

Humiliation and Immobility in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*

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Introduction

Men (and women) of Mediterranean classical cultures, like other face-to-face cultures, negotiated status by demonstrations of honor and inflictions of shame. They developed highly articulated systems of affront, abuse, and insult to advance agendas and to retard or dismantle perceived competitors. “Dissing”—glares, hand-gestures, verbal insult, spitting, punching and otherwise mauling peers—punctuated personal, family, and political quarrels. Modern treatments of the “poetics” of verbal violence, pushful behaviors, and physical brawling encourage new study of parallel situations in ancient social history and in classical texts.¹

¹Relevant classic anthropological studies of status-management include: J. G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago 1966); P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, R. Nice, trans. (Cambridge 1977; French original 1972); M. Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood: Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village* (Princeton 1985); D. D. Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, D.C. 1987). W. I. Miller, *Humiliation, and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca 1993) is a humane survey with special reference to Norse literature. R. S. Miller, *Embarrassment: Poise and Peril in Everyday Life* (New York 1996), provides a psychological perspective indebted to Erving Goffman's micro-sociology. For classical Athens, one might begin with D. Cohen, *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 1995), less rosy a picture than G. Herman, “How Violent was Athenian Society?” in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower, eds., *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis* (Oxford 1994) 99–117, but still too rosy. E. Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome*, P. Daly, trans. (London 1993; Dutch original 1977) 98–127 provides Roman comparanda and bibliography. Note that dishonored Athenian and Roman victims (bringing a suit) have usually left more evidence and argument than the alleged perpetrators did. This caution about the

This paper analyzes Apuleius' portrayal of the contemporary Roman provincial aggressive practices (ca. 160 C.E.) that circumscribe the characters of his one, *sui generis* novel. In extreme cases, social and physical controls, and even self-policing, shut down the limited Roman liberty of "free agents," rendering characters immobile, literally or figuratively. We document (through the novel's incidents of dishonor and immobilization and their attendant vocabulary) Apuleius' "appreciation" of the pervasive infliction of shame in second-century provincial Roman society and in his protagonist's driven life.

Traveling the well-cambered Roman roads in a world of decreasing freedom and therefore mobility, Apuleius' unheroic hero Lucius happily runs into and then becomes entrapped in many macabre *culs-de-sac*. At the same time he welcomes sexual and religious initiations without full—or any—awareness of their dangerous consequences. Immobility of body and mind is thus both a narrative end-game pattern and a pessimistic theme. Freely chosen and cruelly inflicted paths lead him "from the frying-pan into the fire," and Lucius finally chooses a permanent form of immobility because his social self has been damaged beyond repair. The *Metamorphoses* is not a salvation narrative but a first-person narrator's consistent and not flattering self-portrait of an engaging but needy and dysfunctional character.²

This paper examines first the strategies of humiliation and embarrassment shown in the novel, particularly examples of and terminology for derisive laughter. Such mirthful mockery signifies to the reader and solidifies for a group some sense of superiority and an excluded individual's dishonor. The characteristic response of victims of public shaming—inert, self-protective stupefaction—is the second topic of analysis. Third, we consider a particular form of immobility, the "death-like" stillness that darkens Apuleius' pictures of earthly communities. His frequent references to statues and other life-like but invariably immobile images expand the range of tropes of stillness and call into question the honor bestowed by Roman monumentalization. The paper next briefly analyzes various types of Roman spectacle that punctuate important episodes of the

victim's perspective should also affect the reading of Lucius, the mostly passive but hardly innocent protagonist of Apuleius' comic romance.

²My perception of Apuleius' originality is indebted to Jack Winkler's magnificent 1985 book. The present essay contends that the pervasive denigrations and "fixes" (unsatisfactory interventions) of the novel encourages the darker reading that Winkler shied away from, noting Apuleius' refusal to affirm a fixed perspective (e.g., 142, 216–23). The continuing debate over Apuleius' message in Book 11 confirms Winkler's view that Apuleius was disinclined to supply a clearly authorized finale.

novel, including the social roles of gazers and objects of their gaze. We conclude by evaluating the central role of immobility in Apuleius' pointed satire of human vulnerability. It seems to serve isolated victims as an always ineffective last refuge, an asylum in which the victim remains a spectacle for others.

Apuleius' at least superficially salvific fiction features ridiculous matter—persons, acts, or objects of this world (plus a few gods and ghosts)—that arouses amusement, mockery, derision, and contempt among internal and external audiences. The comedy arises from absurd predicaments that befall the once-privileged, worldly hero and other “innocents” of whom he learns. His story studies primarily secular humiliation—the loss of face—again both literal and metaphorical. The labile hero takes spiritual, intellectual, and physical pratfalls. This picaresque suffering has always been recognized as an irony of identity. Lucius is physically transformed into an ass because he took the wrong magical ointment for the owl-transformation and he regularly makes an ass of himself in intellectual and sensual pursuits, but asininity may not be the ultimate insult to Lucius' human selfhood.³ Book 11's vision of spiritual improvement and honor—the conclusion of disputed meaning—is not the focus of this study, but our evidence will point to a pessimistic reading of it as another kind of affront (freely chosen) to full humanity (see below, Conclusion). This paper chiefly addresses the less remarked transitional phase before complete social annihilation in which Lucius and others are transfixed by anxiety, shame, or fear, while still human-ish. Apuleius' Lucius, “writing” of a cruel and heartless world, compares frozen feelings, facial features, and postures to immobile statues, to

³An anonymous reader for *TAPA* pointed out that Lucius' story has analogues in the widely useful myths of the long-suffering, shape-shifting Trickster (see Paul Radin's classic discussion of the Winnebago Indians' figure, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* [New York 1956] and the recent wider-ranging, more popular portrayal by Hyde. The Romans—like many other communities—clearly enjoyed spectating other people's humiliations and indeed elevated the pain that others experience to civic festival status. They also enjoyed, in their fantasies and in envy of the more fortunate, stories of changed identity and unmasked pretensions. Apuleius, the designing author, created for them a magnet-character for mishap, abuse, and cruelty. I do not however believe that the analogies arise from conscious or sub-conscious observation or intention in a novelist interested in folklore but not a collector or analyst of it. Lucius' asinine curiosity and oblivious clumsiness attract irritation from interlocutors, penalties from local authorities, and punishment from self-appointed masters, but his violations of boundaries do not exhibit Trickster's supreme amorality.

corpses, to conditions at the edge of death and in the Underworld.⁴ The false deaths, or pre-deaths, signify the vulnerability of this world by showing the reader the fragility of freedom, honor, and life itself.

1. Humiliation, Embarrassment, and Derisive Laughter

Strategies for inflicting and avoiding humiliation (and for denying to the victim that one intends any slight, as Hypatan burghers do: 3.11 *ne istud ... contumeliae causa perpessus es*) still occupy much human thought (cf. Goffman; David on Spartans). Lucius, a young and noble Greek visitor in a strange Thesalian town (1.1), meets reasonably gracious treatment from various hitherto unknown hosts,⁵ but his pseudo-heroic Herculean temerity (3.19) in private and public leads him into anti-heroic embarrassment—and worse—in the elaborate hoax or “April Fool” of the carnivalesque *Risus* festival. Inflicted discomfiture seems “poetic justice” for the person who transgresses acknowledged boundaries for food, sex, hospitality, magic, etc.⁶ Although this episode is left loosely connected to the rest of the plot, it is determinative for themes of debasement, disorientation, and immobility.⁷ The humblest and the highest in this novel experience derision, from slaves or horse-whipped and nearly gelded asses, to the Olympian gods and their congeners, which appear as caricatures of cruelty and cowardice in the “Cupid and Psyche” *fabula*, as accomplices in fraud for the Syrian priests, and as bribable pornography in the “Judgment of Paris” mime, “a corrupt religious spectacle” (Schlam 1992: 55) that universally degrades viewers and viewed.

Derision in Roman society affords a prime cause of social stillness; it is debilitating to the affected individual. Apuleius, himself from the Roman prov-

⁴Vocabulary was checked and augmented from Oldfather et al. Hall studies the sympathy extended to lower classes in Apuleius’ “model,” the ps.-Lucianic “Ass-Tale.”

⁵However, the disorienting incident in which the magistrate Pythias has Lucius’ fish trampled foreshadows other bafflements and inverted expectations: 1.25 *his actis consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus*.

⁶Cooper 437–44 describes the anti-epic reversals of the protagonist, his interactants, and the included tales. Summers 524 n. 31: Lucius’ crime in Roman law was corruption of an *ancilla*.

⁷Perry 273–80 marks the tale as an Apuleian interpolation in the original, Greek Palaestra-Goatskin-Metamorphosis sequence. He is probably correct in seeing Apuleius’ original hand, but in labeling it “logically incompatible” with the goat-skin deflation (279), while strictly correct, he demands excessive precision from fiction.

ince of Africa, develops his description of society with tropes of immobility that dwell on examples of sadistic spectacles in the Roman provinces. Three examples of derisive debasements follow, two considered briefly, the third at greater length. All involve encounters between men and magic, and all three men are psychologically deracinated and socially damaged.⁸

Achaean Socrates is a hopelessly ragged and ghostly street-beggar (1.6 *semiamictus ... deformatus ... larvale simulacrum*) after Meroë of Larissa ensnares him in Thessaly. When Aristomenes meets him crouched motionless on the street, he hesitates to approach “the pitiable spectacle of suffering” crusted with filth. Socrates beats his own head for stupidity when awake and lets out a death-squeal when his heart is removed (1.7, 13).

Aristomenes, sprawled flat, trembling in fear under his bed on the floor, has his face drenched in urine by the squatting *lamiae* and is then left for dead (1.13–14 *humi prostratus ... inanimis ... et frigidus ... semimortuus ... supervivens et postumus*). Even his friend and the lowly doorman of the inn scorn him. He prefers exile in Aetolia and Thessaly to returning home to Achaean Aegium.

Milesian Thelyphron, Lucius’ third major foreshadow, is abused by the murdering widow of Larissa for a fatuous and ill-omened comment, then pummeled and thrown from the house by her staff, before his deepest humiliation in full public: suddenly revealed facial deformation (2.20–31). He too remains fixed in Thessaly and never returns home (2.30 *nec postea debilis ac sic ridiculus Lari me patrio reddere potui*).⁹ Zatchlas the Isiac necromancer and Thelyphron the revived corpse prove their accusations against the woman with *documenta perlucida*: praeternatural knowledge of the live watchman Thelyphron’s fresh mutilations. The many bystanders, once his losses are revealed, point their fingers at noseless and earless Thelyphron, nod heads at him, and boil over with laughter (2.30 *risus ebullit*, the latter a *hapax*). Thelyphron

⁸Tatum 490, 499 explores these anticipatory tales that Lucius fails to heed (cf. 11.15).

⁹2.14 offers a further example: Milo’s inset tale about Diophanes mocks his own wife, his guest, and the *Chaldaeus egregius*. Cerdo the curious merchant, after observing the fraud Diophanes unmasked, successfully retreats with his coins intact. That prophet himself finally wakes up (*tunc demum ... expergitur*) from his own story and realizes his unintended self-revelation. The crowd dissolves in laughter at the self-defeating self-betrayal of a spiritualist’s pretensions. Laughter again unifies the group and excludes and debases the transgressive alien.

escapes his mockers in a cold sweat (*frigido sudore defluens*), lowering himself physically and crawling through the bystanders' legs.

Long after the defining event of his life, Thelyphron is laughed at by mocking fellow symposiasts. He has become a permanent laughing-stock. At the Hypatan feast, Thelyphron, at once kept client and house fool, reclining by himself in a corner, suddenly becomes the spot-lit object of all guests' laughter and attention (2.20 *convivium totum in licentiosos cachinnos effunditur, omniumque ora et optutus in unum quempiam angulo secubantem conferuntur*). Framing his story, the drunken diners laugh before and after his impressment into another telling (2.31 *madidi rursum cachinnum integrant*, cf. 2.20 above). The victim, in his agitated state, complains and tries to leave, but the hostess insists that he replay his life's worst moment (*qui cunctorum obstinatione confusus indigna murmurabundus cum vellet exsurgere*, but she *ingratis cogebat effari*). "Kindly" Byrrhaena characterizes the Milesian's tale as *sermo lepidus*! The ancient Greeks and Romans disdained the disabled and they marginalized the disfigured (Garland 29, 43, *passim*). Thelyphron qualifies: no ears or nose, unwilling to return home, he lives refigured by prosthetic devices on the fringe of Thessalian society.

Lucius soon joins the series of men who approach magic. Perspicuous examples never direct this cupidinous soul (2.1, 3.19, 22) to find meaning for himself in other people's experiences, even when warnings are verbal and explicit (2.6, 15, 20: Byrrhaena, Milo, Fotis). His trust in appearances is insufficiently eroded. Lucius stumbles from public humiliation to seemingly irreversible transformations. The novel's heartless laughs and their paralyzed victims invite discussion of Roman risible pleasure in spectacles of formal (judicial) and informal policing and punishment.¹⁰

¹⁰Seneca had noted problems of impression management: the least motions (of hand, head, finger, or eye) can betray tendencies that one prefers to suppress: *Ep.* 52.12 *argumentum morum ex minimis quoque licet capere; impudicum et incessus ostendit et manus mota et unum interdum responsum et relatus ad caput digitus et flexus oculorum*. Quintilian, a later student of communication, concurs: *Inst.* 11.3.65–66 *gestus ... pleraque etiam citra verba significant*, and *ex vultu ingressuque perspicitur habitus animorum*, or *non manus solum sed nutus etiam declarant nostram voluntatem et in mutis pro sermone sunt*. A third student of human nature and oratory, Apuleius portrays several characters who cannot suit movements and gestures (a type of *communis sermo*) to their judges and audience (cf. *Quint. Inst.* 11.3.150, 180). When one cannot coordinate his words and gestures, words may fail him—Apuleian stupefaction (cf. *Quint. Inst.* 11.3.67).

“In Apuleius, laughter seems singularly harsh.”¹¹ *Risus* in this text is cruel, mocking, and joyless, since its humans are both vulnerable and competitive.¹² Justice at law in the Roman imperial provinces appears elusive or unattainable.¹³ Inferiors are envious, superiors pitiless. Venus (portrayed as the local *domina* of a large villa), the rich neighbor of the three brothers, or the Roman soldier requisitioning the ass, all hope to profit from another’s weakness (6.7–10, 9.35–38, 9.39–42). Peers are eager to profit from others’ losses in a zero-sum-game society. *Fides* is rarely exhibited, usually crumbles soon after emerging, and before the finale gains no reward (cf. Shumate 87–88). In this world, ridicule is an effective device for marginalizing nuisance-causing neighbors or threatening competitors. Indeed, ridicule supplies a less immediately lethal weapon than others that Lucius learns of, e.g., malicious and false murder prosecutions and vicious, man-killing dogs.

Lucius’ unforgiving Roman world thus enjoys many a laugh, especially gratuitously sadistic mirth at someone else’s expense. Laughter in this *fabula* is usually hostile. Readers are often invited to participate in the scorn. Thelyphron’s unwitting revelation of his facial disfigurement and Venus’ indignation at Ceres’ and Juno’s intervention on behalf of Psyche provoke mocking laughter in specified internal listeners and in an external audience, the readers (2.30, 5.31). So do an auctioneer’s jokes at the ass’s expense, and the exposure of the Atargatis priests’ fraudulent piracy and sexual deviance (8.23–24, 29). Thelyphron is Byrrhaena’s pet, a parasite on display whenever she wants to amuse other guests. Venus worries about becoming a conspicuous laughing-stock (5.30 *irrisui*), the fate that Lucius so vividly experiences as man and ass. The perverted Syrian priests feign laughter when caught in a sacrilegious burglary (9.10 *mendoso risu cavillantes*), but provide real laughs for their ridiculing captors (8.29) and some contrast to the genuine piety of the sober Isiac priests (Schlam 1992: 54). The only laugh in the “Isis Book” (11.8 *rideres utrumque*) is laughed by the putative reader at disfigured Pegasus and Bellerophon.

¹¹Nethercut 119. See Lateiner 1977 for laughter in other authors, esp. Herodotus. At greater length on the archaic and classical Greek periods, Arnould and Desclos.

¹²Schlam 1992: 40 and ch. 4 in general. *Risus* and the louder *cachinnus* are mocking, while the verb *ridere* lacks edge and can refer to a smile, e.g., Socrates *subridens* at Aristomenes’ urinal stench (1.18, with Nethercut 119). This survey discusses nearly all examples.

¹³Summers describes the justice system in the empire, reading the trial scenes of the novel as indicting the administration of justice in the provinces, a system that once endangered author Apuleius himself in a criminal prosecution for magic. David analyzes comparable derision in earlier Sparta.

phon, an ass with glued-on wings and a crippled man in the Isiac parade.¹⁴ That laugh belittles the faded heroes of yore and their silly claims.

Cachinnus signifies boisterous and often malevolent laughter, the type that Catullus (56.1–2) or the satirists evoke for *res ridiculae*—a sexual exposé, a hurtful joke or humiliating prank—or characterizes a disbelieving vocalic gesture (like English “snort”). In Apuleius’ first instance, Aristomenes’ road-companion and audience thus sneer at the teller’s self-denigrating witch-story (1.2 *alter exserto cachinno*). Hypatan bystanders react thus to Diophanes’ unwitting self-exposure (2.14 *adstantes in clarum cachinnum ... effusos*), and Thelyphron’s symposiasts similarly greet and respond to his self-exposing tale (2.20, 31).

¹⁴Schlam 1992: 44 notes that happy cheer displaces bitter laughter at Lucius’ restoration. This paper cannot fully reprise or argue the contentious issue of Book 11’s divine revelation to the sophomoric Books 1–10. I myself think we need to remain sceptical of priestly sermons demanding servitude in the name of freedom (11.15). Tender-skinned Lucius does finally experience intense joy (11.14 *magnum gaudium*), as a reader more sympathetic to his conversion reminds me (cf. the palpably Christian, condescending comments on “the new life” of Festugière 68–84; also Gwyn Griffiths 51–55, 345; and Shumate 320–22). But Lucius has escaped from involuntary servitude and *chosen* to escape to self-deprivation, self-denial, and self-imposed humiliation. Novels portray the truth of individuals and their relationships, and they are not, at least the good ones are not, religious tracts or political propaganda. It is a tinny compliment to the artist Apuleius to argue for the sincerity of the author’s personal (unknown) Isisism at the cost of his novel’s consistency of tone, character, and parodic viewpoint (e.g., on law, medicine, religion, government, marriage). Lucius’ monastic “freedom” as a recluse renounces and devalues the human community for something “wonderful” elsewhere, a dynamic pattern observed from the first page on. That tough-skinned community remains inescapable. Even Isiac priests belong to it and ironically keep asking in the “epiepilogue” for money—the clothes off Lucius’ back! (The rapacity of 11.28 reprises that of the witch Meroë in 1.7; cf. Winkler 1985: 221 and Schlam 1992: 24–28, 118–22, on sources and genres). Lucius’ success is variously limited; he replaces humiliation with a coached, expensive humility. Cooper’s Jungian reading (464, 437) correctly gathers Apuleian critiques of, and challenges to, traditional literary and societal values (the heroic world has vanished!), but her claim that passive “feminine” spirituality replaces action does not convince. Shumate (288, 323) better describes the sociology of the religious experience of Lucius’ “sick soul.” Lucius accepts a cult “script” to stabilize his shaky world, to reach a state of assurance in a recruited community with strong affective bonds. She argues well that the novel accurately (if comically) describes spiritual “crisis and conversion,” without evaluating the worth of the spiritual change. Shumate finally (326–27) endorses Winkler’s aporetic, non-authorizing reading of this novel.

These horse-laugh acknowledge self-deconstruction without sympathy. The caricature of the wicked mother-in-law, Venus, thus greets fugitive slave Psyche (6.9 *laetissimum cachinnum extollit et qualem solent furenter irati*), a description that clarifies the laugh's connection to sadistic, hostile impulses. Lucius the Ass submits to sale by an auctioneer who disrespects his own merchandise. He damages his own interest in order to joke about the broken-down ass to an appreciative and laughing crowd (8.24 *cachinnos circumstantium mouebat*). The adulterous wife in the "Tub Tale" laughs derisively at her husband's stupidity in her lover's presence (9.6), soldiers laugh uncontrollably at an innocent man's legal and capital peril (9.42), and Thiasus' cooks, angry with each other, "crack up" when the ass is discovered to be the connoisseur-thief of their elegant food (10.15 *risu maximo dirumpuntur*).¹⁵ The pleasure of amusement at another's expense outweighs social inhibitions and even the calculus of profit and honor.

Cachinnus generally denotes more bodily involvement than calmer *risus*, but the rich master enjoyed the latter until his belly ached (10.16 *risu ipse quoque latissimo adusque intestinorum dolorem redactus ...*), and so did his servants and convivial guests (... *convivium summo risu personabat*). Their frequently noted mirth (Zimmerman 240) at an ass's buffoonery may be accounted less malicious than it would be for a human's discomfort. However, the robbers' hilarity after sighting the Virgin on the Ass (6.29 *risu maligno*) and Venus' angry delight when Psyche is whipped (6.9 bis), certainly express ill will. The grotesque and wretched bakers manage to laugh at the still more pathetic blindfolded ass's "decision" to march (when unexpectedly beaten) in order to grind the grain (9.12 *risum toto coetu commoueram*). Again, the soldiers laugh at the ass's shadow that betrays itself and its master, and Milo laughs at his witch-wife's weather forecasts (9.42; 2.11). Lucius realizes with a displeased laugh that his friend Demeas has sent him to be a guest at a miser's house (1.21). These outbursts of amusement are derisory gibes at others' dignity or pretensions. They express the laughter's (often unearned) sense of superiority (Lateiner 1977). In Apuleius' world, the joking can never be laid aside, though Lucius wishes it could be (1.21 *remoto ioco*).¹⁶

¹⁵Their bizarre delight at the unspeakable taste of a lazy beast cannot be counted a "put-down" since the ass is not thought to understand their glee, but it certainly provides an outlet for their accumulated anger towards each other.

¹⁶Occasionally laughter in ancient literature is innocent but that kind quickly evaporates (Lateiner 1977; Arnould). At Byrrhaena's feast, the mood is pleasant at first, as is suited to *cenae* from Homer's Phaeacians through Plato and Petronius: 2.19 *risus affluens et ioci liberales et cavillus* (cf. 2.8, 3.19 *risi* [conj.]). But Thelyphron reports that unfriendly *risus ebullit* from the crowd at his unmasking

The festival of *Risus* intensifies Roman scenes of humiliation known from satiric incidents in Petronius, Juvenal, and Martial. While Lucius is arrested and paraded sacrificially (3.2 *lustralibus piamentis*) through their streets, people laugh to bursting at the uncomprehending prisoner (3.6 *risu cachinnabili diffluebant*). When he finishes his elaborate defense speech, his host and kinsman Milo laughs loudest (3.6 *risu maximo dissolutum*). After the corpses have been “exposed” as wineskins and the joke has been revealed, and while Lucius walks to the baths, relatives, friends, and strangers roar with laughter (3.7 bis, 10, 12). Sadistic Byrrhaena wants him to return to her house that very night so she can show off her new “goat” (cf. 8.2) to another (or the same) crowd of clients. Lucius’ mortification has cost him his dignity in Hypata.¹⁷

His spectacular shame, and even more, his realization of his having been “framed,” for a (non-existent) crime, is the town’s release and catharsis. The language of mirth is ubiquitous at the staged, unequal combat in the arena of words: *risu dirumperetur, risus libere ... exarsit*, and *risus* causes *dolor ventris* (3.2, 10).

The novel contains other scenes of powerful figures showing off a helpless clown or humiliated freak as a guffaw-provoking spectacle. The planned lethal theatrical spectacle at Corinth is (barely) averted, but Isis the Showman’s Cenchrean *praeludium* is not.¹⁸ The spectacles at the *Risus* festival, at Corinth’s amphitheater, and at Cenchreae (noted by Habinek and Zimmerman) all have disquieting consequences for the detainee, and the negative valence that

(2.30), and his umpteenth retelling (2.20) again provokes uproarious *cachinnus* (2.31). Aristomenes emits an unexpected laugh at himself when petrified with fear by the witches (1.12; cf. 4.27 *affectus in contrarium*). The least innocent but happiest, and to us most sympathetic, laugh is Charite’s when her disguised husband Tlepolemus convinces his new robber friends to sell the comely wench to a brothel (7.10), the ultimate insult conceivable for any novel’s heroine. She already knows who pseudo-Haemus the robber really is, but her trusty sidekick, the still ignorant and gullible ass, is disgusted, since he remains duped by the Odyssean disguise.

¹⁷After Lucius becomes an ass, *risus* accompanies him, as predicted: 3.11 *ubique comitabitur amanter*. Other true but similarly unexpectedly bitter predictions emerge from Diophanes, Byrrhaena, and Fotis (2.12, 2.5, 3.22, 25). Heine 290–93, in a chapter on *das Groteskes*, discusses the malicious, uncanny laughter of the *Risus* festival and its parallels in group derision from the stories of Aristomenes and Thelyphron.

¹⁸See also, e.g., Byrrhaena and Thelyphron, Tlepolemus’ display of the bound and drunk robbers (7.13, with Lucius and the town as *spectatores*), and Lucius’ dubiously fond master Thiasus’ display of Lucius the Ass-Symposiast.

Apuleius places on this embarrassment invites reading the naked Lucius' Cenchrean "rebirth" in the Isis procession pessimistically (*contra* Habinek 49ff., Zimmerman 25, 240). Lucius' subsequent display as Isis' proof-text and priest also depresses, after what he has gone through, despite the naive narrator's clear pleasure in the renewed attention; the "freeze-frame" ending of the novel with bald Lucius (Winkler 1985: 211–26) now on an invisible chain suggests that he has only exchanged jailers, only experienced a *rite de passage* into another dead-end.¹⁹

2. Stupefaction

In a novel entitled *Metamorphoses* flux and shape-shifting are expected. One important variety of transformation is from mobility to immobility. Humans are normally active, so a more-than-momentary hesitation or stillness provides a distorted, frozen imitation of the usual human condition. A cataleptic trance, an immobile corpse, or an image in stone represents zero-degree animation, a physiological marker of motility lost, or at least of psychological immobilization. Physical immobility is often emblemized, perhaps accompanied, by verbal disablement (silence) and paralyzed internal confusion, cognitive or emotional overload. The *Gestalt* is one of reduced capacity, temporary or permanent impairment of human resources.²⁰

¹⁹The *Metamorphoses* includes many incidents of legal and illegal capture, binding, and imprisonment. The number of demobilized victims would astonish, were immobilization not so important a theme in the novel (often identified by words such as *carcer*, *custodia*, *vinculum*, etc.). Not surprisingly, external demobilization is most important for the three leading characters: Charite, Psyche, and Lucius. Charite: 4.23, 6.31, 8.8; Psyche: 4.35, 5.5 (*beatus carcer!*, a concept perhaps relevant to book 11), 5.20, 6.9; Lucius the man: 1.26, 2.15; 3.2, 10, 12, 25; from 11.6 on his mobility is limited by orders of Isis and her priests, at 11.28 he gets a shaven head (cf. 9.12 on half-shaved slaves); Lucius the ass, often tied up to keep him from wandering off: 3.28; 4.3, 7; 6.27, 30; 7.15 (cf. 16, *tandem liber asinus!*), 24, 25, 28; 8.25, 26, 30; 9.1, 2, 11, 12, 39, 40, 42; 10.35 (*liberum arbitrium* at the arena); 11.6 (Lucius' *sedulis obsequiis* to Isis). Others: 1.7, 10 (a whole town!), 15; 2.25; 4.10; 17, 21; 6.11 (Cupid!); 7.6, 12, 25; 8.5, 12, 14 (volunteer Charite; cf. Frangoulidis), 20, 22; 9.10, 12; 10.8, 10, 12, 24, 26, 28, 34.). The law provides them with no safe harbor from violence and detention. Indeed, the authorities are mustered against them (unfairly or utterly falsely: 6.7–8, 7.1–2).

²⁰The narrative shorthand for stupefaction had been long since perfected by Ovid in his homonymous *Metamorphoses*. Ovid also describes phases of transformation, some of them prior to, and pointing at, subsequent and final changes. See the fundamental study of Anderson, and Lateiner 1992.

Non-activity is not in itself a dishonorable state. It may signal several moods or responses. It is frequent in private experience, and Homer's and Vergil's epic heroes and tragic Ajax, etc., accept it in crucial moments of pain and recognition (Arnould, Lateiner 1992, Montiglio, Ricottilli). Non-activity in an interactive context, a passive or pseudo-passive response violating expectations of constant interaction (verbal, facial, gestural), provides a "present absence." That is to say, stillness and silence emit an emphatic communication, a "filled pause," in the language of linguists, when preceded and/or followed by words and/or other communicative acts. The pause in the verbal or actional stream, if it does not merely regroup or refresh the subject, communicates inability or unwillingness to continue an untenable interchange as before.²¹ The duration (chronemics) of silence and stillness qualifies their seriousness (co-structuration of expression). Because silence and stillness are absences, unlike audible sounds or visible gestures and expressions, features of volume, intensity, distortion of facial muscles, and extension of body cannot modulate them.²²

Apuleius' garrulous Lucius is from start to finish fascinated by speech (and hair). He remarks the semanticity of silence, one-sided or shared. Carl Schlam noted that "the capacity of speech—and silence—raises a question of what is human" (1981: 133). This observation applies to Lucius first as human, then as ass, and finally as a third species, Isiac initiate. It also applies to the Apuleian semiotics of narrative, the communicative potential of silence and stillness. There are enforced and respectful silences (civic or court commands; divine transformation from the human to animal, plant, or mineral; non-debatable interruptions), physiological ones (the ass can say "Oh," but not "Caesar"; breathlessness), and more-or-less elective silences (grief, guilty conscience, delight, amazement, or despair).

Stupor, voiceless bewilderment, is characteristic for Lucius' earlier and later unilluminated states. Cluelessness is symptomatic of his usual passivity.²³ His

²¹One deceptive motionless event, intended as the inaction of ignorance, requires note. Lucius the ass pretends not to know his "job" in revolving the millstone (9.11 *ignarus operis stupore mentito defixus haerebam*); he is beaten for his inactivity and finally derided.

²²Poyatos 6. Sound and physical motion—or their absence—are more sensible and interactive, therefore more important, than smell (sweat), temperature (chill, flush), or taste. Montiglio discusses various kinds of silences in Greek genres.

²³Recall again his totally asinine misreading of Haemus and Charite (7.10), and his slowly dawning identification of Pythias and that magistrate's agenda. Mispri-
sion of events and objects enriches enjoyment of fiction. The more playful the writer,

thinking and expressive capacities shut down in various situations (sex, food, magic, death, and gods). The word appears eight times in *Metamorphoses* (only once elsewhere in Apuleius' works: *Pl.* 2.4), along with its congeners *stupeo*, *stupidus*, *obstupesco* (*obstupidus*, *obstupefactus*), and compounds. Often yoked with a word for becoming dumbstruck or frozen fast (e.g., *attonitus* or *defixus*: 1.8, 2.13, 3.22, 9.34, 11.14), the concept evokes the psychology of the socially and spiritually labile and unconfident (cf. Shumate 43–134).

Stupor and immobility appear in the prologic tale of Aristomenes. When his friend Aristomenes insults his jailer-witch, Meroë, Socrates exhibits paralysis or a numb befuddlement (1.8 *in stuporem attonitus*). Indeed Socrates asks his putative savior to leave him behind, on the grounds that he is an object, a nonambulatory sexual trophy that Fortuna has fixed in place (1.7 *tropaeo ... quod fixit ipsa*). Soon after, salvific Aristomenes himself lies near death (1.12 *morti proximus*; 14 *inanimis ... mihi supervivens et postumus*, etc.).

After these preliminary indications of the paralysis resulting from meddling in sex and magic, it is no surprise that Lucius frequently finds himself stupefied.²⁴ Lucius is confounded and wallows in miserable consternation when his dear friend, the magistrate Pythias, ruins his investment in a dinner of fish (1.25 *consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus*).²⁵ A frolicsome female cook's undulating

the more frequently and seriously characters misapprehend. This supplies readers with two pleasures: a false sense of superiority and the appreciation of various ironies. Heliodorus' Knemon misreads clues because of his Thisbe-phobia and Khari-kles misreads narratives, medical symptoms (his foster-daughter's), gestures, and speech regularly enough to engineer the plot and Kalasiris' plotting (e.g., *Aith.* 1.11, 12; 2.3; 4.14–15, 19.3; 5.2–4; cf. Morgan 1991: 95, 102; Winkler 1982: 140 ff.).

²⁴As do other sex-and-magic-meddlers: Socrates can barely move and does not wish to (1.7). Diophanes the seer, forgetting to maintain his mask of omniscience, is dumbfounded when approached by an unexpected friend (2.13 *attonitus et repentinae visionis stupore et ... oblitus*). He soon becomes the butt of laughter for his unwitting admissions of ignorance. Thelyphron, another foreshadowing figure, fingers his reward of gold, thunderstruck by the widow's generous reward, just before his inauspicious *faux pas* (2.26).

²⁵Auerbach 52–55 wonders whether silliness, malice, or insanity motivates the officer of the law. Pythias seems to be the first figure to reflect Apuleius' dismantling of authority—neither secular nor sacred powers protect the weak (leaving Isis aside). Whether for profit or sheer exuberance (*contentus morum severitudine*), Pythias' acts make subjects into objects and everything dear is mashed to a pulp. The name of justice decorates and dignifies some of the worst problems that Apuleius and Lucius face.

hips and buttocks next transfix Lucius (2.7 *isto aspectu defixus obstupui et mirabundus steti*).²⁶ Good, bad, and indifferent outcomes equally immobilize him. When Lucius reaches Hypata, dumbstruck with longing for magic (2.2 *sic attonitus ... desiderio stupidus*), he walks about without a clue in search of signs. “I was stunned out of my mind” (3.12 *impos animi stupebam*; cf. 5.22 of Psyche), says anti-heroic Lucius when he describes his mental state after the exposé of the cruel débâcle of the *Risus* festival. When Lucius later sees Pamphile transformed into an owl, he is likewise thunderstruck, awake in a dream (3.22 *facti stupore defixus Sic exterminatus animi, attonitus in amentiam vigilans somniabar*), an oxymoronic climax of stillness and frenzy.

Later, transformed mistakenly into an ass, he is angry enough to consider ripping Fotis part and kicking her to death (3.25). Speechless—and nearly gestureless (3.25 *iam humano gestu simul et voce privatus*)—he has become a lowly ass rather than a high-flying owl. The laughable beast as protagonist cannot speak words for three-quarters of the novel, from 3.25 to 11.18 (cf. 4.23 *asinalia verecundia ductus*). As tethered chattel, he cannot choose movement or stillness, speech or silence.²⁷ He can no longer attempt to clear himself, as he had done with the goatskin “murders,” of the unfounded charge of robbery (7.1–3 *nec mihi tamen licebat causam meam defendere vel unico verbo saltem denegare*; cf. 7.25–26). Repeatedly he needs to speak but has not the *copia loquendi* (3.29, 7.26, 8.29, 9.26). He is bonded to a bestial body: tongue-tied and saddled by other masters, eventually loved for his big penis alone.

At the bakery, hunger and curiosity dumbfound Lucius (4.22, 9.12 *familiari curiositate attonitus*). Alcimus the imprudent robber is also bested by a crone who catches him “preoccupied” with his curiosity (4.12 *in prospectu alioquin attonitum*).²⁸ The entire world is stupefied by Psyche’s beauty (4.28 *formositatis admiratione stupidi*). Psyche is astounded at her husband’s supernaturally lavish palace and appurtenances (5.2 ‘*Quid,*’ *inquit* [sc. *vox quaedam*] ‘*domina, tantis obstupescis opibus?*’). Venus’ impossible “sort the seed” test freezes her “slave” (6.10 *consternata silens obstupescit*). Thrasyllus, during the boar-hunt, accuses his sexual rival and intended victim Tlepolemus of cowardly passivity (8.5 ‘*Quid stupore confusi ...?*’). The portent of gory drops at a dinner table appalls the transfixed, good-natured farmers (9.34 bis, *stupore defixi*

²⁶While his volitional body motion ceases, his genitals, previously limp, come to a hard stand.

²⁷Whenever the ass does choose to stand still, he is beaten (3.28, 4.4, 6.30, 7.18, 9.11, etc.).

²⁸*Attonitus* appears eleven times in *Met.*, nowhere else in Apuleius.

mirantur). The three sons who were outrageously savaged to death are survived by their father, who emblemizes stillness, silence, and, briefly, incapacity to display grief: 9.38 *nec ullum verbum ac ne tacitum quidem fletum tot malis circumventus senex quivit emittere*. After the facts sink in, he grabs a table-knife and stabs himself repeatedly in the throat with a flood of suicidal gore (*novi sanguinis fluvio proluit*) in order to escape his unbearable situation. The Corinthian audience of the Trojan mime is “spellbound” (10.35 *attonita*, Hanson’s transl.). The priest of Isis, though forewarned, is nevertheless astonished by the retransformed Lucius (11.14 *in aspectum meum attonitus*).

The extreme of stupefaction occurs when Lucius under judicial duress sees that the allegedly murdered corpses are only perforated goatskins (3.9 and 17). Although he sees that he has been saved from torture and execution for multiple murder, he freezes in perception of his social injury. He metaphorically turns into stone (an early metamorphosis), and stands there frozen and fixed.²⁹ His false salvation comes at the cost of intense humiliation: he has exchanged actual death for a social one. He has been the butt of a gruesome mass deception of one lonely stranger (3.9–10 *obstupefactus haesi ... fixus in lapidem steti gelidus nihil secus quam una de ceteris theatri statuis vel columnis Nec tamen* [was Milo able to soften the] *indignationem iniuriae quae inhaeserat altius meo pectori*, etc.). This concentration of demobilizing metaphors and comparisons here marks one “death” of Lucius’ many. The Hypatans, including intimate friends, exhibit intentional malevolence in their jointly plotted damage to his self-esteem.

Our thoughts, feelings, and bodily infirmities are usually shielded from humiliating exposure by clothes, adequate social masks, and polite civilities. At the *Risus* festival, the urbane Lucius first fails to realize what everyone else already knows—that the accusation of triple murder is a hoax. He consequently digs a deeper pit of shame by false and pretentious claims of heroism in a well-constructed but utterly pointless *apologia*. The carefully staged revelation humiliates him before a delighted mob cognizant of the “true facts.” Anxiety and shame structure this first death, from arrest (immobilization), through the revelation (causing petrification), until after he is “freed” and manages to produce a false smile (3.12; cf. Newbold 34–35). No other Apuleian incident combines so

²⁹The metaphor is “proverbial and frequent,” as van der Paardt notes *ad loc.*, but thematic in any work entitled *Metamorphoses* that plays on the immobility theme. The image of morphing into stone here resonates with earlier and later passages; e.g., Psyche, faced with Venus’ request for “freezing liquid,” was transformed into stone (6.13–14 *mutata in lapidem*) by the hopeless task.

much anxiety and guilt. It provides the paradigm episode in a life of mistaken searching and false assumptions.

3. Non-Death Deaths, Including Statues

Apuleius' *fabula* plays a fugue on death: metaphorical, metonymic, and mythical/allegorical death. We also encounter the familiar novelistic motif of *Scheintod* (10.5, 12; 6.21). Further, Apuleius describes partial death (loss of members), near death (7.28), spiritual death, and social death (3.24, 7.1–3, suspicions of robbing his host: *latrocinium verum etiam parricidium*). Several actual deaths, including both murder and suicide (attempted and successful: 1.16, 6.30, 8.14 bis, 9.38), surface—but not natural deaths.³⁰ This progression from metaphor, apparent death, and limited deaths to real deaths deserves brief review, and statues—another death-like state—belong in the series.

The familiar names of the Underworld's personnel appear when Psyche journeys to the realm of the dead and the spirits. Orcus, Death's god and its realm, appears four times in Book 6 (8, 16, 18, 29), and only five times elsewhere.³¹ In the catabasic Book 6, Mercury speaks of Death's clutches, Jupiter's eagle of Death's dismal domicile (*Orci ferales penates*); the Tower speaks of Death's palace, and Lucius of Charite's choice of the wrong escape route—heading towards Hell. The Styx is mentioned thrice: by Thelyphron's briefly revived corpse (2.29, with Lethe), Jupiter's eagle, and Isis (6.15, 11.6, along with Acheron and Elysium). Death lurks ubiquitously in the novel. His realm is the land of stillness.

A mythic locale or associated being can metonymically represent the process, fact, and machinery of death. Death-like non-function characterizes individuals whose body and tongue are still, even if they are stunned but still alive. Thus, in the preludic tales, Meroë's victim Socrates speaks of her ability to illuminate Tartarus, and a terrified Aristomenes of beholding Tartarus and Cerberus. Byrrhaena describes Pamphile's powers to drown light in Tartarus and

³⁰Two momentary Un-deaths, returning from the Dead (1.17, 2.28–29), appear before the only “real” rebirth (11.16, 21 *renatus*) of the dead Lucius. Christian and pagan (e.g., Osirian) parallels, well noted by Gwyn Griffiths (e.g., 51–55, 258–59), should not be pushed so far as to make the author Apuleius a fellow-traveler.

³¹Orcus appears in the trial scene when Lucius deems himself already accounted for (as a slave) among Proserpina's paraphernalia (the queen of the dead has nine other occurrences) and Orcus' other slaves. Orcus surfaces in the robbers' mocking salutation for the crone as “Death's sole reject,” in Haemus' description of his own narrow escape, and in Charite's sentencing of the murderer and adulterer Thrasyllus to wander *inter Orcum et solem* (3.9, 4.7, 7.7, 7.24, 8.12).

Chaos, Thelyphron's revived corpse bemoans Lethe and the Styx, and Lucius himself at Milo's house speaks of Avernus. His trial evokes Proserpina, Orcus, and the dead below, the *inferi* (1.8, 15; 2.6, 29; 3.2, 2.11, 3.9). This emphasis on death and the Underworld, lands of immobility, is relevant.

One may mistakenly value this pretentious mythologizing as another display of the author Apuleius' rhetorical ornament, or as merely subtle authorial characterization of Lucius the narrator's pseudo-education (11.15 *nec ... ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit*). These ludic periphrases and euphemisms, however, prepare readers for two most significant incidents: "Cupid and Psyche" and "Lucius' Conversion and Anamorphosis." Psyche's heroic labors and "real" journey to and from (almost) the Underworld, *ad inferos et ipsius Orci ferales penates*, including Proserpina, the "bottom of Tartarus," Dis, Orcus, Charon, and Cerberus (6.16–19), allegorize the soul's journey away from and back up to god by way of death and resurrection.³² Lucius' religious revelation is filled with light (*lumen*), which displaces the frightening dark.³³

³²Schiesaro has identified a notable *topos*: an ecphrasis of the *locus horridus*, counterpart to the well-known poetic trope, the *locus amoenus*. He focuses on two parallel passages more or less at the edges of the crone's narrative: Lucius' description of the bandits' mountain-cave hideout and Venus' directions to Psyche for obtaining the "freezing liquid" of the mountain-top spring (4.6, 6.13). See further the Talking Tower's directions (or revelation: *vaticinatio*) to the *pyxis* of beauty (6.18–19). This ecphrasis of Hell, disguised as a prophecy or road map, is the longest of the three (19 and 7 vs. 48 lines). The Talking Masonry offers a pastiche of Vergil's ecphrasis of the path of rare return to Darkness (Schiesaro 211–23; Walsh 56–57; Finkelpearl 1998: 110–14 on catabasis). In fact, ecphrasis and many small touches recollect the Infernal in Apuleius as well as in Petronius. See 7.16; 8.16, 21, 22; 9.10, 12, 24: the mean and sadistic miller's wife, the welt-coated, branded, half-shaven and chained miller's slaves with their whipping and endless circling, the journey through the wolf-infested countryside, the man-eating serpent, the devouring ants, the attacking dogs, the boy suspended in sulphur fumes at the fuller's. Cf. Bodel on literary and visual conventions concerning death at Roman *cenae*. Dark describes the uncanny and undesirable: *mons horridus ... umbrosus; fontis atri fuscae defluunt undae; deviis abditam locis ... tenebras ... squalido seni ... atra atria ...*, while shining light and day provide positive environments.

³³From the full circle of the moon in unique brilliance before baptism (11.1) to Lucius' prayer to the *regina caeli ... ista luce feminea conlustrans* (11.2), light is gratefully received. By the answering epiphany of Isis wearing a cloak scintillating with stars and a flaming moon, and by the arrival of the golden sun itself, divinity illumines the grateful convert (11.1–7). *Candidus* or "gleaming" is especially frequent in Book 11 (7 of 16 appearances; cf. Drake), and is thematic: Isis' crown, Lu-

Scheintod is another kind of apparent but unreal death, one in which people are judged to be dead by others. It afflicts the “poisoned” son of the lecherous stepmother: 10.5 *exanimis terrae procumbuit*. He awakes in the tomb in the presence of the good physician (see Amundsen). Psyche experiences a second death-like catalepsy when she opens the infernal pyxis (6.21 *iacebat immobilis*, etc.). An unusual *Scheintod* afflicts the three “men” that Lucius allegedly killed. It is only an apparent death since they were only skin bags (*utres*) of dead goats to begin with. Other *Scheintoden*, “social deaths,” can be listed, e.g., Lucius’ and Psyche’s disappearance from their original worlds. Alienation and demobilization from the familiar is imminent in these stories.

Cold and corpse-like, in turn, is the condition of frightened or spiritless bodies (*inanimis*, *exanimis*). When the witches Meroë and Panthia leave, Aristomenes is flat on the ground, lifeless, naked and cold (1.14 *inanimis, nudus et frigidus*). Thelyphron the employed guard falls into a lifeless sleep, very like a corpse (2.25 *somnus profundus ... quis esset magis mortuus. Sic inanimis*; cf. 2.30 *in exanimis umbrae modum*). Charite is dis-spirited with fear when she is kidnapped in her wedding dress (4.26 *exanimem saevo pavore*).³⁴ Catalepsy is associated with cold after Lucius’ moment of truth when the punctured goat-skins are revealed (3.10 *gelidus*). The briefly dead Thelyphron has *frigida membra* (2.30).

Dismemberment (death of parts of the body) haunts Lucius’ long journey as an ass.³⁵ Tragic *sparagmos* in Dionysiac myth (Pentheus’ tale) is reduced to Thelyphron’s comic incompetence in restraining his *curiositas* and greed. Lucius repeatedly expresses fear of castration or total mangling by beasts (7.23, 28; 8.15, 31; 9.2; 10.34; cf. 1.13). Thelyphron must live noseless and earless, and Lamachus the robber grimly chooses death rather than useless existence as a robber without a right arm (4.10–11). Inversely, at the end, Lucius the tricho-

cius’ face, the women’s clothes in the holiday procession, male and female initiates, Lucius’ returned horse, the temple curtains, the crown of palm, and the initiating vision (11.3, 9, 10, 20, 24, 23).

³⁴The ass, in a more physical sense, is weighed down, out of breath, and exhausted (4.4 *exanimatus ac debilis*). The truly lifeless Socrates pitches into the river and the hexed baker hangs dead, in the word’s literal sense (1.19, 9.30; cf. 9.37, 10.28).

³⁵Before his transformation, it figures prominently in the paradigms of his narrative: Socrates loses his heart, Actaeon is about to be ripped apart by dogs in his familiar mythical deer-form, and Thelyphron loses appendages. Pamphile has a warehouse of stolen body parts (1.13, 2.5, 2.20, 3.17). Other dismemberment myths are mentioned, at least when damaged MSS are mended (2.26 seems periphrastically to include Orpheus and Pentheus; cf. Heath 116).

mane joyfully volunteers to live with shaven head, hairless (11.30 *raso capillo*).³⁶ Lucius dismisses his prior obsessions, integrity of body and beauty.

The “near death” experience parallels the social deaths and close calls of the hero. The novel’s first story retells Lucius’ nearly choking to death on a cheese polenta (1.3–4 *polentae caseatae ... minimo minus interii*). Socrates and Aristomenes pioneer Lucius’ career, both searching out and threatening witches and nearing death through choking.³⁷ As an ass, Lucius, like Meleager, would have died from a brand, in his case the gardener’s wife’s firebrand (here shoved into his groin (or anus? 7.28 *mediis inguinibus obtrudit ... interisset*). As death hangs over the ass, he soliloquizes about its attractions: nothing further to lose, no fear of the half-dead hag (6.26 *contemplatione comminatae mihi mortis ... anus semimortuae*). Soon after, the robbers, once drugged by Haemon, are “laid out and buried in their wine” and “as good as dead” (7.12 *omnes vino sepulti iacebant ... pariter mortui*; cf. 8.11, his evil rival Thrasyllus laid out drunk; 1.18, stupid Socrates drunk; 2.29, hasty Thelyphron’s magical sleep-affliction). These men will be soon dead, or better off if they were.

“Out of body” experiences, too, populate the plot. While not death, such an experience is a temporary cessation of normal life and identity. Socrates walks when already dead, Pamphile and Lucius become owl and ass respectively, the first Thelyphron’s corpse is compelled to speak and move, all examples of alienation from normal self or state. *Exterminatus*, “beyond the bounds, expelled,”³⁸ also describes spiritual disruption or eviction. Pamphile’s magical

³⁶See Englert and Long, and Winkler 1985: 224–27; cf. Heath 120–21. Lucius’ unexpected joy in desexualized hairlessness is terminal for the novel: *calvitio ... quoquo versus obvio gaudens obibam*—The End! Integrity of body is dismissed. Symbolic meanings of *elective* baldness include (besides castration), liberation from slavery and salvation from shipwreck (Nonius Marcellus 848 [Lindsay], quoted by Bodel 258 n. 64; Lucian *Merc. Cond.* 1, *Herm.* 86). These cultural conventions apply to Lucius along with the Isiac “rule.” Baldness was remarked and mocked by the “straight” world (the beggar Aithon at *Odyssey* 18.355; Petr. 109.8–10, Suet. *Dom.* 18; also Elisha in II Kings 2:23), and, as Winkler (1985) notes, was affected by buffoons (Alciphron 3.7, Lucian *Symp.* 18, Artemidorus *Oneir.* 1.22).

³⁷1.4 Lucius: *cibi ... faucibus inhaerentis et meacula spiritus distinentis*, though the sword swallower’s throat was not damaged by what he swallowed; 1.18 Socrates’ throat cut and Aristomenes’ bread and cheese sticking in his throat, *mediis faucibus inhaeret*; 1.19 Socrates’ death by the stream with a hole in his neck.

³⁸Five occurrences. Cicero and Apuleius also use the word geographically: *Flac.* 25, *Sest.* 30, *Prov.* 3, but cf. *Luc.* 127; *Met.* 2.25, 5.16, 9.35: the weasel, Psyche’s sister, the rich owner’s plan.

power sends Lucius beyond his mind's normal limits (3.22 *exterminatus animi*).

Burials of the undead regularly occur in ancient novels. Apuleius fancies such reports of the "good as dead" not buried properly. Psyche suffers this, according to her sisters (5.18). The dead Thelyphron's wife should be buried alive, according to local sentiment (2.29). Charite is nearly sentenced by the bandits to nasty entombment in the gutted ass (6.31–2). Other mis-burials surface, such as the prematurely buried twelve-year-old half-brother of the beloved son (10.5–6, 12). The drugged and soon-to-be-blinded Thrasyllus will, according to Charite's passionate speech of revenge, experience the inverse of the usual pattern: he will be neither alive nor dead, but suspended between daylight and Hell (8.12 *sed incertum simulacrum errabis inter Orcum et solem*). Here the "good as dead" man will dwell among the living. No longer possessed of his faculties, Thrasyllus, *sui generis*, is but a "passable likeness" of a man. He prefers to entomb himself, right after Charite kills herself, further examples of self-immobilization (8.14).

Such entombments preclude further movements of the "dead." They also have metaphorical counterparts. Isis and Lucius in his long-awaited salvation and initiation use the language of the Death World. Isis mentions Lucius' final journey to the Dead, and the mythical Acheron, Styx, and the Elysian Fields (11.6). Before that final day, by a "voluntary death," even those standing at the end of their light (11.22 *iam in ipso finitae lucis lumine constitutos*) might pray for salvation in the now and in the hereafter. In his initiations, Lucius approached the edge of death, stood on Proserpina's threshold (11.23 *accessi confinium mortis, calcato Proserpinae limine*), saw the bright light of the sun at midnight (*solem candido coruscentem lumine*), and approached the gods below (*deos inferos accessi coram*). Psyche and Lucius both submit to voluntary slavery, even death (4.34; 6.12, 14, 17; 11.15, 21), forms of immobility, in their search for a life better than bitter reality. Life above seems infernal to its unwitting and undeserving victims—a thought familiar to Augustine, Apuleius' countryman, centuries later (*C.D.* 4.4).³⁹

³⁹The parallel between death-like and death-approaching earthly misfortunes (on the one hand) and cultic imitations of death as passage to a better world (on the other) demands brief clarification, as a reader (quoted below) requests. Some mystery cults, including some Christian sects, sought to provide rehearsals of death, or a near-death experience, such as "prolonged immersions of the baptised. Inevitably there were tragedies." Apuleius missed a trick here, I suppose, in not mocking Christian belief, something he seems to do elsewhere (the wicked wife of 9.14). In any case, I believe that the parallels in Book 11, however deadpan in Lucius' narration,

The Realm of the demobilized Dead (*infern*) haunts the novel: suicidal Aristomenes invokes it, Zatchlas compels it, and Lucius foresees it (1.16, 2.28, 3.10). Psyche visits it (6.16, 17–21), an old man fears it for his little child, and the miller left for it (8.20, 9.31). In a moment of caustic banter (8.25 *dicacule*; cf. 1.9), Philebus the priestly pervert calls the lively ass-auctioneer a *cadaver surdum*, a “dumb [or sense-less] corpse.” Psyche, opening the jar, experiences a superlative sleep, i.e., death: *infernus somnus ac vere Stygius*. She is *immobilis et nihil aliud quam dormiens cadaver* (6.21). In Apuleius’ enticing redundancy, sleep is deadlike and a corpse is sleeping. The *infern* are also thematic in Book 11: Isis rules them and their gates, she predicts Lucius’ journey thereto, Mercury visits them, Lucius retransformed comes back from there, where the *infern* worship Isis (11.5, 6, 11, 18, 21, 25).

Aristomenes and Thelyphron anticipate Lucius’ failure to follow good advice about dealing with witches and death. Psyche prefigures Lucius’ journey to another world (death). Lucius first hears and then experiences magic, the walking dead, and the immobilized living (Nethercut 114–15). All four humans depart from normal experience, change shape, and enter a more terrifying world. Aristomenes saw the earth gape: 1.15 *ima Tartara inque his canem Cerberum prorsus esurientem mei*. Thelyphron the corpse drank Lethe and swam in Stygian swamps (2.29). Lucius walks with head bowed *imo ad ipsos inferos* before the trial and later emerges from the land of the dead (3.2, 3.10 *ab inferis emersi*). Only when Milo reclaimed him from the court (*iniecta manu*; like claiming a slave) and held him sobbing and shaking, did Lucius rejoin the living. This literary image is more than hyperbole; it recognizes the useful concepts of spiritual crisis and social death.

Analogizing life experiences to death is to suggest death’s most obvious qualities: motionlessness and lack of consciousness. Lucius comes out of his trial by asininity at the Cencrean exorcism, but he is still paralyzed, as after his trial in Hypata (11.17 *nec tamen me sinebat animus ungue latius indidem digredi*; cf. 3.9). The visible symptom of his mental or spiritual breakdowns is to

are more revelatory of the character Lucius than of the liturgical reversals in ideology that conversion-prone, optimistic-ending-seekers may seek and find. The Mystery paradigm (parallel to magic) inverts slavery to freedom, death to new life, and poverty to riches, but readers not already converts to this particular cult or its congeners will find this answer *du jour* to Lucius’ problems characteristic of his weaknesses and thus amusing.

be stopped dead, null movement (*haero*).⁴⁰ Like the inanimate statue of Isis that sticks to the temple steps (11.17 *quae gradibus haerebat argento formata*), the re-transformed and supposedly now human Lucius remains stuck in silence in the temple (11.14 *at ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam*).⁴¹ But even after Isiac initiation, Lucius is immobilized by an attractive dream portending profit (11.20 *diu diuque apud cogitationes meas revolvebam*); getting and spending while stalled in a fog characterizes Lucius. He experiences several deceptive re-humanizations (9.2, 10, 13, 17; cf. 29; Schlam 1981: 122). His recuperations from inflicted and self-induced catatonia are unsteady and backsliding.⁴² His crippled mobility after his anamorphosis will draw our further attention below.

Statues and paintings play an intermittent but thematic role in Apuleius (and his forerunner in transformations, Ovid). Statues of mythical heroes, historical persons, emperors, and contemporary benefactors populated the cities of the Roman empire in the second century A.D. The “peculiar cult of Greek culture” in the Roman empire led to mass-produced statues for public and private venues. Consumers sometimes possessed so many that they could and did arrange their collections alphabetically (Zanker 10, 14). That is, statues were omnipresent in imperial daily life. Lucius remarks that the citizens gathered in the market-town theater for his trial wrapped themselves around columns and hung from statues in order to get a better view.⁴³ Such three-dimensional images provide Roman authors with two opposed ideas: emblems of human achievement, art (or magic: 2.1) rivaling or surpassing nature, and a hierarchy of mobility and of human spirit reduction, from volitional soul to instant ossifica-

⁴⁰So Psyche is caught in “the clutches of Orcus” (6.8 *inter Orci caneros iam ipsos haesisti*). The incestuous poisoner is stymied at what to say to her Hippolytus (10.3 *vado dubitationis haerens*).

⁴¹Cf. Ino at Ov. *Met.* 4.560 *haesit in illo*.

⁴²Survivors of such experiences can come to love their captors and mock executioners. Victims of the Stockholm or hostage syndrome (such as Patricia Hearst) may identify with those who kidnapped them.

⁴³3.2 *studio visendi*. The image suggests many statues as well as columns (cf. Heath 126). Lamp-posts served this function in the twentieth century, as my second-cousin Ruth Czasnik Schiller, now safely in São Paulo, once told me. As a child in Berlin, she climbed a lamppost in order to observe Hitler in a motorized Nazi cavalcade. Both incidents vividly convey a packed and demobilizing crowd of observers inadequately situated (and so straining) to see all the excitement.

tion.⁴⁴ Statues may walk at any moment, Lucius thinks, but inversely, walkers may freeze. Lucius' proposed statue represents something more and less than human: the hero's memorial and the miscreant's punishment.

Statues demobilize and devitalize living persons. They mold forever the iconolatrous public's perception of living persons. They reduce the complex reality to the establishment's simpler ideological needs.⁴⁵ Apuleius himself deprecated such an honorific memorial at Carthage (*Flor.* 16), and his Lucius politely refuses such bronze in Hypata (3.11). Platonists distrust statues (*Apol.* 14–15): their reflection of humans' natures is inaccurate—because fatally immobile.⁴⁶ Further, they create a rigid expectation, a distortion of natural appearance that demands a fixed mask or persona and so murders the volatile person so honored.

Ovid carefully contrived his strolling Actaeon to be innocent (3.142 *non scelus invenies*), but Apuleius' immobile Actaeon is/was lying in wait, an intentional voyeur (*curioso optutu*). *Error* becomes *scelus* as he waits for Diana to strip.⁴⁷ Apuleius' ecphrasis preserves the conceit⁴⁸ of describing the other objects as if they were moving in reality: blowing robes, running *numen*, and savagely snapping, racing dogs. The *signifex*'s skill and the pool gave the Parian marble “the quality of movement, among all other aspects of reality” (Hanson's translation: *inter cetera veritatis nec agitationis officio carere*). That

⁴⁴Pygmalion's inversion of the norm proves the Ovidian rule. Perseus engages in retributive petrification (*Met.* 5.177–235). Pamphile has the same “touch”: 2.5 *in saxa et in pecua et quod vis animal puncto reformat*. The explicit *ars-natura* rivalry *topos* appears in Ovid's ecphrases of Actaeon's *locus amoenus* and Thetis' cave (*Met.* 3.158, 11.235), and also in Apuleius: *Met.* 2.4 *ars aemula naturae veritati*.

⁴⁵Zanker 3–9, 233–42 examines the cult of the monument and Apuleius' labile self-image. The “savage's” fear of having his or her spirit captured by a photographic image exhibits the “primitive” attitude towards ownership and theft of self.

⁴⁶Apuleius describes motion as essential for representing a living subject (*Apol.* 14; cf. Slater 1997: 102); visual representations are therefore inferior. Too summarizes Apuleius' philosophical posture towards statues in his various texts. The Mercury statuette that Apuleius carried about (*Apol.* 63) contradicts by its mobility one aspect of statuary fixity.

⁴⁷Krabbe 54–55 compares Ovid's Phaethon and Pentheus with Psyche, Jupiter and Europa (2.1–102, 6.103–107) with Lucius and Charite (6.29), then Lucius and the rich matron; finally Ovid's Ocyrhoe (2.670–73) with Lucius. She finds imitation in both episodes and (less plausibly) in the structures.

⁴⁸Further, the apostrophe *topos* with the engaging second-person verb: *putes, credes, putabis*.

is, reality is represented by mobility. Actaeon and Lucius immobilize *themselves* in scopophilic ecstasy before others transform them into disastrously permanent shapes. Actaeon at Byrrhaena's has become a statue, a fate Lucius will narrowly escape.⁴⁹ Lucius would rather gaze intently than be gazed at, but no such luck is his (11.24, see Heath 106–107). The obliquely cautionary image fails to dent his inappropriate *curiositas* (2.5, 2.6 *tantum a cautela Pamphiles afixi*). At the end of the novel, he is staring still in delight, now at Isis' image (11.3, 17, 20, 24: agalmatophilia, again; cf. Ovid's gynophobic Pygmalion).

Psyche and Lucius share statuesque features: the former is admired as if one, the latter is first reduced to one in his *Risus* mortification and later "enlarged" or rewarded by the offer of another—along with the honorific and certainly expensive euergetist title of *patronus* (4.32, 3.10–11). Both have legitimately mixed feelings about unchosen conspicuousness: *spectatur ab omnibus ... ut simulacrum ... mirantur omnes*, etc. Such objectification⁵⁰ is undesirable because it pushes one beyond the comforting realm of the shared community into dubious celebrity. One becomes less than alive. Beautiful Psyche has not a single suitor (*virgo vidua*); her isolation on earth resembles that later one in Cupid's unearthly palace. A human exalted to the conspicuous level of *simulacrum*-worship paradoxically has less maneuverability than the unnoticed and sheltered typical human. Lucius in the lonely midst of the laughing mob, or changed into an intrusive ass that neither animals nor men admire, or as isolated Deacon of Isis (11.24), is out of touch with his fellow men.⁵¹ Psyche and Lu-

⁴⁹Male peepers and pryers—such as Actaeon and Lucius seeking to live out fantasies of sexual dominance, gratification, and control—become the dominated and demobilized victims of ravenous females, Diana, Pamphile, perhaps Fotis, and of various other *dominae*, good and bad (6.28, 7.14, 7.27–28: Charite, the gardener's wife, the miller's wife; Psyche, all too human, reversing the sexes, suffers from a similar curiosity and needs). The ambiguous Isis is even more powerfully petrifying.

⁵⁰Other "image" words in Apuleius: *effigies* describes the result of magical changes of form, fraudulent disguises (Thrasyleon's), and earthly representations of the goddess Isis (2.1, 4.14, 11.11, 17). *Simulacrum* (cf. *imago* at, e.g., 6.29) also describes artifacts such as representations of the divinities Epona, Venus, Atargatis, and Isis (3.27 bis; 4.29; 8.25, 30; 9.10; 11.11 bis, 17). Once it notes an apparition of the goddess herself to a needy believer (11.3).

⁵¹Socrates the beggar is reduced to a *simulacrum* of himself, and the widow Charite can be visited only by her murdered mate's *simulacrum*, here a ghost or phantom (1.6, 8.12). These two examples carry a non-statue meaning, but they share the sense of something less satisfactory than the normal individual, someone socially or physically dead to the world.

cious are exhibited at opposite poles of egregious notoriety, but neither may remain comfortable in his or her normal community.

After Lucius' debasement, Hypata's magistrates ironically offer Lucius *honores egregios* including the status of *patronus* and a bronze statue on a new base, to commemorate and immortalize his humiliation (3.11; cf. 6.29, Charite's promised reward to him of a painting). Having just recovered his self-determination, he rejects the honor and the honorific immobility. Becoming a statue is another form of metamorphosis or death. Faced with a choice, he momentarily rejects others' manipulations of his person.

Lucius is "statuesque" anyway, once he realizes his sorry role (3.10 *fixus in lapidem steti gelidus nihil secus quam una de ceteris theatris statuis*). First apprehended and captured as a common criminal, when he pleads for his life, he briefly regains his respectable, elite identity—educated rhetor and sober pleader (1.1, 24, 3.4–7, 15). He loses it again in the battle about uncovering the corpses (3.10, above), then regains it briefly after the shroud is stripped from the goat-skins. But such protection is brutally stripped from him again by the hilarious townspeople. He has been granted his life at the cost of his dignity. His social person dies. He has been de-authorized: his reasonable script for himself has been trashed and the town's clown-suit replaces it. He is as frozen in their script as dummy as he would be by a statue commemorating his disastrous visit.

4. Gaze and Spectacle in the *Metamorphoses*

Bloody spectacles—painful and publicly humiliating rebels' and criminals' deaths on the battlefield, along the highways, and especially in the arenas—have made notorious the Roman state machinery of violence. Hacked appendages and promenaded heads were a testament of glory, a noble's political statement in a warrior culture, the source of rewards, and proof of deadness.⁵² This ostentatious "status bloodbath" (Hopkins 9, quoting Erving Goffman) furnished exceptional repute for the provider and a locus of public solidarity for the ordinary citizen.

When a criminal was condemned in a formally correct and legally just manner, Roman ideology expected that the public should participate in the annihilation of the wicked and witness the come-uppance on some sort of stage (Brown 185). Those convicted by the public judicial system might suffer (*inter alia*) crucifixion, burning at the stake, and/or arena death in the jaws of animals (*crux*,

⁵²Hopkins 5, Barton. Roman triumphs sometimes revealed Romans as head-hunters (Voisin 263, 273; Caesar in Gaul; Catiline and Cicero as victims; Trajan's column; Constantine's triumph).

crematio, bestiae; Callu 335, in that order of frequency; Shaw 20–21; MacMullen).

Arena executions provided the most luxurious spectacle, enabling viewers to see themselves as part of the power structure and part of the solution. Hopkins calls the related *gladiatorial* shows political theater with glamorous heroes (17). The executions provided the inverse thrill, since notorious malefactors or villains are as interesting as heroes. Often the appalling penalties exacted from the condemned are talionic, penalties tailored to the crime,⁵³ as well as adjusted to the victims' social status.⁵⁴ Death by the sword (decapitation) was considered more honorable as well as quicker. Burning is purifying as well as punitive (Callu 343–45 and n. 129 for methods), and condemnation to the beasts produces a drawn-out, degrading experience for the convict, a source of curious amusement for the crowd. State and citizenry thus shared, from a secure position, in the retributive violence allotted to the wicked and in the legitimated, fascinating death spectacles.

Michel Foucault's *Surveiller et Punir* begins with the humiliation, torture, and execution of the would-be regicide Damiens in 1757. "The gloomy festival of punishment" features the spectacle of the condemned (Foucault 3–6). The condemned Frenchman has "his own ceremonial": arrest, trial, march through the streets to place of execution, exhibition of his criminal instruments, speech of confession, and public display of the instruments of state process (Foucault 29, 45: scaffold, pincers, hot oil, gallows, later guillotine, etc.). The convicted Frenchman heralds his own condemnation and execution. Many of these juridical procedures are paralleled in other ancient sources (see, e.g., MacMullen, Barton 11–46), but Apuleius' novel uniquely recognizes rather than erases the victims' tribulations. Foucault posits a disjunction between pre-modern and modern attitudes and ideologies of judicial inquiry, political power, and retribution for wrong-doers. Nevertheless, his anatomy of French royal justice and retaliation offers insight into the earlier social psychology of Apuleius' Roman world of undependable justice (cf. Shaw on non-existent procedures and public terrorism). Recall Lucius' trial, that of the arrested stepbrother, and the planned execution of the murderess.⁵⁵

⁵³E.g., *Met.* 7.23, 9.27–28, etc.; cf. Coleman 46–47 *et passim* for historical parallels.

⁵⁴Callu 342; Habinek 63; in *Met.* 10.12 the incestuously-inclined stepmother and poisoner is merely exiled, while her slave-accomplice is crucified.

⁵⁵Despite ironic praise of the laws' protection of free—even poor—men, the three brothers had no recourse to law when they were attacked by their rich neighbor

Torture and, *a fortiori*, execution are elements of “the liturgy of punishment” (Foucault 34). These brand the victim and his family with infamy, and signal to the community memorable “pain duly observed.” A “poetics” of the judicial drama induces public participation in the awesome dissymmetry between the isolated and shackled violator and the potent sovereign (49). The condemned Frenchman was forced to proclaim his own guilt (65). Such confessions reassure the community that treats its own members so brutally. Their human sacrifice of him expiated his own crime.

Lucius’ lictors march him through *every* square, to the forum and tribunal, thence to the theater as victim and laughing stock (3.2). He is threatened with torture by fire, whips, wheel, and cross to elicit the names of his (non-existent) confederates (3.8–9, esp. *ad iustam indignationem arrecti pro modo facinoris saeviat* [sc. “you the people”]). The mother of one of the “victims” elicits applause for encouraging cruelty. Lucius is forced to uncover the three dead men. We have the judicial process without any crime, the emotional torture of one defenceless man for the delight of the civic many.⁵⁶

Both Petronius’ Encolpius and Apuleius’ Lucius play this scapegoatish role, enjoying, at first, special licenses and then experiencing demobilization and preparations for mock execution (*Sat.* 17–22; 132; *Met.* 3.8–9). Each is stripped or “dressed naked” (Barton 169) on a public stage to emphasize his exposed vulnerability.⁵⁷ This deprivation of clothes and mobility amuses otherwise powerless viewers. Romans delighted in the degradation of high-status persons, and their fascination and comfort in others’ misfortunes reflect their

(9.36 *cum alioquin pauperes etiam liberali legum praesidio de insolentia locupletium consueverint vindicari*). The magistrate Pythias’ wanton destruction of the expensive fish sets the tone for government protection (1.24–25). The butt can grin and bear taunts and chuckles, remaining fixed amidst jiggling and pointing onlookers, or he can slink away, remove the object of scorn. Apuleius marks both the victim’s unavoidable humiliation and the audience’s delight in the process. The *Metamorphoses* records a losing “struggle against inhumanity” (Schlam 1981: 135) in which men and women act as selfishly, uncharitably, and irrationally as animals. Slaves, animals, even free neighbors and strangers are whipped or attacked, as if they were animals.

⁵⁶Bandits, however, did not enjoy the rights of citizens when accused: summary “justice” resembled the unceremonious decapitation without trial and rolling over the cliff inflicted on Haemus’ erstwhile companions (7.14; cf. Shaw 1984: 20–21).

⁵⁷*Sat.* 20.3, 105, 108, 132; [Lucian] *Ass* 54, 56; *Met.* 11.14 (the ass strips Lucius of his abominable covering in public) *nefasto tegmine despoliaverat asinus*.

own fragility and insecurity. Aristomenes' concern about the discovery of Socrates' corpse arose from a reasonable expectation that he would be charged with murder and would be crucified, so he hanged himself, though without success (1.14–16). After Thelyphron A's murder, Thelyphron B witnessed the Larissan mob, an impromptu court or lynch mob, ready to bury the guilty widow alive (2.29). Lucius's foregone condemnation for multiple murders and his imminent torture and execution at the Hypatan tribunal testify to justified anxieties about the administration of Roman provincial justice regardless of guilt, innocence, or suitable evidence (3.8–9; cf. the apostle Paul's appeal unto Caesar).

Apuleius' ass reports a robber band's discussion of how to punish their prisoners, a disobedient maid and an ass. The callous proposals intentionally mimic official magisterial *conventus* vocabulary and discussions of Roman penal alternatives (Habinek 65–66): 6.31 *ut primus vivam cremari censeret puellam, secundus bestiis obici suaderet, tertius patibulo suffigi iuberet, quartus tormentis excarnificari praeciperet*. But the calmest and most moderate bandit jurisconsult argues against quick death: 6.31 *nec feras, nec cruces nec ignes nec tormenta ac ne mortis quidem maturatae festinas tenebras accersere*. His climactic proposal is to secure the live person of Charite inside the dead and gutted animal Lucius (6.31–32; Callu; Kyle 54; dead persons were also so used). This particular pseudo-judicial application of cruelty would have had a small but select and appreciative audience—if circumstances had permitted. Bandit justice is presented as no better or worse than state justice.⁵⁸

Pain and death furnished institutionalized edification and entertainment for the public. The *honestiores* exhibited their civic generosity to the *humiliores* in spectacles of animals or humans ripping apart other humans and animals. The social functions of exemplary torture and slaughter are pursued in many other studies (Foucault, Hopkins, Callu, Coleman, Barton, etc.). The rich further commemorated permanently their generosity in public areas of their private houses. Large mosaics in stone and glass, even in dining areas, most commonly in North Africa and Gaul (Brown 183), immortalized bloody hunts⁵⁹ and execu-

⁵⁸Millar describes contact and conflict between Roman state and subject in the historical world portrayed in Apuleius' novel. Shaw usefully supplements his essay. McKay presents the systematic failures of Apuleius' heroic and cunning thieves, doomed bandits destroyed by puny victims. Halliday offers an illuminating analysis of the relationship (parallel and opposite) of criminal and deviant speech to the terminology of the "establishment." Grünwald has produced a useful survey of Roman banditry.

⁵⁹In the novel, nasty dogs with threatening nostrils, eyes, ears, and mouths approach Actaeon (2.4); Lucius as an ass is thrice threatened by the gardener's dogs

tions. The eaters formed a re-enacting, arena-shaped mini-crowd. The historical images reminded visitors of their host's community spirit. The original displays cost vast sums of money: machinery (recall that Thiasus' Mt. Ida disappears into a chasm! 10.34), scenery (e.g., Thiasus' music, perfumes, saffron, dyes, wine), and good supplies of performers, human and bestial (Coleman 52).

Thiasus' show at Corinth was intended to celebrate his elevation to the summit of the local *cursus honorum*, *duumvir quinquennalis* of Corinth in Achaea (10.18). Such euergetist honor required a display of *munificentia*—a three-day gladiatorial show, the best wild beasts, and the most famous gladiators (cf. Demochares' plans at 4.13, Zimmerman 251, and Echion's scorn for Norbanus' sorry show at Petr. *Sat.* 45.6). His sudden inspiration is to follow the elaborate mythological Trojan mime with the *spectaculum publicum* (10.23): mating his pet ass and the convicted murderess—prior to her judicial dismemberment by beasts. She was *vilis aliqua sententia praesidis bestiis addicta*. She had become an imprisoned non-person, as Lucius was too, in a different way, an immobilized and disposable outcast. His human-like peculiar food and sexual behaviors, based on urges shared by humans and animals (Schlam 1992: 131), make him liminal between men and beasts. Thus his humanoid or bewitched behavior furnishes Thiasus' family with a nervous amusement, but to the wild beasts, as even the ass realizes, he is just another juicy meal, guilty or not.

The punishment of criminals included social degradation as well as talionic pain (Coleman 46; Kyle 53–55).⁶⁰ Humiliation (as in Jesus' story) was often elaborate, as would be the bestial sex and death of the condemned female. In a win-win situation, the magistrate would gain approval and popularity, the audience would be entertained and educated (as to the penalties for crime), and the condemned woman would be ritually animalized, sexually and murderously assaulted, and executed.⁶¹ The power of the state was confirmed. Forcing crimi-

near the roses, at the stud-farm, and in the dining room (4.3, 7.16, 9.2); Thrasyleon as bear is ripped apart by dogs (4.14–21). See Nethercut 1968: 113, Heath 1996: 110–12.

⁶⁰Other functions of punishment included correction (when the penalty was not capital), prevention of the criminal from further similar acts, and deterrence of others (Coleman 47).

⁶¹Coleman, amazingly, reports that sexualized punishment has historical parallels and retells tortures and deaths as horrific as those in Apuleius: reports of crucifixion nails through the genitals, enforced self-castration and other self-inflicted tortures, versions of public sexual bestiality, etc. Habinek's fine analysis of Lucius' *rites de passage* (63) underestimates Apuleius' regular attention to the spectators' enjoyment ("only incidental").

nals to play scenes from myths in “fatal charades” was exceptional and began only in Caesar’s or Augustus’ period (Shaw 23–26; Coleman 67, 72). It might have been thought to provide a sacrificial, religious offering. Apuleius’ parading and dancing “opening acts” (10.29) and the magnificent “Judgment of Paris” displayed first the populace (*prosequente populo pompatico fauore*), then professional dancers and actors (*ludicris scaenorum choreis primitiae spectaculi*), and finally local talent (*puelli puellaeque, virgines, innuptarum puellarum decorae suboles*). The final act of the spectacle was no longer an elaborate mythical charade, but, by popular demand (*iam populo postulante*), the criminal wife (*illam de publico carcere mulierem ... bestiis esse damnatam*), laid out on (and presumably chained to) a beautifully prepared marriage bed, a *torus genialis*. Every aspect is well-attested (Finkelpearl 1991: 226–31).

Hopkins and Barton, among others in following Foucault, have examined Roman pleasures and profit in viewing other humans’ pain. Lucius’ and Thelyphron’s survivor stories replay later for entertainment and laughs. But the condemned woman in Corinth’s “musical comedy” (Barton 61) will be raped by an ass and then savaged to death by carnivorous beasts—according to official plans (10.23, 28–35). The great spectator Lucius will become once more the spectacle. The abundance of peculiar *monstra* to see brought Lucius to Thesalian Hypata. The powerless population finds their monstrous sport in watching Lucius, deracinated and thus more powerless.⁶² Lucius’ ignorant humiliation, the obliteration of his status, elevates the knowing audience—the Hypatan folk. The collectivity reverses the hierarchy—for a day, a festive Saturnalian day.

The most fully realized spectacles in the novel are the two dramas in theaters that star Lucius. His urges and talents make him the unwitting creator and performer in both.⁶³ And yet Lucius *spectator aut actor* cannot read the set, the plot, or the audience of the spectacle in Hypata. Performed before a *cavea* and “written” as a tragedy by Lucius, it is received as farcical comedy by an audience that grasps the plot better than the principal performer does. “But this is the way

⁶²In the capital and provinces of the Roman empire, civil-war street-fighting had almost become a spectator sport: Tac. *Hist.* 3.83.1–3 describes Rome during the *Saturnalia* of 69 C.E: *Aderat pugnantibus spectator populus utque in ludicro certamine, hos, rursus illos clamore et plausu fovebat Simul cruor et strues corporum ... prorsus ut eandem civitatem et furere crederes et lascivire Velut festis diebus id quoque gaudium accederet, exultabant, ... malis publicis laeti.*

⁶³*Auctor et <ac>tor*, Winkler’s 1985 title, occurs at 3.11, as the magistrates’ description of Lucius; see Finkelpearl 1998: 89.

life goes: a man imagines that he is playing his role in a particular play, and does not suspect that in the meantime they have changed the scenery without his noticing, and he unknowingly finds himself in the middle of a rather different performance.”⁶⁴

Lucius becomes the cynosure of mockery.⁶⁵ He “freezes” into a statue. When the joke is unmasked, the presiding magistrate informs the butt that the erection of a bronze statue has been mooted and decreed (3.11 *ut in aere staret imago tua decrevit*).⁶⁶ He declines such honor while he can, but, at another party and a later festival (Habinek 53), he again becomes central: bestial symposiast at Thiasus’ dinner and sex-toy in private and in public (10.16, 23). The *voluptarium spectaculum* of Venus dancing on stage (10.35) furnishes the Corinthian climax. To see an ass copulating with a condemned felon in public before both are shredded by more feral beasts gilds the lily.

But Lucius stars in still more spectacles in Book 11, these staged by Isis. Abandoning the privileges of viewing-subject (even as ass), he delivers himself

⁶⁴Milan Kundera, “Edward and God,” in *Laughable Loves*, S. Rappaport, trans. (New York 1974; Czech original 1969) 229. Kundera’s comedies feature people warped into new personalities (although not bodies, like his countryman Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*) by their games and erotic desires. The paradox of genre is made explicit in the “incestuous stepmother story,” which the ass describes to us (*lector optime*) as a tragedy (10.2, probably *Phaedra*) not a light tale (*fabula*). It turns out to be a comedy with a nick-of-time salvation for the defendant in the dock and the buried corpse, while the father gets to keep his two sons and to lose his noble but vicious wife to exile and a slave to deserved crucifixion.

⁶⁵Lucius focuses the gazes of others often, to wit: arrival at Milo’s (1.22–23), meeting Byrrhaena (2.2), joining her party (2.19), trial for murder (3.2; onlookers *studio visendi pericula salutis neclegebant*), post-acquittal walk to the baths (3.12), his metamorphosis (3.24; Fotis only), victim of the beating farmers (4.3, 7.15), Charite’s prayers (6.28), animals at stud (7.16; cf. 3.27), at the first auction (8.23), introduced to the Syriac priests (8.26), almost butchered (8.31), the experiment that proves his non-rabidity (9.3–4), second auction (9.10, also 31), the legionary’s search for the ass (9.41–42), the asinine consumer of human food (10.15, 16), the recliner at table and matron’s sex-partner (10.19, 23, 34), Thiasus’ spectacle (10.18, 23, 29), the Isiac *ploiophasia*-interrupter and the subject of later initiations (11.13, 16, 24 *populi mirantur, populus errabat* with Lucius as a living statue), and fame in the forum (11.18).

⁶⁶Lucius’ public standing, stupid freezing, and “erection” are connected verbally with his private encounter with Fotis (Slater 1998: 38, following Winkler 1985: 175; cf. Schlam 1992: 48–57 on spectacle). Socrates and Thelyphron (1.7, 2.21) also ruinously looked for *spectacula*.

to be the principal spectacle at the transformative procession, alone and naked (11.13–14 *populi mirantur ... at ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam*). He is later dressed up next to Isis' statue as an object of wonder (11.24 *ante deae simulacrum constitutum ... iussus superstiti ... floride depicta ueste conspicuus* and *exornato me et in vicem simulacri constituto*).⁶⁷ *Tableau vivant* he is again, in Corinth, Cenchreae, and still later Rome, as in Hypata. Trust becomes rationally impossible for the survivor of near-death tortures.⁶⁸ Meanings become clear to him only after the fact. Lucius' still crippled mobility arrests much attention.

Like Actaeon, the gazing Lucius is transformed into an object of the gaze. First he is a butt of a pitiless joke (nearly arena-meat or statue), then an ass, captive animal of labor, a circus performer, and finally a living witness and beneficiary of Isis' questionable beneficence (11.16 *totae civitati notus ac conspicuus, digitis hominum nutibusque notabilis*; cf. 3.10, 12). He is displayed in the Thessalian forum and theater (3.2), on the auctioneers' block (8.23, 9.10), in Corinth's theater (10.23, 29), and at Cenchreae's and Rome's Isis temples (11.24, 30). The animated and aggressive trichomaniac delver into the occult has become a shaven-headed exhibit for Isis, a demobilized shadow of his former self (2.4, 9.42; like Socrates, 1.6).⁶⁹ Nothing, however, annoys him more than inattention (7.12 *contempta mea praesentia quasi vere mortui*). He never learns; he runs into only more disasters (Finkelpearl 1991: 236).

Conclusion

Embarrassment furnishes groups with means of organizing their members and correcting them without explicit process, as Goffman explained. Lucius and his

⁶⁷Lucius does gaze on Isis and the Mysteries, as Ellen Finkelpearl *per litt.* reminds me (11.17, 19, 23), but Apuleius places the emphasis on Lucius as the usual attraction and the naïve victim of both state and outlaw savagery.

⁶⁸Lucius' repeatedly undercuts (by his own doubts) trust in Isis and her minions in 11.12–30—a psychologically veracious coloring for even a “believer.” Events in the plot such as the name of the Isiac Priest Mithras, the “church's” constant, venal demands, and the limited freedom of movement of the initiate italicize questions for the reader. Such demands and limitations historically occur but this fact does not make them more attractive to readers following Lucius' desperate search for answers.

⁶⁹The “real” Diana and Actaeon were carved in stone but their images appear further reflected in water. Slater 1998: 40–41 studies the symbology of reflections and mirrors, but misses this double remove, foreshadowing the attenuating self-image of disappearing Lucius. Intentional self-depreciation also appears when Lucius the ass jokes about ass-narrators, e.g., 7.12, 9.30, 10.33.

upper-class peers try to express alignment and disalignment to events in Hypata and elsewhere by small behaviors such as civil disattention, gaze, and bodily orientation (Goffman 102). They ignore minor slights (Milo's mocking exposé of Diophanes is aimed first at his wife) and withdraw from the presence of tormentors (Thelyphron in Larissa). Or they show that they are flustered (Thelyphron at Byrrhaena's party), and develop screens by which to hide reactions (Lucius' politeness after Pythias leaves him without money or fish, his immobility when the corpses are uncovered, and his falsely cheerful visage after the trial). Any social sub-system may quickly crumble, if all parties do not maintain the collective front—gestural, postural, and verbal behaviors that suppress unexpected deviations from the norm. Problems of discipline require teamwork and social policing. Thus, the symposiasts' intense joshing is required to force Thelyphron to repeat his tale of shame, and the magistrates officially call on deflated Lucius to jolly him back into conformity with Hypatan concepts of good clean fun and hospitality. As coercive forms of inducement, promises of statues somehow resemble threats of fire, rack, and whips.

Lucius presents himself as a tactful man, someone cognizant of the usual rules of decorum. The staged (?) nightmare encounter with the robbers at Milo's door and then the theatrical Hypatan courtroom farce entirely discredit his socially constructed self. He is terrified and they (including his relative and his host-friend) are laughing. Their communal self-presentation baffles and distresses him. Their behavior does not fit his cognitive schemes. The dénouement forces the guest to assume a role and present a face that the public and magistrates are comfortable with. This is a humbled scapegoat and a second Thelyphron—a future perpetual victim of the finger pointed derisively. While the locals verbally josh Lucius, their banter and demeaning gestures speak more loudly than their words. The trial initiates the visitor into local society while ritually marginalizing the not entirely admirable newcomer. Venus, the sisters, and the robbers police Psyche and Charite, too, by taunts and dishonoring remarks when they land in new societies. Whenever isolated newcomers try to define themselves, other authorities' expectations and threats realign them. Lucius as youth and Psyche and Charite as women must project a "stream of conduct" acceptable to power.

After the trial Lucius has no further buffers: social networks, status, or loyal friends. Once his local dignity is shrunk to zero, a magic exit from anxiety, or a religious escape, becomes even more attractive. His blush first reveals Lucius' severe discomfort (Lateiner 1998: 178–79). Acute shame requires less ambiguous and stronger expression: silence and tears express a desire to be elsewhere.

After his anamorphosis into man (but still the property of Isis, 11.13–18), he remains largely speechless. Despite all changes, he has not changed.⁷⁰ Although Finkelpearl (1998: 190–94) argues that Lucius gains “a new voice,” he himself alleges stuporous incapacity (11.14, 25), parades in silence, and speaks no more than necessary confessionals (11.19 *ex officio singulis narratis meis propere*). Apuleius himself may have been an “insincerely insecure wordsmith” (Finkelpearl 1998: 198), but his “dumb” character Lucius reports genuine blockages. Daily Isiac prayer is his *praecipuum studium*, and his law practice provided only *quaesticulum forense*—a pauper’s livelihood, not riches or even enough to keep him clothed.⁷¹ What voice he retains is Isis’ gift—with strings attached.

Self-repair, papering over disesteem and returning to the normal flow of events, everyday give-and-take, is not presented as a sufficient remedy for notorious disesteem. Socrates’ erotic enslavement, Thelyphron’s public discovery of maiming, Lucius’ theatrical degradation, and his dehumanization provoke repeatable community glee and repeating breakdowns for the devastated hero (Clark 16). The persecuted victims must relive their traumatic dishonor every time they enter a street, until they die or become someone else. Social status has been damaged beyond repair.⁷² As man and ass, Lucius experiences chronic insecurity, anxiety about his reputation, his life (4.3, 6.26, 32, 8.16, 31, etc.), and mutilation of his body, particularly his testicles, by judicial or other torture (3.8–9). He has valued these appendages more than life itself (7.19, 28, 24 *Orci manibus extractus, sed extremae poenae reservatus*). His noble status and citizenship (1.2, 2.1–3, 3.15) do not protect him from the local or Roman administrations’ machinery of injustice. Ambiguous predictions of fame and fortune turn out true, but not as envisioned (2.5, 2.12, 3.11: Byrrhaena, Diophanes, the Hypatan magistrates). While loquacity or frenetic occupation is itself no virtue, speech and participation in human communities provide touchstones of human

⁷⁰Massey 34–58 well expresses Lucius’ failure to relate to others, his repetitive trading of one preoccupation for another. Cf. Lateiner 2000, 324–30, where I argue that the character and narrator Lucius, as damaged survivor, has not yet fully comprehended his new bondage, but the author Apuleius has hinted at it, in so far as this technique of “Ich-Erzählung” permits.

⁷¹11.26, 28; cf. 8.29, the mendicant priests’ income. Lucius is repeatedly stripped—of clothing, money, dignity, and humanity.

⁷²The Corinthian masses ludicrously credit Lucius’ return to human form as divine reward for past innocence (11.16: *qui vitae scilicet praecedentis innocentia fideque meruerit* ...). The error casts doubt on any human understanding of divine plans.

connectedness. Voluntary silence and stillness and the chosen badge of baldness stamp Apuleius' Isiac devotee. Lucius finally retreats from uncontrollable urges and messy human relations. Freely chosen immobility replaces humiliation, motionlessness, and imprisonment inflicted by others, but it remains a retreat from Lucius' earlier affirmations of life.⁷³

⁷³I thank Maaïke Zimmerman for sending me a photocopy of part of Heine's dissertation. I am also grateful to Ellen Finkelpearl, Cynthia Damon, and anonymous referees for sensitive readings and sympathetic improvements. They will probably not agree with everything in this paper, for which the author assumes full responsibility.

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