

APULEIUS AND THE ART OF NARRATION

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who wants to understand the very considerable art which Apuleius displays in narrating the stories of the *Metamorphoses* must naturally first *describe* the various modes of narration which he employs. Such description can scarcely be photographic: it requires its own language of categories and concepts – a language which Apuleius might, or might not, have understood. A valuable modern addition to the vocabulary has been the concept of ‘Point of View’: this concept is used to categorize modes of narration according to the relationship which they set up between reader, narrator and the narrated. The narrator may be more or less involved in the events he narrates; he may know everything about them, or very little; he may relate them as present or as past. The reader may be told much or little of what the narrator knows; he may be made to view the story from the point of view of the narrator, of one of the characters, or even, I suppose, ‘objectively’. This whole sort of categorization has been dear to many authors and critics of this century, but has only recently been taken up by critics of the ancient novels: Chariton, Xenophon, Achilles 1971 (Hägg); Petronius 1973 (Beck); Apuleius 1972 (W. S. Smith), 1978 (van der Paardt).¹

Might Apuleius have understood such descriptive language? To an extent it may be argued that the answer does not matter: however he came to write his narratives, this is how they are. It is therefore no surprise to see critics who speak ‘Point of View’ language dissociate themselves from history and the author’s intention.² Yet the description provides us with a pattern of choices and avoidances by the author (accounting for which is at least a significant element in our understanding), and there can be therefore little danger of a fruitful description being entirely divorced from the author’s intention. Perhaps, however, there is more danger of descriptive categories only approximating to the categories in which the author was in fact thinking and of therefore to that extent (at least historically) falsifying the way in which the novel was built.³ This is what I shall argue in the case of Apuleius. Indeed he would have understood the reader–narrator–narrated relationship, but for him it was not an

¹ N. Friedman, ‘Point of View in Fiction: the Development of a Critical Concept’, *PMLA* 70 (1955), 1160–84; W. C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), 149–65; T. Hägg, *Narrative Technique in Ancient Greek Romances* (1971), 112–37; R. Beck, ‘Some Observations on the Narrative Technique of Petronius’, *Phoenix* 27 (1973), 42–61; W. S. Smith Jr, ‘The Narrative Voice in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*’, *TAPA* 103 (1972), 513–34; R. Th. van der Paardt, ‘Various Aspects of Narrative Technique in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*’, in *Aspects of Apuleius’ Golden Ass*, edd. B. L. Hijmans, Jr and R. Th. van der Paardt (1978), pp. 76–9. R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (1966), pp. 242–7, consider ancient narratives.

² Booth, preface: ‘I am aware that in pursuing the author’s means of controlling his reader I have arbitrarily isolated technique from all of the social and psychological forces that affect authors and readers. For the most part I have had to rule out different demands made by different audiences in different times.’ Hägg, pp. 17–18: ‘The function of the narrative is described, in the first stage, without regard to whether a technique used is intentional or unintentional, original or traditional’.

³ Like, I think, most classicists, I am concerned to apply to the work of art only a criticism which the author might have recognized and in terms of which one may presume he composed the work. Those who are concerned about the ‘Intentionalist Fallacy’ or who practise ‘Rezeptionsästhetik’ will think differently, but run the risk of changing the meaning of the work of art from generation to generation.

awareness simply of how novels may be written, but the foundation-stone of the rhetorical art by which he lived. Viewed in this light, the diligence and waywardness of his narrations become essential and intelligible characteristics.

In what follows I shall use the 'Point of View' category to pick out areas of interest in Apuleius' technique, but shall at several points go beyond it. I shall start with description, but move gradually to explanation. The principal theme is Apuleius' first-person narrations – how he props them up and how he interferes with them.

First-person narration: Apuleius and 'Lucius of Patras'

Least interesting to the critic⁴ and most comfortable to the reader are stories told by omniscient narrators. Such are fairy tales (where children regularly require of their parents that for every question the narrator shall have an answer) and such, alone in our novel, is *Cupid and Psyche*: the narrator can tell us what happened in heaven or what passed between Psyche's sisters in her absence; she even lets us know the motives of Venus and of the sisters, admittedly in monologue and dialogue, but that is to be expected in a culture so conditioned by pantomime and drama and whose greatest theorist, Plato, saw thoughts as unspoken words.⁵

The other stories in the *Metamorphoses* differ from *Cupid and Psyche* in that in the context of the novel they are alleged to be *true* and subject to the limitations on knowledge which reality imposes. 'How do you know?' thus becomes a possible and even necessary question, and the authority for the story replies and narrates *in the first person*.⁶ The most important first person in the novel is of course Lucius; he is this, to use the terminology of Friedman, both as protagonist and as witness.⁷ The first person as protagonist, because of his greater involvement, raises less problems in substantiating the account: he is the witness. This too is the part we can see in the Lucianic *Ass* and which therefore Apuleius certainly derived from 'Lucius of Patras' – the part that gives Apuleius' novel its picaresque aspect ('Adventures of an Ass'). The other passages, where Lucius is first person only as witness, are by that very fact capable either of having been deducted from 'Lucius of Patras' by 'Lucian' or added to him by Apuleius, and the real question to ask in each case is whether the story displays 'Apuleian character'.⁸ But in any case, as there is a huge discrepancy in length between 11 books of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and the two books which they represent of 'Lucius of Patras', we may think that Apuleius added most of these

⁴ 'Point of View' analysis is concerned with the manipulation of the supply of information from the events narrated via witness and narrator to the reader; the manipulation consists primarily in restrictions; but if the narrator is omniscient, then the supply of information is not restricted and is relatively unmanipulated. Consequently, it is authors who deviate more than most from omniscient narration who attract most attention from this form of criticism.

⁵ Plato, *Tht.* 189e, with Scholes and Kellogg, p. 180.

⁶ Modern novels, notably those of Kafka, sometimes display a device known as the 'third-person reflector', where the supply of information to the reader is diminished in the same way as in a first-person narration, but instead of a first-person narrator there is a third-person he/she through whose eyes the events are seen. This device leads, I think, to a rather negative treatment of the choice of person in which to tell events in some modern theorists: 'Perhaps the most overworked distinction is that of person. To say that a story is told in the first or third person will tell us nothing of importance unless we become more precise', Booth, p. 150.

⁷ Complete conspectus of narrators: B. L. Hijmans, Jr in *Aspects*, p. 113. Role of Lucius: H. Riefstahl, *Der Roman des Apuleius* (1938), p. 21. Protagonist and witness: Friedman 1174–5 and van der Paardt 77.

⁸ P. Junghanns, *Die Erzählungstechnik von Apuleius' Metamorphosen und ihrer Vorlage* (1932), p. 3.

stories,⁹ and observe in them more original manipulation of material by Apuleius and come closer to the spirit of our author. For it is in precisely these passages that the question 'How do you know?' receives virtuoso, alert and humorous treatment.

First-person narration imposes a perspective which must be consistently carried through. The author fails if the reader can ask a narrator 'how do you know?' and receive no answer, i.e. if the narrator exceeds the information available to him. This problem is obvious enough to authors, and complete failures in perspective are accordingly rare.¹⁰ But authors do differ from each other in the amount of attention they devote to avoiding the problem.¹¹ Apuleius, as we shall see, devoted much: was he different in this respect from his model, 'Lucius of Patras'?

Some care is evident in Lucian's abridgement and it would fit the simple, limpid, detailed style which 'Lucius of Patras' seems to have used.¹² At *Onos* 17 (Apuleius 4. 1, also) the brigands with Lucius call on friends of theirs: how does the ass know they are friends? – because he judges by their behaviour. At *Onos* 19, Lucius is contemplating faking tiredness when the other ass suddenly displays symptoms of tiredness: Lucian will not say outright that he too is faking, but adds a cautious 'perhaps' to mark that he is speculating. The old woman at *Onos* 24 has, in Lucius' absence, hanged herself for fear of her masters' anger at her incompetence; but it is added that her fear was of consequences that were only too likely, thereby revealing the path by which Lucius had arrived at the old woman's strictly unascertainable motives for suicide. A similar speculation appears at *Onos* 34, where the servants of Charite and Tlepolemos run away 'as you might expect when (οἷα δῆ) the house had been emptied of its young master'.

In addition to the examples of speculation above, which are largely a question of a word or two to establish smoothness by plausibility, there are more deliberate examples concerned with witnessing. Lucius resolves not to scheme further at *Onos* 20 (Apuleius 4. 5 also) because he *hears the brigands say* the journey is almost over. And at *Onos* 45 the battered soldier, in Lucius' absence, eventually succeeds in getting up again and goes to inform his comrades, 'as they said' ('as I afterwards learnt', Apuleius 9. 41).

Finally, a problem of a slightly different sort. Names of characters cause problems in anything other than an omniscient narration. Omniscience allows the narrator to state at the beginning, for instance, 'In civitate Antiochia rex fuit quidam *nomine Antiochus*'.¹³ In a first-person narrative, a name, like anything else, is a fact to be discovered; and this leads to a certain hesitance in presenting the name. Thus it is only at *Onos* 36 (or Apuleius 8. 25 *fin.*)¹⁴ that Philebus is finally named, with the formula 'for this was the name of my purchaser'. Less markedly, Menekles' name comes into the text at his second mention, *Onos* 49: 'Menekles – our master – as I said, had...'. (At Apuleius 10. 18, again late, the equivalent character, now called Thiasus, is given his name – 'Thiasus, for this was the name of my master' – and a thumbnail sketch into the bargain.)

⁹ cf. Junghanns, pp. 118–20.

¹⁰ Outstanding example in van der Paardt, p. 89 n. 16.

¹¹ A nice example of desperate measures in B. Callison, *Flock of Ships*: the dying first-person narrator writes the novel, somewhat implausibly, on his death-bed.

¹² Junghanns, p. 10 n. 8.

¹³ *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, *init.*

¹⁴ This approach may explain some, but not all (not Lucius or Psyche), late naming in Apuleius; cf. B. Brotherton, 'The Introduction of Characters by Name in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius', *CPh* 29 (1934), 36–52; J. Tatum, *Apuleius and The Golden Ass* (1979), p. 27 and n. 5.

Scilicet as perspective-maintainer

In Apuleius, the most frequent indicator of the author's concern to preserve perspective is the word *scilicet*, which occurs some 50 times in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁵ On all occasions it purports to add to the information available to the addressee, as one might expect from a word which according to its constituent parts should mean 'one may know' (*scire-licet*). But it is not always used to preserve perspective. On four occasions it simply accompanies additional information which is part of the knowledge of the speaker: at 5. 26, *consilium vestrum scilicet quo mihi suavisistis* means 'your plan, namely the one by which you persuaded me'; at 5. 17, *sociae scilicet doloris* means 'and you should know we are associates in your grief'. At 11. 12, the ass moves unhastily and the fear which causes his lack of haste is qualified with a *scilicet*; fear, as we shall see, often attracts a *scilicet* because its analysis is speculative, but it can scarcely be so here, as the ass is recounting his own fear; the translation should therefore be not 'fearing doubtless that...', but 'fearing, you should know, that...'. Likewise at 6. 1, *rata scilicet*, if it had its expected meaning of 'doubtless thinking that...', would be an irregular surrender of the narrator's omniscience in the *Cupid and Psyche* story, and is much more likely to mean 'thinking, you should know, that...'.¹⁶

The remaining 46 examples are all speculative one way or another. The speaker does not know, he only guesses; but, all the same, he purports to be attempting to add to the information already available to the hearer, as when, towards the end of the novel, Lucius' relatives come to see him 'evidently because they had heard the stories about me' (11. 20). But the situation is now complicated by a new factor. Speculation lends itself very much to irony and sarcasm and, as a result, the actual amount of information added by *scilicet* is in inverse proportion to the amount of irony employed. At 6. 9 Venus speculates, with exactly as much improbability as irony, that Psyche's child will make her a happy granny; at 8. 26, the ass any self-respecting castrated priest of the Syrian Goddess can see is an ugly brute is speculatively described as 'doubtless such a lovely chick'. In this way, plainly visible objects, which one would have thought admitted of no speculation, treated ironically open up a whole new world of false speculative possibilities.

In this article the examples which interest me are those which are genuinely speculative rather than ironic or caustic. These are of course not mutually exclusive areas, but two extreme poles of influence which is greater or lesser in a particular example. But, after admitting the existence of border-line examples, it can be said with reasonable meaningfulness that about 25 of these 46 examples genuinely seek to offer information at the same time as qualifying the narrator's claim to knowledge.¹⁷ A preliminary indication of the importance of these 25 examples to Apuleius' technique in handling first-person narrative is given by their distribution: not one of them occurs

¹⁵ Observed in this connection by van der Paardt, p. 77.

¹⁶ Only 'likely' because a third-person narrator can, if he wishes, surrender his omniscience temporarily for effect: in particular, it is a favourite move of Heliodorus, e.g. 1. 8 *init.*, ἀνακινούσης αὐτοῖς, οἶμαι, πλέον τὰ πάθη τῆς νυκτός, ἅτε... I am aware that the distinction to be made is not so much between two meanings of *scilicet* (they probably felt the same to a Roman) as between two uses, but have overlooked philosophical precision in the interests of clarity.

¹⁷ It would be stretching the reader's confidence too far not to list the examples, but too tiresome to argue at length. Speculation to preserve perspective: 3. 26; 4. 3, 10, 12 (*ter*), 23; 6. 29; 7. 25, 28; 8. 7, 16, 25, 26; 9. 11, 42; 10. 1, 5, 17, 34 (*bis*); 11. 1, 16, 20, 27. Irony: 1. 12, 15; 3. 27; 4. 19; 5. 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 31; 6. 1, 8, 9; 7. 16, 18, 27; 8. 24, 26 (*bis*), 28, 30; 9. 3.

in the omniscient narrator's *Cupid and Psyche*, unless one includes Apuleius' innovative aetiology of the lamp at 5. 23 (doubtless invented by some lover or other) or accepts, as we have not, a surrender of omniscience at 6. 1 (Psyche, doubtless thinking that...). It is also interesting that there is no example before Lucius' transformation (at 3. 24); for *ego scilicet Ulixi astu* at 1. 12 and *tu alicuius facinoris tibi conscius scilicet mori cupis* at 1. 15 seem to me entirely ironical.

Of the 25 examples, 17 are in the mouth of Lucius as narrator, 4 in the mouth of the bandit-narrator and 1 in the mouth of a servant-narrator (the remaining 3 are in brief passages of direct speech). From these figures I think it can be seen that Apuleius considers the word useful in narration, presumably because it maintains an impression of plausibility. The use of the word, with the exceptions I have noted above, is reasonably constant, although there is a large section between 6. 29 and 7. 25 devoid of non-ironical uses; on the other hand, its over-use at 4. 12 (3 examples) seems designed to continue the characterization of the bandit-narrator as very audience-conscious, the Aelius Aristides of the robber community if one may judge by the careful arguments and theses that introduce his narration.¹⁸

Speculation may be on facts, past, present or future; or it may be on the interior workings of a human (or animal) mind. The 25 speculative examples, like the ironic group, split almost evenly into these two categories. Fact present: a woman comes screaming when the ass knocks a nurseryman unconscious, *uxor eius scilicet* (4. 3). Fact past: the miser – *scilicet* – had been awake and listening for ages (4. 10). Fact future: they take the poor nurseryman off to prison, *scilicet* to be executed (9. 42). Fact future hypothetical: *scilicet* when I the ass and the criminal were in the bond of Love, the wild animal would be unable to restrict its teeth to her (10. 34). Interior workings include all manner of fearing and thinking, purposes and reason; phrases such as 'fearing that', 'thinking that', 'in order to', 'in case' characteristically attract an Apuleian *scilicet*, to cover the narrator against the strict unavailability of another's mind.

But what we need to know now is whether Apuleius' use of this word is in any way unusual or whether it is perfectly ordinary, given that he is writing a first-person narrative. For the purpose of comparison, a Greek author would be unsatisfactory: the Greek novels have too much third-person narration or first-person narration in almost omniscient retrospect, and in any case *scilicet* is a peculiarly Latin word: *ποῦ*, *δήπου*, *ἴσως*, *οἶμαι* are too tentative; *οἶον* *εἰκός*, *οἶα* *δὲ* do not really convey the same meaning. This is something important about the word; if we understand that Apuleius is working with Greek predecessors, the word reveals part of the originality of Apuleius: the word and the attitude of the narrator which it represents – now caustic, now cursing, now speculating on the paths by which knowledge reaches him, but always alert – are likely to be a distinctive contribution by Apuleius and characteristic of our author. It seems best, therefore, to compare the performance of this word in Apuleius with that in a Roman novelist, Petronius.¹⁹

Author	No. of pages (Loeb)	Total uses of <i>scilicet</i>	Part of speaker's knowledge	Speculation and irony	Speculation Irony	Speculation on fact	Speculation into minds
Petronius	189	20	13	7	nil	5	2
Petronius	as 297	31.4	20.4	11.0	nil	7.9	3.1
Apuleius	297	50	4	46	21	12	13

¹⁸ At 4. 9; cf. my comments in *CR* n.s. 29 (1979), 70.

The text of Petronius is, of course, fragmentary, but it is still two-thirds of the length of Apuleius, and accordingly if the fragmentariness affects our figures it would have to be argued that the lost parts were likely *by their nature* to use the word in a way closer to Apuleius. This would be especially difficult to argue in view of the striking absence of ironical *scilicet* from the fully preserved *Cena*. Equally, these figures cannot be dismissed on the grounds that the *Satyricon* is a different sort of work from the *Metamorphoses*, because they are not of different types in that they are both first-person narratives and any further differences between them are precisely what we are attempting to register here.

The table above shows that Apuleius, in comparison with Petronius, is especially fond of the word (he uses it 59 per cent more). But his interest is only in the word when it is speculative and ironical (+318 per cent). Other uses, to impose a non-speculative view of the narrator on the audience, are highly characteristic of Petronius but not Apuleius (Petronius uses it +411 per cent): thus 'I, *scilicet* ("of course" or "you know") a very intelligent man, immediately knew what it was' (para. 69) is typical of Petronius, but 'and, you should know, we are associates in your grief' (5. 17 – p. 422 above) is atypical of Apuleius, in the *Metamorphoses*. Irony is exclusive to Apuleius. Speculation on fact to an extent appears to be induced by the narrative form, but still seems significantly more prominent in Apuleius (+53 per cent). Speculation on inner workings of the mind is devastatingly Apuleian (+319 per cent).

The explanation of Apuleius' ironical use of the word is quite straightforward: he is an energetic author who likes a joke with his audience, something which cannot be doubted by anyone reading his expatiation in the *Apologia* on the merits of philosophers using toothpaste or his prescription in the *Florida* of the ultimate remedy for parrots that swear.²⁰ But there are more possible ways of explaining the prominence of speculation in Apuleius. One might redescribe the absence of speculation in Petronius by observing (i) the fullness of information (or misinformation) available to the characters through the very generous use of direct speech and (ii) the specific use of the narrator's ignorance for comic effect;²¹ the novel is in this respect black and white, it does not indulge in the greys of speculation. One might observe the absence of the sort of stories inserted into a frame that lead to the need to qualify the narrator's knowledge. On the other hand, Apuleius clearly has a special interest in men's minds and emotions: like Socrates, he thought that 'men should be considered not by the vision of the eyes, but by the vision of the mind and the regard of the soul'.²² The interest distinguishes him from the Lucianic *Onos* and, probably, from 'Lucius of Patras', and is shown clearly in the last column of the table. But we must not overlook that Apuleius is not always under an obligation to insert a *scilicet*. When Lucius' horse and the other ass drive him away, in fear – *scilicet* – for their food (3. 26), the *scilicet* is smooth, doubtless, and exact, but not strictly necessary: without it we would not condemn the narrator (we do not condemn the narrator in the *Onos* at the equivalent point, paragraph 15) for a break in perspective or imagine that he

¹⁹ In compiling this table, I have used J. Segebad & E. Lommatzsch, *Lexicon Petronianum* (1898), for the instances of *scilicet* but not for their classification and have accepted (without complete conviction) the deletion of two examples under the heading 'Part of Speaker's Knowledge'. I have used the Loeb as an easily comparable format for the two authors.

²⁰ On irony, see Riefstahl, pp. 64 ff.; Apuleius employs it down to the smallest detail, e.g. the word *bonus*, cf. A. Scobie, *Apuleius, Metamorphoses I, a Commentary* (1975), p. 96. Tatum, pp. 164–5, clearly thinks parrot glossectomy is typical of Apuleius.

²¹ Hägg, pp. 321–2.

²² *Flor.* 2. Apuleius, 'Lucius of Patras' and emotions: Junghanns, pp. 26 n. 32, 28 f., 33 and index s.v. Psychologie; Riefstahl, pp. 23, 61 ff.

had assumed omniscience, but rather would accept it as an unmarked but fairly obvious speculation, just as we do at 8. 15, 'then they, fearing the new situation brought about by the change of master...'. What the *scilicet* does is to mark out the speculation. We may describe this as a form of emphasis on the distance between narrator and narrated and may consequently view the narrator Lucius (not the protagonist Lucius) as, in his way, a more substantial figure than the narrator Encolpius.²³ But this is only descriptive and is not concerned necessarily with the motives which Apuleius had for this employment of the word. He may indeed have been seeking what we understand by a literary effect; but, as a *scilicet* does not just carry us over an awkward moment of perspective but demonstrates to us that Apuleius has observed a problem of perspective, it may be well to consider the possibility that there is an element of showmanship in this usage, something which would be entirely in character with our author.²⁴

Stance at the outset of ancient novels

If I have employed *scilicet*, it is because it is relatively easy to identify and quantify. But naturally it is only a symptom of Apuleius' individual attitude to narration, which reveals itself in many diverse ways, not least in the very curious preface which he attaches to his work. Beginnings of novels are obviously important to point of view because generally they establish it, and we may perhaps better understand the individuality of Apuleius if we consider how other ancient novelists chose to establish the prevailing point of view for their novels.²⁵

Xenophon of Ephesus opens, without preface, 'There was a man at Ephesus...', in the same manner as, and presumably in a neo-classical imitation of, the real Xenophon's 'Darius and Parysatis had two children...'. The author is unmentioned; no attention is drawn to the narrator; the subject-matter is everything and it starts with identifications. He wishes to present his story in the factual dress of a historian.²⁶ Likewise, the *Story of Apollonius of Tyre* starts simply, 'In the state of Antioch, there was a king called Antiochus...'. Chariton goes to more trouble: 'I, Chariton of Aphrodisias, clerk to Athenagoras the orator, will narrate events that happened in Syracuse, a love story. Hermocrates, the general of the Syracusans, the one that defeated the Athenians, had a daughter called Callirhoë.' The effect is to reinforce the historical stance, both by the Thucydidean expression and by the choice of real characters out of Thucydides from which to suspend the plot. But our interest in this fictional amalgam of author and narrator is slight: he is only there to suspend our disbelief in the story; otherwise, he proceeds in the manner of Xenophon and the *Apollonius* – with identifications. The historical stance was clearly popular: an extravaganza was spun round the historical figures Ninus and Semiramis; Iamblichus in his *Babyloniaka* enjoyed the same historiographical exotic Middle Eastern scenery

²³ Substantiality of the narrator Lucius: Riefstahl, p. 22.

²⁴ 'He thinks of one thing at a time in its close-up aspect, ever intent on his showmanship', B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances* (1967), p. 254.

²⁵ Useful, if brief, observations in Scholes and Kellogg, p. 247; more developed account in Hägg, pp. 114, 120, 124–6.

²⁶ Presentation of the novel as history is clearly a choice of point of view readily available in a culture of which historiography was so great a part; but it scarcely has the genetic implications for the origins of the novel that used to absorb scholars' attention: see S. Trenkner, *The Greek Novella* (1958), pp. 180–1, with bibliography, p. 180 n. 2. R. Heine, *Untersuchungen zur Romanform des Apuleius*, diss. Göttingen (1962), p. 29, is to my mind right to see it as a formal question and, in the case of Chariton, as a misplaced attempt at realism.

with accounts of Babylonian customs;²⁷ and Heliodorus has Iamblichus' 'Herodotean history' as one of the colours on his palette.

But other works have an extended first-person opening. Achilles Tatius opens with himself as author/narrator recounting how, in the presence of a picture of suitable theme, he met the principal narrator, whose narration is the novel. I am not sure that Achilles achieves more than a pretty and fashionably ekphrastic setting by this device, as the 'author' is as fictional a character as the narrator (and is utterly forgotten at the end of the novel), but it may be that Achilles intended the production of the narrator as witness to aid the suspension of our disbelief. In any case, the narrator opens with the customary identifications: 'He began speaking, in this way: "I am Phoenician by nationality, I come from Tyre, my name is Kleitophon..."' Longus is more ingenious: again we have an author/narrator who comes across a picture, but the story this time is the picture, which gains a semblance of objectivity and independence from the author by the mention of an 'interpreter', who – unlike the author – has access to its meaning. The story is thus given a truth (subsisting in its existence and aesthetic attraction) independent of historical accuracy, except in so far as 'Longus' is alleged to have encountered it: a remarkable theory of the novel (and 'point of view') is implied.

If we now consider the Greek *Metamorphoses*, whose first two books contained the ass story, it is clear that the ass story at least, like only the novel of Achilles above, was told in the first person. Equally, verbal similarities between Photius' account of its contents and part of Apuleius' prologue indicate with some probability that there was an author's preface announcing the variety of metamorphoses which the reader would encounter in the whole work, not just the first two books.²⁸ But we are left with no clue to how the Greek original managed what on the face of it seems a very awkward transition between the author's prologue and the first-person narration.²⁹ Lucian's abridgement of the first two books logically enough omits the prologue to the whole work and as a result commences in the bald manner of a first-person Xenophon, identifying author with narrator, 'I was once going off to Thessaly...'. Apuleius, on the other hand, chooses illogically to maintain the general prologue and the general (plural) title,³⁰ an idiosyncratic choice in keeping with the idiosyncrasy of the whole prologue.

For Apuleius adopts some of the means we have seen in the other novels. There is nothing historiographical about the opening; he is so little concerned with plain facts that his narrator does not name himself and has no regular place of origin (what would 'Attic Hymettos, the Ephyrean Isthmus and Spartan Taenaros' look like under 'Place of Birth' in a passport?). Worse, he introduces no witnesses or other means to establish his credibility: rather, he is concerned *ut mireris*, is going to present *fabulae*.

Yet, he is more concerned than any of the novelists with his reader, a character left

²⁷ Fr. 1, fr. 27 Habicht.

²⁸ Photius, *Bibl.* cod. 129, with Apul. *Met.* 1. 1, compared well by Scobie (1975), p. 65 (except that *διάφοροι* means 'several', not 'various'); see also H. van Thiel, *Der Eselroman* (1971), i. 44; M. Molt, *Ad Apulei Madaurensis Met. Librum Primum Commentarius Exegeticus*, diss. Groningen (1938), ad loc.; P. Vallette, *Apulée, les Métamorphoses* (1940), i. xvii and esp. p. xvii n. 3, which neatly counters the starkly negative attitude of B. E. Perry, *CPh* 18 (1923), 229 ff., esp. 230 n. 2.

²⁹ Was it done in the manner of Achilles? If so, it would be difficult to explain how the name of the hero of the ass story, Lucius of Patras, became that of the author – cf. R. Helm, *Apulei Opera* II. 2 (1910), p. vi and n. 1, H. J. Mason in *Aspects* (1978), p. 2.

³⁰ This has been a source of great difficulty: Helm (1910), pp. vi–vii with Perry (1923), p. 230. Attempts to save the plurality of Apuleius' title, *Metamorphoses*: Perry (1923), pp. 234–8, Vallette, pp. xxiv–xxv, van Thiel, pp. 26–8; modern scholarship has spiritualized the meaning of 'metamorphoses': Tatum, pp. 28–33, Scobie in *Aspects* (1978), pp. 45 ff.

only implied by the openings of the other novelists. *At ego tibi*, the novel begins, forging an immediate link between speaker and reader. This style has been associated with the personal conversations the satirists hold with their readers.³¹ But the ambience of the prologue and the fact that there is a prologue at all point rather towards the comic stage, as has been widely observed. In particular, the instruction *lector intende: laetaberis* has clear affiliations with calls for attention in the prologues of Plautus and Terence.³²

This approach can also, I think, cast some light on the old problem of who speaks in the prologue: is it the author or the narrator? An 'I' talking about the book he has written to the reader easily leads to the supposition that Apuleius the author is speaking; but later, when the 'I' refers to his difficulty in learning Latin, we need Oudendorp's (1788) note that 'Apuleius is pretending he is the Greek, Lucius'. From this sort of observation arises the position of Rohde (1885), that the prologue presents a mixture of Apuleius and Lucius, especially because of the reference to translation from Greek into Latin (the activity of Apuleius) and the acknowledgement of the fictionality of the story. To Bürger (1888), Rohde's position seemed incredible: there must, he thought, be a single speaker in the first paragraph of the novel; consequently, he explained away the references to translation and fictionality and maintained that the subject was Lucius throughout.³³

Bürger's position has commended itself to commentators needing a brief solution to an awkward problem.³⁴ But it does not, I think, explain the shift in stance at *exordior. quis ille? paucis accipe*, a passage not even correctly punctuated in Bürger's time. It sweeps Rohde's point under the carpet, rather than disposes of it: we are still left with a tension between the writer of the book (now called 'Lucius') and the narrator. Lucius' learning Latin, also, is clearly enough a way of calling attention to Apuleius' activity of translation, even if Apuleius himself is not the grammatical subject. And, finally, Bürger's whole position is based on the unreasonable refusal to accept that Apuleius might have written an ambiguous and complex prologue and eventually leads him into the absurdity that because the 'I' of the novel is Lucius, it would have confused the reader if Apuleius' name had appeared on the title page and therefore it must first have been published anonymously.

Leo (1905), in an important note,³⁵ formally assented to Bürger's position, but brought Rohde's distinction back from under the carpet: the whole prologue was spoken by Lucius, but there was a mixture of writer and narrator. Lucius the author is presented as a narrator competing for a bystander's attention ('But I will string together for you a marvellous story...'); the reader, who as bystander would have asked 'Who are you, then?', as reader asks 'who is that?' (*quis ille?*). Leo's major achievement is to dissociate the fictional author from Apuleius:³⁶ Apuleius is not himself actually competing for the reader's attention, but presenting an author (or 'himself' – though the term is deceptively vacuous) as so doing. But it is doubtful whether Leo was also right to identify the fictional author (*ego*) with the narrator (*ille*).

³¹ Tatum, p. 26: for a possible explanation of these similarities, see p. 435 below.

³² Oudendorp ad loc.; Scobie (1975), p. 77; W. S. Smith, Jr, *Lucius of Corinth and Apuleius of Madaura*, diss. Yale (1968), p. 106; Smith (1972), pp. 513 ff., esp. 519; Tatum, pp. 24–6.

³³ E. Rohde, *RhM* 40 (1885), 66–91; K. Bürger, 'Zu Apuleius', *Hermes* 23 (1888), 489–98. In the following I have not discussed Calonghi's strange, diffuse and isolated position that the prologue is a dialogue between Lucius and Apuleius. Other bibliography: van Thiel, p. 43 n.

³⁴ Molt 4, Scobie (1975), pp. 71–2, both inadequate discussions without reference to Leo (v. *infra*).

³⁵ F. Leo, 'Coniectanea', *Hermes* 40 (1905), 605–6, taken up by Helm (1910), vi, xi–xii.

³⁶ It is helpful to regard all authors inasmuch as they appear in 'their' books as fictional to a degree: see Booth, pp. 71–6, 156 on the 'implied author'.

If the author could say *at ego tibi* to the reader, then the reader should certainly have said *quis tu?* (not *quis ille?*) to the author in return. The competitive offer of the first sentence is made by the 'author'; but *exordior* is said by someone else, Lucius the narrator inside the book, and it is only this fact that can explain (i) the use of the word *exordior* rather than its total omission (which would be required if, as Leo thought, the *quis ille?* picked up the maker of the offer in the first sentence) (ii) the need for *quis ille?*³⁷

Later scholars³⁸ seem to have recurred to the position of Rohde: Riefstahl thinks Apuleius presents himself to the reader; van Thiel's 'Persönliches Hervortreten des Autors, Anrede des Lesers' is apparently about Apuleius, not a Lucius-author; Hammer and Heine too seem to connect the 'author' with the notion of biographic reality. Other scholars have been interested in the way that here and elsewhere Apuleius 'plays hide and seek' with the reader or 'peeks through the fabric of his novel' and how the narrator often shows traits of Apuleius himself.³⁹

If we now turn to the prologues of comic drama, we discover that there are two types. In one, a character enters, in particular in what seems the model for Apuleius' *quis ille? paucis accipe*, the very first line of the *Aulularia*:

Ne quis miretur qui sim, paucis eloquar.

In the other, an actor, for instance the author, comes forward; in this case, the actor is as yet uncharacterized, as is evidenced by the revealing joke at the end of the *Poenulus* prologue:

...ibo, alius nunc fieri volo (126)

I suggest, therefore, that in Apuleius' prologue both types are employed. The uncharacterized actor, the 'author', speaks the opening line, in competition, as the old dramatists often were, for the audience's attention. At *exordior* he assumes the part of Lucius the narrator and commences the other type of prologue, *exordior* meaning *προλογίζω*. Yet at the same time the prologue is still outside the play and can afford to take a cavalier attitude to the convention of creating or preserving the illusion of reality of the fiction. Consequently, the references at the end of the paragraph to the manner of the *written* composition (*stilo*), to the fictionality of the work (*fabulam Graecanicam*, *pace* Bürger), and to the reader (*lector*) are not to be taken as reversion from Lucius-narrator to the author or as a mixture of the two. Indeed, at the end of the paragraph Apuleius is closer than ever to the comic prologue: *fabulam Graecanicam incipimus* conjures up the actor or company of actors presenting a drama from the Greek; *lector intende: laetaberis* we have already commented on. Smith has it neatly when he speaks of Apuleius as 'an actor in his own story' or of the narrator as 'a kind of prologus'.⁴⁰

Returning now to the stance at the outset of the ancient novels, we see that Apuleius, like only Longus of the other novelists, has presented his story as something other than a record of something which once happened. Longus assimilated his novel to a work of art; Apuleius assimilates his to a comic play, that is to say classifies it

³⁷ Friedman, p. 1168: 'Since the problem of the narrator is adequate transmission of his story to the reader, the questions must be something like the following: (1) Who talks to the reader? ...'

³⁸ Riefstahl, p. 22, van Thiel, pp. 44-5, Heine, p. 121 (citing S. Hammer, 'L'état actuel', *Eos* 39 (1926), 235).

³⁹ J. van der Vliet, 'Die Vorrede der Apuleischen Metamorphosen', *Hermes* 32 (1897), 79-85, Tatum, p. 88, Junghanns, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Smith (1972), p. 520, (1968), p. 106, works to which my debt will be obvious.

as 'fiction: entertainment'.⁴¹ This is something which in itself establishes a greater degree of thought and self-consciousness in Apuleius than in most other ancient novelists; but also the style in which it is done makes a display to the reader of enormous energy, character and showmanship. Yet it can be seen that we have advanced well beyond 'point of view'. True enough, we have been presented with a first-person narrator and have been told how to view the fiction, as entertainment. But our role as audience to a comic drama is occasionally recurred to (as we shall see below) rather than continuous. For the most part it is only important that we should accept the illusion created by the narrator. The narrator's contact with his reader in the opening paragraph is something over and above 'point of view', although it is of course part of Apuleius' attitude to narration.

Perspective and stance in the Met.: jocular uses

If Apuleius is cavalier with the fictional illusion in his prologue, it does not mean, any more than it does in the comic dramas, that he devotes no attention to the plausibility of his story. In fact he is much more concerned with it than the historian-type novelists, partly because of the dangers posed to it by the restricted point of view of a first-person narrator and partly for other reasons.

As we have seen, Apuleius is concerned in the prologue to explain how it is that Lucius, from the story a Greek, comes to narrate his novel in Apuleian Latin. It is not a thing which needs explaining – this is 'witty' according to Helm⁴² – and is as excessive as the 'explanation' at 4. 32 that Apollo 'although a Greek and an Ionian, gave his response in Latin because of the writer of the story'. At the same time he delights in paying excessive attention to logic when the narrator, who will speak Apuleius' dazzling virtuoso Latin, apologizes for his poor command of the language – 'ironically' according to Riefstahl.⁴³ A different adjective which springs to mind is 'bogus': Apuleius is creating problems, he is making a vice of necessity.

This can be illustrated from various extreme examples. Having, as is often remarked, incongruously and gleefully employed *delira et temulenta illa anicula* to relate the *Cupid and Psyche* tale – something which is 'inept' or 'jocular' according to your scholar⁴⁴ – Apuleius proceeds (6. 25) to make the narrator record the regret of the 'experiencing I' that he had no pen and paper to record the story we have just (thanks to its being carefully recorded with pen and paper) read. It would be unconvincing to argue that it is only the 'experiencing I' who is represented as being destitute of stationery, that the 'I' of here and now – the narrator – is doubtless better supplied and now recording the story for us. That would require 'I was upset that I did not *at that time* have pen and paper': the sentence is clearly designed to convey the impression that the story was lost to posterity. Indeed, the distinction between 'narrating I' and 'experiencing I' is never made by Apuleius except clearly in digression: we are given no significant reference forward in the novel, we are made to share (and be ourselves improved by)

⁴¹ To an extent this is a typical Apuleian false directive to the reader: the reader who understands *Cupid and Psyche* will already be wondering about *argutia Nilotici calami* and *Taenaros Spartiaca*; for false directives, cf. especially *tragoediam, non fabulam* at 10. 2 (237. 13 Helm) with Smith (1972), pp. 522–3.

⁴² Helm (1910), pp. vi, xii.

⁴³ Riefstahl, p. 20.

⁴⁴ 'Inepte' Helm (1910), p. vii, cf. 'inepte' on 10. 33 at p. xi; 'jocularly' A. Scobie, *More Essays on the Ancient Romance and its Heritage* (1973), p. 44, although he looks too for a deeper purpose – an attempt to preserve the greater realism of the frame story after *Cupid and Psyche*.

the experience and ignorance of Lucius.⁴⁵ The absence of a distinct 'narrating I' is in any case made clear by the next line, '*Ecce! confecto nescioquo gravi proelio latrones adveniunt...*', which is present to the reader directly through the 'experiencing I'. So in this passage the narrator 'realistically' professes the loss of the story, the reader in fact possesses it and the author, in effect cutting across the scene to have his joke with the reader, has called attention to the illusion and to the physical book. Intrusion by the author, which this by implication is, has been thought to have the deleterious effect of destroying the dramatic illusion. But it has been too readily believed that calling attention to the illusion destroys it, as any reader of *Tom Jones* will testify. On the other hand, on the basis of examples mainly later in the novel, Riefstahl sees a consistent purpose in illusion-destruction in the *Met.*, namely to distance the reader from the material. This should not be pressed too far. The author of the *Met.* feels free to communicate with his reader independently of the fictional illusion for a variety of purposes: in the prologue, Lucius talks of his learning Latin so that the author may refer to his activity of translation for the reader; for a deeper purpose, at 2. 4-5 the author conveys comment on the story through the significance of the statue of Actaeon; here, at 6. 25, Apuleius simply displays a humorous wilfulness which Sterne would have enjoyed.⁴⁶

In a similar way, at 2. 12 an astrologer is reported as having predicted to Lucius that he would be *historiam magnam et incredulam fabulam et libros*, something which appears⁴⁷ to cover every possibility: the true account, the fictitious story (or plot?), the written word. The written book again jars against the experiencing narrator and harmonizes with the reader outside the illusion. Lucius the narrator is, after all, if not without exception,⁴⁸ very much an oral figure. The partly colloquial style contributes to this effect, as do the ass's lack of pen and paper at 6. 25 and, small things in themselves, acknowledgements of the audience later in the novel (even if they are part of a change of character of the novel):⁴⁹

8. 24: scitote qualem...

8. 28: specta denique...

9. 4: cognoscimus...fabulam quam vos etiam cognoscatis volo...

9. 13: fabulam denique bonam...ad auris vestras adferre decrevi...

A final example of reference to the physical book is to be found at 8. 1, where the narrator (this time, a subordinate one) will relate *quae gesta sunt* but leave it for others more learned (!) to commit it to writing.

To move to a different sort of example, there can be few clearer cases of an author inviting disaster than when Apuleius ensures a bandit (at 4. 12) is entitled to know about the story he relates. As we have already remarked, the chapter is loaded with *scilicets* to guard the narrator's speculation. But Apuleius throws the sole source for the narrator's story out of a first-floor window (which has grown to *altitudo nimia* in the meantime) and carefully positions a gigantic stone in his flight path, but all the

⁴⁵ cf. van der Paardt, p. 80; by 'insignificant' I mean such grumblings as 'sed agilis atque praeclarus ille conatus fortunae meae scaevitatem anteire non potuit' (4. 2). Cf. also Smith (1968), pp. xvii-xx.

⁴⁶ Intrusion and illusion: Booth, pp. 16, 205 f.; Riefstahl, pp. 22-3, cf. Smith (1972), pp. 526-7. Some similar implied communication between author and reader occurs in the *Satyricon*, cf. Beck, pp. 49, 56-7, who, however, is bent on eliminating the author and creating a narrator-Encolpius in his likeness (on which procedure, see Booth, p. 151).

⁴⁷ On the other hand, Scobie (1973), p. 42 could be right that it is simply pleonasm.

⁴⁸ Notably, references to the reader at 1. 1, 10. 2, 11. 23.

⁴⁹ Here Riefstahl, pp. 22-3, must be right that the emphasis on the narrator distances the reader from the events; Helm (1910), p. vii observes the loose connection of the stories late in the novel; Hijmans, p. 121 n. 42, observes that names are rarer late in the novel.

same gives him just enough time – amidst rivers of blood – to relate *quae gesta sunt*. Was this a convincing method of justifying the story? Was it really necessary to justify the story at all? The situation is not dissimilar at the end of the narration on the death of Charite. Details in the story have seemed distinctly and disturbingly authorial and omniscient: how does the narrator know about Charite's dream, about how she put Thrasyllus off? An attentive reader might begin to wonder whether the old woman in 8. 11 is the answer, or whether the pace of the narrative precludes intermediate care with witnessing. But at last in 8. 14 Charite can hold her sword back from the act of suicide while she narrates all the particulars in order (*enarratis ordine singulis*).⁵⁰ These excuses are like a longstop in cricket: they catch any balls that come their way, but are of no great individual excellence. They are bad, either because Apuleius could do no better, or because he could not be bothered to do better, or, as I think, because a preposterously perfunctory solution to these problems served better than any other to show that he had not been caught out. In this case showmanship and a very wicked sense of humour should be savoured on reading.

Worst of all is the example at 9. 30, where Apuleius comes close to the 'obtrusive authorship', or 'obtrusive narratorship', of Fielding and Sterne, and, in particular, to an alarming passage in *Don Quixote* where Sancho asks the knight how the narrator came to know of events where only the two of them were present.⁵¹ In the Apuleian passage, the narrator breaks off from his story to envisage a reader criticizing his narration for recounting events he could not know; the criticism is brushed aside with the invitation to watch how it is done. The passage in itself solves nothing;⁵² it raises a problem which, one would have thought, would have lain dormant otherwise; it breaks into the story itself and disrupts it. Apuleius' concern seems more to be that he, or the narrator, should be seen to be alert and wide awake than that the story should be involving. Even the solution, when it comes (9. 31), seems hard to swallow: all had been revealed to the daughter by the ghost of her father in a dream. As Quintilian said,⁵³ dreams have no credibility – they are just too easy. And Apuleius must surely have felt the clash between this fantastic, story-book explanation and the realism he invites by the interruption of his narration. It is a terrible solution and he knows it.

Witnessing: smaller details

Events can be heard of, heard, or seen. So that a story may be *heard of*, occasions for narration are staged throughout the novel.⁵⁴ One instance is the nice touch at 1. 10: 'as she told me when she was drunk recently'. Indispensable for *hearing* events are, not unnaturally, ears, and ass's ears are, thanks to their size, particularly receptive: 'receiving this decision with ears the size mine were...' (6. 32 *fin.*); 'all the same, that one consolation for my agonising deformity gave me pleasure: endowed with huge ears I could perceive everything with the greatest of ease, even at quite a distance' (9. 15 *fin.*). Again, Apuleius takes a lot of care to give his witnesses a view. Vaguely at 1. 8 *fin.*, 'hear what she perpetrated in *conspectum plurium*'; more precisely

⁵⁰ *Vixque enarratis cunctis* at 10. 26 serves the same purpose, with the *vix* a very nice final touch.

⁵¹ Obtrusion (or 'intrusion'): M. Allott, *Novelists on the Novel* (1959), pp. 192 f., 269 ff.; *Don Quixote*, part II, chapter 2 with Scholes and Kellogg, p. 255; *Don Quixote*, intrusion and display of the author's genius: Booth, p. 212.

⁵² As Helm rightly observes, cf. van der Paardt, p. 78.

⁵³ *Inst.* 4. 2. 94.

⁵⁴ A conspectus of the variety of narrators: Hijmans, p. 113.

at 7. 13, when Lucius accompanies Tlepolemus, not Charite, so that he (and we) may learn what happened to the robbers; explicitly at 9. 13, where we are told the great virtue of being an ass: nobody hides information from a dumb beast,⁵⁵ a comment on Apuleius' narrative advantage. Aristomenes has a good view from under the collapsed bed at 1. 11–12, but an alarming effect ensues:⁵⁶ we take him as a witness, but then the story reaches out and draws him in, an effect disconcerting for the audience, who have up to then been sharing his viewpoint; similarly, at 2. 29 Thelyphron is positioned on a high stone, apparently, his part in the story over, to act simply as a witness, but the story draws him back in. And it is not an entirely dissimilar technique when Lucius gets a view through a crack (3. 21) of a metamorphosis, in which he will presently participate. Then there are the two robbers who act as witness-narrators. One is left at 4. 18 to keep an eye on the situation, more for us than for the robbers themselves, and he moves, like a roving television camera, with events: in front of the house at 4. 18, speculating (*scilicet*) on the ultimate cause of interior commotion at 4. 19, retreating from the house and observing from behind a door at 4. 20, staying on (earning overtime, one would imagine, by now) to see how long it is before anyone will dare to touch Thrasyleon (4. 21). The other robber is detached by Apuleius from the band that was present in the Greek *Metamorphoses* and stormed Milo's house (3. 28). No reference is made in Apuleius to the tying up of Milo and Fotis (contrast *Onos* 16), which is left unwitnessed. But a robber *is* left behind to report on the police investigation and does so, many books later, at 7. 1 (Lucius himself is wanted for questioning) in a passage of characteristically Apuleian flavour.⁵⁷ After all, absent people tell no tales: 'I cannot report to you things of which I was ignorant' (10. 7).

Audience-awareness: serious uses

In the two theatre scenes, at the Festival of Risus and at the show of Thiasus, Apuleius makes serious use of his awareness of the elements present in an act of narration.⁵⁸ The Festival of Risus is the last event before the sequence that leads to Lucius' transformation into ass-shape; the show of Thiasus is the last event before the sequence that leads to Lucius' reconversion into man. In both the intention is that Lucius shall be watched by an audience, and the result of this is that we are presented with a reflection of our own relationship to Lucius, namely audience to actor-narrator. Further, the laughter of the fictional audience seems to reflect the entertainment sought by the real audience of the *Golden Ass* (and promised by Apuleius in the prologue). By contrast, the second theatre-scene presents a markedly different arrangement. There, in the first part of the proceedings (10. 29 ff.) the ass now, like the reader, spectates, reflecting the disinvolvement of Lucius from the stories he relates in the later part of the novel: he is no longer the protagonist, he is a witness who in a consequently almost arbitrary fashion recounts stories that come his way (9. 4, 9. 13 above). Again, when, in a chapter that at first sight seems strange, Lucius expresses his disgust with the show, the aim seems to be for the real audience to join, this time, with Lucius and dissociate itself from the entertainment-seeking fictional audience. This is then reinforced by the refusal of Lucius to take part in the degrading entertainment: he

⁵⁵ This is one way amongst others of giving a narrator special access to information, cf. Friedman, p. 1174.

⁵⁶ Tatum, p. 72 (cf. 74) rightly speaks of 'rapid and unexpected transformations'.

⁵⁷ Junghanns, p. 146.

⁵⁸ On these scenes, see for instance Riefstahl, pp. 71, 74–5, Junghanns, pp. 136, 179, Smith (1968), p. 50, van der Paardt, p. 6 and especially Tatum, p. 42.

carries us away with him out of the theatre into prayer and conversion. Finally, at 11. 15, the audience again comes into question, when the priest invites the *inreligiosi* to behold Lucius triumphant over his Fortune – which is precisely what we the audience are doing. In all, the reader has been invited into the novel on the pretext of entertainment, and the attempt is made through the novel to convert him from being unreligious to a more devout view of the world. This is at least one reason why the audience is more important to Apuleius than to other ancient novelists.

Interpretation of Apuleius' stance

As was remarked at the outset, in describing all these devices and attitudes of our author, either we may employ what we consider to be objective terms of literary criticism ('point of view', 'author', 'narrator') or we may ask how Apuleius himself would have looked upon his manoeuvres. To a large extent this is a question of genre. Although the ancients were very conscious of rules of genre, the 'novel' as a genre is scarcely something which is conditioning⁵⁹ Apuleius in his authorship of the *Metamorphoses*, except in so far as he is adopting and adapting something (the Greek *Metamorphoses*) which we may consider a novel. The Greek romances are both different from the Apuleian *Metamorphoses* and generically coherent amongst themselves.⁶⁰

This means in effect that the rules which guide Apuleius' writing are not those of the genre 'novel', but belong elsewhere (always assuming that they belong somewhere). Particularly revealing in this context is Apuleius' adversion to the *lector scrupulosus* who 'finds fault with the narration'. In our terms, such a worry would occur to the novelist only when contemplating the 'critic', a person with the leisure to devote excessive attention to the undersealing of the text. Apuleius' very attention to this point in mid-narrative seems to indicate either neurosis or a deliberately wilful style of writing in the manner of Fielding. But perhaps we may first ask whether in fact Apuleius' readership *was* scrupulous, whether it in truth made a practice of reprehending narrators.

Here it is impossible not to cite *Florida* 9, where Apuleius speaks of his performances as sophist and the audience reaction he expects, given his great reputation:

for who of you will forgive me a single solecism? who will let me have even a single mispronounced syllable? who will allow me to blurt out carelessly tasteless, faulty words, like those that occur to men in delirium?

Others, he continues, will get away with it: Apuleius will not. One may suspect exaggeration, but no one should underestimate the great weight of defensiveness that goes with being even the most meagre of alert public speakers. For years of his life before writing the *Metamorphoses* Apuleius must have practised prepared and impromptu performance in theatres before large crowds, living on his wits to avoid being threadbare or caught out in diction or content, word or argument. The whole stance he takes up in the *Metamorphoses* reflects this practice: the constant alertness and attention to the audience, the (Plautine) theatrical opening, the effuse and magnificent vocabulary, even the choice to reflect the author–reader relationship in

⁵⁹ Even allowing for the *Spielraum* (Riefstahl 1) which exists within the genre for an individual author.

⁶⁰ In this context I think it is fair, despite the reservations of Hägg, p. 13, to emphasize their similarities: see Heine, p. 6 and Junghanns, p. 7.

scenes set in theatres. The novel, even if its length in fact rules this out, would not have been out of place declaimed in the theatre.⁶¹

Underlying the practice of the sophist is the rule-book of the ancient rhetoricians. Although they devote the lion's share to forensic oratory, elements of such technique are required by the novelist,⁶² and in our context we should consider above all the art of 'narration'. 'Narration', as far as the rhetoricians are concerned, is primarily that brief section of an advocate's speech which states (supposedly) the facts of the case. In these circumstances it attempts to display three qualities: economy, clarity and plausibility. A novel is not necessarily – and indeed not often – cast as a statement of facts, but it still recounts events which are presented as having happened and which must be credible enough to suspend the reader's disbelief.⁶³ Consequently, of the three qualities of narration, it is *plausibility* on which we have seen Apuleius spends his time. Economy is not a notable characteristic of Apuleius, as it tends to be obscured by various forms of self-indulgence, notably his luxuriant vocabulary. It is much more characteristic of some writers in the Greek tradition, and it may be as much rhetorical precept as natural love of the simplest (Xenophontic) style that accounts for the economy of Xenophon of Ephesus and Chariton. Furthermore, for the economy (in all senses) of Lucian's *Ass* we should perhaps not look to the process of abridgement – after all, 'Lucius of Patras' took only two books in the Greek *Metamorphoses* – but more to the overtones of a Lysianic defendant outlining what befell him. It is this style also, it seems, which was adopted by the Greek *Metamorphoses* and abandoned by Apuleius.⁶⁴

Quintilian recognizes that 'plausibility' is something which extends to fiction: he discerns a plausible sequence of events in the plots of comedies and mimes.⁶⁵ Precepts for plausibility often seem obvious: one must not contradict oneself, actions must not seem out of character, nothing must be 'contrary to nature'. But in the midst of these precepts, there are some which cast light on Apuleius' practice. The authors, for instance, stress opportunity: 'the narration', says Cicero,⁶⁶ 'will be plausible... if there shall be seen to have been opportunities for the action,... if the place shall be shown to have been suited for the very event which is the subject of the narration'. Under this heading clearly come the various attempts we have examined to demonstrate that there was an opportunity for the story to pass into the narrator's hands. Likewise, Apuleius' interest in the long ears of the ass or the advantages of his narrator being a disregarded dumb animal are simply a wayward corollary of Cicero's questioning how so many overdressed witnesses could be present unseen in a public bath in the *Pro Caelio*.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Tatum emphasizes well Apuleius the sophist. B. P. Reardon, *Courants Littéraires Grecs des II^e et III^e siècles après J.C.* (1971), pp. 106–7 shows in how real a sense the sophistic had a 'qualité théâtrale'.

⁶² It will be seen that here I part somewhat from the emphasis of Hägg, p. 18, who sees rhetoric as something not designed to describe the novel and therefore as a distorting medium; my thesis is that if the author of the novel is conditioned by this 'distorting' medium, then the critic who fails to take account of it himself distorts his appreciation of the novel by insisting on a supposed (and non-existent) novelistic purity. But in the end, Hägg is simply attempting a-historical description (cf. p. 419 above).

⁶³ I am not convinced that the rhetoricians before Apuleius had already classified a genre of novel and described it as a species of *narratio*; cf. E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*² (1900), p. 377 n. 1, Trenkner, pp. 182–5.

⁶⁴ Lysias and the novel: Trenkner, pp. 154 f.; 'Lucius of Patras' had a clear and simple style, cf. Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 129 and Junghanns, p. 2. n. 2.

⁶⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 4. 2. 53; plausibility in fiction also, e.g. Hermog. *Prog.* 1. 12.

⁶⁶ *Inv.* 29.

⁶⁷ *Cael.* 62.

The authors are also concerned that reasons and causes should, in moderation, be apparent. In Latin, the result is skilful and insidious use of *nam* and *enim*, as may be seen in any narration of Cicero's. But we should not overlook that Apuleius' *scilicet* often serves a similar function, by supplying a plausible reason to carry us across a gap in our knowledge of events: 'doubtless in fear that...', 'doubtless because his joy was growing', 'doubtless because he was sick of me', 'doubtless for us to take away', 'doubtless because they had heard stories of me'.⁶⁸

Other things too may be explained from rhetorical theory. The prologue has been seen in many lights: Smith concentrates on its resemblance to Plautus; Tatum is interested in the closeness of its conversational tone to the *sermo* of Horace or Juvenal. But I think it takes on a new appearance when one sees Quintilian recommend for narration 'a tone of voice very close to conversational (*sermoni*)'.⁶⁹ The aim is clearly to cut the distance between narrator and audience, to have the audience on your side. This is a standard aim of ancient opening sections, is prescribed by the rhetoricians, and was recognized in the prologue of the *Metamorphoses* by Beroaldus.⁷⁰ What Apuleius has in common with Horace and Juvenal is the fiction that the narrator is present with the reader, in order to gain rhetorical (persuasive, communicative) capital. But none of them stops there. If the purpose of a good rhetorical opening is to establish a good relationship with the audience, there is also the question of what topic you start from. Typical of rhetorical practice is to start from a person, oneself even.⁷¹ Cicero, for instance, does this in the *Pro Murena*. This explains Apuleius' concern with author and, especially, narrator in his prologue. To a lesser extent, it explains the way in which Horace's and Juvenal's opening satires are made to concentrate upon themselves or, rather, upon their *personae*.

So, in the end, the range of phenomena which we have examined, some of which may be taken under 'point of view' analysis and some of which may not, can be seen as a natural enough product of Apuleius' unusual professionalism as a sophist. If we conduct 'point of view' analysis, it may light up areas we otherwise would have ignored and provide us with a useful vocabulary and a theoretical basis for near-objective comparison with novels of later eras; but we will perhaps miss a more valuable element, the recovery of the authentic tone of Apuleius' narration and the wayward brilliance of the sophist's art.

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⁶⁸ 3. 26, 4. 22, 8. 7, 8. 25, 4. 12, 11. 20; Apuleius likes inferential particles too, cf. Scobie (1975), pp. 90–1.

⁶⁹ *Inst.* 11. 3. 162.

⁷⁰ *ad loc.*: 'proponit quid sit toto in opere edissertaturus. Docilitas autem captatur et attentio colligitur.' More broadly, a similar technique is employed when the whole Aristomenes story is presented so as to disarm the reader's disbelief at the outset, 'in sharp contrast with the almost "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude' of the Greek original (Scobie (1973), p. 41).

⁷¹ *Initium narrationis a persona*: Quint. *Inst.* 4. 2. 129.