

THE TALES IN APULEIUS' *METAMORPHOSES*

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There is no unanimity of opinion among modern scholars as to whether Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is as successfully composed as its golden title might suggest.¹ It is not, for example, strictly a romance or satire.² Moreover, comparison with other works of ancient and modern fiction has not entirely resolved the question of which genre it belongs to.³ The peculiar Latin and the account of the initiation of the hero Lucius into the cult of Isis in the final book have attracted considerable attention, but it is above all the tales scattered throughout the work which have caused many to wonder how we can reconcile the incontestably serious ending of Book 11 with the tales and their oft-stated purpose of "entertaining" the reader.⁴

Perhaps the frivolity of these stories is exaggerated because of association with later authors' use of them (e.g. the Tale of the Tub in Boccaccio), or perhaps the idea that the work is nothing but a series of Milesian tales (*sermone isto Milesio*, 1.1) makes us expect nothing but entertainment. Yet most of these tales are neither mundane nor

¹ For a recent survey of all Apuleian scholarship, see Carl C. Schlam, "The Narrative Structure of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius" (Diss. Columbia 1968) 4-31; and for a brief discussion of the contrary results reached in assessing its composition, see my Dissertation (Princeton 1969), "Thematic Aspects of the Tales in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*," 6-14.

² See B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of their Origins*, Sather Classical Lectures 37 (Berkeley 1967) 237-82.

³ For Comparison with ancient works, see A. Mazzarino, *La Milesia e Apuleio* (Torino 1950) and V. Ciaffi, *Petronio in Apuleio* (Torino 1960); for modern literature, H. Riefstahl, *Der Roman des Apuleius: Ein Beitrag zur Romantheorie* (Frankfurt am Main 1938) and Rolf Heine, *Untersuchungen zur Romanform des Apuleius von Madaura* (Diss. Göttingen 1962).

⁴ E.g. B. E. Perry (above, note 2) 233-34 and 242-43; and Erich Burck, "Zum Verständnis des Apuleius von Madaura," *Vom Menschenbild in der römischen Literatur* (Heidelberg 1966) 399-400.

light-hearted. If they are told only for our delectation, one marvels at the tastes they would appeal to, for they usually end in the humiliation and death of the characters involved.

It has been a conventional practice in analyzing the *Metamorphoses* to deal with all the so-called *Einlagen*, or episodes and tales which do not appear in the Pseudo-Lucianic *Loukios* or *the Ass*.⁵ A consideration of only the tales might have some advantage over such analysis, for Apuleius' formal identification of the constituent parts of his work extends only to these *fabulae* (*varias fabulas conseram*, 1.1), and not to other kinds of additions he may have made to the story of Lucius, such as long speeches or a description of a piece of sculpture. Taking all the *Einlagen* together also obscures the fact that the tales form most of the work. Their prominence argues that they cannot be taken merely as pleasant interruptions in the wanderings of Lucius. Some have been studied for their beauty,⁶ and others for their flaws,⁷ but they also merit attention to see whether all of them, and not just the story of Cupid and Psyche, have an intelligible and serious role in relation to the final book. If they do have some bearing on the story of Lucius and the "Isiac" interpretation of his experiences in Book 11, then it will be possible to maintain that the *Metamorphoses* is a disciplined, purposeful composition throughout.

Before considering the tales, I offer here a summary of the religious interpretation which the eleventh book gives the first ten.

At the end of Book 10, Lucius flees the amphitheater and gallops for his life, not only because he is ashamed of copulating with a condemned woman in public, but also because he fears that the beasts sent to slay the woman will not be "civilized" enough to spare him. Both Apuleius and the author of the Greek epitome shape the subsequent action on the basis of an understandable fear of death, but with very different

⁵ For a list of the various *Einlagen* categorized by form, see Max Bernhard, *Der Stil des Apuleius von Madaura* (Stuttgart 1927) 259; Albin Lesky offers the best example of the analytical method of studying the origin of various *Einlagen* in "Apuleius von Madaura und Loukios von Patrai," *Hermes* 73 (1941) 43-74.

⁶ E.g. the Cupid and Psyche story; see Pierre Grimal, *Metamorphoses 4.28-6.24: Le conte d'Amour et Psyché* (Paris 1963) 1-29, for a comprehensive summary of the many studies on this tale.

⁷ E.g. the tales of Thelyphron and Aristomenes; cf. B. E. Perry, "On Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 1.14-17," *CP* 24 (1929) 394-400, and "The Story of Thelyphron in Apuleius," *CP* 24 (1929), 231-38.

results.⁸ Loukios eats the roses and returns to his original form (*Onos* 54), and his dilemma, as well as his story, are resolved by his re-transformation. Apuleius' Lucius flees the theater, however, and makes his way to Cenchreae (10.35). His concern for *salus* becomes the transitional idea to the final book, and the basis for his appeal for salvation to the "Regina caeli" (11.2). As is possible with the word *salus*,⁹ the idea of momentary freedom from danger is transformed into *salus* in a religious sense, or "salvation." This leaves the original idea of escape from momentary personal danger, which at first is identical with the situation in the *Onos*, far behind indeed. The perils of the arena are regarded as only the last in a long series of misfortunes:

tu meis iam nunc extremis aerumnis subsiste, tu fortunam conlapsam adfirma, tu saevis exanclatis casibus pausam pacemque tribue (11.2).

This appeal recalls Lucius' earlier statements about his experiences.¹⁰ Further, we see here the same language which Isis, her priest, and Lucius himself will use as he becomes an initiate into the cult.¹¹ In this way does the first half of Book 11 refer to Lucius' story, so that the priest's speech in the center of the book (11.15) is a continuation of an established point of view. His adventures were an unpleasant alternative to life without Isis, and his "Odyssean" wanderings, which he

⁸ Cf. *Onos* 54, ἐγὼ δὲ ἄμα μὲν ἡδούμην ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ κατακείμενος, ἄμα δὲ ἐδέδιεν μὴ πον ἄρκτος ἢ λέων ἀναπηδήσεται, and 10.34, "quaecumque ad exitium mulieris bestia fuisset immissa non adeo vel prudentia sollers vel artificio docta vel abstinentia frugi posset provenire."

⁹ For the religious concept of *salus*, cf. Nilsson, GGR 2.159 and 689 (on *soteria*), and 624-39; Latte, RRG 227 note 3, and 234-35; and A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (London 1963) 9 ff.

¹⁰ The word *aerumna* in particular is often used to describe Lucius' tribulations; cf. 3.29 ("tot aerumnis me liberare"), 7.16 ("talibus aerumnis edomitum novis fortuna saeva tradidit cruciatibus"), 8.26 ("iam meas futuras novas cogitabam aerumnas"), 7.2 ("veteris fortunae et illius beati Lucii praesentisque aerumnae et infelicitas asini facta comparatione"), 7.27 ("nec aerumnae meae miseretur").

¹¹ Cf. 11.5, "adsum tuos miserata casus, adsum favens et propitia. mitte iam fletus et lamentationes, depelle maerorem; iam tibi providentia mea inlucescit dies salutaris" (Isis); 11.15, "multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti... en ecce pristinis aerumnis absolutus Isidis magnae providentia gaudens Lucius de sua Fortuna triumphat" (the priest of Isis); and 11.19, "adfatis itaque ex officio singulis narratisque meis propere et pristinis aerumnis et praesentibus gaudiis me rursum ad deae gratissimum mihi refero conspectum" (Lucius).

once boasted made him at least a "much-knowing" man (9.13), are now regarded as nothing but one trial after another under evil fortune.

Because of such interpretative consistency, the speech at 11.15 is the most important statement of an "Isiac" view of the entire *Metamorphoses*.¹² The priest's language recalls remarks in the first part of the book, and adds more besides. He explains why Lucius endured what he did, and also to what point those experiences have now brought him. Interpretation of past experience and initiation into the cult are so closely linked together that this speech is nothing less than a signification of the story in Books 1 through 10 into the morality of the worshipers of Isis. What the priest says here is by no means an isolated display piece set down in an effort to link Book 11 with the rest of the work.¹³

Throughout the *Metamorphoses* there are repeated professions of pleasing the reader or of telling a "charming" story,¹⁴ but what the priest says does not make either Lucius' travels or the tales which he heard sound trivial. His trials really were the "storms of fortune" of which the priest speaks. The very phraseology echoes the words which were used earlier in the book to describe his "labors" and "disasters."¹⁵ The "port of quiet" and the "altar of mercy" which Lucius has reached are the answers to his plea for *salus* in 11.1-2.

¹² See Willi Wittmann, *Das Isisbuch des Apuleius: Untersuchungen zur Geistesgeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart 1938) 77 and Lesky (above, note 5) 72.

¹³ For a different opinion see Perry (above, note 2) 242.

¹⁴ Cf. 1.20, "sed ego huic et credo hercules et gratas gratias memini, quod lepidae fabulae festiuitate nos avocavit, asperam denique ac prolixam viam sine labore ac taedio evasi"; 2.20, "immo mi Thelyphron," Byrrhena inquit, "et subsiste paulisper et more tuae urbanitatis fabulam illam tuam remetire, ut et filius meus iste Lucius lepidi sermonis tui perfruatur comitate"; 4.27, "sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protinus avocabo"; 9.4, "cognoscimus lepidam de adulterio cuiusdam pauperis fabulam, quam vos etiam cognoscatis volo"; and 9.14, "fabulam denique bonam prae ceteris, suavem, comptam ad auris vestras adferre decrevi, et en occipio." All these reasons for telling a story follow the theme of the reader's entertainment which is announced so elaborately in 1.1 (esp. "auresque tuas benivolas lepidio susurro permulceam" and the concluding exhortation, "lector intende: laetaberis"); and the last example, 9.14, in particular echoes the opening words of the *Metamorphoses* ("auresque tuas benivolas," "fabulam . . . comptam ad auris vestras").

¹⁵ Cf. 11.2, "tu meis iam nunc extremis aerumnis subsiste, tu fortunam conlapsam adfirma, tu saevis exanclatis casibus pausam pacemque tribue; sit satis laborum, sit satis periculorum"; and 11.15, "multis et variis exanclatis laboribus . . . pessimis periculis . . . pristinis aerumnis."

Cenchreae, the "surest port for all vessels," becomes the "surest port" for Lucius, too, as the site of his conversion.¹⁶

As the priest says, the reason for Lucius' suffering is that, in spite of his book-learning and good background,¹⁷ he was addicted to "servile pleasures" ("serviles voluptates"), and was punished for his "unlucky curiosity" ("curiositatis inprosperae sinistrum praemium reportasti"). This criticism is only just; indeed Lucius' *curiositas* is frequently acknowledged as the most notable feature of his character.¹⁸ This abandonment to "servile" pleasures is a condemnation of double significance. Sexual gratification is on a "lower" level than the divine, and *servilis* also recalls that Lucius was quite literally abandoned to sex with a serving-girl, Fotis, up to the moment of his metamorphosis. His appeal to Fotis to reveal her mistress Pamphile's magic arts was tied very explicitly to their mutual pleasures.¹⁹ As he accepts the worship of Isis, he will adopt something altogether different from such promiscuous living, for service to her offers a "higher" pleasure (without sex), and also a complete rejection of any curiosity about her mysteries.

Throughout the speech, fortune is continually said to be the agent of Lucius' sufferings, and in fact the half-proverbial, half-real Tyche of the Greek Romance²⁰ is conceived of everywhere in the *Meta-*

¹⁶ Cf. 10.35, "portus etiam tutissimum navium receptaculum," and 11.15, "ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti."

¹⁷ An observation frequently made while Lucius was a man; cf. 1.20, 1.23, 2.5, and esp. 3.11 (his noble background), 3.15 (his learning).

¹⁸ The most recent study is by Carl C. Schlam, "The Curiosity of the Golden Ass," *CJ* 64 (1968) 120-25. The meaning and implications of the word *curiositas* have been studied with considerable thoroughness; see for this also the excellent study of the history of the word by A. Labhardt, "Curiositas, notes sur l'histoire d'un mot et d'une notion," *MH* 17 (1960) 206-24; R. Joly, "Curiositas," *AC* 30 (1961) 33-44; S. Lancel, "Curiositas et Préoccupations Spirituelles chez Apulée," *RHR* 160 (1961) 25-46; H. J. Mette, "Curiositas," *Festschrift Bruno Snell* (München 1956) 227-35; "Curiositas und Magie, Apuleius und Lucius als litterarische Archetypen der Faust-Gestalt," *Wort und Text: Festschrift Fritz Schalk* (Frankfurt am Main 1963) 57-82.

¹⁹ Lucius himself says that he is a slave to his passions for Fotis: "in servilem modum addictum" (3.19).

²⁰ Cf. the description of Tyche by Erwin Rohde in *Der griechische Roman* (Leipzig 1914) 303: "Im trüben Spiegel lassen sie (sc. die Romane) uns gleichwohl mit unerfreulicher Deutlichkeit erkennen, wie jenen Zeiten das Gesamtbild des menschlichen Daseins erschien. Durch Länder und über Meere treibt die "neidische Tyche," wie sie immer genannt wird, ihre Helden vom Glück in das Elend und immer neue Not; meint man endlich, nun sei des Unglücks Gipfel überstiegen, so schleudert ein Zufall,

morphoses as an almost visible foe against whom Lucius and many others bitterly complain.²¹ Thus is "blind Fortune" transformed into a "seeing" Fortune, or Isis-Tyche, one of Isis' numerous manifestations:

in tutelam iam receptus es fortunae, sed videntis, quae suae lucis splendore ceteros etiam deos illuminat (11.15).

This change resembles that in *voluptas*, which we saw move from the "servile" pleasures of Fotis to the spiritual joy of worshipping Isis. So also does Lucius exchange his former servitude as an animal of burden for the voluntary yoke of a servant of Isis ("ministerii iugum subi voluntarium"). The more he serves her, paradoxically, the freer he shall become ("nam cum coeperis deae servire tunc magis senties fructum tuae libertatis").²²

As the speech ends, those standing around are impressed by the "innocence" and "faith" which must have marked Lucius' earlier life for him to merit such honor.²³ He is "reborn" into the services of the goddess, and soon shows his new self by rejecting the very faults which had previously been so much a part of his character. In the latter half of Book 11, he is careful to guard the secrets of Isis' cult from the uninitiated, is solicitous about keeping his readers free from the dangers of "rash curiosity," and adopts the asceticism of a priest of Isis.²⁴

eine neue Laune des Dämons die Armen wieder zurück." This description could have been taken from Lucius' own remarks on *fortuna* at 7.2.

²¹ E.g. Socrates (1.7), Aristomenes (1.16), Cupido (5.5), Charite (6.28), and most of all, Lucius (7.2, 7.17, 7.20, 7.25, 8.1, 8.24, and 10.4).

²² A comparison with the *Onos* shows that the *periergia* of Loukios is not as sinister as the *curiositas* of Apuleius; e.g. *Onos* 15, ὡς τῆς ἀκαίρου τούτης περιεργίας. The counterpart of *fortuna*, *tyché*, is used only in a proverbial and innocent fashion, as at *Onos* 47, καὶ γὰρ τὴν τύχην ὁρῶν ἤδη ἀπαλὸν μοι προσμειδιδῶσαν καὶ μαθὼν ὅτι με τοῦτο μόνον τὸ παίγνιον ἀνασώσει, and 19, ἀλλὰ τις δαίμων βάσκανος συνείς τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων ἐς τοῦναντίον περιήνεγκεν. In neither case does *periergia* or *tyché* undergo the kind of transformation in meaning which we see in Apuleius.

²³ This comment about Lucius' character is not ironic or a slip on Apuleius' part, but an accurate explanation of his credulity and inability to recognize evil; cf. below, p. 512.

²⁴ His address to the reader at 11.23 reveals a complete reversal in character: "Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studioso lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum; dicerem, si dicere liceret, cognosceres, si liceret audire. sed parem noxam contraherent et aures et linguae illae temerariae curiositatis." And this from a man who, at the beginning of his travels, could say of himself, "non quidem curiosum, sed qui velim scire vel cuncta vel certe plurima" (1.2)!

The changes in meaning of *fortuna*, *voluptas*, and *servitium*, and Lucius' total rejection of *curiositas*, suggest that Books 1 through 10 need not be "religious" at all, or rather that they may be so only by an enthusiastic, but unsuccessful, attempt to affirm a point of view opposed to the doctrine preached in Book 11. Thus, the more vulgar and sensual the experiences, or the tales, the more "moral," ultimately, they may prove to be. Presumably we need not wait until Book 11 to recognize that *curiositas* or the baser *voluptas* are wrong. Such vices, if presented cleverly, will discredit themselves in the telling.

If this proves true, I realize I am tending towards a moralistic interpretation of these stories—perhaps even a humorless one. But the priest of Isis does exactly this in 11.15. Apuleius never mentions the reader's edification, but, unless the tales are drastically out of harmony with the religious interpretation of this work which I have outlined, a purpose deeper than mere entertainment should be discernible in the stories.

THE TALES OF ARISTOMENES AND THELYPHRON

The tale of Aristomenes, the first in the *Metamorphoses*, introduces the reader into the strange world of Thessalian magic.²⁵ Lucius meets two men on the road and urges one of them to tell a story which the other finds quite unbelievable. This tale is designed to pass the time of a tedious journey, but there proves to be little enough festivity in it.

Aristomenes begins, as do Lucius (1.1) and Thelyphron (2.21), with a brief reference to himself and what caused him to enter upon such a situation (1.5). His description of the appearance of Socrates forcefully establishes the image of *fortuna* as a malign power:

humi sedebat scissili palliastro semiamictus, paene alius lurore, ad miseram
maciem deformatus, qualia solent fortunae decermina stipes in triviis
erogare (1.6).

²⁵ See Perry (above, note 2) 259-64; Vincenzo Ciaffi, *Petronio in Apuleio* (Torino 1960) 9-52; esp. 9-17 and 38-41; J. J. M. Feldbrugge, *Het Schertsende Karakter van Apuleius' Metamorphosen* (Utrecht 1939) 4-11; and Paul Junghanns, *Die Erzählungstechnik von Apuleius' Metamorphosen und Ihrer Vorlage* (Leipzig 1932) 121-22.

The first words of Socrates, the "refuse" of fortune, are a warning to Aristomenes not to ignore her unpredictability:

"Aristomene," inquit, "ne tu fortunarum lubricas ambages et instabiles incursiones et reciprocas vicissitudines ignoras" (1.6).

He is nothing but a "trophy" of fortune:

at ille, ut erat, capite velato, "sine, sine," inquit, "fruatur diutius tropaeo Fortuna, quod fixit ipsa" (1.7).

Socrates ends his account of his troubles by blaming the witch Meroe and fortune for his lot. This is the same *fortuna* which shall torment Lucius, but of which he is as yet ignorant. At the same time, it should be noted that Socrates' explanation of his troubles reveals that he himself bears some responsibility for all this, for he enjoyed Meroe's favors not unwillingly: "Meroen, anum sed admodum scitulam" (1.7).

Just as fortune first appears vividly in the description and lamentations of Socrates, so also a negative conception of *voluptas* is established. Aristomenes scolds Socrates for placing sexual pleasures before the welfare of his own family:

"pol quidem tu dignus," inquam, "es extrema sustinere, si quid est tamen novissimo extremius, qui voluptatem Veneriam et scortum scorteum Lari et liberis praetulisti" (1.8).

Socrates does not bother to refute this charge of *voluptas Veneria* and *scortum scorteum*, but only cautions Aristomenes not to criticize the morals of the "divine" Meroe, who has punished many people before for such indiscrete talk. Thus a close association, which reappears throughout the *Metamorphoses*, is established from the very beginning between magic and its use for the gratification of sexual desires, and revenge for their frustration.²⁶ This outburst against Socrates' dalliance with Meroe is the only explicit condemnation of *voluptas* ever made until the priest at 11.15 mentions Lucius' "servile pleasures."

²⁶ Meroe changes various lovers into other forms and uses her magic for evil purposes, as does Pamphile (cf. 2.5); and the evil wife in the tale at 9.14-31 calls on a witch's help either to return her to her husband's good graces, or to kill him (9.29). Note esp. the virtually identical phraseology which describes the woman in Book 9 and Meroe: "saga . . . et divina potens" and "saga illa et divini potens." Lucius decides to learn about magic by using the maid Fotis to accomplish his ends: "verum enim vero Fotis famula petatur enixe. nam et forma scitula et moribus ludicra et prorsus argutula est" (2.6).

In spite of his distaste for Socrates' conduct, Aristomenes recognizes the savage as well as the miraculous nature of Meroe's arts: "'Mira,' inquam, 'nec minus saeva, mi Socrates, memoras'" (I.11). But this does not save him from their wrath when witches finally appear. He is named an accomplice in Socrates' desertion of Meroe, and is threatened with punishment for his *dicacitas* and *curiositas*: "faxo eum sero, immo statim, immo vero iam nunc, ut et praecedentis dicacitatis et instantis curiositatis paeniteat" (I.12). *Dicacitas* is more apparently a fault of Socrates than Aristomenes, and neither of them is as clearly a *curiosus* as Lucius. But regardless of the justification, *curiositas*, like *fortuna* and *voluptas*, is unmistakably identified and punished.

Panthia suggests to Meroe that Aristomenes be castrated,²⁷ but he is spared in order to bury his friend. Socrates' throat is cut, like an animal's at a sacrifice, "a victimae religione" (I.13). When the witches leave, Aristomenes' fear of being blamed for this murder leads him to attempt escape, but the gatekeeper refuses to let him out. He then attempts suicide, but the bed on which he jumps falls to pieces, and his search for *salus* in death is thwarted. At that moment, the janitor enters and Socrates springs up alive, accusing him of being a *curiosus* intent on stealing something (I.17).

This is a miraculous deliverance from a somewhat contrived, but nonetheless horrifying dilemma. Aristomenes is apparently saved from prosecution, and Socrates seems more robust than ever. This proves, however, to be a false deliverance. A similar turn of events occurs in the tale of Thelyphron in Book 2, where there is likewise a seemingly happy resolution to what appears a hopeless situation (2.26). There, by falling asleep on the job of watching a corpse, Thelyphron does the one thing he ought not to have done. At the very moment he awakes, the widow and her attendants enter and discover the corpse unharmed. He, too, is overcome with joy at his sudden luck, and is in fact so beside himself that he makes a rather tactless remark which results in his expulsion. In both tales there is a deceptively happy

²⁷ The motif of mutilation and castration is not so pronounced a theme as *curiositas* or *voluptas*, but it does recur later in the work; Lucius is so threatened by the robbers and the evil boy in Book 7. For a Freudian interpretation of castration as a literary motif in another author, see J. P. Sullivan, *Petronius' Satyricon: A Literary Study* (London 1968) 232-54 (esp. 248, on castration). In the Isis-Osiris myth the member of the god Osiris is cut off and thrown into the Nile; cf. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 18.

resolution to a situation of extreme peril, but this is soon "corrected" by a surprising and horrifying conclusion. Socrates will soon "die" a second time, and Thelyphron will discover at what cost the corpse remained untouched.

Such mercurial changes in luck are what Lucius shall experience in Book 3. At his trial in the Risus Festival, his fortunes sink to their lowest point, and, like Aristomenes and Thelyphron before him, he stands at the very jaws of Hades (3.9). He then has a sudden change in luck ("quae fortunarum mearum repentina mutatio?"), for his robbers prove to be only wine-bags, and, in the words of Fotis, he is not a homicide, but a "utricide" (3.18). Yet both Aristomenes and Thelyphron are examples, in their own stories, that such a dramatic deliverance may not be fortune's last turn, and shortly afterwards Lucius is transformed into an ass. These changes reflect the *Metamorphoses*' peculiar theme of multiple changes in fortunes as well as forms, for bad luck (a cut throat for Socrates, failure and mutilation for Thelyphron) appears for a time to have been miraculously deflected, "in alias imagines," "to other appearances." Finally it returns to its original, true state, "rursum in se."²⁸ In the words of Socrates (1.6), we should not ignore the rapid and unpredictable changes of fortune, but, to our cost, we too often do.

This first tale ends in Socrates' death; as he bends over a running stream for a drink, Meroe's warning not to do so is realized, and Aristomenes is compelled to flee his former life and take up a new one:

ipse trepidus et eximie metuens mihi per diversas et avias solitudines
aufugi et quasi conscius mihi caedis humanae relictā patria et lare ultroneum
exilium amplexus nunc Aetoliam novo contracto matrimonio colo (1.19).

The same fate, exile, is also reserved for Thelyphron at the end of his tale, as he flees and adopts a disguise for fear of being *ridiculus*:

nec postea debilis ac sic ridiculus Lari me patrio reddere potui, sed capillis
hinc inde laterum deiectis aurium vulnera celavi, nasi vero dedecus
linoleo isto pressim adglutinato decenter obtexi (2.30).

²⁸ A similar turn of fortune comes in the story of Charite and Tlepolemos when the apparently happy resolution of their story is reversed in the tale at the beginning of Book 8. Conversely, the "tragedy" in Book 10 of the wicked step-mother, in spite of a portentous introduction to the contrary, ends quite happily for all concerned.

Just how accurately the conclusion of these two tales predicts Lucius' fate becomes apparent shortly before his own metamorphosis. His curiosity and indulgence in sex are there so strong that he renounces his home and former life to gain his desires: "iam denique nec larem requiro nec domuitionem paro et nocte ista nihil antepono" (3.19). These desires are soon fulfilled.

In addition to these forebodings, there are a number of echolalic responsions between this tale and its setting which are of considerable subtlety. For example, the contrast drawn between the sceptical *comes* and the credulous Lucius is repeated within the tale itself. Since Aristomenes tells the story, this detail of its plot is very likely to be taken as a rejoinder to his sarcastic companion. When he professes disbelief in Socrates' account of Meroe's powers, Socrates gives her abilities in a list of *adynata* (1.8) which recalls the earlier list his companion had made as of things merely preposterous and hyperbolic (1.3). At this point a character is said to have the very powers which barely five chapters before had seemed only ridicule. Both lists involve reversals of the natural order of things:

1.3	1.8
amnes agiles reverti	caelum deponere
mare pigrum conligari	terram suspendere
ventos inanimés exspirare	fontes durare
solem inhiberi	montes diluere
lunam despumari	manes sublimare
stellas evelli	deos infimare
diem tolli	sidera extinguere
noctem teneri	Tartarum ipsum inluminare

This sarcastic echo within the tale conforms to Lucius' earlier dictum (1.3), that things which seem very difficult at first hearing may prove easily done after all.

An even more subtle connection between the tale and its setting lies in Lucius' unusual anecdote which he tells to encourage Aristomenes to tell his story. He almost choked to death on a piece of cheese, but he saw a man in Athens swallow a sword and remain unharmed. This bizarre story anticipates the two "deaths" of Socrates in the tale, for though he seems to survive having his throat cut, by eating a

piece of cheese and attempting to quench his thirst—as innocuous an action as Lucius’—he dies.²⁹ As we shall see with most tales in the *Metamorphoses*, the story of Aristomenes reflects a good rhetorician’s concern to suit his speech to the taste and predisposition of his audience.

Even after only the first of the “*variae fabulae*” of the *Metamorphoses*, the elaborate reiteration of the theme of “entertainment,” with which the episode closes (1.20), has a sardonic sound to it. It is not necessary to assume that merely because a tale is introduced for “entertainment” or “distraction” it is at odds with the interpretation given in Book 11. Neither should we take Apuleius so literally when he speaks of our “delectation.” If we can perceive nothing more than *iucunditas*, *festivitas*, or a *lepida fabula* in this story, then we have grasped nothing more than Lucius himself.

Aristomenes does not fail to see the savagery of magic, which Lucius cannot perceive. His inability to recognize evil, even when face to face with it, along with an unshakable faith that no matter how strange a thing may be, it can still be proven true,³⁰ are every bit as typical of him as his curiosity. These qualities remain with him right up to his metamorphosis at 3.24. It is these faults to which the crowd refers when it speaks of the *innocentia* and *fides* of his former life (11.16).

Events within the tale answer to the setting in which it is told. It appeals to all that is essential in Lucius’ character: his curiosity, his faith in the miraculous, and that strange innocence, even naivete, which prevents him from recognizing evil when he sees it.

Most importantly, the story is thematically and interpretatively in harmony with the final Book. *Fortuna*’s power is strongly emphasized (1.6–7); *voluptas* is identified and condemned for the first and only time until Book 11 (1.8); the dangers inherent in magic, the perils of *dicacitas* and *curiositas*, are identified and, like sexual promiscuity, *voluptas veneria*, punished (1.12–13). Thus the tale establishes very strongly in our minds, before Lucius’ involvement with magic begins,

²⁹ Schlam (above, note 1) 55–57.

³⁰ His remarks at the end of the tale show that he is a fit subject for the experiences he is about to undergo: “ego vero,” inquam, “nihil impossibile arbitror, sed utcumque fata decreverint, ita cuncta mortalibus provenire: nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis hominibus multa usu venire mira et paene infecta, quae tamen ignaro relata fidem perdant” (1.20). There is clearly enough *fides* here to qualify him for faith in Isis.

all the themes mentioned in Book 11, and it establishes them in the same system of values applied by the priest at 11.15. Aristomenes has anticipated not only the events in Books 1 to 3 which lead up to Lucius' metamorphosis, nor merely the atmosphere of magic and intrigue therein,³¹ but also the ultimate interpretation of the entire work. This tale is, in practical terms, an extension of the prologue, an expansion of the essential theme of *figuras fortunasque* in the first chapter.³² Not even in the Cupid and Psyche story are such explicit statements made about all the themes mentioned in Book 11.

After this tale, Lucius' involvement in magic deepens—his interest whetted, no doubt, by the outlandish story of Aristomenes. He is particularly interested in metamorphosis, and imagines that everything he sees—rocks, birds, statues, or whatever—are wavering back and forth from one form to another (2.1). The statue of Actaeon and Diana in Byrrhena's house is interpreted as an example of the *punishment* of curiosity by metamorphosis. Actaeon is portrayed at the moment he is transformed into a stag for spying on Diana with a "curious stare": "inter medias frondes lapidis Actaeon simulacrum curioso optutu in deam proiectus" (2.4).³³ Byrrhena follows the description with "tua . . . sunt cuncta, quae vides" (1.5), a phrase with double meaning. It includes her house with its sculpture of Actaeon's metamorphosis, but also the warning implicit in that sculpture. She then swears by the very goddess, Diana, who destroyed Actaeon for his *curiositas* (2.5)!

Later in Book 2, Lucius recalls that a prophet Diophanes had predicted his future renown (2.12). At the beginning of Book 3, he remembers this prophecy, but forgets altogether what Byrrhena had said, and pays no attention to the warnings of Fotis. He has a talent for hearing only what he wants to hear.

³¹ Junghanns (above, note 25) 122.

³² I have in mind here a symbolic anticipation of the whole work not unlike that which Viktor Pöschl demonstrated in the opening of the *Aeneid*; see his *Die Dichtkunst Virgils: Bild und Symbol in der Äneis* (Darmstadt 1964) 23–56.

³³ Compare this to Ovid, who explicitly attributes Actaeon's metamorphosis to a case of bad luck: "Fortunae crimen in illo, non scelus invenies; quod enim scelus error habebat?" (*M.* 3.141–42) and also 3.146, "illum fata ferebant." See Riefstahl (above, note 3) 67–69 and Mette (above, note 18) 231, who sees this as a "vorbedeutende Szene."

It is in this deepening atmosphere of Lucius' interest in metamorphosis and ominous predictions that Thelyphron tells his story.³⁴ If Aristomenes' tale anticipates an "Isiac" interpretation of all these experiences, then Thelyphron's is even more to the point in the way it shows the punishment of a brash young man who failed to heed warnings about the dangers of magic and suffered the consequences. In charity, we might ascribe this misfortune to his innocence. He, like Lucius, seems to be incapable of heeding any warning, no matter how direct.

Themes such as *curiositas*, *voluptas*, or *fortuna* do not appear as explicitly in this tale as before, but if not actually stated, they are implied by the actions of the characters. Thus Thelyphron attends the public inquisition into the young man's death and looks on the scene with "curious eyes" (2.29), and at the end of the tale he decides to "tempt fortune" (2.30) by seeing if his ears and nose really were cut off.³⁵ The wife who is charged with poisoning her husband is an example of the corrosive power of *voluptas*, and she is the kind of woman who appears frequently in Books 9 and 10. The most clever of Apuleius' sly hints at Book 11 is the appearance of the Egyptian priest Zatchlas. His "divine"³⁶ providence is accorded great respect,

³⁴ See Junghanns (above, note 25) 132 and 140; Feldbrugge (above, note 25) 11-19; Ciaffi (above, note 25) 53-108; B. J. De Jonge, *Ad Apulei Madaurensis Metamorphoseon Librum Secundum Commentarius Exegeticus* (Diss. Groningen 1941) 2-6; Blanche Brother-ton, "The Introduction of Characters by Name in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius," *CP* 29 (1934) 36-52 (esp. 47-50); Perry (above, note 2) 264-73; Perry, *CP* 44 (1949) 38-42 (a review of De Jonge and an amplification of points made in "The Story of Thelyphron in Apuleius," *CP* 24 [1929] 231-38).

³⁵ Most modern texts have the emendation of Gruter to *formam*, even though the manuscripts read *fortunam*; however, earlier editors were able to see *fortunam* here. Oudendorp *ad loc.* suggested that *fortunam* is appropriate because of the thematic importance of "figuras fortunasque" in the prologue, and certainly "fortunam adgredior temptare" would conform to the thematic usage of the word. Perry (above, note 2) 272 follows the reading *fortunam* in his translation of this passage. To "test fortune," "temptare fortunam," is a common phrase (*ThLL* 6.1.1185.11-12), but "temptare formam" seems without parallel (*ThLL* 6.1.1069.15-37).

³⁶ *Divinus*, unless used by such men of doubtful wisdom as Socrates, is reserved for philosophers ("senex [sc. Socrates] divinae providentiae," 10.33, and "divinus Pythagoras," 11.1), a wise man such as the doctor who saves the little boy's life ("providentiae divinae condignum . . . exitium," 10.12), and above all for Isis (with *vox* 11.4; *promissio*, 11.12; *vadimonium*, 11.23; *simulacrum*, 11.24; *vultus*, 11.25; and *somnium*, 11.30). Zatchlas has that same "divine providence" which Lucius rates so highly, and which few others possess.

and the miracle of resurrecting the dead for a good purpose, *veritas*, stands in the strongest possible contrast to the evil magic practiced by the witches on Socrates or Thelyphron. There is a very important difference between the two "resurrections" in these tales: Socrates is revived by black magic for the purpose of revenge, but in Thelyphron's tale the young husband is brought back to prove his wife's guilt.³⁷ Thus there is a contrast in the tales, but not in the main narrative, of supernatural powers used for good and for evil. Zatchlas hardly seems a part of this Thessalian world of black magic and human folly.

As in Aristomenes' tale, there are echolalic responsions between the tale and its setting. The conversation at the dinner table (2.20) anticipates the plot of Thelyphron's story, for Lucius has heard of the mutilation of the dead, and Thelyphron is a living example of it. Lucius' apprehensive remark about magic, "*oppido formido caecas et inevitabiles latebras magicae disciplinae*" (2.20), is echoed within the tale, where the same curiously rhyming phrase, "*oppido formido*," occurs in the words of Thelyphron: "*mihique oppido formido cumulation quidem*" (2.25).

Nor is Lucius the only person to whom Thelyphron so subtly refers. Byrrhena urged her guest to tell his story—one somewhat embarrassing to say the least—and prevailed only after Thelyphron's protest over the coarse laughter and humiliation he received from the guests (2.20).³⁸ Within the tale, the servant maid who accompanies the adulterous

³⁷ The "resurrection" of a character occurs often enough that it is very likely a motif related to Lucius' own "rebirth" in Book 11 (cf. 11.16, 11.21 and 11.23). Socrates, the young husband in this tale, the boy in the "tragedy" of Book 10, and Psyche are each involved in one kind of "rebirth." Socrates shows the motif as an example of the evil powers of black magic; the young husband, as an example of the benign powers of an Egyptian priest; Psyche, as the benefit of divine intervention (in this case by rather congenial, but nonetheless immortal, Olympians); and the young boy, as a sham resurrection, in which the motif is almost irreverently treated, by a false death and rebirth ("*adulescentium duorum pater repente factus est*" 10.12). The contrast of all these to Lucius' spiritual resurrection is clear, and, as in the case of the *providentia*, *voluptas*, and *fortuna* of Isis, there is no doubt that his "rebirth" under her grace is by far the more desirable.

³⁸ The laughter which greets the tales of Aristomenes and Thelyphron ("*alto exerto cacinno*" 1.2, "*convivium totum in licentiosos cacinno effunditur*" 2.20, and "*compotores vino madidi rursum cacinnum integrant*" 2.31) anticipates the derision and ridicule to which Lucius will be exposed in his "trial" in Book 3 ("*risu cacinabili diffuebant*" and "*exitium meum cacinnat*" 3.7; cf. also 3.10). *Cacinno* was regarded as onomatopoeic by the ancients (cf. Porph. *Ars* 113, "*verbum secundum*

and probably murderous widow is named "Myrrhene" (2.24),³⁹ and this sounds, but for the initial letter, suspiciously like the unusual name of Lucius' aunt, Byrrhena.

In the series of increasingly explicit warnings which lead up to Lucius' metamorphosis at 3.24, the tale of Thelyphron is more "localized" than that of Aristomenes, in that it tells of fair warnings ignored, and the consequences. Thus, to set Thelyphron's story apart from all other warnings Lucius receives would distort its function. The description of Actaeon, the prophecy of Diophanes, and the warnings of Fotis and Byrrhena are all of a piece, and it would be somewhat artificial to abstract this second story from the series of warnings to which it so clearly belongs.

Although the pretense of our "entertainment" has been scrupulously observed by the author at every point, I hope we do not fail to see more to both these tales than meets Lucius' eye.

ROBBER STORIES

After Lucius' metamorphosis and his abduction by a band of robbers, he is driven to a mountain lair where he hears the story of three bandits who each suffered gruesome deaths.⁴⁰

Just as Aristomenes and Thelyphron began their tales faced with a challenge to their credibility and dignity, so too an unnamed bandit ("unus ex illo posteriore numero," 4.9) defends himself and his fellows against another bandit's charges of cowardice—even of crawling through an old woman's bedroom. The thief who makes this charge praises Lamachus' "excessive courage" (4.8), which will earn him a place alongside the most famous kings and generals. Such grandiose praise abounds in every robber's speech. Lamachus' *virtus* is never questioned, paradigm for robbers that he is, but the survivors have to make some explanation for returning safe and sound. To answer

ὀνοματοποιῶν fictum a sono risus"; see also Ernout-Meillet 80 and Walde-Hofmann 126), and well describes the *Schadenfreude* which Thelyphron and Lucius suffer.

³⁹ The standard reading now of *Myrrhene* is an emendation of Beroaldus from *Myrrhene*.

⁴⁰ See Junghanns (above, note 25) 61-78 and 141-43 (for 4.9-22) and 156-65 (for 7.5-9); Lesky (above, note 5) 50-61; and P. A. MacKay, "Kleptika: The Tradition of Tales of Banditry in Apuleius," *G & R* 10 (1963) 147-52.

this attack it is essential to show that the other robbers in the band performed deeds just as meritorious as Lamachus, and lost their lives just as willingly.

The villain in the case of Lamachus was a miser named Chryseros, "Mr. Gold-love," who nailed Lamachus' hand to the door as he tried to break in. The robbers were forced in desperation to cut off his arm at the shoulder to escape, and then ran off with "the rest of Lamachus."⁴¹ He begged them to put him out of his misery "by the right hand of Mars," their patron god (a somewhat incongruous oath, as he had just lost one of his own hands). But no one can be persuaded to commit *parricidium* (a word indicative of Lamachus' "paternal" standing among them),⁴² even though he says that no robber should outlive the hand "by which he was accustomed to rob and murder." As he says, any bandit would be lucky to die by a comrade's hand. Enthusiastic to the last, he kisses his sword passionately and plunges it through his breast. His story ends with his burial at sea, in a manner reminiscent of famous, but more respectable, heroes: "et nunc iacet noster Lamachus elemento toto sepultus" (4.11).⁴³

By this heroic death, Lamachus shows that bravery and self-control in extreme pain and mortal danger, along with a selfless concern for the welfare of one's fellow *latrones*, constitute the highest good, for the very bad. But in spite of this inspiring and sanguinary tale, the narrator cannot obscure the fact that Lamachus failed, however much *virtus* he had.

No such inspiration can be drawn from the second story (4.12). In contrast to Lamachus, who died rich in maxims, one sentence describes Alcimus' wretched end. Compared to the lengthy praise of the "heroes" in the first and third tales, this middle tale seems laconic. But to make the best of a poor showing, the narrator introduces the

⁴¹ An exceptional use of *ceterus* (cf. *ThLL* 3.966.27-29), which is at once funny and cruel; for a description of this mixture of terror and grotesque humor, see below, note 73.

⁴² Cf. Richard G. Sommers, "A Legal Commentary on the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius" (Diss. Princeton 1967) 166-67. *Parricidium* indicates that he is regarded as the *paterfamilias* of the band.

⁴³ E.g. the famous sentence in Thucydides 2.43 (that the whole earth is the grave of famous men) or Lucan 8.858-9.11 (the description of Pompey's eternal fame).

tale simply as an example of bad luck: "enim vero Alcimus sollertibus coeptis tamen saevum Fortunae nutum non potuit adducere." This "hero" has little else to recommend him besides his credulity and spectacular death. Even more incautious than Lamachus, he is pushed from an upstairs window by an old woman, who tricked him into looking next door for the neighbors' fortunes.⁴⁴ He is given a hero's burial, as a "good follower" of Lamachus.

The legacy of Alcimus, however, is something other than the narrator intended to impart. The narrator must of course excuse *all* failures, but the effect of this brief story sandwiched between the two long tales of Lamachus and Thrasyleon is to suggest that it is only one more in a series of heroic deeds, which of course it cannot possibly be. Alcimus accomplishes nothing at all, and meets his end in an absent-minded and stupid way. His death is blamed on *fortuna*, and what better way to show the "nobility" of any robber than have him slain by an act of treachery?⁴⁵ It is the peculiar standard among these thieves that they find virtue and immortality in robbery or murder, but treachery in the frustration of their enterprises: both Chryseros and the old woman who pushes Alcimus from a window, for example, are called *nequissimus* (4.10 and 12).

The third tale explains the most imaginative of all their attempts at robbery, but it is as unsuccessful. A rich man Demochares provided an easier target for robbers than their other victims (cf. 4.9). One robber volunteered to dress in the skin of a dead bear and was placed inside the house with other animals collected for a spectacle. He is

⁴⁴ Only in Book 4 does *fortuna* occur in the sense of "money" or "wealth." But would it be possible for the word *fortuna*, even when meaning "money," to be mentioned without one's thinking of *fortuna saeva*? The usage previous to Book 4 should of necessity color the meaning of the word. Thus Alcimus the robber is a victim of the "savage nod of fortune" because he was "thinking about the fortunes" of others. Another example of such word-play is at 8.20: "per fortunas vestrosque genios." Although the phrase "per fortunas" apparently means only something like "for heaven's sake" (cf. Cicero, *Att.* 5.11.1), the old man who says it later turns into a snake and devours a youth. He called them "by their fortunes," and the result was *mala fortuna* for one. In this way Apuleius exploits the ambiguity which is possible with *fortuna*; this of course the Greek *tyché* cannot do.

⁴⁵ MacKay (above, note 40) 152. No character in the *Metamorphoses* ever admits as much, but Apuleius acknowledged elsewhere, in a discussion of *fatum* and *fortuna* (*De Platone* 1.12), that not everything can be blamed on fortune: "nec sane omnia referenda esse ad vim fati putat, sed esse aliquid in nobis et in fortuna esse non nihil."

introduced in the formulaic way of all robbers,⁴⁶ with the added virtue not merely of strength in body, but in spirit as well. Thrasyleon, "Bold-lion," submits himself to this ordeal with the calm face of a noble hero ("vultu sereno" 4.15). His disguise in the bear-skin becomes an oblique reference to the theme of metamorphosis. Once dressed in it, he seems to have been transformed into a bear: "fortissimum socium nostrum prorsus bestiam factum" (4.14). When he is discovered at night wandering about Demochares' house and is exposed to mortal danger, he remains faithful to his disguise to the end. We read not of the death of a man, but of a *bear*: "lanceam mediis iniecit ursae praecordiis" (4.21). Even after his death, people are afraid to approach the "bear's" corpse. Thus he gains his share of "immortality" among thieves. For one time at least, the robbers proceeded with caution, but bad luck ("scaevus eventus") did have a role in this story.

The one thing all three tales have in common is the failure and death of each "hero." Why does Apuleius tell three such stories in a row?⁴⁷ No amount of praise for their virtue, glory, or immortality can obscure the fact that in each case these bandits died wretchedly—and in Alcimus' case, most ingloriously. The point is that equal praise for unequal acts discredits all such praise, even when it is genuinely deserved.

Apuleius never tells a story only to expand a particular scene, or to reiterate something already present in the main narrative. The tales of Aristomenes and Thelyphron incidentally contributed to the atmosphere of magic and intrigue, but we have seen that they deal more

⁴⁶ Cf. 4.8 ("unus, qui robore ceteros antistabat"), 4.9 ("unus ex illo posteriore numero"), 6.31 ("unus omnium"), and 6.30 ("unus e numero").

⁴⁷ Cf. Junghanns (above, note 25) 141: "Den Rahmen der Räubermahlzeit benützt Apuleius, wie die Vorlage (= *Onos*), dazu, das Räubertum durch Darstellung eines Gesprächs zu illustrieren." He assigns a similar purpose to the tale of Aristomenes (cf. note 31, above). In neither case is he incorrect, but I do not think that a simple elaboration of a scene was the primary reason for the tale. Lesky (above, note 5) 60, does see a connection between the tales in Book 4 and Book 7, and points out that the robber stories in 4 make it plausible for Haemus to join the band in Book 7: they have lost men, and also their leader, Lamachus, and need a new one. But this does not altogether explain why we also hear about Alcimus and Thrasyleon, who are only members of the band, not leaders. The interpretation of Haemus' speech as a satire based on the stories in Book 4 would account for the two additional tales.

than anything else with the characters of certain people as they contrast and complement Lucius' own personality. The one thing that is *not* created by these three stories is an aura of authenticity or realism about the robbers.⁴⁸ Perhaps they are caricatures of real life, or of the Greek Romance, in which they were a fixture,⁴⁹ but it will be noticed that, for all their dire threats, they never quite get around to killing anyone, and are more boasting and talk than action. They are the only characters in the *Metamorphoses* who are untouched by, and apparently unconcerned with, *voluptas*. Much like the Pirates of Penzance, or underworld characters in the "Beggar's Opera," they are stereotyped, romantic, but hardly realistic. Like everyone else in the *Metamorphoses*, they are addicted to excusing their short-comings by blaming fortune. Also like the characters in most other tales, their escapades end in complete futility and death. To this extent, they are very much a part of Lucius' uncertain and cruel world.

But they are hysterically overdrawn. The hymn to their *virtus*, their immortality, bravery, loyalty, and their *disciplina* of robbery (cf. 4.9) loses all its solemnity, and gains much in silliness, by its repetition. One story, of Lamachus, is inspiring; Alcimus' tale is embarrassing; and Thrasyleon's, ingenious and depressing. Yet to hear three times of varied adventures, with but one dismal conclusion, only confirms our opinion of the robbers' ineptitude and gullibility.

I believe that the speech of "Haemus" (7.5-8) is fundamentally a parody of the values set forth in these tales in Book 4. From the first sentence onwards, it exaggerates the outlandish sentiments of such sentences of Lamachus as 'sat se beatum qui manu socia volens occumberet,' and "manu reliqua sumptum gladium suum diuque deosculatum" (4.11). Now they hear a leader who would rather be wounded than take money—one who even prefers death to life itself (7.5). Such irony and exaggeration play upon their gullibility, their bravery, and their fatalistic addiction to bad luck, all with considerable art. Much of what Haemus says is barely credible, and certainly funny, but for them it is a convincing manifestation of their "heroism." They are deceived even as they hear the truth.

⁴⁸ Cf. MacKay (above, note 40) 150.

⁴⁹ Cf. Rohde (above, note 20) 385-86 (on the noble robber); Junghanns (above, note 25) 150; and MacKay (above, note 40) 148.

Haemus, "Mr. Blood," outdoes all their names by his selection of "Haemus" (*haima*), and his etymological explanation that he was "nursed on human blood," "humano sanguine nutritus" (7.5). An ancestral *virtus* makes him an aristocrat among thieves.⁵⁰ His speech is a rhetorician's exercise in appealing to the special interests of the group hearing it. In this respect it resembles the tales of Aristomenes and Thelyphron, which told Lucius exactly what he wanted to hear, and appealed to his predilection for magic and metamorphosis. Like those tales, however, this speech, with its story of "Plotina," has a veiled warning, and an anticipation of the eventual capture of the thieves. It says as much about the audience as it does about the people in the story.

The larger part of the speech is an account of the virtues of Plotina, who stayed faithful to her husband and was his companion in all his misfortunes. Haemus justifies this praise of her virtue, which seems out of place amidst robbers, by saying piously that he must tell the story because "the truth has to be told," "vera enim dicenda sunt" (7.7). He echoes a similar phrase from Book 4, "vera quae dicta sunt credens" (4.12) "believing that what was said was true," which accounted for the deception of Alcimus by an old woman. This is yet another echolalic response, in this case between two widely separated tales. The story does not arouse the robbers' suspicion, yet it is *vera* in a way they cannot know, for they will be foiled by disguise and deception just as the enemies of "Plotina" were. Even Haemus himself used a disguise to escape his enemies (7.8), but his story of earlier disguises does not put them on their guard. Like other bandit heroes, he was at the jaws of death (7.7), but unlike them, escaped by disguise and deception. He claims as much respect alive as was given Lamachus or Thrasyleon only when they were dead.

The bandits are suitably impressed. Is it any wonder they acclaim him as their new leader? He seems to embody every virtue they have, and unfortunately for them, he also knows their weaknesses as well: the weaknesses which were outlined so clearly in the tales of Book 4. Like Lucius, they receive some warning about what will happen from the story of Plotina, but perhaps this was all too subtle. In any case,

⁵⁰ MacKay (above, note 40) 151.

their capture and death are as bare of detail and as ignominious as that of Alcimus.

The tale of the wifely devotion of Plotina has an additional point which its narrator could hardly be expected to know. Tlepolemos seems for the moment to be master of the situation, but he too will soon prove no more immune from treachery than his victims. He is shortly betrayed and slain by his friend Thrasyllus. It is then left to his wife Charite to take revenge on the murderer. The tale of Plotina seems at first hearing to be nothing more than a private joke told to flatter Charite's sense of her own virtue,⁵¹ but in recollection we shall see that it more accurately foreshadows her role in revenging Tlepolemos.

Coming as it does after the Cupid and Psyche story, the speech of Haemus is the last of the anticipative tales in the *Metamorphoses*, and, with the stories in Book 4, continues Apuleius' parable of human foibles. His characters have an apparently unlimited capacity for self-deception and over-confidence. This speech also forms an important transition to the theme of the tales in Books 8 to 10, for there deception plays a part in every story, and the outcome is rarely any more certain, ultimately, than Haemus' momentary triumph.

The grim picture of life without Isis in Book 11 is not contradicted here. By including even his light-hearted thieves in the "Isiac" scheme of things, Apuleius has left no episode and no set of characters untouched by his pessimistic and consistent view of life: most men, if left to themselves, are not likely to make things come out right.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

The old woman who looks after the band of robbers tells a story to distract the captive bride Charite from her unfortunate situation. Her tale, the story of Cupid and Psyche (4.28-6.24), is the longest in the *Metamorphoses*, and is the most admired and studied part of the whole work. I intend here only to examine its thematic connection with the interpretation in Book 11, and to take it as only one more tale (albeit the longest) among many.

⁵¹ It is a highly developed one; note her speeches at 4.34, 6.28-29, and esp. 8.12.

The opening recalls the purpose of so many stories in the *Metamorphoses*, the distraction of the audience. But this immediate purpose is soon superseded and the tale becomes much more than the "bella fabula" which Lucius calls it at the end. The story may be a consolation to Charite, but Psyche's struggles with *curiositas* and *fortuna*, and the unusual length and central position of her story suggest that this is an allegory of Lucius' own adventures, too.⁵² Further, while the reader of the *Metamorphoses* soon grows accustomed to the "redende Namen" which occur in many tales,⁵³ in this story he encounters simple personifications: not only Psyche and Cupido, but also Sobrietas (5.30), Consuetudo (6.8), Sollicitudo (6.9), Tristities (6.9), Voluptas (6.9), and Providentia (6.15).

It is the name and character of Psyche, however, which concern us most, for Cupid, like Fotis or Byrrhaena, disappears from the scene and leaves Psyche to face her ordeal alone (5.25-6.21). Word-play even more elaborate than with Cupido is employed with the equivalent words for *ψυχή* in Latin, *animus* and *anima*.⁵⁴ The latter word, the semantic equivalent of *Psychê*,⁵⁵ appears together with her name in such phrases as "tuae Psychae dulcis anima" (5.6), "Psychae animam gaudio recrea" (5.13), and "miserandae Psyches animae" (6.2). All these are spoken by Psyche herself, in pleas to Cupido and Ceres. *Animus* often describes the weak character and emotional states of Psyche. This is most distinct at 5.22, where she finally looks upon her husband for the first time. There her faintness in resolve and body, her shock

⁵² For the most recent example of this interpretation, see Schlam (above, note 18).

⁵³ E.g. the pun on *thêlu-* in Thelyphron's name at 2.23, "animum meum *commasculo*," and the character of Thrasyllus (*thrasus*) revealed in 8.8, "sed Thrasyllus, praecepto alioquin et de ipso nomine *temerarius*."

⁵⁴ For *cupido* see especially 5.6. A clear distinction between *animus* and *anima* is not always observed, though the ancients attempted to draw one: e.g. Accius, *Trag.* 296, "sapimus animo, fruimur anima; sine animo anima est debilis"; and Nonius Marcellus 426.27, "animus est quo sapimus, anima qua vivimus." But *animus* is occasionally used in Cicero in place of *anima*, as an equivalent to *psychê*: *De sen.* 21.77, "credo deos immortales sparsisse animos in corpora humana, ut essent qui terras tuerentur," and *Tusc.* 5.13.38, "humanus animus decerptus ex mente divina." Cf. also the association in Lucretius 1.131, "tunc cum primis ratione sagaci, unde anima atque animi constet natura videndum." Whatever distinctions we may wish to draw, Apuleius undoubtedly plays on the relationship between the two words by describing Psyche's torments continually in terms of her *animus*.

⁵⁵ Ernout-Meillet 32.

at first seeing Cupido, and, finally, her recovery are all expressed in terms of her *animus*: "tunc Psyche, et corporis et *animi* alioquin infirma . . . Psyche tanto aspectu deterrita et impos *animi* . . . recreatur *animi*." The repetition of the genitive accentuates this pun.

To show parallels between Lucius and Psyche, the tendency has been to treat her as a character whose chief similarity to Lucius is her *curiositas*.⁵⁶ This equation is undoubtedly correct, for she loses her husband and fails her last test under Venus by succumbing to that fault and opening the *pyxis* of Proserpina.⁵⁷ But there is, as we have seen, more to Lucius' character than curiosity, and the same is true of Psyche. In this tale of the soul, *psychê*, Apuleius also treats other aspects of Lucius' character as well. In such an allegory, *curiositas*, or anything else, may be taken not merely as the flaw of one character, but instead something to be found in all men.

Just as any soul can be helpless before the multifarious changes of fortune with her many dangers, so is Psyche. Like Lucius and many others, she is vulnerable to the deceptions of her sisters and cannot recognize their threat to her. In spite of repeated warnings from her husband, who likens their threat to the storming of a citadel (5.12),

dies ultima et casus extremus, et sexus infestus et sanguis inimicus iam sumpsit arma et castra commovit et aciem direxit et classicum personavit; iam mucrone dstricto iugulum tuum nefariae tuae sorores petunt,

the "citadel" falls before the assault of its enemies (5.15):

tunc nanctae iam portis patentibus nudatum sororis animum facinerosae mulieres, omissis tectae machinae latibulis, dstrictis gladiis fraudium simplicis puellae paventes cogitationes invadunt.

These warnings are as explicit as those Lucius received in Books 1 to 3. Psyche's vulnerability to curiosity helps to "elevate" the whole conception of *curiositas* to a higher level than mere "nosiness." It embraces not merely trivial desires, or longing to learn the secrets of evil and supernatural arts, but now the identity of a *god*. The gravity of this fault, of course, depends entirely on the object of such

⁵⁶ See above, note 18.

⁵⁷ Note that as Psyche succumbs to *curiositas* by opening a *pyxis* (6.21), so too does Lucius, when Fotis opens and uses the contents of the wrong box: "me trepidatio simul et festinatio fefellit et pyxidum similitudo deceptit" (3.25; cf. also 3.21).

curiosity. If it is *curiositas* about everyday affairs, perhaps it will prove only annoying; if about magic, it could be foolish and dangerous; and if about a god whose form is forbidden to men's eyes, it may be a mortal sin. The fault remains the same, and is, I think, at all points meant to be reprehensible. We may only measure its gravity by the circumstances; whether Lucius recognizes all this or not is very doubtful—at least not until Book 11.

Neither Psyche nor Lucius have the foresight which Cupid urges, and they cannot comprehend the nature of the forces which threaten them. They are both curiously myopic about such dangers, whether it be black magic or jealous sisters, and both innocently persevere in their desire to know. The tale of Psyche is Apuleius' explanation of why they are so strangely innocent.

Psyche cannot grasp these direct warnings because of her *simplicitas*, "naïveté, ingenuousness." To no purpose does Cupido warn her of the consequences of betrayal. He speaks of his *secreta* in the same way Fotis earlier spoke of the secrets of magic to Lucius; she also was fearful of revealing anything, but when pressed, begged him not to disclose the "mysteries" (3.15). Similar warnings against betrayal appear again in the final book of the *Metamorphoses*, where Lucius commits himself at last to silence and respect for the *secreta* of Isis (11.23). This concern to guard from the knowledge of the uninitiated the *secreta* of a cult typifies the Lucius of Book 11, as much as its absence does the old Lucius before his metamorphosis.

Although *simplicitas* may be applied in exasperation, as when Cupid call Psyche *simplicissima* (5.22; at that moment it is only just, as she has just looked at him for the first time), it is by no means a fault to be regretted. When Psyche tries to lie to her sisters, she fails because of her "excessive innocence" (5.15), and we cannot really find much fault with that. This *simplicitas* is "naïveté" in a good sense. Thus the reed which advises Psyche in the second of her labors is "simplex et humana"; such an association of *humanitas* and *simplicitas* is a virtue which Apuleius regarded as appropriate to a philosopher.⁵⁸ It is a

⁵⁸ Cf. *Apologia* 43: "quin et illud mecum reputo posse animum humanum, praesertim puerilem et simplicem, seu carminum avocamento sive odorum delenimento soporari et ad oblivionem praesentium externari." The author of the *Asclepius* (14) comments that one engages in devotion to a deity with an attitude of *simplicitas* in mind and spirit:

highly desirable quality for any convert to have, as uncomprehending innocence must inevitably be in the face of evil. If *curiositas* is the chief fault of Psyche, then surely *simplicitas* is her chief virtue.⁵⁹

How else than with *simplicitas* can we explain that curious, selective innocence of Lucius, who in many respects is very wise in the ways of this world (as with Fotis), yet so oddly careless and ignorant in others?⁶⁰ Such simplicity requires some outside intervention, be it by Jupiter or Isis, if such people are ever to be saved from themselves. Quite simply, Lucius and Psyche deserve the protection they finally receive because neither can learn to be evil.

Thus the character of Psyche as developed in this tale is an important key to understanding Lucius' story. There are also more mundane, but nonetheless important narrative parallels. For example, when Psyche falls victim to Venus, her trials under the goddess of love resemble his own under *fortuna*. She very quickly earns the enmity of Venus for her beauty, and, like Charite, is called *infortunatissima*.⁶¹ In her role as an unceasing and vindictive tormentor, Venus becomes in the course of the tale identified with *fortuna*, who is in fact not mentioned after Venus begins her persecution of Psyche.⁶² Psyche's trials lead her towards the *salus* and *tutela* which Lucius eventually desires. She seeks first the protection of Ceres, and then Juno. When pleading to Juno, she refers to her trials in practically the same language which Lucius will use in Book 11:

"simplici enim mente et anima divinitatem colere eiusque facta venerari, agere etiam dei voluntati gratias, quae est bonitatis sola plenissima, haec est nulla nimia importuna curiositas violata philosophia."

⁵⁹ Cf. Grimal (above, note 6) 64: "C'est là une des qualités essentielles de Psyché, cette 'naïveté,' cette 'honnêteté,' qui finalement lui assurera l'affection d'Amour."

⁶⁰ See above, p. 492.

⁶¹ This superlative form appears only in the *Metamorphoses* (cf. *ThLL* 7.1480.70), and is another example of a resposion between a tale and the conversation preceding it. Charite speaks of the name of her "most unfortunate husband" ("*infortunatissimi mariti nomen*," 4.27), and the old woman who narrates the story calls Psyche's father "the most wretched father of a most unfortunate daughter" ("*infortunatissimae filiae miserrimus pater*," 4.32).

⁶² The same epithet, *saeviens*, is applied to both Venus and *fortuna*; cf. 5.31 ("*Veneris iram saevientem sic adortae*"), 6.2 ("*deae tantae saeviens ira*"), 6.5 ("*saevientes impetus [sc. Veneris] eius mitigas?*"), 6.16 ("*nec tamen nutum deae saevientis vel tunc expiare potuit*"). For *saeviens* with *fortuna*, cf. 6.28, 10.4, and 11.15. See Junghanns (above, note 25) 161 note 70, and Schlam (above, note 1) 139.

sis meis extremis casibus Iuno Sospita meque in tantis exanclatis laboribus defessam imminentis periculi metu libera (6.4).

tu meis iam nunc extremis aerumnis subsiste, tu fortunam conlapsam adfirma, tu saevis exanclatis casibus pausam pacemque tribue (11.2).

When Psyche's final plea is rejected, we read that all hope of safety is dashed, "tota spe salutis deposita" (6.5). "Spes salutis," the mere "hope of safety," is the same thing Lucius desires at the beginning of Book 11. The whole point of the labors under Venus in Book 6, with each one increasing in difficulty, is that they are completely hopeless, and without end. Nothing Psyche accomplishes there can satisfy Venus, for she can no more be propitiated than *fortuna* herself.

She learns nothing from her trials, and Lucius acquires no safeguards against unpredictable changes of fortune. The grim series of events dealing with the death or dramatic reversal in the fortunes of various people in Books 8 to 10 leads nowhere and is not "educational" in any way. And of course it must not be, if Isis is to be of any help. No preparation or caution can account for fortune; Venus is as vindictive, for her "savage nod" (6.16) can never be avoided.⁶³

Psyche finds a deliverance similar to Lucius' in almost every respect. He is saved only by Isis' intervention, and she finds *salus* only when Cupido intervenes (6.22) and Jupiter commands the other gods to accept her on Olympus. All the gods welcome her, including her former tormentor Venus, who now even dances in her honor (6.24). This dramatic reversal in role, turning one's worst enemy into part of the celebration, is precisely what the priest of Isis will say to Lucius about *fortuna* in Book 11: "in tutelam iam receptus es fortunae, sed videntis, quae suae lucis splendore ceteros etiam deos illuminat."

Finally, there is the birth of a child named "Voluptas," "joy" or "pleasure," with which Psyche's tale ends (6.24). It will be recalled that Lucius' indulgence in *voluptas* is condemned by the priest of Isis at 11.15. Is there then some sinister meaning in the birth of a child named Voluptas to Psyche? If so, this would be a curious way indeed to end what is supposed to be a happy story. Fortunately, such is

⁶³ The "nod of Venus," "nec tamen nutum deae saevientis vel tunc expiare potuit" (6.16), is described almost exactly like the "nod" of *fortuna*: "feralem fortunae nutum latere non potuerunt" (10.24).

not the case, for, depending on its context, *voluptas* can express either sensual or spiritual pleasure. Cicero's distinction (*De fin.* 1.11.37) is the clearest; namely, that the kind of pleasure spoken of depends on whether the mind or the body is referred to:

huic verbo [sc. *voluptas*] omnes qui Latine sciunt duas res subiciunt, laetitiam in animo, commotionem suavem iucunditatis in corpore.

Laetitia in animo is the *voluptas* which Lucius feels, for example, in his contemplation of Isis' image at 11.24, "paucis dehinc ibidem commoratus diebus inexplicabili voluptate simulacri divini perfruebar"; while *commotio suavis iucunditatis in corpore* describes the *serviles voluptates* which he enjoys with Fotis, and which the priest refers to in 11.15.

The birth of a child with this name, as the happy resolution to the tale of Psyche, represents the soul's discovery of spiritual joy at its deliverance from the power of blind fortune (in Psyche's tale, represented by Venus). Just as the intervention of Jupiter anticipates the appearance of Isis to Lucius, so does the birth of Voluptas anticipate the spiritual pleasure Lucius will feel in his salvation in Isis. In Book 11, he is "reborn" in spirit, and his own tale, like Psyche's, ends happily as he goes forth clothed in the garb of a priest: "sed quoquoversus obvio, gaudens obibam." These final words of the *Metamorphoses*, "gaudens obibam," recall the ending of the story of Cupid and Psyche, "*quam Voluptatem nominamus.*"

TALES OF REVENGE AND ADULTERY

In discussing the latter part of the *Metamorphoses*, Franz Dornseiff observed an "infernal" development in Books 8 and 9 which leads toward the "purgatory" of Book 11.⁶⁴ I believe this description could be extended to Book 10 as well. But where exactly does this "Inferno" lie: in Lucius' experiences, or the tales?

After Lucius' deliverance from the robbers (7.12), contrary to the rewards he had expected, he is abandoned to a cruel boy who tortures him most wickedly. After the boy is eaten by a bear (7.26), Lucius

⁶⁴ Franz Dornseiff, "Loukios und Apuleius' Metamorphosen," *Hermes* 73 (1938) 226.

then works for various masters, who mark off four stages in his wanderings: the corrupt priests of the Dea Syria (8.23-9.10), the miller (9.11-31), the gardener and the soldier (9.32-10.12), and the baker and cook (10.13-35).⁶⁵ Essentially the same progression of events occurs in the *Onos*,⁶⁶ but I do not think one could term the adventures of Loukios there as an "Inferno": perhaps it is bizarre poetic justice, but otherwise hardly worthy of Dornseiff's term. The "infernal" aspect of Books 8 to 10 is in fact created by Apuleius' *Einlagen*, and principally by the tales. The themes of adultery and revenge, and the effect of *fortuna* on other people's lives, are examined in ever greater depth and with a continually worsening cast of characters.

After many personal dangers in Book 8, Lucius does comparatively well in Books 9 and 10. The "storms" of fortune, against which he complains so long and bitterly at 7.2-3, turn from him and concentrate their fury on other people. He observes the misfortunes of others with a kind of "Odyssean" detachment, just as he heard with equanimity the unfortunate stories of Socrates and Thelyphron before his metamorphosis in Book 3.

In all the *Metamorphoses*, there is only one tale which in itself seems to have no sinister overtones: the Tale of the Tub (9.5-7). After that story, Lucius is moved by the pitiful sight of the suffering of slaves and his fellow animals at the mill to explain to the reader that the one advantage he derived from his asinine form was an unhindered ability to observe the actions and conversation of men (9.18); he had, in other words, a perfect means to indulge in the same old *curiositas*. In the middle of the story of the miller's faithless wife, he comments on the advantages which a "curious" man has in the form of a beast (9.30):

sed forsitan lector scrupulosus reprehendens narratum meum sic argumentaberis: "unde autem tu, astutule asine, intra terminos pistrini contentus, quid secreto, ut adfirmas, mulieres gesserint, scire potuisti?" accipe igitur, quem ad modum homo curiosus iumentum faciem sustinens cuncta, quae in perniciem pistoris mei gesta sunt, cognovi.

⁶⁵ Cf. Schlam (above, note 1) 47: "The experience of the Ass at each of these stages emphasizes a different aspect of the evils of this world."

⁶⁶ *Onos* 29-33 (Loukios' suffering under a *paidarion akatharton*), 35-43 (Loukios with the priests), 43-46 (with the miller), and 46 ff. (with the cooks).

He later humorously likens himself to a philosopher, at the end of the enactment of the *iudicium Paridis* in the arena. After observing the similarities between his present situation and the trial and condemnation of Socrates, he breaks off that digression with a self-flattering remark (10.33):

sed nequis indignationis meae reprehendat impetum secum sic reputans:
 "ecce nunc patiemur philosophantem nobis asinum," rursus, unde
 decessi, revertar ad fabulam.

These comments show that, until the moment comes for Lucius to copulate with a condemned woman in the arena (10.34), he clearly relishes this role as an observer untouched by the horrors in the tales he hears. He may occasionally involve himself by exposing wrongdoers to justice: he brays so loudly that the priests of the Dea Syria are exposed while debauching a village youth (8.29-30); he intervenes in the tale of the baker's wife by crushing the fingers of the adulterer Philesitherus (9.27); and he unwittingly betrays his master the gardener by "curiously" showing his shadow to a search party of soldiers (9.42). In this way he is an "agent" of justice. But when he is about to meet the *matrona* in the arena, he loses all taste for this role, and also the one consolation he believed he had, that of being an animal with a man's intelligence.

We may now turn to the final series of tales which this impartial observer, this "philosophizing" ass, tells us.

In the *Onos* (34), a messenger brings the news of the death of the young bride and her husband who had been with Loukios among the robbers:

ἐπεὶ δὲ ἦν νύξ βαθεῖα, ἄγγελός τις ἀπὸ τῆς κώμης ἦκεν εἰς τὸν ἀγρόν καὶ τὴν ἔπαυλιν, ταύτην λέγων τὴν νεόνυμφον κόρην τὴν ὑπὸ τοῖς λησταῖς γενομένην καὶ τὸν ταύτης νυμφίον, περὶ δεῖλιν ὀψίαν ἀμφοτέρους αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ αἰγιαλῷ περιπατοῦντας, ἐπιπολάσασαν ἄφνω τὴν θάλασσαν ἀρπάξαι αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀφανεῖς ποιῆσαι, καὶ τέλος αὐτοῖς τοῦτο τῆς συμφορᾶς καὶ θανάτου γενέσθαι.

In Apuleius, too, a messenger arrives and reports evil tidings (8.1), but in contrast to the *Onos*, the deaths of Tlepolemos and Charite are explicitly attributed to fortune and the corrupting power of *voluptas*, as seen in the adulterous suitor, Thrasyllus. The plain bad news of

their deaths is expanded into a tale of adultery and the revenge which it inspires. The messenger tells this story so that it may be recorded by those "doctiores, quibus stilos fortuna subministrat" (8.1).

If Lucius' speech at 7.2-3 is an indication of his growing awareness of the power of *fortuna* in his life,⁶⁷ and a prelude to the grim experiences which he must endure, then this tale of Charite's revenge is just as much a prelude to the stories which appear in Books 8 to 10. The wretched ending of this happy couple is a "correction," as it were, of their once happy fortune. This is not the first time, of course, that we have observed someone's fortune undergo an unpredictable change.⁶⁸ It seems that the old woman's tale about the happy ending of the Cupid and Psyche story, with its birth of Voluptas to the re-united pair, was a fate not destined to be fulfilled by Charite and Tlepolemos, after all.

With this tale of a *faithful* wife (a great rarity indeed in the *Metamorphoses*), Apuleius introduces his tales in Books 8 to 10 with a reversal, in a kind of negative exposure, of the plots of the subsequent stories. Thrasyllus is emblematic of the women in the tales that will follow, for he is deceitful and driven to his crimes by lust:

in profundam ruinam Cupidinis sese paulatim nescius praecipitaverat. quidni, cum flamma saevi amoris parva quidem primo vapore delectet, sed fomentis consuetudinis exaestuans inmodicis ardoribus totos amburat homines (8.2). . . . ecce rursus nuper fervide voluptatis detestabilis petitor aures obseratas de nuptiis obtundens aderat (8.9).

He is eventually defeated by his own weapons of dissimulation and treachery, for Charite tricks him into her power and then scratches out his eyes with a hairpin.

The tragedy of Charite, an embodiment of grace (*charis*), is that by a bitter turn of fortune she is compelled to change her spirit and harden herself to a task of bloody revenge. Not unlike the matron "Plotina" in the speech of "Haemus," she becomes "worthy of a man" in her resolve. She is made into as cruel a creature as many another woman in the *Metamorphoses*; indeed she seems almost another character, altogether different from the young girl who heard the tale of Cupid and Psyche. She stands above the unconscious Thrasyllus,

⁶⁷ Wittmann (above, note 12) 7.

⁶⁸ Cf. above, pp. 495-96.

whom she drugged by means of a sleeping potion, with a man's resolve (8.11): "iamque eo ad omnes iniurias exposito ac supinato introvocata Charite *masculis animis* impetuque diro fremens invadit ac supersistit sicarium." When she commits suicide at her husband's tomb, she "breathes out a manly soul": "efflavit *animam virilem*" (8.14). In her revenge of her husband, she resembles Plotina, who even adopted the dress and manners of a man: "tonso capillo *in masculinam faciem* reformato habitu" (7.6). Like Charite, Plotina acted a man's part in dealing with her adversaries: "cunctorum periculorum particeps et pro mariti salute pervigilem curam sustinens, aerumnas adsiduas *ingenio masculo* sustinebat" (7.6). This change of sex, figurative perhaps in the case of Charite, but in outward appearance quite literally true for Plotina, constitutes a kind of "metamorphosis" of the two heroines, for both play the role of a man when their husbands are no longer able to defend them. Thus, by her fidelity to her husband, Charite recalls the heroines Plotina and Psyche, and by her revenge she also anticipates the character of the rather less pleasant ladies in the tales which follow.

Before Lucius enjoys the relative calm and decent masters of Books 9 and 10, he passes through a series of terrible experiences in Book 8 which are complementary to the tale of Charite. At one point he hears of a horrible crime of adultery and revenge. This "facinus oppido memorabile" (8.22) is the shortest tale in the *Metamorphoses*, and tells very succinctly of the punishment of a slave for adultery with a neighbor's wife. The slave's wife not only burns up all his records, but also kills herself and her own child. His master holds him to account for all this and punishes him by feeding him to a bed of *ants*. The horror of the tale is accentuated by its brevity. It is almost as if an outline of a story were being sketched. But the last sentences describes the manner of his death in fastidious and vivid detail: "... parvis quidem sed numerosis et continuis morsiunculis penitus inhaerentes [sc. formicae]."

This tale has been accounted as simply one more in a series of horrors, but beyond this, there has been a reluctance to attribute much more to it than a deepening of the mood of horror and despair.⁶⁹ Certainly

⁶⁹ See Junghanns (above, note 25) 166-67 and note 80, and E. Paratore, *La novella di Apuleio*² (Palermo-Rome 1942) 272 note 37.

the tale does this. Along with the attack by the villagers and dogs on Lucius' party (8.16), the warnings of a villager from the ominous perch of a cypress tree (9.18), and the strange meeting with an old man who turns into a snake and devours a youth (8.20-21), this story contributes to the mood of terror which deepens throughout the book, and which ends only after the most grotesque and fearful adventures with Lucius' sale to the depraved priests of the Dea Syria. But it also resembles the darkest of the tales of adultery and revenge, the story in Book 10 of the "vilis aliqua" who mistakes her husband's innocent sister for his lover, and sets off on an orgy of poisoning that eventually claims five victims. Thrasyllus' passion is very finely drawn as the madness of love, and Charite's revenge is, if bloody, at least justified, but the *facinus* at 8.22 conveys only two things in its brevity: the corrupting power of *voluptas*, and the terrible forms which revenge for adultery may take. In both tales of Book 8, adultery is so savagely punished that we should be mistrustful, to say the least, when we read Lucius' remarks about the first of the "charming" stories of adultery in Book 9: "cognoscimus *lepidam* de adulterio cuiusdam pauperis fabulam" (9.4).

The tales in Books 9 and 10 bring to a climax the "infernal" development of the plot. Four stories are formally introduced as such: the "lepidam fabulam" (9.4-7), the "fabula denique bona prae ceteris suavis" (9.14-31), the "tragoedia non fabula" (10.2-12), and the story of the "vilis aliqua" (10.23-28). In addition to these parallel stories of revenge and adultery, the account of the death of three brothers at 9.33-42 continues the gloomy theme of fortune's power ("puncto brevissimo dilapsae domus fortunam," 9.39), and leads into the theme of the final stories, revenge.

As I have already noted, the "Tale of the Tub" (9.4-7) is the only story in the *Metamorphoses*, aside from that of Cupid and Psyche, which has a happy conclusion, with no sinister implications; unlike every other tale in Books 8 to 10, there is no death. Yet this solitary tale discredits adultery, an aspect of *voluptas*, in the strongest possible way. Adultery appears at first as an amusing foible of men and women, but does not remain as pleasant or as harmless as we might wish. The genial conclusion of this tale is "corrected" almost at once by a very elaborate story which is parallel in most respects. The same narrative

technique of arousing false hopes which Apuleius used *within* the tales of Aristomenes and Thelyphron is now applied to the conclusion of a tale. The dramatic reversal of fortune comes in a second story with a similar plot. The careful parallelism in the tales of Books 9 and 10 is Apuleius' most extensive development of his theme of fortune's unpredictability: "ne tu fortunarum lubricas ambages et instabiles incursiones et reciprocas vicissitudines ignoras" (1.6).

The second tale in Book 9, "good beyond any other," is structurally the most complicated of all the tales. It is a *tour de force* in irony and surprise endings. These two things, always a feature of any tale in Apuleius, are carried to their most elaborate point by the two tales told within the main story. The account of Philesitherus and his successful cuckolding of Barbarus is an encouragement to the Baker's wife in her own affair, and, like the Tale of the Tub, seems to augur well for her success. The second tale-within-the-tale, the Baker's gloomy report of the adultery of a neighbor's wife, is told in ignorance of his own betrayal ("ignarus suorum, domus alienae percenset infortunium," 9.23), and anticipates the tragic conclusion to his own story. The four adultery stories in Book 9 unfold in an interlocking series of deceptively happy conclusions:

Tale of the Tub: happy conclusion

Tale of the Baker's wife: ultimately an unhappy conclusion

Tale of Philesitherus: happy conclusion

Tale of the Neighbor's wife: unhappy conclusion

The Baker's account of his neighbor's troubles reminds us at a crucial moment that adultery is more likely to result in an ending like the tales in Book 8, than the Tale of the Tub.

The spirit of this story which Apuleius calls "good beyond all others" is identical with that of the first story in Book 9—at least up to the moment the Baker discovers Philesitherus. But the ending is very different from what we might have imagined. The Baker addresses the frightened lad with a "serene brow and a calm face" (9.27), and his explanation for such calm embodies clever references to each of the two preceding tales: "non sum barbarus [i.e. either literally a barbarian or the husband Barbarus], nec agresti morum squalore praeditus [an expanded phrase equaling *barbarus*], nec ad

exemplar naccinae truculentiae te necabo [a reference to his own account of the Neighbor's wife]." The adulterer is punished by another, more depraved kind of *voluptas* (buttock-beating and buggery), and such use of *voluptas* as a punishment darkens the motif of "servile pleasures" considerably. The husband is shortly thereafter slain by magic. The savage end of the tale reintroduces the idea of the use of magic as a punishment for the frustration of *voluptas*, which, it will be recalled, we also saw in the tales of Aristomenes and Thelyphron. In this way the tales in Book 9 go a long way towards effecting a "religious" view of *voluptas*: they completely discredit the idea of sexual pleasure as a desirable thing.

A similar parallelism of plot lies in the tales of Book 10. The first one, a "Phaedra-Hippolytus" story,⁷⁰ tells of a step-mother who attempts to take revenge on her step-son for refusing her advances, but is foiled by the providence of a physician. The last one, about a "certain vile woman," tells how she avenged herself by slaying her husband, his sister, a doctor and his wife, and even her own child. Apuleius carefully introduces the first tale as a "scelestum ac nefarium facinus" (10.2) and provides a solemn introduction which sets the tale apart from all the others: "scito te tragoediam, non fabulam legere et a socco ad coturnum ascendere" (10.2). The plot of the tale does recall the *Hippolytus* of Euripides and its tragic end, but these words are as deliberately misleading and ironic as the elaborately cheerful introduction to the tale at 9.14-31 as a "charming" story. In this case, what is introduced as a "tragedy" ends with an unexpected reversal of fortune, and a happy ending (10.12).

The cast of characters in these stories is similar. In both, for example, a doctor plays an important role. It is the "divine providence" of the first one which saves the situation (10.12), whereas the doctor in the second tale not only helps the evil woman poison others, but, with little providence for his own interests, himself falls victim to her crime (10.26). The jealous wife's attempts at murder are foiled completely in the first tale, and are altogether successful in the second, so that the arbitrary nature of blind fortune is nowhere more evident

⁷⁰ Both the description of love as a sickness at 9.2-3 (by far Apuleius' most elaborate and sympathetic description of a woman in the grip of passion) and the chaste step-son who refuses to "cure" his step-mother recall Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

than in these tales. It causes what seems almost certainly a tragedy to have an unexpectedly happy outcome; yet again the same situation also leads to the death of everyone but the guilty person.

The second tale of Book 10, and the last in the *Metamorphoses*, amply justifies Lucius' desire for *salus*. Here the Greek and Latin authors agree at least in broad outline. In the *Onos*, Loukios is about to have intercourse with a condemned woman in the arena, and no more is said of her than that she is "one of those condemned to die," *τινα τῶν γυναικῶν, ἣτις κατεκέρριτο θηρίοις ἀποθανεῖν*. In Apuleius, by contrast, a wife's crimes are described in the last and, I think, most dreadful of all the tales: at least in sheer number of deaths (5), it outdoes any other. She is beyond question the wickedest woman in the *Metamorphoses*, and her story forms a significant expansion of the simple description in the *Onos*. At the conclusion of this tale, Lucius remarks that it is with such a woman as *this* that he must lie (10.29). Little wonder that he would regard copulation with her as a *contagium* (10.34). Now he is to dispense justice in a way far different from his punishment of Philesitherus or the priests of the Dea Syria, and it is a brand of justice, *voluptas* as punishment, which he cannot be eager for. The prospect of her favors also discredits whatever pleasure Lucius found with his kindly *matrona* in the first part of Book 10.

By the end of Book 10, *voluptas*, and indeed everything about Lucius' old character, is utterly discredited. The lesson which the priests of Isis have to give us in Book 11 is, in large measure, a lesson already taught, for the treatment of sexual pleasures in these latter tales reflects clearly the ascetic doctrine of Book 11, with its "higher" and more "spiritual" pleasures.

There is a clear parallelism between these tales, and an easily perceivable progression in human degradation.⁷¹ Apuleius carries his custom-

⁷¹ While the wife in the Tale of the Tub is an adulteress, and scandalously deceitful, the woman in the long tale at 9.14-31 is every bit as bad, but resorts to murder and magic as well. Cf. the description of the first wife at 9.5: "uxorcula etiam satis quidem tenuis et ipsa, verum tamen postrema lascivia famigerabilis." This is mild, however, when compared to the scabrous description of the wife in the second tale (9.14), of which perhaps the most vivid part is the finely phrased comparison of her to a latrine: "sed omnia prorsus ut in quendam caenosam latrinam in eius animum flagitia confluerant." The unnatural passion of the step-mother in Book 10 is more sympathetically portrayed; Apuleius hesitates whether to blame an innate depravity for her love, or

ary technique of responsion between one tale and the next, or between a tale and its setting, to its greatest length in Books 9 and 10. Now tales deliberately anticipate or, on the other hand, contradict one another, so that one does not know what conclusion to expect. One enthusiastic sensual experience is followed by a similar one which "corrects" it, and prepares for a kind of doctrine which shall reject all such things. Showing the wages of sin is not something original to Apuleius, but it is undeniably effective. If this is all mortal *voluptas* can offer us, we would do well to pass it up.

Surprisingly, as we near the end of Lucius' travels, his personal torments cease altogether. In Book 10, his masters are indulgent to a remarkable degree, and he enjoys physical pleasures of every kind. It is only in the tales that something appears to be increasingly wrong with this hedonistic Odyssey.

If Book 11's interpretation is to be relevant to the tales, there should be at least two things observable as we near the end of Lucius' adventures: an eventual need for a *salus*, which again and again is shown to be never surely attainable by men on their own, and a desire for something better than sensual *voluptas*. I believe this is clearly the case. The stronger the justification for the "purer" *voluptas* of Isis, the more convincing the conversion to her worship will be. These horror-stories about the misfortunes of other people effect exactly such a justification, but *not* the experiences of Lucius himself. If left to himself, he could have continued indefinitely in his ways, for in Book 10 he enjoys nothing but one kind master after another. And in Book 9, he obviously relishes the role of an unknown observer of human affairs: an ideal role for a *curiosus*. There he was still the man who said he would like to know "everything or certainly as much as possible."

But the imminent appearance of the condemned woman shatters this foolish euphoria. The steadily declining cast of characters in the tales, with all their moral depravity, is now about to intersect with

simply fate: "*seu naturaliter impudica seu fato ad extremum impulsa flagitium*" (10.2). But there is no doubt at all about the "*vilis aliqua*" (10.23) of the last tale in Book 10. The change in her character is as rapid as it is extreme: "*coepit puellam velut aemulam tori succubamque primo suspicari, dehinc detestari, dehinc crudelissimis laqueis mortis insidiari*" (10.24).

Lucius himself. He always believed himself immune from example, just as when he was a man, yet with this last story he is to be made into the final chapter, as it were, of the tale of the wicked step-mother. He is to be her punishment, and share her *contagium*.

In the same way that the respective fates of Aristomenes, Thelyphron, and Actaeon finally intersect with Lucius in Book 3, so now does the moral condemnation of adultery and sexual pleasures, which *only* the tales generate, eventually overtake Lucius in Book 10. Far from being extraneous to the plot, these last tales are the very means by which Lucius' adventures are led towards the salvation of Isis in Book 11. They are the reason why that salvation is credible and desirable.

SUMMARY

The tales in the *Metamorphoses* serve a number of purposes. They often anticipate a later event in the main narrative, and all without exception have a didactic purpose in harmony with Book 11. Although often introduced as entertainment or diversion, on the whole, the tales are as much instruction as amusement. It is a matter of taste how far one may go in reconciling the heterogeneous elements in this work, for I do not deny that they exist. The *Metamorphoses* is a well-composed work, and an immensely complicated one; but that fact, in itself, says nothing about its bizarre and often disturbing mixture of moods.⁷²

There is not so much a rigid, formal unity here as an interpretative harmony between the final book and the first ten, with thematic connections between all parts, and all tales. The author who added the tales is also the author who concluded his work with the "Isis Book,"

⁷² Cf. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (New York 1957) 52-53: "With an extreme emphasis on desire, which all the spices of rhetorico-realistic art are employed to arouse in the reader too, there is a complete absence of human warmth and intimacy. There is always an admixture of something spectrally sadistic; desire is mixed with fear and horror; though to be sure there is a good deal of silliness, too. And this runs through the entire book: it is full of fear, lust and silliness." I find this an excellent appraisal of Books 1-10, but, significantly I hope, not of Book 11. It is from this mad world which Auerbach describes that Isis frees Lucius. All "fear, lust and silliness" are left far behind when we enter the eleventh book, and its tone is throughout elevated, religious, and serene. The harsher the contrast between Isis' world and Lucius' old one, the better.

and I do not find it so surprising that the tales are consistent with that last book's interpretation.

It has been necessary, of course, to discriminate between various types of stories. Thus, the magic stories in Books 1 to 3 are admonitory, warning Lucius about what is to happen to him; the robber tales in Book 4 anticipate the deception of the bandits in Book 7, yet the speech there of Haemus says more than even he knows about the fate of himself and Charite; the story of Cupid and Psyche allegorizes Lucius' experience, and predicts the happy intervention of Isis; and the tales of revenge and adultery create the need in Lucius for a salvation in Isis by discrediting the kind of indulgence which marked his life as a man. Such stories thus make for a flexible and highly adaptable narrative style.

Very broadly, the tales achieve this much for the story of Lucius: they emphasize the inability of human beings to improve their luck on their own, and, by the picture they give of the foibles and weaknesses of others, they widen the range of humanity beyond a single character, Lucius, to suggest that *all* men act this way. Lucius himself is placed in a ludicrous position. He has the itinerary of an Odysseus, with no heroic stature. He has a range of experiences as bizarre as any hero ever had, but, because he is, after all, an ass, he is continually denied the glory of a real hero—however much he pretends to be one. In other characters likewise there is a disparity between what is actually the truth of the situation, and what they think it to be. Human perception is consistently presented as a very limited thing, and though there be occasional flashes of *providentia*, the elaborate parallel of the provident and the stupid doctors in Book 10 shows that it comes more often by accident than design.

All the while that the tales contribute to this depressing view, they also seem, innocently enough, to fulfil the promise of "entertaining" the reader. Apuleius evidently enjoyed the irony of maintaining this pose, for he never admits openly that the tales do more than amuse us.

Thus, by anticipation of later events; by sensitivity to the narrative "environment"; by extremely subtle interrelationships between characters in a tale, and the people hearing it; and by thematic relationship to the final "Isis Book," the tales are not simply relevant to the main story, they are in fact essential to its conclusion and its philosophy of

human life in relation to Isis. It is not the "Isis Book" which solemnizes and holds together this new work which Apuleius created;⁷³ rather, the tales themselves are the principle means whereby the author changed a frivolous and entertaining story, such as we see in the *Onos*, into the mystical and religious work which the *Metamorphoses* so clearly is.

In this discussion I have been led to treat more than anything else the character of the people in the tales. We continually find careful representation, even allegorization, of faults and imperfections in Lucius' character which lead him, and presumably us, to see the error of his ways. Indeed, this story is more for our benefit than his, since through much of the work he is oblivious to the "message."

Because of the "Isiac" point of view, which is never very far away in the tales, it is only fair to say that, if Apuleius is a student of human nature, he is so only as far as the doctrine he preaches in Book II allows him to be. Women, for example, are wholly sensual creatures, susceptible to corruption and capable of great wickedness; the rare exception (Charite) is likely to be corrupted or betrayed. This world is a dangerous, crazy place, made even more uncertain by the malevolent and supernatural powers of magic. If pure chance (*fortuna*) does not ruin us, then we shall probably do it ourselves, and blame fortune in the bargain.

Undoubtedly there is complexity in the telling of this story, but I do not feel it is ever very profound. Certainly there are *types* of people, who are used chiefly to exemplify the inherent evils of greed, lust, or treachery, but they never really seem fleshed-out, believable characters. We are taught to expect very little of other men, or of ourselves, so that we may expect all the more of Isis. Such is the simplistic, pessimistic lesson of a mystic with no high regard for men's capabilities or their achievements. Some will perhaps think this justified; others may find it intellectually and humanly repugnant. I hope to have shown merely that it is never anything less than a lesson well taught.

Lucius' personal experiences do not differ greatly from those of his Greek counterpart in the *Onos*, yet two more different conclusions to

⁷³ See Perry (above, note 2) 244, for a different opinion.

the same story could scarcely be imagined. In the *Onos*, the hero tries again to indulge in sexual pleasures after his return to human form, but is repulsed because his penis is too small. He lost "that great characteristic of the ass," τὸ μέγα τοῦ ὄνου σύμβολον, and the *Onos* ends with thanks to the gods and an allusion to a vulgar proverb:

ἐνταῦθα θεοῖς σωτήρσιν ἔθνον καὶ ἀναθήματα ἀνέθηκα, μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἐκ κυνὸς πρωκτοῦ, τὸ δὴ τοῦ λόγου, ἀλλ' ἐξ ὄνου περιεργίας διὰ μακροῦ πάνυ καὶ οὕτω δὲ μόλις οἴκαδε ἀνασωθεῖς.

The *Metamorphoses* ends not with a vote of thanks to "the gods who saved him," but with Lucius' grateful participation as a priest in the service of one particular goddess, Isis, a deity opposed to everything his former life stood for. In direct contrast to the sensualist he was before, and which the Greek Loukios remains to the end, Lucius openly rejoices in this new life, and its asceticism:

rursus denique quam raso capillo collegii vetustissimi et sub illis Syllae temporibus conditi munia, non obumbrato vel oblecto calvitio sed quoquo versus obvio, gaudens obibam.

The last transformation we read of, of Lucius into a priest, is as a literary achievement more remarkable than any effected by magic, and it is chiefly because of the tales in the *Metamorphoses* that this most significant metamorphosis of all is so convincing.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ I am grateful to the Editor and to Douglas Marshall for many suggestions toward the improvement of this paper.