorphoses are not the consequence of his perception by mortals, but of his own power, as he changed his form to circumvent opposition to his desires, even though he imputes the responsibility for these changes to his son, Cupid.<sup>771</sup> Isis is represented in the *Metamorphoses* not as self-changing, but as perceived differently. From her garment emanates the true and preferred form of her rite which embraces all others yet surpasses them.<sup>772</sup> Thus, all ambivalence is

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<sup>770</sup> 11.5: *cuius numen unicum multiformi specie, ritu vario, nomine multiiugo totus veneratur orbis. Inde primigenii Phryges Pessinuntiam deum matrem, hinc autocthones Attici Cecropeiam Minervam, illinc fluctuantes Cyprii Paphiam Venerem, Cretes sagittiferi Dictynnam Dianam, Siculi trilingues Ortygiam Proserpinam, Eleusinii vetusti Actaeam Cererem, Iunonem alii, Bellonam alii, Hecatam isti, Rhamnusiam illi, et qui nascentis dei Solis incohantibus illustrantur radiis Aethiopes utrique priscaque doctrina pollentes Aegyptii, caerimoniis me propriis percolentes, appellant vero nomine reginam Isidem.*

<sup>771</sup> 6.22: *contra leges et ipsam Iuliam disciplinamque publicam turpibus adulteriis existimationem famamque meam laeseris ... serenos vultus meos sordide reformando.*

Jupiter's claim that his transformations into animals are the work of his son, Cupid, does not alter the fact that Jupiter is associated in the novel with mutability of form. This association is repeated only a few chapters later by Charite (6.29).

<sup>772</sup> Griffiths (1970, 49-52) acknowledging that Apuleius makes little inclination to the Egyptian prototype for the depiction of Isis in the *Metamorphoses*, claims that Apuleius' depiction of the goddess's mysteries as precursor to 'gnosis' of the highest being – Osiris – is pallid by comparison to the heavily Neo-Platonist allegorising of the rite in Plutarch. This argument can be countered merely by considering the different nature of Plutarch's text, which can afford to be more doctrinaire and dry in its exposition of detail, and Apuleius' innovative and subtle emphasis on the appearance of Isis. On the status of Plutarch's text as philosophical, see Richter (2001). Interestingly, Apuleius appears not to have looked to the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid for inspiration in this, the transformative book of his novel. The address of Isis to Telethusa in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is very short, occupying only a few

resolved in her; clothing is reinstated at this point in the novel, but gradually lends itself less to perceptual ambiguity or variation. The connotations behind the colours and motifs on Isis' dress, and the symbols associated with her cult (which we may assume some of Apuleius' readers to have been familiar with), establish her rite as the correct one, deflecting multiple readings of it. It is crucial that no variant reading emerges alongside that of Lucius.<sup>773</sup> The dress of the *cinaedi* had a literarily and socially predetermined symbolism too, but, through Lucius, Apuleius is concerned to confirm what is erroneous in what their dress represents by Lucius' privileged position through which we have access to the true nature of the *cinaedi* as opposed to the unenlightened vision of the public spectators of the priests' ritual performance.

### **The *anteludia*: The Consummation and Consumption of Performance.**

In Book 11, prior to the solemn religious procession made by the priests and priestesses of Isis a popular procession takes place, similar in respect of costume and tone to a carnival. Lucius refers to this carnivalesque parade as the *anteludia* which precede the Isiac procession, in a manner which leads the reader to believe that they are a standard feature of the solemn religious counterpart (11.8): *Ecce pompae magnae paulatim praecedunt anteludia. A hapax legomenon*,<sup>774</sup> the word *anteludia* conveys its own meaning, both in terms of order and nature: it precedes the religious ceremony, *ante-*, and its main intention appears to be popular diversion, *-ludia*. This aspect of the *anteludia* is reiterated at the beginning of the following chapter where they recede to give way to the more solemn religious procession (11.9): *Inter has oblectationes ludicras popularium, quae passim vagabantur, iam sospitatricis deae peculiaris pompa moliebatur*. Several points need to be made about the

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lines (9.696-701). The only point in common her address to Telethusa has with the address of Apuleius' goddess to Lucius is the element of succour (9.699-700).

<sup>773</sup> See also the insightful remark of Svendsen (1978), 102, where he speaks of the authoritative (if not authorial) appropriation of perspective in the final book, evident in the novel's structure: "Upon conversion the 'retrospective' narrator promised by the prologue reasserts himself, perceives the true significance of his past experience, and interprets it for the reader." Whilst Svendsen's remark may not be aimed at the place of dress and other items of cult in Book 11, his understanding of the workings of an appropriating higher perspective in Book 11 is, I find, accurate.

<sup>774</sup> Griffiths (1975), 172.

*anteludia* by way of preliminary remarks to the more important discussion of its place in the final book and novel as a whole. In spite of the notable differences between the *anteludia* and the stately procession made in honour of Isis and her consort, Osiris, which comes after the *anteludia*, the two processions must be examined together. Integrating such a ludic spectacle within the realms of religious feasts is not difficult, given there is some evidence that such parallels existed in antiquity.<sup>775</sup> The difficulty with regard to their appearance in the *Metamorphoses* lies in ascertaining the nature of the link that binds them together. Can we take the *anteludia* as an integral part of the Isiac ritual, the individual elements expressive of certain features of the rite,<sup>776</sup> or do they merely serve a dilatory function, retarding the climactic point of the whole religious festival – Lucius’ retransformation – for greater effect? My interpretation of the function of the *antleudia* in the novel is based on a hypothesis which assumes an inherent connection between them and the subsequent procession, whether this mirrors the reality of the Isiac cult in its practice or not; hence the costumes do not have merely an aesthetic function in the scene. The reader is drawn to make connections between the *anteludia* and the religion itself through the mediation of the themes of metamorphosis and transformation, as costumes seek to bring about a temporary transformation of identity. Isis, the goddess who is worshipped under various guises, has ultimate control of physical transformation, especially Lucius’. Furthermore, the very dilatory effect (if not intention) of the *anteludia* cannot be separated from its connectedness to the rest of the festival. While marked differences stamp each procession as different in kind and form, similarity of purpose and direction underpins the essential link between them, the *anteludia* figuring as the preliminary stage in the process of transformation necessary to those who aspire to a less worldly life.

### **Performance and Costume**

Lucius relates eight costumed characters to the reader. He also includes as part of the *anteludia* three costumed animals, a tame bear, a monkey and an ass, the last animal accompanied by an old man. This brings the total number of participants to twelve. The inclusion of animals in this is validated

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<sup>775</sup> See Herodian on the festival in honour of the mother of the gods (1.10, 5-6).

<sup>776</sup> Griffiths (1975), 173.

by the important role animals have had all throughout the novel, both in themselves, and as part of the deeper inquiry into psychological hybridity that can be perceived in certain characters, like Thrasyleon (half man and wild beast) and Lucius (half man and half donkey). One of the most obvious features is the performative aspect, which is made especially clear by the terms with which the narrator chooses to describe it (11.8):

Ecce pompae magnae paulatim praecedunt anteludia votivis cuiusque studiis exornata pulcherrime. Hic incinctus balteo militem gerebat, illum succinctum chlamide crepides et venabula venatorem fecerant, alius soccis obauratis inductus serica veste mundoque pretioso et adtextis capite crinibus incessu perfluo feminam mentiebatur. Porro alium ocreis scuto galea ferroque insignem e ludo putares gladiatorio procedere. Nec ille deerat qui magistratum fascibus<sup>777</sup> purpuraque luderet, nec qui pallio baculoque et baxeis et hircino barbitio philosophum fingeret, nec qui diversis harundinibus alter aucupem cum visco, alter piscatorem cum hamis induceret. Vidi et ursam mansuem, quae cultu matronali sella vehebatur, et simiam pilleo textili crocotisque Phrygiis Catamiti pastoris specie aureum gestantem poculum, et asinum pinnis agglutinatis adambulantem cuidam seni debili, ut illum quidem Bellerophontem, hunc autem diceres Pegasus, tamen rideres utrumque.

The scene is replete with language which smacks of performance, and which shows that these roles have been assumed with conscious knowledge of what they represent by the actors, or players. The use of factitive verbs to enhance the role of dress as costume, as well as of apostrophe and potential subjunctives with which to address a second person, recalls the narrator's attempt at closing the gap between himself and the reader, as at Book 10 (11.8): *Ecce ... praecedunt ... hic ... gerebat, illu ... (crepides et venabula) ... fecerant, alius ... mentiebatur. Porro alium putares ... nec ille deerat, qui ... luderet, nec qui ... fingeret, nec qui ... induceret ... hunc autem diceres*; yet the general ambiance is more joyful and less negative than the pantomime's surrounding circumstances, as it lacks the sting of the satirist's indignation which marks his spectatorship at the amphitheatre.<sup>778</sup> More importantly, the

<sup>777</sup> *F: facibus*. For my discussion of this textual point, see further.

<sup>778</sup> Two further points of consideration arise from this. Firstly, Lucius had been brought to this point in Book 11 by his own will. He knew that this was necessary for his re-transformation. His presence at the amphitheatre, however, had been imposed on him by external forces and the part he was to play in the public spectacle was to confirm the animal in him rather than dispel or check it. Secondly, Lucius' joy is a consequence of the playful

factitive verbs in this passage do not function to show the completely transformative effect that the process of donning a costume has elsewhere in the novel (*cf.* 3.21: *fit bubo Pamphile*; 4.15: *bestiam factum*); the boundaries between acting a part and natural behaviour are better defined in this case.

The participants' choice of costume<sup>779</sup> is essential for resurrecting the past figures of the novel at a point where Lucius is soon to be bound by the goddess to give up his past life. Previously, scholars have preferred to focus on these characters in masquerade as symbolic of aspects solely of the Isiac cult.<sup>780</sup> My reading of these figures in masquerade of course does not overthrow any specifically Isiac meaning they may have, so I accept these readings as viable where I think they are valid; however, I perceive a

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carnavalesque aspect of the *anteludia*. The vignettes that feature in the *anteludia* are a jumble of personal stories; this is not the case for the pantomime in book 10. Of equal importance is the fact that the participants are not professional actors taking a role in the controlled re-enactment of an historical myth. These costumes are the result of personal choice (*votivis*).

<sup>779</sup> This notable feature has caused perplexity among scholars, as one of the key elements in the interpretation of this passage lies in the reasons for the individual player's choice of costume. This is borne out in the opening phrase (11.8): *Ecce pompae magnae paulatim praecedunt anteludia votivis cuiusque studiis exornata pulcherrime*. *Votivis* is an emendation for *votibus* which occurs in *F*, yet both words share the same root (*vot-*), which has religious or pietistic connotations. Various scholars believe that the phrase *votivis cuiusque studiis* refers to the personal choice of the wearer, despite the religious connotations of the word *votivis* (Gianotti, 1981c, 324; Fredouille, 1975, 66; Griffiths, 1975; Hanson, 1989, 2: 306) a connotation retained by other scholars who have kept it in their translations (Augello, 1980, 629; Boeken, 1899, quoted in Gianotti, 1981c, 324, and Fredouille, 66; Médan, 1925, quoted in Gianotti, 324, and Fredouille, 66).

<sup>780</sup> The anti-religious explanation for the presence of the *anteludia* at this point, as we have seen, is driven by historical precedent (Herodian, 1.10.5: "Free licence is given to all kinds of revels; anyone can disguise himself as any character he wants") and a legitimate concern, such as that expressed by Gianotti (1981c, 323) that looking for religious symbolism in the details of the dress can end in contradiction within arguments or conclusions that are far-fetched. The translation of Herodian is that of Whittaker in the Loeb edition (1969). According to Fick (1987, 35-36), the soldier, transvestite, gladiator, magistrate, philosopher, bird-catcher and fisher were all subjects of the ancient mime in popular festivities where people could momentarily liberate themselves from social constraints. She refers to Maximus of Tyre (3.10) for ancient evidence of identical parades occurring during the Dionysia which were characterised by laughter.

connection, albeit loose, between these figures and characters who have occurred in the preceding books. This connection in turn is carried into the conclusion of the novel and becomes relative to it by the thematic importance of transformation and exchange in the novel. One of the most notable features of the private costumes in the *anteludia* is the focus on individual signs as an essential aspect of costume. Specificity of signs is one way to indicate a role. More crucially, these signs are expressed by words which recall preceding costumed figures in the novel. This is important, as it seems that Apuleius, now more closely assimilated to Lucius, wishes the reader to remember these costumed figures during the *anteludia*, even though Lucius may not make these connections himself at the time he first sees these figures.

The soldier who opens the *anteludia* is marked out visually by the presence of the *balteus* from which he would append his arms.<sup>781</sup> The soldier has been interpreted as a configuration of the image of the holy army in which Lucius is encouraged to enlist himself (*da nomen sanctae huic militiae*, 11.15),<sup>782</sup> as well as an allusion to the Mithraic cult,<sup>783</sup> or, less compellingly, a reconfiguration of the Egyptian deity Wepwawet, the one who “opens the way.”<sup>784</sup> More compellingly, he recalls the soldier as a recurrent figure in the preceding books<sup>785</sup> and is a rather more general re-articulation of the warfare waged against Lucius by personified entities such as Fortune (*Fortuna*) when she is averse to him.<sup>786</sup>

Similarly, the figure of the man dressed as a woman, complete with a female wig (*adtextis capitis crinibus*), recalls the presence of the *cinaedi* posing

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<sup>781</sup> Griffiths (1975) 173.

<sup>782</sup> Merkelbach (in Griffiths, 1975, 174).

<sup>783</sup> Berreth (in Gianotti 1981c, 323 and Griffiths 1975, 174).

<sup>784</sup> Wittmann (in Gianotti 1981c, 323 and Griffiths 1975, 173-174).

<sup>785</sup> See, for example, 9.39 and 10.1. The soldier may also tap into those figures in the novel who perceive themselves to be soldiers, like the brigands. For specific examples of this, see Chapter 5 on Thrasyleon and the heroic self-perception of the robbers.

<sup>786</sup> 4.2: *Fortunae meae scaevitatem*; 7.3: *Fortunae scaevitate*; 8.24: *illa Fortuna mea saevissima*. Lucius' bad fortune is also acknowledged by Isis to have played a part in his misfortunes, 11.15: *Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis...Fortunae caecitas*. Such an admission does not of course rule out the part of Lucius' personal responsibility for his actions.

as priests in the service of the Dea Syria,<sup>787</sup> and even, although to lesser degree, Tlepolemus going under cover as a woman. The silk dress is indeed redolent of the topos of female vanity and luxury, although the *socci* could be worn by either sex.<sup>788</sup> Perhaps, then, the costume could point rather more to an inherent sexual ambiguity than to a denial of masculinity. Conversely, it may be plausible to take the transvestite man as a reconfiguration of the strong women in the novel, such as Plotina and Charite, who both had the outer form of a woman, but a man's spirit underneath, as a continuation of the image of male sexual ambivalence in the novel.

The fowler and hunter have been interpreted in varying ways. The fowler may recall to the reader the grandson of the old man who turned out to be a dragon in disguise. This young boy had been chasing after a sparrow in the hedge and had supposedly fallen into a pit. Just as the old man's grandson had perished as the result of chasing after a bird, so the dragon hunted for human blood in the guise of an inoffensive old man.<sup>789</sup> This serves as a warning against rash judgment based upon the first encounter. The hunter has also been interpreted in a ritual light, alluding specifically to the hunts of the Dionysiac rites;<sup>790</sup> however, I add that the *chlamys* and *venabula* mentioned in Lucius' description of the procession may recall the hunt during which Tlepolemus was treacherously murdered, the *venabula* reminding the reader of Tlepolemus' own *venabulum* (also called a *iaculum*) and Thrasyllus' *lancea*.<sup>791</sup> The *chlamys*, as well as being the regular garment for hunting, recalls Mercury as he was depicted in the pantomime (10.30): *ephebica chlamyda*. Even recalling

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<sup>787</sup> *Contra* Berreth (in Gianotti 1981c, 323) who believes it evokes the *galli* in the service of Attis. Cumont (1933), 257, believes that the cross-dressed man evokes the *Isiac* rite by virtue of its Eastern origin; such masquerades are a standard feature of the Eastern rites.

<sup>788</sup> Griffiths (1975) 175.

<sup>789</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 8.20-21. Mangouby (2001) 30, also makes this connection between the fowler figure in the *anteludia* and the earlier scene in Book 8 of the novel.

<sup>790</sup> Berreth (in Gianotti 1981c, 323). Griffiths (1975) 174 disagrees, suggesting an *Isiac* connection through the huntsman's representation as Horus, but with caution. He refers the reader to Eisler's conjecture that the hunt, in later Dionysiac contexts, was a metaphor for the taming of wild passions. Given the metaphorical value of costume in the *Metamorphoses*, I find this idea quite appealing but hesitate to apply it to the masquerade in question.

<sup>791</sup> 8.5.

Mercury as a beautiful boy (*luculentus puer*) and obviously an ephebe, it resurrects the less heroic aspect of Tlepolemus.<sup>792</sup> Hunting was also a popular feature of Roman public shows.<sup>793</sup> The reader may recall that the intended spectacle of Lucius' copulation with the condemned woman was to be set up as part of a public hunting show.<sup>794</sup>

The fisher of course recalls the old man who sold Lucius his fish which were promptly destroyed by Pythias.<sup>795</sup> As a couple, the fowler and fisher have also been taken to be a metaphor for the priests of Isis, relevant to the passage by the Greek assimilation of Isis to Diana.<sup>796</sup>

The participant simulating the philosopher has been interpreted by Merkelbach as symbolic of the platonising and pythagorising priests of Isis<sup>797</sup> (perhaps because of the sandals: *baxeis*), a supposition refuted by Griffiths on the grounds of Lucius' awareness that the priests of Isis, unlike the philosophers, were clean-shaven (see Book 11, chapters 10 and 30). He seems to suggest that these sandals may have been made of papyrus (as sandals of this type in Egypt were made out of papyrus) whereas those worn by Zatchlas, the priest depicted in Isiac style in Thelyphron's story, were made of palm-leaf.<sup>798</sup> Gianotti on the other hand perceives behind the particular stylisation of the character, a physical resemblance with the street philosophers of the Cynic-Stoic stamp who were such easy targets of derision and caricature.<sup>799</sup> This is a depiction of how philosophers, and perhaps philosophy in general, may have been perceived by the lower echelons of society; hence it is apt that

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<sup>792</sup> For this, see Chapter 6.

<sup>793</sup> Griffiths (1975), 174.

<sup>794</sup> 10.35: *tota familia partim ministerio venationis occupata.*

<sup>795</sup> 1.24.

<sup>796</sup> Merkelbach (in Gianotti 1981c, 323 and Griffiths 1975, 177)

<sup>797</sup> Gianotti (1981c), 323.

<sup>798</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 2.28: *Et cum dicto iuvenem quempiam linteis amiculis iniectum pedesque palmeis baxeis inductum et adusque dearso capite producit in medium.* Hanson's translation (1989, 2: 307) reads "wicker sandals."

<sup>799</sup> Gianotti (1981c) 329. Gianotti does not make parallels with preceding figures of the novel, so no attempt is made at resurrecting the figure of Socrates from Book 1, whose rough cloak (*palliastrum*) has been taken by other scholars to evoke the Cynic school of philosophers (Kindstrand, 1976, 61; Keulen, 2003; 2007).

philosophy should appear in this manner in a popular masquerade. Interestingly, no attempt has been made at establishing a parallel of even the loosest nature with the forlorn figure of Socrates in Book 1. This may be due to the sharp difference between the intact philosopher's cloak in this case (*pallio*), with the trappings typical of a Cynic brand of Socratic philosophy (*baculoque et baxeis et hircino barbitio*), and the tattered cloak of Socrates (1.6: *scissili palliastro*). Undeniably, Socrates in Book 1 is not a philosopher (indeed, he is portrayed as the very opposite of the philosopher whose name he shares), nor is he depicted as one of these Cynic-Socratic types, as he does not have the beard, sandals, stick or begging bowl associated with these types.<sup>800</sup> This does not however preclude the possibility of any comparison with the various Socratic schools, of course, inducing the reader to reflect upon the character in Book 1, the philosopher himself who is mentioned in Book 10, and the rather more stereotyped figure of the philosophical legacy presented here in the *anteludia*. Rather more subtly, and of greater significance to the novel as a whole, the presence of the philosophical figure on this occasion perhaps serves as a spring-board into consideration on how externals, such as sandals and cloaks, and other aspects of dress, especially those shared by different groups (in this case, the different "schools" of philosophy) can cause identity confusion or be misread, an important theme not only in the *Metamorphoses*,<sup>801</sup> but also in Apuleius' other works, resurfacing in his novel at a seminal point.<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>800</sup> Apuleius, too, was aware that these instruments are properly the insignia of the Cynics, as he insists in the *Apologia*, 22: *Peram et baculum ... Non sunt quidem ista Platonicae sectae gestamina, sed Cynicae familiae insignia. Verum tamen hoc Diogeni et Antistheni pera et baculum, quod regibus diadema, quod imperatoribus paludamentum, quod pontificibus galerum, quod lituus auguribus. Diogenes quidem Cynicus cum Alexandro mango de veritate regni certabundus baculo vice sceptri gloriabatur.*

<sup>801</sup> See for example, the points of similarity between the rite of the Dea Syria and the rite of Isis, which can lead people into error by confusing the two. See Chapter 7 for more on this.

<sup>802</sup> Compare, for example, what Apuleius says in the *Florida*, 9: *Nec tamen vos parva quaedam et prava similitudo falsos animi habeat, quoniam quaedam, ut saepe dixi, palliata mendicabula obambulant.* One of the causes of this misperception of the truth for its false image is the *nominum communitio* of which he speaks at *Florida* 4.

The gladiator and magistrate have attracted little attention.<sup>803</sup> However, Berreth's perception of the gladiator as a configuration of the psychomachy of the passions<sup>804</sup> may be valid insofar as this can be taken to refer to the robbers, especially in light of the evidence we have that "gladiator" was seen in antiquity to be a by-word for "robber"<sup>805</sup> and that the robbers are likened to gladiators in the novel.<sup>806</sup> No parallels have been suggested between the magistrate and Pythias. This may be due to the difference in the nature of the magistracies in the two passages, yet, notwithstanding this essential difference, a parallel with the figure of Pythias could be induced by the presence of the *fascēs*, the rods symbolic of the authority and punitive power of the higher magistracies, as these were not normally carried by magistrates themselves but by their attendant lictors. As well as being a caricature of the higher magistracy, marked by the purple (*purpuraque*) and perhaps purposely acknowledged as caricature by the actor, this incongruous image of the *fascēs* and the purple (note the juxtaposition in the text: *fascibus purpuraque*) could also recall the behaviour of Pythias which was incongruous with his particular magisterial authority (*potestas*).<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>803</sup> Mangouby (2001) 29, who, as I do, perceives the function of the *anteludia* to be resumptive of aspects of Lucius' past life, does however suggest that the gladiator recalls the arena where Demochares' bears were to fight and the arena in which Lucius was to copulate with the condemned woman, and, curiously, that the "false magistrates" (*sic*: "faux magistrats") evoke the false trial during the Festival of Risus. Gianotti (1981c), 323 makes the claim that, taken together, they can be considered to bring a specifically Roman flavour to the whole charade by operating as a kind of political seal of the hegemonic culture on religious manifestations of the imperial period. Fredouille points out (1975, 67) that the costume marks the gladiator out as belonging to the category of the Samnites.

<sup>804</sup> "ein Bild der Psychomachie gegen die Leidenschaften" in Gianotti (1981c) 323.

<sup>805</sup> GCA (1977) 184, with references.

<sup>806</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 4.26: *cum irruptionis subitae gladiatorum impetus ad belli faciem saeviens, nudis et infestis mucronibus coruscans, non caedi, non rapinae manus offerunt, sed denso conglobatoque cuneo cubiculum nostrum invadunt protinus.*

<sup>807</sup> I accept *fascibus* as the emended reading of *facibus* in the *F* manuscript. *Facibus*, referring to the torches used to illuminate magistrates during nocturnal visits, could yet still make sense, especially in the context of a carnival where realism is not expected to prevail; but I believe the emended reading gives a critical impetus to the figure. On the issue of the textual emendation, see Griffiths (1975) 176.

Gianotti perceives the guiding hand of the author controlling the costume of the animals. Two out of three of these animal costumes refer to mythical characters - a monkey dressed up as Ganymede and a donkey made up to resemble Pegasus - whose final destiny was in the heavens.<sup>808</sup> The bear in feminine clothing has been taken to recall Callisto,<sup>809</sup> but this is not stated in the text. The setting of the scene in Corinth makes the animal masquerade doubly relevant,<sup>810</sup> especially in view of the importance of transformation in the novel, as this is the place where Lucius will be restored to his human aspect.

The inter-species charade is also relevant as it reconfigures in comic form the closeness of human to beast in the novel. The tame bear in women's ornament may recall the matron from Corinth who became enamoured of Lucius in his asinine form and consummated her passion with him.<sup>811</sup> That bears and donkeys are different animals in no way undercuts the basic message of the closeness between man and beast. This very physical and successful union between man and animal serves to show how little actually separates us from our animal brethren. When we allow our mad passions (*cf* 10.19: *vesanae libidini*) to dominate us, they bring us down to the level of the beast. The bear in woman's clothing then also recalls the bestiality within Thrasyleon and which resurfaced through his bear disguise.<sup>812</sup>

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<sup>808</sup> Merkelbach (1962, 212) pre-empted Gianotti (1981c, 320) in this interpretation. See also Griffiths (1975) 176 on this.

<sup>809</sup> Although the bear is not associated with Isis, the constellation known as the Great Bear was considered to be the soul of Typhon (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 21, 259d; Fredouille, 1975, 68). Thrasyleon in his aspect as a bear then can also be seen to be a configuration of the antithesis of Isis. Appropriately, he died in costume. Lucius however regains his human shape. A comparison of Thrasyleon in his true aspect with Lucius in his true aspect as a man whose perceptual acuity has been honed (even if it is not yet perfect) as a result of his various travels and experiences, and who is soon to be admonished for his former life, confirms Isis as the queen of transformations, and shows that she has ultimate power over her enemies.

<sup>810</sup> On the relevance of Corinth to the masquerade, see Griffiths (1975) 177-180 and Gianotti (1981c) 315, 320-321, 325.

<sup>811</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 10.21-22.

<sup>812</sup> Relative to the question of man-beast similarity is the episode of Thiasus' riding into Corinth on Lucius, still a donkey, bedecked with elaborate trappings (10.18). Lucius tells us that Thiasus received him with civility from the start (*humane*, 10.17), as if he were a human

The monkey, the only animal who properly simulates, is an etymological figure of the very notion of simulation – *simia/similis* – as this has appeared in various guises throughout the novel, and the ultimately risible deficiencies of this.<sup>813</sup> Likewise, his Ganymede costume can be taken to recall the *cinaedi* who are pathics like Ganymede. They feigned true devotion in Book 8, but embodied false ritual (hence, knowledge) and life at a lower level, given over to pleasure. From a philosophical perspective this life can be considered the false life; hence the appropriateness of the animal who most closely simulates (*simia*) man. The *anteludia* therefore convey examples of inter-class, inter-gender and inter-species cross-dressing. In this way, they constitute a kaleidoscope of mixed imagery, redolent of both perceptual confusions, and the lower forms of life which Lucius has been attracted to or encountered on his journey and which no longer hold him back.

Capping the *anteludia* are an old man and a donkey dressed up with wings. These two characters together remind Lucius of Bellerophon and Pegasus, and can be seen to serve as a prefigurement of Lucius' attainment of immortality and his final place in the universe, by their terminal place in the popular procession. The old man posing as Bellerophon perhaps recalls the old gardener who befriended Lucius in Book 10.<sup>814</sup> The figure of Pegasus is more directly relevant to Lucius by the fact of Lucius' assimilation to the winged steed made on two occasions in the *Metamorphoses*, when Lucius picks up speed so as to escape from an undesirable situation. On the first occasion, Lucius attempts to escape from the robbers with Charite (6.30-31), and on the

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being. Behind this expression of humane treatment lurks the possibility that Thiasus too may have seen the human behind the beast, although not necessarily in a positive way, as Thiasus' motives were lucrative.

<sup>813</sup> *Contra* Connors (2004) 201, who sees no parallel with previous events in the novel, insisting rather on the place of the monkey as a figure of the "combination of low and high elements which his adventures span" following Finkelpearl's reading of it as "a real and comic celebration of the possibilities of the genre in which he has been a character" (Finkelpearl, 1998, 211). Wittmann (in Griffiths, 1975, 179), suggests that the monkey represents Thoth through the plaited cap. The ape as guardian of the Great Bear holds the cup; this suggestion is refuted by Griffiths.

<sup>814</sup> Nethercut (1968) 118 points out, however, that the old gardener in 9.31ff is never depicted as physically debilitated; he even manages to overthrow the arrogant soldier.

second, he fears being devoured by wolves.<sup>815</sup> The terms in which it is couched show how the second of these occasions constitutes a veritable cutting down to size of the mythical prototype (8.16): *Denique mecum ipse reputabam Pegasus inclutum illum metu magis volaticum fuisse ac per hoc merito pinnatum proditum, dum in altum et adusque caelum sussilit ac resultat, formidans scilicet igniferae morsum Chimaerae*. To the ancient reader familiar with the stories of Pegasus, it is clear that the creature's heroism is under question in Lucius' version of the myth. These two final figures in the masquerade then become a comic reconfiguration of how Lucius saw himself as Pegasus at that moment. The fact that these figures close the *anteludia* which recede to make way for a procession of a less popular and profane stamp, reinforces the function of the *anteludia* as signposting Lucius' relinquishment of his previous life which was lived at the mercy of the vicissitudes of fear-inducing Fortune.

The element of overriding importance however is the overall effect of the two together, as the sight of them induces laughter (11.8: *tamen rideres utrumque*). Perhaps behind this purely innocent laughter is the rather more sinister laughter, that which arises from the spectacle of the ridiculous, as when the discrepancy between instrument and intent suddenly becomes revealed to us. A notable example of this is the soldier dressing up Lucius, an ass, in military style with the intention of terrifying travellers (10.1): *sarcinis propriis onustum et prorsum exornatum armatumque militariter producit ad viam. Nam et galeam nitore praemicantem et scutum gerebam longius relucens, sed etiam lanceam longissimo hastili conspicuam, quae scilicet non disciplinae tunc quidem causa, sed propter terrendos miseros viatores in summo atque edito sarcinarum cumulo ad instar exercitus sedulo composuerat*. How could arms loaded onto a donkey produce such an effect, even by night? The function of the donkey and the soldier and the re-articulation of them in comic form at this point is to remind the reader of the derisive nature of disguise, howsoever the soldier may have intended it to work. Likewise,

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<sup>815</sup> Gianotti (1981c) 319-321. In the first occurrence (6.30), Lucius is assimilated to Pegasus by the robbers who express astonishment at his sudden transformation, brought about through the speed of his attempted escape with Charite: '*At paulo ante pinnatum Pegasi vincebas celeritatem.*'

reactions can undergo transformation: *rideres* can also mean smile as well as laugh.<sup>816</sup>

Such reactions do not indicate however that the costumes operate at only one level, that of the ludic, as mere play. The costumes also function to resurrect the importance of perception with regard to identity in the novel, insofar as they may reflect the aspirations and yearnings –perhaps the self-perception – of the participants. The occurrence of a cognate of the word *votivis* in Book 1 attests to this more general meaning of personal wish (1.24): ‘*Sed quid istud? Voti gaudeo.*’ One man finds hunting appealing, or yearns for the lifestyle which provides it; another may find the gladiator’s way of life attractive and another man may even want to be a woman. This reading of the *anteludia* can be considered a variant on the expression of the ancient concern with life choices, a concern which found expression in all genres, reaching its highest form in the philosophical corpus, especially of Plato and Aristotle and the Alexandrian philosophies,<sup>817</sup> with their insistence on the best possible kind of life - *aristos bios*.<sup>818</sup> This is prominently expressed by the structure of the narrative description heavily scored with pronouns as if providing a catalogue (‘Beispielreiheung’; 11.8): *hic...illum...alius...alium...nec ille...nec qui...nec qui...alter...alter*.<sup>819</sup> Under this scheme, Isis’ all-inclusive godhead which does not discriminate on the grounds of social origin or status, ethnicity, age or

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<sup>816</sup> Nethercut, (1968) 119. Fick (1987, 36-37) distinguishes the measured laughter which the *anteludia* give rise to with the contemptible laughter which marked Lucius’ humiliation at the mock trial in Hypata (3.10).

<sup>817</sup> Gianotti (1986), 89. Gianotti is enlightening on this topos, in both the Latin and Greek traditions, and sees another expression of it in Apuleius’ own *DM*, 366-368, where a series of human activities is listed. This list is then capped by the unifying role of god whose function is similar to that of the law which maintains equilibrium in the universe. This god is invoked by a series of different names and worshipped under a series of different aspects because of his power which has many forms (*DM*, 370): *Et cum sit unus, pluribus nominibus cietur, specierum multitudine, quarum diversitate fit multiformis vis*. This last passage may have relevance to the representation of Isis and her cult in the *Metamorphoses*, but I think the goddess’s insistence in the novel on the presence of a correct form of her worship and her name should be emphasised (11.5).

<sup>818</sup> Gianotti (1981c) 326-327, with references.

<sup>819</sup> Gianotti (1981c) 326. Also known as “Priamel-Formula”. For more on this, see Bréguet (1962) 128-136.

gender becomes one of her most desirable aspects.<sup>820</sup> However, notwithstanding the desirability of this aspect of her rite, the elective element still stands. Where some people are called to a higher level of existence, then the *anteludia* represent those lower forms which are undesirable for the elect, represented by the initiate priests and priestesses who take over from the *anteludia* in the ensuing religious procession (*pompa*).

From this perspective, as a prelude to the procession which will finally lead through various stages to Lucius' initiation, the *anteludia* must ultimately signify issue, or conclusion. The figures in the *anteludia* connect Lucius' past to his future. Just as these wandering unenlightened figures are swallowed up in the processional mass of the enlightened elite, Lucius' past life with all its various turns and guises is swallowed up in favour of a new life marked by stability and unity of mind and form, expressed outwardly by religious costume as both garment and tonsure. This will be Lucius' new *habitus*, expressive of both his joy, shown on his face, and his inner disposition, given to both joy and purity (11.15): '*Sume iam vultum laetiolem candido isto habitu congruentem.*'<sup>821</sup> Carnavalesque costume comes to embody all that is merely performative or dissimulating, all that operates at a surface level, the level of philosophical non-attainment in the *Metamorphoses*. The figures in the *anteludia* may be the expression of a "blessed group" a series of metamorphoses which "bespeak an elevation of state: bears...now can appear mild and civilised.; even the ape can find a place among the gods as

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<sup>820</sup> Gianotti (1981c) 328-329. The gender equality of the rite is unambivalently symbolised by a subtle but striking chiasmus in the following section (11.10): *Tunc influunt turbae sacris divinis initiatae, viri feminaeque omnis dignitatis et omnis aetatis, linteae vestis candore puro luminosi, illae limpido tegmine crines madidos obvolutae, hi capillum derasi funditus verticem praenitentes.* Likewise, Habinek (1990, 58) talks of a "festival of indiscrimination...*communitas*."

<sup>821</sup> Cf. TLL: A i.q. *micans, splendidus, lucidus*; C translate: 1 i.q. *laetus, prosper, felix*; 2. i.q. *benevolus, bonus, simplex, sincerus; apud ecclesiasticos etiam purus, innocens castus.* I believe the inherent notions of colour, brilliance and inner disposition to be all present in the context in which the adjective is used on this occasion. See also the OLD (1982), 264-265. Reinforcing Lucius' recent arrival at a state approximating correct perception is the following section of the priest's speech: he opposes Lucius, in his new *habitus*, to those who are *irreligiosi* (unbelievers) in terms redolent of perception and understanding: '*Videant irreligiosi, videant et errorem suum recognoscant.*'

Ganymede; an ass can be a horse; an old man a youthful hero.”<sup>822</sup> But this outcome can only happen for an elite few who can make the correct retrospective connections between cause and effect in their previous worldly existence and then move on to the higher life which will make them like unto a god as far as is possible for a mortal, the only metamorphosis that counts.

The *anteludia* are, then, Lucius’ first step towards union with the divine (embodied in the novel as Osiris) insofar as they are a symbolic figure of what he is leaving behind, baggage which is shed literally at the moment of his re-transformation. They are a continuation of the metaphor of exchange in the novel. The popular masquerades of religious festivals, howsoever they functioned in ancient society, become in the *Metamorphoses* directly linked with Lucius’ “putting off the old man” in all its various guises. This is why the re-transformation must precede the rite of initiation into the rites of Isis – Lucius must be whole again and purified before being joined to Osiris through her.<sup>823</sup> This is made doubly emphatic by the fact that the donkey was considered an impure animal by its association with Seth-Typhon, the god who killed Osiris. Hence Lucius’ appeal to Isis that she should cast off (*depelle*) his donkey appearance, dreadful to both him (Lucius) and her (11.2): *depelle quadripedis diram faciem*. The animal is so hateful to the goddess that Lucius euphemistically exchanges the species – the donkey - for the genus – *quadrupedis*, the quadruped. The goddess, too, avoids direct reference to the donkey by name (11.6): *mihique detestabilis iam dudum beluae istius corio te protinus exue*.

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<sup>822</sup> Nethercut (1969) 119.

<sup>823</sup> Nethercut aptly points out (1969, 111) that it is at this seminal point in the story of Lucius’ journey towards self-knowledge that he is able to re-establish contact with his white horse. It is not by accident that the native-bred pure white horse (1.2: *in equo indigena peralbo*) of the opening book should be restored to him as a shining white horse (11.20: *equum colore candidum*), of the same kind of brilliance as the day-light on the day of the festival (11.7: *candebat*), and as the white stoles of the female initiates (11.9: *mulieres candido splendentibus amicimine*). White is associated with joy as well as with purity. Lucius’ relationship with the horse is now restored to its natural order – it reflects his noble status, his humanity and is now his companion (which it could not be when he was a donkey, as the donkey is a lower equine species).

## Lucius' Re-Transformation and Nakedness

Lucius' awareness that Isis alone can free the man from the beast within him, which is expressed in his asinine form, motivates his appeal to Isis in her transformative capacity, prevalent at that moment when he first prays to her. Lucius' prior curiosity in metamorphosis, mediated through Photis whose connection with light is redolent in her name, has brought him to the feet of Isis, queen of all prodigies and metamorphosis.<sup>824</sup> However, Lucius' transformation into a donkey was the result of Photis' confusion of the jars, caused by her haste. The terms of her explanation for her error recall moral messages concerning deceptive appearances which can lead to ignorance and thence to moral downfall or complete undoing (3.25): *'Me trepidatio simul et festinatio fefellit et pyxidum similitudo deceptit.'*<sup>825</sup> If Photis embodies incorrect knowledge, Isis embodies correct knowledge. Magic is replaced by religion, expressive of a philosophic vision. Isis is depicted in the novel as bringing about retransformations, as opposed to the witches whose transformations are never seemingly reversed. In this book his asinine appearance approximates a costume proper inasmuch as it no longer reflects the truth of his character, and has now become burdensome to him (he refers to it as a *diram faciem*, 11.2). By his opposing this asinine form, in his prayer, to his essence – *depelle quadripedis diram faciem, redde me conspectui meorum, redde me meo Lucio* – he is making a distinction between the two based on what he perceives to be the truth: he is not a donkey, so he should no longer have the appearance (*facies*) of one. He wishes to be restored to the sight of his fellow man (*redde me conspectui meorum*) so he can be judged as a man (*redde me meo Lucio*). Lucius' restoration to humanity proper begins with the restoration of his

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<sup>824</sup> Citati (1990) 167.

<sup>825</sup> Such a message is made clear in the section of the novel dealing with the *cinaedi* (8.27, 28). For a fuller discussion of this, see Chapter 7. Haste is always depicted negatively in the novel. See Lucius' haste to discover the arcane arts, and the haste with which he runs through the procedure by which he intends to be transformed into a bird only to become a donkey. Such haste leads to his downfall (2.6; 3.24). Isis' name, however, as Plutarch tells us, contains a good notion of haste, "hastening (*hiemai*) with understanding" (*De Iside et Osiride*, 375 C, E), haste towards knowledge of "Him, who is the First, the Lord of all, the Ideal One. Him does the goddess urge us to seek" (*De Iside et Osiride*, 352 A). Photis' words also recall Apuleius' message in the *Florida*, 9: *vos parva quedam et prava similitudo falsos animi habeat*.

human form. This functions to remind us of his subtending humanity, just as his transformation into a donkey functioned to make visible to the reader Lucius' subtending asininity, an asininity which coexisted with his humanity, but which at that time, had the upper hand. His retransformation is the undoing of his original transformation (11.13):

Nec me fefellit caeleste promissum: protinus mihi delabatur deformis et ferina facies. Ac primo quidem squalens pilus defluit, ac dehinc cutis crassa tenuatur, venter obesus residet, pedum plantae per ungulas in digitos exeunt, manus non iam pedes sunt, sed in erecta porriguntur officia, cervix procera cohibetur, os et caput rutundatur, aures enormes repetunt pristinam parvitatem, dentes saxei redeunt ad humanam minutiem, et, quae me potissimum cruciabat ante, cauda nusquam.

The mark of Lucius' physical form is now the measure determined by his human nature. The language used to express this is the language of restoration, of settling back into prior dimensions (*residet, repetunt pristinam parvitatem, redeunt ad humanam minutiem*). Humanity of form must now reflect his re-ordered soul.<sup>826</sup> The irrefragable co-dependency of body and soul is reiterated and holds to the last moment.

No sooner is the donkey-skin shed than it is apparent that Lucius is naked, a symbol of his rebirth, but also of his shedding of the baggage of his past life and its unworthy attractions. The priest orders him to be covered with a linen garment (11.14).

Sed sacerdos utcumque divino monitu cognitis ab origine cunctis cladibus meis, quanquam et ipse insigni permotus miraculo, nutu significato prius praecipit tegendo mihi linteam dari laciniam; nam me cum primum nefasto tegmine despoliaverat asinus, compressis in artum feminibus et superstrictis accurate manibus, quantum nudo licebat, velamento me naturali probe muniveram. Tunc e cohorte religionis unus inpigre superiorem exutus tunicam supertexit me celerrume.

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<sup>826</sup> Recall what the unnamed interlocutor said to Lucius after hearing Aristomenes' story (1.20): *'Tu autem,' inquit 'vir ut habitus et habitudo demonstrat ornatus, accedes huic fabulae?'* By this remark, it appears that Lucius was covering an overly curious and credulous, even superstitious soul, with a demeanour which would belie, or show up, such credulity as ill-becoming a man of his social status and education.

Lucius' shame at appearing naked before a crowd of onlookers, especially in a religious procession, is understandable;<sup>827</sup> but Lucius' shame on this occasion can also be attributed to his regained sense of human dignity. He refers to the donkey skin that covered him as the animal itself, now separate from him and no longer a part of his being, reclaiming his own pelt: *me nefasto tegmine despoliaverat asinus*. It has now become an unwanted costume, a skin, a mere covering (*tegmen*) of which Lucius is glad to be spared. In view of Lucius' request at 11.2<sup>828</sup> and Isis' injunction at 11.6,<sup>829</sup> we can assert that the covering is that of the donkey and that Apuleius makes no attempt at this point to be deliberately ambiguous with regard to meaning. Apuleius' skill at subtle word-play can be detected in this instance, as by the juxtaposition of the words *tegmine* and *despoliaverat* he recalls the original meaning of the root of the verb in question – *spolium*, in *despoliaverat* – as skin, especially the skin of an animal.<sup>830</sup> No undertones of irony exist here; the donkey and the man are two separate entities: “The donkey despoiled me of **his** skin.” Lucius' refund nakedness is indeed termed as covering (*velamento...naturali*) but a covering which is a privilege and aspect of nature, not of intended artifice or dissimulation.

In addition to accruing ritual importance, the sight of Lucius naked resonates with the message of the *DDS*, wherein, using the long-standing metaphor of horse selection, Apuleius reminds us that we are to use the sight of the mind in contemplating men, and that we must judge the man divorced of his trappings, often expressed through dress – social connections, status, power, etc – if we are to arrive at a correct judgement of him (*DDS*, 23): *Sed istis omnibus exuviis amolitis equum ipsum nudum et solum corpus eius et animum contemplantur... Similiter igitur et in hominibus contemlandis noli illa*

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<sup>827</sup> Griffiths (1975) 240, states that such spectacles may have been deemed shocking; although he does point out further on (310) that there was a brief moment in the mystic rites when the initiate was naked, recalling a passage in Plotinus' *De Abstinencia* (1.31) and the *Chaldaean Oracles* (fragment 116, 2) which he takes as referring to the moment between the old and the new. Griffiths also has a brief *addendum* on nudity in the Isiac rite (356).

<sup>828</sup> 11.2: *Depelle quadripedis diram faciem*.

<sup>829</sup> 11.6: *pessimae mihique iam dudum detestabilis beluae istius corio te protinus exue*.

<sup>830</sup> Brachet (2001) 39-50, especially 43-45.

*aliena aestimare, sed ipsum hominem penitus considera.* Being naked, Lucius cannot be judged by his clothing, the primary character index in the novel, if not life. The equine metaphor has resonance for this passage, as Lucius has spent most of his time in the novel in the guise of a donkey, a lower member of the equine species.<sup>831</sup> In spite of Lucius' outer garment - and animal skin is a kind of clothing - Charite had a presentiment of the human behind the donkey. Now, by shedding his equine skin, he shows how he has shed (at least most of) his equine qualities. Just like the horse stripped of its trappings, Lucius is *nudum*, stripped of his skin, redolent of the trappings of his previous existence. The reader is put upon to extrapolate meaning from this scene, as if Lucius is asking: "Now, how do you judge me?"

The covering of Lucius' nakedness after his retransformation is a positive counterpart to the negative attempt at covering Socrates' shame in Book 1. Socrates' pathetic attempt to cover his shame (*punicantem prae pudore*) when he first meets Aristomenes and which ends only with his emphasising his nakedness is matched by Aristomenes' realisation that his friend's shame is so great that clothing him, like a man, is not a viable option; mere covering is the best he can do for Socrates (1.7). Behind this realisation there lurks a reflection on the moral purpose of clothing on a man. Clothing makes the man but also reflects the man as a creature with a soul.<sup>832</sup>

Lucius' sense of shame also confirms his reinstatement amongst human beings, as animals have a sense neither of nakedness nor of shame (*cf.* 10.34: *praeter pudorem obeundi publice concubitus*). The word used for the temporary covering provided by one of the initiates to cover Lucius' nakedness is *supertexit* a word which, by its prefix, suggests that the outer tunic had to be pulled on over the head, calling to mind the image of the *ependytes* (11.14):<sup>833</sup>

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<sup>831</sup> The equine metaphor has its origin in Xenophon, in the *Memorabilia*, 4.2.26ff (*contra* Harrison, 2000, 169, who suggests that a more distant technical source could reside in Xenophon's *De Re Equestri*, 1.2. I believe the *Memorabilia* is more likely to be the genesis of the topos by reason of the Socratic frame, echoed in the mention of Socrates in the passage from the *DDS*: *ipsum ut meum Socratem pauperem spectata*).

<sup>832</sup> Compare the meaning behind the *vestis humanior* in Petronius' *Satyricon* (117), mindful however of the perverted context in which it occurs.

<sup>833</sup> On the problem of the *ependytes*, its origin and what it was used for, see the insightful and cautionary article by Miller (1989) 313-329, especially page 327, where she discusses

*Tunc e cohorte religionis unus impigre superiorem exutus tunicam supertexit me celerrime.* Now Lucius has shed his past life, he can move closer to the divine. This further step also materialises in the novel in textile configuration.

### The Olympian Stole

Lucius' preparation for the reception of the sacral robes, especially the garment by which he is assimilated to the Sun, the Olympian stole, is ceremoniously inaugurated by his being enveloped in an unused linen robe. The fact of its being unused (*rudique*) means it is a robe which is personal to Lucius. Interestingly, this simple garment can only be worn when the uninitiated have been dismissed (11.23): *Tunc semotis procul profanis omnibus, linteo rudique me contectum amicimine arrepta manu sacerdos deducit ad ipsius sacrarii penetralia.*<sup>834</sup>

The next morning, he must come forth wearing his robes as a sign of his consecration. There is nothing merely decorative in the elaborately worked ordination robe, known as an Olympian stole - *Olympiacam stolam* - which Lucius must wear for his initiation. It may be called an Olympian stole by

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the possibility of its being used, in cultic contexts, as the "ancient equivalent of 'Sunday best'." The officiating priest then would have worn it for formal elegance, not for the advertisement of priestly rank. It thus conferred social status. For more on the language of dress in religion, see Mills (1984) 255-265.

<sup>834</sup> If, with Eitrem (1926) 52, and also Griffiths (1975) 293, we take this to be a garment associated with death, a "Todeskleid" possibly representative of Isis' garment of mourning for Osiris, this would explain the nature of the subsequent vision of Lucius as he comes face to face with the gods including those of the Underworld (11.23): *Accessi confinium mortis et, calcato Proserpinae limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi...deos inferos et deos superos accessi coram et adoravi de proximo.* I see this garment as perhaps referring to something other than a mourning dress. Rather, it seems more plausible to read into this garment an association with the idea of *victory over death*. Assurance of victory over death is given by Isis herself when she appears to Lucius (11.6): *et cum spatium saeculi tui permensus ad inferos demearis, ibi quoque in ipso subterraneo semirotondo me, quam vides, Acherontis tenebris interlucentem Stygiisque penetralibus regnantem, campos Elysios incolens ipse, tibi propitiam frequens adorabis. Quodsi sedulis obsequiis et religiosis ministeriis et tenacibus castimoniis numen nostrum promerueris, scies ultra statuta fato tuo spatia vitam quoque tibi prorogare mihi tantum licere.*

reason of the rapport between the initiates and the Olympian gods,<sup>835</sup> a possibility which still holds in the context of an Egyptian mystery-rite.<sup>836</sup> The *DM* can provide a further explanation: Olympus is god's dwelling. Apuleius offers a definition of Olympus, relating the word to notions of freedom from obscurity and agitation.<sup>837</sup> Ironically, at this point in time, Lucius is depicted with more dignity than has been shown in the depiction of the Olympian deities in the novel, such as Venus (in both the Cupid and Psyche tale and the pantomime) and Jupiter (again, in the tale of Cupid and Psyche), and is entering a new life free from the vicissitudes of Fortune and acquiring a clearer vision.

The robe is part of an elaborate and symbolic ritual. First, he comes out wearing twelve robes as a sign of his consecration (11.24): *processi duodecim sacratus stolis*. These twelve robes appear to be part of the Olympian stole. This attire, Lucius tells us, is very holy (*habitu quidem religioso*). Although the case of *habitu* and its juxtaposition with *stolis* puts it in apposition with *stolis*, Apuleius' fondness for word-play allows the reader to detect behind this material garment a state of soul and mind which is better disposed to religiosity, as Lucius has been initiated into the rite, that is, made more worthy of the rite (*sacratus* from *sacer*),<sup>838</sup> and this new state is reflected in and

<sup>835</sup> Walsh, quoted in Krabbe (2003, 280). Krabbe mentions a possible parallel with Hercules, based on Lucius' descent to the underworld which evokes Hercules' last labour to bring back Cerberus. Lucius' elevated status at this moment and his stole decorated with animal figures, reminiscent of Hercules' lion-skin, reinforce this parallel (Krabbe, 2003, 240).

<sup>836</sup> On Apuleius' conflation of Greco-Roman terminology with Egyptian ideas, see Griffiths (1975) 313.

<sup>837</sup> Apuleius, *DM*, 362: *Ὀλυμπον etiam idem illa ratione eum nominant, quem ab omni fuscitate ac perturbatione vident liberum*.

<sup>838</sup> I hesitate to translate this "holy", because of the Christian connotations behind the English word, even though there are occasions in Book 11 where *sacer* comes close to this meaning, cf. *Metamorphoses*, 11.9: *quae de gremio per viam qua sacer incedebat comitatus solum sternebant flosculis*. I take it for granted that being made more worthy of the mysteries is predicated upon a sense of moral improvement in some way. Lucius, for his part, is told that he must learn to control his appetites, an ascetic injunction which after some hesitation (11.19) Lucius is willing to attempt (11.23): *Quis venerabili continentia rite servatis*. Although abstinence is mentioned in the text mainly with reference to meat (11.21; 11.23; 11.28; 11.30), I see no reason why this abstinence cannot be transferred also to more carnal appetites, such as lust.

through this attire. Griffiths offers, as translation of this phrase, “made sacred with twelve robes” on the grounds that “new clothing indicates a new man in this context” thereby tightening the body-soul connection.<sup>839</sup> The former connotations of victory behind the palm-leaf that have arisen in the novel<sup>840</sup> reappear in the crown made of palm leaves reproducing sun rays. This crown also reiterates the close link of the goddess Isis with her brother-consort through the symbolism of light and the sun (11.24): *At manu dextera gerebam flammis adultam facem, et caput decore corona cinxerat palmae candidae foliis in modum radiorum prosistentibus.*

The solar imagery is continued as far as Lucius’ physical condition. Lucius appears the next morning as the risen sun which had set on the previous night (11.23): *et Sol curvatus intrahebat vesperam.* During the secret ceremony which had taken place that evening, Lucius had seen the sun flashing with a bright light in the middle of the night (11.23): *nocte media vidi solem candido coruscantem lumine.* Now elevated, just like the sun at its zenith, Lucius is the centre of the gaze of those who look upon him. It is they who, like satellites, must move around him (11.24): *Sic ad instar Solis exornato me et in vicem simulacri constituto, repente velis reductis in aspectum populus errabat.* The sun brings light to the world and can see everything.<sup>841</sup> Can the argument be made that, in this garment, Lucius is resurrected in the garment of the sun god, Osiris, to whom Isis is linked in the novel?<sup>842</sup> Although no mention is made of

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<sup>839</sup> Griffiths, (1975) 308.

<sup>840</sup> See the palm-leaf sandals worn by Zatchlas, who has all the attributes of an Isiac priest, at 2.28: *pedesque palmeis baxeis inductum.* Earlier on in Book 2 (2.4), Lucius gazed with attention on a statue in Byrrhaena’s house, which included a depiction of the palm-bearing goddess (*Palmaris deae facies*) which scholars have taken to refer to Victory (*Nike*) (Peden, 1985, associates Victory with Isis). Griffiths (1975) 315, sees the crown as probably deriving from the Osirian “crown of justification or victory” because of its solar form.

<sup>841</sup> Cf. Apuleius, *DM*, 355: *sol quidem omnituens ortu suo diem pandit.*

<sup>842</sup> The sun appears to be a divinity associated with Isis in Book 11. Lucius acknowledges this association in his prayer to her (11.2): *et Solis ambagibus dispensans incerta lumina,* an association reiterated by the goddess herself when she addresses him, speaking of those nations whose worship of her is in line with the correct one (11.5): *et qui nascentis dei Solis incohantibus illustrantur radiis Aethiopes utrique priscaque doctrina pollentes Aegyptii.* On the assimilation of the sun-god to Osiris, see Fredouille (1975) 116; Griffiths (1975) 303-306.

Osiris at this point, certainly, in this guise, Lucius shows himself now to be like unto a god - *sic ad instar Solis* - (cf. *ὁμοίωσις θεῶν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν* in Plato, *Theaetetus*, 176b) as far as is possible for a mortal.<sup>843</sup> In the Platonic scheme, the Form of the Good is compared to the sun.<sup>844</sup> Towards the end of the second century A.D., the sun was worshipped as a god, and the cult of Sol Invictus was adopted into the state and became an important part of imperial religion.<sup>845</sup> The radiate crown was an important part of the associated iconography.<sup>846</sup> For the reader familiar with Egyptian religious lore, the image of Lucius likened to the sun will have greater significance for Lucius' communion with Osiris at the end of the novel; yet even for those without access to such knowledge, Lucius' portrayal at this moment undeniably conveys a sense of elevation. Where it is permissible to extend the rays of the sun depicted in Lucius' crown into the yellow colour spectrum until they submerge into gold, associations with divinity are rendered licit. Becoming like unto a god is symbolised at the level of the body by a ceremony involving dress.

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Lucius' appearance in this garment prefigures the intimate moment of his contact with the god, the moment on which the novel ends.

<sup>843</sup> On this interpretation of the novel's ending, which seeks to make a philosophical message readily accessible to a non-specialist readership, see Gianotti (1981c), 331 (= 1986, 94). Moreschini (1965) 37 associates the Platonic formula (which Apuleius repeats, *DPD*, 2.23: *Sapientem quippe pedisequum et imitatore[m] dei dicimus et sequi arbitramus deum; id est enim ἔπου θεῶν*) with the cult of Isis: "La *ὁμοίωσις θεῶν*, dottrina fondamentale dell'etica medioplatonica e sostenuta anche da Apuleio (*De Platone* II, 23, 252 ss.), potrebbe rappresentare, forse, il lato razionale e profano di una esigenza di iniziazione misterica attraverso la quale l'uomo possa avvicinarsi il più possibile a Dio; altrettanto si potrebbe dire dell'altra formula, affine alla prima, quella dell'*ἔπου θεῶν*." Notwithstanding this fact, I see it as plausible to take the garment as a prefiguration of Lucius' future accession to the rites of Osiris. Lucius may have been aware of the association of the sun with Osiris, although he has chosen not to mention the brother- consort of Isis at this point. Griffiths (1975), 317 also insists on the assimilation of the worshipper to the god through the use of clothing and symbols identified with the god. In Book 11, Lucius' progression towards the truth is hastened at the narrative level, but in terms of chronology, it is spread out over the course of a year.

<sup>844</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 6. 508e1-509a5; 509b2-10. On this comparison, see Wheeler, III (1997), who also highlights the equivalence in Plato's text between Good and the Sun, and Light and the Truth (Truth is to be understood in its Platonic meaning).

<sup>845</sup> Dunbabin (1982), 70.

<sup>846</sup> Dunbabin (1982), 84.

The basic dress (which one takes to consist of the twelve robes) is of typically humble material, the linen redolent of purity (*byssina*), but it is richly decorated: *floride depicta veste*.<sup>847</sup> This attire is represented as an ordination garment, unlike the rough, unworked linen garments worn by the priests and priestesses of Isis.<sup>848</sup> The cloak, which reaches to Lucius' heels, is expensive (*pretiosa*) and also highly wrought with significant and colourful pictures. The co-ordinating adversative particle- *sed*<sup>849</sup> - as well as establishing a contrast between the purity of the fabric and the complexity of the motif, further suggests that the combination of fine texture and decoration may have been difficult to produce. The overall effect is of a garment becoming of a god – a harmonious marriage of opposites, sheerness and decoration (11.24):

superstiti, byssina quidem, sed floride depicta veste conspicuus. Et umeris dependebat pone tergum talorum tenuis pretiosa chlamyda. Quaque viseres, colore vario circumnotatis insignabar animalibus; hinc dracones Indici, inde grypes Hyperborei, quos in speciem pinnatae alitis generat mundus alter. Hanc Olympiacam stolam sacrati nuncupant.

The presence of a linen tunic beneath a cloak (*chlamys*) may suggest an Egyptian hieratic custom.<sup>850</sup> Again, the combination of colour (*colore vario*) can in this case be considered syncretistic, as symbolic of a rite which embraces all forms of devotion and reaches to the ends of the earth. Colour variation does not occur in this case in a context of hurly-burly motion like the dress of the *cinaedi*; rather, the static posture of Lucius replicates the statuesque quality of Isis in her appearance to Lucius prior to his retransformation. Cult vestments embroidered with animals may have been common in antiquity.<sup>851</sup> The depiction of legendary animals from India and the Hyperborean region on a

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<sup>847</sup> On the question of the likelihood of floral motifs (*floride depicta*), see Griffiths (1975) 310-311.

<sup>848</sup> Compare this with the finely woven linen (*byssu tenui pertexta*) worn by Isis at 11.3.

<sup>849</sup> Callebat (1968), 91, cautions against ascribing an adversative function to the connector *sed* on every occurrence of the word in the *Metamorphoses*, showing how it often marks not opposition but enrichment, an amplification of a previous statement. I believe that it is possible to see an example of this function behind the connector on this occasion.

<sup>850</sup> Griffiths (1975) 311.

<sup>851</sup> On this question, see Fredouille (1975) 115-116.

religious vestment expresses the expanse of the world traversed by the sun.<sup>852</sup> The animals depicted on Lucius' Olympian stole carry meaning: griffons are Osirian as opposed to Typhonian animals (as Typhon was Isis' and Osiris' enemy),<sup>853</sup> an opposition which is necessary, as Lucius has now put off the donkey, which was a Typhonian animal.<sup>854</sup> Saint Isidore of Seville tells us that griffons originate in the Hyperborean regions, a statement already pre-empted in the information Lucius provides (*quos in speciem pinnatae alitis generat mundus alter*),<sup>855</sup> and that India and Aethiopia are the places of provenance of dragons.<sup>856</sup> Some scholars have associated griffons with dominion over one's enemies,<sup>857</sup> or, through associations with Apollo and Dionysus, divinity and immortality.<sup>858</sup> The appearance of griffons on the inner altar of the Ara Pacis and on the cuirass of Augustus (in the Prima Porta statue) would further signify peace and wisdom. All these connotations are valid for the present context, so griffons are aptly transferred onto the initiation garment of Lucius who has recently overthrown his subjection to adverse Fortune, has promised to overcome subjection to his own fleshly inclinations, and has acquired inner

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<sup>852</sup>In this guise the stole may recall the Egyptian re-birthing rite known as *tekenou*, part of the mystery rites of Osiris. On this rite, see Hani (1973) 278.

<sup>853</sup>On this opposition, see Hani (1976) 381-439 and Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 351F and 362E. It was Typhon who dismembered Osiris' body (*De Iside et Osiride*, 357F-358).

<sup>854</sup>Hani (1976) 424-430. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 362F, 371C.

<sup>855</sup>Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, 12.2.17: *Hoc genus ferarum in Hyperboreis nascitur montibus*. The Latin text of Isidore of Seville is that of Lindsay (1911). I refute the translation of *mundus alter* by Hanson (1989, 2: 343) who has "in another world". Griffiths (1975) 101 likewise translates "a world other than ours." Lucius categorically states *mundus alter*, the *other* (of two) worlds. Whether this is the afterworld (Wittmann in Griffiths, 1975, 313; refuted by Fredouille, 1975, 116) or the legendary world in the far north or another place altogether, is irrelevant. The fact of overriding importance is that they are creatures of good omen which arise in a world other than this one, as Lucius must now become detached from the attractions of his previous existence.

<sup>856</sup>Fredouille (1975) 115.

<sup>857</sup>Hani (1976) 400 tells us that the griffon was an auxiliary demon and, being hybrid, united in itself the signs of all other created beings and often, in the Old Empire of Egypt, represented the king overcoming his enemies. By his elevated status on this occasion, Lucius is likened to a king.

<sup>858</sup>Sturgeon (2004), 76. Fredouille (1975) 115 states, that both animals- griffons and dragons - are associated with Isis and Osiris as symbols of life.

peace and wisdom. Insistence on the Hyperborean griffons and Indian dragons may be understood as an attempt at emphasising the syncretistic aspect of Isis' rite,<sup>859</sup> but they are also essential for understanding Isis' transformative power since dragons, although previously associated with evil in the novel,<sup>860</sup> at this point they are imbued with positive meaning. Indian dragons are depicted in the *Florida* as undergoing an eternal struggle for victory with elephants. Lucius' struggle against his enemies must be forever before his mind.<sup>861</sup>

More importantly, the stole's very colourfulness and ornateness are an essential aspect of its aptness for public view, as embodying and embracing elements of a varied nature so as to appeal to a large number of people, an extension of the syncretistic aspect of the cult. This function of religious dress contrasts strongly with the simplicity of the plain unused linen robe in which Lucius was enveloped on the day preceding his assumption of the Olympian stole. In the robe which places Lucius on a par with the Sun, Lucius can be seen not only by those initiated into the rite who would have known how to interpret the figures, but also by the unenlightened populace (11.24): *repente velis reductis in aspectum populus errabat*. The likelihood that others, like the uninitiated, may read these symbols differently is not explicitly stated in the text. The very lack of emphasis on the possibility of interpretative divergence is meaningful, significant of the fact that Lucius' understanding is presented as being the only valid one. Whilst Lucius does not seek to explain the symbolism in depth or further to the reader, this lack of transmission of knowledge must not be read as lack of knowledge itself.<sup>862</sup> Crucially, it is in this book that Lucius

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<sup>859</sup> Fredouille (1975) 115.

<sup>860</sup> See, for example, the dragon which lured people to their deaths with a human disguise (8.21). If it is permissible to take snakes as a variant form of dragon, these too have negative associations in the novel (4.33; 5.17, 20; 6.14. In this last passage they are termed *dracones*, dragons). On the variant symbolic meanings given to the dragon and the griffon in the ancient tradition, see Fick (1966), 384-385.

<sup>861</sup> *Florida*, 6: *nec quod isdem Indis ibidem sitis ad nascentem diem tamen in corpore color noctis est, nec quod apud illos immensi dracones cum immanibus elephantis pari periculo in mutuam perniciem concertant*.

<sup>862</sup> In opposition to Englert (2008, 8-9), I believe that Lucius does not miss what true devotion to Isis is all about. Mistaking the exterior signs of religion and devotion for religion and devotion themselves constitute the caution made by Plutarch to Clea at the beginning

appears to be more conscious of the implications of curiosity. He is more discreet with regards to what he wishes to impart to the reader, depending on what drives the reader's curiosity.<sup>863</sup> He expresses awareness of the generation of the animals scored on his robe in another world; we may therefore assume that he had been tutored to some degree in the symbolism of the mysteries and appurtenances of the rite. The aspect of other-worldliness may be the most important aspect to Lucius of his initiation, inscribed on the cloak, as it bespeaks his new direction in life. Ultimately, precise detail on the symbolism is not necessary given the positive and joyful context in which the garment arises in the passage.

The number of garments has attracted the interest of scholars who vie in interpreting its significance. It may relate to the constellations of the Zodiac, which were in turn identified with the twelve Olympian gods.<sup>864</sup> This would have the effect of connecting Lucius in some way with these same gods. In the

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of the *De Iside et Osiride* (352c): "It is a fact, Clea, that having a beard and wearing a coarse cloak does not make philosophers, nor does dressing in linen and shaving the hair make followers of Isis; but the true follower of Isis is he who, when he has legitimately received the things shown and the things done connected with these gods, investigates them with the faculty of reason and engages in philosophy in studying the truth contained in them." And earlier on (351 e-f): "For the search for the truth requires for its study and investigation the consideration of sacred objects, and it is a work more hallowed than any form of holy living or temple service." Whilst the point Englert makes is a valid one, reiterated by Apuleius himself (*cf. Florida*, 9), Englert fails to notice the instances where Lucius tells us that he does undergo further initiation into the rites of Osiris which, one must assume, entails further study, 11.28: *principalis dei nocturnis orgiis illustratus*. The translations of the Greek passages are those of Englert.

<sup>863</sup> 11.23: *Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum. Dicerem si dicere liceret, cognosceres si liceret audire. Sed parem noxam contraherent et aures et lingua, ista impiae loquacitatis, illae temerariae curiositatis. Nec te tamen desiderio forsitan religioso suspensum angore diutino cruciabo...Ecce tibi rettuli quae, quamvis audita, ignores tamen necesse est. Ergo quod solum potest sine piaculo ad profanorum intellegentias enuntiari referam.* Lucius appears to wish the reader to learn his own lesson: that an innate desire to know things is either good or bad, depending on its motivation and what it seeks to know. On the different types of curiosity, with reference to the *Metamorphoses*, see De Filippo (1990), Deremetz (2002) and Garbugino (2009), especially pages 212-213.

<sup>864</sup> Fredouille (1975) 116.

reworking of Aristotle's *Peri Kosmou* which has been attributed to Apuleius under the title of *DM*, Apuleius talks of the constellations which come under the Zodiac as being more ordered than those which do not (291-292). Associating the twelve robes with such notions on this occasion would suggest that order is being restored to Lucius' soul.<sup>865</sup> Lucius' subsequent statement that he was thus adorned in the likeness of the sun – *sic ad instar Solis* – can also lead to the plausible conclusion that the twelve robes symbolise the twelve zones of the night (corresponding to the twelve hours) which the sun crosses in the empire of the dead,<sup>866</sup> or even in its yearly course.<sup>867</sup> Given the cosmological and mystical importance of the number 12, its association with ritual garments at the end of the *Metamorphoses* is not fortuitous, as it underscores Lucius' proximity to the divine.<sup>868</sup>

### **Osiris: The Invisible and Immaterial Expression of Enlightenment**

Lucius' new enlightened state as an initiate of Isis and a vessel of right knowledge, a state reflected in the symbolic ornateness of his initiation robe, will in turn be subsumed into another level of knowledge, represented in the novel as baldness and descriptive silence. A year passes, and the goddess Isis appears to him one night, speaking of more rites and more initiation to be undergone. Lucius is baffled by this and gives it some thought. He discovers, with some amazement, that he has not yet been initiated into the mysteries of

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<sup>865</sup> According to the mysteries of the rite of Mithras, it was through these twelve zones that the soul of the initiate is purified (Fredouille, 1975, 114). Dyson (1929) 194, believes this garment to function in a manner parallel to that of the initiation robe of the Mithraic *leontica*. Porphyry describes such a garment in the *De Abstinencia*, providing two explanations for it from Pallas (4.16). Dyson explains these beliefs as arising out of sympathies that stretch across boundaries of time, space and culture, and considers Pallas' transmigration-based interpretation of the robe understandable in view of the likelihood that such beliefs persisted in the "vulgar mind."

<sup>866</sup> Fredouille (1975) 114; Griffiths (1975) 309.

<sup>867</sup> Cumont (1933), 257.

<sup>868</sup> Fick (1987, 46-47) speaks of the wide-spread knowledge of numeric symbolism at the time Apuleius was writing and emphasises that the number 12 has strong resonances with Lucius' access to the divine in Book 11: Lucius wears 12 robes of consecration; he disembarks at Rome on the twelfth day of the twelfth month to be initiated into the rites of Osiris. For this reason Lucius' consecration robes symbolise his access to immortality.

Osiris, who is greater even than Isis, the unconquered parent of the gods (11.27): *deae quidem me tantum sacris imbutum, at magni dei deumque summi parentis, invicti Osiris, necdum sacris illustratum; quamquam enim conexa, immo vero unita ratio numinis religionisque esset, tamen teletae discrimen interesse maximum*. The following night, he has a dream in which one of the initiates of Osiris appears to him. Just like those consecrated to Isis, he is wearing linen robes (*sacratibus linteis iniectum*) a fact which reinforces the interdependence of the two rites. In order to be able to undertake study for initiation into this rite, Lucius must sell the clothes he has (11.28): *veste ipsa mea quamvis parvula distracta*. He abstains from meat, shaves his head and is enlightened by the teachings of the cult, a process whereby Lucius shows that he is interested in the rite in its integrity and not merely in its outer aspect; but he must undergo a third initiation, and for this he cannot wear the robes he wore for his initiation to Isis (11.29). As Lucius approaches initiation into the rites of Osiris, more demands are made of him, demands that entail stripping, or removal – metaphorical removal of the flesh of the body that is an encumbrance to the soul (expressed literarily as the embodied soul that is clothed), the extirpation of vice by self-discipline and the ultimate overthrowing of the wrong kind of knowledge and curiosity by doctrinal learning and enlightenment. Yet he patiently endures all this toil and, just as Isis appeared to Lucius at the beginning of Book 11, so he is finally rewarded by a vision of Osiris himself, at the end.

But there is a great difference. Osiris is the greatest of all gods, even greater than Isis.<sup>869</sup> Isis says that she is the correct and true form of worship, yet she is apprehended differently, whence arises the ritual variation that is typical of her syncretistic worship (*cf.* 11.5). Osiris, however, is never presented

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<sup>869</sup> In the *DDS*, 154, Osiris is one of a number of divinised human beings, honoured as gods after their death by reason of the justice and wisdom which marked their lives on earth: *quippe tantum eos deos appellant, qui ex eodem numero iuste ac prudenter curriculo vitae gubernato pro numine postea ab hominibus praediti fanis et caerimoniis vulgo advertuntur, ut in Boeotia Amphiarus, in Africa Mopsus, in Aegypto Osiris, alius alibi gentium, Aesculapius ubique*. Plutarch insists on more than one occasion on the complete divinisation of Isis and Osiris – that is, they were changed from good minor deities to gods (*De Iside et Osiride*, 361E; 362E). In the *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius has gone a step further and has chosen Osiris to represent the Platonic god.

in the *Metamorphoses* as apprehended differently. Lucius speaks of him in terms that are hyperbolic to the point of dissolution (11.30): *deus deum magnorum potior, et maiorum summus, et summorum maximus, et maximorum regnator, Osiris*. If Osiris is the greatest of the gods and surpasses even Isis, the true and correct form of worship, how can he be described? Precisely, he appears to Lucius not only in his own essence but in his own ‘venerable utterance’ (11.30): *non alienam quampiam personam reformatus, sed coram suo illo venerando me dignatus affamine per quietem praecipere visus est*. *Reformatus* qualified in the negative in this instance does not mean “restored” and does not convey connotations of exteriorising hidden aspects of nature as it does for Plotina, and even Lucius<sup>870</sup> but “of changed aspect”.<sup>871</sup> Osiris did not take on any form (*personam*) other than his own to visit Lucius,<sup>872</sup> which marks his divinity as totally unlike that of Jupiter, who is known for his assumption of different guises (6.22). Plutarch’s explanation in his treatise for the lack of colour as hue in Osiris’ robes can, by allegorical extension, be applied to Osiris’ manner of appearing to Lucius at this terminal point in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*: “But the robe of Osiris has no shading or variety in its colour, but only one single colour like to light. For the beginning is combined with nothing else, and that which is primary and conceptual is without admixture...But the apperception of the conceptual, the pure, and the simple, shining through the soul like a flash of lightning, affords an opportunity to touch and see it but once.”<sup>873</sup>

### Osiris and Descriptive Silence

Apuleius however goes a step further. Osiris is not depicted in the novel in *clothing*, the object of Plutarch’s discussion of the god. In the

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<sup>870</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 7.6: *in masculinam faciem reformato habitu* (Plotina). Lucius too was restored to a previous form or condition (OLD, 1982, 1596), 11.16: ‘*Hunc omnipotentis hodie deae numen augustum reformavit ad homines.*’

<sup>871</sup> OLD (1982) 1596: 1 “To alter in form or appearance.”

<sup>872</sup> The Second Sophistic appears to favour the motif of gods appearing in their true form. Compare, for example, Apollo in Philostratus’ *Vita Apollonii*, 1.1.

<sup>873</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 382C, D. My intention is not to suggest that Apuleius is relying slavishly on Plutarch’s work. The reference to Plutarch’s work merely serves to show the degree of art and innovation in Apuleius’ literary appropriation of ritual ideas and knowledge.

*Metamorphoses* the robe of Osiris has been subsumed into his very essence, as becomes “the conceptual, the pure, and the simple.” It seems that philosophical enlightenment, represented by Osiris in the novel, cannot be expressed in the visual terms used by the unenlightened, especially not to one whose vision, like Lucius’, is no longer clouded by false perceptions. Clothing and costume, depending so much on how other people perceive them, can easily lead to error in judgment. Even where they enfold and embody the true rite, they can be mistaken for a dissembling appearance. Prolonging the role of religious rite and knowledge in the novel as allegorical of philosophical enlightenment, it is therefore crucial to understand that the place of dress as a part of description in the novel *can* be inadequate representation of the philosophical enlightenment behind the rite. Relying on sensory perception alone especially when this perception is the product of unenlightened sensory apparatus can lead to misprision. Religious dress must submit to regulation and be correctly perceived and understood. Consequently, Apuleius is careful to depict Lucius in his initiation robes in an environment which is promoted in the text as ideal, and with at least a certain degree of knowledge of the symbolism behind this garment.

The phrase ‘*visus est*’ (11.30) is important in this regard. *Video* in the perfect passive is a way of expressing a vision experienced during a dream.<sup>874</sup> Additionally, we may argue that, in this case, the importance of the visual field is much diminished as physical appearance yields to non-physical manifestation of divine reality.<sup>875</sup> There is the strong likelihood that it refers to Lucius’ new mode of perception, the only way to see the essence of the primary god that is embodied in the novel as Osiris (*DPD*, 1.6): *Sed illa [scilicet: ousia], quae mentis oculis comprehenditur, semper et eodem modo et sui par ac similis invenitur, ut quae vere sit ... Et primae quidem substantiae vel essentiae primum deum esse et mentem formasque rerum et animam*. Similarly, visual language is inextricably linked with the language of knowledge and realisation as a necessary corollary to the connection between sight and perception.<sup>876</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> For another example in literature, see Virgil’s *Aeneid*, 2.270-271: *in somnis, ecce, ante oculos maestissimus Hector/visus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus*. See also the note in Fredouille (1975) 49-50.

<sup>875</sup> Laird (1997) 80.

<sup>876</sup> Laird (1997) 82.

The lack of physicality of the god in his appearance on this occasion is matched by the lack of direct speech on his part, thereby reinforcing the sublimity of the truth that he embodies in the novel. This contrasts strongly with the detailed description we have of Isis' robes and her address to Lucius, as well as the standard representation of Anubis and even the dignified Canopic Osiris, the golden urn which is wrought on the outside with Egyptian figures as part of the procession.<sup>877</sup> Lucius' description of this urn, whilst noting the quiet dignity of its workmanship, distinguishes it from the usual zoomorphic or anthropomorphic depictions of the god, thereby prefiguring the impossibility of transmitting his essence through the visible and tangible medium of a body (11.11): *summi numinis venerandam effigiem, non pectoris, non avis, non ferae ac ne quidem hominis quidem ipsius consimilem*. However, this new manner of depicting the god, which rejects the necessity of translating his essence through forms, confirms the very essence not only of the god but also of the sublime faith which demands to be kept hidden from most people. The language of covering (*tegendae*) acquires respectability in the context of religious and philosophical truth (11.11): *sed sollerti repertu etiam ipsa novitate reverendam, altioris utcumque et magno silentio tegendae*<sup>878</sup> *religionis argumentum ineffabile*. Testifying to Osiris' divinity, the urn is of wrought gold: *Sed ad istum plane modum fulgente auro figuratum*. Gold is now transferred from canonical depictions of the hair of the Olympian gods (Cupid at 5.22 and Mercury at 10.30) to express in a new way the essence of the highest godhead (*summi numinis*) – Osiris.

This less visual mode of representing Osiris does not undermine the sincerity and importance of Isis' role in this Book, but does seem to supplant Isis. The common motif of the inability to express an object of awe or great beauty which attended Lucius' description of Isis,<sup>879</sup> is converted in the case of

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<sup>877</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 11.11: *fulgente auro figuratum: urnula faberrime cavata, fundo quam rotundo, miris extrinsecus simulacris Aegyptiorum effigiata*.

<sup>878</sup> I am retaining the emendation of *F* which has *tegente*.

<sup>879</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 11.3: *Eius mirandam speciem ad vos referre conitar, si tamen mihi disserendi tribuerit facultatem paupertas oris humani, vel ipsum numen eius dapsilem copiam elocutilis facundiae sumministraverit*.

Osiris' epiphany to mere silence before the ineffable God.<sup>880</sup> Visuality in the *Metamorphoses* is companion to embodiment. Osiris is the ineffable and inexpressible truth brought about by communion with the divine subsequent to the enlightenment embodied by Isis as its ideal visual representation. Plutarch<sup>881</sup> explains the co-dependency which links Isis to Osiris, the etymology of their names being instrumental in this. The etymology given to Isis' name by Plutarch ("hastening") may go some way in explaining the rapidity and swiftness with which the *Metamorphoses* comes to an end once Lucius has undergone initiation into the Isiac rites.<sup>882</sup> It is not by accident that Lucius' accession to the rites of Osiris occupies less descriptive space in the text and closes the novel. If the divinity embodied by Osiris is the essential one (*cf. DPD, 1.6: ousia; primae quidem substantiae vel essentiae primum deum esse*), then any material representation of it, even the most pure and sincere, will be inadequate; mimesis as representation is no longer possible.

There is also a point to be made here about the mimetic nature of narrative and description. The literary form of the novel is itself mimetic and can relate only the world of appearances.<sup>883</sup> Where Lucius has used descriptive and visual language, he has done so in retrospect for the benefit of the reader who has enjoyed neither enlightenment, nor communion, albeit fleeting, with the divine; the unenlightened, as a result of this disadvantage, must necessarily

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<sup>880</sup> Apuleius, *DDS*, 124: *Quorum parentem, qui omnium rerum dominator atque auctor est...hunc solum maiestatis incredibili quadam nimietate et ineffabili non posse penuria sermonis humani quavis oratione vel modice comprehendere; DPD, 1.5: Sed haec de Deo sentit, quod sit incorporeus... Quem quidem caelestem pronuntiat, indictum, innominabilem, et ut ait ipse, aoraton, adamaston; cuius naturam invenire difficile est; si inventa sit, in multos eam enuntiari non posse.*

<sup>881</sup> Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 352, 375 C, E.

<sup>882</sup> A passage in Apuleius' own work on Plato also conveys this idea of hastening or being borne onwards towards the truth: (*DPD 2, 23*): *Sapientiae finis est, ut ad dei meritum sapiens provehatur hancque futuram eius operam, ut aemulatione vitae ad deorum actus accedat.* Méthy (1996), 252 explains the use of both the singular with reference to god (*dei*) and the plural (*deorum*) as the sign of a certain lack of precision with regard to the very notion of the divine. This is not monotheism, but an acknowledgement of a superior divine being.

<sup>883</sup> Heller (1983), 283, sees the first ten books of the novel as relating the world of becoming. The eleventh book "stands beyond the world."

understand expression of the invisible in visual terms. Reaching those in this disadvantaged state necessitates the use of visual markers to refer to knowledge acquired through language. Hence, Book 11 at the very end attempts to cease to be novelistic and shifts into another mode before ceasing altogether. Whether or not Lucius underwent further initiations to Osiris or Isis,<sup>884</sup> from the point of view of the narrative, is unimportant. Apuleius has chosen to end the novel at the Osiriac rite. This is the point at which the *written* narrative ceases. Ironically, it is by Apuleius' clever use of descriptive language that the reader is drawn to consider the meaning of things in their essence in the novel; this is a literary way of expressing a philosophical point, suitable for the literary narrative that is the novel, and of benefit for the reader who is unversed in philosophical discourse. Lucius' initiation into the Isiac rite teaches us ritual – by metaphorical extension, philosophical - discernment, an essential lesson after so many competing or incomplete readings of dress and outer forms in the preceding books of the novel. By his further accession to the priestly rites of Osiris, Lucius overturns the descriptive procedure, thereby leading us to contemplate the processes by which we should strive to exceed sensory representation, of which clothing and appearance are an essential part.

### **Lucius' Baldness**

Given the prominent place of Lucius' bald head in the narrative of the final book of the novel, discussion of its significance cannot be ignored. In their interpretation of the picture of Lucius as a priest in the service of Osiris, which terminates the novel, scholars have focussed on Lucius' tonsured head as an ambivalent signifier of his religious sincerity. Many readings which resist the notion of his sincerity are based on the image of his bald head as evoking the mimic fool, or clown,<sup>885</sup> a reading facilitated by the bald head of the Isiac

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<sup>884</sup> A possibility mentioned by Fredouille (1975) 138 based on the greater importance that the god Osiris enjoyed throughout the imperial period.

<sup>885</sup> Winkler (1985), 226, initiated the argument by offering an unclosed reading of the end of the book and analysing the final image of Lucius as drawing on both the "bald clown" and the "bald deacon" (291). He discusses the ancient evidence for a mocking image of baldness on pages 225-227. Harrison (2000), 235-259, sees the whole novel as parodic; by this reading, Lucius' baldness is symbolic of the fool. Murgatroyd (2004), 319-321 adduces further proof of the subversive intent of the final book, pinpointing how Lucius has merely exchanged one type of servility for another. He becomes the dupe of the priests who exploit

devotee or initiate in the preceding Roman satirical tradition.<sup>886</sup> Some have also taken Lucius' insistence on his baldness as a sign of the type of narrator that he is, the sophistic narrator who is merely indulging in a topos of imperial literature.<sup>887</sup> Another perspective would have it that the bald head at the termination of the novel visualises the notion of narrative openness, or ambiguity.<sup>888</sup> However, scholars have neglected the degree to which the metaphors of covering and uncovering have articulated the representation of the body in the novel, failing to notice the resonances throughout the novel which colour Lucius' insistence on his uncovered bald head at the end of the novel as a public spectacle for the reader. What is covered, or demands to be covered, often conveys negative values in the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>889</sup> It is in this way that we would rather understand the relevance of Lucius' shaven crown at the end of the novel. Tonsuring can become an outward sign of honesty, of openness, and, in a ritual context, of detachment from the trappings of the world. Where hair functions as a signifier of attraction and servility to false values (such as the *cinaedi*, especially Philebus, and the lusty serving wench, Photis), then the removal of hair must necessarily accompany him who has

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him for his money. These scholars fail to take into account the transformative nature of the eleventh book. The limp of the priest, Asinius Marcellus, which many scholars take as a sign to the reader to be wary of the sincerity of the priests (Griffiths, 1975, 333; Murgatroyd, 2004, 321) can also be read the same way: just as the deformed left hand functions as a sign of justice because its slowness prevents it from practicing deceit (11.10), the priest's defective heel is his left one, which causes him to walk hesitantly but also gently, 11.27: *sinistri pedis talo paululum reflexo, cunctabundo clementer incedebat vestigio*. James and O'Brien (2006) relate Lucius' baldness to his earlier attempt in the novel to "metamorphose his identity more drastically" as a technique of self-preservation (235).

<sup>886</sup> Compare the representation of the Isiac devotee in Martial, 12.28.19, and Juvenal (about a priest representing Anubis, who was connected with the Isis-Osiris rite) 6.533.

<sup>887</sup> Van Mal-Maeder (1997), 198. Van Mal-Maeder doubts the sincerity of Lucius' conversion because the narrating Lucius who indulges in sensual descriptions of Photis' and Isis' hair (2.8-9; 11.3), is the same bald narrator at the end of the novel who is revelling in the sensual descriptions of hair of these women *after* his "conversion."

<sup>888</sup> Winkler (1985), 226-227.

<sup>889</sup> See, for merely two examples, the shameful covering of Thrasylus (8.10), and the shameful nakedness of Socrates which requires to be concealed by covering (1.6). Lucius' nakedness in Book 11, although humanly shameful, is a sign of his rebirth as a man and reintegration into the human community.

overcome such attachments. Lucius' arousal at the sight of Photis' luxuriant hair (2.9-10) is translated by his transformation into the shaggy hair which is typical of the donkey, the animal associated in the ancient mind with licentiousness. One of Lucius' greatest fixations – hair - was written onto his body (3.24). Lucius' new bald pate, as a sign of his separation from the common run of mankind and a member of the initiated elite, functions as a positive counterpoint to the shaggy hair of his ass-skin, which also marked him off from mankind (for a donkey-man is not a whole man insofar as the portion of manhood is incomplete or compromised), whether Lucius was aware of this or not.

It is significant that Lucius' insistence on the visibility of his baldness occurs as a parallel with the epiphany of the god Osiris to him. The appearance of the god in his own form is connected with Lucius' determination not to hide his baldness but to openly reveal it. This must count for something. Lucius' baldness then becomes a sign not only of his religious right-mindedness (in contrast to the semi-baldness of Philebus which signified his religious wrong-mindedness) but also of his newly acquired clear vision, now stripped of all the worldly priorities which obfuscated the right vision necessary to see God, a Platonist idea present in Apuleius' other writings, transferred to his novel.<sup>890</sup> Lucius' penchant for making ornate descriptions of hair, be it luxuriant in the case of Photis' or Isis' hair, or unattractive as it was on Philebus, is overthrown at this point with his insistence on his baldness. His shedding of his own hair can stand in for his disinterest in the hair of others. This becomes doubly important in light of the essential function of hair in the novel, in the practice of magic (3.16-18), to which Lucius is no longer attracted. His bald pate shows how he has become one of the elite, one of the "earthly stars of the great

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<sup>890</sup>Apuleius, *DDS*, 124: *vix sapientibus viris, cum se vigore animi, quantum licuit, a corpore removerunt, intellectum huius dei, id quod interdum, velut in artissimis tenebris rapidissimo coruscamine lumen candidum intermicare?* *DM*, 359: *omnibus occulta vis, nullis oculis obvia, nisi quibus mens aciem suae lucis intendit*. The bright light of which Apuleius speaks in this passage of the *DDS* appears on Isis' crown where it appears to function as a prefigurement of Osiris' apparition to Lucius (11.3): *rotunditas in modum speculi, vel immo argumentum lunae, candidum lumen emicabat*.

religion" (11.10: *magnae religionis terrena sidera*).<sup>891</sup> Coming so close to Lucius' vision of the disembodied Osiris, Lucius' baldness prolongs the idea, relevant at the very end of the novel, of "baldness" of expression.

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<sup>891</sup> Fick (1987, 50) adduces for comparison a passage from Plato's *Republic* (7. 517d) wherein the philosopher is portrayed to be the butt of the mockery of others when he has to face daily life after having gazed on reality at a higher level ("après avoir contemplé les réalités supérieures"). This explanation sits well with Lucius' present situation.

## Conclusion to Chapter 8

The focus in this chapter has been to demonstrate how the transition from dress and physique as indicators of a visible manifestation of correct ritual form (Isis) to a disembodied expression of philosophical enlightenment, represented in the text as invisibility (Osiris), allegorises the movement from mere recognition of philosophical truth (presented most clearly in Book 11 by the priest's admonition to Lucius to give up his past life), to its attainment. The lower level of existence which entrapped Lucius earlier on in the novel is replaced at the end by access to life lived at a higher level, achieved through union with Osiris via Isis who stands in for right knowledge, as it is through an Isiac priest that Lucius comes to learn what he was lacking in his previous existence.

Information about ritual dress is imparted to Lucius by the Isiac priests, who have correct knowledge of it. Lucius, whose name is derived from the Latin word for light – *lux* - has finally been enlightened. No testimony of appearance provided by Lucius is counterbalanced by any other that would contradict it. This contrasts with the ritual dress of the *cinaedi* which is read differently by the two main audiences: the unenlightened and credulous spectator – the populace – and the enlightened, mistrustful spectator – Lucius. The Isiac initiates' dress is redolent of purity and order. Isis' dress is symbolic of religio-philosophic truth, in spite of its variegation, by the positive connotations of the colour scheme which reflects her syncretistic nature and the goddess's representation as monumental and robed. More importantly, the transformative power of the goddess appropriates and reinterprets representations of clothing in previous books, so that any clothing or colour scheme which carried negative connotations acquire positive ones in this book, especially when applied to the goddess Isis: the erotic connotations of hair are overthrown in favour of a divine image of hair; the robed monumentality of *Isis triumphans* overthrows the undesirable lubricity of the motley of the *cinaedi*, restores gender to its rightful place, and purges the feminine elements of the novel of eroticism.

After his reintegration into the human world as a man, Lucius' status as an initiate and his new life are expressed in two ways: his initiation robe, the

*stola Olympiaca*, shows his progression on the way to becoming a “god,” that is to say, of becoming like unto the divine itself as far as is possible for a mortal. This is the matter of a lifetime’s work, and the wise man will strive to imitate God and follow him, a Platonist notion. Lucius’ baldness, the result of ritual prescription, is the second sign of this new religious status and his new soul, a bold and visible statement that he is free from undesirable attachments and excess.

Other scholars have specifically located the authorial voice of interpretation in this book on the conflation of Lucius with Apuleius himself at 11.27.<sup>892</sup> Whilst not necessarily assimilating this conflation with autobiography in the strict sense of the word, I do believe that Apuleius the author allows himself to come through more strongly in this book and appropriate the direction of the reading. Additionally, in this book, the reader is increasingly put upon to make connections between dress as it approximates ritual truth, and dress as it appeared in the preceding books. This has been made clear especially through the *anteludia*, where auctorial Lucius uses language evocative of dress and characters in previous passages of the novel to facilitate comparison between their earlier appearance and their re-appearance in the *anteludia*.

However, the role of clothing in Book 11 as a tool of philosophical allegory is not suspended as a function distinct from its role in the preceding books. In the preceding books of the novel, personal clothing and appearance have followed the trajectory of the novel towards an impersonal end. The rags which featured in the novel’s previous books, redolent of shame and

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<sup>892</sup> 11.27: *Nam sibi visus est quiete proxima, dum magno deo coronas exaptaret, de eius ore, quo singulorum fata dictat, audisse mitti sibi Madaurem sed admodum pauperem, cui statim sua sacra deberet ministrare; nam et illi studiorum gloriam et ipsi grande compendium sua comparari providentia.* Many scholars have attempted to account for the adjective *madaurem* in the final book of the novel by presenting arguments both for and against conflation of Lucius the narrator with Apuleius the author. I shall restrict reference at this point to the article of van der Paardt (1981) which gives a good overview of the positioning of various scholars on the problem. The question of the conflation of author with narrator is also closely connected with that of who is speaking in the prologue, so the two issues can be examined together.

psychological fragmentation, and other clothing (co-operating with the body) which carries multiple or negative connotations, such as transvestism and the ritual vestments of the *cinaedi*, are replaced in this book by garments which are intact and beautiful, such as the dress of the Isiac initiates, Isis' robe and mantle, and Lucius' own initiation garment. Dress and the body in the previous books also underpinned a philosophical message, even of the loosest nature, pertaining to knowledge of self and /or others. In Book 11, colour and fabric express ritual and philosophical enlightenment rather than individual nature; yet it is from correct perception of our self and others that we can attain the correct perspective on life, and achieve perception, albeit fleeting, of the divine.

Plutarch's treatise on Isis and Osiris can facilitate the reader's appreciation of the manipulation of relevant ritual and philosophical ideas and their incorporation by Apuleius into the *Metamorphoses*. Plutarch's avowed commitment, stated at the very beginning of his work (351E), is to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, which is a longing for the divine; but the final image in Apuleius' novel of an invisible and ineffable god which brings Lucius peace, after so many highly descriptive passages and ordeals narrated in detail, achieves the same end as Plutarch's stated intention. All things may be resolved in Isis, but Osiris' lack of visual aspect in the novel take this resolution further, but only for those whose perception has been righted. Whether or not the descriptive mode in the final book of the *Metamorphoses* owes much or little to the information exposed in Plutarch's treatise, it can be claimed that the movement in Book 11 from a highly visualised goddess whose physical manifestation is described in detail, to a god whose appearance in his ineffable essence cannot be marked in the text by description, carries with it an allegorical function.

## General Conclusion

In this thesis, I have attempted to provide an account of the depiction and perception of character identity through dress and physical appearance in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius. My argument has been that dress and appearance have a dual function in the novel: they function at a surface level as costume or disguise, whereby the wearer seeks to project a persona and/or conceal personal identity, but are further underpinned at a deeper level by their role as markers of personal identity. This second function emerges as the privileged view of the enlightened mind which can see past dress in particular as a costume or disguise, howsoever the wearer may intend it. Correct perception emerges in the *Metamorphoses* through the function of narration in the frame narrative and the embedded tales. Dress becomes an expression of the embodied soul. According to this paradigm dress and the body become inseparable (the body is the garment of the soul). The novel's title can be plausibly deemed to foreshadow this dual function of dress and appearance, in the first ten books. True identity is often revealed in the novel as one of the many *versions* that occur as an expression of metamorphosis. The gender inversions (Thrasyllus), the extroversions of personal nature (Socrates, Thrasyleon and the *cinaedi*), and the perversions of duty (Pythias) that lurk behind so many sartorial manifestations of character, are all types of metamorphosis.

Without strictly following the order of the books of the novel, I have aimed to track the progress of perception of identity mediated by outer appearance, from the individual character in Books 1 -10, to a Platonist conception of god appearing as Osiris in Book 11. Philosophical allegory is pervasive in Book 11, especially in the final chapters, and appropriates the descriptive passages in the Book. The heavily allegorical nature and tone of the final Book in the novel, however, do not keep it detached from the other books of the *Metamorphoses*. In these, too, Apuleius seems to draw on his Platonist formation to give a philosophical colour to the emergence of clothing and appearance in the *Metamorphoses*, prior to Lucius' vision of Osiris. It is worthwhile recapitulating the philosophical basis of Apuleius' unique approach to character formation in the *Metamorphoses*, even though it is not the only

one; this basis is visible in his non-narrative works, so it is to them that I have turned (if not exclusively) for an appreciation of Apuleius' literary technique.

In the *Apologia*, Apuleius used dress to express ethical and moral points even though the context in which the defence speech was delivered (or intended for delivery) is forensic: (*Apologia*, 3) *Pudor enim, veluti vestis, quanto obsoletior est, tanto incuriosius habetur; (ibid, 19) fortunam velut tunicam magis concinnam quam longam probare; quippe etiam ea, si non gestetur et trahatur, nihil minus quam lacinia praependens impedit et praecipitat; (ibid, 21) namque animi ita ut corporis sanitas expedita, imbecillitas laciniosa est, certumque signum est infirmitatis pluribus indigere.* Underpinning this sartorial manner of expressing states of the soul are concepts found in Apuleius' philosophical works. Select passages from the *DDS* (152-154; 172-175) and the *DPD* (1.18; 2.5; 2.22) have allowed us to follow the novel with the critical insight necessary for appreciating characters as soul-types in the *Metamorphoses*. Foremost amongst these are Socrates and the other ragged characters in the novel (Chapter 3), Pythias (Chapter 4), Thrasyleon (Chapter 5), and, of course, the *cinaedi* (Chapter 7). Additionally, the passage looked at from the *DDS* (172-175) can provide the framework for judging the perceptive acuity of characters *within* the novel, such as Charite (Chapter 1) especially, but most characters in a more general way.

In addition to Apuleius' own ideas about the soul, I have attempted to show how genre helps in the creation of character and the articulation of perception in the novel. The specific examples of generic links I looked at are not exhaustive and further generic influence can assuredly be detected behind all characters; yet all these generic echoes are ultimately appropriated by Apuleius' education in the principles of Plato. Additionally, I have drawn attention to Apuleius' manner of giving complexity to the protagonist of his novel, Lucius, by attributing to the latter an intuitive ability to scent out discrepancies in appearances. To this end, I have focussed on Lucius' reaction to characters such as Pythias (Chapter 4) and Haemus (Chapter 6) to exemplify this intuitive quality, an aspect of the perceptive faculties.

I have taken the stance that perception is a quality deemed necessary for the reader as much as for characters within the novel. The many appeals made by Lucius to the reader necessitate the active co-operation of the latter

in the decoding of the text. Without engaging in arguments about the nature of reading and the level of erudition of readers in Apuleius' time, I have deemed safe to suggest that, naturally, an erudite reader has an advantage in situations where Apuleius appears to be drawing on the literary prototypes and cultural context of his time inasmuch as the allusive richness of the text affords greater intellectual pleasure to the reader. This stance is applicable to all the episodes looked at in the thesis. Nonetheless, such is the genius of Apuleius, that the real character behind the clothes is perceivable to the less educated reader, both ancient and modern, by the outcome of events and by Apuleius' narrative technique.<sup>893</sup> This more direct access through the text to characters' real identity I have also attempted to show.

I began the thesis by showing how both functions of clothing – concealing and revealing true personal identity – relate to the perceptive faculties. Consequently, I focussed initially on stories in the *Metamorphoses* where the interrelationship between perception and clothing is strongly disclosed in the text through Apuleius' narrative technique and his choice of language (Chapter 1). This was then followed (Chapter 2) by a specific focus on metamorphosis in the novel as an aspect of appearance, as metamorphosis is a process by which external form can be changed. My argument was that physiognomy and metamorphosis go hand in hand towards character definition. The first specific type of dress mentioned in the novel is the ragged garment of Socrates, so my next step was to show how Socrates' rags are programmatic of many other ragged figures in the novel (Chapter 3). The function of magisterial dress as revelatory of both personal and social identity was analysed in the next chapter (Chapter 4). This analysis then led on to a foray into the dissolution of disguise (Chapter 5) in the figure of Thrasyleon. Lucius' intuitive scenting out of contradictory aspects of Haemus' bodily appearance and costume initiated the analysis of the next chapter (Chapter 6).

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<sup>893</sup> To the Appendix I have relegated further investigation into the relevance of ideas of *habitus*, physiognomy and metamorphosis to the novel. In it I have sought to argue for the relevance of the *Gorgias* as a Platonic prototype for the function of the body as the garment of the soul, as well as a text that generates considerations pertaining to the perception of personal identity.

Following on from this, the interplay between divergent perceptions of ritual truth and the crucial role performance and religious vestments have in this interplay, were a major part of the study of the next section (Chapter 7), where the *cinaedi* were the focus of analysis. Examining further the link between clothing and religion, or God (in the *Metamorphoses*, this is the Platonic notion of God), naturally led me to consider the final Book in the novel in the final chapter of the thesis (Chapter 8). In this chapter, my aim was also to disclose the close association of the final Book of the *Metamorphoses* with the preceding ones by focussing on the role of allegory in Book 11, as clothing has functioned allegorically in a way all throughout the novel to bring considerations of identity and its perception before the reader.

Apuleius' all-embracing literary vision and style of writing which aided in the construction of his novel are more than the product of the literary tastes of the time in which he lived and worked. The *Metamorphoses* can be considered to be, among other things, an account in novel form of the necessity of having a clear vision to arrive at philosophical enlightenment. By using dress as the mediator between this ideal perception and the philosophical wisdom we should all be striving towards, Apuleius elevates dress (including the body, as it is an emblem of dress) to the status of a tool of philosophical enquiry, imbuing it with an epistemological significance, thereby imbuing dress and physical appearance in the novel with freshness and critical plasticity.

## Appendix: *Habitus*

### A Apuleius' Use of *Habitus* and *Habitus*

The notion of overall appearance as expressive of inner character has a long history emerging as early as the Homeric epics.<sup>894</sup> One way of expressing this idea in Latin was to use the word *habitus*, which is used of both inner character or nature and outer appearance.<sup>895</sup> Apuleius uses the word *habitus* in the *DPD* to express the Platonist notion of virtue as a state of the mind and soul which is consonant with itself and firmly grounded in a strong moral base (*DPD*, 2.5): *Sed virtutem Plato **habitus**<sup>896</sup> esse dicit mentis optime et nobiliter figuratum, quae concordem sibi, quietem, constantem etiam eum facit, cui fideliter intimata, non verbis modo sed factis etiam secum et cum ceteris*

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<sup>894</sup>“For Homeric society what a person wore represented in a real, not just a symbolic, sense what he *was*. A king without his proper raiment was not a king.” Fenik (in Block, 1985), 2. Block then goes on to specify how this works in Homeric epic: “Dressed as a beggar, Odysseus is a beggar. Hence mistaken identification based on his clothing confirms that Odysseus is not yet restored to his rightful position, and to this extent the clothing reflects a truth.” In an article on *menos* (μένοσ), Giacomelli (1980) quotes Robbins (1968) on his objection to other scholars’ tendency to analyse *menos* from the point of view of a “dichotomy between psychic and physical” which is “non-Homeric.” Giacomelli’s overall insistence on the lack of distinction between body and soul in Homeric literature can be taken as indicative of a (cultural) perception of the relation between body and soul, and can reinforce the validity of a metaphorical reading of the body and bodily covering as an extension of the faculties of the mind and/or soul.

<sup>895</sup> The *TLL* separates the referential categories of *habitus*, but there is no reason why the word cannot be used to convey both referents – body and soul – at once. The main purpose of the *TLL* is to give denotational meanings, rather than meanings of a connotational order. However, the *TLL* does acknowledge that two meanings can be covered under one subheading: *duae notiones uno loco coniunctae*. On the usefulness of the *TLL* for cultural history, see the article by Corbeill (2007), who justifies this usefulness by drawing on the arguments of cultural historian Peter Burke to show how the *TLL* can “connect ... with the surrounding culture” (Burke, in Corbeill, 2007, 503).

<sup>896</sup> Beaujeu (1973, 83) translates the word *habitus* by concentrating on its sense as inner disposition or quality: “La vertu, au dire de Platon, est une disposition morale de structure excellente et noble.” In her translation O’Brien (2002, 84), on the other hand, chooses the old-fashioned expression “dress of the soul”, which has implications for the word’s ability to refer to both the inner and the outer aspect of man: “Plato says virtue is the best dress of the soul (*mentis*) and the more nobly adorned.”

*congruentem*.<sup>897</sup> The function of *mens* (mind) in this instance aligns it closely with *animus*, the soul. The word *habitus*, in this passage, seems to cover both meanings by a process of accretion. Given that the *habitus* spoken of in this passage is an emanation of *virtus*, ideally, then, such a state of mind and soul would best be reflected in a body worthy of such virtue. By a process of inversion, we can readily imagine a defective moral state to be expressed (as an embodied soul, usually clothed) in a manner appropriate to it, as some characters in the *Metamorphoses* prove to be.

A similar notion occurs previously in chapter 18 of the first book of the *DPD* where Apuleius acknowledges that the body can follow the state of the soul.<sup>898</sup> The word *habitus* does not occur in this passage, but the body-soul interaction which would produce *habitus* is the focus of discussion (*DPD* 1.18): *Sed tunc animanti sanitatem adesse, vires, pulchritudinem, cum ratio totam regit parentesque ei inferiores duae partes concordantesque inter se iracundia et voluptas nihil adpetunt, nihil commovent, quod inutile esse duxeri[n]t ratio. Eiusmodi ad aequabilitatem partibus animae temperatis, corpus nulla turbatione frangitur. Alioquin invehit aegritudinem atque invalentiam et foeditatem, cum inconpositae et inaequales inter se erunt, cum irascentiam et consilium subegerit sibi que subiecerit cupiditas aut cum dominam illam reginamque rationem, obsequente licet et pacata cupidine, ira flagrantior vicerit.* The general message of this statement is that a healthy soul, that is, a soul which has balance (*sanitatem*) strength (*vires*) and beauty (*pulchritudinem*), will necessarily reflect these qualities in the body to which it is attached. Imbalance in the soul is responsible for sickness (*aegritudinem*), feebleness (*invalentiam*) and ugliness (*foeditatem*) in the body. The ideal,

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<sup>897</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De Inventione*, 2. 159: *nam virtus est animi habitus naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus*. See also the next section, Roman *habitus* and Sociological *habitus*, for how *habitus* was taken up and manipulated by later theoretical traditions. Cicero's *De Inventione* appears to have been one of the Classical texts used in the formulation of these.

<sup>898</sup> Cf. the statement made by pseudo-Aristotle in the *Physiognomonica* that the mind follows the state of the body (805a1). The same author also states that the body follows the affections of the soul on occasions of love and fear and grief and pleasure, a process called epiphenomenalism. Such a stance may seem to run counter to the Platonic tradition inherited by Apuleius, but his is a Platonism of a much later stamp, being infected by Aristotelian thought (cf. Danini in Gianotti, 1986, 21: "aristotelizzante").

according to Plato, is a man whose body and soul are in perfect symmetry with each other: *At enim hominem tunc esse perfectum, cum anima et corpus aequaliter copulantur et inter se conveniunt sibi que respondent, ut firmitas mentis praevalentibus corporis viribus non sit inferior.*<sup>899</sup> By the same paradigmatic process, a healthy and balanced soul will be beautifully dressed. This sympathy between body and soul, in and as a literary expression, is interpreted as the body (clothed or naked) as the garment of the soul.

There is evidence within the novel itself that Apuleius uses the word *habitus* to convey both meanings – “physical appearance” and “state of soul” - early on in the *Metamorphoses* in the nominal couplet *habitus et habitudo* used to express appearance as containing and reflecting inner nature, both perceived and true. In this case, as in others in the novel, *habitus* functions as one of two parts of a couplet of nouns, but the early occurrence of both words in the novel’s programmatic first book inaugurates the thematic importance of notions of identity both personal and social expressed as outer appearance in the *Metamorphoses*, by the word *habitus* alone. Indeed, in many scenes in the *Metamorphoses*, no word at all is used to convey this idea, but the idea is discernible nonetheless.

The idea expressed by the noun couplet *habitus et habitudo* first arises in the context of a discussion appertaining to narrative truth and *vraisemblance* in the tale told by Aristomenes about his friend, Socrates.<sup>900</sup> Engagement with notions of perceived identity and true identity and the common ground they share, expressed in Socrates’ emaciated and bedraggled physical state, is encapsulated in the rhetorical question of the incredulous listener who quizzes Lucius on his readiness to accept the truth of such tales, a readiness which he deems unbecoming of the *vir ornatus* that Lucius appears to be. He wonders how a man of Lucius’ appearance and demeanour can give credence to such a story (1.20): *‘Tu autem,’ inquit ‘vir ut **habitus et habitudo** demonstrat ornatus, accedis huic fabulae?’* Lucius’ reply, no less scoffing than his travelling companion’s disbelief, puts the burden of interpretation on to

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<sup>899</sup> This passage can also be deemed a kind of manifesto for the basis of a more primitive type of physiognomic thinking exhibited in Apuleius’ work.

<sup>900</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 1.6-19. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this tale.

those who, like the incredulous travelling companion, are ignorant (1.20): *Nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis hominibus multa usu venire mira et paene infecta, quae tamen **ignaro** relata fidem perdant*. The problem, then, is one of reception, not reality. This can be applied also to readings of identity in the novel.

The same couplet recurs in Book 9 where it is used by Lucius to refer to the clothing and appearance of a legionary (9.39): *Nam quidam procerus et, ut indicabat **habitus atque habitudo**, miles e legione*.<sup>901</sup> Dress is therefore an essential component in the construction, promotion and maintaining of (as well as perceiving of), social identity; but that social identity in the *Metamorphoses* is also reflective of inner nature, a connection that is readily perceived in the Pythias episode in the novel<sup>902</sup> which deals with social and civic identity, expressed through dress and behaviour, as arising from inner nature as much as from any cultural formation.<sup>903</sup> Dress, then, as marker of social character becomes ancillary to the role it has as index of personal character.

The word *habitudo* both in the couplet and on its own appears to measure rather more the value of the physical body in the *Metamorphoses*, conveying information arising from the body as a bearer of identity.<sup>904</sup> It is however an elaboration of the word *habitus*, which is its base, so rather than cancel out the force of *habitus*, it cooperates with it. Milo's remark to Lucius à

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<sup>901</sup> The *TLL* classes both these occurrences of the couplet as adnominal (2481, 70-72).

<sup>902</sup> *Metamorphoses*, 1.24-25. For further analysis of the role of *habitus* in this episode, see Chapter 4.

<sup>903</sup> Koortbojian (2008, 73) speaks of the "quintessentially Roman double sense of identity, at once individual and institutional" (although he is speaking of the representation of the dead in funerary practices in Rome of the second century B.C.). Lucius appears to share this understanding of the workings of dress and outer appearance.

<sup>904</sup> The word *habitudo* also occurs at the beginning of Apuleius' work on the doctrine of Plato to explain his name, which was given to Plato in accordance with a particular physical quality he displayed (*DPD*, 1.1): *Platoni **habitudo** corporis cognomentum dedit; namque Aristocles prius est nominatus*. Hildebrand (in Molt, 1938, 95) explains the meaning of *habitudo* thus: "*habitudo vero sit nativa illa et externa corporis species, quae ex incessu, facie, et toto denique eius filo cognoscatur*." *Habitus* on the other hand conveys "*omnia amplectatur ea, quae ad externum hominis ornatum pertineant*." The *TLL* however deems both words to convey much the same meaning. Butler and Owen (1983), 17 claim that the couplet in the *Metamorphoses* means "dress and bearing."

*propos* of his genteel behaviour testifies to the word's specific relevance to the body (1.23): *Et sic 'Ego te' inquit 'etiam de ista corporis speciosa **habitudine** deque hac virginali prorsus verecundia generosa stirpe proditum et recte conicerem.'* Demeas' letter and the genealogy of Lucius provided by Byrrhaena both corroborate this reading of Lucius' character from his physical appearance. In Book 2, Lucius uses the word with specific reference to Photis' hair (2.8): *Nec tamen ego prius inde discessi quam diligenter omnem eius explorassem **habitudinem**,* and Milo uses it when he requires a description of the Chaldaean seer based on his physical appearance (2.13): *'Qua' inquit 'corporis **habitudine** praeditus quove nomine nuncupatus hic iste Chaldaeus est?'* Lucius replies to Milo's request accordingly: *'Procerus' inquam 'et suffusculus, Diophanes nomine.'* If physical appearance is reflective of innate ability, an aspect of character, then Diophanes' appearance is a truthful mirror image of this, as what the seer foretells of Lucius' future life comes true. Likewise, Photis' attractive physical appearance, especially her hair, reflects her erotic nature. Hair often arises in the novel in contexts of beauty and erotic encounters which are definitive of erotic inclination, or, as happens in Book 11, the absence of erotic inclination.<sup>905</sup>

More importantly, *habitus* is morally neutral as an interpretative tool; so when, for example, the word arises at the beginning of the novel to express Lucius' good breeding and genteel manners, his subsequent outer appearance as a donkey in no way undermines the validity of *habitus* to reflect Lucius' identity prior to his transformation.<sup>906</sup> Again, the sight of Lucius' amorous entanglement with Photis and penchant for magic coming so soon after these initial readings of Lucius' nature based on his appearance only superficially undermines the validity of interpretations of his *habitus et habitudo* as reflective of a character not given to such preoccupations. It seems plausible to suggest, therefore, that the function of the couplet is to insist on the basic validity of many of the first readings of character, in this case, Lucius', in the novel, in spite of their inhabiting and reflecting a complex character.

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<sup>905</sup> For the function of hair as an aspect of *habitudo* and how this is reflective of personal nature, see Chapters 7 and 8 which deal with the *cinaedi* and the cult of Isis, respectively. The word *habitudo*, however, does not appear in the passages depicting the hair of the *cinaedi* and the Isiac devotees.

<sup>906</sup> For more on how this works, see Chapter 2.

*Habitus* also occurs in the *Metamorphoses* in passages where it too signifies clothing and overall appearance. By extension and in context, it also conveys a soul (hence, a personality) inclined to certain behaviours, that is, a character's basic nature. In the case of Milo the *habitus mendicantis* in which he goes about refers to Milo's soul which is in the state of a beggar because of the strength of its appetitive parts which make Milo seek to conceal his wealth through fear of robbery.<sup>907</sup>

The consequence of the function of *habitus* and the couplet *habitus et/atque habitudo* in the programmatic first book is their colouring of the novel as a whole. Surfaces are not mere surfaces. The body functions as a garment, hence an expression, of the soul.

### **B Roman *habitus* and Sociological *habitus***

It is worth examining the basis of commonality between *habitus* as a Roman concept and expression of personal identity and the word as it was appropriated by the discipline of sociology, especially by Pierre Bourdieu. *Habitus* as it functions in the *Metamorphoses* is, in some passages, especially the Pythias episode (1.24-25), not too far removed from the sociological concept. Within the wider anthropological field, the word is used to express the environmental process of habituation by which men become integrated into their society and come to embody, espouse and perpetuate its values and structures. Corbeill refers to it as "beliefs embodied."<sup>908</sup> Brubaker (1982) defines *habitus* and, not unaware of the problems of such a concept in its applicability to cases, discusses its plasticity and relevance to the field of work which it deems to serve (758): "The *habitus* is defined abstractly as the system of internalized dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activity, being shaped by the former and regulating the latter .... the system of dispositions that mediates between inert structures and the practices through which social life is sustained and structures are reproduced

<sup>907</sup> For this occurrence of the word *habitus*, see Chapter 3.

<sup>908</sup> In Koortbojian (2008) 88. Burton, in an article on friendship in the plays of Plautus (2004, 212), defines *habitus* as "normative social sanctions" (although he possibly defines it thus within the specific confines of the notion of friendship). The fact that the definition of the word may change in context speaks volumes about the great gulf that separates *habitus* as a tool of social anthropology and the way it worked in the Roman imagination.

or transformed.” As a critique of the excessive rigorism of post-War French social theory, it aimed to show the manner in which “dispositions lead individuals to act in a way that reproduces the social structure (more precisely, the regularities constitutive of it) without radically transforming it” (759); yet it too, like any theory, risks becoming fluid to the point of vacuity:

... the habitus is conceived in three distinct sets of relations: to the conditions under which it was formed, to the immediate situation of action, and to the practices it produces. The habitus is thus a concept made to do an extraordinary amount of theoretical work .... Doubts inevitably arise about the usefulness of any concept so vague and versatile. It is tempting to dismiss the concept of habitus as a *deus ex machina*, as another in the series of dialectical do-it-alls sprung on generations of unsuspecting sociology students by the ever-resourceful French. But the linked concepts of structure, habitus, and practice are not intended to constitute a theory, and it would be unfair to evaluate them by the criteria we use to evaluate theories. They are metatheoretical notions, designed to focus attention on the kind of conceptual framework that is required of any sociological theory, namely one that incorporates dispositional as well as structural concepts.<sup>909</sup>

Based on these judgments of his work in the field, it would appear that Bourdieu, who would have had the benefits of a Classical education,<sup>910</sup> may have drawn on a passage in Cicero’s *De Inventione* wherein the speaker talks of *habitus* as it appears to function in the critique made above, as an imposed criterion, that is, as the result of personal absorption and application of normative behavioural standards existing outside the individual, rather than as the expression of personal nature (1.35): *nam quae industria comparantur, ad habitum pertinent, de quo posterius est dicendum*. Further on, Cicero explicitly defines *habitus* of both mind and body within the field of the pre-established criterion (that is, within his own work) of the embedding of social and cultural values within the individual (1.36): *habitus autem appellamus animi aut corporis constantem et absolutam aliqua in re perfectionem, ut virtutis aut*

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<sup>909</sup> Brubaker (1985) 760.

<sup>910</sup> For Bourdieu’s debt to the Classical tradition for his use of terms like habitus, scheme, and hexis, see Héran (1987), 385-416. Gleason (1995), xxiv, also acknowledges Bourdieu’s debt to ancient society for his conception and terminology of the “aggregate” of behavioural patterns. Gleason’s analysis of the function of *habitus* in ancient Rome is rather reductive; she restricts *habitus* to the meaning it has in the Roman rhetorical sphere, as an aspect of constructing identity.

*artis alicuius perceptionem aut quamvis scientiam et item corporis aliquam commoditatem non natura datam, sed studio et industria partam.*<sup>911</sup>

Nonetheless, the context of Cicero's definition and discussion of *habitus* within the field of oratory restricts it to a performative setting which is not always constitutive of every occurrence of the word or concept, even in ancient texts.

Scholars have attempted to offer correctives to the Bourdieuan reading of *habitus* as an inner reflection of something absorbed from without. Lowrie reminds us that "scholars in Classics from Richard Heinze to Karl Galinsky will tell you that *auctoritas* is a power the Romans conceived of as emanating from the individual – i.e., inside out – while Pierre Bourdieu will tell you that it is conferred on a leader by his followers – i.e., outside in."<sup>912</sup> Whilst *auctoritas* and *habitus* are not the same thing, from a Roman perspective, *habitus* can be visual proof and expression, existing at the level of the body, of this inherent *auctoritas*. For Bourdieu, on the other hand, the expression of power, inherent in its symbols, can be a learned and imposed character trait. The symbols of power are thus conferred with a concomitant language expressive of how they are perceived. In the Roman mind, social and personal identity could not be so easily separated. Koortbojian, in his examination of funerary practices from the second century B.C, expands on the Roman double perception of identity when he speaks of the "quintessentially Roman double sense of identity, at once individual and institutional"<sup>913</sup> a definition of identity aptly relevant to the depiction of Pythias, in spite of the non-funerary context of the Pythias episode,

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<sup>911</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De inventione*, 2.160: *Iustitia est habitus animi communi utilitate conservata suam cuique tribuens dignitatem. eius initium est ab natura profectum; deinde quaedam in consuetudinem ex utilitatis ratione venerunt; postea res et ab natura profectas et ab consuetudine probatas legum metus et religio sanxit.* In this later passage, Cicero seems to have a grasp on the co-operation of *habitus* as nature and social custom. Atkins (1990), 283, sees the function of *habitus animi* in this case to be a "social function."

<sup>912</sup> Lowrie (2005), 42. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991, 192): "Symbolic power is a power which the person submitting to grants to the person who exercises it, a credit with which he credits him, a *fides*, an *auctoritas*, with which he entrusts him by placing his trust in him. It is a power which exists because the person who submits to it believes that it exists." Quoted also in Lowrie.

<sup>913</sup> Koortbojian (2008) 73.

where Pythias' *habitus* expresses as much a mind-set which is telling of the state of his soul, as his magisterial rank.<sup>914</sup>

Certainly, Apuleius himself understands the necessity for a portion of sincerity to accompany the visible actions of a magistrate when these are motivated by justice, and speaks of the forms this sincerity takes as something akin to courtly qualities without regard for how these qualities come into being (cf. *Florida*, 8 and 9).<sup>915</sup> From the foregone it can be deemed reasonable to interpret Plotina's male *habitus* in an ancient light. Certainly, a Roman reading of the *habitus* of Plotina in her disguise as a man, rather than drawing on the later sociological interpretation of her assuming a correctly (learned) masculine behaviour and strength both from and along with her new male appearance, would apprehend it in the context of the narrative rather as an alternative expression of her innate qualities of *feminine* strength, qualities prized in the preceding literary canon and which made women the counterpart, if not the equal, of men.<sup>916</sup>

### **C Ancient Sources for the Idea of the Body as the Garment of the Soul**

In scenes where clothing, including costume and disguise, comes to reveal the true identity of a character, clothing, like the body, serves as the garment of the soul, that is, the transparent garment of the soul, as it is its expression. Clothing in such cases functions merely as an extension of the naked body which, being naked, is essentially truthful, for the naked body cannot dissemble. It is for this reason that philosophical texts, including those of Apuleius, insist on the importance of judging men in their naked state, that is, stripped of all trappings, of which clothing is a necessary component.<sup>917</sup>

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<sup>914</sup> Koortbojian (2008) 73. Dissecting *habitus* from the point of view of visible, that is, outward, signs of identity, located more specifically in the fields of costume and gesture, Koortbojian applies the Bourdieuan model to confirm that the signs "might be held to testify to a display of individuality. This was, paradoxically, a matter of convention. One identified, indeed individuated oneself, by adopting the conspicuous appearance that was synonymous with a distinctive social role."

<sup>915</sup> For these speeches and their relevance to *habitus* in the *Metamorphoses*, see Chapter 4.

<sup>916</sup> For a deeper enquiry into how this works in Plotina's case, see Chapter 6.

<sup>917</sup> Apuleius, *DDS*, 174-175. The Platonist prototype can be found in the *Gorgias*, 524d-525a. It is a philosophical conceit which was repeated down throughout the centuries and in both

Nakedness in such cases is of course a metaphorical idea used to transmit the idea of man independent of his accomplishments and offices, behind which he can hide. Clothing, which includes insignia and magisterial costume, can, after all, dissimulate, concealing the ugly truth of nature from sight. This notion of the clothed body as dissimulating may appear to operate by way of paradox alongside clothing as *habitus*, the garment of the soul, reflecting inner nature; yet the one interpretative scheme need not necessarily rule out the other. Perceptual, hence interpretative, error can coexist alongside truthful representation. This is not only contingent upon the beholder, who may mistake true identity for false, and vice versa, or perceive only partly true identity of whomsoever he is beholding, because his mental faculties of perception are unable to pierce outer layers and first appearances. It so often happens that the character seeking to conceal his true nature by costume or disguise may have an erroneous perception of himself, thereby unwittingly revealing his true identity through the very means by which he sought to conceal it. In Apuleius' novel, this double strain accompanies clothing and the body wherever they occur. One particular dialogue of Apuleius' avowed master, Plato, contains both interpretative strategies: the *Gorgias*.

Pertinent to the representation of the clothed and the naked body in the *Gorgias*, the notion of the body as the garment of the soul in a strictly philosophical sphere, appears to have been first formulated in the ancient tradition by the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles, in a phrase that has come down to us preserved in fragment 126 DK: *σαρκῶν ἀλλογνῶτι περιστέλλουσα χιτῶνι* "robed in an alien garment of flesh." It was a widespread notion throughout both the Greek world and the Orient,<sup>918</sup> and appears to have enjoyed longevity, as later reformulations of the notion attest,

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the Latin and the Greek cultures. In the Latin canon alone, Seneca repeats the idea in his letters, conflating it with another Greek trope, that of judging a horse by its body and not its trappings (80): *omnium istorum personata felicitas est. Contemnes illos si despoliaveris. Equum empturus solvi iubes stratum, detrahis vestimenta venalibus ne qua vitia corporis lateant: hominem involutum aestimas?* The metaphor of horse selection to represent the moral lesson of the criteria by which to judge men arises in the earlier Greek canon in Xenophon's *De Re Equestri* 1.2 and his *Memorabilia* Book 4.2.26ff. Apuleius too adapted the horse selection motif into his work on Socrates, *DDS* 172-173.

<sup>918</sup> Zuntz (1971) 406.

such as the following Italian sepulchral epigram, most likely dating from the second century A.D., and most likely influenced by Pythagorean thought: *σωμαχιτων ψυχης*.<sup>919</sup> Whilst the Empedoclean formula in the strict sense most likely refers to the descent of the disembodied daemon back into a body, it can have metaphorical value once divorced from its original context, where it may be used to refer figuratively to the embodied soul. This of course depends on the perception of the relationship between the body and the soul; certainly the adjective *ἀλλογνῶς* connotes an undesirable aspect to putting on this garment of flesh.

Possibly the connection between the body and the soul in this formula has relevance to the allegory told by Socrates in the *Gorgias*, 523a-d through which Socrates explains how perceptual discrepancies arise in the matter of judgement based on externals, that is, the clothed body in all its trappings. Certainly some scholars have taken it this way.<sup>920</sup> In this section of the *Gorgias*, both parties are disadvantaged by clothing: the judges' vision is obfuscated by their bodies, expressed in clothing terminology, more specifically the veil, and the men to be judged are ill-judged because they use their bodies and their clothes to conceal their faults. Both parties must be stripped bare of their clothing, so that soul may perceive, hence, judge soul (*Gorgias*, 523a-523e):<sup>921</sup>

<sup>919</sup> *I.G.* xiv.2241 in Zuntz (1971). Zuntz (1971), 406, in contradistinction to other scholars, is reticent to consider the concept *σωμαχιτων ψυχης* "Orphic", but does claim that "the question could only be considered together with all other formulations of the body, as well as of human qualities, as 'garments' of man, or of the soul." See Zuntz (1971, 405- 406) also for a brief overview of the literary manipulation of the idea expressed in the formula in both Greek and Latin literature, and on the possibility of the Pythagorean origin of the concept.

<sup>920</sup> Wendland (1916), 483, relates the passage from the *Gorgias* to the fragment of Empedocles. Wendland calls it the "Garment of Vanity" ("Das Gewand der Eitelkeit"). Clark too, (2008, 49) makes a direct link between the cited passage from the *Gorgias* and the fragment of Empedocles: "Plato, *Gorgias* 523c ff, after Empedocles fr.126DK."

<sup>921</sup> "Now in the time of Cronos there was a law concerning mankind, and it holds to this very day amongst the gods, that every man who has passed a just and holy life departs after his decease to the Isles of the Blest, and dwells in all happiness apart from ill; but whoever has lived unjustly and impiously goes to the dungeon of requital and penance which, you know, they call Tartarus. Of these men there were judges in Cronos' time, and when Zeus had but newly begun his reign – living men to judge the living upon the day when each was to breathe his last; and thus the cases were being decided amiss. So Pluto and the overseers from the Isles of the Blest came before Zeus with the report that they found men passing

ἦν οὖν νόμος ὁδε περὶ ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ Κρόνου, καὶ αἰεὶ καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἔστιν ἐν θεοῖς, τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν μὲν δικαίως τὸν βίον διελθόντα καὶ ὀσίως, ἐπειδὴν τελευτήσῃ, εἰς μακάρων νήσους ἀπιόντα οἰκεῖν ἐν πάσῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ ἐκτὸς κακῶν, τὸν δὲ ἀδίκως καὶ ἀθέως εἰς τὸ τῆς τίσεώς τε καὶ δίκης δεσμοπήριον, ὃ δὴ Τάρταρον καλοῦσιν, ἰέναι. τούτων δὲ δικασταὶ ἐπὶ Κρόνου καὶ ἔτι νεωστὶ τοῦ Διὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχοντος ζῶντες ἦσαν ζώντων, ἐκείνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ δικάζοντες ἢ μέλλοιεν τελευτᾶν· κακῶς οὖν αἱ δίκαι ἐκρίνοντο. ὃ τε οὖν Πλούτων καὶ οἱ ἐπιμεληταὶ οἱ ἐκ μακάρων νήσων ἰόντες ἔλεγον πρὸς τὸν Δία ὅτι φοιτῶν ἐκ μακάρων νήσων ἰόντες ἔλεγον πρὸς τὸν Δία ὅτι φοιτῶν σφιν ἄνθρωποι ἐκατέρωσε ἀνάξιοι. εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ζεὺς· Ἄλλ' ἐγώ, ἔφη, παύσω τοῦτο γιγνόμενον. νῦν μὲν γὰρ κακῶς αἱ δίκαι δικάζονται. ἀμπεχόμενοι γάρ, ἔφη, οἱ κρινόμενοι κρίνονται· ζῶντες γὰρ κρίνονται. πολλοὶ οὖν, ἢ δ' ὅς, ψυχὰς πονηρὰς ἔχοντες ἠμφιεσμένοι εἰσὶ σώματά τε καλὰ καὶ γένη καὶ πλούτους, καί, ἐπειδὴν ἡ κρίσις ἦ, ἔρχονται αὐτοῖς πολλοὶ μάρτυρες, μαρτυρήσοντες ὡς δικαίως βεβιώκασιν· οἱ οὖν δικασταὶ ὑπὸ τε τούτων ἐκπλήττονται, καὶ ἅμα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀμπεχόμενοι δικάζουσι, πρὸ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς αὐτῶν ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ὤτα καὶ ὄλον τὸ σῶμα προκεκαλυμμένοι. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῖς πάντα ἐπίπροσθεν γίνεσθαι, καὶ τὰ αὐτῶν ἀμφιέσματα καὶ τὰ τῶν κρινομένων. πρῶτον μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, παυστέον ἐστὶν προειδόμενος αὐτοῦς τὸν θάνατον· νῦν γὰρ προϊῶσαι. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν καὶ δὴ εἴρηται τῷ Προμηθεΐ ὅπως ἂν παύσῃ αὐτῶν. ἔπειτα γυμνοὺς κριτέον ἀπάντων τούτων· τεθνεῶτας γὰρ δεῖ κρίνεσθαι. καὶ τὸν κριτὴν δεῖ γυμνὸν εἶναι, τεθνεῶτα, αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν θεωροῦντα ἐξαίφνης ἀποθανόντος ἐκάστου, ἔρημον πάντων τῶν συγγενῶν καὶ καταλιπόντα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς πάντα ἐκεῖνον τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα δικαία ἡ κρίσις ἦ.

Such a command appears to have generated the related philosophical injunction to judge a man in his naked state, that is, stripped of all the trappings of his social status and achievements, an idea rearticulated by

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over to either abode undeserving. Then spake Zeus: 'Nay,' said he, 'I will put a stop to these proceedings. The cases are now indeed judged ill; and it is because they who are on trial are tried in their clothing, for they are tried alive. Now many,' said he, 'who have wicked souls are clad in fair bodies and ancestry and wealth, and at their judgement appear many witnesses to testify that their lives have been just. Now, the judges are confounded not only by their evidence but at the same time by being clothed themselves while they sit in judgement, having their own soul muffled in the veil of eyes and ears and the whole body. Thus all these are a hindrance to them, their own habiliments no less than those of the judged.'" The text and translation of the *Gorgias* are those of W. R. Lamb in the Loeb edition (1953).

Apuleius in his own writings (*DDS*, 174-175). Additionally, the supposition arises from the reading of the above passage that, at the time of the trial, fair bodies and the sartorial trappings of status should ideally be signs of lives lived justly, especially in the case of a leader. On these souls, however, they become disguise, a stratagem rendered doubly efficient by the perceptual failings of the judges, whose bodies, likened to a veil which obfuscates the judges' vision, hinder them in the service of justice.

The subsequent section of the *Gorgias* (524d-525a) explains how the souls of those to be judged have now been stripped of their bodies, but retain the effects, good and bad, in the form of marks and welts, of the formerly close bond between the body and soul so as to reveal the truth of their past lives (*Gorgias*, 524d-525a):<sup>922</sup>

ταύτων δὴ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτ' ἄρα καὶ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι, ὧν Καλλίκλεις· ἐνδηλα πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἐπειδὴν γυμνωθῆ τοῦ σώματος, τὰ τε τῆς φύσεως καὶ τὰ παθήματα ἃ διὰ τὴν ἐπιτήδευσιν ἐκάστου πράγματος ἔσχεν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος. ἐπειδὴν οὖν ἀφίκωνται παρὰ τὸν δικαστὴν, οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας παρὰ τὸν Ῥαδάμανθυν, ὁ Ῥαδάμανθος ἐκείνους ἐπιστήσας θεᾶται ἐκάστου τὴν ψυχὴν, οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅτου ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως ἐπιλαβόμενος ἢ ἄλλου ὅτου οὖν βασιλέως ἢ δυνάστου κατεῖδεν οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς ὄν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ διαμεμαστιγωμένην καὶ οὐλῶν μεστήν ὑπὸ ἐπιτορκιῶν καὶ ἀδικίας, ἃ ἐκάστη ἢ πρᾶξις αὐτοῦ ἐξωμόρξατο εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ πάντα σκολιὰ ὑπὸ ψεύδους καὶ ἀλαεῖς τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ πάντα σκολιὰ ὑπὸ ψεύδους καὶ ἀλαζονείας καὶ οὐδὲν εὐθὺ διὰ τὸ

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<sup>922</sup> “And so it seems to me that the same is the case with the soul too, Callicles: when a man’s soul is stripped bare of the body, all its natural gifts, and the experiences added to that soul as the result of his various pursuits, are manifest in it. So when they have arrived in the presence of their judge, they of Asia before Rhadamanthus, these Rhadamanthus sets before him and surveys the soul of each, not knowing whose it is; nay, often when he has laid hold of the great king or some other prince or potentate, he perceives the utter unhealthiness of his soul, striped all over with the scourge, and a mass of wounds, the work of perjuries and injustice; where every act has left its smirch upon his soul, where all is awry through falsehood and imposture, and nothing straight because of a nurture that knew not truth: or, as the result of an unbridled course of licence, luxury, insolence, and incontinence, he finds the soul full fraught with disproportion and ugliness...” See also, with regard to this passage from the *Gorgias*, Blondell (2002, 62): “Condemnation of the slightest deviation from a rigorous ideal norm of embodied character persisted throughout antiquity.”

ἄνευ ἀληθείας τεθράφθαι· καὶ ὑπὸ ἐξουσίας καὶ τρυφῆς καὶ ὕβρεως καὶ ἀκρατίας τῶν πράξεων ἀσυμμετρίας τε καὶ αἰσχρότητος γέμουσαν τὴν ψυχὴν εἶδεν.

These welts and marks on the soul (*διαμεμαστιγωμένην καὶ οὐλῶν μεστήν*) remotely recall in a way the later Aristotelian notion of the *sympatheia* that exists between the body and the soul, although Plato's allegory in this case, of course, is not an expression of the Aristotelian notion. For our purposes, it is sufficient to suppose that the imbalance in the soul which caused it to succumb to incontinence must have been expressed and enacted at the level of the body prior to death. Clothing in the *Metamorphoses*, like the naked souls stripped of their bodies in the passage above from the *Gorgias*, is often transparent from a higher perspective, and does not forestall the truth of nature from being visible to the enlightened beholder. In the passage quoted above from the *Gorgias*, the souls are depicted as suffering the same afflictions as the body, even when separated from it, whether the wounds inflicted on them are the result of actions on it by the body or by themselves, as they "knew not justice." The work of perjuries and injustice has the effect of making the royal habiliments, on such an embodied soul, take on the connotations of and represent tyranny. Clothing functions in a similar manner to this in the *Metamorphoses*, where characters who seek to disguise their true identity, hence nature, through costume, ultimately fail, thereby disclosing inherent truths about themselves to the perceptive judge, of which the reader stands to be a prime example.<sup>923</sup>

How, then, can clothing express falsehood, imposture, and other such vices spoken of in the text of Plato, representative of and embodying the marks of the soul? In the *Metamorphoses*, sartorial and somatic expression of qualities and vices often work by Apuleius' drawing on canonical specimens of

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<sup>923</sup> On the ideal reader of the *Metamorphoses*, see Svendsen (1978) who claims that Apuleius' novel, like the modern novel, demands "an alert, sophisticated reader who must supply transitions, make connections, and in a sense, complete the narrative" (101) and recently, Nicolai (1999), who points out the risks of a narrative like that of the *Metamorphoses* which appeals to a reader who will often go beyond the narrative itself to find meaning for the text (164): "Apuleio esige dal lettore la capacità di decodificare i segni e lo porta per mano verso l'esegesi allegorica del romanzo, ma se questo rende certa l'esistenza di ambiguità, polisemie e relazioni intretestuali, non elimina però il pericolo di andare oltre, eccedendo nella scoperta di improbabili sensi riposti o ripostissimi."

dress and the body which have predetermined moral value. The educated reader (both ancient and modern) will recognise the voice of satire, historiography, epic, sophistic speeches (including Apuleius' own) and other media used in such a way as to convey philosophical common-places. A later Platonising tradition, particularly visible in the fourth speech of Dio Chrysostom (although not only there) will make this correlation more plastic, more sartorial in its expression, adapting clothing to do the work of the image of the unhealthy soul in the *Gorgias*. In this more literary expression of the idea, the clothed body becomes revelatory of the condition of a man's soul. The same can be said of clothing in the *Metamorphoses*, where these canonical specimens, combined with Apuleius' own ideas, allow him a free hand in the vision and process of characterisation which are particular to the *Metamorphoses*.

In his *Apologia*, for example, Apuleius speaks of the rational part of the soul in terms of kingly authority, deeming it to be the royal part of the soul (50): *ilico regalem partem animi [debilitat], quae ratione pollens verticem hominis velut arcem et regiam insedit*. Were the rational part of the soul to be depicted as a figure in accordance with this image, it would necessarily be depicted as a benign but ever watchful king. Seneca had already made this allegorical leap in his letter to Lucilius (114) on the outward expression of our soul through physiognomy and dress. He spoke of the soul which determines our expression, gait and sartorial style, as either king or tyrant. Tyranny of soul arises as a result of effeminacy and lack of control of the emotions and bodily appetites: *animus noster modo rex est, modo tyrannus. Rex, cum honesta intuetur, salutem commissi sibi corporis curat, et illi nihil imperat turpe, nihil sordidum. Ubi vero inpotens, cupidus, delicatus est, transit in nomen detestabile ac dirum et fit tyrannus*. Although Seneca does not in this letter develop the king/tyrant parallel into a full-blown sartorial metaphor, he had pre-empted the notion of kingly apparel functioning to conceal un-kingly behaviour in a previous letter (*Epistles*, 80). Regal habiliment is apt for the king but not the tyrant; were a tyrant to wear the robes of a king, this would be disguise: *hominem involutum aestimas?... Vides illum Scythiae Sarmatiaeve regem insigni capitis decorum? Si vis illum aestimare totumque scire, qualis sit, fasciam solve; multum mali sub illa latet*. Such ideas appear to be related to the image of the soul of the Great

King in the *Gorgias*, scourged with vice which had been concealed until the time of judgment. Depicting the embodied soul in regal habiliments in a literary narrative for the sake of making a philosophical point would be neither a striking novelty, nor a sharp departure from the allegorical method of exposition as found in a Socratic dialogue.<sup>924</sup>

Parallel to such a method, Chryseros' and Milo's rags in the *Metamorphoses* reflect the scars on the soul which are striped with the scourge of injustice, of the *oligarchia* (Apuleius writes the word in Greek characters), which overtakes and unbalances a man's soul.<sup>925</sup> This image can even operate vicariously, so that the rags that fall from the barely-covered bodies of the slaves in the mill bespeak a moral servitude which is as telling of Lucius' moral situation as it is of that of the miller's wife, given to turpitude and vice, even though Lucius cannot at this point recognise servility as a moral state.<sup>926</sup> On the other hand, although (moral) servitude is still at this point external to Lucius, the sight of it is shocking to him. This shocking revelation of the physical and moral degradation which attends servitude (Lucius refers to the slaves as *homunculi*) counts for something. From this basis, it is not difficult to perceive of dress in certain scenes of the *Metamorphoses* as a reading of the individual soul as slavish, especially with regard to carnal pleasure (the motley of the *cinaedi*) or, as we have just seen, money (the rags of Chryseros and Milo); or as conceited and puffed up (Pythias' magisterial costume). In the case of Pythias' magisterial dress, which has relevance to the discussion of the soul as king, insignia of rank can represent one or the other of two things: the benign influence worthy of a wise king who is willing to impose authority with

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<sup>924</sup> On the manner of depicting philosophical, especially Platonic common-places literarily in the second century A.D., see Elsom (1984).

<sup>925</sup> Cf. Apuleius, *DPD*, 2.15 for the notion of oligarchy in the soul, and 2.21 for a further development of the effects of this imbalance. See also Chapter 3 for a fuller treatment of how this works in the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>926</sup> This event occurs at 9.12. For a detailed analysis of the revelation of the realities of slavery to Lucius, see Chapter 3. By the repetition of motifs, such as the rags, which recur in Book 9 after they had been left behind by several chapters, the sight of the mill slaves appears intended to have an impact on the imagination of the reader as much as on Lucius. Ironically, at this point in the novel (9.12) Lucius is either unaware of his own previous moral enslavement (he even refers to it when he speaks of his erotic enslavement to Photis: 3.19, 22) or does not fully understand it.

benignity, or the despotic scare tactics of a tyrant. Hence, the importance of acuity of perception, for an enlightened mind would perceive, behind the trappings of the king, the possibility and trappings of a tyrant. Although this extended metaphor is not taken so far nor discussed further in Seneca's letter 114, a further difficulty arises in that the robes for both may be the same, as it is so easy for a king to slip into a tyrant. Similarly, the same magisterial dress could represent authority tempered by justice, or authority without check.

### **D *Habitus*, Metamorphosis, and Physiognomy**

Traces of the notion of the body as the soul's garment possibly persist in notions and/or images of transformation. A vestige of this may reside in Plato's *Phaedo*, section 81e-82a, where Socrates speaks to Cebes of what happens to the souls of men after death.<sup>927</sup> The line of argument is Pythagorean. Socrates explains how the souls of those who have lived a life of detachment from their body and have learned to quash the assaults of the body upon the soul return to the divine principle, whereas the souls of those who did not exercise such detachment return into the body of whichever animal they most resembled during their term of life by their lifestyle. Such souls have been infected by the proximity of their body to them, and are therefore trapped therein. The philosophical thought behind this passage is akin to the motivating force behind the process of Lucius' transformation in the *Metamorphoses*, in particular. Of note is the language, at the end of the passage from the *Phaedo* especially, which Socrates draws on in his explanation. The transmigrating soul "puts on" the likeness of wild animals. Lucius too speaks of his personal transformation as of a "putting off" of his old form. Clothing, the processes of dressing and what is contained within or concealed by this act, become embroiled in wider issues pertaining to personal identity and the necessity of expressing or concealing it, and the closeness of the body to the soul. Personal identity is an emanation of the soul. Where this can be read on the body, then whatever form the identity puts on will be expressive, even if only partially, of that identity. Metamorphosis in no way undercuts the process of *habitus*: *habitus* remains and is permanent, howsoever often form may change. The

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<sup>927</sup> Alesse (2000, 410) believes that there is a direct link between the passages in Plato's *Phaedo* (and others in the *Republic*) and the Empedoclean fragment, 126 DK.

relevance of this is not only for transmigration<sup>928</sup> but also for physiognomy in its broader context of *habitus*. This is the other way clothing and the body operate in the *Metamorphoses*. The truth is visible, but the perceptual acuity of the beholder is faulty, and cannot read it for what it is. It is to be noted that in the section of the *Gorgias* quoted above (523a-523e), it was deemed necessary for the judges to remove their “clothing” in order for them to have the means to judge the dead correctly.

The link between *habitus* and physiognomy is quite obvious, as the latter is an aspect of the former. The degree of Apuleius’ acceptance of physiognomy, outside the relevance it has for the *Metamorphoses*, is somewhat less easy to determine. For some of Apuleius’ commentators, Apuleius did give credence to physiognomic theory. This, according to Gaisser, was how Beroaldo saw Apuleius: “Apuleius, devotee of physiognomy that he was, wanted to be memorialised in statues conveying his beauty, eloquence, and philosophical wisdom. Beroaldo, steeped in Christian doctrine, refused to believe in the link that Apuleius insisted on between the inner and outer self, or that a statue could convey his real character to posterity.”<sup>929</sup> Whilst Beroaldo’s charge is not levelled at Apuleius as an author, nor entirely indicative of his complex method of character creation with respect to the *Metamorphoses*, as a reception of Apuleius’ propensities (propensities which can nevertheless be sensed in his narrative work), it is a fair summation.

Certainly, Apuleius believed in a frankness of expression which would reflect innate qualities of nobility. This is a teaching he claims, in the *Apologia*, to have been handed down to him (40): *more hoc et instituto magistrorum debere, si quo eat, in primori fronte animum gestare*. Further on in the *Apologia*, he claims that one of Aemilianus’ nick-names is Charon because of the ugliness of both his face and his soul, as if the latter were responsible for the former (56): *Igitur agnomenta ei duo indita: Charon, ut iam dixi, ob oris et animi diritatem*. His purposes for making this claim must be taken into account given the forensic and apologetic context in which it was pronounced; but,

<sup>928</sup> Inwood, on the other hand (2009, 71, 84), claims that transmigration cannot occur without a distinction between body and soul.

<sup>929</sup> Gaisser (2008), 241. Evidence of Apuleius’ alleged insistence on the link between inner and outer can be found in both the *Apologia* and the *Florida*.

notwithstanding this fact, there is no reason why skill in physiognomy cannot be considered a likely and plausible *modus vivendi* for a man of Apuleius' formation and public standing at the time.

Further evidence of the validity of physiognomy for Apuleius is attested in the *DPD*. In it he recounts the story of Socrates' method of recognising Plato, still a boy, as the swan of Cupid merely by judging his looks (1.1): *Cum hoc [scil.somnium] Socrates in conventu amicorum referret, Ariston Platonem puerum oblaturus Socrati magistro commodum prosequabatur. Quem ubi adspexit ille ingeniumque intimum de exteriori conspicatus est facie: "Hic ille erat, amici" inquit, "de Academia Cupidinis Cygnus"*.<sup>930</sup>

On the other hand, Apuleius, in another passage, refutes the validity of physiognomy, which relies on the inner-outer link which forms the functional kernel of *habitus*, as a reliable tool of judgment. In the *DPD* is a passage wherein he discusses the necessity of friendship amongst men who are inclined to good, the philosophical type of man. It is the good in a man, or beauty of soul, to which the philosopher should be attracted and not his physical beauty. The philosopher alone, the "wise man", judges others with the eyes of the soul, so he cannot be deceived by appearances (2.22):<sup>931</sup>

Bonos omnes oportet inter se amicos esse, etsi sunt minus noti, et potestate ipsa, qua mores eorum sectaeque convenient, amici sunt habendi; paria quippe a similibus non abhorrent. Unde inter solos bonos fidem amicitiae esse constat. Sapientia amatorem boni adulescentem facit, sed eum qui probitate ingenii sit ad

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<sup>930</sup> I do not fully adhere to Keulen's claim (2009, 103 and 211), that this particular anecdote serves as an example of the use of physiognomic analysis as an "admissions test" to certain philosophical schools. I believe it merely points to the future importance of Plato as a vehicle for Socrates' teaching. Beaujeu (1973, 249-250) regards this anecdote as part of a tradition, beginning roughly in Apuleius' time (starting perhaps with his contemporary, Favorinus of Arles) which combined elements of the marvellous with historical fact ("qui mêle le merveilleux aux données historiques") towards a heroisation of Plato. Keulen points to examples of the use of "physiognomical recruitment" of pupils in Apuleius' contemporary, Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae*, 1.9) and also in Apuleius' own *Metamorphoses* (1.23, and 2.2).

<sup>931</sup> Compare what he says in the passage of the *DPD* with what he says earlier in the same work, at 1.18, where he connects bodily imperfections with imbalances in the soul. It is in the same work (*DPD*, 1.6) that Apuleius declares that it is also with the eyes of the soul alone that the wise man, or the philosopher, will see god.

artes bonas promptior. **Nec deformitas corporis talem abigere poterit appetitum; nam cum ipsa anima conplacita est, homo totus adamatur; cum corpus expetitur, pars eius deterior est cordi.** Iure igitur putandum est eum qui sit gnarus bonorum cupitorem quoque eiusmodi rerum esse; **is enim solus boni[s] desiderii accenditur, qui bonum illud oculis animi videt; hunc esse sapientem.**

James and O'Brien likewise acknowledge Apuleius' refutation of the presence of close body-soul symmetry<sup>932</sup> and apply this caution to the world of the novel, where they deem "image (to be) in a continuous state of becoming."<sup>933</sup> Certainly, in his love for the truth, Apuleius, in the *Florida*, zealously cautions the man who would be wise and would attain correct knowledge against mistaking the trappings of philosophy for philosophy itself; but neither of these

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<sup>932</sup> James and O'Brien (2006), 248: "For our purposes it is sufficient to note that costume or disguise seemed necessary to indicate on the outside what was going on in the inside: a person had to be read by his cover. The intellectual or philosopher had to look bald or the complete opposite, wildly hairy and old as fashion demanded. Apuleius' own remarks on his wild coiffure in the Apology are intended to show his concern with higher things, though he does plead that philosophers might also be good-looking (*Apologia*, 4). This is 'branding' ancient style and, taking our argument into profounder philosophical realms, is the reason why Apuleius himself feels it necessary to state in On Plato and his Doctrine that outward appearance is of no account at all in the philosopher's search for true wisdom...It is against this background that one should look at Lucius' appearance in the *Metamorphoses*."

<sup>933</sup> James and O'Brien (2006), 248. Against this claim it can be stated that, certainly in Lucius' own case, being is in a state of flux and becoming and that both his noble physique and his asinine appearance mirror the inherent truth of the man's nature at that time. Apuleius, like his intellectual and ethical master, was aware that most men were a mixture of good and bad (*DPD*, 2.3): *Hominem ab stirpe ipsa neque absolute malum nec bonum nasci, sed ad utrumque proclive ingenium eius esse; habere semina quidem quaedam utrarumque rerum cum nascendi origine copulata, quae educationis disciplina in partem alteram debeant emicare.* In the following section, he speaks at length about qualities that are midway between the good and the bad: *Eiusmodi quippe medietatis inter virtutes et vitia intercedere dicebat tertium quidam, ex quo alia laudanda, alia culpanda essent. Inter scientiam et inscientiam validam alteram opinionem, alteram falsam pervicaciae vanitate iactatam, inter pudicitiam libidinosamque vitam abstinentiam et intemperantiam posuit, fortitudini ac timori medios pudorem et ignaviam fecit. Horum quippe, quos mediocres vult videri, neque sinceram esse virtutes nec vitia tamen mera et intemperata, sed hinc atque inde permixta esse.* In a literary narrative, physical characterisation will necessarily be moulded by considerations of philosophical notions of wisdom and its acquisition, and of self, where such preoccupations can be perceived in the text. Literary narratives favour and feed off this flexibility.

cautions constitutes the same thing as an unequivocal and entire rejection of physiognomy. Leaving aside critical questions of literary personae, to begin with, in the passage cited from the *DPD* above, Apuleius is speaking quite categorically of the perceptual acuity of the wise man for whom *physique alone* is not and never can be an adequate tool of moral judgment. The Zopyrus anecdote renders the simultaneous retention and application of both points of view – that physical appearances both are and are not an accurate indicator of personal nature – less improbable within the framework of philosophical theory.<sup>934</sup>

Awareness of the shortcomings of physiognomy as an interpretative scheme is evident and acknowledged even within the physiognomic canon itself. Pseudo-Aristotle admits of the inefficacy of the system when confronting those affections of the soul whose occurrence effects no change in the bodily marks on which relies the physiognomist for his diagnosis. Such affections are the result of opinion or scientific knowledge which does not imprint itself on the body.<sup>935</sup> The acquisition of knowledge and facts will not produce any alteration in the signs on which the physiognomist relies, so it is difficult to recognise a physician or a musician merely by sight. Pseudo-Aristotle's caution resonates in the priest's admonition to Lucius in Book 11, where the priest states unequivocally that Lucius' fine education and birth availed him nothing (11.15); yet even this must be read alongside the obvious correlation between false knowledge and religion exemplified in the novel by the Syrian goddess, and the associated attraction of "ugly" and "false" types (such as the *cinaedi*) and the overly credulous and unenlightened spectator, to this.

### **E *Habitus*: Conclusion**

It is evident that in his novel Apuleius followed a rule of thumb whereby clothing *ultimately* functions as *habitus*. Physiognomy and metamorphosis conspire to reinforce the function of the clothed body as *habitus*. This occurs in

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<sup>934</sup> For the Zopyrus anecdote, see Chapter 2. Even in the present day, howsoever fervently we may lay claim to a more enlightened perspective in our dealings with each other, one based on the rejection of the physiognomic principle that the physical man reflects the moral man, we nevertheless seem reticent to suspend our prejudicial instincts until they are shown to be misgiven.

<sup>935</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 806a12-19.

the *Metamorphoses* whether the word *habitus* arises in the text or not. The debt owed by modern theorists to the Classical tradition when they took up the word and adapted it for their purposes can be perceived in Latin literature (and in the Pythias episode in the *Metamorphoses*) but Apuleius retains the Classical notion behind the word where it occurs.

Given the Platonist tradition in which Apuleius worked, it seemed expedient to locate ideas of the body as the garment of the soul, of which *habitus* can be deemed a part, within the current on which Apuleius drew. Underpinning this is the consideration that both models of the body portrayed in the *Gorgias* – the body that conceals the true condition of the soul much like clothing as disguise, and the body separated from the soul (the disembodied soul) so that the latter, whose scars reflect its true condition, remains in a later tradition to be expressed through sartorial metaphor - are present, even coequal, in the *Metamorphoses*. The conclusion from this is not that Apuleius followed a slavish path that can be traced back to his professed intellectual and moral master, nor that Apuleius had his mind on the model of the *Gorgias* when he wrote his novel, but that Apuleius fits quite firmly in an already established literary tradition and culture which acknowledged that appearances could at one time both derive from and depart or even diverge from truth of personal identity, a tradition whose roots can perhaps be traced back at least as far as the Platonic dialogues, and can be manipulated in accordance with the demands and vision of individual writers. Literary needs and conventions are as pressing for a philosopher (like Apuleius) who wants to transmit philosophical ideas in a literary medium, as are philosophical common-places.

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