Of the twelve essays collected in this ninth volume of the Groningen Colloquia on the Novel, five deal with `Theatre, Spectacle and the Ancient Novelists' and three articles are devoted to `Early Christian Narrative'. These themes reflect the topics of some of the sessions of the 20th Groningen Colloquium on the Novel held in May 1997. Most of the articles are revised and expanded versions of papers presented at one of the GCN of recent years.

Besides the themes mentioned above, other subjects are covered as well. Two articles deal with the `supernatural' in ancient narrative, and two more essays discuss not novels, but tales: one of these discusses the `Milesian tales' in connection with the ancient novel while another one examines the reception in later literature and cinema of Herodotus' tale of Gyges, his wife and Candaules.

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# Comedy in Apuleius' *Apology*

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The ancient novel has often been closely linked to the genre of comedy, sometimes to the point that the entire genre is said to be derived from it.[1] Leaving aside questions of generic development, strong thematical links can be seen between novel and comedy, particularly New Comedy.[2] Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses* is no exception here: its rich literary texture includes various elements of comedy and mime, which have been duly noticed by scholars.[3]

Whereas most ancient novelists are exclusively known for their novels, in the case of Apuleius we are in the fortunate position that we possess works in different genres. Perhaps surprisingly, the influence of comedy is not restricted to the *Met.*, but is also apparent in some of the 'minor' works. In the present contribution, I propose to examine the use and function of comedy in Apuleius' rhetorical works, notably the *Apology*, but also *Soc.* and *Flor.*

1 For a sound discussion see Niklas Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel, an Introduction*, London/New York 1995, 28–42, who argues that the thematic proximity of the ancient novel to New Comedy is the result of changing socio-political factors which determine the production and consumption of literature: having better means of reaching out to audiences, the novel superseded other genres such as comedy. On novel and comedy in general, see also Michael von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, München 1994, 957–958.

2 Cf. Holzberg 1995, 32–33, who points to the political and social status quo of the period in which both genres flourished, and to the escapist tendency they share (cf. p.30). A recent study on farcical comedy in Petronius is: Costas Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri. Theatrical Elements in the Satyrica of Petronius*, Leiden 1995. For the *Cena* in particular, see: L.A. Callari, *La Cena come Spettacolo nel Satyricon di Petronio*, Palermo 1995.

3 Cf. recently Schlam 1992, 26–28; on comedy, laughter and entertainment as motifs in the *Met.* see Schlam 1992, 40–47 and 120–122. An older contribution is: William E. Stephenson, 'The comedy of evil', *Arion* 3 (1964), 87–93; but it must be added that the author pays more attention to the element of 'evil' than that of 'comedy'. For a striking theatrical scene in the *Met.* see e.g. 10,29 ff., with *GCA* ad loc. (forthcoming), and: Gian Franco Gianotti, 'Forme di consumo teatrale: mimo e spettacoli affini', in: O. Pecere, A. Stramaglia, *La letteratura di consumo nel mondo greco-latino*, Atti del convegno internazionale Cassino 14–17 settembre 1994, Cassino 1996, 265–292, esp. 277–81 ('mimi e pantomime in Apuleio').

## De Deo Socratis *and* Florida

The first work to deal with, the philosophical discourse *De Deo Socratis*, may seem a rather unlikely candidate for any comic element whatsoever. Contrary to what is suggested in its title, Socrates plays only a marginal role here; the extant Latin text is an improvised exposition on demons, the intermediaries between gods and men. The text as we have it, is probably the second, Latin part of a bilingual improvisation, of which the first, Greek part, probably focussing on Socrates, is lost.[4]

In the course of the speech (*Soc.* 11), Apuleius speaks about the dazzling splendor of the bodies of demons. To illustrate this he quotes a line by Plautus on the dazzling shield of the 'braggart warrior'.[5] The example is rather far-fetched, and hardly adds to the demonological point in question. Some pages further on (*Soc.* 20), Terence is quoted with a line on 'hearing someone's voice'.[6] Though Apuleius briefly deals with Terence's exact wording, this example too seems to serve merely as an erudite ornament.[7]

These references to comedy clearly bring out Apuleius' taste for Archaic Latin,[8] but they may seem out of place in a philosophical, speculative discourse. However, *Soc.*, as we have it, is clearly marked out as a *Roman* speech, because of the inclusion of specific Roman elements and examples, and the particular attention to the Latin language.[9] In this way, Apuleius seems to shape *Soc.* consciously to be the Latin counterpart of the lost Greek section of the discourse. Considering this general aim, the references to the two Roman

4 Cf. Hunink 1995. For a study on the discourse in the context of the Second Sophistic, see Sandy 1997, 191–213.

5 *(…) prorsus quod Plautinus miles super clipeo suo gloriatur: 'praestringens oculorum aciem hostibus'* 'just as the Plautine soldier boasts about his shield: "dazzling the enemy's sight"'. This is a free quotation of Pl. *Mil.* 4: *(ut)… praestringat oculorum aciem in acie hostibus.*

6 *(…) quin potius 'uox' aut certe 'cuiuspiam uox' diceretur, ut ait illa Terentiana meretrix: 'audire uocem uisa sum modo militis'*. 'It would be better to speak about "a voice" or "someone's voice", as does this prostitute in Terence: "It seems I just heard the voice of a soldier". (Ter. *Eun.* 454).

7 Matters seem slightly different in the case of the tragedian Accius, whose lines on Ulysses are quoted at the end of the discourse (*Soc.* 24), where they aptly reinforce Apuleius' philosophical point.

8 On this matter in general see: Mattiacci 1986. One may also think of Apuleius' references to the satirist Lucilius: we encounter his name in the very first lines of the *Prologue* of *Soc.*, where his term *schedium* for 'improvisation' is quoted.

9 Cf. Hunink 1995, 303. Particularly noteworthy is *Soc.* 11, where Apuleius gives an allegedly impromptu Latin rendering of a line of Homer. By contrast, generally he is quite eager to give such quotations in the original Greek, as may be seen throughout the *Apology*.



comic authors are relevant and functional. They reinforce the Roman coloring of the text, as do the numerous references and quotations of Ennius, Lucretius and Virgil.

In Apuleius' *Florida*, the situation is somewhat less clear. This is partly due to the uncertain status of the texts. We do not know if all the 23 rhetorical pieces, of which the collection consists, are fragments or whether complete speeches are included. Neither is it possible to say anything with absolute certainty about the time of the composition, the identity of the editor and his aim, or even the title.[10]

References to comedy are to be found here too. In three cases, a quotation of comedy has been inserted for ornamental purposes, similar to what was observed above on *Soc.* Here, the quotations are slightly more integrated into their context and more elaborated by the addition of a variant line in the passage in *Fl.* 2.[11] In general, the theatre is never far away in the *Florida*. Two of the 23 passages, numbers 5 and 18, were actually pronounced in a theatre, probably in Carthage. In the first of these, Apuleius explicitly refers to comedy and *mimus* as common theatrical performances. Shortly before (*Fl.* 4,3), the *mimus* was also referred to in general terms.

Though the *Florida* present many problems to scholars, they quite clearly have in common the aim to display wit and erudition, to impress and amuse the audience with brilliant stories and fine anecdotes.[12] This general aim explains the references to comedy mentioned up to now.

Apuleius was not only familiar with the theatre, he actually wrote or translated comedies and tragedies, as he states in *Fl.* 9.[13] Regrettably, there is al-

10 For instance, the title has been taken to refer either to an 'anthology' or to the 'florid' style. The collection as we have it is an excerpt of a probably much larger original, which had been made either by Apuleius himself or by a scholar in late Antiquity. As to the time, the texts give us only minor clues to enable us to suggest a date between 160 and 170 A.D. See further Hijmans 1994, 1719–1724. For sophistic aspects of the *Florida*, see Sandy 1997, esp. 148–175.

11 *Fl.* 2 contains a line of Plautus: *Truc.* 489 *Pluris est oculatus testis unus quam auriti decem*, 'one sharp-eyed witness outranks ten keen-eared' (transl. P. Nixon in the Loeb edition), as well as an original variation better suited for Socrates: *Pluris est auritus testis unus quam oculati decem.* In *Fl.* 18,6–7 a change of scene is introduced with a line from an unknown tragedy, immediately followed by three lines of Plautus: *Truc.* prol.1–3. Finally, the satirist Lucilius figures once again in *Fl.* 21, where a description of a horse is amplified with a line of his: *qui campos collesque gradu perlabitur uno* 'who slips over plains and hills with one stride' (transl. E. Warmington) (Lucil. 506 W).

12 Apart from explicit references to comedy, the *Florida* also contain amusing, 'comic' passages, such as the story of Protagoras and Euathlus in *Fl.* 18, but since they do not refer to the specific genre of comedy, I will not discuss them.

13 *Praeoptare me fateor uno chartario calamo me reficere poemata omnigenus apta uirgae,*

most nothing left of his comedies, with the exception of a poetical fragment in Latin based on Menander's *Anechomenos*. This text is very interesting because of Apuleius' translation technique and his concept of erotic poetry, but it does not offer us much help to understand his concept of comedy.[14] For this, we may profitably turn to a key passage in the *Florida*.

### *Comedy according to Apuleius*

In *Fl.* 16, Apuleius thanks his audience for a statue decreed to him, and apologizes for the delay in expressing his gratitude: he has been visiting healing baths. Halfway the text he explains that he had sprained his ankle during exercise. But before this, he presents the story of the comic poet Philemon, as an example and analogy for 'the sudden dangers a man can find on his way.' This Philemon, Apuleius duly adds, was a *mediae comediae scriptor*[15] of considerable talent and a rival of Menander. Once, during a public recitation of his latest piece,[16] Philemon had been overtaken by rain, forcing him to postpone reading the last section until the next day. The morning after, a large audience gathered in the theatre, but waited in vain for Philemon. Some men went to see where he was, and found him at home, in his bed, dead, still holding a scroll in his hand. This sad but worthy fate had *almost* befallen himself, Apuleius concludes.

This anecdote hardly provides more than a parallel for Apuleius' personal

*lyrae,* socco, *coturno (…)* ('I prefer, I confess, using one writing pencil to compose poems in all genres: those fit for the rod, the lyre, the low-heeled shoe or the high boot.'). Possibly, Apuleius even wrote *mimus*, as might appear from *Fl.* 20: *Canit enim (…) Epicharmus mimos (…), Apuleius uester haec omnia* ('for Epicharmus writes mimes… and your Apuleius writes in all these genres'). But here, *mimos* is an emendation by Reich for *modos* of the MSS, and cannot be regarded as conclusive.

14 On this piece, see: S.J. Harrison, 'Apuleius Eroticus: Anth. Lat. 712 Riese', *Hermes* 120 (1992), 83–89; Silvia Mattiacci, 'Apuleio "poeta novello"', in: A. Tandoi (ed.), *Disiecti membra poetae*, Foggia 1985, 235–277, esp. 261–274. Text and translation can be found in: Jean Beaujeu, *Apulée, opuscules philosophiques*, Paris 1973.

15 Apuleius' reference to 'Middle Comedy' here is problematic, since Philemon has invariably been reckoned to New Comedy, already by scholars in antiquity; see Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, *Die attische Mittlere Komödie. Ihre Stellung in der antiken Literaturkritik und Literaturgeschichte*, Berlin/New York 1990, 62 with note 81. Apuleius is clearly not making a chronological error, as appears from his reference to the poet's rivalry with Menander. The description in *Fl.* 16 of Philemon's art also conforms to what we know about New Comedy. Possibly, as Nesselrath, 62 adds, Philemon's technique and stylistical qualities were so much inferior to Menander's that Apuleius could consider him somewhat 'old-fashioned'.

16 This sort of *recitatio* seems more characteristic of Roman culture than of early Hellenistic culture (4th cent. BC), to which Philemon and Menander belong. One wonders whether Apuleius projected one of his own experiences on the Greek poet. Especially the mentioning of a theatre as the location might suggest that this was the case.



circumstances. The story is only loosely linked to the rest of *Fl.* 16, in which the speaker expresses his thanks for a statue. It obviously serves as an introduction, but also as a fascinating tale by itself, intended to amuse the audience and draw its attention.

The passage with which I am particularly concerned, is the description of the literary talents of Philemon. Here, Apuleius gives an extensive list of praiseworthy elements, which seems worthwhile to quote in full:

> *Reperias tamen apud ipsum multos sales, argumenta lepide inflexa, agnitus lucide explicatos, personas rebus competentes, sententias uitae congruentes, ioca non infra soccum, seria non usque ad coturnum. Rarae apud illum corruptelae, tuti errores, concessi amores. Nec eo minus et leno periurus et amator feruidus et seruulus callidus et amica illudens et uxor inhibens et mater indulgens et patruus obiurgator et sodalis opitulator et miles proeliator, sed et parasiti edaces et parentes tenaces et meretrices procaces.* (*Fl.* 16,7–9)

> 'Nevertheless, we find in him much wit; plots ingeniously involved; recognitions clearly made out; personages suited to the matter; phrases appropriate to each character; gaieties not beneath the sock, gravities not quite up to the buskin. Seductions are rare in his works, moral lapses without danger, love affairs allowable. Nevertheless, you find in him the perjured pimp, the hot lover, the cunning slave, the wheedling mistress, the peremptory wife, the indulgent mother, the scolding uncle, the helpful friend, and the fighting soldier, together with various parasites, and stingy parents, and wanton harlots.' (transl. [Anonymous] 1893, 390, with some adjustments).

This seems a remarkable passage, not merely for its stylistic bravura (the *Florida* abound in this), but for its detailed generic picture of comedy. From it, we may derive what amounts to a definition of good comedy: it must have a cleverly wrought plot, with a final recognition scene, and fitting characters; being both witty and serious, it should maintain a proper level in all respects; on the moral side, erotic matters should be treated with care and moderation, avoiding coarseness and excess; but stock characters may include the perjurer pimp, the fervent lover, the smart slave and the deceitful girl, as well as the typical austere wife, tolerant mother, angry uncle, helping friend, fighting soldier, greedy parasite, strict parents and provocative harlot.

Taken as a whole, this seems a good description of the atmosphere and basic structure of those Menander pieces that we still possess. It shows that Apuleius' concept of comedy comes quite close to what we know about New Comedy. I will return to this later.

## *Comedy in the* Apology

In the strictly philosophical 'minor' works of Apuleius, *De Platone, De Mundo, De Interpretatione (Peri hermeneias)* and *Asclepius*[17] references to comedy are completely absent. This is hardly surprising, since all four of these works are in some way closely linked with Greek originals or models, and deal with serious philosophical matters, not presented to a public, as in *Soc.*, but exposed in written form. If Apuleius adds a Roman touch here and there, he does so only by referring to 'serious' authors like Virgil and Lucretius. This leaves just one work for the present examination, which I will discuss more closely.

In 158/9 A.D. Apuleius was accused of practising magic. It was alleged that he had used illegal means to seduce the rich widow Pudentilla into marrying him. The long speech which Apuleius delivered in defence of himself, is commonly known as the *Apology*.[18] In this speech, comedy plays an important role on several levels.

Most conspicuous again are a number of explicit references to comedy. In *Apol.* 5 a line of Caecilius is cleverly exploited by the speaker for a pun.[19] Shortly afterwards, a line of Afranius is used in a somewhat similar fashion, now to make a philosophical point.[20] So, both references are slightly more

17 The authenticity of all four works has been questioned; see Hunink 1997, I, 20–22.

18 The speech should properly be referred to as *Pro se de magia*, the only title for which there is evidence in the MSS. However, for the sake of convenience, I will use the common title *Apology*.

19 *Sane quidem, si uerum est quod Statium Caecilium in suis poematibus scripsisse dicunt, innocentiam eloquentiam esse* (Caec. Fr.255 W), *ego uero profiteor ista ratione ac praefero me nemini omnium de eloquentia concessurum* 'certainly if it is true what Statius Caecilius is said to have written in his poems, that innocence is eloquence itself, to that extent I claim and boast that I will yield to none in eloquence.' (5,3). Apuleius then continues with etymological puns on *eloquens*, *facundus* and *disertus*.

20 *Quapropter, ut semper, eleganter Afranius hoc scriptum relinquat: 'amabit sapiens, cupient ceteri'* (Afran. Fr.221 Ribb.$^3$/225 Daviault)*; tamen si uerum uelis, Aemiliane, uel si haec intellegere unquam potes, non tam amat sapiens quam recordatur* 'and therefore let us grant that Afranius shows his usual elegance of expression when he writes: "The wise man loves, the others just desire". In truth however, Aemilianus, or if you are capable of ever grasping such matters, the wise does not love, but only remembers' (12,6). Apuleius' final words contain a barely veiled reference to the Platonic theory on learning as remembering. The suggestion is that Apuleius' opponent cannot understand this, whereas the judge, Claudius Maximus, is expected to be familiar with Plato.



than mere illustrations displaying the speaker's erudition and talent to please his public: the comedians' words are integrated in the argumentation and put to effective use.[21] Elsewhere, if a quote is needed to underline a point just made, comedy readily offers suitable examples.[22]

As in the *Florida*, the theatre is never far away in the *Apology* either. Clearly standing out is the famous story of Sophocles, who, being accused by his son of insanity, limited himself to reciting his latest piece, the *Oedipus in Colonus*, and was left undisturbed (37,1–3). Although, strictly speaking, the anecdote is about Sophocles as a tragedian, it has many elements in common with Apuleius' tale of Philemon, discussed above. Obvious points are the reciting of drama, 'the latest piece written' and the favourable reaction of the audience. Further, one may point to the motif of 'old age', explicit in the story of Sophocles and implicit in that of Philemon (Sophocles reached the age of 90, Philemon actually became 100). But most importantly, in both cases the dramatic tale is quite loosely inserted in the context, and obviously also told for its own sake. The Sophocles tale may also be said to function as a break, during which a piece of evidence needed in the trial is searched for.

Throughout the *Apology*, Apuleius' thoughts easily pass to the theatre. If he needs an example for a hideous face, the first thing he mentions is a mask of Thyestes (16,7). Insulting one of his opponents' effeminacy and cowardice, he compares him to an actor, a bad one at that, playing Philomela, Medea or Clytemnestra (78,4). Greek drama as a whole figures among his literary authorities (30,11), while the specifically Roman *fabula Atellana* is alluded to as well: in 81,4 some legendary scoundrels are said to be mere *macci* and *buccones*, 'clowns and fatheads', when compared to Apuleius' accuser.

On the level of language and style, the presence of 'comic' words and the overall comic color is noteworthy. To mention one or two examples: the use of *pax!* (75,7) and words as *cuppedinarius* (29,6).[23]

21 Again, one may also point to the appearance of the satirist Lucilius. In *Apol.* 10,4 he is criticized for exposing two boys to public contempt by naming them in a satire; Vergil did much better, Apuleius adds, in using pseudonyms. Here too, the reference to the archaic author is more than just a decorative one.

22 Cf. *Est ille poetae uersus non ignotus 'odi puerulos praecoqui sapientia'* (85,8); the source is unknown, but possibly a comedy. Cf. also: 88,6 *Ibi et ille celeberrimus in comoediis uersus de proximo congruit:* παίδων ἐπ' ἀρότῳ γνησίων ἐπὶ σπορᾷ. Here a line of Menander is the source; see Hunink 1997 ad loc.

23 For the Plautine color of Apuleius' language, see L. Callebat, *Sermo cotidianus dans les Métamorphoses d'Apulée*, Caen 1968, passim; Mattiacci 1986, 193–199 with numerous examples. Cf. further Silvia Mattiacci, 'Note sulla fortuna di Accio in Apuleio', *Prometheus*

### *Comic characters*

But the influence of comedy goes even much further. In accordance with ancient practice, explicit abuse of the opponents plays an important role in the speech. Apuleius' accuser, Sicinius Aemilianus, is consistently pictured as a morally debased, greedy ignorant, who dares to attack the philosopher Apuleius on false grounds. The same goes for Aemilianus' friends and assistants, such as Herennius Rufinus and Sicinius Pudens. Apuleius is so sure of himself that he makes fun of his opponents, employing irony and sarcasm, wordplay and imagery whenever he can. One of his more subtle means of ridiculing is to present them more or less as stock characters in comedy, as has incidentally been noticed by scholars.[24]

Attention has been drawn mainly to the characters of Rufinus and his wife and daughter, whose pictures conform to the stereotypes of the *leno* and *meretrix*. In c.74–5 Rufinus' household is described as a brothel, while he himself makes the arrangements with those who wish to spend the night with his wife. That is, he is a fullblown *leno*, who is bald (*priusquam isto caluitio deformaretur*, 74,7) and behaves like a Plautine pimp.[25] Since he is actually called *leno* (98,1) and his house a *domus lenonia* (75,1), there is no doubt about Apuleius' intentions here. Much the same goes for Rufinus' wife and daughter. The wife is called a *lupa* (75,1) and is clearly described as an active prostitute, and her daughter, a *meretrix* (89,1), is of the same sort. Her picture in 76,5 leaves hardly a trace of doubt: she has herself carried on a litter with eight bearers, looking around and displaying herself in a most shameless way, wearing make-up on mouth and cheeks, and alluring men with her eyes.

In the second place there is Crassus, a character whose testimony Apuleius derides and declares worthless because he is a stupid drunkard. First he is consistently associated with cheap taverns, smoky kitchens, gluttony, drunkenness, hangovers and mendacity. Then we get the following picture: Aemilianus was possibly right in avoiding to make Crassus appear personally before the judge,

20 (1994), 53–68, esp. 67, calling Plautus' language: 'una sorte di limfa vitale alla quale si alimenta costantemente il *sermo cotidianus* delle *Metamorfosi*'.

24 See notably Callebat 1984, 143–167 and 165–166 and Sallmann 1995, 143 on a part of the exordium: 'das hört sich an wie der Stoff zu einer Komödie'. Sallmann stresses the literary character of the speech, which he analyses as a *declamatio* which has a secundary, practical use in the courtroom.

25 The specific stock character of the *leno maritus* is an element of satire; Butler/Owen refer to Juv. 1,55 with Mayor's note; see further V.A. Tracy, 'The leno-maritus', *CJ* 72 (1976), 62–64. On Plautine pimps, see Erich Segal, *Roman laughter, the comedy of Plautus*, Cambridge 1968, 79–92.



> *ne tu beluam illam uulsis maxillis foedo aspectu de facie improbares, cum animaduertisses caput iuuenis barba et capillo populatum, madentis oculos, cilia turgentia, rictum <restrictum>, saliuosa labia, uocem absonam, manuum tremorem, ructus popinam. Patrimonium omne iam pridem abligurriuit, nec quicquam ei de bonis paternis superest, nisi una domus ad calumniam uenditandam (...).* (59,6–7).
>
> '...fearing that you would disapprove of that brute with his shaved jaw and the abominable appearance of his face, when you took notice of the young man's head, stripped of its beard and hair, and his drunken eyes, his swollen eyelids, his open mouth, his slobbering lips, his inharmonious voice, his trembling hands, his vulgar belching. He long ago consumed his entire inheritance in luxury, and nothing survives to him from his good parents, except a single house for selling false accusations.'[26]

That is, he is a brute, with depilated cheeks and a horrible appearance, beardless and bald, with watery eyes, swollen lids, broad grin, slobbering lips, ugly voice, trembling hands and a breath smelling of cheap eating-places. All the details contribute to the caricature of a stupid drunkard, which is so strong as to make him appear like the *maccus* or *bucco* of the *Atellana*.[27]

A more innocent comic role is that of the naive lover, the *amator feruidus* as met in *Fl.* 16. This seems a good model to understand the description of Pudens, as Callebat suggested, or more to the point, his older brother Pontianus, who is treated much more favourably by Apuleius. Both brothers are easily manipulated by Rufinus, who exploits the fact that they are madly in love in order to make them do whatever he wants.[28] But whereas Pontianus liberated him-

26 The quotation is taken from a working translation of the *Apol.*, made available on the Internet by a group of students led by Prof. James O'Donnell at the University of Pennsylvania; *http://www.english/upenn.edu/~schwebel/apuleius.html*.

27 That Crassus seems to be presented as a *maccus* here, is noted by Marchesi on *Apol.* 81 (*Della magia di Apuleio*, Bologna 1955, or later reprints). The point is repeated by Callebat 1984, 165 and Sallmann 1995, 147 ('eine Atellanenfigur, zum Entzücken der Hörer (und Leser) in die Szene gezaubert!').

28 Cf. on Rufinus and Pontianus: *(...) ni ita faciat, inicit scrupulum amanti adulescentulo ueterator, minatur se filiam abducturum. Quid multis? Iuuenem simplicem, praeterea nouae nuptae illecebris obfrenatum suo arbitratu de uia deflectit.* (77,3); 'the old fox threatened the young lover: if Pontianus would not do this, he would take back his daughter.' (transl. as in n.26, with minor changes). On Pudens: *at ille puellae meretricis blandimentis et lenonis patris illectamentis captus et possessus... ad patruum commigrauit (...)* (98,1); 'But he

self from this influence and regained his former virtue, during the trial Pudens is still in Rufinus' might.

Still following Apuleius' own description of comedy in *Fl.* 16, there are more comic characters who seem to be represented in the *Apology*. For the *seruulus callidus* one may think of Rufinus, who controls the young lovers, or of Apuleius' slave Themison;[29] the *uxor inhibens* and *mater indulgens* is, of course, Pudentilla, whose qualities manage to keep Apuleius in Oea (73,3–9)[30] and who, under Apuleius' influence, finally appoints her ungrateful son Pudens as her heir (100,3). Aemilianus, Pontianus' and Pudens' uncle, criticizes and manipulates the boys whenever he can, and he is the perfect *patruus obiurgator*.[31] Persons to whom the title 'helping friend' (*sodalis opitulator*) seems applicable, are, on Apuleius' side, the Appius family (72,2; 72,6), Quintianus (58,4), and perhaps the judge, Claudius Maximus, who is constantly flattered and whose support is repeatedly called upon.[32] On the side of the prosecution, Herennius Rufinus is a likely candidate (74,5). Less clearly represented are the *miles proeliator* and the *parasiti edaces*, but perhaps we could think of the brave Apuleius himself fighting against his accusers, who are eagerly hunting for Pudentilla's wealth. And considering the characterization of the drunken glutton Crassus selling his testimony, this witness, too, might be thought of as a *parasitus edax*. Finally, the *parentes tenaces* are obviously represented by the harmonious, high-principled couple Pudentilla and Apuleius, who do not give way to young Pudens' manipulations and feel happy about their reconciliation with his brother Pontianus.

One may add even more examples. There is the epileptic slave Thallus, who is described by Apuleius with a certain amount of pity but also, with a touch of unmerciful *Schadenfreude*, as an ugly, raging, silly boy who can hardly stand on his feet and easily falls on the floor.[33] Are we not reminded of the clumsy and

was captivated and possessed by the slut's charms and by the tempting lures of her pimp father, (…) and moved to his uncle's'.

29 His medical and biological expertise and his service to Apuleius are mentioned twice, in 33,3 and 48,3. Admittedly, these are no 'clever schemes' as we know them from slaves in comedy. Of that specific element Apuleius himself seems the main exponent. But naturally, he avoids picturing himself as a slave.

30 The parallel is not complete, if only because at the time she is not yet *uxor*. But in general, Pudentilla's 'high moral standards' may be thought of here.

31 He is actually called *patruus* several times: 28,7 and 9; 85,7; 86,5; 98,1–2; 99,1; and 100,8. *Obiurgare* is used for 'criticize' several times in the *Apology*: 77,2 (of Pontianus by Rufinus), 78,5; 82,1; and 87,9 (of Pontianus by Pudentilla).

32 Cf. also Apuleius' praise of another magistrate, Lollianus Avitus, in c.94–5. In this case, the praise is mainly stylistic: Avitus' qualities as a writer of letters are extolled.

33 *Est enim miser morbo comitiali ita confectus, ut ter an quater die saepe numero sine ullis*



lapstick-like characters in the *Atellana* or *mimus*? Finally, Apuleius himself :an also be seen as the 'wise father' re-establishing harmony, and he actually ›ictures himself in this way (93,6).

Not all of these minor parallels are strong and convincing. The model of :omedy in *Fl.* 16 is certainly not a blueprint for the speech, and so it cannot, and ıeed not, be applied in every detail. The important thing to note is that several nain persons involved in the trial would fit into a comic pattern, such as the one ›resented by the *Fl.* passage.

Of course, comedy is not Apuleius' only source for character portrayal.[34] Recent studies have shown his interest in physiognomy, the ancient technique ›f deriving information on a person's inner characteristics from a careful anal-ysis of aspects of the outward appearance.[35] Furthermore, I point to the long radition of rhetorical invective, in which by Apuleius' time 'stock categories ›f attack' had become fully established.[36] A particularly intriguing element is he possible polemic with Christianity, which may be lurking under the surface ›f the *Apology*.[37]

*cantaminibus corruat omniaque membra conflictationibus debilitet, facie ulcerosus, fronte et occipitio conquassatus, oculis hebes, naribus hiulcus, pedibus caducus* (43,9) 'for the pitiful creature has suffered so much from epilepsy that three or four times a day he falls without any incantations, and convulsions leave all of his limbs powerless. His face is ulcerous, his forehead and the back of his head bruised, his eyes dull, his nostrils gaping and his feet unsteady.' (transl. as in n.26 with some changes). According to Callebat 1984, 165, Apuleius' characterization is in the style of comedy; cf. Pl. *Merc.* 639: *canum, uarum, uentriosum, bucculentum, breuiculum,* and Ter. *Hec.* 440–441 *magnus, rubicundus, crispus, crassus, caesius / cadaueroso facie.*

34 It may also be observed that not all typical characters from comedy are represented. Most conspicuously absent is the cook (*coquus*). Food and drink, however, do play a large role in the speech, e.g. in the long section on the use of fish (29–41), which contains a lengthy quotation of Ennius' *Hedyphagetica* (39), and in the characterization of Crassus, who spends most of his time in inns and bars, and tends to reduce everything to what he knows best: the kitchen (58,10).

35 We have two extant ancient treatises on physiognomy, one in Greek and one in Latin. The latter is sometimes attributed to Apuleius, but is clearly not authentic. For Apuleius' interest in physiognomy, see: Elizabeth C. Evans, 'The study of physiognomy in the second century AD', *TAPA* 72 (1941), 96–108; F. Opeku, 'Physiognomy in Apuleius', in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin literature and Roman history*, I, Bruxelles 1979, 467–474; H.J. Mason, 'Physiognomy in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 2,2', *CP* 79 (1984), 307–309.

36 Cf. Ilona Opelt, *Die lateinischen Schimpfwörter und verwandte sprachliche Erscheinungen*, Heidelberg 1965; Severin Koster, *Die Invektive in der griechischen und römischen Literatur*, Meisenheim am Glan 1980; Thomas McCreight, 'Invective techniques in Apuleius' *Apology*', *GCN* 3 (1990), 35–62. Especially the contrast between Apuleius as a man of letters and his opponents as illiterates is dominant in the *Apology*.

37 For Aemilianus as a 'Christian', see Emanuele Griset, 'Un christiano di Sabratha', *RSC* 5

So, considering these rich backgrounds, it would be quite wrong to reduce Apuleius' technique of character portrayal merely to a familiarity with comedy, and that is certainly not my intention. Still, there seems to be sufficient evidence to conclude that Apuleius *also* worked with comical stock characters as his models.

### *A comedy of errors*

We may perhaps venture one step further. It has been suggested by Klaus Sallmann during one of the previous *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* that the *Apology* as a whole may have been intended as amusement (Sallmann 1995). Admittedly, fictitious judicial speeches do occur in antiquity, e.g. among the works of Isocrates, but in such cases the literary character was manifest already in antiquity. As to the *Apology*, we have no ancient or medieval testimony whatsoever pointing in this direction. So, it seems best to assume that some judicial reality lies behind the text.

We may, however, take up Sallmann's initial point, that the *Apology* contains many elements which seem foreign to a court and require a specific explanation.[38] One of the possible approaches seems to be offered by the element of 'comedy'.

Surely, Apuleius was not the first to employ comical points in his speeches.[39] In Roman oratory, the example of Cicero will have been in his mind,[40] but Apuleius seems to have gone much further.[41] Callebat (1984, 164–166) has already suggested that the *Apology* can be analysed as 'prose

(1957), 35–39; for Apuleius as a possible representative of pagan opposition of Christianity, see Victor Schmidt, 'Reaktionen auf das Christentum in den *Metamorphosen* des Apuleius', *VChr* 51 (1997), 51–71 with further references.

38 The problem has often been dealt with in relation to the publication of the speech. Some scholars think that particular sections have been added only after the actual trial. The matter is still under discussion; cf. Hijmans 1994, 1715–1719.

39 For comedy in early and classical Greek rhetoric, see: Phillip Harding 'Comedy and rhetoric', in: Ian Worthington (ed.), *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, London / New York 1994, 196–221.

40 On Cicero's use of comedy, see Katherine A. Geffcken, *Comedy in the Pro Caelio*, Leiden 1973. Geffcken uses 'comedy' in the wider sense of 'humour', but deals with the genre comedy as well.

41 Apuleian scholars often assume that Ciceronean influence *must* be present in the *Apol.* because Cicero was the best known orator. But most of the alleged parallels can be explained as courtroom formulae; cf. Hijmans 1994, 1711 note 7. Apuleius' archaic preferences would lead him to Cato or the Gracchi, rather than to the classical Cicero. As a matter of fact, nowhere in the *Apol.* is Cicero marked out as a significant model; cf. notably 95,5 where Cicero's name is inserted almost casually as the last one in a series of famous orators.



descriptive', 'prose narrative' and 'prose dramatique'. But apart from the examples mentioned above, the French scholar expresses himself in rather general terms. We may be more specific here. I am not suggesting that the *Apology* is something else than a speech, such as a fantastic 'novel', a scientific treatise, or, for that matter, a comedy. But we may assume that it is a speech in some way *modelled on the basic patterns of a comedy*.

If we return to Apuleius' description of good comedy in *Fl.* 16, and apply the other elements mentioned there to his own *Apology*, the results are remarkable. *Multos sales* brings to mind the speaker's wit and humour, while *argumenta lepide inflexa* is a good description of the second half of the speech, dealing with the circumstances of the marriage and the various attempts of enemies to obstruct it. Even *agnitus lucide explicatos* are, in a way, present: a Greek letter of Pudentilla, used against Apuleius by the prosecution, turns out to be evidence in favour of his case (81–84). Apuleius' explanation is 'lucid': Pudentilla's irony had been misunderstood, and the quotation given had been incomplete. Furthermore, throughout the speech Apuleius himself appears to be not the magician he has been held for, but a wise philosopher. *Personas rebus competentes* and *sententias uitae congruentes* seem suitable descriptions of the persons involved in the trial and of part of Apuleius' style. Apuleius' humour is not rude or primitive, while the content of the speech is serious, though never on a 'tragic' level: *ioca non infra soccum, seria non usque ad coturnum*. Seduction or moral corruption (*corruptela*) is actually practiced only among the opponents' ranks, although allegedly Apuleius was guilty of it as well. The moral lapses (*errores*) of those on Apuleius' side remain without serious damage. One can think of Apuleius' step-son Pontianus here, who first supported the marriage plan, then opposed it, but finally made up with Apuleius. *Concessi amores* is by all means the impression Apuleius wants to give of his marriage with Pudentilla.[42] So the generic description of comedy in *Fl.* 16 turns out to be a fitting model for the *Apology* as well.

To all this, we can add some elements of the story, such as the dominant role of dowries and legacies, or the constant joking about other people's stupidity and ignorance.[43] Considered as a whole, the *Apology* has a plot not unlike a comedy of errors. The accusers have mistaken Apuleius for a magician, a seducer and a legacy hunter, and use all kinds of insinuations, tricks and evil

42 The notion is present even in the final summary of reproaches and answers in 103,2: *'uxorem ducis', leges iubent.* ("you marry a wife!" That's the law.)

43 An intriguing passage is c.98 where Pudens is said to be visiting gladiatorial schools and speaking only Punic or 'a bit of Greek.' This recalls Plautus' linguistic parody, especially of a Punic speaking character in the *Poenulus*.

schemes to affirm their claim. But all the evidence unexpectedly turns against them, and Apuleius finally proves to be a heroic defender of philosophy, a kind father and an honest, unselfish husband.

Furthermore, dramatic technique is used in the presentation of facts; for instance, those concerning Pudentilla's testament are only gradually revealed, with a denouement at the end (c.100–101). In this way, the tension is maintained as long as possible. Other examples are the treatment of Pudentilla's Greek letter (c.78–84)[44] and her age (c.89).

As to its general structure, the speech starts in a properly comic fashion with some hilarious sections, such as those concerning toothpowder and fish, and later becomes less turbulent;[45] still, here too constant jokes are made at the expense of the prosecution, and moments of relaxation are duly included. The section on Sophocles, already dealt with above, is the best example of an intermezzo serving as a pause. Finally, the triumphant conclusion suggests a real 'happy ending'.

### *Comedy as strategy*

This leads me to the crucial question of *why* Apuleius has given comedy such an important place in his speech. Surely, by adding comic references, Apuleius amuses his audience and illustrates his own erudition; comic notes serve as ornaments, and the 'prose dramatique', as Callebat has called it, enhances the liveliness and attraction of the speech. But I would suggest that Apuleius' intention lies deeper.

The choice of stock characters and fixed models enables him to mould his material in a specific way. Complex circumstances, subtle distinctions and personal characteristics can all be reduced to simple clichés. For example, the speech hardly gives an idea of what Aemilianus or Pudens must have really been like: their picture is restricted to caricature. Naturally, these simplifications are rhetorically effective: they make it easier for the audience to follow the tale, and allow the speaker to dissimulate weaker points in his argumentation.

To mention one or two points here, Apuleius' opponents were relatives of Pudentilla, and seem to have had quite legitimate economic motives to object

44 The section reads like a proper 'kriminalistisches Bravourstück auf literarischem Gebiet', as Sallmann 1995, 154 puts it.

45 In *Fl.* 16,10 Apuleius says that comedy strikes different notes when it has come halfway: *(…) cumque iam in tertio actu, quod genus in comoedia fieri amat, iucundiores adfectus moueret* 'when he (i.e. the poet) had come to the third act and, as usually happens in comedy, was exciting more pleasant emotions.'



to her marriage to Apuleius. The marriage might cause the family capital to slip out of their hands, which was obviously not in their interest.[46] Apuleius' picture of them does not allow such nuances to become apparent. Furthermore, Apuleius' knowledge of magic seems beyond all reasonable doubt,[47] but the constant ridiculing of the prosecution helps to keep this out of the picture.

Perhaps more importantly, by invoking comic associations, Apuleius is automatically influencing the expectations of the audience about the outcome of the trial. For example, by depicting Rufinus as a pimp, he seems to be doing more than merely disqualifying him as a witness. As Segal (1968, 79–92) observes, pimps always represent 'anticomedy attitudes', such as a constant care for money and profit. In the end, 'the Plautine pimp is always punished' (p.81): he is usually represented as a foreigner, who by the end of the play will be excluded from the community. So, as soon as Rufinus is called a pimp, the public immediately knows what will become of him. Similarly, the use of the model of the *maccus* rouses specific expectations: in his note on *Apol.* 81, Marchesi remarks that on stage the *maccus* was usually the target of jokes and even blows. The picture of Crassus in terms of the *maccus* seems to involve what we might even call substitute or symbolic violence. Apuleius' words seem to function almost like a spell here.[48]

In so far as the case is presented like a comedy, the expected outcome is manifest, too: in the comic pattern, a happy ending is, of course, indispensable. Confusion must be removed, errors and mistakes solved and harmony restored. For this very reason, Apuleius may have decided to use comedy as one of his models: it enables him to manipulate the audience into expecting a 'fitting solution of the plot,' that is: victory for the defendant Apuleius.[49] In this way, comedy seems to have become an important element in his rhetorical strategy.

46 Cf. E. Ifie / L. Thompson, 'Rank, social status and esteem in Apuleius', *Museum Africum* 6 (1977–78), 21–36.

47 Cf. A. Abt, *Die Apologie von Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei*, Giessen 1908; and Butler/Owen (passim).

48 The use of language as a magical tool in the *Apology* has sometimes been noticed, but deserves a separate study. The most striking example is Apuleius' veritable *curse* of Aemilianus in 64,1.

49 We do not know for sure whether Apuleius was acquitted or not, although the speech as a whole strongly suggests that he was; for further discussion see Hunink 1997, I, Introduction A.3. However, for the present argument, it is not the *actual* outcome of the trial that matters, but the *expectations* about it, as roused in the speech itself.

## *Conclusion*

So, not only can Callebat's notion of the *Apology* as 'prose dramatique' be confirmed, it can be considerably extended as well. Even if not all elements in the comparison between *Fl.* 16 and the *Apology* are equally convincing, it is clear that the presence of comedy in the *Apology* reaches far beyond a superficial level of quotations and explicit references.

Depicting the persons involved in the trial as comic characters is the most conspicuous and effective comic element. As a whole, the speech exploits several general traits of comedy for its own, rhetorical purpose, and is even partly constructed as a comedy itself,[50] with its end effectively foreshadowed already in the beginning.

So, the ingenious use of comedy is not restricted to Apuleius' novel. It forms an integral and structural element in his *Apology*, too, and may therefore be seen as a *Leitmotiv* in the finest parts of his extant oeuvre.

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50 Returning to the *Met.*, one is perhaps reminded of the attempt Walsh and Kenney made to present the story of Cupid and Psyche in terms of a *tragedy* with five 'Actus'; cf. Apuleius, *Cupid & Psyche*, edited by E.J. Kenney, Cambridge 1990, esp. 20 note 88. Kenney actually prints indications of these 'acts' in his commentary. However, this is not supported by much evidence or properly defended. The *Apology* should not, by analogy, be subdivided as a comedy. It is a speech, but one in which the model of comedy is operative all the time.



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