

Declamation and Storytelling: First Person Speech in
Apuleius' Metamorphoses

by

Alexander Paul Ray
Class of 2013

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Classics

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	3
Chapter One: Declamation and the <i>Metamorphoses</i>	8
Chapter Two: Rhetoric and Narrative	37
Chapter Three: Speechmaking in <i>Cupid & Psyche</i>	62
Conclusion	84
Bibliography	87

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I'd like to express my gratitude to my thesis advisor, Professor Lauren Caldwell, for her guidance and motivation throughout the planning and writing of this thing. It's safe to say that without your inspiration, not only would I not have been able to finish it, I probably wouldn't have even attempted a project like this in the first place.

To the entire Classical Studies Department, thank you for teaching me for four years, and for making it so easy for me to choose my major. I am especially grateful to Professor Andy Szegedy-Maszak, Professor Chris Parslow, and Professor Michael Roberts for their support and attention both in and outside of class. And to Debbie Sierpinski, thank you for making work a pleasure.

I'd also like to thank Professor Matthew Garrett of the English Department, for being generous with his time and pointing me towards some helpful readings.

Introduction

There are many narrators in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, as well as many speakers whose voices are featured in the narration. Lucius is the main narrator, but often in his telling, he relates the direct speech of other characters who in turn have their own commentary to provide. What results is a collection of narrators and speakers whose voices sometimes overlap, sometimes have nothing to do with each other, but which all speak in the first person constantly throughout the novel. The reader is tasked with assimilating the information presented by these various characters, all referring to themselves as "I." Although Lucius is always directing how the narrators and speakers communicate with the reader, the inclusion of these different voices is notable and worth investigating. For a modern reader, scholars have offered varied explanations of how we might expect to make sense of a narrator's function and location in the text. For a reader contemporary with Apuleius, literary speech may have had additional connotations particular to his culture. For these reasons, I have undertaken a study of first person speech in Apuleius' novel that considers his characters' language both in terms of the formal, declamatory speechmaking of his time, and in terms of the theories that modern scholars have advanced about storytelling.

The direct speech in the *Metamorphoses* has interesting connections to declamation that are often ignored in the scholarship on Apuleius' novel. While it is hard to ever know if Apuleius looked to declamation exercises specifically as inspiration for his writing, it is clear that a familiarity with declamation enhanced, and can still enhance today, a reader's experience with Apuleius' bizarre work of fiction.

Moments of speechmaking as well as moments of storytelling in the *Metamorphoses* recall declamation, which in this project is considered as a remarkable mode of communication that was simultaneously restrained by specific requirements and yet open to creative manipulation. The internal logic of declamation lends much to our understanding of Lucius' strange world, and allows us to draw conclusions about how Apuleius' audience could have engaged with such a unique and peculiar text. By examining the work from both a rhetorical and a narratological perspective, we can more fully understand the explicitly constructed reality of the *Metamorphoses*, and investigate the novel with the exacting attention that it demands from us.

My investigation of the novel is informed by the work of several prominent scholars in the fields of both classical studies and literary theory. Martin Bloomer analyzes the effects of social subordination through declamatory impersonation, and when I discuss a narrator's assumption of a rhetorical *persona* it is with Bloomer's work in mind.¹ The act of speaking on behalf of a fictional character is relevant to both declamation and the novel. Robert Kaster also considers declamation as a far-reaching cultural phenomenon, and his commentary on rhetorical *color* is important to this project.² The creative authority embodied in *color* provides readers who are aware of declamation with a model for thinking about the *Metamorphoses* as a candidly designed and imaginative work of literature.

¹ Bloomer (1997: 62), "[Declaimers] were also learning an inextricably connected social and rhetorical subordination: where to place various *personae* and what words and sentiments were appropriate to them."

² Kaster (2001: 320) explains, "And [the declaimer] had to determine the *color*—the narrative background or 'spin'—that it would be most useful to give the facts... the declaimer was allowed to interpret [the facts] in whatever way he wished or to invent a history for the facts that placed them in a light favorable to his own side."

John Winkler's work deals directly with Apuleius' novel, and considers the curious duplicity of *auctor* (author or narrator) and *actor* (narrator or actor) in the *Metamorphoses*.³ For my study it is important to observe a distinction between the characters being told about and the voice doing the telling, and Winkler provides helpful explanation of moments when that line is intentionally blurred and hard to define. For my purposes, I will follow Winkler's lead and focus on the strategies of the narrator, rather than any perceived intentions of Apuleius as the author. Winkler also provides insight into how a reader might grapple with the text, either as a "first reader" or later as a "second reader."⁴ The distinction is important to any scholarly investigation of the *Metamorphoses* that seeks to understand which narrative devices reveal themselves upon closer inspection. In my analysis, I occupy the position of a second reader who has returned to the text to evaluate trends and repeated narrative strategies that can shed light on the complicated and intentionally confusing programmatic aims of the novel. Additionally, Mikhail Bakhtin's study of time and positionality in literature is of considerable importance, and he considers Lucius' unique location in the world of the novel as an observer of the everyday happenings of "private life."⁵ The work of Gerard Genette also deals with time, as well as with narrative levels and the relationship between the narrator and the reader. Genette's

³ Winkler (1985: 140) observes the following: "This relation of *auctor* (whom we may call Apuleius, although his name is irrelevant to the analysis) to *actor* (Lucius) accounts for the high level of narrative delight, the incredible coincidences, exciting characters, and in general the storied quality of the book."

⁴ Winkler (1985: 142) explains, for example, that the "areas of interaction between present *auctor* and past *actor* form a complex but quite intelligible system for the first-reader, a system that the second-reader will later reexamine with some sense of shock, disbelief, amazement, or irritation."

⁵ Bakhtin (1981: 122), "Playing the lowest role in the lowest level of society, Lucius does not participate internally in that life and is, therefore, in an even better position to observe it and study all its secrets.... The everyday life that Lucius observes and studies is an exclusively personal and private life."

categorization of the different “diegetic levels” and especially of the various “functions of the narrator” lends much to my study of the *Metamorphoses*, a text that is notable for its fusion of literary conventions.⁶

There are several aspects of the study of narrative that are relevant to this project besides the terminological framework discussed above. Gerard Genette concludes that the most basic function of a narrative is the reporting of information by a narrator to a reader.⁷ Before considering the will of the narrator or the condition of the narrating act, a study of narrative must regard this fundamental qualification. Concerning the reader’s participation in the construction of a narrative, Roland Barthes observes that whenever the narrator is reporting information that is new to the reader but of course not new to the narrator, the narrative is in a sense activated by an implied audience for the narrator’s reporting.⁸ In this way, the narrator and reader exist co-dependently and are each signified according to this reporting of information. Narratives begin and end according to the narrator’s direction, but the involvement of the reader as the recipient of information applies its own boundaries to the discourse. The difference between narrative and direct speech, which is an important distinction for my analysis, is that direct speech is not always involved in reporting information, and may often be part of the informational details of a narrative.

In the chapters that follow, I intend to demonstrate how deeply connected Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* is with the genre of declamation, and to show why a study

⁶ In particular, Genette (1980: 248) distinguishes between a homodiegetic narrator, who tells a story and is also a character in that story, and a heterodiegetic narrator, who tells a story but is not involved as a participant in the plot.

⁷ Genette (1980) 161.

⁸ Barthes (1978: 110), “Thus, each time the narrator stops ‘representing’ and reports details which he knows perfectly well but which are unknown to the reader, there occurs, by signifying failure, a sign of reading, for there would be no sense in the narrator giving himself a piece of information.”

of speech in the novel benefits from both a rhetorical and a narratological analysis. By first examining instances of formal speechmaking in legal settings in the novel, I will clarify in chapter one how a reader familiar with declamation can especially appreciate Lucius' trial during the Risus festival. We will take a close look at Lucius' speech to see exactly how he is borrowing from declamation, and to what effect. Moving next to non-legal speech in chapter two, I will explain how declamation still acts as a communicative model for the narrating throughout the novel. Although the stories and characters move beyond the courtroom, the narrative approach relies on a combination of declamatory techniques and traditional storytelling in order to familiarize the reader with the bizarre reality of Lucius' world. Finally, in chapter three I will consider the story of Cupid and Psyche as exhibiting the same declamatory style and persuasive storytelling approach as the rest of the novel, despite occurring in an entirely different place and time. The unique position of this section of the novel as an ostensibly fictional inset story allows the narrator to offer a particularly rich presentation of direct speech from an impressive range of embellished characters. Thus, both declamation and narratology emerge as crucial points of consideration when seeking to fully understand how first person speech functions in the *Metamorphoses*.

The translations into English of the *Declamationes Minores* are by D.R. Shackleton Bailey (2006). I use my own translations for analysis of the *Metamorphoses*, building on work that I had done as part of a course on Apuleius in the Spring of 2012. My version is influenced by the work of Sarah Ruden (2011), Visiting Scholar in Classical Studies at Wesleyan University.

Chapter One:

Declamation and the *Metamorphoses*

The importance of declamation to daily life in ancient Rome extends far beyond the rhetoric teacher's classroom. The cultural capital acquired in part through practice in declamation enabled students to maintain the patriarchal order of Roman society well beyond adolescence. More than simply a genre of literature to be studied in a vacuum, declamation and speechmaking in general represent a highly relevant social phenomenon through which upper-class men reinforced their powerful status. For this reason, it is worth considering the extent to which experience with declamation and its unique performative and verbal requirements could have influenced Apuleius' approach to the genre of fiction. Keeping in mind declamation's relevance to the organization of Roman social roles, it is not surprising that the techniques of declamatory communication found their way into the creative literature of the same elite culture that declamation reinforced. A reading of the *Metamorphoses* is enhanced by a familiarity with the specific training in self-advocacy and impersonation that Apuleius and his readers had access to as students of declamation. In this chapter, I will use examples of rhetorical impersonation and direct speech from declamation exercises to demonstrate how declamation influenced characters' speech in the *Metamorphoses*. Although the novel differs from declamation in its scope and organization, a consideration of the communicative strategies and thematic content of declamation reveals that the episodes in the novel

concerning law and criminality draw heavily from the scenarios, characters, and linguistic techniques of declamatory speechmaking. In particular, the Risus festival in book three demonstrates how the mechanics of declamation can enliven the scene of Lucius' trial and offer a literary experience that a reader versed in the practice of declamation would find especially complicated and engaging.

Background

Although it is not clear whether the surviving collections of declamation exercises represent the work of students, or are instead the gathered notes of a rhetoric instructor,⁹ the texts do allow us to examine the extent to which education in rhetoric reflected the broader concerns and preoccupations of elite Roman culture. And not only do the declamations shed light on Apuleius' society, but they also provide insight into Apuleius' storytelling strategies. The same structural elements and technical features of declamation that allowed students to reproduce cultural values through delivering speeches on strange topics are also at work in Apuleius' novel, which features a variety of fictional scenarios with quick pacing and bizarre themes and characters.

The collection of declamations that is most relevant to this study is the group of so-called *Declamationes Minores*, or *Minor Declamations*, due to their thematic variety and peculiar content. The *Minor Declamations*, which are attributed to the school of the Roman rhetorician and educator Quintilian, have been preserved partially intact, with 145 of the original 388 exercises surviving today.¹⁰ Declamation exercises were organized into several parts, and classroom activity was structured

⁹ Bailey (2006) 2.

¹⁰ Bailey (2006) 1.

around a system of examples and repetition, with the teacher presenting speeches and the students following given patterns. The rhetoric instructor invented characters, representing either the prosecution or the defense at an imaginary trial, and delivered speeches known as *controversiae* on behalf of these characters. The explanations and studies of rhetorical principles that came after the speeches were called *sermones*. Students followed the teacher's lead, gradually becoming skilled enough to compose and deliver the speeches on their own.¹¹ The paradigm of internalizing and then reproducing ideas based on an established and validated model can illuminate how information was generated and transmitted among circles of the wealthy, educated members of Roman literary society during Apuleius' time. Thus, an awareness of the logic and literary workings of declamation can enhance, complicate, and otherwise affect a modern's reader's experience with the literature of the period. The *Minor Declamations* date from around the second century C.E. and were roughly contemporary with Apuleius. Indeed, as a student of rhetoric Apuleius would have practiced speaking on behalf of the varied and recognizable cast of characters that made up the extensive curriculum of declamatory exercises. Mendelson explains that these exercises,

...required students to adopt all the components of a balanced rhetorical stance: i.e., student declaimers would analyze an historical or legal problem and develop a pragmatic argument in response to that problem, they would adapt this argument to a specific audience with a definite need to know, and they would invoke an identifiable character to impersonate during the delivery of their fictional oration.¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Mendelson (1994) 92.

The requirements identified by Mendelson all outline why declamation provides an important context within which to consider Apuleius' novel. And as we will see, declamations addressed a variety of social issues, including the role of women, paternity and family relations, and slavery. However, it is important to keep in mind that as a privilege of upper-class males, declamatory training was very much aligned with the particular value system that informed the elite way of life. Before more fully considering declamation as a process of cultural indoctrination, however, it is helpful to look more closely at the specific logical and intellectual circumstances that were imposed upon the students.

Declamation was an active exercise that involved both engaging with legal problems and also attempting to apply solutions. Mendelson's first point about how students would "analyze an historical or legal problem and develop a pragmatic argument in response to that problem" is fully represented in the collection of declamations that survives. In *Minor Declamation 319, Adultera venefica* "The adulteress poisoner," a man charges his wife with the murder of their son by poisoning. Included in the background information is the fact that originally the man had attempted to charge his wife with adultery, but during the process, the son, who was going to stand as a witness at the adultery trial, died from poisoning. The wife argues that she should stand trial for adultery first, while the husband wants her to be tried immediately for murder. In this instance, the student is required to consider the specific and unusual constraints, and then make an argument for why the wife should be tried for murder. Rather than a simple discussion of the problem, the student is tasked with generating a pragmatic response to the issues at hand. The goal is

ultimately to make a proposal for action that cannot be easily refuted by the hypothetical defense. To do this in the example of “The adulteress poisoner,” the student, speaking in the first person voice as the husband, outlines the details of the case, appeals to his audience, and swiftly moves into offering a solution.

In his designing of the argument, the student appropriates the words of the man he is defending: since the case is of course fabricated, the student is left to approximate the different perspectives that he might expect to encounter. Speaking as the husband, he even addresses the wife and supplies her response himself, “I expect you will say among other things: ‘What reason did I have to poison my son? I was not an adulteress’... But desire for delay is natural to wicked people. Here you see infamy as the punishment. But what is reputation or public opinion to you?” (*Nempe hoc inter alia dictura es: ‘Quam causam dandi veneni filio meo habui? Adultera non eram’... Sed naturalis improbis hominibus dilationis est cupiditas. Hic infamiae vides poenam. Quid autem fama ad te aut opinio?*).¹³ The student takes on the role of the dutiful father defending his son’s death, and in his characterization of the deceitful wife, he uses direct speech to enhance her guilt for the sake of his argument. Speaking in such a way about the character of the wife, the student performatively endorses how unfaithful women were expected to be treated in his society.

The stock character of the adulterous wife, not to mention acts of poisoning, are indeed prevalent throughout declamation—and in Apuleius’ novel.¹⁴ In book nine, Lucius tells the story of a baker’s wife who pursues an affair to comic lengths and even invites her young lover to have dinner at her home while her husband is away

¹³ Bailey (2006) 59.

¹⁴ For an example of the adulterous wife, see *Met.* 9.14-31. For instances of poisoning, see *Met.* 10.2-12 (see p. 32-4 in this chapter) and *Met.* 10.23-28.

next door. In book ten, we hear about a woman who attempts to poison her stepson after he rejects her romantic advances, and about a criminal convicted of several acts of poisoning and then sentenced to perform on stage with Lucius the ass in a mock wedding ceremony. The student is challenged by the differing background scenarios that these stock *personae* and events are set in for the purposes of the exercise. In a sense, the student imaginatively enacts the entire trial through a single speech, and he is forced to be comprehensive enough to make an argument that is not only credible and attentive to the various participants, but also plausible to the audience of the declamation. Thus, declamatory training instilled in students the confidence to speak on behalf of others and with intent to act upon a given, although fictional, situation.

Yet declamation was above all training in self-advocacy. In many instances the student was required to speak on behalf of others, but a main goal of declamation was to impress upon students the power of the educated, upper-class man, both in the courtroom and in society at large. Although a variety of perspectives were explored in declamation, in every instance the patriarchal order was being reinforced, even if sometimes framed in opposition for forensic purposes. Bloomer notes, “Speaking on behalf of the prostitute who applied to be a priestess or the rape victim who hesitated between choosing death of the rapist or marriage with him was not an exercise in situational ethics nor did it necessarily impart some enlightened state. It did naturalize the speaking rights of the freeborn male elite.”¹⁵ Rather than becoming empathetic or familiar with the lives of those with less social power, students were taught how to

¹⁵ Bloomer (1997) 58.

classify and subjugate the people that were viewed as inferior.¹⁶ The stock characters that declamation revolves around ultimately were used to maintain the elevated status of the wealthy, educated upper-class. Students of declamation were trained to appropriate the actions, words, and in general the identities of lower-class people in pursuit of the convincing and practical legal solutions that made students' speeches effective and brought about the students' own personal success.

Another aspect of declamation centers on the careful reaffirmation of social roles. Mendelson's second point that the student would also be required to "adapt this argument to a specific audience with a definite need to know" is worth looking at closely. Such an example is presented in *Minor Declamation* 314, *Ego te, pater, occidi* "I killed you, father," in which a man acquitted of killing his father goes on to develop a verbal tick: "I killed you, father," and is subsequently convicted as a confessed murderer. Although the details of this exercise are again highly unusual, the father-son dynamic explored within is essential to declamatory exercises. Imber draws an important conclusion,

Roman *rhetores* routinely assigned their students the task of composing mock courtroom speeches arising out of conflicts that imagined the gamut of possible crises a Roman man in his public and private life might possibly confront. The practice of declaiming, therefore, allowed Roman sons to rehearse their future roles as *patres* and *cives*.¹⁷

Here is an aspect of declamation as a social activity that extended far beyond mere rhetorical training. Keeping these rehearsals of paternity in mind, it is clear that the student of declamation was often tasked with speaking to an audience of educated

¹⁶ See for example in *Minor Declamation* 354, *Morietur antequam nubat* "She will die before she marries" (Trans. Bailey 2006). An unfaithful, deceitful woman attempting to have an adulterous relationship is described accordingly as belonging to a lower class of people, speaking "after the everyday fashion of common folk" (*cotidiana consuetudine vulgi... dixisse*).

¹⁷ Imber (2009) 1.

fathers who had a vested interest in the ideas being explored, and how the arguments were formed. The declaimer had to maintain a sensitive balance between an emotional commitment to the argument and an acknowledgment of the particular social values encoded into the exercises, which he would have been expected to treat in a particular way. The highly exaggerated courtroom scenarios provided an environment for social norms to be explored and gradually internalized before the young men were themselves expected to make the impactful social decisions that were the privilege of adult men in Roman society. Imber goes on to note, “Romans associated a set of values and expectations with each of the stereotypical figures that declaimers used in their arguments.”¹⁸ By taking on these stereotypical *personae* and anticipating their motivations, thoughts, and even language, students of declamation were solidifying an ultimately class-driven worldview constructed and analyzed from a wide range of perspectives.

Students of declamation were also given the opportunity to play with elite social roles and construct an awareness of their culture as insiders. Another instance of practicing for adult male life is preserved in *Minor Declamation* 283, *Cynicus disertus filius* “Cynic son of an orator.” The declaimer takes on the role of a father attempting to disown his son in court, but because the son is a Cynic, he has already renounced all worldly possessions. The declamation makes use of first person speech, challenging the student to speak from the father’s point of view. The example reads, “My entire plea is located in examining my son’s life. To say nothing of other matters, just look at his get-up” (*Omnis mihi actio in dispicienda vita filii posita est.*

¹⁸ Imber (2009) 6.

Videte, ut alia taceam, habitum ipsum).¹⁹ It is clear how such a self-reflective stance would not only train the student—and conscientious son himself—in rhetorical skills, but also reaffirm the patriarchal values of the society he was being raised in. Speaking as a father and criticizing a son’s appearance puts the student in a uniquely challenging position, where in some ways he is using the appropriated fatherly language to expose and deal with his own adolescent insecurities. Gunderson elaborates, “Declamation can thus imagine reality or add substance to its imaginings. Declamation allows Romans to allegorize reality, to play with it, and to comment upon it. Similarly reality becomes fodder for declamatory fictions.”²⁰ Addressing an audience of educated men and fathers while playing such a role, the student had to demonstrate his ability to both acknowledge the social order and make his own unique and creative contribution to that society within its own terms. Not only did he navigate the constructed legal environment and fictional personalities prescribed by the declamation exercise, but in his argument the student also experimented with the social code of his own world. The blending of imagination and reality that occurred in declamation is an especially unique happening that requires closer examination.

In fact, the student of declamation was specifically trained to be inventive and improvisational in his delivery of an argument. The particular *color* of a speech was directed entirely by the student himself, and was not stipulated along with the background information or other logistical constraints of the exercise.²¹ The concept of *color* and the fact that it was expressly taught to students demonstrates a level of

¹⁹ Bailey (2006) 311.

²⁰ Gunderson (2003) 90.

²¹ See Bloomer (1997: 59), “The place, the setting, the facts are given in the statement of the theme; the student must now animate the scene and redirect this harsh outline of a plot by filling it up with characters and their motivation. He spins the formulas of the themes into narratives.”

flexibility that might seem to underscore the rigid expectations of rhetorical strategy and social hierarchy that declamation was deeply concerned with. But the creative license given to students of speechmaking encouraged the young men to enter comfortably into the subordinating act of speaking on behalf of lower-class citizens. With such leeway to invent the actions and words of other people, the student could become more confident in the security of his unchallengeable place in the social order. By becoming familiar with the act of categorizing individuals and impersonating them through direct speech based on the social hierarchy, students of declamation were well prepared for life as the elite members of a strictly class-driven and patriarchal society.

Along with shaping the masculine identities of students, declamation also instilled in its practitioners an awareness of social stratification across class and gender lines. Mendelson points out that students of declamation were invariably required to “invoke an identifiable character to impersonate during the delivery of their fictional oration.” A wide variety of stock characters emerge, including reformed prostitutes, adulteresses, criminal priests, sons with extravagant lifestyles, brothers disputing inheritances, pirates, and many additional characters, some more exaggerated than others, who were expected to populate the more obscure legal situations that required particularly subtle and thoughtful arguments. In the example from *Minor Declamation 363, Vestiplica pro domina* “A wardrobe maid instead of her mistress,” the surviving text has the student quoting the maid in the first person: “In short, if you doubt my word, send me dressed as your wife. I’ll see whether he can tell the difference” (*Denique si dubitas, me uxoris tuae habitu mitte: videro an*

possit discernere).²² In this instance, the declaimer provides elaboration for his case, in the form of the maid's direct speech. Again, by undermining the reputation of a lower-class individual through calculated and direct impersonation, the elite male student is able to then go on and offer an irrefutable solution to his case, which hinges on the maid's alleged guilt.

In the example of "A wardrobe maid" we observe the effects of a particularly effective *color*. The speaker proposes that the maid had offered to disguise herself as her master's wife and attempt to solicit sex from the wife's extramarital lover. Although this event is not stipulated in the background information, the declaimer makes the rhetorical move of impersonating the maid, and he thus explains why the husband should not be found guilty of maltreating her: because she volunteered to do it. The student takes advantage of the flexibility that he is given to construct a plausible scenario, and he is trained to call upon the traits of a recognizable character, in this case the immoral and possibly lustful maid, in order to argue for the defendant's innocence. It was entirely acceptable for the declaimer to circumvent the facts and base his entire argument on an appeal to the elite's collective distrust of household slaves, for example—in fact the student was taught to do this. Here again is an example of the considerable flexibility that was built into declamation exercises, which often required students to offer an imaginative take on established social constraints.

The logical maneuvering that declamation exercises required was therefore both a means of successful argumentation and a creative affirmation of traditional values. The training and imagination required to construct supporting details around a

²² Bailey (2006) 345.

given scenario certainly prepared Apuleius well for writing the fast-paced collection of fictional stories that makes up his novel. Declamation is concerned with presenting information by means of unique presentational techniques, first person speech, and innovative methods of characterization and description that are readily adapted to the genre of fiction. More than a classroom exercise, declamation equipped upper-class students with the social attitudes and creative sensibilities necessary to enter into life in elite Roman society and remain powerful by appropriating others.²³ The social conditioning and creativity of declamation certainly had a part to play both in Apuleius' composition of his novel and in its reception by his audience of wealthy, educated men.

Declamation and the *Metamorphoses*

During the Risus festival in book three, Lucius finds himself in the middle of a frightening situation that he feels is growing rapidly out of control. Lucius is abruptly and unceremoniously taken out of bed and paraded through Hypata, finally coming to a stop in the theater, where he is officially charged with murder.²⁴ A full-scale trial ensues, featuring rousing speeches and the threat of real legal punishment. Lucius is found not guilty after it is revealed that the whole scene had been staged to honor Risus, the local god of laughter. Despite its comic aims, the serious legal

²³ For more on Apuleius' own artistic consideration of lower-class existence, see Doody (2007:45), "He shows us in his narrative the ironic inaudibility of those beneath the boot of Rome, as well as the disturbing indication that consciousness sustains itself even in the most abused and deprived of beings."

²⁴ Bodel (2010: 327) discusses the declamatory implications of Lucius' trial being held in a theater, "The theater was also in the Roman world (both east and west) a place where declamations were regularly performed as public entertainments, and thus it is unclear at the outset of the proceedings, to us as well as to the narrator, into which of these two situations he has fallen."

content of the Risus festival trial scene offers an extra dimension of understanding and accessibility to the reader familiar with declamation.

Although social historians have been able in various ways to explain the cultural significance of the Risus festival's inclusion in the novel, the genre of declamation is overlooked as a specific literary influence on the text itself. Millar points out the role of legal "self-help" in the Risus festival, where Lucius has to defend himself on his own.²⁵ The charges brought against him are not clearly handed down by a central governmental authority.²⁶ What results is a legal scenario that is highly reminiscent of declamation: the speaker articulates an individualized, pragmatic response to an absurd charge raised by other individuals. The self-advocacy, bizarre content, quick pacing, and extensive use of first person speech central to declamation are all at work during the Risus festival, giving the episode a particularly declamatory feel. It is clear that while Apuleius could, for example, be offering his own commentary on the harsh reality of provincial law enforcement, he is nevertheless approaching his audience from a fictional setting, populated and ordered by fictional characters and the carefully controlled logic that they subscribe to.²⁷ Apuleius makes use of the artificiality and abstraction of declamation in his presentation of the Risus festival, and these elements are especially reflected in his descriptive approach to Lucius' trial during the festivities.

²⁵ "Whatever may have happened in reality, in the world of the novel justice is done and public order maintained, if at all, by self-help" (Millar 1981: 71).

²⁶ See Summers (1970: 530), "... justice in the provinces and for provincials can only be obtained if Rome returns the administration of criminal justice to the hands of responsible municipal citizens rather than insisting upon the primary role of the provincial governor backed by the central authority of the emperor."

²⁷ See Summers (1970: 511) on Apuleius criticism of law enforcement in the provinces.

Although Lucius is not aware of the hoax and at first truly fears being condemned to death, the reader is left to appreciate the comedic tension and absurdity of the situation.²⁸ The scene itself unfolds just like a declamation exercise: the incident in question is related, the charge is brought up, and then speeches are made. There is a thematic resonance between the ridiculous circumstances of Lucius' mock trial and the variety of equally bizarre and unrealistic scenarios that students of declamation were required to speak about. And there is also an important exchange taking place between the rhetorical, performative aspects of declamation and the entirely textual environment of Apuleius' novel. The Risus festival in particular brings the themes and language of declamation to the page of a novel, where an educated reader could appreciate the rhetorical nuances of Lucius' trial. It is certainly true that Apuleius' contemporary readers were wealthy, educated men who had been trained in declamation, and therefore could consider the bizarre circumstances of the Risus festival with an appreciation for, or at least an awareness of, the sensationalized rhetorical maneuvering that takes place there.²⁹ Throughout Lucius' trial, a discerning narratorial presence constantly recalls the goals of declamation: ultimately Lucius serves as the conduit through which all other characters are related. Kaster offers an important take on the social significance of declamatory training, noting that "whatever the mess produced by even the most monstrous acts, the calm surface of social relations... could be restored by reasoned arguments delivered from a position

²⁸ Summers (1970: 521), "The entire trial scene is in fact a fantasia, in which logic plays a secondary role.... This is not careless writing: Apuleius did not want perfect logic. The one constant feature of the trial is the fear of Lucius that he will be wrongly charged and convicted by the capricious system of Roman justice."

²⁹ See Osgood (2006: 417) on Apuleius' audience.

of objective distance.”³⁰ The objective distance between the identity of Lucius as a narrator, who functions like a declaimer, and the characters he impersonates is an important element of declamation preserved in the novel.

The declamatory style first of all situates the reader in an explicitly fabricated present. In the practice of declamation, the speaker would address a made-up problem or event that had necessarily already happened in a hypothetical world, and then proceed to offer his audience a hypothetical solution to that problem. The act of the student giving the actual speech in reality, because it references an entirely fictional scenario, operates in a time that is still further removed from the legal discrepancy at hand. Similarly in the *Risus* festival, Lucius is telling the reader about something that has already happened. Although the trial is eventually revealed to have been a hoax, in his description of the event Lucius maintains the illusion of a real trial until the truth comes out later in his presentation. During the trial and in its direct aftermath, Lucius the narrator gives voice to seven different characters, each with a different part to play in the proceedings. He quotes the prosecutor’s address, a grieving woman’s entreaties, the comments of magistrates, a servant’s message, Photis’ confession, and of course provides his own past thoughts and present commentary, all in the first person. But the voice of Lucius the defendant represents only one element of the story.

In this way, Lucius relates the trial experience to the reader as if it is happening for the first time. We are hearing an account of the entire event from Lucius’ memory, but through first person speech each participant in the trial is represented by what seems like his or her own language. Lucius’ narrative frame

³⁰ Kaster (2001) 334.

remains intact, but for that moment the story becomes more like a transcription familiarized instantly by the designation of “I.” The reader experiences the trial just as Lucius could be understood to have experienced it, on the same level as a primary witness. For example, Lucius the defendant is overcome with emotion. Lucius the narrator, however, is temporally removed from the episode, yet he includes the emotional details of the trial in order to orient the reader’s attention away from the larger narrative, and towards the circumstances of the trial scene. The sights and sounds of the whole episode are still framed by Lucius’ account, but the presentation is not as distilled as a more overtly secondhand version might be. A declamatory perspective that moves beyond Lucius’ own involvement in the trial, and which also treats the other participants in a declamatory manner without at first favoring the protagonist of the story, enriches the description of the event.

For example, when Lucius speaks on behalf of other individuals who were present at the trial, he uses first person speech to represent these other *personae*, a hallmark of declamation. Rather than paraphrasing the prosecutor’s words, Lucius offers them directly to the reader: “Most virtuous citizens of this storied empire, while this is not a trivial situation, at the same time it particularly concerns the peace of our state, and by means of a grave precedent it should be made useful for all the generations that follow” (*Neque parva res ac praecipue pacem civitatis cunctae respiciens et exemplo serio profutura tractatur, Quirites sanctissimi*).³¹ Here, the prosecutor makes his case persuasively that the assembly is about to consider a truly serious matter. The prosecutor’s voice confronts the reader and casts an initially grave tone over the proceedings. Lucius, in his relating of these words, is utilizing a

³¹ *Met.* 3.3

declamatory style to highlight the formidable legal opposition that he thought he faced at the time.³²

Since Lucius is after all the main director of the narrative, by including the direct speech of the prosecutor he is not undermining his own defense, but rather continuing to work within the medium of declamation to lend continuity to the episode as it unfolds, and as other perspectives are added. After the prosecutor speaks and brings Lucius to tears, Lucius' own words prompt a sobbing woman to address the assembly as well: "On behalf of common sympathy, on behalf of the law which they say is shared among all people, take pity on the young men slaughtered undeservedly, and give us comfort in our widowhood and loneliness by taking vengeance" (*Per publicam misericordiam per commune ius humanitatis aiunt miseremini indigne caesorum iuvenum nostraeque viduitati ac solitudini de vindicta solacium date*).³³ The woman is given the means to tell her own story, and to act as an equalizing presence in conversation with the similarly distressed Lucius. Summers notes, "The speech of the old woman is filled with legal metaphor which gives it a legalistic tone and makes it a good foil to the accusation of the [prosecutor] and a good foreshadow of the final result..."³⁴ Since the reader does not yet know that the trial is a joke, and because Lucius the narrator does not yet give any hints that he had in fact been the victim of a prank, the reader is tempted to consider whose tears are more warranted, either those shed by Lucius the defendant or by the grieving woman. Here the forensic aims of declamatory impersonation and one-sided argumentation are further adapted for the sake of the artistic purposes of a fictional novel, and the

³² See Turpin (2002: 17), "The ponderous opening is typical of courtroom speech."

³³ *Met.* 3.8

³⁴ Summers (1970) 519.

voices of both Lucius and the woman can offer contradictory first person appeals to the reader's sympathy.

Through the voices of different characters, Apuleius thus invites the reader to consider the trial scene of book three beyond just the scope of the main narrator's experience. Although declamations were designed to argue a case from only one point of view at a time, in the Risus festival the perspective of each participant in the trial is fully articulated and put in conversation. The result is an interesting convergence of voices, leaving the reader in a state of suspended judgment until it is revealed that Lucius did not in fact kill three people, but instead punctured three wineskins. After hearing the passionate appeals of the prosecutor and alleged victims' family members, the reader is then able to more fully appreciate the comic reversal of Lucius' fate when he learns that the trial was staged, and that he was not in fact ever in any danger. But by giving full treatment to the language and intention of the prosecutor and the bereaved woman in a first person, persuasive, and declamatory style, Apuleius puts into service several dimensions of forensic activity that a reader familiar with declamation and rhetorical exercises would have appreciated immediately.

Although in his presentation Lucius the narrator is aware of the outcome, he withholds the truth in order for the reader to have a laugh at Lucius' misfortune, and the narrator thus makes good on the promise of enjoyment that he made to the reader in book one.³⁵ The story is told from the vantage point of Lucius as a respectable, converted citizen, while the humiliation that Lucius endured at that precise time as the lowly object of a joke creates a dramatic tension between the past and present Lucius.

³⁵ *Met.* 1.1, "Pay attention, reader: you will be glad" (*Lector intende: laetaberis*).

The dramatic and legalistic language of the trial scene also heightens this tension, making the resolution at the end of the trial even more satisfying for the reader. Apuleius thus uses carefully honed rhetorical control of the trial episode to more closely manipulate the reader's access to the story.³⁶

For example, book three opens with a thorough treatment of Lucius' anxiety about having committed murder the previous night, or so he thought at the time. Lucius reflects, "An oppressive heat entered my consciousness, recalling last evening's crime... Now the forum and the judges, now the verdict, and then at last the executioner himself appeared in my mind" (*Aestus invadit animum vespertini recordatione facinoris... iam forum et iudicia, iam sententiam, ipsum denique carnificem imaginabundus*).³⁷ Although detailed background information was not included in the set-up of a declamatory scenario to the extent to which Lucius provides his own internal commentary to the reader, the inclusion of these reflective moments can enhance the power of Lucius' speechmaking. We learn that Lucius had trouble sleeping, that he was truly worried about his fate, and that he certainly had no idea that he was being tried as part of an extensive joke: he in fact expected to be executed. Through Lucius' words the reader is made aware both of his mindset going into the trial and of his initial expectations for its outcome. However, it is also important to keep in mind Lucius' ability to distort and sensationalize his account of an event that he has already lived through. The *tricolon* of *iudicia... sententiam... carnificem* "courts, verdict, executioner" has a particularly rhetorical aim, and it is

³⁶ See Kaster (2001: 334), "Control, finally, is what the schools of rhetoric were about. Through their lessons, the young elite males who frequented the schools learned to control their own speech so that they might one day control the opinions of others..."

³⁷ *Met.* 3.1

clear that the fashioning of this moment with such a grave tone is intended to set up a contrast with the comic reversal that occurs later on, after the mock seriousness of the trial is fully established for the reader. Thus, Lucius the narrator carefully leads into the trial scene in such a way that complements the dramatic, declamatory style that he goes on to develop in his characterizations of all the various participants in the trial.

A declamatory style thus allows for moments of what Genette has termed “narrative metalepsis,” when the extradiegetic narrator intrudes into the diegetic universe and “produces an effect of strangeness that is either comical or fantastic.”³⁸ In the case of the Risus festival, the moments of intrusion by the narrator often heighten the temporal tension between past- and present-Lucius, while at the same time reminding the reader that it is in fact an experienced narrator who is establishing control over and appropriating the voices of secondary characters, using the first person voice as his medium. Rather than speaking for themselves, Apuleius’ characters are participating in a literary enactment of a realistic, yet stylized and theatrical, legal dispute that is confidently directed from a distance by a narrator who acknowledges the fact that he has had ample time to deliberately compose his version of the story for maximum enjoyment.

The advantage of applying declamatory techniques to the presentation of Lucius’ trial is also realized during the moments of narrative metalepsis that occur between the formal presentations of speeches made by the various parties. For example, between the prosecutor’s speech and the speech of Lucius the defendant, Lucius the narrator fills in some of the emotional details that would not have had a place in the condensed format of a declamation exercise. He explains, “And at once

³⁸ Genette (1980) 236.

the herald was ordering me to begin, if I would have liked to respond at all to the charge. But at that moment I was able to do nothing more than weep—not, by Hercules, over my consideration of the savage indictment, so much as over my own wretched conscience” (*Ac me statim praeco, si quid ad ea respondere vellem, iubebat incipere. At ego nihil tunc temporis amplius quam flere poteram, non tam hercules truculentam accusationem intuens quam meam miseram conscientiam*).³⁹ Right before Lucius the narrator relates the words with which he, charged with murder at the time, addressed the assembly in defense of his innocence, he intrudes to reflect on his past state of mind as a defendant at the trial. The objective distance created by the use of a past tense narration here is brought to bear on the distance between two versions of the narrator himself, rather than on the distance between the speechmaker and the different voices that he manipulates for argumentative affect. Again, the declamatory style that drives the trial episode is carefully applied and put in service of the artistic requirements of the novel.

The more overtly declamatory tone returns, however, when Lucius launches directly into his defense speech. He begins with an acknowledgement of the charges, and then offers his main point of refutation:

Nec ipse ignoro, quam sit arduum—trinis civium corporibus expositis—eum qui caedis arguatur, quamvis vera dicat et de facto confiteatur ultro, tamen tantae multitudini, quod sit innocens, persuadere... Facile vos edocebo me discrimen capitis non meo merito, sed rationabilis indignationis eventu fortuito tantam criminis invidiam frustra sustinere.

And I myself am not unaware how difficult it can be—with the bodies of three citizens put forth as evidence—for the man who is accused of murder to still persuade such a large crowd that he is innocent, although he speaks the truth and admits that he did the deed... I will easily inform you that I mistakenly

³⁹ *Met.* 3.4

bear the weight of life-threatening danger from so great a crime not by my fault, but by the chance outcome of a justifiable anger.⁴⁰

Lucius proposes his intention to simultaneously admit to the killings, but also prove that he is not guilty of senseless murder. The kind of argumentative framework that he sets up right away in his self-defense is certainly bizarre enough to recall the purposefully extreme scenarios invented for students of declamation to argue their way out of. The informed reader would take in Lucius' statement and anticipate the sophisticated argumentation that would necessarily have to follow in order for a man to acquit himself of a crime that he readily admits having perpetrated. Just like in declamation, Lucius' defense rests on a strident appeal to the less quantifiable factors at work in the incident with the robbers, including Lucius' motives, his honorable nature and good citizenship, as well as the violent intentions of the dishonorable men he had allegedly killed.

In his defense, Lucius adapts a *color* that is highly reminiscent of declamation.⁴¹ In his speech, he provides the words of the robbers themselves, supplying his audience with a version of events that audaciously supports his innocence without refuting or otherwise disregarding the basic statement of the background information put forth by the prosecutor at the beginning of the trial. Working within the established situational parameters, Lucius uses declamatory language to fill out the audience's perspective of how Lucius was in fact threatened by the robbers, and was therefore unquestionably acting in self-defense. Again using the first person, Lucius recounts the words of the robbers, "Alright boys, with manly

⁴⁰ *Met.* 3.4

⁴¹ Bodel (2010: 327) notes the particularly declamatory elements of Lucius speech, calling it "a self-defense that is a model of its kind, addressing point by point his accuser's argument in the same canonical order of *exordium*, *narratio*, here much embellished with elaborately fabricated detail..."

spirits and keen strength, let us advance upon those who are sleeping. All this hesitation, all this cowardice, may it depart from your chest: with dagger drawn let slaughter walk through the entire house” (*Heu pueri, quam maribus animis et viribus alacribus dormientes adgrediamur. Omnis cunctatio, ignavia omnis facessat e pectore: stricto mucrone per totam domum caedes ambulet*).⁴² In this way, Lucius makes a swift rhetorical move that reestablishes the entire event in his favor and reframes the accusations made against him. Based on these words, which Lucius has invented himself, he seems much less guilty of premeditated murder. And Lucius goes on to offer a blow-by-blow account of his fight with the robbers that highlights his bravery and virtuous intentions. But the reader of the novel, unlike the fictional audience of Lucius’ trial, enjoys access to Lucius’ original experience of the event before the Risus festival, as well as to the dramatic rendition of the attack that he offers during his defense speech.

Lucius’ declamatory approach is fully revealed, since the original account of the robbers’ attack that Lucius gives at the end of book two is far less detailed than the account that he gives during his defense speech. There is no dialogue in the original account, and it is only until the charges are subsequently leveled that Lucius elaborates on exactly what had happened. For the reader, this indicates that Lucius’ defense speech is vastly embellished and employs a high degree of declamatory logic and persuasive spin. The reader hears from Lucius the night of the attack, and then hears much more about it from him later on at the trial. The discrepancy between the two accounts emphasizes the considerable narrative leeway, or *color*, that a speechmaker is given in pursuit of the desired verdict. The effect of an argument

⁴² *Met.* 3.5

based on an appeal to the specific intentions, morals, and even supposed language of the other parties who cannot speak for themselves is fully demonstrated, and ultimately Lucius' defense speech would come across to the reader as a skillful declamation that takes creative liberties with narration and relies on a highly stylized and inventive argumentative approach.

A comparison of the language used in each account of the robbers' attack demonstrates the declamatory exaggeration that Lucius makes use of during his trial. In his account at the end of book two, Lucius describes the melee using words that imply ambiguous destruction rather than specifically homicidal violence. After all, Lucius as the narrator has already experienced the event, and in his presentation he uses language that does justice to the temporal tension at work during the Risus festival. In book two, words including *conluctantem*, *demergo*, *perforati*, *spiratus efflaverint* "struggling, I bury, pierced through, they blew out their breath" preserve the uncertainty of the situation and set the stage for Lucius' vivid embellishment later during the trial.⁴³ The words that Lucius uses could apply either to the slashing and deflation of leather containers, or more metaphorically to the expiration of three human lives.

Lucius then takes full advantage of the narrative flexibility of the situation as described initially by the prosecutor, just like a talented student of declamation would have been expected to do. During his defense, not only does Lucius insert the direct speech of the robbers, but the less murderous vocabulary of his previous account is replaced by explicitly violent words such as *dirigitur acies*, *manibus ambabus capillo adreptum*, *prosterno*, *mordicus*, *ictu temperato*, *occurrentem pectore offenso peremo*

⁴³ *Met.* 2.32

“the battle line was drawn, seized by the hair with both hands, I knocked [him] over, with the teeth, with a well-aimed blow, having been struck in the chest I killed the one running away.”⁴⁴ Lucius mentions individual body parts as he recounts the specifically human acts of violence that he is conjuring up for the sake of his defense. The reader is able to derive particular satisfaction from the declamatory move Lucius makes here, with the juxtaposition explicitly made available between the reader’s original experience of the event and its creative, rhetorical distortion during Lucius’ subsequent trial.

After his defense, Lucius the narrator breaks from direct speech and intrudes again with a narrative approach that is still implicitly informed by declamation. He relates the nonverbal appeals that he makes to the gathered audience, which was also an important part of speechmaking: “Having said these things, with tears springing forth again and with my hands stretched out in prayer, full of sadness and on behalf of public sympathy, on behalf of the love of their children I was entreating first the people here, and then those over there” (*Haec profatus, rursus lacrimis obortis porrectisque in preces manibus, per publicam misericordiam, per pignorum caritatem, maestus tunc hos, tunc illos deprecabar*).⁴⁵ We can understand a difference between the reader’s reception of the grief that Lucius displays at the beginning and then later at the end of his speech, because the rhetorical dynamic of the trial has clearly shifted from serious speechmaking to declamatory gesturing.

After Lucius’ exaggerated account of his fight with the robbers reveals a considerable amount of embellishment on his part, the reader can begin to

⁴⁴ *Met.* 3.6

⁴⁵ *Met.* 3.7

acknowledge the humor and strange temporal tension that is driving Lucius' account of the trial scene. At first, perhaps Lucius seemed genuinely disturbed by the charges. But after demonstrating such boldness in his own account of the events, which the reader would note is quite overblown compared his original description of the same fight scene at the end of book two when he was not yet on trial for murder, Lucius' displays of misery following his defense speech begin to seem more artificial. At this point, the absurd circumstances of the Risus festival are beginning to converge, and the reader can partake more in the humor and unreasonableness of a recognizably declamatory scenario than in the pathos of a murder trial. When Lucius is eventually forced to look upon the corpses of his victims and sees only wineskins, his reaction is meant to be comical, and the raucous laughter of the audience signals to the reader that the Risus festival was put on entirely for entertainment, and that the absurdity and rhetorical maneuvering of declamation have successfully been put to work in Lucius' descriptive approach to the trial episode.⁴⁶

Successful speechmaking

Apuleius also demonstrates that legal self-help is absolutely necessary sometimes, and can be life-saving when successfully applied. Again, the genre of declamation serves as a key literary influence for instances of first person speechmaking. The other major legal episode of the novel occurs in book ten, when a young man is put on trial for murdering his brother with poison and threatening his stepmother. In this instance, a father had charged his son with serious crimes that could warrant a capital punishment. Again, however, both the persuasive goals of

⁴⁶ Bodel (2010: 327) rightfully concludes that "Lucius realizes that he has been applauded for his declamatory performance as an entertainer rather than acquitted for his eloquence as an advocate..."

declamation and its tendency for bizarre closure can be brought to bear on our understanding of how the stepson's trial could have been received by Apuleius' readers. The stepson's name is finally cleared after a physician comes forward, explaining that the stepmother's slave tried to buy poison from him with which to kill the stepson, but which was actually a sleep-inducing drug. The younger son is still alive, and the older stepson is proven innocent. Here, we see the law being taken into individuals' hands, and just like in a successful declamation, a pragmatic solution is arrived at on the level of the individual citizen. So, unlike the Risus festival, we can consider this moment to be a demonstration of declamatory logic that is brought to fruitful completion. Through individual advocacy, the correct solution for an unusual legal problem is measured out and obtained.

The tone of the stepson's trial is notably more serious than that of the Risus festival trial scene, and although Lucius is not a participant in this trial, he uses a declamatory style in his presentation that is still intended to move the reader emotionally. While the story is still clearly intended to be entertaining, Lucius the narrator signals his intention to make use of rhetorical techniques distinct from the comic Risus festival as he frames the reader's experience. And perhaps ironically, Lucius is sure to mention about the stepson's trial, "And according to the precedent of the Attic Law for the Court of Mars, the herald declared for the sake of the defense that there were to be no opening remarks and no arousing of sympathy" (*Et exemplo legis Atticae Martiique iudicii causae patronis denuntiat praeco neque principia dicere neque miserationem commovere*).⁴⁷ Lucius includes this specific detail perhaps to account for the declamatory embellishments that he goes on to make in his

⁴⁷ *Met.* 10.7

presentation, lending credence to his account of a trial that he did not directly participate in, but which nevertheless includes the manufactured and exaggerated direct speech of those who were involved.

Indeed, when the doctor comes forward to speak at the trial, the tone that Lucius adopts in his impersonation is a serious one, meant to suggest the higher stakes of the stepson's trial as compared to the mock trial of the Risus festival. The doctor concludes his presentation: "He said, 'By Hercules, I will not allow you to impose a punishment upon that innocent young man, against what is right, nor will I allow this slave to escape the penalty for his harmful crime, with our court having been made into a joke. In fact I will present clear evidence pertaining to the situation at hand'" (*Non patiar' inquit 'hercules, non patiar vel contra fas de innocente isto iuvene supplicium vos sumere vel hunc ludificato nostro iudicio poenam noxii facinoris evadere. Dabo enim rei praesenti evidens argumentum*').⁴⁸ He goes on to produce the guilty slave's signet ring and tell about the slave's role in the crime. The doctor's language, again fashioned through Lucius' presentation, is emphatic, conclusive, and in line with the goals of declamation to both appeal to the audience's emotions and propose the most pragmatic and appropriate solution to the strange legal problem at hand.

Thus, the techniques of declamation lend themselves well to the creation of a multidimensional narratorial identity that Apuleius would have been comfortable manipulating, given his rhetorical training. And given the position of Lucius to both relate and reflect upon events that have already taken place through direct speech, the secondary characters can act as exemplars of lower-class humor or household

⁴⁸ *Met.* 10.11

dynamics, for example. Without implicating himself, Apuleius uses a declamatory approach in order to manipulate the actions and especially the speech of his characters for the enjoyment of his readers. Although the novel features first person speech from a variety of perspectives, keeping declamation in mind allows us to realize that the inclusion of these first person voices is more of an impersonating act than simply a narrating one. The reader hears from many different characters in the first person, and in this way the “I” defies any kind of constant identity. Rather, we can think of Apuleius himself, an educated member of the upper-class, as adopting a declamatory style to impersonate all of these characters and speak on their behalf to an audience of his educated peers. Declamation provides the creative model for literary impersonation in the novel, as well as its special relevance to the reader.

Chapter Two:

Rhetoric and Narrative

Porrigit dextram, et ad instar oratorum conformat articulum, duobusque infimis conclusis digitis ceteros eminus porrigens et infesto pollice clementer surrigens.

He stretched out his right hand, and he posed his fingers in the manner of orators, with the last two bent inward, stretching out the others at a distance and benignly pointing an accusatory thumb.⁴⁹

In this scene, Lucius is describing Thelyphron as he reclines on a dining couch and comports himself like a serious orator. Thelyphron is about to give a firsthand account of murder and witchcraft, but the mannerisms of serious speechmaking are appropriated to make a joke out of Thelyphron's experience and in so doing, lower the stakes of the whole ordeal. The language and literary devices of professional rhetoric are in fact entirely absent from Thelyphron's performance. Instead, the narrator is using imagery to explicitly acknowledge a connection between the arts of rhetoric and storytelling. Although the narrative goals of delivering a successful speech and telling an engaging story necessitate different strategies of representation, both attempt to deal with the same issues of accuracy and engagement with an audience.⁵⁰ In the previous chapter I addressed the use of direct speech in the legal context of Lucius' trial, and in this chapter I will investigate instances of first person

⁴⁹ *Met.* 2.21

⁵⁰ Barthes (1978: 109) describes the basic mechanism of this transaction, "Just as there is within narrative a major function of exchange (set out between a donor and a beneficiary), so, homologically, narrative as object is the point of a communication: there is a donor of the narrative and a receiver of the narrative."

narration and direct speech that occur in other storytelling contexts in the *Metamorphoses*.

The narrative structure of the novel at times draws heavily from the communicative strategies of declamation, such as during the Risus festival, but the novel does purport its own, self-contained storytelling logic that often departs from the model of formal speechmaking and forensic language. A hybrid approach results, involving declamation along with other, diverse narrative elements. While a declamatory style is particularly appropriate for the presentation of a trial scene, different settings require narrative approaches that resonate accordingly. For example, Telyphron's humorous tale is as much a luxurious commodity at Byrrhena's dinner party as the food being served alongside him, and his story is presented and received in a manner that is appropriate for the setting of the narrating act. And it is for this reason that both the lengthy mythic digression about Cupid and Psyche, and the brief episode "about the adultery of a certain poor woman" (*de adulterio cuiusdam pauperis*)⁵¹ can each have the same designation as a *lepida fabula*,⁵² despite the greatly differing subject matter of these two tales. However, a varied first person perspective remains an important orienting tool for all the different characters who are given voice in the novel, and direct speech continually mediates the flow of information from the speaker to the reader.

The use of "I" takes on an immediate familiarizing effect, and although the identity of the speaker shifts, there is right away a sense of comfortable immediacy that results from a perspective so undiluted and close to the action, such that the

⁵¹ *Met.* 9.4

⁵² See *Met.* 4.27, *Sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protinus avocabo*, and *Met.* 9.4, *...cognoscimus lepidam... fabulam, quam vos etiam cognoscatis volo*.

reader can readily follow Lucius' wild adventures, willingly setting aside expectations of plausibility, and instead use the main narrative of Lucius as an illustrative example of how reality functions in the world of the novel.⁵³ The narratorial voice is dynamic and designed for different purposes, and I will consider Apuleius' character-narrators as playing three important roles that all make use of the first person voice: situating the reader in a bizarre, declamatory environment informed by the narrator's intention to entertain the audience, providing testimony and articulating sources of information, and replacing law with magic as a tool for managing crises.

Situating the reader in a bizarre, declamatory environment informed by the narrator's intention to entertain the audience

Many of the narrators in the *Metamorphoses* are social outcasts and members of low society, and the strange circumstances of the stories they tell are meant to recall declamation and its exploration of extreme and unusual situations. Lucius appropriates the words of secondary narrators as he relates their tales through their own direct speech, but law does not always provide order in the world of the novel. Instead of sound logic, entertaining storytelling emerges as a measurement of success for acts of first person narration. For example, one of the robbers who steals Lucius the ass from Milo's stable later tells about his inability to call out and intervene on behalf of one of his criminal associates disguised as a bear after a failed heist: "And yet my oratorical skills were of no benefit to the very unlucky young man" (*Nec tamen nostri sermonis artes infelicissimo profuerunt iuveni*).⁵⁴ The robber, as

⁵³ See Genette (1980: 67), "The 'first-person' narrative lends itself better than any other to anticipation, by the very fact of its avowedly retrospective character, which authorizes the narrator to allude to the future and in particular to his present situation..."

⁵⁴ *Met.* 4.21

narrator, is referring both to a specific moment in his story, as well as to the fact that, generally speaking, verbal argumentation has no place in his bizarre account of a man who was killed by hunting dogs while sewn inside of a bear's hide. However, the reader is entertained by the ridiculous details of the story, and in this way Lucius applies declamatory impersonation to sensationalize lower-class existence for the benefit of his audience.⁵⁵

Through the voice of Charite's slave in book eight, the novel's aim of entertaining is hinted at in a way that reinforces Lucius' privilege, just as in declamation, to exploit the language of a stock character, in this case the clever slave. Lucius gives a brief introduction, and then begins supplying the direct speech of the slave. However, Lucius' presence as the primary narrator is maintained throughout the story, just as in a declamatory exercise where the speaker maintains his own upper-class identity despite speaking on behalf of others. The slave addresses a *conservorum frequentiam* "crowd of fellow-slaves,"⁵⁶ and frames the story he is about to tell about the death of Charite:

Equisones opilionesque, etiam busequae, fuit Charite nobis, quae misella et quidem casu gravissimo nec vero incommitata manes adivit. Sed ut cuncta noritis, referam vobis a capite quae gesta sunt quaeque possint merito doctiores, quibus stilos Fortuna sumministrat, in historiae specimen chartis involvere.

Horse grooms and shepherds, even cowherds! Our unfortunate little Charite has died, and indeed with a most burdensome descent she has not travelled to the shades unaccompanied. But so that you all can become acquainted with her story, I will relate to you from the beginning the things that happened,

⁵⁵ Winkler (1985: 157), provides helpful elaboration on the nuanced deployment of character-narrators besides Lucius, "Qua narrator and qua actor, Lucius can adopt the high tone of an aristocrat and scholar, reporting and evaluating the linguistic and social behavior of the lower classes. In some cases... this allows the text to incorporate an obviously silly joke without taking responsibility for it."

⁵⁶ *Met.* 8.1

details which more learned people, whose pens Fortune aids, rightly ought to roll out on a scroll as an example for history.⁵⁷

The mention of *doctiores* refers to Lucius in his role as the main narrator and final arbiter of how the stories in the novel are presented. However, by telling the story in the voice of the slave, Lucius can both preserve his status as an elite male with such allusions, and also make use of the humorous exploitation of lower-class characters by appropriating their language to meet his needs as a storyteller. Like in declamation, the bizarre character of the slave, with his formal introduction to the story and self-deprecating speech (*possint merito*), is understood to exist under the creative direction of Lucius, a member of the educated upper class. Lucius is then able to take on the slave's exaggerated *persona* to maintain accuracy and continuity in a dramatic narration about the declamatory themes of love, jealousy, and murder.

Just as students of declamation used speechmaking to legitimize the elite moral code, the narratorial voice of Charite's slave offers the reader a cautionary warning that serves both to entice the reader and pass judgment on the people involved in the story. Charite's slave, whose name is never given, again addresses his audience of fellow slaves in an abstracted, persuasive, and declamatory style: "But I beg that you all pay the utmost attention, behold at last to what place these attacks of raging passion can rush forth" (*Spectate denique, sed oro sollicitis animis intendite, quorsum furiosae libidinis proruperint impetus*).⁵⁸ The authorial language here (*spectate... intendite*) is again meant to suggest Lucius' presence in the narrating act, despite the use of the slave's voice as the conveyer of information. Such an explicit transition hints at a rhetorically organized presentation, and so the reader is prepared

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *Met.* 8.3

to hear a story that may contain declamatory embellishment for the sake of persuasion or, more appropriate to the goals of the novel, for the sake of maximum entertainment for the reader. The slave as a narrative vehicle allows for a particularly theatrical presentation of the story, due to his personal involvement in the events in question. Charite's slave treats his entire account like a dramatic performance, and tells about Charite's late husband who visited her in a dream and informed her that his death had been staged by a rival: "And [Tlepolemus] added the rest and brought to light the whole scene of the crime" (*Et addidit cetera omnemque scaenam sceleris illuminavit.*)⁵⁹ The metaphor of the *scaenam sceleris* makes it clear that the entire narration is itself being put on as a spectacle, and that Charite's slave is one of its fictional players. Lucius' choice to use the slave's voice for the narration suggests declamatory impersonation and also the comprehensive subordination of reality in the novel, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Indeed, Lucius himself provides self-referential commentary on the use of a varied narrative approach in the novel. Lucius reflects before beginning in book nine to tell about his experience of living with two bakers:

Nec immerito priscae poeticae divines auctor apud Graios summae prudentiae virum monstrare cupiens, multarum civitatum obitu et variorum populorum cognitu summas adeptum virtutes cecinit. Nam et ipse gratas gratias asino meo memini, quod me suo celatum tegmine variisque fortunis exercitatum, etsi minus prudentem, multiscium reddidit. Fabulam denique bonam prae ceteris, suave comptam ad aures vestras afferre decrevi. Et en occipio.

And when the divine author of poetry among the Greeks of olden times was wanting to point out a man of the utmost foresight, it wasn't an accident that he sang about the man's meeting many communities and his acquaintance with different peoples, having reached a state of the highest enlightenment. And I myself even recall my time as an ass with great fondness, because

⁵⁹ *Met.* 8.8

hidden under his covering I was trained in the various walks of life, and I returned knowing much, although less wise. The result is a good story arranged agreeably, in fact better than the rest, and I have resolved to bring it forward to your ears. Here I go...⁶⁰

Lucius' reference to the *variorum populorum* reminds the reader of the diverse cast of speakers that is given voice throughout the novel. Lucius himself is careful to point out to the reader in a moment of self-reflection that the declamatory *personae* he comes across and often impersonates contribute positively to his ability as a storyteller. He refers to the story he is about to tell as a *fabula* rather than an outright oration, but he appeals to the enhanced perspective that first person, rhetorical impersonation lends to his account. The representational aims of declamation are put to good use in a fictional setting as Lucius populates the world of the novel with recognizable and realistic, yet at the same time bizarre and entertaining, characters.

Looking closely at the trial of the young man accused by his stepmother of poisoning his brother in book ten, it becomes clear how Lucius the narrator successfully combines a declamatory style—based on the pursuit of reason and logical solutions—with a consistent narrative approach that doesn't undermine the novel's goal to entertain by certifying implausible stories. Lucius starts by explicitly framing the episode as tragic: “Consequently, excellent reader, understand that now you are reading tragedy, not a mere story, and that you have upgraded from the light slipper worn by comic actors to the boot used in tragedy, with a thicker sole” (*Iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam, legere et a socco ad cothurnum ascendere*).⁶¹ Lucius simply tells the reader that the forthcoming story is decidedly not a *fabula*, but in so doing he still appeals to his logical conceit about truth and the

⁶⁰ *Met.* 9.13

⁶¹ *Met.* 10.2

uninitiated reader, and fulfills his ideological function as narrator.⁶² The reader is accustomed by now to not take the narrator's word at face value, and indeed to ignore appeals to truth or lofty ideals that often set the stage for especially ridiculous occurrences.⁶³ And it is important to keep in mind that Lucius did not directly participate in this trial. He claims,

Quibus autem verbis accusator urserit, quibus rebus diluerit reus ac prorsus orationes altercationesque neque ipse absens apud praesepium scire, neque ad vos quae ignoravi possum enuntiare, sed quae plane comperi ad istas litteras proferam.

But I don't have knowledge of the words with which the accuser pressed the charge, the circumstances by which the defendant washed it away, and the speeches and debates, myself being away inside the stable, nor am I able to assert to you any details of which I am unaware, but I shall present here in my book the things which I found out on the level.⁶⁴

Lucius admits that his account is an approximation of actual events. As the narrator, then, he is free to direct his version of the story however he sees fit and provide the rhetorical *color* that he deems most appropriate for his goals as the speaker.⁶⁵ When he states at the beginning that the story is a tragic one (*tragoediam*), Lucius is more reinforcing his own interpretation than providing objective commentary. The act of narrating in this episode thus conforms to the same precepts as all the other *fabulae* of the novel, despite its purported tragic content. Ultimately, the so-called tragic story of the stepson is entirely distilled in Lucius' memory and represented according to the

⁶² See Genette (1980: 256), "But the narrator's interventions, direct or indirect, with regard to the story can also take the more didactic form of an authorized commentary on the action. This is an assertion of what could be called the narrator's ideological function..."

⁶³ Winkler (1985: 124) observes, "The brilliance, and the point, of the AA is that it never states such a thesis outright but makes each reader undergo the experience of having to make up his or her mind about what Lucius's experience and Lucius's narrative mean."

⁶⁴ *Met.* 10.7

⁶⁵ See Summers (1970: 529), "Simply stated, we cannot verify this form of trial as extant in the provinces during the lifetime of Apuleius because such a procedure did not actually exist. Apuleius is not showing us what *is* in this second major trial scene of the *Metamorphoses*; he is showing us what *should be*."

same creative ideology that constrains even the tales framed by laughter. By offering evidence in a manner that is carefully controlled and internal to the world of the text, the narrator can set up and then humorously defy the reader's expectations for reasonable attestation.

Providing testimony and articulating sources of information

Lucius and Aristomenes fulfill the narrator's "testimonial function" both by providing evidence for their stories and by suggesting how that evidence is meant to be received by the reader.⁶⁶ In book one, the main narrator uses first person dialogue to establish how a reader should interact with a story. The narratorial voice requests in the prologue that the reader pay close attention to the forthcoming account, with a promise of enjoyment as the reward for a thoughtful reading: "Pay attention, reader: you will be glad" (*Lector intende: laetaberis*).⁶⁷ De Jong offers a useful interpretation of the prologue as a "pseudo-dialogue" with identifiable participants and the "formal characteristics of a conversational exchange."⁶⁸ And the juxtaposition of first and second person verbs in the prologue (*exordior... laetaberis*) firmly establishes the strange diegetic proximity of the narrator and the reader that is highlighted throughout the novel.⁶⁹ Almost immediately following the direct address to the reader, the narrator begins telling a story he had heard while on the road in Thessaly. The

⁶⁶ See Genette (1980: 256), on "...the part the narrator as such takes in the story he tells, the relationship he maintains with it—an affective relationship, of course, but equally a moral or intellectual one. It may take the form simply of an attestation, as when the narrator indicates the source of his information, or the degree of precision of his own memories, or the feelings which one or another episode awakens in him."

⁶⁷ *Met.* 1.1

⁶⁸ De Jong (2001) 201.

⁶⁹ Winkler (1985: 194) notes, "The authorial strategy is to involve the reader in interpretive problems..." Direct addresses to the reader call attention to the strange system of reality at work in the novel, demanding an active discourse between the narrator and the reader.

account is given in the first person by the traveler Aristomenes, the man who had originally experienced the events in question. He adopts an authoritative tone similar to the main narrator of the prologue when he states, “But let me begin to weave together the yarn that I had taken in hand earlier. But in fact I will first swear an oath to you by that all-seeing Sun god that I recall the truth as I know it” (*Verum quod incohaveram porro exordiar. sed tibi prius deierabo solem istum omnividentem deum me vera comperta memorare*).⁷⁰ Here the initial narrator experiences a quick role reversal, finding himself the audience for a story told by someone else claiming truth. Aristomenes swears an oath (*deierabo*), and without further corroboration moves on to his narration about the magically enacted death of his friend Socrates. Aristomenes asserts that he is an authentic witness (*me vera comperta memorare*), but offers no substantiating evidence beyond his own testimony. Frangoulidis makes an important point about “Aristomenes’ inability both as participant in his homodiegetic tale to understand the dangers inherent in magic and as narrator to exercise authorial control of his narrative and persuade his audience that he is not responsible for his friend’s death.”⁷¹ However, the point of Aristomenes’ account is not to persuade the reader about the facts of his story; his questionable narration is designed to implicitly introduce the creative parameters that will hereafter inform the unique reality of the novel. Already and without delay, Apuleius creates a layered first person narrative that brings the reader into a story about magic and witchcraft, and which sets a precedent for the presentation of similarly unbelievable stories in the novel.

⁷⁰ *Met.* 1.5

⁷¹ Frangoulidis (1999) 377.

And the narrator is careful to tie in Aristomenes' story with a problem explored throughout the novel: the reliability of the narrator, and especially the credibility of his sources. The initial narrator of the prologue, later understood to be Lucius, responds in the first person when Aristomenes' companion is doubtful of his friend's story about the witch Meroe:

Ego vero, inquam, nihil impossibile arbitror, sed utcumque fata decreverint ita cuncta mortalibus provenire: nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis hominibus multa usu venire mira et paene infecta, quae tamen ignaro relata fidem perdant.

But I for one claim nothing to be impossible: however fate will have decided, thus it will come about for all us mortals. For the many marvelous things that happen to me and to you and to all people according to some design, and which seem just barely possible, they nevertheless lose their credence when related to someone who is unacquainted with them.⁷²

Lucius associates accuracy with the careful art of storytelling, but also makes the point of describing Aristomenes' account as a *lepida fabula* "charming story."⁷³ In his reversed role as storyteller-turned-audience-member, Lucius emphasizes the notion that an uninitiated reader needs to become receptive to new or strange information (*quae tamen ignaro relata*) in order to fully accommodate the value of a good story. Lucius is careful to make this point in anticipation of his later assumption of the form of an ass, who will face an uninitiated and perhaps initially skeptical or confused audience for his tales.⁷⁴

⁷² *Met.* 1.20

⁷³ See Mayrhofer (1975: 75) on the circumstances of Aristomenes' narration, "The author indulges the reader by means of his principal narrator, while keeping his distance by means of the doubting companion. The special pleasure of the story is to be that of the incredible or supernatural, and its tone is to be not, for example, simply horrific or dreamlike, as that of the supernatural tale often is, but hilarious and disquieting at the same time."

⁷⁴ See Genette (1980: 256) on moments when narrators fulfilling the function of communication are "...often more interested in the relationship they maintain with that public than in their narrative itself."

Thus, through the voices of both Aristomenes and Lucius as co-narrators and the exemplars of a specific narrative approach, a case is made to the reader that an enjoyable story is both unbelievable and ostensibly factually accurate.⁷⁵ In this way, Lucius contextualizes a narrator-narratee contract based on the exchange, or rather the setting aside, of belief for enjoyment, and he sets the stage for the outrageous personal narratives that will take form throughout the rest of the novel.⁷⁶ However, an obvious and interesting contradiction exists in the reader's awareness that of course the various narrators could not be telling the truth in this fictional account of magic and transformation. The reader, in on the joke, can look past the narrator's claims of truth, and instead indulge in the more implicit enjoyment that he is in fact acknowledging through all of the bizarre characters that populate the novel, creating a humorous conceit that is not necessarily predicated on truth, but does ostensibly appeal to it for comedic effect.⁷⁷

A man trapped inside the body of an ass would probably not, during that time, trouble himself with the careful documentation of his struggles and the integrity of his sources of information. However, it is important to keep in mind that in the *Metamorphoses*, Lucius is of course relating the events after they have taken place.

The reader understands that the narrator has had time to reflect on the stories he tells,

⁷⁵ Smith & Woods (2002: 184) further explain how Aristomenes' story informs the programmatic aims of the rest of the novel, "The Tale of Aristomenes shows us rather a world in which intellectual posturing has little effect, magic is no false charge but a horrifying reality, and the powers of evil have the upper hand: the witches prevail, and the forces of justice will be helpless to stop the real culprits, while there is a real threat that an innocent man will be condemned."

⁷⁶ Winkler (1985: 119) accurately describes the novel as a sort of game with rules that are intentionally broken, "The *AA*, however, not only has boundaries (those announced in the prologue) but continuously creates interior bounded situations that represent its own activity (characters narrating to each other) and then playfully violates all such boundaries."

⁷⁷ See Genette (1980: 235) on the intrusion of the narrator: "All these games, by the intensity of their effects, demonstrate the importance of the boundary they tax their ingenuity to overstep, in defiance of verisimilitude—a boundary that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself..."

and so his professed concern with proof and accuracy is juxtaposed with the harrowing and ridiculous circumstances of his travels in order to create a comic, enjoyable, and entirely literary experience. It is after Lucius' transformation that most of his direct asides to the reader occur, and in such instances he is often appealing to truth and accuracy in the same way that Aristomenes, Thelyphron, and Photis, for example, make claims about magical happenings that are meant to be humorous and are in observance of the ideological program put forth in book one. For instance, Photis cites her own ears as a source in her account of Pamphile's witchcraft.⁷⁸ The reader might otherwise expect a more vigorous defense of Photis' version of the story, but keeping in mind the main purpose of storytelling as entertainment, the reader can accept a lack of evidence not only as suitable, but in fact particularly fitting due to its deficiency. Along similar lines, Lucius reflects, "But, despite feeling debilitating rage towards Photis due to her mistake, I was actually still invigorated by this solitary comfort in my wretched transformation: the fact that, having been gifted with huge ears, I was able to very easily hear all kinds of things that were discussed even from far away" (*At ego, quamquam graviter suscensens errori Photidis... isto tamen vel unico solacio aerumnabilis deformitatis meae recreabar, quod auribus grandissimis praeditus cuncta longule etiam dissita facillime sentiebam*).⁷⁹ He explains that even the most inaccessible information was easily made available to him (*longule etiam... facillime*), in the same way that Photis gathered her information about Pamphile by overhearing. Lucius' excuse about his ears is convenient enough to drive the narrative forward, while also reminding the reader that the narratorial

⁷⁸ See *Met.* 3.16, *Audivi vesperi—meis his, inquam, auribus audivi*

⁷⁹ *Met.* 9.15

voice does not necessarily operate according to plausibility, yet is nevertheless ideologically consistent.⁸⁰

It is doubtful at best that Lucius was able to entirely overhear the stories that he was not directly a participant in, and more questionable that he could have remembered the exact words and other details that he offers to the reader in his own account. Rather, the logical maneuvering undertaken by the narrator requires the reader to suspend judgment in order to assimilate the given information not as confirmed reporting, but as a series of artfully rendered, entertaining episodes that defy conventional sense. What results is an almost collaborative storytelling act,⁸¹ which, for example, Lucius himself makes note of, “But perhaps, scrupulous reader, censuring my narration you might attempt to raise a case in this way: ‘But from where, you sly little ass, were you able to become knowledgeable about what those women were going on about in secret, as you insist, when you were enclosed within the boundaries of the mill?’” (*Sed forsitan lector scrupulosus reprehendens narratum meum sic argumentaberis: ‘Unde autem tu, astutule asine, intra terminus pistrini contentus, quid secreto, ut affirmas, mulieres gesserint scire potuisti?’*).⁸² Lucius supplies even the direct speech of an implied reader of his story, in order to resolve the perceived argument over his increasingly questionable sources of information. As

⁸⁰ See Laird (1990: 158), on the narratological implications of Lucius’ convenient access to information: “[Apuleius] turns the character of his first person narrator into a dumb ass which at times functions as a third person narrator.”

⁸¹ Genette (1980: 236) makes an interesting point, “The most troubling thing about metalepsis indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic narrator is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees—you and I—perhaps belong to the same narrative.” And Winkler (1985: 42) draws a similar conclusion about the involvement of the reader in the narrating, “The special pleasure of the AA is the way that assertions and denials of the strange-but-true are co-present, and every time the force of laughter or surprise compels us to acknowledge a hidden truth there is something lurking close by that can remind us that our assent is itself a fictional response.”

⁸² *Met.* 9.30

in the prologue, Lucius blends first and second person language to suggest the diegetic proximity of the narrator and the reader (*narratum meum... argumentaberis*). But unlike in declamation, which is concerned with tactful reasoning, a thorough argument for credibility isn't ever fully enacted by Lucius or another narrator.

Indeed, Lucius makes it clear that his audience is not only hearing a story, but explicitly reading a book.⁸³ Lucius discusses how his transformation into an ass could impact his capability as a writer: “For at the same time I will both put my artistic ability to the test, and compose the following such that you too can discern whether I was an ass in my mind as well as in the perspective of my observations” (*Nam et meum simul periclitabor ingenium, et faxo vos quoque an mente etiam sensuque fuerim asinus sedulo sentiatis*).⁸⁴ The emphasis is placed explicitly on artful storytelling, rather than on speechmaking and determined persuasion. The reader is a clearly defined entity (*vos*) that actually has a role to play in the narrating events of the novel, and in the navigation of the text. For instance, Lucius tells Milo about a prophecy that he had heard about himself in Corinth, which states that Lucius would become the subject of “a great historical work, and an unbelievable story, and one consisting of many books” (*historiam magnam et incredundam fabulam et libros me futurum*).⁸⁵ Again, the term *fabula* is used to signal to the reader that the prophesied tale about Lucius' life, which could certainly be a reference to the novel itself, is designed for entertaining.⁸⁶ Lucius also explicitly mentions his writing process before

⁸³ Genette (1980: 255) refers to this as the narrator's “directing function,” which manifests when “the narrator can refer to [the text] in a discourse that is to some extent metalinguistic (metanarrative, in this case) to mark its articulations, connections, interrelationships, in short, its internal organization...”

⁸⁴ *Met.* 4.6

⁸⁵ *Met.* 2.12

⁸⁶ Laird (1990: 137) makes a useful connection between Lucius' function of communication and the use of *fabula* particularly as seen in the prologue: “There is much emphasis here on the idea of the

telling about the stepson's trial in book ten: "But so that you too can read about it, I am presenting it in my book" (*Sed ut vos etiam legatis, ad librum profero*).⁸⁷ In this way, Lucius as the narrator totally redirects the reader's concept of what is true or possible or entirely fabricated, leaving the reader no choice but to approach the text with an open mind and without a need for convincing evidence. The narrator reminds the reader directly that these fantastical events are in fact the carefully assembled contents of a book (*legatis... ad librum profero*), and thus an explicit logical disconnect is first stated and then skillfully enacted by the complicated narratorial presence.

Replacing law with magic as a tool for managing crises

Thelyphron and Photis add consistency to the novel's bizarre, subjective reality by describing magical happenings not only as real, but at times commonplace. And just as laws are used to implement control over the fabricated scenarios of declamation, magic functions as a directing agent in the world of the *Metamorphoses*. The account given by Thelyphron about his mutilation by witches is illustrative of the novel's varied narrative approach, both in its similarity to the structure and themes of the Risus festival and in its explicit departure from the linguistic strategies of speechmaking. Like the Risus festival, Thelyphron's story is preceded by *licentiosos cachinnos* "unbridled laughter" from the gathered audience.⁸⁸ Byrrhena in fact convinces Thelyphron to tell his peculiar story expressly for the enjoyment of Lucius

narrator being someone who *speaks* his *fabulas*, as *sermone isto ... auresque tuas benivolas* indicates. The very word *fabula*... is significant: it connotes not necessarily 'story' alone, but also 'conversation.'"

⁸⁷ *Met.* 10.2

⁸⁸ *Met.* 2.20

and the guests at her dinner party, and the entire scene is intended as formal entertainment. Byrrhena entreats him, “And kindly reel off that story of yours again with your usual sophistication, so that my dear son Lucius here can delight in your charming discourse” (*Et more tuae urbanitatis fabulam illam tuam remetire, ut et filius meus iste Lucius lepidi sermonis tui perfruatur comitate*).⁸⁹ Just like Aristomenes’ earlier story about witchcraft, Thelyphron’s story is characterized as a *fabula*, and told in a manner that is *lepidus*. Thelyphron’s story is sought after and praised for its value as entertainment, and it clearly fulfills the requirements for a good story that were established through the ideological exchange with Aristomenes in book one. And although the pseudo-rhetorical body language of Thelyphron mentioned at the beginning of this chapter suggests the thematic concern with criminality and public trials that emerges more fully as the novel progresses, the narrative approach to Thelyphron’s story about magic is informed entirely by the suspension of reason called for at the outset of the *Metamorphoses*.

Thelyphron’s story fully embodies the self-contained logic proposed in book one, and again, direct speech provides continuity and adds excitement to the act of narrating. The required appeal to truth in Thelyphron’s story is supplied by an anonymous guest, who asserts the narrator’s testimonial function and explains that Thelyphron assuredly did live through the events he will discuss.⁹⁰ Thelyphron himself, accredited by the voice of another character, speaks in the first person, and quotes the direct speech of several other characters. He also cites his *curiosis oculis*

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ See *Met.* 2.20, “And somebody has suffered accordingly” (*Et nescio qui simile passus*). Also see Aristomenes’ earlier assertion (*Met.* 1.5), “I recall the truth as I know it” (*Me vera comperta memorare*).

“attentive eyes”⁹¹ as another questionable source of information. And again, like in Lucius’ trial during the Risus festival, there is a unique temporal tension at work that heightens the dramatic, and in this case comic, aims of the storytelling. When Thelyphron finishes the story, the reader has learned that his own face was the subject of the mutilation by witches. Although the topic of the story was established in conversation before Thelyphron began telling it, the narrator’s own involvement as the subject of the mutilation is withheld from Lucius and the reader, but presumably not from the other contented dinner guests who had heard the story before, and certainly not from the initially hesitant Thelyphron himself. Winkler rightly points to a “high caliber of concealed intelligence in the narrative” that allows Thelyphron, like Lucius during his trial, to relate the events of the story to the reader as if they are happening for the first time.⁹² For this complicated storytelling maneuver to work, however, the reader must be willing to suspend judgment of the narrative accuracy to some extent, and accept the material produced as viable entertainment first and foremost.

And the move away from a reliance on purely rational explanations is an important one for the reader to make, and become accustomed to making, in light of the physical evidence for magic that is first offered through Thelyphron’s story. Although the word of a man’s reanimated corpse is ultimately accepted as suitable evidence to condemn his widow of poisoning him, the legitimization of his testimony is packaged into a familiar, yet still fantastical legal setting. An old man comes

⁹¹ *Met.* 2.29

⁹² Winkler (1985) 113. Also see Winkler’s important point on the transfer of information between narrator and reader: “The audience experiences a continuous rethinking of the accumulated information, a rethinking that is at once the most deft entertainment (on first and second readings) and a curious parable of narratology.”

forward and accuses a woman of murdering the man whose corpse Thelyphron was entrusted to guard from witches. He makes *lamentabiles questus* “a mournful complaint” and Thelyphron notes that the crowd is successfully, and perhaps too easily, swayed: “And they were driven by an approximation of what actually happened towards a rash confidence in the charge” (*Et facti verisimilitudine ad criminis credulitatem impelli*).⁹³ Notably, the details of the indictment are not true, but merely resemble truth (*verisimilitudine*). A declamatory scenario emerges, but it does not develop into a full-scale trial, due to the timely intervention of the husband’s corpse after his soul is recalled from the underworld. According to Bakhtin, the informal public discussion of these events by the gathered crowd is enough to bring the episode within Lucius’ purview as narrator.⁹⁴

Magical intervention, instead of law, is cited in Thelyphron’s story as a useful tool for managing a crisis, a notion that fully exemplifies Lucius’ previous statements about the uninitiated reader’s task of accepting the information presented as true and already verified. When Thelyphron removes his bandages at the dinner party to reveal that his own nose and ears had indeed been taken by witches in exchange for the facial features of the corpse that he was guarding, Lucius is exposed firsthand to physical evidence of magical practices for the first time in the novel. And despite the seeming impossibility of the story, its potential for enjoyment is more important than its questionable legality or even plausibility. Thelyphron mentions that the citizens who gathered to watch the corpse’s resurrection were eager to see a *venerabilis*

⁹³ *Met.* 2.27

⁹⁴ Bakhtin (1981: 122), “Events acquire a public significance as such only when they become crimes. The criminal act is a moment of private life that becomes, as it were, involuntarily public.”

scaenae... miraculum “production worthy of respect... a miracle,”⁹⁵ and Lucius mentions that after Thelyphron finished narrating, “The drinking-companions soaked with wine again united in laughter” (*Compotores vino madidi rursus cachinnum integrant*).⁹⁶ The gradual distillation of problems involving magic into laughter and enjoyment is thus a key mechanism of the various narrators’ overall storytelling approach throughout the work, and serves to link disparate episodes by means of a clearly articulated and thoroughly normalized narrative premise.

For example, perhaps the emotional state of Lucius in book three, when he is unveiling the punctured, magically animated wineskins and expecting to see the corpses of the men he thought he had killed, is meant to be informed and supported by the temporal tension that he and the reader had already experienced, both in the audience for Thelyphron’s unbelievable story.⁹⁷ Thelyphron says that after he fell asleep standing guard over the body, he woke up the next morning and anxiously unveiled the corpse to make sure that witches hadn’t removed any of its body parts overnight, and was relieved to find everything intact. He recounts, “Terrified, I hastened to the corpse, and with a lamp having been brought near and with his face having been revealed I examined his features one by one, all of which were present and accounted for” (*Perterritus cadaver accurro, et admoto lumine revelataque eius facie rimabar singula, quae cuncta convenerant*).⁹⁸ However, Lucius and the reader learn by the end of the story that in fact while he was narrating, Thelyphron was

⁹⁵ *Met.* 2.28

⁹⁶ *Met.* 2.31

⁹⁷ Winkler (1985: 145) notes the comic implications of this chronological split: “Lucius’ cogitations are in effect a soliloquy designed for the immediate audience’s benefit, heightening the thrill of the past as present, within the secure but nearly invisible control of the present narrator.”

⁹⁸ *Met.* 2.26. See *Met.* 3.9 for Lucius in a similar situation, “At last, overcome by force and although unwilling, with the shroud having been dragged off I uncovered the bodies” (*Evictus tandem necessitate succumbo et, ingratis licet, abrepto pallio retexi corpora*).

aware of how things eventually had turned out. Thus, Lucius himself bears witness along with the reader to the peculiar combination of direct speech and temporal tension in a storytelling event.⁹⁹ The factual likelihood or even the truth itself of the narrated events is subordinated to the act of transferring information for the purposes of entertainment.

Thelyphron's description of being beaten by the family members of the deceased man recalls Lucius' description of his fight with the supposed robbers. He reflects, "One man struck my cheeks with his fists, another one thrust his elbows into my shoulder-blades, another dug through my sides with aggressive hands" (*Pugnis ille malas offendere, scapulas alius cubitis impingere, palmis infestis hic latera suffodere*).¹⁰⁰ The haphazard listing of violent actions and body parts contributes to the ridiculous tone of the whole episode, and the careful reader might consider how Thelyphron was able to even remain conscious following such an attack.¹⁰¹ Yet Thelyphron takes it a step further, adding "And I agree that I was much deserving of even several more blows" (*Dignumque me pluribus etiam verberibus fuisse merito consentio*).¹⁰² Thelyphron is temporally removed from the violence, and thus is in a position to joke about it and use stylized language in his description of the event, which at the time was surely not taken as a joke. His exaggeration is meant to play upon the idea made explicit in book one that the fictional world of the novel is not

⁹⁹ Bakhtin (1981: 120) suggests that the temporal sequence of the novel "...is nevertheless a closed circuit, isolated, not localized in historical time (that is, it does not participate in the irreversible historical sequence of time, because the novel does not yet know such a sequence)." The isolated experience of time allows for moments of self-reference within the text.

¹⁰⁰ *Met.* 2.26, Cf. the violent vocabulary of Lucius' description at *Met* 3.6.

¹⁰¹ See Riess (2001: 270), "But it is precisely the most brutal scenes in his novel, which are also the most fictitious ones. The bloody scenes... are deliberate and above all recognizable exaggerations formed according to literary models with the purpose of bringing action and slapstick scenes into the novel and thus making it more exciting to read."

¹⁰² *Met.* 2.27

supposed to make sense, and that the literary experience offered to the reader in fact draws its value from a defiance of expectations.¹⁰³ The narrator in the prologue promises, “I am beginning to spin a yarn, so that you can marvel at the shapes and destinies of men redirected into other manifestations and then remade into themselves again through a communal joining” (*Figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se rursus mutuo nexu reflectas, ut mireris, exordior*).¹⁰⁴ The surreal process of disruption (*conversas*) and restoration (*reflectas*) is staged for the reader’s enjoyment (*ut mireris*), and scenes such as Thelyphron’s beating and Lucius’ fight with the wineskins represent a literary stitching together of topical motifs. The verb *exordior* “begin to weave” metaphorically suggests the crafting of a story.¹⁰⁵ Legality provides meaning and context for the joke made out of Lucius’ trial scene, while magic brings about the dramatic resolution to Thelyphron’s story about murderous witches.

Magical practices in the novel are normalized further by Photis’ report to Lucius about her mistress Pamphile’s secret activities, and again the information is related through direct speech and is intended primarily to entertain the reader. Whichever character is doing the telling and no matter how implausible the story seems, the narratorial voice is always concerned with validating the storytelling act through the reader’s enjoyment of the tale. Yet Photis first makes the obligatory

¹⁰³ Murgatroyd (2004: 495) elaborates, “In addition, the strongly criticized anomaly of the servants seizing all kinds of weapons but in fact only using their hands, elbows, and feet on Thelyphron may well subtly foreshadow the ending: just as here danger seems to threaten him from one direction (the weapons) but in fact comes from another one, so at the conclusion we learn that danger had seemed to threaten him from mutilation of the corpse (necessitating repair of the damage from his own face) but in fact came from an attack on Thelyphron himself while guarding the corpse.”

¹⁰⁴ *Met.* 1.1

¹⁰⁵ See *Met.* 1.1, “But I will stitch together various stories for you, according to that Milesian style of discourse...” (*At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram*).

appeal to truth, a function of attestation which by now the reader understands is of secondary importance and is more fully a comic gesture, especially in an implausible story about magical transformations. She speaks in the first person about Pamphile's latest ritual activity: "I heard [Pamphile] last night—I'm telling you, I heard her with my own ears— ... threatening the Sun himself... for the purpose of initiating her magical enticements" (*Audivi vesperi—meis his, inquam, auribus audivi— ...ad exercendas illecebras magiae... ipsi Soli... comminantem*).¹⁰⁶ Whereas previously Aristomenes swore by the all-seeing Sun god that the story about his friend Socrates is true, here Pamphile is attested to be in contention with that same divine presence earlier meant to stand for credibility.¹⁰⁷ In this way, the narrator characterizes Pamphile as operating within the same comprehensive system of logic as the rest of the characters, but potentially as an antagonist.

Photis goes on to tell about how Pamphile used magic to animate the wineskins that Lucius encountered on his way home and drunkenly engaged in combat, but Lucius' reaction is far from disbelief, or even frustration. Again, the emphasis on the enjoyment of storytelling is maintained, despite how the reader might expect Lucius to react to the dangerous or troubling circumstances of his continued involvement with Pamphile's magic. Lucius narrates, "I was excited by the charming story of Photis and bantered in return" (*Exarsi lepido sermone Photidis et in vicem cavillatus*).¹⁰⁸ Again, the word *lepidus* is used to designate a story that is successful in its role as entertainment. Lucius is not put off by Pamphile's dangerous intentions; he is encouraged. After witnessing Pamphile change herself into an owl,

¹⁰⁶ *Met.* 3.16

¹⁰⁷ See *Met.* 1.5

¹⁰⁸ *Met.* 3.19

Lucius asks Photis to help him do the same. Lucius' sexual desire for Photis is equated to his desire for magic, adding to the novel's characterization of magic as tempting, mysterious, and nevertheless a normal consequence of human behavior.¹⁰⁹ After Lucius is mistakenly transformed into an ass instead of an owl, his narratorial presence throughout the rest of the novel becomes the most fully realized enactment of the programmatic aims sets forth in book one, with magic having been firmly established as a directing force in the nonsensical world of the novel.¹¹⁰ Lucius himself reflects on his transformation, noting that while he was an ass, people did not behave differently around him and thus offered an honest presentation of their normal lives: "They all acted and spoke freely, however they wished" (*Libere quae volunt omnes et agunt et loquuntur*).¹¹¹ The story becomes notable not for its supernatural content, but for its ridiculous appeals to traditional normalcy, convenience, and logic in an often dangerous reality that is regulated by magic.

Establishing magic as a normal entity also allows the narrator to link different characters' experiences together. For example, Thelyphron and Lucius each laments being made the object of a spectacle ultimately brought about by magic.¹¹² But

¹⁰⁹ See De Smet (1987: 617), "While Lucius seduces Photis of convenience and with a lot of pleasure, he himself gets trapped by the temptation of magic. By Photis' person he is introduced to the false mysteries, to magic. Apuleius did this on purpose and he even underlies it by giving magic a further erotic charm through Photis' appearance."

¹¹⁰ Bakhtin (1981: 124) explains that in his animal form, Lucius is particularly well-positioned to access the incredible details of his entertaining stories: "Such is the positioning of the rogue and adventurer, who do not participate internally in everyday life, who do not occupy in it any definite fixed place, yet who at the same time pass through that life and are forced to study its workings, all its secret cogs and wheels."

¹¹¹ *Met.* 9.13

¹¹² Thelyphron (*Met.* 2.30): "And meanwhile I was being marked out as the center of attention by pointed fingers and turned heads" (*Ac dum directis digitis et detortis nutibus praesentium denotor*). Compare to Lucius (*Met.* 3.2): "And in the manner of those who through ritual purification ceremonies avert divine misfavor by means of sacrificial animals led around the forum, having been led around into every nook and cranny I was stationed near the tribunal in the forum" (*Et in modum eorum quibus*

according to the clearly articulated value system of the novel, the laughter of the crowd that each of them is met with converts his misfortune into the narrative capital that drives the novel forward. Lucius is indeed an offering, but more to the reader than to the gods of his fictional world. And while it is important to remember that the reader is after all hearing about every story in the novel from the memory of Lucius as the main narrator, and that Lucius as a simultaneous character-narrator ultimately shapes the entire storytelling frame of the text, stories such as Aristomenes' and Telephron's are meant to be at first considered separately and then assimilated by the reader in accordance with the novel's self-contained logic. Lucius extends this narrative exercise to his declamatory account of the Risus festival trial scene, and reinforces the narrative goals set forth in book one about the presentation of seemingly impossible events that appeal to magic to restore order. Within the unique creative parameters of the story, these experiences cannot be taken at face value, and instead must be actively situated by the reader within the terms of the narrator-narratee contract first set up by Lucius, according to which the suspension of belief, empathy, or other familiar judgments is converted into pure enjoyment.

lustralibus piamentis minas portentorum hostiis circumforaneis expiant circumductus angulatim, forum eiusque tribunal astituor).

Chapter Three:

Speechmaking in *Cupid & Psyche*

'Quis autem te deum, quis hominum patietur passim cupidines populis disseminantem, cum tuae domus amores amare coerceas et vitiorum muliebrium publicam praecludas officinam?' Sic illae metu sagittarum patrocínio gratioso Cupidini, quamvis absenti, blandiebantur. Sed Venus indignata ridicule tractari suas iniurias praeversis illis alterorsus concito gradu pelage viam capessit.

‘But who of the gods, or what sort of person will suffer you, spreading around desires far and wide for everyone, when you deny lovers to love in your own house and you shut down your workshop of communal womanly vices?’ Thus the goddesses kept flattering Cupid with a favorable defense, because they had a fear of his arrows even though he was not present. But Venus was offended that her injuries were dealt with so facetiously. She brushed the goddesses aside, and having turned forcefully away she swiftly took up a path for the sea.¹¹³

Juno and Ceres candidly disparage Venus for her harsh treatment of Cupid.

The two goddesses offer a formal legal defense (*patrocinium*) that is nevertheless entirely abstracted from a courtroom environment, and which is rather intended to poke fun at Venus, the goddess of love, for ironically trying to get in the way of her own son’s romantic undertakings. Venus herself, in a moment of textual self-awareness, notes the satirical tone (*ridicule*) of the situation, and leaves in frustration. The exchange exemplifies how the fairy tale about Cupid and Psyche is in truth a sensationalized, legalistic drama featuring gods and goddesses who behave like mortal men and women. The presentations of exaggerated behavior, stylized speech, and odd subscription to the rules of earthly existence are all meant to humanize these satirical characters. In this way, a connection is drawn to the vulgar and

¹¹³ *Met.* 5.31

sensationalized adventures of Lucius throughout the rest of the novel, which also appeal to carefully selected details from Roman daily life, with declamation consistently providing the model for the speaker's communication with the reader. Yet the first person speech in this section of the novel still benefits from an examination from both a rhetorical and a narratological perspective. Although the story of Cupid and Psyche does not take place in the world of Lucius and his travels, a declamatory style and descriptive approach that are consistent with the rest of the novel lend continuity to a close reading of the tale.

Scholars have proposed various readings of the Cupid and Psyche tale that cite a number of possible influences, but declamation is generally ignored as a textual source that provides a creative system for the blending of reality and fantasy that occurs in this section of the novel, which specifically purports to be a fairy tale. Finkelppearl names the *Aeneid* as a source text for the story of Cupid and Psyche, and while the connection between Psyche and Aeneas is notable and interesting, more could be said about the relevance of this intertextuality to the lives of Apuleius' readers.¹¹⁴ Schlam rightly points to Apuleius' interest and documented engagement with the philosophy of Plato as evidence for the inclusion of references to Platonic concepts in the novel and particularly throughout the story of Cupid and Psyche.¹¹⁵ However, there is more to be made of the placement of real-world allusions in a fairy tale setting. Osgood provides discerning commentary about the references to real

¹¹⁴ See Finkelppearl (1990: 336), "It is possible in some cases that these are unconscious allusions, brought on by the heavily Vergilian context, but I prefer to think of these allusions as reinforcements of the large-scale imitation, and signals that other more subtle and complex allusions are present."

¹¹⁵ See Schlam (1970: 485), "Apuleius has, however, infused his narrative with a variety of Platonic motifs, which may allow us to see in the *Metamorphoses*, not sectarian propaganda, but a syncretistic vision in harmony with Apuleius' conception of Platonism."

legal practices in the Cupid and Psyche tale, and he arrives at the important conclusion that such references are for Apuleius one way of “helping his audience connect with the tale.”¹¹⁶ The text of the novel itself would indeed have been the main focus of both its author and its reader. And Kenney notes that while Apuleius is drawing on thematic and iconographical precedents in his rendering of the Cupid and Psyche tale, his specific arrangement of literary elements “represents an astonishing feat of originality.”¹¹⁷ Although the reader would likely have been familiar with the mythic tropes and character types featured in the Cupid and Psyche tale, especially compared with other tales in the novel, Apuleius makes an innovative contribution to Latin literature that reflects his unique intentions as an author. With this in mind, I propose a reading of the story of Cupid and Psyche that considers allusions to the practice of declamation, in order not only to point out similarities between the world of Apuleius and his readers and the world of the *Metamorphoses*, but also to link the inset fairy tale to the same declamatory program and use of direct speech that regulate the rest of the novel, despite its additional source material and its formal separation from Lucius’ narration.

The differing speakers’ voices in the story of Cupid and Psyche have a powerful and dynamic presence. According to van Mal-Maeder and Zimmerman,

¹¹⁶ Osgood (2006: 417). Osgood also notes, “Apuleius’ readers may recognize similarities between their world and the novel’s, or perceive a gap, often humorous, between them.”

¹¹⁷ Kenney (1990: 21-2). Kenney explains further, “From the enormous extent and variety of the iconographic material it is apparent that there was no single myth of Eros and Psyche, rather a potentially unlimited range of applications of two highly versatile symbols, attractive to artists not only as profoundly suggestive but also as lending themselves to exploitation in innumerable forms, from the merely pretty or whimsical to the tragic or near-sadistic. The monuments do not yield a single coherent picture or narrative which can be posited as A.’s source for his story. He had the acumen to perceive and the technical ability to turn effectively to account this rich and suggestive corpus of symbol and allegory and invest the protagonists in his basic story, if there really was such a thing, with names and identities.” The application of declamatory techniques is an important part of Apuleius’ unique exploitation of these recognizable symbols.

almost half of the lines that make up the story contain direct speech.¹¹⁸ And about twelve different characters speak in the first person during the “charming old wives’ tale” (*lepidis anilibusque fabulis*)¹¹⁹ told by the “drunk and raving granny” (*delira et temulenta anicula*).¹²⁰ Despite the alleged limitations of the tale’s form and its narrator, the story of Cupid and Psyche can in fact offer a particularly illustrative look at how rhetoric and storytelling function together in Apuleius’ novel, through its dense array of first person speech, depictions of persuasion, and references to law and legal practices.

A crucial moment of narrative metalepsis serves first of all to link the story of Cupid and Psyche with the main narrative of Lucius, and in so doing it reminds the reader of the ideas put forth in book one about how to understand the bizarre, subjective reality of the novel. The narrative voice fulfills its directing function, intruding and remarking in an aside to the reader, “But Apollo, although he was a Greek and even an Ionian, fashioned his lot in Latin out of respect for the author of this Milesian tale” (*Sed Apollo, quamquam Graecus et Ionicus, propter Milesiae conditorem sic Latina sorte respondit*).¹²¹ The reference here is to the initial narrator of the prologue, who states that in the work that follows, he will tie together different kinds of stories in the same “Milesian” style later referred to at the outset of the Cupid and Psyche tale.¹²² Although the old woman who works in the robbers’ cave is identified as the narrator of this particular episode, an ostensibly different speaker

¹¹⁸ Van Mal-Maeder and Zimmerman, (1998: 84) note 4, “The tale of *Cupid and Psyche* contains in all 1176 (Teubner) lines. Ca. 500 of these contain direct speech.”

¹¹⁹ *Met.* 4.27

¹²⁰ *Met.* 6.25

¹²¹ *Met.* 4.32

¹²² See *Met.* 1.1: “But I will stitch together various stories for you, according to that Milesian style of discourse...” (*At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram...*).

intrudes here to point out to the reader that even in this lengthy digression from Lucius' world, the same programmatic goals are being worked towards as in the rest of the novel: namely, the exchange of logical plausibility for artistic enjoyment.

The identification of an overarching narrative presence that at times can transcend individual characters recalls the declamatory strategy of impersonation, when different voices were appropriated to serve a broader purpose. The narrator of the prologue, whose ideological function as a narrator has already been defined, is relying on the speech of other, different characters to communicate information from various perspectives that make the presentation more accurate or interesting due to the unique qualifications of the particular *personae* through which that information is offered to the reader.¹²³ The presence of this other narrative voice also reinforces the strange diegetic proximity of the narrator as seen elsewhere in the novel. Even though the narrative voice is speaking about events entirely outside the world of Lucius, the voice is ideologically consistent with that of Lucius, and yet can still intrude and offer commentary on the oracle that Apollo gives to Psyche's parents. The blending of realities brought about by the commonality of narrative voices highlights the constructedness of the story: it becomes clear to the reader that the individual characters are being organized and directed from a distance, according to a unified narrative approach that defines how the reader should interact with the first person storytelling that occurs throughout the entire novel.

Venus and Cupid: A declamatory framework

¹²³ Recall, for example, *Minor Declamation* 363, *Vestiplica pro domina*. In making his case, the declaimer provides the direct speech of both the elite male *paterfamilias* and the ordinary female slave whose job was to fold clothes.

The direct speech of Venus is meant to demonstrate to the reader her formidable power as a goddess.¹²⁴ But the main narrator of the tale, as mentioned above, is characterized as a drunken old woman, a distinction that makes her account of divine beings' actions and words especially and intentionally distorted by her perspective as a participant in lower-class life. Keeping in mind that the story's source of information is a woman employed as a housekeeper by a band of robbers, the lofty standards to which gods and goddesses are normally held can be humorously manipulated. The switch from Lucius, a homodiegetic narrator, to the old woman, a heterodiegetic narrator, can influence how the narrator's commentary is received by the reader. Whereas in the rest of the novel the narrator acts as a witness and a participant in the stories he tells and makes exaggerated overtures to the reader assuring his credibility and the accuracy of his stories, in the inset story of Cupid and Psyche, the narrator does not purport to have been involved in the events of the story, and so she does not bother to emphatically claim to be telling the truth. The narrator's function of attestation changes, and is not humorously manipulated like it is when Lucius and other characters are narrating, as discussed in the previous chapter. In this case, the narrator's social status is set in extreme contrast to that of the actors in her story, and the reader can find humor in the relatively unqualified claims about the actions and speech of various deities that the old woman makes in her indisputably fictional account.

¹²⁴ See Summers (1970: 515) on Venus' purported legal power as well: "Psyche is conceived to be the fugitive slave of Venus (5.31) and consequently she is refused asylum by both Ceres and Juno. Certainly both goddesses refuse to aid the girl because of the penalties of the *lex Fabia* as well as other civil and praetorian remedies." Summers also compares Juno's language at *Met.* 6.4 to a legal text attributed to Ulpian (*Coll.* 14.3.5).

The act of narrative impersonation in the Cupid and Psyche tale becomes especially comical due to this juxtaposition in status, and the direct speech of Venus keeps the reader constantly in touch with the low humor being packaged in absurd rhetorical maneuvering.¹²⁵ When Venus asks her son Cupid to punish Psyche for her popularity, first she inwardly reflects on what she will say (*sic secum disserit*).¹²⁶ The reader is primed to expect a carefully calculated speech to follow, one which the speaker has had time to deliberately consider, just like a declaimer.¹²⁷ Venus next implores Cupid "...by the bonds of maternal dearness, by the sweet wounds of your arrows, by the honeyed searings of your flames" (*per maternae caritatis, per tuae sagittae dulcia vulnera, per flammae istius mellitus uredines*).¹²⁸ The *tricolon* presented here sets up the ridiculous nature of Venus' relationship with her son, using an ordinary rhetorical convention to describe the extraordinary bond between a goddess and her son. And the exchange ends with the narrative voice asserting its function of attestation, claiming simply that Venus "spoke out in this way" (*sic effata*).¹²⁹ The verb *effor* is also used to describe Thelyphron's act of narrating in book two, and is meant to suggest formal speech in both instances.¹³⁰ The rhetorical formulations do not communicate an expectedly grave or serious tone, but rather

¹²⁵ See Smith (1998: 77) for further examples of displaced speechmaking: "Rhetorical declamations by tragic heroines, in particular, can intrude into some surprising contexts. Vergil's Dido is a tragic heroine whose eloquent denunciation of her harsh treatment at the hands of Aeneas in *A.* 4, many readers have felt, is so convincing that it virtually derails the patriotic message of the poem..."

¹²⁶ *Met.* 4.29

¹²⁷ See van Mal-Maeder and Zimmerman (1998: 93) for more elaboration on manipulation of the reader's expectations: "The narrator also knows more than the gods: long before Venus, the reader knows that Cupid's bride is her rival Psyche. This knowledge in advance heightens the reader's expectation and full enjoyment of the outburst of anger when Venus finally learns, through the gossip of the chattering bird, the name of her son's lover (5,28)."

¹²⁸ *Met.* 4.31

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ See *Met.* 2. 20, *ingratis cogebat effari*.

point out the exaggeration and histrionics that define Venus and Cupid's family interactions within the strange forensic environment of the novel.¹³¹

Indeed, Venus touches on a wide range of declamatory topics when she later reprimands Cupid after finding out about his romantic involvement with Psyche, and a declamatory style is appropriate for the narrator's entertaining presentation of Venus and Cupid's relationship. The reader is offered a rhetorical and pseudo-legal treatment of a bizarre and extreme situation, in which arguments are presented in a serious tone that is humorously juxtaposed with the sensationalized, fictional environment of the story. The reader is left to appreciate the narrator's creative synthesis of human legal culture and divine activity. Venus censures her son extensively:

Velim ergo scias multo te meliorem filium alium genituram, immo ut contumeliam magis sentias, aliquem de meis adoptaturam vernulis eique donaturam istas pinnas et flammam et arcum... Nec enim de patris tui bonis ad instructionem istam quicquam concessum est.

Well, I would like you to know that I am going to bring forth another son much better than you, and so that you feel the insult more deeply, I am going to adopt someone from my household staff and I'll confer to him those wings, and the flames, and the bow... For nothing has been granted to you from your father to pay for that array of toys.¹³²

And she continues,

Et ipsam matrem tuam, me inquam ipsam, parricida denudes cotidie et percussisti saepius et quasi viduam utique contemnis, nec vitricum tuum... metuis... quidni?—cui saepius in angorem mei paelicatus paellas propinare consuisti.

¹³¹ See *Met.* 6.16 for a telling example of Venus behaving as a typical mortal woman: "But return it sooner rather than later, because I need to attend the theater of the gods smeared with that same makeup" (*Sed haud immaturius redito, quia me necesse est indidem delitam theatrum deorum frequentare*).

¹³² *Met.* 5.29

And even your own mother—I'm talking about myself here—you strip me bare every day like a brat and have hit me often, and you disregard me just as if I were a widow, and why don't you even fear your step-father? Instead, to cause distress by giving me a rival, you've often made it a habit to shower him with mistresses.¹³³

Venus surveys issues of inheritance, paternity, violence, and family relationships—all fundamental concerns of declamation. She threatens to essentially disown her son, and while the legality of her threatening is dubious at best, she nevertheless hints at a legal basis for her doing so.¹³⁴ The humor is apparent in Venus' listing of the possessions of Cupid—including his wings—that she claims are rightly her property, as if she were actually bound by human laws and presenting the information in court.¹³⁵ Venus mentions adoption, widows, stepfathers, abuse, beating, and revenge, all terms which to a contemporary, educated reader would certainly recall the routines of rhetoric school and declamation exercises.

For example, the parental threat of disownment is cleverly articulated in *Minor Declamation 322, Abdico te nisi desinis* "I'll disown you if you don't stop." A man trying to frame his father for planning a revolt is himself implicated by tablets found in the father's house after the man kills his father. Written by the father, the tablets state: "I disown you if you don't stop, and if you oppose, I shall reveal my reasons" (*Abdico te nisi desinis, et si contradixeris indicabo causas*).¹³⁶ The threat of

¹³³ *Met.* 5.30

¹³⁴ Osgood (2006: 429) arrives at an insightful conclusion, "As with Psyche and her sisters, the use of legal language gives Venus' speech a certain efficacy; it is an effort to sound powerful, even menacing. Yet it underscores, for the modern scholar, the very real fact that the mother had no power, legally speaking, over her child's marriage, even in the father's absence. All the same, appeal to the law itself was a strategy one might use in a familial dispute..."

¹³⁵ See Bodel's (2010: 317) important point about narrative perspective and the location of trial scenes: "In the Roman novels... the trial scenes serve rather to reflect, by dislocation of setting, conceptual or perceptual dislocations in the worldview of the narrator. They are out of place physically, just as the narrative is out of place rhetorically and the narrator, often, perceptually."

¹³⁶ Bailey (2006) 82.

disownment was a serious one, but Venus invokes it to parody the overzealous parental figure. The dysfunction of Venus's family as she describes it is filled out further by an example from *Minor Declamation 330, Abdicandus qui alit adulteram matrem* "Disowned-to-be, the feeder of an adulterous mother." The given scenario reads:

Crimine adulterii repudiavit quidam uxorem, ex qua iuvenem habebat filium. Adolescens accessit ad patrem et ait amari a se meretricem. Dedit illi pecuniam pater. Ille matrem egentem alere coepit, patre ignorante. Comperit pater et ob hoc abdicat filium.

A man divorced his wife, from whom he had a young son, on a charge of adultery. The young man came to his father and said he was in love with a prostitute. The father gave him money. He started feeding his mother, who was in need, without his father's knowledge. The father learns of it and disowns his son for that reason.¹³⁷

In this case, the declamatory themes of bickering parents and filial deception find a parallel. Unknown to the divorced Venus, the young son Cupid supplies his stepfather Mars with women instead of money.¹³⁸ Again, the narrator draws a thematic connection between the extremes of familial strife as presented both in the novel and in declamation. And the concept is again echoed in *Minor Declamation 338, Lis de filio expositoris et repudiatae* "Suit concerning the son of an exposor and a divorcée." The given background information states: "A certain person divorced his wife, by whom he had or was thought to have a youthful son, and married another woman. There were frequent fights between stepson and stepmother..." (*Quidam, repudiate uxore ex qua iuvenem filium habebat aut videbatur habere, duxit aliam. Frequenter iurgia erant inter privignum et novercam*).¹³⁹ Again, although the roles do not carry

¹³⁷ Bailey (2006) 145.

¹³⁸ For a note on the identification of Mars and Vulcan in these passages, see Bailey (2006) 307.

¹³⁹ Bailey (2006) 212.

over exactly, the notion of family in-fighting due to divorce and issues of child custody is given embellished attention both in the novel and in declamation.¹⁴⁰ Venus has a series of disagreements with Cupid, a stepson himself, and Venus brings up as evidence the lack of money left for Cupid by his biological father Vulcan (*nec enim de patris concessum est*).¹⁴¹ By behaving like a human family taken out of declamation, Venus and Cupid remind the reader that an uninterrupted blending of fantasy and reality consistently informs the creative development of the novel.

A final example from *Minor Declamation 362, Invicem pulsatores partum* “Beaters of their fathers, mutually” speaks to the type of violence against a parent that Venus accuses Cupid of perpetrating against her (*et percussisti saepius*).¹⁴² Two fathers in this declamation are described as “austerely loving” (*patribus ex austero indulgentibus*).¹⁴³ The strict parental oversight described in this exercise, which drives the sons of the two men to violence, is embodied by Venus as well in her attempts to impose restrictions on Cupid’s amorous lifestyle and behavior in the name of maternal love. The comic effect lies in the reader’s understanding that Venus is stubbornly exhibiting typical parental behavior towards a child who is by no means typical: his mythical domain in fact directly concerns the spreading of love. Thus the application of a declamatory framework appropriately supports the bizarre subject matter, while the replacement of stock characters with the well-known figures of Venus and Cupid allows the story to still function as a narrated tale. Keulen rightly asserts, “The hopes of a reader looking for an unambiguous truth behind the story,

¹⁴⁰ Osgood (2006: 438) draws an important distinction, “In Cupid and Psyche... what threatens the marriages depicted is not the laws as such, but appeal to it by difficult family members.”

¹⁴¹ *Met.* 5.29

¹⁴² *Met.* 5.30

¹⁴³ Bailey (2006) 342.

are, however, frustrated in the same way as the hopes of whoever wants to explain Venus' speech by referring to Roman Law."¹⁴⁴ While legal concepts are steadfast, a "set of rather teasing references"¹⁴⁵ to such concepts can have a variety of implications, and it is true that in the *Metamorphoses*, the inclusion of legal terminology is often more about realism than reality.

Psyche and Her Sisters: Differences in communication

Psyche's two sisters also occupy much of the narrator's attention, and their direct speech still draws from declamation and reminds the reader of other characters, despite being removed from a courtroom setting and from the world of Lucius' travels. The sisters demonstrate the creative aspect of rhetorical *color* in the same way that Lucius does during his defense speech: the reader's experience is informed and enhanced by an awareness of the rhetorical maneuvering that is taking place.¹⁴⁶ Although Lucius doesn't confide to the reader beforehand that his description of the robbers' speech and actions is highly exaggerated in order to strengthen his case, Psyche's sisters explicitly discuss the fashioning of their deceptive plan, using first person speech. One sister concludes, after she realizes that Psyche is trying to conceal the identity of her husband:

Quam vel mendacia istam pessimam feminam confingere vel formam mariti sui nescire; quorum utrum verum est, opibus istis quam primum exterminanda est.... Ergo interim ad parentes nostros redeamus et exordio sermonis huius quam concolores fallacias attexamus.

¹⁴⁴ Keulen (1997) 227.

¹⁴⁵ Osgood (2006) 433.

¹⁴⁶ See van Mal-Maeder and Zimmerman (1998: 97) on the narrator's description of the sisters: "The discrepancies between the version of the old narratrix and that of the sisters can easily be explained by the rhetoric of persuasion used by the indignant princesses (exaggerations, emphasis, exclamations), in an attempt to excite one another by transforming the situation according to their purely subjective perspective."

Either that wretched woman has invented lies or she doesn't know what her husband looks like; whichever of these is the truth, she must be driven away from those riches immediately.... But for now let us return to our parents and spin a deceitful yarn that matches the warp we've laid with this conversation.¹⁴⁷

Weaving as a metaphor for storytelling (*attexamus*) is not unique to Apuleius, but the sister's use of the term *concolores* "matching in color" certainly hints at the declamatory style (*color*) that various speakers all make use of throughout the novel. By means of first person speech, the narrator compels the reader to consider the situation from the perspective of the sisters, and although the reader might have access to information that the sisters do not, their speech offers a different and creative take on the problem at hand. The reader can enjoy the construction of their point of view, and the enjoyment of this process is enhanced by the fact that the reader already knows who Psyche's husband is.¹⁴⁸ The sisters' weaving metaphor also recalls the narrator's remarks in the prologue mentioned above (*conseram*), and storytelling and speechmaking are presented in combination, just as in the description of Thelyphron as an orator in book two, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The sisters thus embody the stylized, rhetorical aesthetic made familiar by other speakers in the novel.

The sisters go on to trick Psyche into figuring out her husband's identity, but since the reader already knows the sister's intentions, the presentation of their misleading speech is framed accordingly by the narrator:

¹⁴⁷ *Met.* 5.16

¹⁴⁸ Winkler (1985: 90) explains, "Even the reader who comes to the tale knowing the outcome must bracket that knowledge as he watches characters who do not know the outcome grapple with the problem." The act of grappling here is deliberately made available to the reader through the narrator's declamatory style of presentation.

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

The criminal women then advanced upon the mind of their sister, laid bare with its gates wide open, and having thrown off the coverings of their covert siege engine, they assailed the frightened thoughts of the poor girl with swords of dishonesty drawn.¹⁴⁹

The women are described by the narrator as criminals (*facinerosae*), an indication that their speech is ultimately not successful in persuading its intended audience, because they are guilty of a crime. Specifically, assault is used as a metaphor for speech to emphasize the power of the sisters' words to forcefully and even violently effect change in the world of the fairy tale. The direct speech of Psyche's sisters thus provides special relevance to a reader familiar with speechmaking and legal culture.

Similarly, the direct speech of Psyche has persuasive aims that provide an extra level of engagement for a rhetorically-minded reader. But when Psyche goes back to trick her sisters after learning of their betrayal, the reader doesn't know her plan beforehand. The reader is not given access by the narrator to Psyche's thoughts or the explicit verbal reasoning that her sisters engage in through direct speech. So, when Psyche does succeed in making her sisters pay for their moral crime, her victory materializes with a sudden and unexpected force. As a speaker, Psyche's function of communication is suppressed, and different from that of her sisters. While Psyche's sisters are already depicted as evil, and their direct speech and characterization by the narrator serve to highlight this for the reader, Psyche's speech underscores the dramatic and suspenseful nature of her character by not revealing her intentions to the reader so readily. Psyche's convincing of her sisters is suddenly and emphatically

¹⁴⁹ *Met.* 5.19

realized when the sisters are each separately talked into taking a fatal leap from the cliff where Psyche claims that Cupid awaits them.¹⁵⁰ In this way, Psyche is subtly characterized as a particularly skillful, albeit unconventional, self-advocate.¹⁵¹ Although the criminal sisters (*facinerosae mulieres*) are not actually put on trial for tricking Psyche into disobeying her husband and disrupting her marriage, the violent force of the sisters' metaphorical aggression towards Psyche (*detractis gladiis*) is matched by the carrying out of the sisters' sentence, which is to fall to their deaths, falsely expecting their plan to have worked. Like a successful declaimer, Psyche plans out and enacts a pseudo-legal solution to the sisters' pseudo-legal transgression, without giving away any unnecessary information until she achieves her stunning goal.

And looking closely at Psyche's direct speech, it becomes clear that her character is intended to entertain the reader through argumentative success that is particularly unexpected, and therefore all the more intriguing. When Psyche's parents receive the distressing oracle that she is to be ritually exposed on the top of a mountain, Psyche's appeal to them is presented in the first person. She pleads with her parents to stop mourning her:

¹⁵⁰ See *Met.* 5.26 when Psyche lies to her sister about her exchange with Cupid: "Because of the pain he was roused from sleep at once, and when he caught sight of me armed with a sword and fire, he said, 'You indeed, because of that heinous crime, you are divorced from my marriage bed right away, and you should take your belongings with you. In fact I'm going to unite myself with your sister in holy matrimony'—and he was speaking the name by which you are listed in the census" (*Quo dolore statim somno recussus, ubi me ferro et igni conspexit armatam, 'Tu quidem' inquit 'ob istud tam dirum facinus festim toro meo divorte, tibi que res tuas habeto. Ego vero sororem tuam'—et nomen quo tu censeris aiebat—'iam mihi confarreatis nuptiis coniugabo.'*) Osgood (2006: 422) notes a real legal precedent to Psyche's words, "The distraught girl uses here, in addition to the already clear expression *toro meo devorte*, a legally binding formula for divorce that went back well into the Roman republic."

¹⁵¹ Van Mal-Maeder and Zimmerman (1998: 102) consider Psyche's innocence a factor in the particular intrigue of her trickery, "We are faced with an example of manipulation of data to achieve a negative goal, which is even more surprising since it comes completely unexpectedly. The reader knew Psyche as an able user of the rhetoric of persuasion—does not her husband give in to all her whims?—, but the image of the young princess is one of a naïve and tender person."

Quid infelicem senectam fletu diutino cruciatis? Quid spiritum vestrum... fatigatis? ... Quid lacrimis inefficacibus ora mihi veneranda foedatis? Quid laceratis in vestris oculis... Quid canitiem scinditis? Quid pectora, quid ubera sancta tunditis?

Why do you torture your unhappy old age with continual weeping? Why waste your breath? ... Why do you defile those faces I must adore with unproductive tears? Why do you gouge at your eyes... Why do you tear out your brilliant white hair? Why do you beat your chest, and your venerable breasts?¹⁵²

Like a trained speaker, Psyche uses the rhetorical device of *anaphora* to emphasize her distress and confusion, repeating the interrogative *quid* in an attempt to communicate anguish and evoke pity from her audience. The declamatory effect is further realized by the narrator's attestation that Psyche speaks "with words such as these" (*talibus vocibus*).¹⁵³ The narrator is asserting her creative license as a speaker herself to approximate Psyche's words, which are ostensibly fictional to begin with, and in so doing she reminds the reader of the declamatory environment within which the whole fairy tale is being staged. When Psyche later prepares to appeal to Venus for mercy, the narrator again makes explicit the calculated verbal planning that takes place. Before Psyche speaks, the narrator informs the reader that Psyche "was rehearsing with herself the beginning of the entreaty that she would make" (*principium future secum meditabatur obsecrationis*).¹⁵⁴ In this way, Psyche is characterized as an attentive practitioner of rhetoric.

Psyche and Cupid: Successful speechmaking

The character of Psyche most noticeably exemplifies rhetorical success during the time before she learns the identity of her mysterious husband, when she is still

¹⁵² *Met.* 4.34

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Met.* 6.5

innocent and undefeated. Psyche entertains Cupid multiple times and manages to convince him to revoke his order that she not see her sisters, even though Cupid is worried that the sisters might provoke Psyche's curiosity to a dangerous extent. It turns out that Cupid's concerns were valid, and thus in a sense, the main conflict of the Cupid and Psyche story is made possible by Psyche's successful persuasion of Cupid to allow her to see her nefarious sisters. Psyche, a mere mortal, convinces a divine being to let down his guard: it is an impressive feat of argumentation, and the way in which these exchanges are presented suggests that Psyche's speechmaking is intended to be the main attraction for the reader. For in fact, Cupid's words of acquiescence are never related by the narrator. He does not communicate through direct speech, and as a result the narrative focus remains on Psyche. Cupid concedes to Psyche's request by means of third person narration, placing a clear emphasis on Psyche's words of persuasion, which are offered by the narrator through direct speech. Psyche appeals:

'Sed prius' inquit 'centies moriar quam tuo isto dulcissimo conubio caream. Amo enim et efflictim te, quicumque es, diligo aequae ut meum spiritum, nec ipsi Cupidini comparo. Sed istud etiam meis precibus, oro, largire, et illi tuo famulo Zephyro praecipe simili vectura sorores his mihi sistat.'Vi ac potestate Venerii susurrus invitus succubuit maritus et cuncta se facturum spopondit.

'But I would rather die a hundred times before giving up this sweetest of marriages with you. For I love you and I am totally infatuated with you, whoever you are, I cherish you as much as my breath, and I can't compare you even to Cupid himself. But grant this wish of mine too, I'm begging you, and have your servant the West Wind carry my sisters to me in the same manner that I was set down here.'And her husband yielded reluctantly to the strong power of her passionate whispers, and vowed that he would do all of the above.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ *Met.* 5.6

Although her language does not employ the technical conventions of rhetoric, the reader can still appreciate the surprising ease with which Psyche is able to make her case and get what she wants. She does not offer a stirring oration, but her speech is presented in such a way that reinforces the narrator's storytelling approach, which involves making sense through rhetorical motifs and adopting a declamatory framework that is appropriate for the bizarre subject matter at hand. After her speech, Psyche gives Cupid *oscula suasoria* "persuasive kisses" and the narrator notes that she deliberately *astruit* "built" the remarks she offers to her husband. The intentional constructedness of Psyche's words likens her persuasive efforts to calculated rhetoric. Cupid is unable to match the power (*potestate*) of Psyche's words, and is represented by no direct speech of his own in response to a determined Psyche.¹⁵⁶

However, the narrator also makes a subtle move to remind the reader that the tale being told is above all a comical fantasy, and perhaps also to reinforce the fact that successful speechmaking is ultimately the domain of the elite men who would have read Apuleius' novel. Psyche's speech is characterized as befitting a dutiful Roman woman: softly whispered and flattering (*susurrus... blanditiis*), and not vigorous and uncompromising like the speech of a practiced male orator.¹⁵⁷ And Psyche herself notes a particularly ironic deficiency in her appeal: Psyche's addressee is so enthralling that she is unable even to compare him to Cupid himself (*nec ipsi Cupidini comparo*). But the reader of course knows that it is Cupid whom she is addressing. Psyche's comic error goes unaddressed by her husband, who is cast as powerless to respond, despite his previously articulated concern with Psyche learning

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

his true identity. Cupid is not presented as being shaken by the offhand remark, because it operates in the narration chiefly as a slight aberration in Psyche's otherwise effective plea, and is meant to remind the reader that the narration is still situated in an absurd, self-referential, and multilayered declamatory environment.

Psyche convinces her husband again to allow her sisters to visit their divine residence, and again the narrator represents Cupid with no direct speech, in order to emphasize both the power and import of Psyche's words, and Cupid's inability to win an argument against her. She pleads in part:

'Iam dudum, quod sciam, fidei atque parcolloquio meo perpendisti documenta, nec eo setius approbabitur tibi nunc etiam firmitas animi mei.... germani complexus indulge fructum, et tibi devotae dicataque Psychae animam gaudio recrea.'his verbis et amplexibus mollibus decantatus maritus lacrimasque eius suis crinibus detergens facturum sponondit.

'For a while now, I think, you have considered the evidence of my loyalty and my economy of speech, and soon enough my mental steadfastness will avail itself to you.... Grant me the delight of a sisterly embrace, and with this joy restore the soul of your Psyche, who is sworn and devoted to you.' ...Her husband, enchanted by these words and soft embraces, and wiping away her tears on his hair, vowed that he would do it.¹⁵⁸

Psyche's opening words (*iam dudum, quod sciam*) do seem to have a distinctly Ciceronian feel, but again, although Psyche is being persuasive, her speech is not explicitly rhetorical. Yet she does gain the upper hand, and later when she eventually does figure out Cupid's identity, he flies away without a word (*tacitus*).¹⁵⁹ Psyche even refers to her own verbal efficiency (*parcolloquio*), and again, Psyche's words (*verbis*) are too powerful for Cupid to overcome. After Psyche disobeys him and his identity is revealed, however, the confrontational force shifts in Cupid's favor, which is again indicated through direct speech—this time his own, in accordance with his

¹⁵⁸ *Met.* 5.13

¹⁵⁹ *Met.* 5.23

newfound argumentative agency. He scolds Psyche, and after the end of his speech (*termino sermonis*) Psyche in turn becomes powerless to reply (*nulloque sermone reddito*).¹⁶⁰ In this way, argumentative success and persuasive agency, both central to declamation, are showcased and given emphasis through direct speech in a creative work that is consistently influenced by declamatory impersonation.

Psyche makes use of the rhetorical creativity embodied in the concept of *color* when she unsuccessfully tries to convince her sisters that her mysteriously absent husband is a young man who is often away hunting. Psyche's attempt at deception is undone by the contradictory information that she offers to her sisters later, claiming that her husband is in fact an old merchant. The reader immediately becomes aware of the inconsistency. But, since the narrator does not relate that Psyche is trying to trick her sisters, in accordance with her suppressed function of communication, a first reader could be tempted to immediately discount the sisters' theory based on the narrator's characterization of them as untrustworthy.¹⁶¹ The rhetorical embellishment is eventually made clear, as in Lucius' contradictory descriptions of his fight with the wineskins discussed in the previous chapter. Psyche's persuasive overtures in this instance are not presented through direct speech, and the narrative perspective is adjusted accordingly. Whereas the convincing words she offers to Cupid are rendered by the narrator through first person speech and Cupid's defeated reaction is not, here Psyche is bested and in turn becomes the party not given voice. In this way, first person representation in the tale becomes associated with argumentative proficiency,

¹⁶⁰ *Met.* 5.25-6

¹⁶¹ Winkler (1985: 92) points out, "The narratrix, to be sure, calls Psyche weak-spirited and frightened (5.18); the same narratrix also endorses the utter wickedness of the two sisters as something furious and viperous. These attitudes allow (but do not constrain) the reader not to notice the reasonableness of their theory of the child-and-bride-eating dragon."

while third person narration is associated with rhetorical failure. Successful speeches are directly evidenced in the text, but argumentative malfunctions are merely summarized. The narrator describes Psyche in the third person:

Sed e re nata confingit esse iuvenem quendam et speciosum, commodum lanoso barbitio genas inumbrantem, plerumque rurestribus ac montanis venatibus occupatum. Et ne qua sermonis procedentis labe consilium tacitum proderetur, auro facto gemmosisque monilibus onustas eas statim vocato Zephyro tradit reportandas.

But on the spur of the moment she pretended that he was a particularly handsome young man, just now shadowing his cheeks with a scruffy beard, and that he very often busied himself with hunting along the countryside or in the mountains. And lest, with the conversation carrying on, she betray her secret trick by a slip of the tongue, with the West Wind having been called at once she handed over her sisters to be carried away, laden with necklaces set with jewels and worked gold.¹⁶²

And later, again in the third person:

Tunc illa simplicitate nimia pristini sermonis oblita novum commentum instruit, atque maritum suum de provincia proxima magnis pecuniis negotiantem iam medium cursum aetatis agere, intersersum rara canitie. Nec in sermo isto tantillum morata, rursum opiparis muneribus eas onustas ventoso vehiculo reddidit.

Then Psyche, all too guileless, drew up a new pretence, having forgotten the earlier conversation, and she said that her husband was a very successful businessman from a nearby province, and that he was already middle-aged, and his hair was streaked with white. She didn't linger even a little bit on that topic, and she gave back her sisters, again laden with lavish gifts, to the windy carriage.¹⁶³

In this way, the narrator orients the rhetorically-minded reader's attention away from failed logical trickery by glossing over it, and towards powerful and effective rhetoric through the use of colorful, engaging direct speech. The declamatory framework of the novel values good speeches over bad ones, as demonstrated by the narrator's use of perspective. Thus it becomes clear how the narrator of the Cupid and Psyche tale

¹⁶² *Met.* 5.8

¹⁶³ *Met.* 5.15

takes advantage of her ability to appropriate the language of Venus, Psyche's sisters, Psyche, and other speakers in order to represent them with attention to the same declamatory style and narrative approach that drive the plot of the novel even beyond the inset story of Cupid and Psyche.

Conclusion

The aim of this project was to demonstrate the benefits of considering the first person speech in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* from a perspective informed by both declamation and narrative theory. A familiarity with declamation allows the reader to appreciate the rhetorical moves that Lucius and the other narrators make in their narrations, while the application of narratological analysis allows us to investigate how and to what effect these declamatory techniques are being applied to the many acts of storytelling that make the *Metamorphoses* an innovative and engaging text.

When Lucius or another narrator speaks on behalf of other characters in the story, they are drawing upon aspects of declamation that readers contemporary with Apuleius would have picked up on, and which certainly influenced Apuleius' approach to the genre of fiction. When the narrator is withholding information from the reader, such as when Lucius waits to reveal that the Risus festival is an elaborate hoax, or when Psyche fails at convincing her sisters that her mysterious husband is at once a youth and an old man, as second readers we can readily appreciate the creative approach to the narration of these events that takes rhetorical *color* as its model.

Apuleius' novel purports its own strange and self-governing organizational system, according to which the main point of reading is to be entertained by bizarre and ridiculous stories. The adventures of Lucius are wildly creative, and despite the narrators' overblown appeals to truth and accuracy, the probability of any event's actual occurrence is far less interesting than its suspenseful rendering and imaginative content. The novel is after all a fictional work, and despite real-world allusions and

careful exploration of the mundane details of Roman life, the whole point is to impress the reader and involve us in the active interpretation of a puzzling text.

The analytical model proposed in this study explores only one of many possible ways of reading the *Metamorphoses*. But a final example from the life of Apuleius himself serves to emphasize why the avenue of study I have undertaken is relevant. In Apuleius' *Apologia*, the author's rhetorical skills are put on display at great length, and his interest in successful argumentation and persuasive narrative techniques is clearly demonstrated. Apuleius himself responds to charges of seduction and sorcery brought against him by members of his wife's family, and he makes a case for why he has not used magic to seduce his wife, going into considerable detail about his personal life in order to do so. His argument is strong and persuasive, and exhibits an advanced knowledge of declamatory skills. Although the content is much more serious in tone than student declamation exercises or the fictional adventures of Lucius, Apuleius still relies on rhetorical impersonation and carefully deployed direct speech to strengthen his case. As he begins to refute the charges against him, Apuleius states:

Audisti ergo paulo prius in principio accusationis ita dici: 'accusamus apud te philosophum formosum et tam Graece quam Latine'—pro nefas!—'disertissimum.' Nisi fallor enim, his ipsis verbis accusationem mei ingressus est Tannonius Pudens, homo vere ille quidem non disertissimus. Quod utinam tam gravia formae et facundiae crimina vere mihi opprobasset!

Well, just now at the beginning of the accusation you heard them say: 'we accuse before you a philosopher, who is handsome and who, in both Greek and Latin'—what a shame!—'is a very skillful speaker.' For if I am not mistaken, these were the exact words with which Tannonius Pudens, not quite a skillful speaker himself, started his accusation of me. I wish they were true, these serious charges of beauty and eloquence!¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ *Apol.* II.4.1-3 (trans. Hunink 2001).

In yet another legal setting, Apuleius shows the effectiveness of using the words of others—not to mention his creative sense of humor—to strengthen his argument and create a hypothetical environment where Apuleius himself is the arbiter of logic and characterization. The declamatory skill that Apuleius demonstrates in the *Apologia* clearly informs how he presents people and information in his fiction, and how he uses the unique communicative framework of declamation to craft a narrative that is at once realistic and explicitly fabricated. By considering the practice of declamation as an influence on a fictional text, we are able to understand both the means by which episodes such as the Risus festival were derived, and also how the literary experience of the novel is significantly enhanced by a reader's familiarity with declamation.

Bibliography

- Apuleius. (1990) *Cupid & Psyche*. Ed. E. J. Kenney. Cambridge.
- . (1989) *Metamorphoses*. Ed. J. Arthur Hanson. Trans. J. Arthur Hanson, 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- . (2001) *Apuleius: Rhetorical Works*. Ed. S. J. Harrison. Trans. John Hilton and Vincent Hunink. Oxford.
- . (2011) *The Golden Ass*. Trans. Sarah Ruden. New Haven: Yale UP.
- , and William Turpin. (2002) *Metamorphoses Book III*. Ed. Julia Haig Gaisser and James J. O'Donnell. Bryn Mawr Commentaries.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 84-258.
- Barthes, R. (1978) "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives." *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 79-124.
- Bloomer, M. W. (1997) "Schooling in Persona: Imagination and Subordination in Roman Education." *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 57-78.
- Bodel, J. (2010) "Kangaroo Courts: Displaced Justice in the Roman Novel." *Spaces of Justice in the Roman World*. Ed. Francisco De Angelis. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010. 311-29.
- De Jong, I. (2001) "The Prologue as a Pseudo-Dialogue and the Identity of Its (Main) Speaker." *A Companion to the Prologue of Apuleius' Metamorphoses*. Ahuvia Kahane and Andrew Laird, eds. Oxford, 201-12.
- De Smet, R. (1987) "The Erotic Adventure of Lucius and Photis in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*." *Latomus*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 613-623.
- Doody, M. (2007) "The Representation of Consciousness in the Ancient Novel." *Remapping the Rise of the European Novel*. Ed. Jenny Mander. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 35-45.
- Frangoulidis, S. A. (1999) "Cui Videbor Veri Similia Dicere Proferens Vera?: Aristomenes and the Witches in Apuleius' Tale of Aristomenes." *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 94, No. 4, 375-391.

- Finkelpearl, E. (1990) "Psyche, Aeneas, and an Ass: Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 6.10-6.21." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 120, 333-347.
- Genette, G. (1983) *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
- Gunderson, E. (2003) *Declamation, Paternity, and Roman Identity: Authority and the Rhetorical Self*. Cambridge.
- Hägg, T. (1983) "The Roman Comic Novel." *The Novel in Antiquity*. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 166-91.
- Harrison, S. J. (2000). *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist*. Oxford.
- Imber, M. (2008) "Life Without Father: Declamation and the construction of paternity in the Roman empire." *Role Models in the Roman World: Identity and Assimilation. Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volume 7*. Sinclair Bell and Inge Lyse Hansen, eds. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 161-70.
- Kahane, A. and Andrew Laird. (2001) *A Companion to the Prologue of Apuleius' Metamorphoses*. Oxford.
- Kaster, R. A. (2001) "Controlling Reason: Declamation in Rhetorical Education." *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Ed. Yun Lee Too. Leiden: Brill, 317-337.
- Keulen, W. (1997) "Some Legal Themes in Apuleian Context." *Der Antike Roman Und Seine Mittelalterliche Rezeption*. Michelangelo Picone and Bernhard Zimmermann, eds. Basel: Birkhäuser, 203-30.
- Laird, A. (1990) "Person, 'Persona' and Representation in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*." *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, Vol. 25, 129-164.
- Mayrhofer, C. (68-80) "On Two Stories in Apuleius." *Antichthon*, Vol. 9, 68-80.
- Mendelson, M. (1994) "Declamation, Context, and Controversiality." *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 92-107.
- Millar, F. (1981) "The World of the Golden Ass." *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 71, 63-75.
- Murgatroyd, P. (2004) "Thelyphron's Story (Apul. "Met." 2.21-30)." *Mnemosyne*, Vol. 57, No. 4, 493-7.

- Osgood, J. (2006) "Nuptiae Iure Civili Congruae: Apuleius' Story of Cupid and Psyche and the Roman Law of Marriage." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 136, No. 2, 415-441.
- Quintilian (2006). *The Lesser Declamations*. Ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Riess, W. (2000) "Between Fiction and Reality: Robbers in Apuleius' Golden Ass." *Ancient Narrative*, Vol. 1, 260-282.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002) *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London: Routledge.
- Schlam, C. (1970) "Platonica in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 101, 477-487.
- , and Ellen Finkelppearl, eds. (2000) *A Review of Scholarship on Apuleius' Metamorphoses, 1970-1998*. Lustrum. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Smith, W.S. (1998) "Cupid and Psyche Tale: Mirror of the Novel." *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass*. M. Zimmerman, V. Hunink, T.H.D. McCreight, D. Van Mal-Maeder, S. Panayotakis, V. Schmidt, and B. Wesseling, eds. Vol. 2. Groningen: Forsten, 69-82.
- , and Baynard Woods. (2002) "Tale of Aristomenes: Declamation in a Platonic mode." *Ancient Narrative*, Vol. 2, 172-186.
- Summers, R. (1970) "Roman Justice and Apuleius' Metamorphoses." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 101, 511-531.
- Van Mal-Maeder, D., and M. Zimmerman. (1998) "The Many Voices in Cupid and Psyche." *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass*. M. Zimmerman, V. Hunink, T.H.D. McCreight, D. Van Mal-Maeder, S. Panayotakis, V. Schmidt, and B. Wesseling, eds. Vol. 2. Groningen: Forsten, 83-102.
- Whitmarsh, T. (2008) *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*. Cambridge.
- Winkler, J. (1991) *Auctor & Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius's Golden Ass*. Berkeley: University of California.