

## PASSION AND PETRIFICATION: THE GAZE IN APULEIUS

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AT FIRST GLANCE the visual arts would seem to be of less importance in Apuleius' *Golden Ass* than in the *Satyricon* of his Roman predecessor Petronius. While the works of art owned by Trimalchio and those in the gallery Encolpius visits are occasions for Petronius to play with the experience of viewing art and indeed form part of a wider critique of mimetic realism as a standard for judging works of art,<sup>1</sup> there is no similar attack on realism per se in Apuleius. And yet few works of literature are as obsessed with the problems of seeing and being seen as *The Golden Ass*. On one level, then, an examination of the process of viewing works of art offers both a case study in a more general issue in Apuleius and a point of contact with the wider tradition of the ancient novel, for ecphrasis in its modern, more specialized sense of descriptions of works of art has recently attracted a great deal of attention in both the novel and poetry.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond taxonomy of the language and techniques of description, however, lie questions about the nature of the process of seeing and the power (or lack thereof) belonging to the spectator. While discussion of "the gaze" is often rooted in very specific psychoanalytic theories, I employ the term here more generally in an attempt to make explicit the issues of power and control surrounding vision.<sup>3</sup> In a work where the first-person narrator spends most of his time transformed into an ass, capable of seeing and interpreting with human intelligence while himself virtually "unseen" because he is treated as a thing by those around him, control of the gaze and the power inherent in it are important and highly contested matters. In what follows I will argue both that control of the gaze shifts fundamentally in the course of the novel and further that not only is this shift foreshadowed by the central set piece of description of a work of art in the novel but also that we as

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1. Slater 1987, Slater 1990, Elsner 1993.

2. See especially Bartsch 1989, but also Fowler 1991, Goldhill and Osborne 1994.

3. Film criticism has been the primary arena for the fascinating debate over the gendered nature of the gaze, an issue of obvious relevance to the topic I will develop here. One might pick as a starting place for this discussion Laura Mulvey's essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," first published in *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6–18, and reprinted now in the valuable collection of Erens 1990; cf. Studlar 1985 and Modleski 1988.

readers can use such works of art to evaluate this shift and the great change experienced by the narrator at the end of the novel.

Apuleius' manipulations of the gaze rest on the expectation that his readers share with him some standard elements of visual repertoire. I use the notion of repertoire, taken from the perspective of reader-response theory, rather than an art historical term such as iconography, both to emphasize this commonality and the range of sources. Apuleius and his readers inhabited a world filled with images, some repeated so often that they had lost any original narrative significance and had become primarily decorative—and therefore capable of co-option into new narratives, such as Apuleius' own. At other times Apuleius uses recognizably specific images, often drawn from the visual language of sculpture. Because examples survive, we can see more clearly than in the case of painting in the Greek novel how Apuleius invokes a standard iconography in his narrative. These examples show how the text provides the reader the pleasure of successful recognition of visual allusion, but we can also sometimes see past or through the narrative to images the narrator fails to recognize. When the narrator fails to see what we as readers can see, supplied from our own visual repertoire, the possibility for ironic comment on the narrator is opened to us and we as readers may feel superior to the characters in the text. Yet that superiority may prove fragile in its turn. It is clear that Lucius our narrator has a well-stocked visual repertoire; whether he knows how to move beyond recognition to interpretation is a more pressing question, as is the relation of the reader to Lucius' interpretations.

Let us begin by examining the case of the reader's recognition of a common, widely reused image. One example occurs in the inset tale of Cupid and Psyche. Here is how the old woman telling the tale to Charite (and overheard by Lucius the ass) describes the departure of Venus from her son Cupid at one point (4.31):

. . . plantisque roseis vibrantium fluctuum summo rore calcato ecce iam profundi maris sudo resedit vertice, et ipsum quod incipit velle; et statim, quasi pridem praeceperit, non moratur marinum obsequium: adsunt Nerei filiae chorum canentes et Portunus caeruleis barbis hispidus et gravis piscoso sinu Salacia et auriga parvulus delphini Palaemon; iam passim maria persultantes Tritonum catervae hic concha sonaci leniter bucinat, ille serico tegmine flagrantiae solis obsistit inimici, alius sub oculis dominae speculum progerit, curru biuges alii subnatant.

[Venus] stepped out with rosy feet over the topmost foam of the quivering waves and—lo!—she sat down upon the clear surface of the deep sea. What she began to desire happened at once, as if she had given orders in advance: the instant obeisance of the seas. Nereus' daughters came singing a choral song, and shaggy Portunus with his sea-green beard, and Salacia with her womb teeming with fish, and Palaemon the little dolphin-charioteer. Now troops of Tritons bounded helter-skelter through the sea-water: one blew gently on a tuneful conch shell; another shielded her from the hostile sun's blaze with a silken awning; another carried a mirror before his mistress's eyes; others swam along yoked in pairs to the chariot.<sup>4</sup>

4. Unless otherwise noted, text and translations are from Hanson 1989.

This theme of the “marine thiasus” is well known in Roman art, from tiny decorative reliefs to large mosaics. Apuleius relies on his reader’s ability to flesh out a mental picture of this scene from previous experience with some such work of art, whether in mosaic (Plate 1, p. 21) or another medium.<sup>5</sup> Note particularly the touch of the mirror held up to reflect Venus’ face.<sup>6</sup> We shall return to the importance of mirrors and reflections to Apuleius below, but on first reading this passage primarily provides the reader the pleasure of recognition: a familiar scene of Venus travelling across the sea rendered even more attractive by Apuleius’ lushly baroque language.

Seeing Venus thus, whether in a work of art or through the medium of Apuleius’ description, does not seem problematic: she and her companions are simply objects of beauty. Our next example, however, which also invokes familiar art objects from the reader’s visual repertoire, does begin to raise questions about the gaze. What presuppositions, what categories of thinking are inherent in the narrator’s use of the language of the visual arts?

Central to the mechanism of the novel’s plot is Lucius’ affair with the maid Fotis. In pursuing Fotis he is motivated both by her own charms and by the possible access to her mistress’ magic that she represents. Lucius’ encounters with her are described in some lascivious detail. The eroticism of his description is enriched by his use of the iconography of the visual arts, as we can see in this passage (2.17):

Nec mora, cum omnibus illis cibariis vasculis raptim remotis laciniis cunctis suis renudata crinibusque dissolutis ad hilarem lasciviam, in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit, pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum feminal rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia.

Without a moment’s delay, she whipped away all the dinner dishes, stripped herself of all her clothes, and let down her hair. With joyous wantonness she beautifully transformed herself into the picture of Venus rising from the ocean waves. For a time she even held one rosy little hand in front of her smooth-shaven pubes, purposely shadowing it rather than modestly hiding it.

The narrator sees Fotis as a work of art, or rather as two works of art in sequence: first, as the well-known Venus Anadyomene (Plate 2, p. 22), and then as the Venus Pudica or Capitoline Venus (Plate 3, p. 23).<sup>7</sup> The original Venus Anadyomene, of course, was a painting by Apelles in Cos, then transferred to sculpture.<sup>8</sup> The Venus Pudica is attributed to Praxiteles. We

5. Cf. a mosaic from Djemila in North Africa (Balenseifen 1990, catalog K52, pl. 14.2), probably dating about two centuries after Apuleius, but reproducing a motif much earlier even than he; it also includes an attendant with mirror.

6. The mirror is in fact less common in surviving artistic representations than one might expect: see Kenney 1990 ad 4.31.7, with references to *LIMC*. The mirror-bearer here may prefigure those in the Isis procession of Book 11 who carry mirrors on their backs: (*aliae, quae nitentibus speculis pone tergum reueris uenienti deae obuium commonstrarent obsequium*, 11.9.2).

7. See Schlam 1992, 71, with references.

8. Athenaeus 13.590 tells us that Apelles was inspired by seeing the courtesan Phryne bathe in the sea and then created his panel painting for the sanctuary in Cos (Pliny *HN* 35.91). Whether all sculptural types are in fact derived from this painting is disputed (see Havelock 1995, 86–88). I think it likely that the Roman viewer would have connected the sculptural depictions with Apelles, but in any case the motif was certainly part of his visual repertoire.

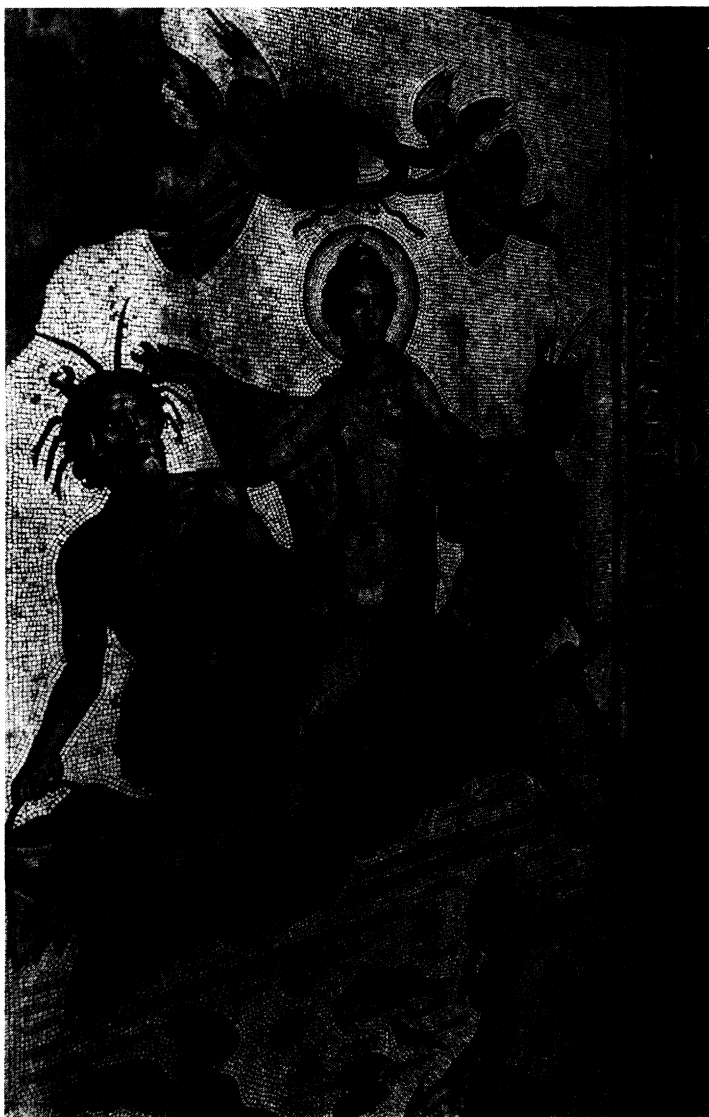


PLATE 1. Marine Thiasus (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 64.77).

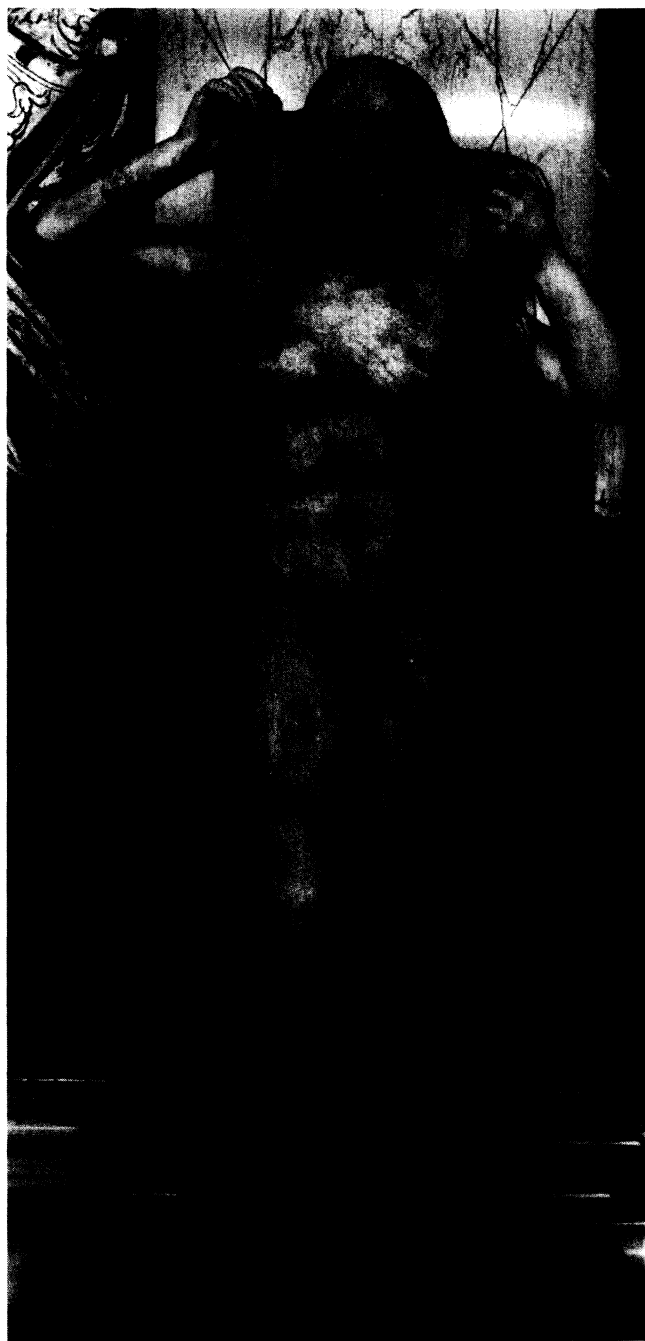


PLATE 2. Venus Anadyomene (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 82.2516).

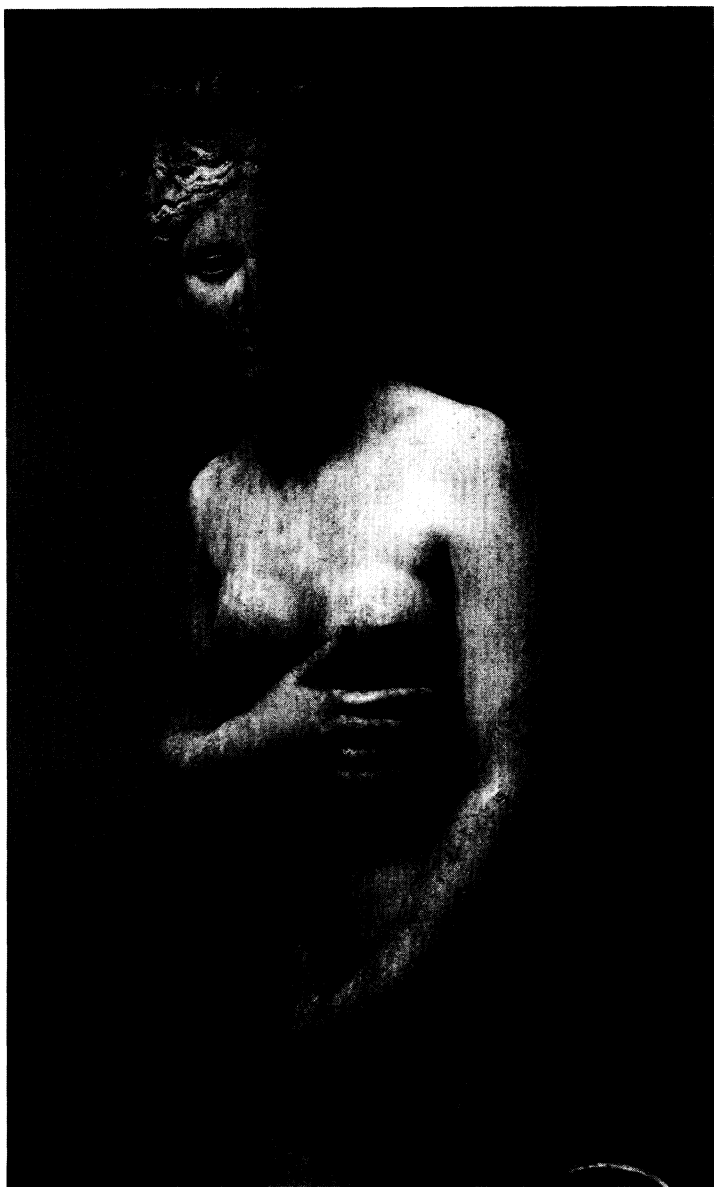


PLATE 3. Venus Pudica (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 57.721).

shall see that this is not the only instance of Apuleius playing variations on sculptural types. Now the citation of a famous statue type does more here than simply embellish the narrative with a bit of learned art history: it is a frame through which Lucius (and we) see Fotis. One could hardly ask for a more classic example of the male gaze with its voyeuristic enjoyment and objectification of the female.

Or is it? The first Venus seems unaware of the viewer, unaware that she is the object of the male gaze which enjoys her beauty. By contrast the second is well aware that she is being observed, as was remarked by Lucian or pseudo-Lucian in one of his dialogues, describing the statue in its original context,<sup>9</sup> and in fact attempts to resist the gaze by covering herself.<sup>10</sup> Note Lucius' interpretation, though: he perceives not true resistance but rather a complicity on Fotis' part with the male gaze. "Purposely shadowing it rather than modestly hiding it" (*obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia*) seems to imply that Fotis conceals herself with the intent further to arouse his desire rather than out of genuine modesty. But is Lucius' interpretation correct? Does Fotis resist the gaze, as the original Venus did? In that case, Lucius' interpretation is just his own vanity. He may in fact be right about Fotis' intentions, since she seems an enthusiastic participant in their sexual encounter hereafter. Yet there is an undercurrent as well, which Lucius seems not to recognize: if Fotis uses resistance to the gaze as a strategy, she can in fact to some degree control it. I suspect most male readers would simply identify with Lucius' point of view and interpretation on a first reading of this passage. But the question lingers and we will return to it: Who controls the gaze?

Lucius' way of seeing and his relation to the objects of his gaze are voyeuristic not just in the obvious sense apparent in his description of Fotis but also in the whole theme of his insatiable curiosity. His desire for the knowledge and power obtainable by seeing, and even more by stripping off the surface reality of things in order to see beneath, is apparent in the opening of Book 2, a description of Lucius' first morning in Hypata as he goes out in search of the magic he has come to find. Not only does this narrative show us Lucius' state of mind; positioned as it is at the beginning of the book, it also functions as a frame through which to see and judge Lucius' subsequent encounter with an elaborate sculpture group which J. Winkler in his splendid book on Apuleius terms an "emblem of [the] unity of design" of the whole novel.<sup>11</sup> Yet that group of Diana and Actaeon does not simply appear in the novel but is presented as the culmination of a search

9. *Erotes*, whose theme is the relative merits of heterosexual and homosexual love, contains a description of the statue at Cnidos, culminating in the story of the young man so taken with the statue that he tried to have intercourse with it. Of greatest interest for our purposes is this initial description of the statue from section 13: ἡ μὲν οὖν θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ καθίδρυται—Παρίας δὲ λίθου δαίδαλμα κάλλιστον—ὕπερ ἡφανον καὶ σεσηρότι γέλῳτι μικρὸν ὑπομειδῶσα. πᾶν δὲ τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς ἀκάλυπτον οὐδεμιᾶς ἐσθῆτος ἀμπεχούσης γεγύμνωται, πλὴν ὅσα τῇ ἑτέρᾳ χειρὶ τὴν αἰδῶ λεληθότως ἐπικρύπτειν. Cf. the discussion of "Interpretation of Naked Aphrodites" in Smith 1991, 81–83.

10. Here I am reminded of the comparison of textual resistance to interpretation to the process of striptease by Morris Zapp in David Lodge's delightful send-up of literary criticism, *Small World* (London, 1984).

11. Winkler 1985, 165.

begun by Lucius at first light after his arrival in Hypata, a search moreover that is focused on issues of seeing and interpretation (2.1):

Ut primum nocte discussa sol novus diem fecit et somno simul emersus et lectulo, anxius alioquin et nimis cupidus cognoscendi quae rara miraque sunt, reputansque me media Thessaliae loca tenere, quo artis magicae nativa cantamina totius orbis consono ore celebrantur, fabulamque illam optimi comitis Aristomenis de situ civitatis huius exortam, suspensus alioquin et voto simul et studio, curiose singula considerabam. 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 aues, quas audirem, indidem plumatas et arbores, quae pomerium ambirent, similiter foliatis et fontanos latices de corporibus humanis fluxos crederem; iam statuas et imagines incessuras, parietes locuturos, boves et id genus pecua dicturas praesagium, de ipso uero caelo et iubaris orbe subito venturum oraculum.

As soon as night had been scattered and a new sun brought day, I emerged from sleep and bed alike. With my anxiety and my excessive passion to learn the rare and the marvelous, considering that I was staying in the middle of Thessaly, the native land of those spells of the magic art which are unanimously praised throughout the entire world, and recalling that the story told by my excellent comrade Aristomenes had originated at the site of this very city, I was on tenterhooks of desire and impatience alike, and I began to examine each and every object with curiosity. Nothing I looked at in that city seemed to me to be what it was; but I believed that absolutely everything had been transformed into another shape by some deadly mumbo-jumbo: the rocks I hit upon were petrified human beings, the birds I heard were feathered humans, the trees that surrounded the city wall were humans with leaves, and the liquid in the fountains had flowed from human bodies. Soon the statues and pictures would begin to walk, the walls to speak, the oxen and other animals of that sort to prophesy; and from the sky itself and the sun's orb there would suddenly come an oracle.

Lucius ventures forth with his categories of thought and seeing already formed. Unlike the skeptical traveller he encounters in Book 1 who rejects the tale of Aristomenes as unbelievable,<sup>12</sup> Lucius is eager, indeed too eager to find magic and metamorphosis in, as well as under, every rock. He sees the present as an unstable moment between past and future transformations—transformations he hopes to witness and (as we know on second reading of the novel) gain power over. Moreover, past and future transformations are not interchangeable. He expects to find a process that has not yet reached its telos: he awaits at any moment motion, speech, and prophecy from these transformed entities.

He finds none of these things—at least that morning in Hypata. Instead, as he continues wandering about the city, he meets a woman in the market whom he can read generically, though not individually (2.2):

et ecce mulierem quampiam frequenti stipatam famulitione ibidem gradientem accelerato vestigio comprehendo. aurum in gemmis et in tunicis, ibi inflexum, hic intextum, matronam profecto confitebatur.

There I saw a woman walking in the company of a large domestic staff. I quickened my pace and caught up with her. The gold entwined in her jewellery and woven in her clothes marked her surely as the wife of an important man.

12. See especially Winkler 1985, 27–33.



Lucius can read the conventional signs of status, but he cannot remember far back enough in his childhood to recognize Byrrhaena, the friend of his mother; she however recognizes him. We thus begin to realize that Lucius, for all his eagerness to see beyond the surface, is not as adept at visual reading as he thinks.

Byrrhaena takes Lucius home, and here in the atrium<sup>13</sup> of her house Lucius finds the most complex visual challenge he has yet encountered, the sculpture Winkler and many others have pointed out as central to the novel's themes. In sharply comic contrast to his expectations of the morning, when he does encounter an example of the metamorphosis he has been looking for, he fails to see what is really going on (2.4–5):

Atria longe pulcherrima columnis quadrifariam per singulos angulos stantibus attolerabant statuas, palmaris deae facies, quae pinnis explicitis sine gressu pilae volubilis instabile vestigium plantis roscidis delibantes nec ut maneant inhaerent et iam volare creduntur. ecce lapis Parius in Dianam factus tenet libratam totius loci medietatem, signum perfecte luculentum, veste reflatum, procursu vegetum, introeuntibus obvium et maiestate numinis venerabile; canes utrimquesaecus deae latera muniunt, qui canes et ipsi lapis erant. his oculi minantur, aures rigent, nares hiant, ora saeviunt, et, sicunde de proximo latratus ingruerit, eum putabis de faucibus lapidis exire et, in quo summum specimen operae fabrilis egregius ille signifex prodidit, sublatis canibus in pectus arduis pedes imi resistunt, currunt priores. pone tergum deae saxum insurgit in speluncae modum muscis et herbis et foliis et virgulis et sicubi pampinis et arbusculis alibi de lapide florentibus. splendet intus umbra signi de nitore lapidis. sub extrema saxi margine poma et uvae faberrime politae dependent, quas ars aemula naturae veritati similes explicuit. putes ad cibum inde quaedam, cum mustulentus autumnus maturum colorem afflaverit, posse decerpi et, si fontem, qui deae vestigio discurrens in lenem vibratur undam, pronus aspexeris, credes illos ut rure pendentes racemos inter cetera veritatis nec agitationis officio carere. inter medias frondes lapidis Actaeon simulacrum curioso optatu in deam versum proiectus, iam in cervum ferinus et in saxo simul et in fonte loturam Dianam operiens visitur.

Dum haec identidem rimabundus eximie delector, “tua sunt,” ait Byrrhena, “cuncta, quae vides” . . .

The atrium was particularly beautiful. Columns were erected in each of its four corners, and on these stood statues, likenesses of the palm-bearing goddess; their wings were outspread, but, instead of moving, their dewy feet barely touched the slippery surface of a rolling sphere; they were not positioned as though stationary, but you would think them to be in flight. Next I saw a piece of Parian marble made into the likeness of Diana, occu-

13. Its location, while realistic (it is the easiest place to accommodate a large sculptural group with fountain), is surely significant as well, as an introduction to the rest of Lucius' adventures. I am grateful to John Bodel for calling to my attention Ciaffi 1960, 55–58, which argues that Apuleius in composing this passage draws specifically on Petronius and the scene in Trimalchio's atrium preceding the *cena*. Ciaffi's claims of extensive parallelism between Petronius and the first three books of Apuleius have largely been dismissed: the verbal coincidences are slight and commonplace. The structural parallels in the house of Byrrhaena are one of Ciaffi's best cases (a first-person narrator enters an atrium, sees a work of art, attends a dinner with story-telling, and has adventures going home from dinner), but all could be dismissed as coincidence. Bodel's own work, however, points to a more detailed parallelism than we have heretofore recognized, one worth exploring whether we believe it to be a conscious reminiscence on Apuleius' part or not. Bodel 1994 demonstrates that the scenes Encolpius examines in Trimalchio's atrium are not paralleled in domestic decoration in that period but are in funerary art and reliefs, especially on tombs of slaves and freedmen from the east. Thus he argues that contemporary readers would have been prepared for the many underworld motifs of the *cena* by the scenes in the atrium. So too, I will argue, should the reader of Apuleius be prepared in part for the consequences of Lucius' curiosity by the sculpture he views in Byrrhaena's atrium.

pying in balance the center of the whole area. It was an absolutely brilliant statue, robe blowing in the wind, vividly running forward, coming to meet you as you entered, awesome with the sublimity of godhead. There were dogs protecting both flanks of the goddess, and the dogs were marble too. Their eyes threatened, their ears stiffened, their nostrils flared, and their mouths opened savagely, so that if the sound of barking burst in from next door you would think it had come from the marble's jaws. Furthermore that superb sculptor displayed the greatest proof of his craftsmanship by making the dogs rear up with their breast raised high, so that their front feet seemed to run, while their hind feet thrust at the ground. Behind the goddess's back the rock rose in the form of a cave, with moss, grass, leaves, bushes, and here vines and there little trees all blossoming out of the stone. In the interior the statue's shadow glistened with the marble's sheen. Up under the very edge of the rock hung apples and the most skillfully polished grapes, which art, rivalling nature, displayed to resemble reality. You would think that some of them could be plucked for eating,<sup>14</sup> when wine-gathering Autumn breathes ripe color upon them; and if you bent down and looked in the pool that runs along by the goddess's feet shimmering in a gentle wave, you would think that the bunches of grapes hanging there, as if in the country, possessed the quality of movement, among all other aspects of reality. In the middle of the marble foliage the image of Actaeon could be seen, both in stone and in the spring's reflection, leaning towards the goddess with an inquisitive stare, in the very act of changing into a stag and waiting for Diana to step into the bath.

I was staring again and again at the statuary enjoying myself enormously, when Byrrhaena spoke. "Everything you see," she said, "belongs to you."

This is an enormously complex visual experience, which we must approach carefully through the historical horizon of expectation. We can establish a few things—less than we would like, certainly, but a few—about the Roman reader's experience of contemporary art. While no set of surviving artifacts precisely represents this sculptural group, a number of pieces of Roman art can help us see what might have been in the author's mind. At the same time, we must keep in mind that Apuleius is not merely a reporter here, but may be playing some very interesting games with the nature of artistic representation and particularly point of view.

One key to our understanding of the artistic ensemble Apuleius places in the atrium is to recognize that much, if not all, of it has been translated from two-dimensional media to three-dimensional. This is easiest to see by looking first at the frame around the central sculpture. I know of no parallel in a private house for the framing group of four winged Victories, standing on their columns—nor as described do they even seem technically feasible. We may initially be reminded of the famous Flying Nike of Paeonius at Olympia, but we must remember that Paeonius' figure was in fact solidly supported by her trailing draperies. The unusual triangular base under her feet fosters the illusion that she is just landing, but even so, some support under her feet is necessary.<sup>15</sup> Winged figures landing on rolling balls are

14. This seems likely to be a reference to a classical topos on the realism of art. The famous fourth-century painter Zeuxis is said to have painted a bunch of grapes so realistically that birds flew up and attempted to eat them. See for example the version of this story in Pliny *HN* 35.1–6.

15. I am grateful to Richard Stoneman for calling my attention to a winged victory, standing on a globe held up by Atlas, on an engaged pilaster at Asqelon in Israel. Even in this high relief figure, however, representing as it does a step between painting and free-standing sculpture, the realities of execution leave little suggestion of motion.

by contrast the province of the fantastic style of wall painting decried by Vitruvius. Even if supported by solid iron pins through stone, the figures described by Lucius seem impossible in three dimensions.

Nor is it at all clear what a private citizen in the Greek east is doing with statues of winged Victories in her home. The idea of a group of repeated figures is not in itself unusual, though even groups in general occur far more often in a public or semi-public setting, such as Hadrian's villa at Tivoli.<sup>16</sup> But why display statues of Victory, a divinity more the concern of the state, in a private home at all?

R. G. Peden in an extremely interesting article points out that these figures are not in fact called Victories by Apuleius but are rather periphrastically described as "likenesses of the palm-bearing goddess" (*palmaris deae facies*). He interprets the instability of the spinning globes under their feet as part of the iconography of the goddess Fortune.<sup>17</sup> Finally, noting that when Isis ultimately appears to Lucius at 11.4 she wears sandals woven from the victor's palm (*palmae victricis foliis*), he suggests that the statues "are not Victoria, nor even Victoria-Fortuna, but a concealed epiphany of Isis in her role of Isis-Victoria-Fortuna." Statues of Isis, unlike those of Victory, make perfect sense in a private house.

If these figures are indeed Isis (and no other plausible explanation for the significance of these winged figures has been advanced), Lucius certainly does not recognize them as such at the time. Whether we as first-time readers should be able to do so by reading her imagery "over the shoulder" of our narrator<sup>18</sup> is less clear, but at least on a second reading we should be aware as readers of Isis gazing down upon Lucius as he himself looks with less than penetrating skill at the sculpture in the center of the atrium.

Within this framing group we find the sculptures of Diana and Actaeon. Unlike the Capitoline Venus or the Venus Pudica, however, this is not simply a known work of art. As C. Schlam has demonstrated, it conforms to no single sculptural prototype; Schlam suggests rather that it is a combination of one known type of Diana the huntress plus various Actaeon portrayals.<sup>19</sup> This is undoubtedly in one sense true, but we need to go further. Has Byrrhaena, or her decorator, simply put two pieces of sculpture together in the form of a "sculpture garden"?

E. Bartman<sup>20</sup> has recently studied the excavated evidence for such sculptural groups in the early Empire, many of which occur in pairs she terms "sculptural pendants." Comparison shows that the Diana and Actaeon group is far more unified than anything we actually have found: unlike simple sculptural pendants, this group functions narratively to tell a familiar and dramatic story.

At the same time, there are certain inconsistencies which demonstrate that the two sculptures in Apuleius were not carved as a group. As they say for

16. Bartman 1988, 219–20.

17. Peden 1985, esp. 381, citing (n. 6) Dio Chrysostom 63.7 and Artemidorus 2.37 for this association. I am grateful to Stephen Harrison for calling my attention to this article.

18. For an example of this process in Petronius, see Slater 1994.

19. Schlam 1984, pl. VII gives an example of the Diana as huntress statue.

20. Bartman 1988 and Bartman 1991.

visual puzzles, what is wrong with this picture? Our first clue is to realize that one part could have been conceived as a free-standing work of art, but the other could not. The Diana statue is quite recognizable and self-sufficient; I offer one example (Plate 4, p. 30), but one could find many others. The dogs signify her role as huntress—yet this familiar iconographic attribute presents a problem when we try to read it here as part of a Diana-Actaeon narrative. In the free-standing Diana-the-huntress statues any dogs portrayed are necessarily hers. The peculiar pathos of the Diana-Actaeon narrative, however, demands that the dogs that turn on him be his.

The Actaeon sculpture here described, in contrast to Diana's, is incomplete and would be incomprehensible on its own. It demands a version of the story in which Actaeon is intentionally lying in wait, a witting voyeur—but the object of his voyeurism is not there yet. All other representations of Actaeon observing the pool include Diana already bathing. This Actaeon's gaze is directed at a still-clothed Diana.

Finally, conceived of as a narrative sequence, the sculpture group lacks a punchline, lacks the scene which is most basic to the story of divine punishment: Actaeon's dogs turning on him and tearing him to pieces. From the earliest black-figure vase paintings, this is the scene the artists love to portray,<sup>21</sup> and it is well-known as a sculpture group as well (Plate 5, p. 31).

In short, the parts of this imagined sculptural group are curiously scattered along the axis of time: Actaeon is already undergoing the punishment for his curiosity by being metamorphosed into a stag, but the naked object of that curiosity is not present before his eyes. A clothed Diana strides along, somehow both before and after the moment of discovery: the lack of any emotional description of her figure may make us believe that she has not yet gone to bathe, while the dogs at her side may suggest that they are already in pursuit of Actaeon.

Vase painting and to some extent sculpture are not designed for extended narrative. Usually in these media a story must be condensed into one image, and for Actaeon that image most often was his final destruction. When we turn to Roman wall painting, we find that the possibilities for narrative are more complex. One could also tell the story through the moment of discovery: Diana observed and at the same time observing Actaeon, as shown in a drawing of a wall painting from Pompeii (Plate 6, p. 32). This moment alone could imply the whole story, or it could be combined with Actaeon's death, as in another, now destroyed Pompeian painting (Plate 7A and 7B, pp. 33–34): note here that we have two Actaeons, both the one who surprises the goddess and the one who is destroyed.

Thus representation of more than one moment in time is a feature of certain Campanian wall paintings of the Diana and Actaeon story. If so, these usually include Actaeon's punishment.<sup>22</sup> Some paintings even give us three scenes,

21. See Schlam 1984, pls. I–VI.

22. See Leach 1981; on paintings with more than one moment in the story, see 314–17 and *passim*. Leach has a valuable discussion of the grotto motif in various representations, which include such details as the grapes and hanging vegetation at the cave mouth. Beall 1993, 351–52, in discussing the description of a painting in the Elder Philostratus, suggests that description of more than one moment in time is the author's literary device to increase drama, but such is well attested in actual Campanian painting.

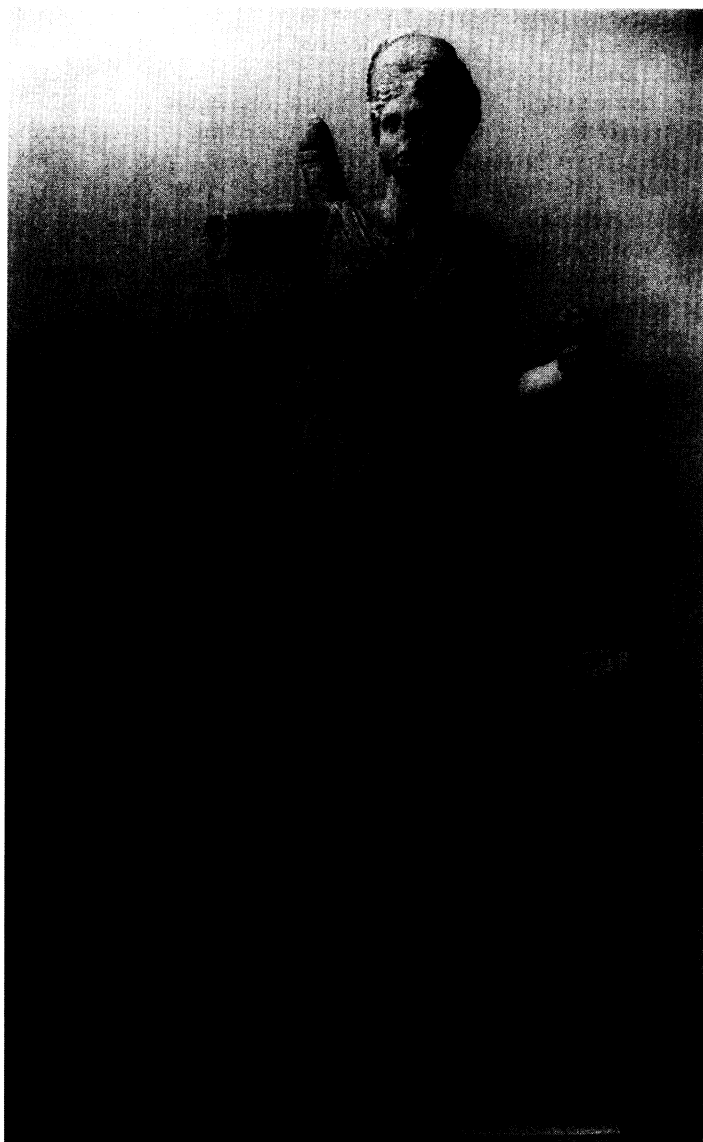


PLATE 4. Diana the Huntress (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 61.1722).



PLATE 5. Actaeon Attacked (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 39.1042).



PLATE 6. Diana and Actaeon, Pompeii IX 7, 16 (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 53.496).

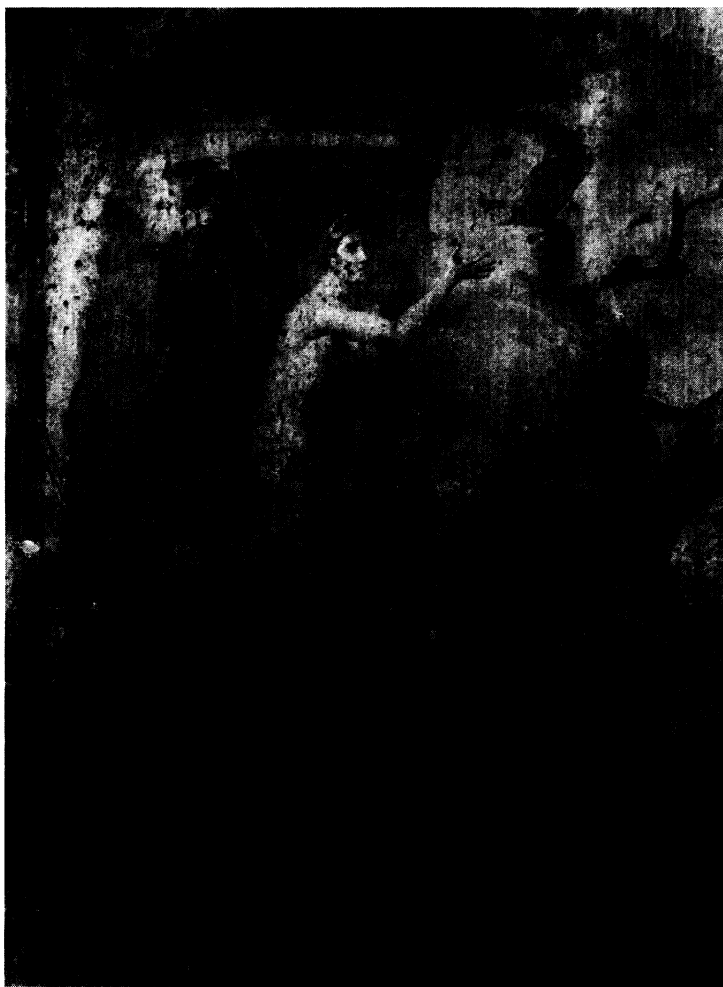


PLATE 7A. Diana, Pompeii VI 2, 4 (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 1938.106).





PLATE 7B. Actaeon, Pompeii VI 2, 4 (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 1938.107).

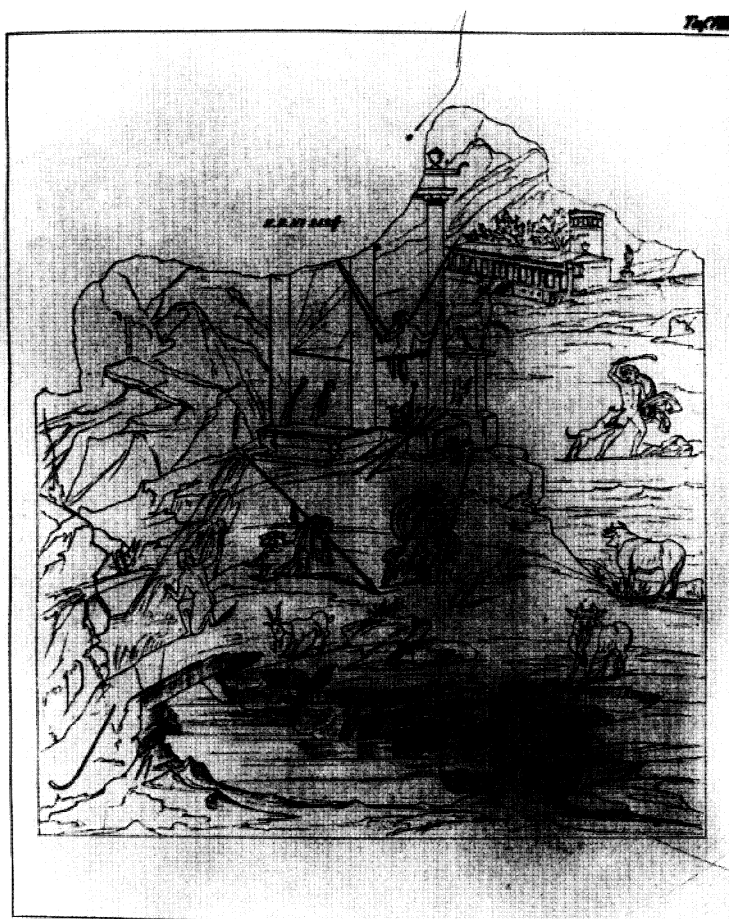


PLATE 8. Diana and Actaeon, Pompeii I 9, 22 (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. W.346).

as in yet another Pompeian painting, best seen in a drawing (Plate 8, p. 35): we see Diana at left, discovered by Actaeon in the fountain house above, then Diana and a dog in pursuit in the center, and finally Actaeon's destruction at right. If we return in our minds to the sculptural group in the house of Byrrhaena, however, we realize that it represents no one scene as we have them in wall painting, but rather elements of two scenes.

Another way to describe what is wrong with the Apuleian group is to consider the spatial axis of vision within the work and the multiplicity of points of view. Actaeon gazes avidly out from the foliage at Diana—but Diana does not look back at him. Unlike Fotis in Apuleius' earlier description of her as the Venus Pudica, shielding herself from the male gaze, Diana seems unaware of Actaeon. She instead gazes forward at the entering Lucius—and we as readers look through his eyes at her. But is she only the object of the double male gaze, from Actaeon and Lucius? I suspect not.

Let us follow the line of the gaze again. Actaeon watches, or watches for, Diana. Diana watches us. The narrator's experience of the statue of Diana is initially overwhelming: she is "absolutely brilliant . . . coming to meet you as you entered, awesome with the sublimity of godhead." She is moving rapidly forward, as are her dogs around her, and they are hunting. Actaeon's voyeuristic gaze is so powerful that it can create an intelligible scene by forcing us as viewers to supply what is not there: the figure of the bathing Diana. So too, I would argue, Diana's gaze creates its object, creates that missing and climactic scene in the narrative—the destruction of Actaeon. And we, insofar as we identify with the first-person narrator Lucius, are on the menu. We look out of Actaeon's eyes as the dogs spring at us.

It has long been recognized that the sculptural group in *The Golden Ass* is a warning to Lucius about his curiosity. His rash desire to see and gain control over the power of metamorphosis leads to his transformation into an ass. This is one level of the irony of Byrrhaena's statement, "Everything you see belongs to you."<sup>23</sup> If the sculpture group were a simple and unified art object, it could be seen from one stable point of view and its lesson would be clear. To view the sculpture in this way, however, is to draw the frame too narrowly around it, for the intentional inconcinnities between parts of the group multiply the possible points of view. Once we can imagine standing elsewhere than in Lucius' shoes, the pattern and therefore the meaning of the composition is very different. Seen through Lucius' eyes and consciousness, the sculpture group is just a technical triumph on a traditional mythic theme. Viewed from the vantage point of the Isis figures on their pillars, looking down, Lucius becomes part of the sculptural composition.<sup>24</sup> Just as Isis is both Diana and these winged figures,<sup>25</sup> so Lucius is both Actaeon and himself, incorporated into the narrative at its climactic

23. In uttering this (to Lucius at least, cryptic) statement, Byrrhaena functions as a parody of the interpreter figure or exegete, often present at significant encounters with art in the Greek novel. For this figure, see Bartsch 1989, 41–42.

24. After coming to this conclusion independently, I was very pleased to find that Heath 1992, 101–34, esp. 121–22, had also seen Lucius as part of the composition. I have learned a great deal from his discussion; as will be seen, I differ in the interpretation of Apuleius' intent here.

25. At 11.6 Isis tells Lucius that she is also worshipped as *Dictynnam Dianam*.

moment. Lucius thinks he is the subject in control of the gaze, but in fact the sculpture, as can clearly be discerned on second reading, tells him he is ultimately to become its object.

Apuleius' play with point of view here bears a significant resemblance to the sleight of hand J. Searle claimed to have found in Velázquez's *Las Meninas*.<sup>26</sup> Briefly, Searle argues that this painting shatters the conventions of pictorial realism by transposing painter and object: the painting depicts Velázquez in his studio painting the Spanish royal couple, whose presence can only be determined from a distant mirror image and from whose point of view the whole scene is apparently viewed.<sup>27</sup> A viewer of this painting initially accepts it as a simple window on reality but gradually accumulates information demonstrating that this point of view, that of a real or imagined artist, is already occupied by someone else: the king and queen whom the artist within the picture is engaged in painting. The situations are not perfectly analogous: in Apuleius we are ostensibly dealing with sculpture, although I have argued above that the reader's visual repertoire will draw on images from wall painting in an attempt to understand the object reported and to make it cohere. But the deeper similarity is striking: both situations raise the question of who owns or controls the gaze. In classical realism, the painting offers the viewer the supposed experience of the artist: to see or even more to own the painting is to have or own the experience it records.<sup>28</sup> But to view *Las Meninas* is to have the experience of being painted, of being recorded, of being objectified by the artist one supposedly employs. The usual experience of art is an unconstrained voyeurism, the ability to see without being seen. *Las Meninas* subverts that usual experience and expectation, capturing the unsuspecting viewer in the narrative it supposedly lays bare.<sup>29</sup> So too Apuleius' Diana and Actaeon turn the tables on Lucius, incorporating him into their three-dimensional composition. Lucius metaphorically becomes another statue in the group.

Nor is this objectification of Lucius, his transformation from viewer into viewed, an isolated moment within the larger narrative. In fact, becoming a statue is a fate Lucius barely avoids just before his transformation into an ass and finally succumbs to afterward—under the gaze of Isis. Just after the description of the Diana and Actaeon group Byrrhaena warns Lucius against his hostess Pamphile who can turn lovers who disappoint her into rocks or animals (*in saxa et in pecua et quodvis animal puncto reformat*, 2.5). At her dinner party, Lucius hears the tale of Thelyphron who, thinking he can observe and guard a corpse against the depredations of witches, is

26. Searle 1980.

27. The topic is a famous and much discussed one. Snow 1989, pp. 40–41, nn. 5 and 7 gives a bibliography of the controversy and the apparently now standard view that geometry proves the mirror to be reflecting the image on the canvas, not that of the sitters (see especially Snyder and Cohen 1980). He also notes however that the painting gives a “carefully contrived (and psychologically unshakeable) illusion” of being seen from the royal couple's point of view. Searle's analysis of the ordinary viewer's experience of the painting therefore stands.

28. See esp. Searle 1980, 480–83.

29. Alpers 1983, esp. 31–33 perceptively discusses the unsettling gaze of other figures in Velázquez paintings who seem to challenge the viewer, but in her overall discussion she seeks actively to suppress or exclude notions of time and therefore narrative that the Apuleius sculpture and *Las Meninas* alike imply.

himself mutilated by them and is shockingly transformed from spectator to object of the public gaze and mocking laughter.<sup>30</sup> Lucius learns nothing from this tale: rather, when told by Byrrhaena of the Festival of Laughter the city is about to celebrate, he incautiously wishes that he could himself provide *materiam* for the festival (2.31).<sup>31</sup>

et vellem hercules materiam repperire aliquam quam deus tantus affluenter indueret.

And by Hercules I wish I could find some material that so mighty a god could wear in flowing robes.<sup>32</sup>

Lucius is granted his wish in a much more literal sense than he would want: he becomes the unconscious outer garment of the god of laughter, embodying him for the festival's spectators. Returning home late and quite drunk from Byrrhaena's party, he sees figures at the door he takes to be robbers, draws his sword and stabs them. The next morning he is arrested for murder and dragged to the theatre to answer the charges. On trial for his life and despite a spirited if fictionalized defense, he is forced to uncover the bodies of his "victims"—which turn out to be inflated animal bladders he has stabbed. As the theatre rocks with laughter, Lucius tells us that *fixus in lapidem steti gelidus nihil secus quam una de ceteris theatri statuis* (3.10). Moreover, the magistrate in charge tells Lucius that the city wishes to honor him for the amusement he has provided: "And [the city] has inscribed you as its patron and decreed that your likeness be preserved in bronze" (*nam et patronum scripsit et ut in aere staret imago tua decreuit*, 3.11). Lucius naturally has no wish for his discomfiture to be memorialized in this way and does decline to have his statue put up.<sup>33</sup> This is just as well, since we soon learn quite a different story lies behind the scene than he or the crowds mocking him have perceived. Lucius was not simply so drunk that he could not tell animal skins from humans: rather, they had been animated

30. See Heath 1992, 115–19 for a superb reading of Thelyphron's tale and its parallels to Actaeon's fate. For the purposes of a warning to Lucius, it does not matter whether his tale is in fact true or, as the laughter of the other guests may warn us, a pure fiction intended to cover up the real cause of his mutilation, a judicial punishment.

31. Cf. Thelyphron's inauspicious wish at 2.26 to be of use again to his employer in guarding corpses!

32. Hanson 1989, p. 121, n. 2 points out that the image is one of dressing the god's statue in a garment for the occasion of the festival.

33. Winkler 1985, 172 claims that "Lucius's resistance to this religion, to this community laughter, and to this memorialization spoils the reader's easy enjoyment of the Risus festival. . . ." For Winkler this is emblematic of a persistent "swing back and forth between coherence and incoherence." I argue that the overall story pattern is indeed directed to a particular coherence: see below, p. 46.

In a discussion of the sexual encounters with Fotis, Winkler also rather cryptically remarks (p. 175): "There are strong connections between Lucius as statue and Lucius as phallos: erection is experienced as alienation, and vice versa, until the Great Mother is reached in Book 11." Winkler may be right, although the connections are far from straightforward. There is, for example, a coincidence of the language of standing, statues, and stupefaction in the descriptions of Lucius' encounter with Fotis and his experience in the theatre at the festival of Laughter: compare *isto aspectu defixus obstupui et mirabundus steti, steterunt et membra quae iacebant ante* (2.7) with *obstupefactus haesi* (3.9), *fixus in lapidem steti gelidus nihil secus quam una de ceteris theatri statuis* (3.10). Far from there being a change in Book 11, however, I would argue that Lucius is consistently dominated, both sexually and otherwise, by a series of figures progressing from Fotis to Isis. On Lucius as a statue at the novel's end, see below, p. 39.

and drawn to her door by the magic of Pamphile. The statue, had it ever been erected, would have commemorated a false story.<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately Lucius does become a statue, part of a group which includes Isis gazing down at him. After his vision of Isis and his decision to be initiated into her cult, Lucius, who has heretofore narrated all that he sees, addresses his *studiose lector* (11.23) in the second person and tells us that he cannot tell us everything that went on in his initiation. This is a sharp reminder that we as readers can no longer fully identify with the narrating "I" and its point of view, for it is made explicit that this first-person narrator has seen things which he refuses to translate into language for us and allow us to see in turn. Up until now, Lucius has been a camera, recording what he sees and making us see it too—but no longer. The camera ceases to identify wholly with Lucius' point of view and begins rather to include him quite specifically within its field of vision. Immediately thereafter he appears on a platform in front of Isis' statue (*ante deae simulacrum*, 11.24) and is exhibited to the crowds as a statue himself (*exornato me et in vicem simulacri constituto*, 11.24).<sup>35</sup> Although not actually turned to stone in the process, Lucius has become part of a reconstituted sculpture group, under the gaze of Isis. This is not quite the end: more initiations and more hefty payments for them are required. Finally, however, Lucius the one-time hair fetishist and zealous seeker after magic, stares blandly out at us in the guise of a shaven-headed priest of Isis and Osiris, confronting crowds who gaze at him.<sup>36</sup>

How are we to take this ending? Certainly the ending of *The Golden Ass* and the intervention of Isis come as a surprise. The metamorphosis narrative itself has no need of her, as the Greek version, *Lucius or the Ass*, demonstrates: Lucius can rescue himself from his ass form by eating some roses. Jack Winkler in his justly famous study of Apuleius' novel argues that on re-reading we will search in vain for hidden clues that would in the fashion of a detective story now be revealed as the hidden web of evidence pointing to Isis; as readers we remained balanced uneasily between first and second readings, between seeing the novel as a comic adventure and as a salvation narrative.<sup>37</sup> Winkler's student John Heath in an excellent study of the Actaeon myth in the novel acknowledges the initial surprise and the disturbing quality of the ending, but seems to believe that re-reading,

34. We hear of at least one more planned work of art depicting Lucius, which would also commemorate a false or at least unfulfilled story. During their abortive attempt to flee the robbers' den, Charite promises Lucius that their escape will be memorialized: *depictam in tabula fugae praesentis imaginem meae domus ario dedicabo* (6.29). Interestingly, Lindsay 1960, 144 translates this as "dedicating in the vestibule of my house a tablet carved with the Story of our Flight," perhaps deriving the notion of a sculptured representation from the verb *signabo* that just precedes the cited passage. While Hanson 1989 is probably right to think rather of a painted panel (*depictam*), the parallel between this proposed work and the Diana and Actaeon sculpture is unlikely to be accidental.

35. He is also wearing a crown of palm (*caput decore corona cinxerat palmae candidae foliis in modum radiorum prosistentibus*), which may refer back to the palms carried by the flying goddesses on their pillars in the atrium.

36. The comedy of Lucius' obsession with hair and other matters is most eloquently treated by Heiserman 1977, 148–66.

37. Winkler 1985.

particularly of the Diana-Actaeon sculpture group, will show that the epiphany of Isis is prepared for—and should be accepted as a solution, a cure for Lucius' inappropriate curiosity.<sup>38</sup>

Aware as I am of the dangers of projecting my own reactions onto the text, I nonetheless find the pattern that transforms Lucius from a curious if over-eager explorer of his world into a virtually inanimate thing at the end less appealing than appalling. And yet my own analysis is pointing in the same direction as Heath's: the Diana and Actaeon group seems to enact a reversal, transforming Lucius from owner of the gaze to its object. Is there no alternative to being hunter or hunted, observer or observed? I return once more to the sculpture group, for I think we have not quite yet exhausted its signification.

The eye of the observer in Lucius' description of the scene in the atrium is drawn ever inward: first we see the figures on their columns; then Diana and her dogs; then we follow her shadow into the cave behind her;<sup>39</sup> our eye is caught by fruit of surpassing realism, lacking only motion; we look down into the water and find their reflection, possessed of that missing motion; then and only then, and yet simultaneously, it seems, we discover Actaeon, both as a reflection in the water, and as the observer, hidden deep in foliage but only now thrusting forward in his own voyeuristic gaze.

Let us reflect a moment on reflection. Why does Apuleius include the reflection in his description of this work of art? How does the viewer pick out Actaeon's reflection on the moving surface, when we initially do not see him in the stone carving? One horizon of explanation could be the visual art tradition itself: here we might see the influence of two-dimensional art on what Apuleius has reimagined in three dimensions. Winkler and others have cited the parallel of a mosaic from Timgad in North Africa, where we do see Diana bathing and, the only detail so picked out, a reflection of Actaeon's face in the waves.<sup>40</sup> In fact, this mosaic is damaged, so without the reflection, we would not know that he is there, but other and earlier pieces show both the figure and reflection clearly.<sup>41</sup> This iconography in the mosaic representations seems to imply a version of the tale in which Diana first detects Actaeon through seeing his reflection in the water's surface,<sup>42</sup>

38. Heath 1992, 119 judges the final sentence a "very unsettling image with which Apuleius chooses to end his work."

39. This "gleaming shadow" (*splendet intus umbra signi de nitore lapidis*) is another puzzle in and of itself, noted (but not explained) by, among others, Laird 1990, 163.

40. Germaine 1969, no. 17, pp. 19–23 and pl. VII; Balenseifen 1990, catalogue K47, pl. 41, 2.

41. Balenseifen 1990, catalogue K46, pl. 41, 1; *LMC*, Aktaion 117.

42. I do not know of a literary source that explicitly states that Actaeon's presence was discovered through his reflection. The idea may well come from a visual source; cf. the later tradition in western painting of scenes of Susannah and the elders. In *Ov. Met.* 3.128–52, Diana's attendant nymphs detect him (178–79); so also Nonnus, *Dion.* 5.308–10. Pausanias 9.2.3 simply says Actaeon looked into the spring and saw Diana bathing. The whole motif of the discovery in the bath is a later version of Actaeon's story; in the earliest versions (starting with the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*) he offends Zeus by desiring to marry Semele; see Heath 1992, 1–18. Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.4.4 records a curious epilogue to Actaeon's story: his dogs, recovering from their madness, go in search of their lost master, and the centaur Cheiron, who had taught him hunting, makes an image (εἰδωλον) of Actaeon to comfort the dogs. This certainly sounds like a later embellishment of the story (comparable to Zeuxis' grapes), but this transformation of the living Actaeon into an artistic object of the (canine) gaze may well be in Apuleius' mind.

although again the lack of any connection between Actaeon's gaze and Diana's within the group in the Apuleian version obviates such a narrative within this composition.

More broadly, mirrors and reflections in ancient art are often used to inspire pathos in the viewer. At the head of this tradition stands the famous Alexander mosaic, a reproduction of a monumental Hellenistic wall painting.<sup>43</sup> The scene is the rout of the Persian King Darius' forces by those of Alexander the Great. At the foot of his chariot is a scene of great pathos. Reflected in the shield of one fallen warrior is the face of another, a dying Persian, cut down in the enemy cause but portrayed by the Greek artist with real sympathy. The same motif can be turned to more delicate but still melancholic contrast. In a Roman wall painting using the same technical feat, we see the workshop of the god Hephaestus, visited by the goddess Thetis.<sup>44</sup> Her reflection is caught on the surface of a shield, from the arms being made for her son Achilles. The immediate contrast seems light-hearted, a female figure out of place in a male realm, but it foreshadows a tragic story, the death of the Trojan prince Hector and the eventual death of her son Achilles as well.

The fact that the reflection in Apuleius is in water has associations with another pathetic tale and image. A famous and widespread motif in Roman wall painting shows the doomed Narcissus, lost in gazing at his own reflection (Plate 9, p. 42).<sup>45</sup> Again, one could simply say that Apuleius, drawing consciously or unconsciously on the two-dimensional tradition of the Narcissus paintings, has included the detail of the reflected face in his description of the sculpture. It is even possible that Apuleius saw and was influenced by some extremely surprising sculptures of Narcissus, which attempt to portray the reflection in low relief.<sup>46</sup> Yet these associations seem insufficient to explain Apuleius' inclusion of the reflection in his description in Book 2.

Apuleius' fascination with mirrors, and indeed his belief in the superiority of their images to works of art, is known to us from his *Apology*. If we are to believe Apuleius himself (an often perilous course), one of the chief items in his accuser's bill of indictment was that this supposed philosopher possessed a mirror. Presumably this accusation was meant to arouse suspicions of narcissism as well as possible magical practices, both in keeping with the charge that Apuleius had ensnared the widow Pudentilla into marriage by sorcerous means. Apuleius has great fun with this charge, scoring a number of debating points, but his claim that the image in a mirror

43. Balenseifen 1990, 45–48, catalogue K30, pl. 23, 1 and 2; she acknowledges the emotional effect but seems more interested in the mirror as a device for creating perspective in the picture.

44. Balenseifen 1990, catalogue K36, pl. 25, which she again sees primarily as a triumph of technique (p. 212): "Mit ihr will der Schöpfer des Bildes zeigen, daß er sich an der Natur orientiert, deren Phänomene er studiert hat."

45. Balenseifen 1990, 130–66 and passim; *LIMC* s.v. One wonders if even so apparently simple a device as showing a deer reflected in the pool it drinks from carries an emotional overtone as well: the reflection may imply its vulnerability to detection and therefore being hunted down.

46. This motif appears on sarcophagi: Balenseifen 1990, catalogue K41, pls. 46–47; *LIMC* Narkissos 16–17. One sculptor, albeit at quite small scale, even attempted this theme in the round on a piece now in the Vatican, including on the ground the sculpted reflection: Balenseifen 1990, pl. 39; *LIMC* Narkissos 55.



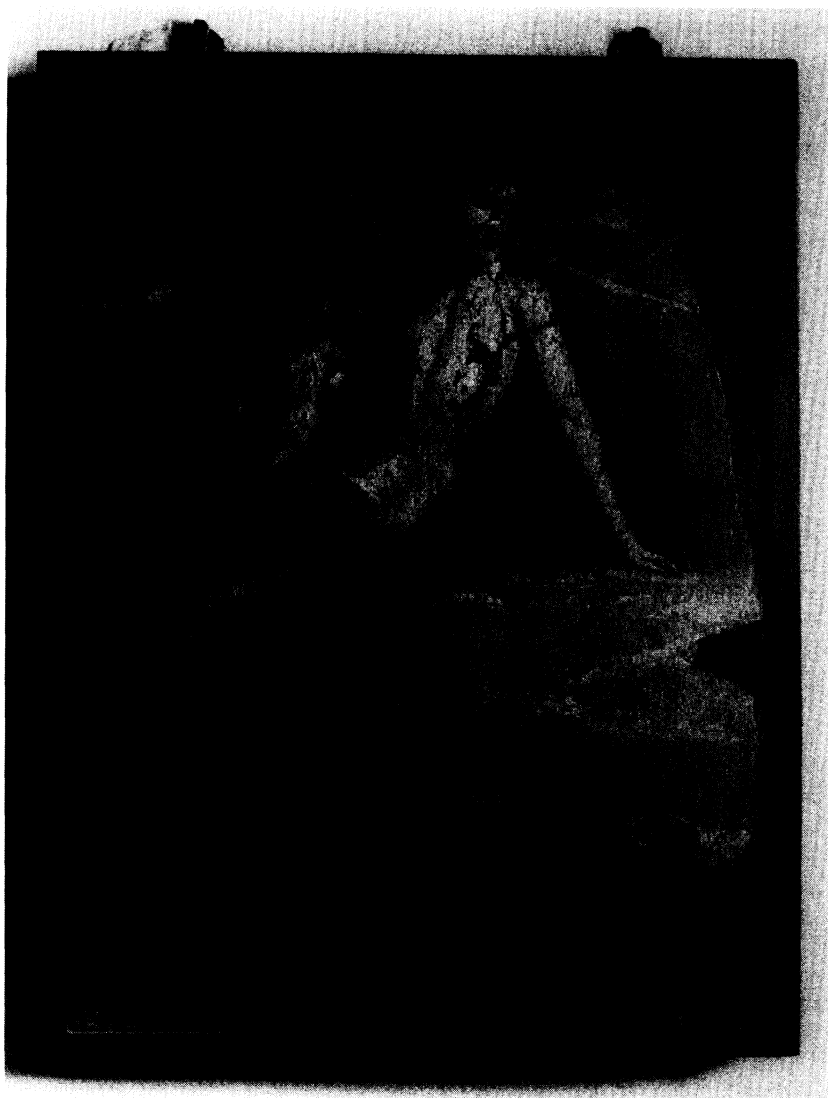


PLATE 9. Narcissus (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 77.2283).

surpasses all other arts is striking and not strictly required by his defense (*Apol.* 14):

quippe in omnibus manu faciundis imaginibus opera diutino sumitur, neque tamen similitudo aequae ut in speculis comparet; deest enim et luto vigor et saxo color et picturae rigor et motus omnibus, qui praecipua fide similitudinem repraesentat, cum in eo visitur imago mire relata, ut similis, ita mobilis et ad omnem nutum hominis sui morigera; eadem semper contemplantibus aequaeva est ab ineunte pueritia ad obeuntem senectam, tot aetatis vices induit, tam varias habitudines corporis participat, tot vultus ejusdem laetantis vel dolentis imitatur. enimvero quod luto fictum vel aere infusum vel lapide incussum vel cera inustum vel pigmento illitum vel alio quopiam humano artificio adsimulatum est, non multa intercapedine temporis dissimile redditur et ritu cadaveris unum vultum et immobilem possidet. tantum praestat imaginis artibus ad similitudinem referendam levitas illa speculi fabra et splendor opifex.

Long labor is expended over all the portraits wrought by the hand of man, yet they never attain to such truth as is revealed by a mirror. Clay is lacking in life, marble in color, painting in solidity, and all three in motion, which is the most convincing element in a likeness: whereas in a mirror the reflection of the image is marvelous, for it is not only like its original, but moves and follows every nod of the man to whom it belongs; its age always corresponds to that of those who look into the mirror, from their earliest childhood to their expiring age; it puts on all the changes brought by the advance of years, shares all the varying habits of the body, and imitates the shifting expressions of joy and sorrow that may be seen on the face of one and the same man. For all we mould in clay or cast in bronze or carve in stone or tint with encaustic pigments or color with paint, in a word, every attempt at artistic representation by the hand of man after a brief lapse of time loses its truth and becomes motionless and impassive like the face of a corpse. So far superior to all pictorial art in respect of truthful representation is the craftsmanship of the smooth mirror and the splendor of its art. (tr. H. E. Butler)

This issue of motion is of particular relevance to the description of reflection in the Diana-Actaeon sculpture group. According to the *Apology*, terracottas, stone sculpture, and painting all fall short of reality in different particulars, but all alike lack motion. The mirror imitates every nod or change of expression, while any work of art keeps one and the same countenance always—like a corpse (*ritu cadaveris*). Lucius marvels at the motion which the reflection in the stream gives to the carved stone fruit; the shimmering reflecting of Actaeon as well may increase the viewer's sense of his reality.

Yet the point of including Actaeon's reflection in the stream is probably not just a technical flourish, making a point about motion. Why does Apuleius particularly want us to see Actaeon not only as a sculpture but as a reflection? Winkler calls attention to the second-person forms in the passage ("if you bent down . . . you would think," *putes . . . si . . . pronus aspexeris*) to suggest that we as viewers will only see Actaeon's reflection if we lean forward in a responsive move to his—and will therefore see our own reflection, too, thereby implicating ourselves in his experience.<sup>47</sup> Heath attempts to take this explanation even further, suggesting that the two reflections are simply one: an attempt to identify Lucius (and we as readers,

47. Winkler 1985, 170.

implicated by our experience of the first person narrative) with Actaeon, his curiosity, and his fate.<sup>48</sup> On this view, the reflection is simply hammering home the main point of the danger of curiosity and the similarity of Lucius and Actaeon in this respect. Again, I wonder if this suffices.

While the most common scenes containing reflections, both in ancient art and later, show us a figure gazing at its own reflection, from at least the Alexander mosaic on there are fascinating variations. Reflection does not necessarily double vision; it can also fracture it. Two views of a single person need not more tightly circumscribe, making doubly sure it is what it is, but rather can enact the possibility of heterogeneous meaning.<sup>49</sup> Reflection opens up another standpoint and viewpoint: give me a place to stand and I will reenvision the world.

The reflected image in the water flowing through the Diana-Actaeon sculpture reveals the possibility of the third point of view. Without this reflection the group resolves itself completely into a set of powerful binary oppositions: male voyeurs (Lucius and Actaeon) and female objects (the winged figures as well as Diana), inner scene (Diana and Actaeon) and outer scene (the female figures looking down on Lucius), but all pointing forward to a reversal of power in which the female gaze of Diana-Isis will dominate. The third viewpoint disrupts this strict economy, postulating an angle of observation outside the either/or of domination or subjection. The reflection allows us as readers to see something we would otherwise not see. Viewing the sculpture, and more broadly the novel, from this standpoint allows us the possibility of identifying neither with Lucius' male voyeuristic gaze nor with the ravenously controlling gaze of Diana and ultimately Isis: rather, we can stand outside their interaction and evaluate it for ourselves.

One final element of the Roman visual tradition, well attested in wall painting but in fact nowhere recorded in literature, may help us see more clearly how reflection offers a different point of view. A number of wall paintings (e.g., Plate 10, p. 45) show a couple seated and gazing into a reflecting pool at the severed head the man holds on high. The head must be Medusa, the couple Perseus and Andromeda.<sup>50</sup> Perseus is showing Andromeda the Gorgon's head. They look into the pool because the reflected image will not turn the onlookers into stone, as directly gazing at the head of the Gorgon will. The reflection reverses the power dynamic, opening up a vantage point that without reflection cannot be occupied by a living person.

48. Heath 1992, 123. As such, Heath's view amounts to a slight variation on the situation in *Las Meninas*: the subject position of Lucius, with which we as readers identify, turns out already to be occupied by Actaeon. Unlike *Las Meninas*, however, on this reading the reflection in Apuleius is unnecessary. Without the mirror in *Las Meninas*, we could not possibly know there is someone else already occupying our point of view; in Apuleius, the reflection is not required in order for us to know of the existence either of Actaeon or Lucius, nor I would argue even for their identification, given the preexistence of the Actaeon narrative.

49. For example, Snow 1989 argues that the *Rokeby Venus* of Velázquez is a powerful critique of traditional "toilette of Venus" scenes, in which the mirror image becomes a challenging and independent viewpoint.

50. Balenseifen 1990, catalogue K35, pls. 20–21.



PLATE 10. Perseus and Andromeda (DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 89.85).

Lucius' fantasies of power, of spying upon magic that will allow him to dominate the world and the people around him (as his fearsome hostess Pamphile does) end in complete overthrow. Once master of the gaze, whether viewing Fotis' beauty or Pamphile's magic rites, he ends as the object of the gaze, both of the statue of Isis behind him and the crowds in front of him. The reader need not, however, remain identified with Lucius' point of view and follow him into the ranks of Isis' worshippers. There is a third vantage point, belonging neither to Isis nor to Lucius, and standing outside their economy of domination and subjection: it is that of the watcher in the water, the reflected viewpoint.

Our exploration of the visual arts in Apuleius has shown how deftly he can manipulate the inheritance of the art historical tradition for his own literary purposes. He plays with iconographic elements to animate them, transferring elements from two-dimensional to three-dimensional representation or putting the two different Venus statues in motion, first rising from the waves and then discovering, and reacting to, the observer, to tell us more about Fotis and Lucius. The Diana and Actaeon group goes much further, challenging us to go beyond an appreciation of beauty and the artist's technical facility to read it against the horizon of our visual repertoire of the subject matter and to reinterpret it in light of the dynamics of that traditional narrative. When this reinterpretation does not account for all details, our visual and philosophical repertoires make possible a third interpretation of the group. The apparently unnecessary reflection of Actaeon in the water allows for a position from which we as readers can see both Lucius and Isis/Diana without being subject to either. Apuleius does nothing without a purpose. Given his fascination with mirrors and reflection, the explanation that he simply adapted or borrowed Actaeon's reflected gaze in the rippling water from either the Narcissus scenes or paintings or mosaics of Diana at the pool that already contained the reflection in the water seems to me insufficient. I believe rather that Apuleius is using it to make us as readers imagine a third, independent viewpoint—neither as voyeuristic males, gazing on female beauty for our own gratification, nor as objects of an equally if not more powerful female gaze that threatens to consume us.

The traditional moralizing interpretation of *The Golden Ass* sees Isis in the final book as a benevolent savior, rescuing Lucius from enslavement to curiosity and lust. Winkler's pioneering book brilliantly exposed the disjuncture between that final book and the narrative that precedes it and showed how re-reading the novel in search of the clues that would make it cohere only exacerbates the inconcinnity. His explanation of the novel as hermeneutic comedy has a particular appeal for our own time and remains a landmark in literary interpretation. My own experience of reading and re-reading Apuleius, however, has not left me balanced between two interpretations of the novel (either as an entertaining adventure with no deeper meaning or as a narrative of progress toward salvation) but more and more convinced of the irony of the ending and its final objectification of Lucius under the gaze of Isis. If we as readers wish to avoid her petrifying gaze,

we would do well to observe the dynamics of that gaze as reflected in the viewpoint in the water.

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