VIEWERS AND VIEWED IN APULEIUS' *METAMORPHOSES*

by

ZACHARY MCGAR

(Under the direction of Erika Hermanowicz)

ABSTRACT

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is a novel singularly obsessed with sight, spectatorship, the acquisition of experience from viewing, and the permeability of social and physical boundaries created by acts of viewing. I intend to analyze the variety of changes that viewing creates and how viewing itself throughout the novel signals the permeability of boundaries between classes and states of being. An examination of the patterns of motivation and consequence in acts of viewing reveals a concern with the delineation of boundaries of status and their transgression. The patterns of sight and transgression of boundaries unify the disparate elements of the narrative with Lucius' initiation into the worship of Isis. This study will argue that the novel is ultimately structured into a narrative of conversion by these scenes of seeing and transgression. The first chapter considers viewing in the context of tales inserted into the narrative. The second chapter covers instances in which the narrator, Lucius, is held in the gaze of others. Finally, the third chapter examines the ways in which Lucius views women, from the slave Photis to the goddess Isis.

INDEX WORDS: Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, *Golden Ass*, gaze, vision, sight, spectatorship, transgression, boundaries, Risus Festival, Lucius, Photis, Isis

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ZACHARY MCGAR

B.A., Loyola University New Orleans, 2006

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2008

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by

ZACHARY MCGAR

Major Professor: Erika Hermanowicz

Committee: Charles Platter
Niall Slater

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2008

DEDICATION

To Samantha

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INTRODUCTION

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* has been the subject of scholarly interest concerning its place within the canon of ancient literature, its status as a document of social and class relations, the composition of its readership, its religious interpretations, and its overall thematic harmony or disharmony. The novel's place within the canon generates a tremendous amount of debate: although it appropriates many aspects of established literary genres, its subversion of these aspects makes it an anomaly. The novel sells itself at first as an adaptation of a Greek work, whether that is the lost text of Lucius of Patras or that of Lucian.[1] We can see from comparison with Lucian's extant text just how radical an adaptation Apuleius' novel is: Apuleius interpolates not only a series of short vignettes but also significant narrative arcs such as the Risus Festival as well as the tale of Cupid and Psyche. These stories play an important role in the interpretation of the novel because they develop patterns of language, imagery, and action that affect the core tale and its ending.[2] This study will consider these connective patterns within several episodes, with particular attention to patterns of visual engagement, especially in the motivations and consequences of viewing and being viewed.

1 For competing theories on which work is the original, see P. G. Walsh's review of Helmut van Thiel's *Der Eselsroman* and Gerardo Bianco's *La Fonta Greca delle* Metamorfosi *di Apuleio*, "Bridging the Asses," *The Classical Review* New Series 24.2 (Nov. 1974), 215-18. Van Thiel argues that the text of Lucius of Patras is the original and Lucian's the epitome; Bianco argues the opposite.

2 James Tatum, "The Tales of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 100 (1969), 487-528.

Several recent studies have focused on visual engagement and interpretation in *Metamorphoses*: for example, R. G. Peden and Niall Slater have written about the statue groups of the *dea palmaris* and the Diana-Actaeon pair in Byrrhena's hall.[3] Slater has read this grouping as indicative of the novel's focus on the perils of viewership: Lucius' early position as spectator becomes compromised as he loses control over the power of the gaze,[4] and the novel concludes with his total subjugation under the eyes of Isis.[5] Yun Lee Too has written about the struggle of the individual "to maintain control over the self and its fashioning" against "the society that shapes the image," and how this struggle manifests in the depictions of art on display.[6] The novel is obsessed with the gaze and its consequences to the maintenance of status. However, social boundaries are not the only ones that the gaze makes permeable: physical, psychological, and religious boundaries are susceptible to crossing as well.

Although narratives of the confusion and restoration of status are at least as old as *The Odyssey*, Kate Cooper attributes the Greek novels' particular emphasis on the representation and maintenance of status to the social alienation created by the growth of the Roman empire. Ancient fiction revolves around the experience of crossing geographical and social boundaries. These experiences define the appeal of the ancient novel: "Certainly the notion that an individual could be disengaged from his or her defining social position, and reviewed in a sequence of

3 R. G. Peden, "The Statues in Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 2.4," *Phoenix* 39.4 (Winter 1985), 380-3; Niall Slater, "Passion and Petrifaction: The Gaze in Apuleius," *Classical Philology* 93.1 (Jan. 1998), 18-48.

4 Niall Slater, "Spectator and Spectacle in Apuleius," in Stelios Panayotakis, Maaike Zimmerman, Wytse Keulen, eds., *The Ancient Novel and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 87.

5 Slater, "Passion and Petrifaction," 46.

6 Yun Lee Too, "Statues, Mirrors, Gods: Controlling Images in Apuleius," in Jaś Elsner, ed., *Art and Text in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 133-52.

shifting contexts, would have held the interest of a population facing social change."[7] A key phrase in the quote above for the current study is the "sequence of shifting contexts," a succession of incidents in which the status of the protagonist is called into question in his own eyes or in the eyes of others. Travel can separate a person from his cultural and social identity, and he can become vulnerable to redefinition and misinterpretation. The ways in which people visually engage each other play a significant role in Lucius' journey, because vision acts as the primary agent of transgression and metamorphosis.

Lucius is a young man of distinguished lineage and education, but in Thessaly he is still an outsider, despite the presence of his aunt Byrrhena, a prominent citizen in Hypata. In a chapter from his book *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* entitled "Enslavement and Metamorphosis," William Fitzgerald writes that Lucius exemplifies the figure of the traveler, a type that appears frequently in the novel. The very mobility of the traveler makes his or her status fluid and unstable.[8] Lucius' status as a traveler marks him for metamorphosis, for a crossing of physical, social, and religious boundaries. The crossing of boundaries is a constant in the novel and, in fact, its organizing principle. Nancy Shumate considers Lucius' progress toward Isis as a narrative of conversion, but one "that operates within a cognitive framework rather than a moral one."[9] Lucius' time as an ass constitutes what she calls the "crisis" phase of his conversion. In this phase Lucius experiences total disconnection from the reality to which he is

7 Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 37.

8 William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 98.

9 Nancy Shumate, *Crisis and Conversion in Apuleius'* Metamorphoses (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 14.

accustomed. The crisis of the novel is that Lucius' sense of himself and his perception by others are jeopardized by his desire not only to witness the performance of magical arts but also to possess the knowledge of transformation. His time as an ass represents a progress away from the old Lucius, and the novel up to Book Eleven "can be read as a running account of the fragmentation of a conversion-ripe subject's view of the world once habituated values come into question."[10] Isis offers Lucius the opportunity for self-reflection and ultimately salvation from a dangerous and unstable world.

My interpretation of the novel follows the argument that Lucius' conversion to Isis, while not telegraphed upon a first reading, becomes upon reflection a natural and satisfying conclusion to a journey that delights in crossing boundaries—not only geographic boundaries, but those between author and audience, man and god, and life and death. The gaze is the agent of these transgressions, whether it is a gaze from without or within. The desire to maintain control over viewing others and the how one is viewed by others is transformative. Lucius' failure to maintain control over his viewing of others and their viewing of him ultimately proves deformative when he becomes controlled and manipulated by the gaze. The metamorphoses to which Lucius is subjected form a continuum of change, of death and rebirth, that delivers Lucius to Isis, in the service of whom he finds peace from from the vicissitudes of his previous life.

In each of my three chapters, I attempt to examine a series of metamorphoses and how we can derive from them consistent patterns of the ways in which viewing makes boundaries permeable. In the first chapter I intend to demonstrate how viewing is used as a means of blurring and transgressing boundaries in the tales of Aristomenes and Socrates, Diophanes,

10 Ibid., 160.

Thelyphron, Diana and Actaeon, and Cupid and Psyche. The tale of Aristomenes and Socrates demonstrates the permeability of the bounds between life and death. Their encounter with Meroë exposes them to a cycle of death and rebirth: Socrates is murdered at the inn, and Aristomenes experiences a series of metamorphoses, from dying man to posthumous child to condemned criminal. His failed suicide attempt, however, brings Socrates back to life, but not for long. This confusion between states of being recurs in the tale of Thelyphron, who slips into a deathlike slumber and is disfigured by witches. His disfigurement marks him out in society, and he is subject to a social death as he abandons his home and lives on the fringes of Hypatan society. The tales of Thelyphron and Diophanes focus on travelers who suffer humiliation in the eyes of the community, and they anticipate Lucius' own humiliation in the Risus Festival, which I will cover in the second chapter. The scenes involving Diana and Actaeon as well as Cupid and Psyche allow us to consider the consequences of attempting to bridge the gap between gods and mortals. The fates of both Actaeon and Psyche represent different consequences of Lucius' experience with viewing the divine: Actaeon views Diana, and he turns into an animal; Psyche views Cupid and is sent on a journey, which culminates in her acceptance among the gods, despite the fact that she has not performed the tasks set for her particularly well. Lucius' visual encounter with Pamphile leads to his physical metamorphosis into an ass, and his visual encounter with Isis leads to his physical restoration and his new, inner change of perspective.

The second chapter focuses on scenes in which Lucius is on display before audiences and struggles against the perception of a group that possesses control of the gaze over him. The scenes to be considered are the Risus Festival, the *munus* of Thiasus, and the procession of Isis and Lucius' public initiation into the cult of the goddess. In these scenes Lucius' status is open to

misperception when he loses control over the power dynamic of the gaze. The changes to which Lucius is subject in the eyes of others are generally social in nature, but they also put Lucius' perception of his own identity at risk. In the first two Lucius is mistaken as someone of inferior status. Finally, in the third set of scenes, Isis promises him a rebirth in which no one will mistake Lucius as inferior; in fact, in this case people's misperception of Lucius works to his advantage, as it effaces all memory of the way he lived his life before and ended up as an ass in the first place.

The final chapter focuses on Lucius himself as a viewer, particularly as a viewer of women. Four women are considered in the chapter as important for charting the progress of Lucius' metamorphic journey—Photis, Pamphile, Venus (in the mime of the Judgement of Paris), and Isis. I focus on the ways in which Lucius' desire to see and possess motivates his series of metamorphoses. His engagement with Photis entangles him in the Risus Festival and gives him the opportunity to view Pamphile. When Lucius watches Pamphile, he initiates the process of changing that manifests in actual physical transformation, which is the result of his reckless desire not merely to see but also to possess. Lucius' viewing of the Judgement of Paris effects an inner metamorphosis, as Lucius reflects upon the life he has lived and thus turns away from the world. His viewing of Isis draws upon his previous viewing experiences of women as well as his particular predilections; however, the goddess offers him not an object to gaze upon but rather a means of self-reflection and contemplation. Lucius thus moves beyond his need to dominate and possess others through the power of the gaze, and he accepts clear markers of status as an initiate and walks the streets of Rome in his robe and with his bright bald head.

CHAPTER ONE

VIEWERS AND VIEWED IN *METAMORPHOSES*

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is a novel singularly obsessed with sight, spectatorship, the acquisition of experience from viewing, and the permeability of social and physical boundaries created by acts of viewing.[11] The novel proceeds through a series of visions and spectacles of men, women, and gods. Lucius, both as *auctor* of the text and its *actor*, is the primary viewer, and, by his own admission "excessively desirous of learning the rare and marvelous" in his travels through Thessaly (*nimis cupidus cognoscendi quae rara miraque sunt*, 2.1).[12] His desire for the *rara miraque* initiates the narrative, and this desire to see translates into a desire to practice when he attempts to effect a metamorphosis of his own. Only through the epiphany of Isis and initiation into her mysteries does Lucius regain his human form, and his desire for viewing becomes channeled into the worship of the goddess. The viewing experiences of Lucius are thus the backbone of the novel, and his choices as author determine what we as an audience

11 For the obsession with knowledge and the pattern of *curiositas* in the novel, see John J. Winkler, Auctor *and* Actor: *A Narratological Reading of Apuleius'* Golden Ass (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); E. J. Kenney, "In the Mill with Slaves: Lucius Looks Back in Gratitude," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 133.1 (Spring 2003), 159-92; P. G. Walsh, "The Rights and Wrongs of Curiosity (Plutarch to Augustine)," *Greece and Rome*, 2nd Series, 35.1 (April 1988), 73-85; Romain Brethes, "Who Knows What? The Access to Knowledge in Ancient Novels: the Strange Cases of Chariton and Apuleius," in Michael Paschalis, Stavros Frangoulidis, Stephen Harrison, and Maaike Zimmerman, eds., *The Greek and the Roman Novel: Parallel Readings* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2007), 171-92; and, in the same volume, Kirk Freudenberg, "Leering for the Plot: Visual Curiosity in Apuleius and Others," 238-62. For the most current and comprehensive bibliography of literature on Apuleius, see that of Julia Haig Gaisser in *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the* Golden Ass: *A Study in Transmission and Reception* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 319-53.

12 Unless otherwise noted, translations of Greek and Latin texts are my own. The primary text used for the *Metamorphoses* is Arthur Hanson's Loeb edition.

see and what we can interpret of his journey. Lucius elaborates upon his own experience with those of ancillary characters who demonstrate the perils of seeing and being seen. Those who attempt to exercise the power of the gaze are always susceptible to the process of transformation, on a physical and psychological level. Vision is an active exchange that leaves an impression on both viewer and viewed.[13] One's sense of self can be molded by the influence of a more powerful perspective. Being exposed in the eyes of others can also expose one to his own inner eye, his own critical faculty.[14] Conflict over control of the gaze is a key facet of Lucius' journey because vision is the agent of transgression and metamorphosis, and this progress between states of being is a unifying theme throughout the novel.

I intend to examine scenes of vision and spectacle, as well as to consider a number of aspects of each particular scene, including the object, the dialogue in which subject and object engage, and the very mutability of subjectivity and objectivity within the shared gaze. I intend to analyze the variety of changes that viewing creates and how viewing itself throughout the novel signals the permeability of boundaries between social classes and states of being. An examination of the patterns of motivation and consequence in acts of viewing reveals a concern with the delineation of boundaries of status and their transgression.[15] These patterns unify the disparate elements of the narrative with Lucius' initiation into the worship of Isis, in which he strips himself of all that has previously defined him and crosses the very threshold of death into a

13 The tactility of sight was at the heart of Ptolemy's theories about the efflux from the eye that generates sight. For a discussion see A. Mark Smith, "Ptolemy and the Foundations of Ancient Mathematical Optics: A Source Based Study," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Association*, New Series 89.3 (1999), 23-4.

14 C. Gandelman, *Reading Pictures, Viewing Texts* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1991), 43: "the dialectic of seeing...always implies a being-seen relationship."

15 Edith Hall, "The Ass with Double Vision: Politicising an Ancient Greek Novel," in David Margolies and Maroula Joannou, eds., *Heart of the Heartless World: Essays in Cultural Resistance in Memory of Margot Heinemann* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), 53.

new life. This study will argue that the novel is ultimately structured into a narrative of conversion by these scenes of sight and transgression.[16] Lucius' viewing of others leads to self-reflection and conversion to the worship of Isis, who promises Lucius that his status will never be mistaken.

Before we consider the visual experiences of Lucius' fellow travelers and what they have to tell us about the permeability of visual status in the novel, I would like to consider a number of issues raised immediately by the novel's prologue (1.1), because it is programmatic for the ways in which vision works. I shall consider in what way Lucius as narrator is communicating to us, what our relationship with him is, what we can expect of him, and what he expects from us. Lucius is ultimately a performer, not only in the sense that he is the protagonist of the novel but also in the sense that he is engaging us as a storyteller. From the prologue it will become clear that Lucius is conscious about our viewing of him both as *auctor* and *actor*, and his consciousness of the ways in which status can be manipulated by sight will pervade the inserted tales.

Quis Ille: *Auctor* and Audience

The opening chapter of *Metamorphoses* establishes a tension between the perspectives of the omniscient *auctor* and the unknowing *actor*, and it blurs the boundary between Lucius and the audience.[17] The first word of the text, *At*, seems to signify that the novel begins as a

16 Nancy Shumate, *Crisis and Conversion in Apuleius'* Metamorphoses (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

17 A similar tension exists in Achilles Tatius, in which Clitophon is the narrator of his own adventures, but we often experience the action through the eyes of Clitophon-*actor*, most clearly in the two deaths of Leucippe.

conversation caught in mid-sentence.[18] Lucius as narrator promises in this prologue to weave together a variety of tales to delight the reader's ears (*varias fabulas conseram, auresque tuas benivolas lepido susurro permulceam*), but he also asks that the reader not be offended at the appearance of the work, written on a piece of Egyptian papyrus with a sharp Nile reed (*modo si papyrum Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam non spreveris inspicere*). Although Lucius is preparing to spin tales for our ears, he acknowledges that the audience is also looking upon a document; and, in fact, he is very concerned with the audience's reaction to this physical aspect of his story. Lucius is conscious of the reader's (assumed) visual evaluation, and he expects to be put on the defensive immediately by some member of the "peanut gallery" asking the question, "Who is this guy?" (*Quis ille?*). Lucius exculpates himself in advance if he, as a non-native, Latin-as-a-second-language student should come off as an unrefined speaker before his presumably Roman audience (*En ecce praefamur veniam, siquid exotici ac forensis sermonis rudis locutor offendero*), although it is more false modesty and tacit reminder of his consummate skill.[19] Nevertheless, Lucius ultimately addresses himself to a reader, that is to say a viewer of a text: *Lector intende: laetaberis*. Lucius toys with the boundary between himself and his audience, but he ultimately wants us to know that we are in his command and that the privilege of knowledge is his to give. At the beginning of 1.2, Lucius offers no explanation for his travel to Thessaly besides a vague reference to having some business there (*ex negotio petebam*), which is

18 See the essays in Ahuvia Kahane and Andrew Laird, eds., *A Companion to the Prologue of Apuleius'* Metamorphoses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), in particular the commentary by Stephen Harrison and Michael Winterbottom, "The Prologue to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*: Text, Translation, and Textual Commentary," 9-15.

19 K. Dowden "The Roman Audience of the *Golden Ass,*" *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, ed. J. Tatum, (Baltimore:
Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 419-34.

never referred to again. Later inquiries in Book 1 about his journey are also frustrated: he evades Pythias' question with a promise that he does not keep (*crastino die scies*, 1.24); he does, however, answer Milo's string of questions (*narro singula*, 1.26), although he still does not reveal those answers to us. Yet Lucius clearly hopes that we will be enticed by his games rather than repulsed, and so he will continue to engage us as spectators to his performance.

The novel is a performance, the novel is a spectacle. So what will we as spectators experience from this spectacle? Lucius has promised us Milesian tales (*sermone isto Milesio*) of transformations of bodies and fortunes into new shapes and restored again in turn (*figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se rursum mutuo nexu refectas*). The *sermo Milesius* refers to generally salacious tales named for Aristides of Miletus, although Moreschini has argued that the term "Milesian" can simply denote a work that incorporates erotic, philosophical, and religious themes.[20] The phrase *sermone isto Milesio* ("that Milesian style of yours") also suggests a playful relationship between *auctor* and audience: Lucius pitches his tale as the sort of Milesian fare that he thinks we want to hear, even though we, as readers and especially as re-readers, know that Lucius is about subverting our expectations rather than fulfilling them.[21] The reference to bodies and fortunes transformed suggests that the narrative will proceed through a series of metamorphoses that are eventually bound up into a neat and

20 C. Moreschini, "Le *Metamorfosi* di Apuleio, la 'Fabula Milesia,' e il Romanzo," *Materiali e Discussioni per L'Analisi dei Testi Classici* 25 (1990), 115-27. Hanson's note from his Loeb edition on *sermone isto Milesio* gives this brief, narrow definition: "This is usually taken to refer to so-called 'Milesian tales,' pornographic stories named for Aristides of Miletus, whose Greek fiction was translated into Latin by the Roman historian Sisenna in the first century B.C. It may also suggest 'Asianic' or florid in style in contrast to the purer 'Attic' style sought by some of Apuleius' contemporary writers."

21 The other reference to Milesian tales in the novel precedes a metafictional curiosity in the narrative of the Cupid and Psyche tale. The old woman explains to Charite that Apollo, "although Greek and Ionic," prophesizes in Latin "for the benefit of the author of a Milesian tale" (*Sed Apollo, quamquam Graecus et Ionicus, propter Milesiae conditorem sic Latina sorte respondit*, 4.32).

well-made knot. He wants us to marvel (*ut mireris*) and be delighted (*laetaberis*) at this "Greekish story," to borrow Hanson's translation of *fabulam Graecanicam*.[22] Lucius compares his narrative style to the act of a *desultor* (*desultoriae scientiae stilo*), a circus performer who leaps back and forth between a pair of galloping horses. This comparison suggests the varied nature of the work itself, its performative and spectacular aspects, and, of course, the performer's deft handling of these leaps.

Lucius wants to engage us as both listeners and as viewers, and he wants to assert an implicit authority over the way we view the narrative. Lucius is a performer, and as a performer he commands our attention. He is conscious that he is in our eyes, and that we are in his. He will play on this give-and-take often throughout the novel, whether by addressing his readers directly or by purposely undermining our understanding of the narrative. We shall focus later on Lucius specifically as a viewer and as an object of viewing, but for now we will take a look at aspects of vision in the tales of Aristomenes and Socrates, Diophanes, Thelyphron, Actaeon, and Psyche.[23] These stories help to develop consistent patterns of viewing and transgression that will apply to the interpretation of Lucius' own visual progress throughout the novel.

22 Hanson's translation is particularly apt because, although the tale is based on a Greek story, Lucius is a Roman, and the Roman empire casts a long shadow over the world that he inhabits. It is worth noting that this dominance of Rome in the narrative distinguishes *Metamorphoses* from the Greek novels, which tend to portray an idealized Mediterranean world in which the Romans do not play a major role. One needs only to look at Lucian's epitome *Onos*, where the only explicit Roman is a soldier who is beaten up by a Greek peasant.

23 See Fergus Millar, "The World of the Golden Ass," in S.J. Harrison, ed., *Oxford Readings in the Roman Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 252 n. 16 for a complete list of the "real-life" inserted narratives in the text.

Supervivens et Postumus: Aristomenes and Socrates

The tale of Socrates and Aristomenes demonstrates how the perception of others is inextricably linked with the progression between states of being. When Aristomenes meets Socrates on the road, he jokes that his friend looks as though he has already been declared dead and is being mourned by his family *(At vero domi tuae defletus et conclamatus es*, 1.6). In his debasement, Socrates becomes not merely a *miserum aerumnae spectaculum* but a *tropaeum*, a symbol of Meroë's power and a paradigm for the fate of other observers.[24] Socrates is dirty and emaciated, and he covers his face with a tattered cloak to keep Aristomenes from looking at him (*sutili centunculo faciem suam iam dudum punicantem prae pudore obtexit*, 1.6). He remains *capite velato* as he relates the tale of his misfortune (1.7). The portrayal of Socrates here recalls the end of *Phaedo* when Socrates covers his head after drinking poison (118a). The gesture of covering the head is significant because it creates a link between this scene and the progression from life to death, a progression that will be echoed in Aristomenes' perception of his own death and rebirth later in the scene. The association of this ancillary character with the final gesture of the historical Socrates signals what boundary we will be crossing, although this boundary will be toyed with throughout the tale and beyond. The image of Socrates with his head covered evokes a religious significance for the later scene at the inn and for the novel itself. Socrates resembles a Roman priest in the act of performing a sacrifice, and this sacrificial context resurfaces in

24 Socrates refuses to let Aristomenes help him: "Allow Fortune to delight a little longer in the trophy that she herself has set up" (*Sine, sine...fruatur diutius tropaeo Fortuna quod fixit ipsa*, 1.7). *Tropaeum* is associated with military monuments commemorating the defeat of an enemy (*OLD* entry on *tropaeum*, 1981). It is interesting to note that the *OLD* gives this very passage as an example of the second definition for *tropaeum*, "victory." The use of *fixit* in the sentence, however, suggests to me a physical action as of dedicating a memorial; and if we consider how Socrates has been objectified as a spectacle so far in the passage, it makes more sense that he would consider his very form to be a monument to his defeat at Fortuna's hands.

Meroë's ritualized murder of Socrates, a murder that is also an attempt to assert her power over Aristomenes himself.[25] This context also suggests that Socrates' fate plays a paradigmatic role in Lucius' narrative: Socrates assumes the guise of a priest with his head covered, and he is sacrificed; however, Lucius' initation into the priesthood of Isis offers him new life, and he leaves his bald head uncovered (*non obumbrato vel obtecto calvitio*, 11.30).

The scene in the inn develops the motif of the permeability of the bounds between life and death: both Socrates and Aristomenes undergo a sort of death and rebirth in the night because of their mocking of Meroë. In this scene as well we have the first explicit power struggle over possession of the gaze, between Meroë and Aristomenes. She promises to make Aristomenes pay for his *curiositas*, a trait that draws a considerable amount of attention in scholarship on *Metamorphoses*.[26] Here we see the first instance of the noun *curiositas*, although it is the third instance of a word with the *curio-* root (the adverb *curiose* and the adjective *curiosum*, both at 1.2 and both describing Lucius). This characteristic is the impetus behind Lucius' pursuit of magic: he uses the word when he addresses himself to Aristomenes and his anonymous companion "not as a busybody, but someone who wants to know everything, or just most things" (*non quidem curiosum, sed qui velim scire vel cuncta vel certe plurima*).[27] Meroë's

25 A well-known sculptural example of a *capite velato* figure is the statue of Augustus as *pontifex maximus* at the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme in Rome.

26 See note 11 above for the theme of *curiositas* in the novel.

27 My translation of *curiosum* here as "busybody" is not without precedent, even if it may not be the most exact translation. Plutarch's treatise on meddlesomeness, the περὶ Πολυπραγμοσύνης, is usually rendered *de Curiositate* in Latin. As E. J. Kenney notes, however, there is no satisfactory Latin analogue for πολυπραγμοσύνη, a difficulty that Aulus Gellius attempted to tackle (*Noctes Atticae* 11.16), without success. The closest Gellius came to *le mot juste* was *negotiositas*, although he was ultimately unsatisfied with it: "Then at first, since I thought I would not be interpreting properly if I said the book was titled 'De Negotiositate,' I began to seek another definition in my writings, because, as it is said, the word would not be expressed by the word" (*Ac tum quidem primo, quia non satis commode opinabar interpretaturum <me> esse, si dicerem librum scriptum 'de negotiositate,' aliud institui aput me exquirere, ut dicitur, uerbum de uerbo expressum esset*). Cf. Kenney, "In the Mill with Slaves: Lucius Looks Back in Gratitude," *Transactions of the American Philological*

charge of *curiositas* against Aristomenes is the first explicitly negative association of the word in the novel. It is parallel to *dicacitas* in Meroë's judgment (*praecedentis dicacitatis et instantis curiositatis paeniteat*, 1.12), which is defined as "mordant and caustic raillery."[28] *Dicacitas* acts as a physical effect of his *curiositas*: Meroë is offended not merely by Aristomenes' desire to learn about her exploits, but by his attempt to assert control over her through mockery. Thus it is not so much Aristomenes' viewing that deserves retribution as his mocking of her.[29]

In her attempt to regain control of how she is perceived, Meroë subjects Aristomenes to a series of metamorphoses from without and within: he has to witness the death, rebirth, and death of Socrates; and he will experience a series of changes from death to life to death again. Meroë makes an example out of Socrates right before Aristomenes' eyes, slitting his throat and extracting his heart (1.13). Yet the murder of Socrates is not the end of her revenge on Aristomenes: she wants to demonstrate her ability to make the boundaries between life and death permeable, to leave Aristomenes unable to distinguish his own status. The series of metamorphoses that he recounts leads him from life to death: "as if fresh from my mother's womb—no, half-dead—actually, outliving myself, or certainly now a candidate for the cross" (*quasi recens utero matris editus, immo vero semimortuus, verum etiam ipse mihi supervivens et postumus, vel certe destinatae iam cruci candidatus*, 1.14).[30] His attempt, however, to effect a

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Association 133.1 (Spring 2003), 164. The equivalence of *negotiositas* with *curiositas* certainly makes for an interesting reading of Lucius' notoriously oblique reason for traveling to Thessaly, *ex negotio petebam*, 1.2).

28 *OLD* entry on *dicacitas*, 536.

29 On the effects of *dicacitas*, see James Tatum, "The Tales of Apuleius' Metamorphoses," *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 100 (1969), 495.

30 Stavros Frangoulidis, "A Pivotal Metaphor in Apuleius' *Metaorphoses*: Aristomenes' and Lucius' Death and Rebirth," in Stephen Harrison, Michael Paschalis, and Stavros Frangoulidis, eds., *Metaphor and the Ancient Novel* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2005), 197-209. Frangoulidis posits parallelism as well as inversion in the "rebirth" of Aristomenes in

permanent status by suicide not only fails to kill him but also revives Socrates, although this resurrection is short-lived. Aristomenes then chooses to cut himself off completely from his old life and goes into exile. From our introduction to Aristomenes, we see that he has had a difficult time convincing his traveling companion of what happened to him. Even in the middle of telling his story to Lucius, he has to emphasize that he saw these things with his own two eyes (*Haec ego meis oculis aspexi*). The effects of his metamorphoses are permanent.

In the figures of Socrates and Aristomenes, we can see many effects of viewing and being viewed that foreshadow Lucius' own experiences to come. *Curiositas* becomes marked as a means of effecting metamorphoses of status, of crossing social and physical boundaries. Both Socrates and Lucius are foreign travelers who become objects of the scrutiny of others because of their sexual entanglements: Socrates with Meroë and Lucius with Photis. Socrates identifies himself as a *tropaeum*, a visual representation of the victory of the goddess Fortuna. Lucius will also find himself set up as a dedication to a victorious god who delights in spectacle, Risus. In his later attempt to view Pamphile and control her arts, Lucius will experience a similarly confused state of being between life and death, and this confusion will drive him toward his physical metamorphosis. Aristomenes experiences a cycle of death and rebirth from his viewing experience. Although he does not die, he does abandon his old life and is thus effectively dead, as Lucius will abandon his old life for initiation into the worship of Isis and Osiris.

Book 1

and Lucius' own conversion in book 11. He determines that Aristomenes undergoes a birth process from the "union" of

the witch Meroe and Socrates (whom some manuscripts have Aristomenes call *meus pater*), and this awful birth is

contrasted with Lucius' own rebirth in Isis, whom he considers his "mother" (*dulcem matris affection miser rum casibus*

tribuis), as he considers the priest, Mithras, who directs his initiation his father (*meum iam parentum*, 11.25).

The Laughter of a Group: Diophanes and Thelyphron

The next two scenes that we will consider focus on foreign travelers who are humiliated and exposed before the eyes of a crowd. The tales of Diophanes and Thelyphron reinforce the transformative power of looking and being looked at in the novel. The two competing narratives about Diophanes, one by Lucius and the other by Milo, present competing perspectives on Diophanes, setting him up as a magical figure before ultimately undermining his abilities and humiliating him publicly. The tale of Thelyphron reinforces the humiliation of exposure in the eyes of a crowd, and it also recalls the tale of Socrates and Aristomenes with its focus on sight and the permeability of states of being, especially the states of sleep and death. The tales taken together create a context for the events of
Book 3, in which Lucius faces the public humiliation of the Risus Festival and then undergoes his metamorphosis into an ass after he witnesses Pamphile at work.

In Lucius' story Diophanes is a sensation throughout Corinth, “stirring up the city with his remarkable utterances and telling fortunes to the people for donations” (*miris totam civitatem responsis turbulentat, et arcana fatorum stipibus emerendis edicit in vulgum*). When Lucius asks him the outcome of his trip to Thessaly, Diophanes responds that Lucius' journey will make him famous and that he will become an incredible story in multiple volumes (*nunc enim gloriam satis floridam, nunc historiam magnam et incredundam fabulam et libros me futurum*, 2.12). Milo laughs at Lucius' credulousness (*Ad haec renidens*, 2.13) and tells his own story, in which Diophanes is cheated by a businessman to whom he was about to sell his prophecy. When Diophanes realizes that he has been deceived by his customer, he “wakes up” (*expergitus*) to an outburst of mocking laughter from all those gathered around (*cum etiam nos omnes circumsecus*

astantes in clarum cachinnum videret effusos, 2.14). The focalization of this scene creates two conflicting gazes: Diophanes is the subject of *videret* and thus should be the primary viewer; however, his view meets with the stronger view of the crowd, which encircles him tightly (*nos omnes circumsecus astantes*) before diffusing in an outburst of raucous laughter (*in clarum cachinnum...effusos*). Two conflicts of perspective are at work in this scene: in the narrative there is the conflict between the perspectives of Diophanes and of those around him; within the framing narrative, however, we see a conflict between the perspectives of Lucius and Milo, and in this conflict Lucius is exposed to the laughter of his host. Yet there is another conflict of perspective outside of the narrative: Diophanes predicts the *incredundam fabulam* that we are reading, and so it seems that Lucius intends for us to sympathize with Diophanes and, by extension, him. However, the strangeness of this metafictional remark in dinner conversation should make us restrain ourselves from too much credulousness.

The narrative of Thelyphron encompasses and elaborates upon many of the effects of vision demonstrated in previous tales. It is framed by the isolation of an outsider by the mocking gaze of a crowd. Thelyphron's isolation makes him, in effect, a dead man, an exile now living on the fringe of Hypatan society. His social death occurs during the funeral procession of the man whom Thelyphron guarded the night before: an Egyptian priest, Zatchlas, revives the man, who reveals Thelyphron's deformity to the people. The tale focuses upon the overwhelming power of a communal gaze over the isolated individual in shaping his status. This narrative has important ramifications for the entire novel, particularly for Lucius, who suffers public humiliation in the eyes of the Hypatans during the Risus Festival.

Thelyphron is an outsider at Byrhenna's party, and his story is a running joke among the other guests. Before the tale even begins, the mere mention of Thelyphron's fate elicits paroxysms of laughter and overwhelming gazes from the crowd: "At these words the whole party dissolved in unrestrained laughter, and the eyes and gazes of all were turned to someone reclining in a corner" (*inter haec convivium totum in licentiosos cachinnos effunditur, omniumque ora et optutus in unum quempiam angulo secubantem conferuntur*, 2.20). Although Thelyphron is a guest of one of the foremost citizens of Hypata, he is still isolated from the other guests. It is clear from his gestures when he begins to tell his story that he is a man of education who has developed rhetorical skills (*ad instar oratorum*, 2.21); however, his exposure before the people of Hypata has nullified his rank and education. When the resurrected man singles Thelyphron out, the onlookers point their fingers and laugh at him (*dum directis digitis et detortis nutibus praesentium denotor, dum risus ebullit*, 2.30). The laughter of the crowd follows him wherever he goes: "Once Thelyphron finished his story, his fellow-drinkers, doused in wine, renewed their laughter" (*cum primum Thelyphron hanc fabulam posuit, compotores vino madidi rursum cachinnum integrant*, 2.31). The solidarity of the group against Thelyphron is clear: the tale begins and ends with their laughter, and they literally make themselves a whole (*integrant*), from which he is excluded.

Thelyphron occupies a social position between the elite and the common people: this liminal position is fitting because Thelyphron is a dead man, but he has also provided the city with a *munus* of his own during the funeral procession. The basic meaning of *munus* is a responsibility or duty, and it is first used to describe his job of keeping vigil over the corpse (*vide...munus obeas*, 2.23).[31] However, the word also means the production of a public spectacle

31 *OLD* entry for *munus*, 1146.

or a funeral procession. Zatchlas' resurrection of the citizen during the procession is rendered in the remarkable phrase *postliminio mortis*, an odd but significant choice within the context of the tale and the whole novel itself. *Ius postliminii* is the Roman legal term for the restitution of rights to a Roman citizen who is released from slavery: Gaius writes in *Institutiones* that citizens who return from enslavement retain all of their rights previous to their capture (*propter ius postliminii, quo hi, qui ab hostibus rapti sunt, si reversi fuerint, omnia pristina recipiunt*, 1.129). Apuleius' striking formulation—which he also uses in *Florida* 19.96 to describe Asclepiades' resurrection of a man *ab inferis postliminio*—as Bowersock writes, "equates death with the servility of a captive and life with the restoration of full citizen rights."[32] Yet the *ius postliminii* in this case has the unintended consequence of exposing Thelyphron's disfigurement. This resurrection reveals that Thelyphron has swapped places with the dead man: the threshold of death is crossed in both directions. As the center of the funeral *munus*, Thelyphron in effect becomes the dead aristocrat. His place on the edge of Hypatan high society confirms that the boundary between status boundaries, and between life and death, are permeable, especially within the context of public spectacle.

The tale of Thelyphron has clear echoes of the tale of Diophanes, and these echoes in turn will be heard in the narrative of the Risus Festival. There is the explicit verbal reference in the complete abandon of the people in their resounding laughter (*cachinnos effunditur*, 2.20), as they focus their full attention on one isolated figure. Diophanes is the victim of public humiliation and becomes a running gag at the dinner table. It is fitting then that Milo uses the anecdote about Diophanes to belittle Lucius for his credulity, since he will be the central spectacle in the Risus

32 G. W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 108-9.

Festival and be offered the opportunity to become a permanent fixture in the theater and a running joke just like Thelyphron. The presence of the Egyptian priest in the Thelyphron tale also helps link these crossings of social boundaries to the crossing of the boundaries between life and death, a transition that Lucius will make when he enters the worship of Osiris, a god who dies and is reborn.

The three tales that we have considered so far have given us a good overview of the danger of viewing and being exposed to vision: status is fluid in the eyes of others, and the boundaries between life and death—both in a social and physical sense—are violable. Socrates and Aristomenes both experience death from their visual experience with the witch Meroë. Diophanes and Thelyphron are both travelers who are humiliated in the eyes of those who see them—and in Thelyphron's case, the very sight of his disfigurement renews the mocking laughter of those around him.

Viewing the God: Actaeon, Psyche, and Lucius

In these last two sections of the chapter, I would like to examine the scene with the statuary group of Actaeon and Diana in Byrhenna's house (2.4) and the tale of Cupid and Psyche, the largest inserted tale in the novel (4.28-6.24). These stories also exemplify the perils of seeing and being seen, but these scenes are also remarkable for demonstrating the effects of attempting to transgress the visual boundary between mortals and gods without permission. Actaeon, in Apuleius' version of the myth, is caught gazing at Diana as he begins his metamorphosis. Psyche attempts to view her lover, Cupid, despite his warnings. For her reckless desire to view, she is punished with a period of trial and humiliation by Venus, who sees her as an unworthy match for

her son. By the end of the tale, however, Psyche is admitted among the gods and is allowed to marry Cupid in "nuptials not unequal but legitimate and conforming to civil law" (*nuptias non impares, sed legitimas et iure civili congruas*, 6.23).[33] The tales of Actaeon and Psyche mirror Lucius' own visual experience with divine powers: Actaeon and Psyche are surreptitious, transgressive viewers, and they suffer for their desire to see—Actaeon through his metamorphosis and Psyche through her set of difficult tasks. The metamorphosis of Actaeon anticipates Lucius' metamorphosis after viewing Pamphile, and Psyche's journey echoes Lucius' own difficult progress. Yet the fate of Psyche does offer some hope for Lucius, because she is finally accepted among the gods and allowed to live with Cupid as her husband, just as Lucius is accepted into a relationship with Isis.

When Lucius enters his aunt Byrhenna's house, he encounters a marvelous tableau depicting a stunningly realistic landscape in marble:

> *Pone tergum deae saxum insurgit in speluncae modum, muscis et herbis et foliis et virgulis et sicubi pampinis et arbusculis alibi de lapide florentibus. Splendet intus umbra signi de nitore lapidis. Sub extrema saxi margine poma et uvae faberrime politae dependent, quas ars aemula naturae veritati similes explicuit. Putes ad cibum inde quaedam, cum mustulentus autumnus maturum colorem afflaverit, posse decerpi, et si fontem, qui deae vestigio discurrens in lenemm vibratur undam, pronus aspexeris, credes illos ut rure pendentes racemos inter cetera veritatis nec agitationis officio carere.*
>
> Behind the goddess's back rose a rock in the shape of a cave, with moss, grass, leaves, bushes and here with vines and there with little trees blossoming from the stone. Within, the shadow of the statue gleamed by the marble's brightness. Under the very edge of the rock hung apples and expertly polished grapes, which skill, equal to nature, displayed like the real thing. You would think you were able

33 Josiah Osgood examines the tale's Roman legal language and how in particular Venus exploits it to invalidate the union between Cupid and Psyche: "*Nuptiae Iure Civili Congruae*: Apuleius' Story of Cupid and Psyche and the Roman Law of Marriage," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 136 (2006), 415-41.

> to pluck some for dinner, when wine-gathering autumn breathes ripening color, and if you bent down and examined the stream, which is stirred into a gentle wave by the goddess's running footstep, you would believe that the grapes hanging as though in the country lacked no ability to move, among other aspects of reality. (2.4)

Against this beautiful but ultimately unreal backdrop stands the goddess Diana surrounded by her dogs, "an absolutely stunning piece, its garments blown about, vigorous as it runs forward, meeting passersby and worthy of reverence for the majesty of its divinity" (*signum perfecte luculentum, veste reflatum, procursu vegetum, introeuntibus obvium et maiestate numinis venerabile*). Although Lucius is the actual viewer of this scene (and the author of this gorgeous ekphrasis), he is not alone: "Among the marble leaves the image of Actaeon, leaning towards the goddess opposite him with an inquisitive gaze, already changing into a stag, both in stone and in the spring is seen waiting for Diana to bathe" (*Inter medias frondes lapidis Actaeon simulacrum, curioso optutu in deam versum proiectus, iam in cervum ferinus et in saxo simul et in fonte loturam Dianam opperiens visitur*, 2.4). The statue of Actaeon is no accidental observer: he leans in for a better view, directs his full attention upon the goddess, who is clothed, whether because she has not bathed yet or because she has finished bathing and is, perhaps, in pursuit of Actaeon.[34] Actaeon is deliberate and intent on seeing, even as his body begins to change. Diana is not looking at Actaeon, but rather she is focused on the viewer of the statuary group—that is to say she is looking at Lucius, as well as us who look through Lucius' eyes. Thus we are invited to consider the possibility that Actaeon's changing is not retributive but rather the result of his own gazing, that he is the agent of his own metamorphosis. Also, although Actaeon is viewing Diana, there is particular emphasis on how he can be seen: his face appears among the leaves and also in

34 Niall Slater, "Passion and Petrifaction: The Gaze in Apuleius," *Classical Philology* 93.1 (Jan. 1998), 29.

the spring itself. The verb *visitur* is delayed until the end: we know that he has been caught in his looking, and we see him frozen at the height of his desire. Lucius is similarly frozen in his gaze: Apuleius here uses *rimabundus*, from the verb *rimor*, which means to scrutinize or examine carefully—literally, it means to peer through a *rima*, or crack, such as the one made when one squints his eyelids. Lucius' gaze therefore is Actaeon's, and Byrhenna's loaded remark, "All yours, everything you see" (*Tua sunt...cuncta quae vides*, 2.5) does not bode well for him. We can therefore see that Actaeon's metamorphosis into a stag is Lucius' metamorphosis into an ass; however, in the artifice of the tableau we can also see a connection to the mime of the judgement of Paris in Book 10, which unfolds before a spectacular recreation of Mt. Ida and ends up being the event that triggers Lucius' rejection of the world to which he has been accustomed.

Actaeon, already in the process of turning into a stag, watches Diana, while Lucius watches them both and misinterprets the scene's significance to his own situation. The Diana-Actaeon-Lucius triad creates a play of perspectives that foreshadows Lucius' own surreptitious viewing and subsequent metamorphosis. What can we say when we pair the scenes of Actaeon viewing Diana and Lucius viewing Pamphile? In terms of similar patterns of action, we can see that both scenes feature the unsolicited viewing of a powerful female figure; however, in neither scene is the viewer directly punished for his viewing by the one viewed. Rather, Actaeon and Lucius effect their own transformation through their viewing. It is the impressionable Lucius, after all, who makes the decision to take his desire from simply viewing to actual practice. The sight of Pamphile changes Lucius before he even undergoes his physical metamorphosis: "But I, who had been enchanted by no spell, was so transfixed with awe at the present happening that I seemed to be something quite different from Lucius" (*At ego nullo decantatus carmine,*

praesentis tantum facti stupore defixus, quidvis aliud magis videbar esse quam Lucius, 3.22). Sight itself begins the process of metamorphosis.

Throughout the tale of Cupid and Psyche, the dangers of reckless viewing are emphasized in ways that recall the experiences of both Actaeon and Lucius. While the tale exhibits a scene of a mortal viewing a god without permission, Psyche's fate reflects a different aspect of Lucius' journey from that which the Actaeon narrative reflected. In the Actaeon narrative, a viewer attempts to cross the boundary between man and god, and instead ends up slipping across the boundary between man and animal. Psyche suffers for her unsolicited viewing by being abandoned by Cupid and put through a series of trials by Venus, but she eventually triumphs. Details of Psyche's entrance into Cupid's home recall Lucius' entrance into Byrhenna's home: she examines everything around her intently (*rimatur singula*, 5.2). *Rimor* recalls *rimabundus* from 2.26, which described Lucius as he viewed the Actaeon-Diana statuary group. The root of these words signifies the action of squinting through a crack (*rima*), of viewing what should be hidden. The verb appears when Psyche examines Cupid and his armaments (*insatiabili animo Psyche, satis et curiosa, rimatur*, 5.23). Psyche's intent gazing at Cupid as he sleeps leads us to reconsider Diana and Actaeon: *curiosa* connects Psyche's viewing to Actaeon himself, who looked upon Diana *curioso optutu* (2.4). Psyche is consumed with the desire to view Cupid, "leaning over him and breathing him in, gobbled up by passionate, hungry kisses" (*magis magisque cupidine flagrans Cupidinis, prona in eum efflictim inhians, patulis ac petulantibus saviis festinanter ingestis*, 5.23). Her viewing separates from her lover, yet Psyche eventually finds acceptance among the gods when Jupiter declares that she may be initiated into the ranks of the immortals (*Sume...Psyche, et immortalis esto*, 6.23). The formerly unequal

relationship between mortal and god is resolved by a marriage sanctioned by all the gods, even Venus.

These two scenes are important in considering patterns of licit and illicit viewing of the supernatural and divine in the novel. Both Actaeon and Psyche attempt nonconsensual viewing of a god, and they both suffer. The consequences that each one faces map the consequences of Lucius' own illicit viewing of Pamphile: he watches Pamphile in secret and finds himself changed inwardly, "something more than Lucius." He faces a period of being shuttled from task to task until, by the mercy of Isis, he is granted an audience with the great goddess who accepts him into the ranks of her initiates. We must also be aware of another correspondence between Psyche and Lucius after their initiations: neither one returns home. Psyche's family has already given her away "in the dress of a funereal marriage" (*mundo funerei thalami*, 4.33) once to the home of her husband, and when she is made immortal she occupies a new home with him. When Lucius is initiated into the cult of Isis, he remains in Rome—effectively in self-imposed exile just as Aristomenes, Thelyphron, and Psyche. From this comparison of the effects of viewing the divine, we can see that the desire to view divinity is transgressive, not in a Judeo-Christian sense of transgression but in the sense that it opens the viewer and exposes him to change. In illicit viewing, the viewer exposes himself or herself to a sort of punitive change, but even when the god sanctions the viewing there can be irreparable consequences. None of the characters whom we have seen in this chapter returns home after his or her experience. Although the world of the novel is a place of constant change, every change leaves its traces.

These tales establish a number of basic points about the nature of sight in the novel. First of all, the desire itself to see is transformative: whether one engages a mortal or a god, one is

already in a process of changing just from looking. The gaze paralyzes viewer and viewed in different ways: beneath the gaze of an individual or a group, the viewed is subject to scrutiny and humiliation; however, to view is to be open to viewing—the rays of sight travel both ways. Viewer and viewed can experience the same scrutiny and objectification. Ultimately, vision is the agent of metamorphosis for those who see and those who are seen. The effects and consequences of these scenes of viewing create a context for Lucius' progression and stages of transformation. In the next chapters I will focus specifically on Lucius' experiences of viewing and being viewed, and analyze how his desire to see and his inability to control the power of the gaze expose him to the pains of being viewed.

CHAPTER TWO

LUCIUS ON DISPLAY

From the experiences of the characters whom we have considered so far, we can establish two premises for the ways in which vision will affect Lucius throughout the novel: to be in the eyes of others is to be susceptible to humiliation and change, and the desire to see what one is not permitted is a transgressive act that can cross social, physical, or religious boundaries. In this chapter I intend to consider the first of these two premises in scenes in which Lucius is put on display before an audience: these scenes include the Risus Festival in Book 3, the *munus* given by Thiasus in Book 10, and the procession of Isis-worshippers and Lucius' initiation in Book 11. These scenes involve the misperception of status and the permeability of status boundaries in the eyes of others. This danger of permeability reflects a particularly Roman anxiety—although hardly an exclusive one—about the loss of personal status, if even only in the terms of play or sport.[35] This chapter will focus on how Lucius perceives and is perceived when he is put on display. In each case Lucius' status is manipulated in the eyes of his viewers, and this conflict between Lucius' perception of himself and others' perception of him makes for a complicated dialogue of sight. I intend to examine this dialogue, how Lucius interprets or misinterprets the gaze cast upon him, and to what extent those who view him are under scrutiny themselves.

35 Maaike Zimmerman-de Graaf, "Narrative Judgement and Reader Response in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10, 29-34: The Pantomime of the Judgement of Paris," in H. Hofmann, ed., *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel*, Vol. 5 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1993). Zimmerman-de Graaf argues that the novel as a whole reflects the cultural "obsession with the danger of being falsely condemned," an obsession perhaps drawn in sharp relief in this novel by Apuleius' own experience (157).

Lucius' reaction to being viewed will be an interesting point of discussion because he as narrator presents an often distorted reflection of the gaze cast upon himself. This perception provides insight into his construction of the world around him as well as the process of its disintegration as he approaches the climax of his crisis of faith.

Material for the God: Lucius at the Risus Festival

There has been a significant number of interpretations of the setup and outcome of the Risus Festival, from its role as a ritual sacrifice to its role as a rite of social integration.[36] Yet the Risus Festival is ultimately a game of playing with status boundaries: the citizens of Hypata know of Lucius' noble pedigree because of his aunt Byrrhena, but they create a context in which Lucius is made to believe that his credentials do not matter, that his boundaries can be violated. The festival subverts Lucius' expectations of his rights: neither his aristocratic upbringing nor his Roman ctizenship are considered of any worth, and Lucius is treated as no better than a slave. The Risus Festival is the creation of a shared viewing experience for the citizens, who act as witnesses to the religious spectacle and celebrants of the god. The effect of the festival is that communal laughter will be created from the collision of different perceptions of the central event —how Lucius perceives the event as opposed to how the Hypatans know it will play out. After all, as Henri Bergson writes, laughter is an activity that depends on this sort of distinction and isolation: ”Our laughter is always the laughter of a group.”[37]

36 Regine May, *Apuleius and Drama: The Ass on Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 185.

37 Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1914), 6.

The Risus Festival is not only the first scene in the novel to take place in a building designed for the viewing of spectacle, but it is also Lucius' first exposure to an audience within the text and his first experience with the transformative effects of being viewed.[38] That the theater will be a venue for metamorphosis is clear in Lucius' response to Byrhenna's invitation to attend the festival: “I sure want to find some material that so great a god may richly don” (*vellem hercules materiam repperire aliquam quam deus tantus affluenter indueret*, 2.31).[39] *Induo* can suggest the wearing of a disguise or even a total physical transformation: we have already seen the verb in the context of transformation in the Thelyphron tale, in which the witches are said to don the forms of birds, dogs, mice, and flies (*aves et rursum canes et mures, immo vero etiam muscas, induunt*, 2.22). In his *Metamorphoses* Ovid uses the verb to describe Jupiter's transformations to seduce mortals (for example, *protinus induitur faciem cultumque Dianae*, 2.425; or *induitur faciem tauri*, 2.850). Coincidentally enough, it also appears to describe Midas' punitive transformation: “he dons the ears of a gently stepping ass” (*induiturque aures lente gradientis aselli*, 11.179). Thus there is a tradition of transformation evoked in Lucius' remark, and we should be aware that we are in for a performance in which identity is mutable and that Lucius will indeed provide material for the god's act.

The theater setting does not necessarily make the trial itself any more theatrical or dramatic; however, it creates an interesting dynamic in the gazes at work. In the action of the novel, Lucius is watched by a crowd that is in on a joke of which he is unaware, and so there is a

38 Although there is no historical evidence for any such celebration of Risus in the Roman world, Plutarch does make mention of a cult of Gelos at Sparta (*Lyc*. 25.2 and *Agis* 30.1), and Philostratus writes that Gelos was a companion of Dionysus (*Imagines* 1.25.3). Cf. May, 187.

39 Tertullian uses the verb to describe the enactment of myths in the arena, in which condemned criminals play the role of gods (*ipsos deos vestros saepe noxii induunt*, *Apolegeticum* 15.4). Cf. Kathleen Coleman, “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990), 60.

conflict between two separate perspectives of the trial: Lucius believes that he is on trial for his life, while the crowd knows that the stakes are considerably lower. The venue also allows every citizen of Hypata to view Lucius and to engage in the celebration. Lucius is surrounded by viewers, but his own vision is not totally nullified. He watches the people and tells us where they are and what they are doing: "Many wrapped around columns, others hanging from statues, not a few half-seen through the windows and openings, all in their amazing zeal for watching neglected the hazards to their safety" (*Plerique columnis implexi, alii statuis dependuli, nonnulli per fenestras et lacunaria semiconspicui, miro tamen omnes studio visendi pericula salutis neglegebant*, 3.2). The last part of this sentence, in describing the Hypatan viewers, expresses a key point about the nature of viewing throughout the novel in general. All who watch are constricted by their own zeal (*miro tamen omnes studio*). *Pericula* stands between *visendi* and *salutis* in the text: dangers separate sight from safety. The juxtaposition of *visendi pericula salutis* also allows us to read the object of *neglegebant* two ways, as the dangers to safety or as the dangers of seeing. The audience is not confined to a seating area; their position is confused—the boundary between the performance space and the rest of the audience space is blurred.[40] Lucius' perspective also brings up an interesting point about the enjoyment that the audience wants to gain from the experience. The trial is well-choreographed, actors have learned their impassioned condemnations, the audience participation has clearly been rehearsed. The pleasure for the audience is not merely in watching their well-orchestrated drama run to its conclusion: the greater pleasure is in being watched by Lucius, in being misperceived by Lucius as a jury with the power of life and death over him. However, the crowd knows what is really under the

40 Niall Slater, "Spectator and Spectacle in Apuleius," in Stelios Panayotakis, Maaike Zimmerman, and Wytse Keulen, eds., *The Ancient Novel and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 89-90.

covering already, and so the true pleasure lies in compelling Lucius to see for himself. Thus we have an interesting permutation of the paralyzing and humiliating gaze, because in this case both Lucius and the Hypatans are viewers of the same object but with different ideas as to the nature of the object. It is unclear whether the Hypatans are aware of the full story behind the act,[41] but whether or not they know the full story, they know that Lucius does not anticipate the ending.

Lucius attempts to define his status as a well-respected man of a good family, who is graciously living among the Hypatans as a guest of one of their foremost citizens; however, what Lucius fails to perceive is that the problem is not that the citizens of Hypata have mistaken him for a lower status but that Lucius himself has mistaken the status of the citizens of Hypata. Lucius is responsible for his own fixation in the gaze of the crowd because he envisions them envisioning him as a slave, or worse, a criminal. The threat of torture "in the Greek way" (*cum ritu Graciensi*, 3.9) suggests that even in the Roman-dominated world of the novel, rights and status can be determined by a community against an individual. In the context of the trial in the Festival of Laughter, under the eyes of the citizens of Hypata, Lucius believes that his status is mutable: he is subject to the tortures that a slave is permitted to suffer in court to give testimony. This perceived loss of status magnifies Lucius' self-consciousness under the eyes of the community.

Although the Risus Festival is intended as a game, Luicus feels that he has suffered lasting damage to his sense of self. He becomes "frozen in stone not unlike one of the other statues or columns in the theater" (*fixus in lapidem steti gelidus nihil secus quam una de ceteris*

41 Note that when Photis reveals the true story to Lucius after the festival, she says that she and Pamphile have "a bad reputation as practitioners of evil" (*quod alioquin publicitus maleficae disciplinae perinfames sumus*, 3.16). Nevertheless, the extent to which the townspeople recognize this occurrence as the handiwork of Pamphile cannot be determined.

theatri statuis vel columnis), and only the consolation of his host brings him back from a perceived death: "Nor did I rise from the depths before my host Milo came up to me and extended his hand" (*Nec prius ab inferis emersi quam Milon hospes accessit, inecta manu*, 3.10). The magistrates of Hypata reveal that they have been aware of Lucius' status all along (*Nam et provinciam totam inclutae vestrae familiae nobilitas complectitur*) and offer to dedicate a bronze statue of Lucius in the town for posterity, an offer that Lucius amiably rejects because he is afraid that it will freeze him in the moment of his embarassment: as Slater writes, he resists not just embarassment in general, but inscenation."[42] It is clear that the fate of Thelyphron weighs heavily on his mind becauses he sees their offer as an attempt to make their control over him permanent. The Risus Festival, however, is not about the impaling of Lucius on the public gaze; rather, it is about a collaborative, mutual viewing of one drama. The humor and enjoyment of the situation are created in the disjuncture between Lucius' expectations and the crowd's: Lucius expects a tragedy, the crowd expects a comedy. Lucius' misinterpretation is key to the festival's success.

The Risus Festival creates a context for a study of the complex way that gazes can interact, especially around Lucius. The people of Hypata and Lucius engage in mutual exposition and mutual viewing. They witness the same courtroom drama but through a different lens. The audience's enjoyment is the result of Lucius' misinterpretation of what he is seeing. Lucius interprets the celebration of the Risus Festival as a trial in which first his status and then his life are at stake, and he views the people before him as his judges. Lucius does not act in any way inconsistent with what we know about his background as a man of means and a good name, although he feels that he has been mistaken for less than he is. This play with status is important

42 Slater, "Spectator and Spectacle," 93.

for the novel because it prepares the way for Lucius' breakdown of his self and his subsequent conversion to the worship of Isis. One of Lucius' motives in leaning on Photis to show him her mistress at work is to recover his self-esteem with "the dignity of wings" (*pinnarum dignitatem*, 3.23).[43] His failed attempt to restore his dignity through the pursuit of magic facilitates his break with his old life and his turn to Isis. As Mithras tells Lucius in Book 11, his original status is ultimately meaningless: "Neither your birth, nor your distinction, nor even the very education by which you've grown has helped you, but down the slope of blooming youth you have slipped into servile pleasures and reaped the miserable reward of reckless curiosity" (*Nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles voluptates, curiositatis improsperae sinistrum praemium reportasti*, 11.15).

This celebration is not the last time that Lucius stands trial in Hypata. One of the thieves reports that the city has already named Lucius as a suspect in the raid on Milo's house. Although the magistrates of Hypata had recognized Lucius' noble bearing and good name after the Risus Festival, they reinterpret the details of his visit to Hypata so as to pin the crime on him:

> *Nec argumentis dubiis sed rationibus probabilibus congruo cunctae multitudinis consensu nescio qui Lucius auctor manifestus facinoris postulabatur, qui proximis diebus fictis commendaticiis litteris Miloni sese virum commentitus bonum artius conciliaverat, ut etiam hospitio susceptus inter familiares intimos haberetur. Plusculisque ibidem diebus demoratus, falsis amoribus ancillae Milonis animum irrepens*, *ianuae claustra sedulo exploraverat et ipsa membra in quis omne patrimonium condi solebat curiose perspexerat.*
>
> Not with doubtful arguments but with genuine rationalizations, by a consensus of the whole crowd Lucius—I don't know who—was considered to be the apparent author of the crime, who recently

43 Paula James and Maeve O'Brian, "To Baldly Go: A Last Look at Lucius and His Counter-Humiliation Strategies," in W. H. Keulen, R. R. Nauta, and S. Panayotakis, eds., Lectiones Scrupulosae: *Essays on the Text and Interpretation of Apuleius'* Metamorphoses, *in Honour of Maaike Zimmerman* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2006), 234-51.

> had recently commended himself to Milo with phony letters of introduction, so that he could get in well with the members of the family. He waited for a few days, working his way into the heart of Milo's maid with false declarations of love, and he had examined carefully the bolts of the door and scrupulously investigated that very part of the house in which the whole family wealth was usually kept. (7.1)

Although Lucius is not responsible for the robbery, this reconfiguration of the facts is not implausible: it is only by his power as narrator that we can attempt to refute the story. Lucius insinuated himself into Milo's house, wooed Photis to get to her mistress, and did indeed have a tendency to examine doors—particularly the one behind which Pamphile performed her transformation. In this trial, Lucius' servant is the one to suffer torture for testimony, although he, like his bewildered master, has no confession to make. Another interesting parallel with the Risus Festival is that Lucius is declared *auctor*, not of the god Risus (*auctorem et actorem suum*, 3.11) but of a crime (*facinoris*, 7.2). In either case the designation of *auctor* brings Lucius back into the court of public opinion, and perhaps we can sense a playful nod to Lucius as author of the text, who addressed us in the prologue. Lucius feels ashamed at the tarnishing of his name and at his inability to defend himself against the charge: he is afraid that his silence will mark him as having a guilty conscience (*ne mala conscientia tam scelesto crimini praesens viderer silentio consentire*, 7.3). Even as an ass Lucius is conscious of losing control over his portrayal and of being seen as less than he actually is.

Lucius and the *Munus* of Thiasus

The three scenes of Lucius on display within the context of the *munus* of Thiasus include his exposure to Thiasus' slaves, his performance at the banquet, and his anticipated show in the arena with the condemned woman. These scenes continue the perception play of the Risus Festival: Lucius is exposed before audiences that do not recognize his true status (although in this case the viewers are not merely playing at ignorance). Lucius is a source of laughter because of his loss of control over how he is perceived. Playing human for Thiasus' guests only exposes Lucius to more laughter and ultimately imperils him: his human behavior sets him up to be a spectacle, just as his fixation on Pamphile sets him up for the elaborate gag behind the Risus Festival. This comparison suggests that Lucius has not yet come to understand the consequences of his behavior; however, when such behavior as an ass earns him a place in the arena, he realizes that he cannot continue to live as he has been up to this point without grave consequences..

The reaction of the slaves in the household of Thiasus recalls the reaction of viewers—including Lucius himself—from many passages in the novel:

> *per quandam modicam cavernam rimantur me passim expositis epulis inhaerentem. Nec ulla cura iam damni sui habita, mirati monstruosas asini delicias risu maximo dirumpuntur, vocatoque uno et altero ac dein pluribus conservis, demonstrant infandam memoratu hebetis iumenti gulam. Tantus denique ac tam liberalis cachinnus cunctos invaserat.*
>
> Through some opening they peered at me glomming on the food left out. With no concern for their own loss, they marveled at the remarkable tastes of an ass and erupted with laughter, and with one then another then all of their fellow servants called together, they

showed off the unspeakable gluttony of a stupid beast of burden.
Then such great and free laughter invaded all. (10.15)

The verb *rimantur* evokes the scenes of Lucius examining the sculpture group of Diana and Actaeon, and his later glimpses of Pamphile (3.21), as well as Psyche's watching of Cupid.[44] Once again humor is generated by a mistaken impression of the object upon which one looks. Lucius does not act in any way contrary to his nature as a human: he eats the food and drinks the wine given to him, and he performs various tricks that are not particularly difficult for a person to do. Thiasus and his guests, however, see not a man but an ass acting as a man. The scene is thus a sort of inversion of the Risus Festival because the performer knows more than the audience and delights in pleasing them by simply being himself. Lucius proudly performs, while his master looks on "drenched in joy" (*delibutus gaudio*, 10.17), much like the amused citizens of Hypata, also "drenched in happiness" (*laetitia delibuti*, 3.10). So we have established that Lucius' exhibition before the slaves and guests of Thiasus resembles his exhibition before the townspeople of Hypata: both are cases of mistaken identity, in the sense that in the Risus Festival Lucius perceives that he is a criminal on trial before the Hypatan assembly, and the dinner guests of Thiasus see an ass with curiously human mannerisms (*asinum luctantem, asinum saltantem, asinum voces humanas intellegentem, sensum nutibus exprimentem*, 10.17).

Despite the similarities between the Risus Festival and the *munus* of Thiasus, there is a distinction between them in their use of the verb *rimor* and its consequences. The appearance of the verb in this scene recalls its earlier use in other scenes of illicit viewing, such as Lucius' viewing of Pamphile and Psyche's viewing of Cupid; however, the use of the verb in this context also allows us to explore the power dynamic inherent in sureptitious viewing as opposed to open

44 Another interesting note about the appearance of *rimantur* in the passage is that it is once more accompanied by a form of *miror* (*mirati*), evoking the same pun as in the statuary and Cupid scenes.

viewing. Thiasus first observes Lucius through a crack, but he does not remain a secretive viewer: “when the door had been opened, he stood right nearby and witnessed me face-to-face” (*iam patefacto cubiculo proxime consistens coram arbitratur*, 11.16). This scene makes a clear distinction between hidden and open viewing: the slaves watch through a crack; the master opens the door and watches face-to-face. In this dichotomy we can sense a correlation in Lucius' viewing: he spies on Photis and Pamphile, but he will look openly on Isis. This correlation can also explain why Mithras chides Lucius for his indulgence in *serviles voluptates*, pleasures that have enslaved him.

Lucius in the Arena

The *munus* of Thiasus is the final straw for Lucius: the peril of becoming part of a deadly arena spectacle climaxes in Lucius' rejection of a society to which he once belonged. This rejection is the result of seeing the consequences of his habitual behavior now that he is an ass. When we first met Lucius the *actor*, he described to Aristomenes and his unnamed companion how he had nearly choked to death during an eating competition with his dinner-companions (1.4). At Thiasus' table he continues to gorge himself among his peers as he always has, but his appearance as an ass makes his behavior an eye-catching spectacle. His dalliance with the *matrona* would not raise any eyebrows if he were not an ass. Yet the *munus* proves that Lucius cannot continue to live in the way to which he has been accustomed: Lucius' primary desire is to view *rara miraque*, but the consequences of this desire put him in a position where his peers see his human behavior as nothing more than imitation. Lucius' status is misinterpreted as it was in

the Risus Festival: he should not be in the arena, he should not be condemned. This sense of persecution, that his status is not merely being toyed with but rather being obliterated, compels Lucius to reconsider his original conception of the world.

Thiasus' *munus* puts Lucius through the lowest degradations of his status: he is an animal to be sexually abused and ultimately consumed as his master sees fit. The show features gladiators and wild beasts imported from Thessaly, a location clearly meant to tip off the reader to what is in store for Lucius, who is himself technically a beast from Thessaly—or at any rate, a man who became a beast in Thessaly. Among Lucius' fans is an unnamed *matrona* who conceives of a Pasiphaean passion for him. This coupling gives Thiasus the bright idea of including Lucius in a show in which he will have sex with a woman condemned for murder. The coupling of a woman and an animal in the arena was not a novelty at the time Apuleius wrote *Metamorphoses.* Martial comments on just such an event in his series of poems on spectacles, *Liber Spectaculorum*: "Believe that Pasiphae mated with the Dictaean bull: we have seen it—the old tale has proof," (*Iunctam Pasiphaen Dictaeo credite tauro:/ vidimus, accepit fabula prisca fidem*, 5.1-4).[45] Lucius feels that he cannot endure being watched during a humiliating spectacle because within that shaggy pelt he is still a human being conscious of the debasement of such an act and refuses to be tainted " by the contagion of that criminal woman or shamed by the ignominy of a public spectacle" (*scelerosae mulieris contagio macularer vel infamia publici spectaculi depudescerem*, 10.29).This refusal to subject himself to such a union emphasizes that Lucius himself has not changed throughout the novel, but rather it is people's impression of him and the standards of behavior that they impose on him as an ass. Lucius can be nothing besides

45 See Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 63-4, for discussion of the logistics and prevalence of such displays in the arena.

Lucius, no matter how the world regards him. In the arena, however, Lucius has to fear not only for his honor but also for his life (*non de pudore iam, sed de salute ipsa*, 10.35). Perception becomes a matter of life and death: for Thiasus, Lucius is just an animal to be exploited, whether in a private bed or a public arena.

Anteludia and Initiation: Lucius and the Procession of Isis

In the Risus Festival and the *munus* of Thiasus, we have seen Lucius endure the extremities of losing his status: he has been arrested, paraded through the streets, and convicted of murder; he has been sold into slavery and thrown into the arena. Thus Isis' promise to restore him to his new form must also include the clause that Lucius will not be mistaken for a witch and condemned on the cusp of his salvation (as the Lucius in *Onos* nearly is).[46] Isis thus promises Lucius that "no one among those revelers and the festive spectacles will shudder at the form you now wear, nor will any interpreter judge harshly your suddenly changing form" (*nec inter hilares caerimonias et festiva spectacula quisquam deformem istam quam geris faciem perhorrescet, vel figuram tuam repente mutatam sequius interpretatus aliquis maligne criminabitur*, 11.6). Yet even here within this context of resurrection and restoration, there is still room for the confusion of status: Lucius' fellow-worshippers assume that the goddess's favor is the result of a life well-lived, when it is actually the result of Lucius' realization of just how poorly his life has been lived up to this point that has earned him salvation. The salvation of Isis is not merely the restoration of Lucius' form, which he has had the opportunity to effect in the

46 The crowd in Lucian's version of the story is hardly as ecstatic at Lucius' remarkable metamorphosis: half of them want to kill him on the spot as a witch, and the other half are for giving him a chance to explain himself before casting judgment (54).

past but has not out of fear of being condemned for witchcraft.[47] Rather, her salvation is to offer a context in which Lucius' status will not be played with or obliterated. She offers him a new status, as a reborn initiate who trespasses the bounds of death in a way not unlike the *postliminium mortis* that the priest Zatchlas performed in Book 2.

In the *anteludia* there is a distinct emphasis on play and artifice, particularly the artifice of the costumes of the worshippers in the parade (11.8). *Anteludia* is attested nowhere else in Latin literature besides this passage.[48] The *lud-* root invokes a playful, festive atmosphere, and recalls the description of the Risus Festival by the magistrates of Hypata as *lusus iste* (3.11); note also the recurrence of the root in *e ludo...gladiatorio* and *luderet* here. In his description of the revelers, Lucius emphasizes the artifice of the production, that the people are wearing the clothes of a specific role (*exornata...incinctus...succinctum...inductus...induceret*), that they are playing and pretending (*fecerant...mentiebatur...luderet...fingeret...induceret*). We are made aware of the artifice of the members of this procession, and, perhaps, by this awareness recognize the ultimate artifice of the world that they represent, the world that Lucius has come through on his way to Isis: if you were to look at the man dressed as a soldier, you would think he had come straight from the arena (*porro alium ocreis scuto galea ferroque insignem e ludo putares gladiatorio procedere*); if you were to look at the old man and his donkey with pasted-on wings, you would call the pair Bellerophon and Pegasus (*asinum pinnis agglutinatis adambulantem cuidam seni*

47 *Met.* 3.29: "Lest, if I should return to being Lucius, with my pelt removed, I meet death at the hands of the robbers either out of suspicion of witchcraft or the accusation of a future witness" (*ne, si rursum asino remoto prodirem in Lucium, evidens exitium inter manus latronum offenderem vel artis magicae suspectione vel indici futuri criminatione*).

48 Cf. J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Apuleius Madaurensis: The Isis-Book* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), note ad loc., 172.

debili, ut illum quidem Bellerophontem, hunc autem diceres Pegasum); and, finally, if you were to look at the two of them, you would laugh out loud (*tamen rideres utrumque*, 11.8).

Lucius finds himself once again at the center of a well-choreographed religious celebration, only now he is taking direction from the goddess herself and directing the spectacle. Because of the games with his status that he has had to play throughout the novel, Lucius is wary of misinterpretation despite Isis' promise. He is hesitant to be the center of the crowd's attention, and he is paralyzed as he was after the trick of the Risus Festival was revealed (*At ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam*, 11.13). Although he has been walking around nude for the majority of the book, Lucius covers himself with his hands and squeezes his legs together to protect himself (*compressis in artum feminibus et superstrictis accurate manibus, quantum nudo licebat velamento me naturali probe muniveram*, 11.14). However, after his metamorphosis back into his human form, the people around are astounded (*mirantur tam evidentem maximi numinis potentiam*) at the manifest power of the goddess, and proclaim her glory *claraque et consona voce*, "with a clear and coordinated cry" (11.13). Lucius seizes the opportunity to put the past behind him, to write the prologue to his new life as a worshipper of Isis: "What would be the best thing to say first, from where should I pick up the introduction of my new voice" (*quid potissimum praefarer primarium, unde novae vocis exordium caperem*, 11.14). The choice of *exordium* here should make us revisit the novel's prologue, when Lucius, as author, first exposed himself and his adventures to us as an audience: *Exordior. Quis ille?* His metamorphosis back into a man fulfills the promise of the prologue—"the forms and fortunes of men transformed into other shapes and returned back to themselves in an interwoven knot" (*figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se rursum mutuo nexu refectas*). Once the priest,

Mithras, has accepted Lucius into the worship of Isis, Lucius becomes, in another echo of the prologue, the stuff of *fabula*: “Everyone was telling stories about me....'By Hercules, he's lucky and three-times blessed, who by the innocence and faithfulness of his prior life earned so famous an inheritance from heaven!'” (*Omnes in me populi fabulabantur....'Felix hercules et ter beatus, qui vitae scilicet praecedentis innocentia fideque meruerit tam praeclarum de caelo patrocinium,'* 11.16). The people's misperception of Lucius' life reminds us of the play with status that effected Lucius' series of metamorphoses in the first place, and it makes us reflect upon just how arduous Lucius' journey has been and how profound his peace with Isis is.

When Lucius emerges from his intiation, wearing his splendid twelve-layered robe, he is put on display before his fellow worshippers as a glorious spectacle:

> *Namque in ipso aedis sacrae meditullio ante deae simulacrum constitutum tribunal ligneum iussus superstiti, byssina quidem, sed floride depicta veste conspicuus. Et umeris dependebat pone tergum talorum tenus pretiosa chlamyda. Quaqua tamen viseres, colore vario circumnotatis insignabar animalibus....Sic ad instar Solis exornato me et in vicem simulacri constituto, repente velis reductis in aspectum populus errabat.*
>
> In the very center of the sacred house, before the statue of the goddess, as I was ordered, I stood on a wooden platform, conspicuous for my garment, which though but linen was decked with floral designs. And from my shoulders down my back hung a pricey cloak. Wherever you should look, I was marked by animal designs of various color....So in the spitting image of the Sun, I set myself up like a statue, when suddenly the curtains opened, and the people's attention wandered around my face. (11.24)

Lucius' exposition bears a resemblance to his earlier exposure in the Risus Festival: in both situations he is on display within a temple of a god: although during the festival he is exposed in a theater, what better temple is there for the god of laughter? Lucius is set up as a statue in the temple of Isis, looked at by all but also casting his own gaze upon all the assembled. Lucius as

born-again Isis worshipper is revealed to the crowd from behind a curtain, in much the same way as the joke behind the Risus Festival—that the bodies of the slain men are actually wineskins—is exposed. There is an emphasis on sustained viewing not only from the reader but also the people around Lucius. Lucius tells us that wherever we look we will see brilliant designs all over his robe. He assumes that we will be investigating every inch of his garment to find out and that we will be as amazed as his fellow worshippers of Isis. One can almost hear Lucius' injunction from the prologue: Pay attention, and you will be delighted. The voice that commanded our attention in the prologue is developing: an *auctor* is born.

Among the displays of Lucius, the Risus Festival, the *munus* of Thiasus, and the *anteludia* and initiation of Isis, we can see similar patterns of play with status. We can also examine a number of interesting disjunctures that open up questions about Lucius' perception of his status and others' perception of it. In general, when Lucius is on display, he is isolated among a uniform group, of citizens (Hypatans), of members of a household (Thiasus and his slaves), and of religious devotees (worshippers of Isis). In every case Lucius is the singular object, and the viewing of him strengthens and adheres the community of viewers. However, Lucius is a complicated object of viewing. For one thing, he is the focus of the reader's own sight, and through him we are able to look back at the people who are looking at him. Thus scenes in which Lucius is on display create an interesting viewing environment, in which we watch Lucius and watch those who watch Lucius, and all the while different layers of knowledge and understanding operate and interact. In the Risus Festival and the *anteludia*, we see the ways in which status can be played with in performance contexts. Over the course of the novel, Lucius becomes conscious of the remarkable change to which his status and his appearance are subject

—especially since he is aware that he is as much of a watcher as anyone else in the novel, more so in fact. Because of his experience with games of status and misperception, Lucius as a viewer is an even more complex figure than the other characters, especially as a viewer of women, slaves, witches, actresses, and goddesses alike. His viewing of women is a consuming passion, which, along with his unfortunate habit of being misunderstood, will effect his series of metamorphoses and ultimately his salvation in Isis.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN IN LUCIUS' EYES

We have seen that viewing in the novel is the agent of social, physical, and religious metamorphosis. Lucius' exposure before audiences opens him to transformation; however, he is not merely a victim of the perception of others, but an active participant in his own entanglement and humiliation. That his own desire to view is responsible for his own entanglement is clear from the opening of Book 2, where he describes himself as "excessively desirous of discovering the rare and the marvelous" (*nimis cupidus cognoscendi quae rara miraque sunt*). In this same passage we can see the extent to which his desire plays with his perception of the world around him: "There was nothing in that city that I believed was what it was when I looked at it" (*Nec fuit in illa civitate quod aspiciens id esse crederem quod esset*). His viewing makes the world unstable: Lucius sees what he wants to see, and whatever enters his sight enters him as well. Byrrhena's remark, *Tua sunt...cuncta quae vides*, turns ominous when we consider what sort of thing Lucius wants to see and possess (2.5).

Lucius' failure to master his own viewing exposes him to manipulation. This lack of control is most evident in his pursuit of women, who are a special concern of his acquisitive vision. The viewing of four particular women will be examined here: Photis, Pamphile, Venus in the mime of the judgement of Paris, and Isis. Each one marks a significant stage in Lucius' journey, and each exercises a transformative effect on him. Photis aids him in attaining his desire

to view Pamphile and to possess her arts, which leads to his physical metamorphosis. When Lucius watches the mime in the arena, he reaches a "crisis" phase in his life and realizes that he must not let himself be seduced by spectacle and remain complicit in his own debasement.[49] Finally, Isis offers him rebirth as well as a chance for self-reflection and contemplation.

For Lucius the most exquisite feature of the women whom he views is hair, but this predilection is not just a fetish but also a key in revealing the structure of the novel as a narrative of conversion. Women's hair, especially the hair of goddesses, has been an obsession of Greek literature since Homer, and in Roman culture it marks status, role, and behavior.[50] Lucius extols the virtues of hair in a long passage in Book 2. This passage lays the groundwork for Lucius' visual pursuits of women. His early obsession with wild, unrestrained hair is indicative of his own lack of self-restraint.[51] Yet the most striking image in the passage and the one with the greatest importance to Lucius' cognitive conversion is the image of the hair as a mirror. This image works in the narrative in two ways: first, it emphasizes that Lucius' viewing is an act that reflects on him to a greater degree than he initially thinks; and second, it will be revealed in Book 11 as a symbol of the goddess Isis herself, whose crown is adorned with a round disc *in modum speculi* and whose female worshippers carry mirrors behind their backs in her procession. The association of the mirror with the salvific goddess demonstrates that Isis

49 Nancy Shumate, *Crisis and Conversion in Apuleius'* Metamorphoses (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

50 Cf. Molly Meyerwitz Levine, "The Gendered Grammar of Ancient Mediterranean Hair," in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger, eds., *Off with Her Head! The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 76-130.

51 C. R. Hallpike, "Social Hair," *Man* New Series 4.2 (June 1969), 257.

encourages Lucius as worshipper to engage her image in an act of self-reflection and contemplation.

Looking at Photis

Lucius' reaction to looking at Photis reveals that his own preoccupied gazing has as paralyzing an effect on him as his exposure before crowds does. He admits that his first sight of her leaves him dumbstruck and marvel-bound (*defixus abstupui et mirabundus steti*) and that she laughs at him while he loses himself in examining her features (*in me respexit et risit. Nec tamen ego prius inde discessi quam diligenter omnem eius explorassem habitudinem*, 2.8). Lucius attempts to exercise control over Photis, but he finds himself in a more difficult struggle than he anticipated.[52]

Photis taunts Lucius, "Go away, you poor boy, go as far from my little oven as you can. For if my little flame should even just breathe upon you, you will be burning deep inside" (*Discede...miselle, quam procul a meo foculo, discede. Nam si te vel modice meus igniculus afflaverit, ureris intime*, 2.7). Her taunt puns on the image from Plato's *Phaedrus* of the look between lovers as an efflux that penetrates the eyes and scorches them deep within (δεξάμενος γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων, ἐθερμάνθη, 251a).[53] This image is not without precedent in Lucian's *Onos*, since it appears in the exchange between Lucius and

52 C. C. Schlam, "Sex and Sanctity: The Relationship of Male and Female in the *Metmorphoses*," in B. L. Hijmans Jr. and R. Th. van der Paardt, eds., *Aspects of Apuleius'* Golden Ass (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1978), 98.

53 Cf. Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, "Eros, Desire, and the Gaze," trans. Nancy Kline, in Natalie Boymel Kampen, ed., *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 81.

Palaestra: Lucius complains to her, “through my very eyes you've cast your invisible fire down into my guts, and you wound me though I've done you no wrong” (καὶ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων τῶν ἐμῶν τὸ σὸν μὴ φαινόμενον πῦρ κάτω ἐς τὰ σπλάγχνα τἀμὰ ῥίψασα φρύγεις καὶ ταῦτα οὐδὲν ἀδικοῦντα, 6). The playful use of this image in this context makes clear that Lucius' visual engagements with women will be complicated and potentially dangerous, and the reference to the gaze exchanged between lovers evokes a certain erudition behind Lucius' selfish acts of viewing that signifies that he may be capable of attaining some sort of enlightenment once he looks past his consuming passion.

Lucius' discourse on hair reveals the nature of his acquisitive desire, and the extent of this predilection leads us to consider its implications for the narrative as a whole. His desire not only to look but also to possess is emphasized: “But why am I talking about the other parts, when the head and hair will always be special concerns of mine to enjoy carefully and openly, and later at home” (*Vel quid ego de ceteris aio, cum semper mihi unica cura fuerit caput capillumque sedulo et publice prius intueri et domi postea perfrui*, 2.8). This possessiveness predicts how Lucius will respond to witnessing the arts of Pamphile, that he will not be satisfied to watch a single performance. In Lucius' mind, hair is character: the head is the first part that enters the eyes, and the sheen of the hair is not the product of adornment but an element of its nature (*vel quod praecipua pars ista corporis in aperto et perspicuo posita prima nostris luminibus occurit, et quod in ceteris membris floridae vestis hilaris color, hoc in rapite nitor nativus operatur*). As such it is a strong indicator of position and propriety in the novel. The mutability of hair is another attractive characteristic, as it “changes its appearance into a different pleasure” (*aut in contrariam gratiam variat aspectum*, 2.9). The arrangement of hair is one of the clearest

signifiers of status in the ancient world: it is, as Hallpike writes, “very appropriate, like dress, for expressing changes or differences in ritual or social status.”[54] The changing of hair has obvious significance for Lucius, whose dabbling in magic will leave him with a thick, shiny coat and whose intitiation into the cult of Isis will leave him with a shaven pate. We must also keep in mind another way in which hair entangles Lucius: Photis' failure to procure the hair of the Boetian sets up Lucius' “crime” for the Risus Festival.

Photis obliges Lucius' overwhelming desire and plays the role of Venus, a role that comes to signify over the course of the novel the dangerous triumph of desire over justice. Lucius begs Photis, “But would you do me a further favor, and loosen your hair and give me loving embraces with your hair flowing like waves” (*Sed ut mihi morem plenius gesseris, in effusum laxa crinem et capillo fluenter undante redde complexus amabiles*, 2.16). Photis' unbound hair and her gestures of covering herself “more to draw attention than for the sake of modesty” transform her into a living depiction of Venus rising from the waves (*in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum feminal rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia*, 2.17). Even without the explicit reference to Venus, Photis' gestures and hair are an instantly recognizable shorthand for the goddess.[55] Slater compares these two poses of Photis with her hair down and with her hand over her pudendum with two well-known depictions of Venus, the Venus Anadyomene and the Venus Pudica, respectively.[56] The hair let down the shoulders is a typical attribute of Venus and also a prominent feature of

54 Hallpike, “Social Hair,” 259.

55 Elizabeth Bartman, “Hair and the Artifice of Roman Female Adornment,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 105.1 (Jan 2001), 22.

56 Niall Slater, “Passion and Petrifaction: The Gaze in Apuleius,” *Classical Philology* 93.1 (January 1998), 20.

portraits of Roman matrons meant to elicit the figure of Venus.[57] It is clear that Photis is in control of how Lucius sees her, since she recreates the Venus Pudica *de industria* as opposed to *de verecundia*. Photis plays at being Venus, yet she is effecting merely her physical, sexual aspects. In this first of Lucius' encounters with an ersatz Venus— the second being in the judgement of Paris mime to come—we can see Photis within the chain of viewing that leads Lucius toward Isis. Here the artifice entices Lucius, who is thoroughly entranced by Photis' dominance of the power of the gaze between them.

The image of hair as a mirror is particularly important in structuring the visual arc of Lucius' narrative of conversion. The sheen of Photis' hair acts as a mirror that "reflects a more pleasing appearance to the eyes of a lover" (*pone versum coactus amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiorem*, 2.9). In *Apology* Apuleius argues that a mirror is a useful tool for contemplation as well: he counters a charge of criminal possession of a mirror by citing that Socrates himself encouraged his students to look at themselves in a mirror, so that the beautiful would be afraid to mar their beauty with bad behavior and that the less pleasant to look at would attempt to compensate for their looks with good behavior (*An non Socrates philosophus ultro etiam suasisse fertur discipulis suis, crebro ut semet in speculo contemplarentur*, *Apol*. 15). So how does Lucius fare in the pursuit of Socrates' *disciplina morum*? Byrrhena has made it clear that Lucius is a handsome young man, but his actions prove that he is not afraid to mar his beauty with sexual or magical dalliance. However, Lucius' remark that the mirror can produce a "more pleasing image" to the eyes of a lover suggests that he is aware of this contemplative capacity of the mirror. Indeed, the mirror will play a significant role in Lucius' meeting with Isis,

57 Eve D'Ambra, "The Calculus of Venus: Nude Portraits of Roman Matrons," in Natalie Boymel Kampen, ed., *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219-32.

whose crown has a gleaming plate mounted in it. Although the mirror in the context of this intial discourse is simply an object for superficial reflection, it will become an object of contemplation when Lucius becomes an initiate of Isis.

Lucius' visual engagement with Photis is paradigmatic for his engagement with women throughout the novel. In an attempt to exercise control over Photis, Lucius finds himself on the defensive—penetrated and set ablaze. His viewing of Photis anticipates his viewing of Pamphile, an act that leads to a confusion of status that precipitates his actual metamorphosis into an ass. Photis' imitation of Venus looks ahead to another actress in the guise of the goddess, the actress in the mime of the Judgement of Paris, who captivates Lucius even though he is about to be led into the arena for a degrading and deadly spectacle. The fixation on hair in this passage serves a twofold function, to demonstrate Lucius' lack of self-restraint and to foreshadow his turn toward self-reflection in his new religious life.

Metamorphoses: Pamphile and Lucius

The next two scenes that we will consider involve Lucius' viewing of the witch Pamphile in two different contexts: the first is at dinner with Milo, and the second occurs as she performs her magic arts. Both scenes involve surreptitious viewing: Lucius at the dinner table steals glances at Pamphile but does not attempt to engage her eye-to-eye; in the second scene he watches Pamphile through a crack in a door. These scenes reflect the consequences of attempting to cross a visual boundary between oneself and a divine power, such as in the Diana-Actaeon scene and the Cupid-Psyche scene. Although Pamphile is not a goddess, her power creates a

boundary that should not be crossed: Lucius should not attempt to bridge this gap between himself and Pamphile, but he does. Pamphile does not punish Lucius for his visual trespass; rather, Lucius is the one who effects his own paralysis and metamorphosis, his own slipping through states of being. He has already demonstrated that his desire to see the performance of magical arts is a consuming passion that affects his perception of the world around him, and his desire not only to see but to possess so as to renew the visual engagement at his leisure predicts that he will be responsible for his change.

The effect of looking at Pamphile is that Lucius feels as though he has slipped into the underworld. At Milo's table Lucius looks for a position so as "to be safe as possible from the gaze of his wife" (*quam pote tutus ab uxoris eius aspectu*); and whenever he does steal a glance at her, he feels as though he were staring into Lake Avernus itself (*et perinde in eius faciem oculos meos ac si in Avernum lacum formidans deieceram*, 2.11). This confusion of boundaries has marked other accounts of visual encounter with magical forces, including the tale of Aristomenes and Socrates, and that of Thelyphron as well. When he finally gets his opportunity to view Pamphile at work, Lucius perceives another confusion of status: although no spell has been cast upon him (*At ego nullo decantatus carmine*), he feels that he has undergone a radical change, such that he is "something beyond Lucius" (*quidvis aliud magis quam Lucius*, 3.22). Those engaged in viewing often effect their own metamorphoses, a process that we witness most clearly from those characters through whom a narrative is focalized, such as Aristomenes, Thelyphron, or Lucius himself. Lucius cannot tell whether he is awake or not, even as he keeps rubbing his eyes (*Defrictis adeo diu pupulis, an vigilarem scire quaerebam*, 3.21). The vision of Pamphile at work leaves Lucius feeling as though he were half-asleep or in a waking dream

(*vigilans somniabar*, 3.22). The space between being awake and being asleep is particularly susceptible to a blurring of sight and status: sleep is a time in which the boundaries between life and death appear permeable. In his state as "something beyond Lucius," he is already moving inexorably in the direction of his metamorphosis.

In the viewing of Pamphile as she performs her arts, we can recognize a correspondence to the later scene in which Psyche secretly views Cupid. By lamplight Psyche performs her illicit viewing of Cupid, and she examines (*rimatur*) and marvels (*miratur*) at Cupid's armaments at the foot of the bed (5.23). Photis gives Lucius his opportunity to peer at Pamphile through a narrow slit as she changes into an owl (*perque rimam ostiorum quampiam jubet arbitrari*, 3.21). *Rima* in the novel is generally associated with secretive and obsessive viewing, just as the image of the partially opened door in Attic vase-painting serves a deictic function in relation to the viewing of women.[58] For Lucius and for us, the crack in the door is meant to lead us to a viewing of something that is usually kept hidden, in this case the performance of a magical ritual of physical transformation. Lucius watches Pamphile undressing and anointing her whole body with a magical salve from her toes to the top of her hair, and as she and her lamp have a long conversation in secret (*multumque cum lucerna secreto collocuta*, 3.21). The lamp is often marked out as an eye in ancient art, and in this novel lamps are connected with scenes of illicit viewing. Psyche watches Cupid sleep by a lamp, which is anthropomorphized as another viewer competing with Psyche to view and touch the god (*lucerna illa, sive perfidia pessima sive invidia noxia sive quod tale corpus contingere et quasi basiare et ipsa gestiebat*, 5.23),[59] The

58 Frontisi-Ducroux, "Eros, Desire, and the Gaze," 90.

59 Ibid., 91. Frontisi-Ducroux points out an example in Attic vase-painting of a red-figure cup depicting a man and a woman engaged in intercourse while another man behind the woman holds a lamp right underneath her buttocks.

composition of the scene is such that the lamp, Pamphile, and Lucius form a triad similar to that of Actaeon-Diana-Lucius earlier in Book 2. As with the Diana-Actaeon scene, Lucius is on the outside looking into a mysterious occurrence, and he is already in the process of metamorphosis, although he does not realize it yet.

Lucius endangers himself by his inability to control his desire to see what he should not see. The acquisitve nature of his viewing leads him to attempt to dominate and control Pamphile's arts; however, as we have seen in both the scenes with Photis and Pamphile herself, his desire exposes him to figurative and literal metamorphosis. His attempts at transgressing the boundaries of Pamphile's power confound his own sense of himself. This confusion of states of being anticipates the slow breakdown of Lucius' self that takes place over the next few books, before Lucius comes to the realization that he must make a change in his life before his desire condemns him to death.

Quid Ergo Miramini: the Judgement of Paris

Many familiar elements of watching are present in the mime of the Judgement of Paris during the *munus* of Thiasus. At the center of this spectacle is a richly detailed artificial landscape of Mt. Ida, teeming with plant and animal life, which recalls the marble backdrop of the Diana-Actaeon scene, with its flora so well produced as to match reality. The elaborateness of the *munus* should be read as a continuation of the metamorphic process that began in Book 2, when Lucius embarked on his adventure in earnest in the foyer of his aunt Byrrhena. In Lucius' viewing of the actress who plays Venus, there are echoes of his viewing of Photis and Pamphile,

a viewing that will also effect a different sort of metamorphosis from that which left him in the shape of an ass: it will lead him to contemplate his own complicity in the troubles that he has endured. In this metamorphosis Lucius will begin the process of becoming an initiate of Isis and the *auctor* of the novel. His recognition of the flaws in a world that he has always accepted will compel him to reject the spectacle and attempt to break free of his old life.

Lucius' handlers leave him outside the theater to pasture by the entrance, yet Lucius is nourishing himself on something other than grass: “I gladly enjoyed myself, occasionally refreshing my curious eyes with a most pleasing view of the spectacle through the open gate” (*libens affectabam, subinde curiosos oculos patente porta spectaculi prospectu gratissimo reficiens*, 10.29). His viewing of the mime is surreptitious: though hardly a *rima*, the open doorway encourages Lucius' voyeuristic nature.[60] His “curious eyes” (*curiosos oculos*) recall Actaeon's “ curious gaze” (*curioso optutu*, 2.4) as well. In the mime Lucius' attention is focused on the actress who portrays Venus. He lingers over her appearance, her clothing, her movements. A gentle breeze plays with the piece of sheer silk that covers her and produces an effect not unlike that which Photis achieved when she shadowed her pudendum (*inumbrabat spectabilem pubem*, 10.31). Venus engages the audience in a similar visual-play: they are all focused on her, but she exercises the power over them. Venus is exposed before the crowd, at center stage in fact (*in ipso meditullio scaenae*, 10.31), but she is the one who is laughing (*surridens*). In her performance, her eyes do all the work: “and she began sometimes to dance with her eyes alone, now with them winking gently, now with them threatening sharply” (*et nunc mite coniventibus, nunc acre cominantibus gestire pupulis, et nonnumquam saltare solis oculis*, 10.32). Her gaze is

60 Gerald Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius: Apuleius and the Second Sophistic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 251.

alternately alluring and commanding, and her seduction of Lucius and the crowd echoes Lucius' earlier seduction by Photis, another actress in the role of Venus.

This reenactment of the judgement of Paris prompts Lucius to reevaluate his priorities and rebel against what he sees as an injustice:

> *Quid ergo miramini, vilissima capita, immo forensia pecora, immo vero togati vulturii, si toti nunc iudices sententias suas pretio nundinantur, cum rerum exordio inter deos et homines agitatum iudicium corruperit gratia,*
> *et originalem sententiam magni Iovis consiliis electus iudex rusticanus et opilio lucro libidinis vendiderit, cum totius etiam suae stirpis exitio?*
>
> Why are you surprised, then, you vilest men—no, you sheep of the court—no, really, you vultures in togas—if now all jurors sell their verdicts at a price, when from the very beginning of things among gods and men a judgement was disturbed by a favor, and a rustic judge, elected by the counsel of mighty Jupiter, sold the first verdict for a profit of pleasure, and with it the ruin of his whole race? (11.23)

Lucius recognizes that something is wrong with his previous conception of the world. He recognizes the situation and realizes that he has reached a point of crisis: if he allows himself to be seduced by the spectacle, he will surrender his life. This scene triggers memories of his encounters with Photis and Pamphile, as well as his experience in the Risus Festival; the accumulation of these experiences drives Lucius away from the desires that have effected his metamorphoses. Zimmerman-de Graaf argues that the outrage here is that of Lucius-*auctor* while the delight depicted is that of Lucius-*actor*.[61] This interpretation works well within a framework of a narrative of conversion because it demonstrates that Lucius is coming to understand the extent of his disconnection from his former identity. This disconnection becomes

61 Maaike Zimmerman-de Graaf, "Narrative Judgement and Reader Response in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 10, 29-34: The Pantomime of the Judgement of Paris," in H. Hofmann, ed., *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel V* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1993), 154.

most striking in Book 11, when Lucius, a Greek aristocrat with a considerable patrimony, becomes a poor man from Madauros (*Madaurensem sed admodum pauperem*, 11.27). This identification is difficult to square with Lucius as narrator; however, Mason sees it as another aspect of Lucius' inner metamorphosis, that he has gone from being a person obsessed with status and dominance, to a being a person who identifies himself as poor and from the fringes of Greco-Roman society.[62] In any case a major change in Lucius' view is clearly taking place. Lucius as *auctor* shapes his narrative such that this viewing of Venus is the final straw. The reference to Socrates' speech in *Apology* about meeting Palamedes and Ajax sets up Lucius' death and rebirth to come when he enters the worship of Isis and her mysteries. The reference to Socrates also signals the start of a new journey and a new object for Lucius: a story about a Socrates running afoul of a witch spurred him on in his pursuit of magic, while the defense of the philosopher signals a more rewarding pursuit than his previous one.

Zimmerman-de Graaf observes that the last sentences of the judgement of Paris scene emphasize the illusory nature of the victory, as the whole lavish production simply vanishes and the elaborate wooden mountain is swallowed by a chasm (*montem illum ligneum terrae vorago decepit*, 10.34).[63] She uses this ephemerality of the production to draw a distinction between the false Venus of the mime and the true Venus that Isis represents. Yet we can also connect the artifice of the *munus* to the tableau of the goddess Diana, with its elaborately built landscape surrounding a scene in which a viewer peers at a goddess (or a representation of a goddess). These two scenes feature a metamorphosis that the viewer himself effects: Diana does not punish Actaeon, but his desire to look has already fixed him to the landscape; in his viewing of the

62 Hugh J. Mason, "The Distinction of Lucius in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*," *Phoenix* 37.2 (Summer 1983), 135-43.
63 Zimmerman-de Graaf, 161.

mime, Lucius is responsible for coming to the realization that he needs to abandon the pleasures of false Veneres. Lucius' revulsion toward the victory of the earthly Venus anticipates his turning toward a heavenly Venus, Isis.

The Mirror of Isis

Isis represents the culmination of Lucius' visual engagement with women. His epiphany of the goddess and his initiation into her worship tie up a number of visual patterns that have developed over the course of the novel. His viewing of the goddess follows the motif of mortals attempting to view goddesses, such as the Diana-Actaeon and Cupid-Psyche scenes; however, Isis sanctions Lucius' viewing and permits him to contemplate her image openly and to cross the boundaries between life and death without repercussion. The passage on hair from Book 2 plays a significant role in Lucius' conversion as well, because we now see how central hair is to the cult of Isis and how her very image becomes a mirror to return an *imaginem gratiorem* to the eyes of her initiate Lucius.

The language that Lucius uses to praise the goddess's hair recalls the description of Photis' hair in Book 2: *Iam primum crines uberrimi prolixique et sensim intorti per divina colla passive dispersi molliter defluebant*, 11.3). Isis' tunic, with its vast array of colors, confounds his sight as well (*longe longeque etiam meum confutabat optutum*, 11.3). Lucius exhibits before Isis the focused, single-minded gaze of Book 2, straining his eye at her as Actaeon does at Diana in another metamorphic encounter with a goddess (*curioso optutu*, 2.4). The recollection of Photis' hair also brings us back to the image of the mirror and how Lucius' gazing reflects on him: this

reciprocal gazing is drawn out to a religious end in Lucius' consuming gaze at Isis. This connection is reinforced by his obsession with viewing the statue of the goddess in her temple throughout his period of initiation: after the Isiac debut, the crowd disperses, but Lucius remains "focused on the image of the goddess" (*intentus in deae specimen*, 11.17), and he later purchases a place near her temple so that he may give himself "to the most pleasing sight of the goddess" (*me rursum ad deae gratissimum mihi refero conspectum*, 11.19). After his initiation Lucius remains fixated on "the inexplicable pleasure of the divine image" (*inexplicabili voluptate simulacri divini*, 11.24).

A reference to Pythagoras at 11.1 invites a consideration of the potential role of the philosopher in tying up visual and narrative threads in the text. Before Lucius has his first glimpse of Isis, he dips his head in the sea seven times "because the divine Pythagoras himself put forth that number as the most appropriate for religious rituals" (*quod eum numerum praecipue religionibus aptissimum divinus ille Pythagoras prodidit*). Apuleius' fondness for Pythagoras is well-documented in his other works, especially in *Florida* 15, where he dedicates an extensive passage to Pythagoras' time in Egypt and his influence on subsequent philosophers.[64] Apuleius' segue into the biography of Pythagoras is a description of a statue in the temple of Hera at Samos, which some people believe represents the philosopher. Apuleius himself denies that the figure represents Pythagoras, but a few details in his description of the statue are worth noting for their coincidence with the description of Actaeon in Book 2. Both Actaeon and the Samian statue are watchers of goddesses: Actaeon focuses his *curioso optutu in deam*, and the other statue is described as *deam conspiciens*. Yet both are exposed to being watched as well (*visitur*; *videtur*). The statue at Samos recalls Actaeon, but it also anticipates

64 Benjamin Todd Lee, *Apuleius'* Florida: *A Commentary* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 135-8.

Lucius' encounter with Isis and her celebrants: the statue wears a multicolored tunic adorned with pictures (*tunicam picturis variegatam*); this language appears at *Met.* 11.16 when Lucius joins the procession of worshippers to witness the consecration of the ship of Isis, painted with many colors and covered in Egyptian designs (*navem...picturis miris Aegyptiorum circumsecus variegatam*). That the ship appears at the very spot where Lucius performed his Pythagorean ablutions helps to forge a connection between the image of the statue in the temple and the role of Pythagoras in charting Lucius' path to Isis.

The image of the mirror from Book 2 reappears in the crown of Isis and in the procession of her worshippers. When Lucius sees Isis, her crown has a flat disc in the center that resembles a mirror (*corona...cuius media quidem super frontem plana rotunditas in modum speculi*, 11.3). The mirror as emblem of Isis recurs among her servants, some of whom "showed their deference to the goddess as she approached with shining mirrors turned behind their backs" (*aliae quae nitentibus speculis pone tergum reversis venienti deae obvium commonstrarent obsequium*, 11.9). This set of worshippers acts as an inversion of the Diana-Actaeon scene, as the women engage the goddess through their own mirrors as she approaches them. The connection to the passage on hair in Book 2 is reinforced by those among the crowd who carry ivory combs and mimic styling the goddess's hair (*quae pectines eburnos ferentes gestu bracchiorum flexuque digitorum ornatum atque oppexum crinium regalium fingerent*, 11.9). That these devotees of the goddess demonstrate their reverence by tending to her hair suggests that Lucius' early desire to possess a woman and her head of hair "to enjoy later at home" (*domi postea perfrui*, 2.8) is antithetical to service of the goddess. Isis does not spurn attention, but rather any attempts at possession.

If we recognize that Lucius still applies a similar sexualized gaze to the goddess and that his pursuit of Isis is not totally different from his other pursuits throughout the novel, then we must consider how to interpret this dialogue between goddess and worshipper, and consider the motivations on each side for such engagement. How Lucius views Isis is consistent with how he has viewed many women in the novel, particularly in his focus on her clothing and hair; however, Lucius' viewing becomes an act of reverence and an admission of servitude. Vision for Lucius is no longer a matter of domination and possession. Lucius is reborn as a man beyond the concerns that he used to exhibit, and he lives in perpetual dialogue with the goddess as he contemplates her image. Isis is the end of a sexualized pursuit of magic and spectacle, and in Lucius' acceptance of her we can still see the play of an inquisitive, obsessive gaze, but now put to the service of adoring and worshipping the goddess. His viewing of the goddess is an open exchange, a non-possessive and self-nullifying gaze. The old Lucius dies, and in his place rises the servant of the goddess. Through his initiation, Lucius encounters the mysteries of the afterlife and the elements: “I reached the bounds of death, and having trod the threshold of Proserpina and having been brought through all the elements, I returned...I reached the gods below and the gods above and worshipped them from close by” (*Accessi cofinium mortis et, calcato Proserpinae limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi...deos inferos et deos superos accessi coram et adoravi de proximo*, 11.24). Lucius' experience in coming face to face with the true gods does him no harm, and he does not have to shrink before the divinity. Lucius has no need to hide from the goddess's sight and no reason to obscure the defining marks of his servitude to her: “with my baldness neither covered up nor hidden, wherever I went, I walked with delight” (*non obumbrato vel obtecto calvitio, sed quoquoversus obvio, gaudens obibam*, 11.31).

Lucius' visual pursuit of women structures his narrative of conversion. Lucius is an avid and amorous viewer throughout the novel, and these visual encounters precipitate his series of metamorphoses, leading up to his salvation by Isis. His desire to discover *rara miraque* leads him only to entanglement and exploitation, and it is not until he begins to recognize his own complacency in his humiliation that he attempts to effect a major change in his life. Isis affords Lucius the opportunity to view her image as a means to self-reflection and peace. She comforts him because she appears to him in a guise in keeping with his innate desire, even though she manages to subvert his more reckless and concupiscent instincts. Ultimately, Isis enables Lucius to focus a mirror on himself, to reflect on his life and produce the *libros* of his *incredundam fabulam*.

CONCLUSION

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* creates a context in which viewing and being viewed are high-stakes activities. While social changes are not an odd phenomenon in Greek and Roman literature, the novel explores vision as an act that can make social, physical, and religious identity unstable. Perhaps the greatest magic at work is the power of the gaze to manipulate others, and to manipulate one's self. Lucius embodies this principle of the power and danger of sight: in the eyes of others he is subject to misinterpretation and even humiliation, and his own exercise of the power of vision has a greater effect on him than he has on anything that he sees. At the beginning of Book 2, Lucius envisions a world in which nothing is as it seems, and he, as an avid viewer who hungers for remarkable experiences, is especially susceptible to the vicissitudes of perception in that sort of world.

The desire to view and acquire knowledge and power moves Lucius through a series of physical, social, psychological, and religious changes. Throughout this series Lucius remains an attentive viewer: in fact, his ass form affords him the opportunity to view the world of slaves and beasts of burden, and his initiation allows him to view the goddess and her mysteries openly. Lucius' viewing of Isis is a mutual and satisfying exchange: Isis is his mistress, and the visual engagement that Lucius has with her is non-possessive and self-nullifying. He has moved beyond the aggressive pursuit of that which he should not touch. Lucius accepts subservience to the goddess not merely because she offers him restoration to his human form (for he could have

effected that metamorphosis on his own) but because she does not deny him his scopophilia, Rather, she sublimates it into the give-and-take of worshipper and god.

Whether Lucius' servitude to the goddess is salvific or horrific is still up for debate. I am inclined to see Lucius' conversion as an escape from a life that, while providing Lucius no end of *serviles voluptates*, ultimately exposed him to the depredations of his own appetites. His journey takes him through the consequences of feeding these appetites until he comes to the realization that the world that has indulged him is the same world that thinks perjury is a joke. Lucius' conversion is thus a recognition that life in such a world is unstable and dangerous: his identity does not matter, for he is subject to change in the blink of an eye. Isis provides Lucius an anchor, and, although this metaphor can also be read as constrictive and uncompromising, it is a safety that Lucius has not found in any other pursuit. It is the safety of a clear and delineated identity.

The purpose of my research in Apuleius has always been to demonstrate the depth and complexity of Apuleius' work and his deft mastery in constructing a novel of so many disparate pieces but with a unity that rewards rereading and reconsideration. The examples that I have given in the chapters make this unity clear enough, yet more meticulous consideration of these visual patterns will allow me to refine my conclusions and create a systematic index of the ways in which vision is used to assert and to distort identity. I think that this examination will raise interesting questions about the ways in which Apuleius employs and subverts the conventions of the established genres of ancient literature. These inquiries will give me a clearer picture of the scope of Apuleius' work, and I am particularly interested in Apuleius' reconfiguration of the *Onos* framework into a narrative that encompasses a world of shifting boundaries and identities.

I intend to apply this examination of the effect of vision on boundaries to other ancient novels and establish familiar patterns of action throughout the genre.

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