

ethnographic 'otherness' in the novel see Bowie (1991), Bowersock (1994) esp. 29–53, Whitmarsh (1998), (1999), Kuch (2003). Elsner (1997) is a penetrating discussion of the travel theme in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Romm (1994) discusses the travel theme in Antonius Diogenes and later novelistic literature. More generally on travel literature in antiquity see André-Baslez (1992), Romm (1992), Clarke (1999).

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JASON KÖNIG

Body and text

The bodies of the ancient novels are hard to ignore: beautiful, chaste bodies, god-like bodies, ugly bodies, dead bodies, fragmented bodies, penetrated bodies, animal bodies, bodies that are hard to tell apart from one another. The novels confront us with these forms insistently. Some of them look easy to interpret, as shining examples of chastity and virtue, qualities that manifest themselves inevitably in beauty. But many of them are enigmatic, unstable, hard to fathom. Here I want to emphasise two main issues in the challenge of reading the novels' bodies: first the way in which these texts both proclaim and problematise the status of physical appearance as a guarantor of inner identity; and second, the way in which the bodies they present us with are so often equivalent in form to the texts themselves, metaphors and mirrors for the very experience of reading.

Bodily integrity and elite identity

The elite society of the imperial period was preoccupied with the way in which social status left its marks on the surface of the human body. The way you dressed, the way you carried yourself, the way you exercised your body said a great deal about who you were. This was an age when gymnasium education,¹ rhetorical prowess (with its obsessive attention to the bearing and physical training of the orator),² and philosophically informed attention to bodily self-care³ were more prestigious then they ever had been, and when public violation and mutilation of the body in punishment were used more routinely and extravagantly than before to signify loss of social status or political influence.⁴ Additionally, the development of new types of Christian thinking about the body – the valorisation of chastity and the glorification of the martyred body, now recuperated from its degradation to be a sign of

1 König (2005) esp. 97–157. 2 Gleason (1995).
3 Foucault (1986). 4 Gleason (2001) esp. 74–85.

Christian victory – was both an integral part of this world and a profound reshaping of it.⁵ And yet the relation between physical form and personal identity was never a straightforward one. The link between body and identity was often hard to guarantee, subject to acute anxiety and to varied interpretation, in need of constant reaffirmation through the repeated performances of day-to-day self-presentation.⁶ That is not to suggest that the bodies of the ancient world were always viewed as malleable and unstable. No doubt many people in the Roman world would have felt little discrepancy between their own bodily appearance and (say) social status. My point is rather that that kind of certainty always had the *potential* to be undermined, especially for members of the elite for whom the pressures of public self-display were so strong. As modern sociological thought tells us, the body is the most familiar and tangible aspect of our selves. And yet that sense of fixity is always in tension with an awareness of the body's alienness, an awareness of its capacity to elude our control. There are always moments when the uncertainties and inconsistencies that lie behind even the most confident acts of bodily self-presentation have the potential to resurface.⁷ The ancient novels both reflect and adapt these assumptions and anxieties.

I turn first of all to the Greek novels, before moving on to Petronius and Apuleius in the second half of this section. The Greek novel texts share many features with early Christian narrative, through their obsession with the chastity and physical inviolability of their heroes and heroines in the face of torture and attempted seduction.⁸ Physical perfection is given great emphasis, for one thing, in descriptions of the protagonists' upbringing and background. In Chariton's novel, for example, there is a recurrent association between beauty and Hellenic good breeding, both in the opening and closing scenes and in the intervening books when the protagonists are removed from the safety of their home city. In these opening scenes, the heroine Callirhoe is introduced to us as daughter of the great Sicilian general Hermocrates. Her beauty draws suitors from all over the Greek-speaking world. Her lover Chaereas is an icon of Greek good-birth and athleticism, trained, like all good Greek citizens, in the gymnasium (1.1). Callirhoe's beauty later acts as a marker and guarantee of her nobility (2.3), outdazzling even the most beautiful women of luxurious Persia (5.3). And their glorious return and reunion in book 8, against all the odds, offers a fantasy image of the triumph of noble, Hellenic virtue, restoring Callirhoe's beauty – further enhanced by her suffering, so the Syracusans believe (8.6) – to its natural home.

⁵ Gleason (1999); Perkins (1995).

⁶ See e.g. Gleason (1995); also Wyke (1998) on the unstable bodies of the ancient world.

⁷ Turner (1996); Shilling (1993). ⁸ Perkins (1995) esp. 41–76.

The fantastical perfection and invulnerability of the elite body is also on show in the many scenes in all of the Greek novels where the heroes and heroines escape unscathed from the ravagings of torture, punishment and imprisonment, often because their beauty compels their enemies to pity (examples below). Here, too, the novels have much in common with other Greek and Roman texts contemporary with them, which are so often preoccupied with examining the physical effects of suffering. That kind of preoccupation is displayed in perhaps its most vivid and – to modern eyes – alien form in the *Sacred Tales* of Aelius Aristides, Aristides' day-by-day catalogue of his own chronic illness and of the assistance he received from the god Asclepius. Pain has the capacity to threaten one's sense of self; it requires elaborate coping mechanisms, which may often involve the 'creation of narrative'. Far from seeking out strategies for ignoring his own pain and the flawed physicality it reminds him of, Aristides engages with it: 'The body, susceptible to pain, disease, old age, and death, seems to be a sign of distance from the divine world, but the creation of a story from the minute details of its physicality paradoxically seeks to transcend its materiality and make it into a sign of divine favour.'⁹ Many other texts from the imperial period – Christian narrative included – give similarly intricate attention to the lived experience of bodily suffering, and find ways of recuperating pain, making it into a sign of triumph, not degradation, a defining feature of selfhood, rather than a threat to it.

The Greek novels follow that lead, but they also depart from it strikingly in the sense that many of them go out of their way to avoid detailed description of the physicality of suffering, in contrast with the intricate attention to physical pain which we find in Aristides and in much hagiographic Christian narrative.¹⁰ Heliodorus goes furthest in registering awareness of the way in which even the most resolute of bodies can be ground down by torture. In book 8, for example, the suffering inflicted on Theagenes and Charicleia by the servants of Arsace leaves its mark – if only inconspicuously – on their bodies:

When Bagoas looked at them, even though they were in chains and by now worn out through torture, still he was impressed by their size and their beauty. (8.13)

Here there is a hint that their unparalleled beauty may have faded, although their powers of resistance are all the more remarkable for being so

⁹ King (1999) 282.

¹⁰ Perkins (1995) esp. 80; see also 173 on the differences between novelistic visions of suffering and the picture offered by Aristides; 202–4 on differences between the novels and their Christian hagiographic counterparts.

pointedly grounded in the realities of bodily suffering. More often, however, in Heliodorus and elsewhere, physical pain is written out of the picture, as if it is so far outweighed by mental suffering as to be negligible. Chariton takes that technique furthest, returning obsessively to the scene of emotions in turmoil,¹¹ emotions that affect the body and the mind in far more overwhelming ways than any externally imposed, human violence. That privileging of mental disturbance over external disruption is clear from the very beginning, from Chariton's elaborate descriptions of the divinely imposed internal violence of love-sickness in the opening paragraphs of the novel.

Elsewhere suffering is eroticised, made into an object of viewing, for example when Clitophon watches mesmerised while his lover Leucippe is (so it seems) disembowelled (*Leucippe and Clitophon* 3.15).¹² And in many cases, especially in Xenophon's *Anthia and Habrocomes*, the elision of physical suffering contributes to an atmosphere of release from the restricting realities of the material world. Xenophon's novel lurches from one narrative crux to the next, with an exhilarating disregard both for the complications of bodily restrictions and for the snares of narrative involution. For example, Habrocomes' crucifixion is described with no attention to physical pain:

the prefect ordered them to take him away and crucify him. Habrocomes was stunned by these misfortunes, but he consoled himself in the face of death with the thought that Anthia too seemed to have died. (4.2)

He prays to the sun god, and rescue comes within moments:

A gust of wind suddenly blew up and struck the cross, sweeping away the soil on which it had been fixed from the top of the cliff. Habrocomes fell into the river and was carried downstream. The water did not harm him, the chains did not hinder him, no wild beasts attacked him; instead the current escorted him along. (4.2)

Anthia and Habrocomes are fantastically incorporeal figures, alluringly free from the physical self-obsessions of Aristides and the other suffering selves of the imperial world.¹³

The Greek novels thus regularly offer us fantasy images of Greek physical beauty and inviolability. At the same time, however, they show a constant awareness of the instability of beauty and of the elite virtue and identity it is taken to guarantee. In that sense, any argument that emphasises the way in which the Greek novels showcase the integrity of the elite body risks underplaying the degree to which that integrity is humorously

undermined.¹⁴ Most obviously, the protagonists' maintenance of chastity is repeatedly placed at risk, both in the recurring scene of heroines leading on their would-be seducers in order to play for time, and also, more concretely, in the examples of heroes and heroines violating the expectation of sexual fidelity: Daphnis' encounter with Lycaenion (3.16–19); Clitophon's pleasuring of Melite, and her comically sophistical justifications that precede it (5.26–7); and Callirhoe's marriage to Dionysius (2.10–3.2). This last event is prefigured by the comparison in the very opening sentence (1.1) between Callirhoe and the oxymoronic 'Virgin Aphrodite', a figure who encapsulates something of the ambiguities which lurk beneath the respectable beauty of many of the novels' heroines.

Less often noted, but equally persistent, is the tension between recognisability and anonymity in the beauty of the Greek novels' protagonists. In Xenophon of Ephesus, for example, the hero and heroine are repeatedly misrecognised by other characters (4.3, 5.10, 5.12), despite what we are told about their distinctive beauty. In Achilles Tatius, Clitophon encounters Leucippe without recognising her, simply because she has been enslaved and her hair shaved (although admittedly this is after what he thinks is her death; and he does notice a certain resemblance – or so he claims in narrating the story retrospectively).¹⁵ In Iamblichus' *Babylonian Affairs*, most nightmarishly, the hero Rhodanes is regularly confused with a pair of twin brothers, called Tigris and Euphrates, who are exact physical doubles both of each other and of him;¹⁶ and the father of the heroine Sinon is mistakes her for the dead girl Trophime, and kills himself from grief, at which point Rhodanes and his companion Soraechus come close to making the same mistake, and are saved from suicide only at the last moment.¹⁷

That theme of non-recognition is given a comical twist in book 7 of Heliodorus' *Charicleia and Theagenes*.¹⁸ Here Theagenes is running round the walls of Memphis, watching the bizarre single combat of the brothers Thyamis and Petosiris. The brothers' father Calasiris arrives disguised as a beggar, and stops the fight by running after them and revealing his true identity to them, throwing off his rags like Odysseus. Charicleia has arrived with him, also disguised as a beggar, and she too joins in the chase around the walls, having spotted her beloved Theagenes from a great distance:

¹⁴ As Goldhill (1995) shows at length (esp. 1–45, 112–32).

¹⁵ At 5.17; cf. 5.7 where he fails to recognise that the headless body he mourns over and buries is not Leucippe's but that of a prostitute executed in her place.

¹⁶ Photius, *Library* codex 94 75b41–a6 = Stephens and Winkler (1995) 194.

¹⁷ Photius, *Library* codex 94 77a29–b9 = Stephens and Winkler (1995) 197.

¹⁸ Cf. Cave (1988) 17–21 on the final recognition of Charicleia in book 10, as part of a broader argument for tensions between resolution and uncertainty inherent in literary traditions of the 'recognition scene' from Homer onwards.

¹¹ Fusillo (1990b). ¹² See Morales (2004) 166–9.

¹³ Cf. Keul-Deutscher (1996) on the all-powerful beauty of Theagenes and Charicleia in *Charicleia and Theagenes*, powerful enough to overcome any threat.

For the sight is often sharp in its recognition of those one loves, and often just a movement or a shape, even if it is far away, is enough to bring an image resembling the beloved before one's mind. Charicleia approached him, as if goaded into madness by the sight, and draping herself around his neck tightly she hung on to him and clung to him and greeted him with mournful cries. But Theagenes, as you would expect, on seeing her face, which had grown dirty and ugly, and her worn-out and tattered clothes, tried to push her away and elbow her aside as if she really was a beggar and a tramp. And then finally, when she refused to let go of him, since she was annoying him and blocking his view of what was happening to Calasiris, he slapped her. (7.7)

They are, of course, soon reconciled, when Charicleia's true identity is revealed, but it is hard to avoid the impression of undignified, comical overtones contaminating their quasi-Odyssean reunion. The point about the power of love to bring recognition even over huge distances works in this passage for Charicleia, but is immediately and humorously contradicted for Theagenes, despite the fact that his view of Charicleia is at very much closer range than her first sight of him. Moreover, Heliodorus seems to be using this detail in order to explore the workings of specifically elite self-perception by the juxtaposition of Charicleia's poverty and Theagenes' dignity. Theagenes fails to recognise Charicleia partly because her beggarly appearance is incompatible with his view of what a properly brought up young lady ought to look like. He quite literally pushes away from himself the threat of contamination with non-elite identity.

The theme of the transparency of the human body is continued in the novels' repeated preoccupation with the way in which emotions leave physical traces on the surface of the human body.¹⁹ The novels are full of passages describing the outer manifestations of jealousy and fear and shame, and, especially, love, often in the language of medical and physiognomical theory,²⁰ and we frequently see the novels' characters themselves drawing on that kind of specialised language to interpret those symptoms. The effect reaches its most extraordinary levels in Achilles Tatius, where the gaze of the narrator seems capable of seeing through the physical surfaces of the human form, charting the way in which emotions churn up the insides of the body, forcing themselves through the skin; and the way in which beauty slips its way through the eyes of the onlooker and burrows down into the

19 Cf. Maehler (1990) on the novels' fascination with the symptoms of love, and on the uniformity with which those symptoms are described.

20 See Toohey (1992) 273–5, and esp. Morales (2004); also Dickie (1991) on Calasiris' discussion of the effects of the evil eye in *Charicleia and Theagenes* book 3 as a pastiche of Plutarch's theories.

soul. In book 5, for example, the narrator Clitophon describes the love of Melite for him:

She was not able to take in food, but instead looked at me with all her concentration. For nothing seems sweet to those in love, except for the beloved. Love takes over the whole soul, and does not leave any room even for food. The pleasure of this sight flows in through the eyes and occupies the breast; and there it draws the image of the beloved to itself unceasingly, and imprints it on the mirror of the soul, reproducing its shape. The emanation of beauty is drawn down into the loving heart by unseen rays and impresses its shadow there down below. (5.13)

The arrows of Eros are explained, rephrased, modernised through the language of medical and philosophical theories of vision (although we might also be conscious of the fact that this narrator's self-serving, retrospective descriptions of the women he encounters are less than trustworthy, that his claim to be able to map inner emotions by his analysis of outward bodily signs is far from reliable).²¹

The human body is thus regularly portrayed as a window onto the emotions and virtues which lie beneath it. And yet that sense of the openness of the body to medical analysis is often undermined by the way in which characters fabricate symptoms and manufacture their own bodily appearance.²² That motif is most strikingly presented in the long story told by Calasiris in books 2–4 of Heliodorus' *Charicleia and Theagenes*, where Calasiris' decipherment of the lovesickness in Theagenes and Charicleia – which draws on contemporary medical discussions of the symptoms of love – is juxtaposed with proudly recounted examples of his own deceptive self-presentation.²³ In book 3, for example, Calasiris correctly diagnoses Theagenes' lovesickness, but chooses to conceal it from her father behind a deliberately theatrical means of display:

I therefore decided that it was the right occasion to do some wonder-working for him, and to pretend to prophesy things which I already knew. So I gazed at him cheerfully and said, 'Even if you yourself hesitate to confess, nevertheless there is nothing which is unknown to my wisdom and to the gods.' Then I

21 Cf. Goldhill (2001b) 167–72 on this passage.

22 E.g. Cnemon's faking of diarrhoea at *Charicleia and Theagenes* 2.19; Anthia's fabrication of epilepsy at Xen. Eph. 5.7.

23 Cf. Apul. *Met.* 10.9, where we see a doctor giving a reliable interpretation of the truth lying beneath the surface of the human body; as with Heliodorus, however, that scene of reliable medical vision is juxtaposed with recurrent descriptions of misleading bodily appearance and deceptive medical treatment (e.g. 10.2, 10.12, 10.25), as Gleason (1999) 288–9 has pointed out.

paused momentarily and made some meaningless calculations on my fingers, and shook my hair around, acting like someone in a trance; and then I spoke, 'You are in love, my child.' (3.17)

This scene draws on the common image of the manipulative holy-man.²⁴ It also draws on the image of medical diagnosis as magic, imagery that the second-century CE doctor Galen exploits but also strives to dissociate himself from in his medical writing.²⁵ Calasiris' ability to decipher physical symptoms is thus intertwined with reminders of the manipulative deceptiveness of his own bodily self-portrayal, and with connotations of ingenious trickery masquerading as learned medical diagnosis.²⁶

There is, then, a recurring fascination within all of the Greek novels with the degree to which physical appearance guarantees internal reality. The link between virtue and bodily beauty is repeatedly asserted, but also – even in the texts of Chariton and Xenophon which have so often been classed as 'idealising' texts – humorously undermined. Threats to the human body and to its chastity are of course very much more prominent in the Latin novels of Petronius and Apuleius, as we shall see in a moment, and in the sex-filled Greek fragments – like Lollianus' *Phoenician Affairs* and *Iolaus* – which have sometimes been categorised as parodic or comic versions of the 'idealising' Greek novels. But the evidence I have outlined here suggests that we should be cautious of drawing any distinction between 'idealising' and non-idealising' fictional traditions in the ancient world, at least in terms of their representation of the human body. Even the most noble and upstanding of the novels' heroes and heroines find it conspicuously difficult to guarantee bodily beauty and virtue.

These anxieties about elite physicality are signalled more extravagantly in the theme of fragmentation and physical vulnerability of the human body. This theme is conspicuous within the Greek texts I have discussed – most strikingly in the opening of Heliodorus' novel, which shows us body parts strewn over a beach, mixed with the remains of a banquet, without any immediate explanation for the situation, an image which anticipates the challenge we face as readers to piece together the disjointed threads of the novel's narrative²⁷ – but it surfaces most insistently in the novels of Petronius and Apuleius. Glenn Most has drawn attention to the prevalence of bodily dismemberment in Neronian Latin poetry, for example within the

²⁴ Anderson (1994) 185–6. ²⁵ Barton (1994) 136–7.

²⁶ Winkler (1982) suggests that the narrative reveals Calasiris to be ultimately trustworthy despite his fabricated appearance, on the grounds that his Odyssean manipulation of both narrative and personal identity is in the service of admirable ends; Baumbach (1997) disagrees, re-emphasising Calasiris' ambiguous identity as both sage and charlatan.

²⁷ See Winkler (1982) 96–100; Bühler (1976).

tragedies of Seneca and within Lucan's epic *Civil War*. He suggests that this obsession may be 'the symptom of an anguished reflection upon the nature of human identity and upon the uneasy border between men and animals';²⁸ and he relates it to questions asked within Stoic philosophy about the continuity of personal identity, and more specifically about the extent to which mutilation of a body will lead to the 'loss of personal identity of that body's owner'.²⁹ As Most points out, Petronius' *Satyricon* (which is almost certainly itself a Neronian text) exemplifies that pattern well, through its 'scenes of and allusions to threatened amputation of the *membrum virile* and other forms of mutilation of the body'.³⁰ It does so also through its repeated visions of failed consumption, eating and drinking which threaten the integrity of the human body, spilling out beyond the body's boundaries (on which more in a moment); and through the fragmentation of the narrator's voice, which lurches between so many different poses at different points in the narrative.³¹ It may even be that Neronian Rome, with its obsessive theatricalisation of public life – at least for those who were linked, like Petronius (if the author of the text has been correctly identified as Nero's 'arbiter of taste'), with the imperial court – provoked particularly acute questions about the links between outward appearance and inner reality, questions that Petronius' bodies pose in provocative ways.

These images of dismemberment are taken to their furthest extreme, however, in a text of the second century CE, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. Apuleius' obsession with questions of physical form and personal identity has less to do with the theatricality of the imperial court than with his status as a member of the culturally mobile second-century elite, as an African orator and philosopher who flaunted his ability to perform in both Greek and Latin.³² He shows a fascination with shifting personal identities not only in the *Metamorphoses*,³³ but also in more avowedly 'autobiographical' works like the *Apology*, where he defends himself against charges of magic while at the same time flaunting his own shape-changing abilities in the fields of linguistic and cultural self-fashioning, in contrast with the ignorant parochialism of his accusers. In line with those preoccupations, the *Metamorphoses* is full of fragmented and penetrated bodies. Pamphile's magical ingredients include 'surviving leftovers of inauspicious birds, and a spread of numerous body parts from lamented and even buried corpses: on one side noses and fingers, on another, flesh-covered nails from the victims of crucifixion, elsewhere the

²⁸ Most (1992) 405. ²⁹ Ibid. 406. ³⁰ Ibid. 396 and 428 n. 28. ³¹ Rimell (2002).

³² On Apuleius' relation with sophistic culture, see Sandy (1997) and Harrison (2000).

³³ The theme of bodily metamorphosis is present within the Greek novel tradition too: not just in the Greek *Ass*, but also in the inserted narrative of Pan and Syrinx at Long. 2.34, and the same story at Ach. Tat. 8.6.

preserved blood of butchered human bodies and maimed skulls twisted from the teeth of wild animals' (3.17), a treasure-trove which prefigures the frequent risks to bodily integrity which Lucius is destined to undergo once he is changed to a donkey by his own misuse of Pamphile's magical substances. Lucius' owners in book 8 are warned of the dangers of the road they are about to travel along in similar language: 'And then they told us that the whole route we were to follow was covered with half-eaten human bodies, and that the road shone from the whiteness of human bones stripped of their flesh' (8.15). Again, these seemingly gratuitous snippets of gory detail are related to the more profound threat to personal identity and bodily integrity which Lucius himself undergoes as a result of his transformation to a donkey. He is exposed to the threat of physical mutilation and horrible death;³⁴ he is aware of the danger that his new-body may be causing the gradual dissolution of his human identity,³⁵ and his bodily transformation is described as a kind of fragmentation, a separation from his true self. Shortly before his rehumanisation, for example, he looks forward to eating the roses which he knows will act as an antidote to the ointment which caused his original transformation: 'recently the roses had burst forth, breaking through their spiny covers and breathing odours of cinnamon – roses that would restore me to my former Lucius' (10.29).³⁶ Here his reunion with his former self is cast as a bizarrely distorted version of the reunions between hero and heroine which end most of the Greek novels, and Lucius' travails are thus represented as an intensified version of the challenges to elite identity and bodily beauty faced by the Greek novel protagonists. Like those Greek protagonists, Lucius' own respectable, elite ancestry is given prominent attention – for example in his claim to be descended from the philosopher Plutarch³⁷ – and the physical degradation he experiences as a donkey is presented through the language of social degradation, as he charts on his new donkey's body the marks of slavery and human poverty.³⁸ Apuleius thus draws on the Greek novels' obsession with the vulnerability of human physical beauty and of the identity it purports to guarantee, but transforms it in order to ask his own more blatantly grotesque and humorous questions about the stability or otherwise of human selfhood.

34 E.g. *Met.* 4.3, 4.5, 6.31–2, 7.22–4, 8.31–9.1.

35 See Shumate (1996) 65–71; cf. *Met.* 4.20, where the robber Thrasyleon, who has been sewn into a bear-skin to facilitate his companions' plans for burglary, continues to act as a bear even while he is being mauled to death by dogs.

36 Cf. *Met.* 11.2. 37 *Met.* 1.2 and 2.3.

38 See e.g. 9.12–13, where the horrifying physical condition of the slaves in the mill where Lucius is working is equated with the physical condition of his fellow animals; cf. George (2002) 45, and further Whitmarsh, 'Class', this volume.

Body and text

Our experience of reading these fictional bodies – this is my second main point – is often implicitly linked with our experiences of the detailed texture of the novels themselves. Critical analysis of modern fiction has drawn attention to repeated parallels between body and text, and those insights, I suggest, have important and generally underestimated implications for our understanding of the (insistently corporeal) novels of the Greek and Roman world. Peter Brooks has analysed from a psychoanalytic perspective the way in which the allure of the physical bodies of fiction often parallels readerly desire for mastery over the complexities of the text.³⁹ He argues that

In modern narrative literature, a protagonist often desires a body . . . and that body comes to represent for the protagonist an ultimate apparent good, since it appears to hold within itself – as itself – the key to satisfaction, power, and meaning. On the plane of reading, desire for knowledge of that body and its secrets becomes the desire to master the text's symbolic system, its key to knowledge, pleasure, and the very creation of significance.⁴⁰

He suggests, further, that the fascination and inscrutability of the female body in particular is often a driving force of narrative. The desire to know the individuals we encounter in reading, to see beneath the surfaces of the body and of the text, is a motivating force for readers and characters alike, although in both cases desire is always necessarily veined with frustration, as we are brought up against the impossibility of ever fully knowing or possessing another's body, or ever fathoming in full the physical surfaces of the texts we look at or listen to.

For Mikhail Bakhtin, meanwhile, the body is a crucial image within his analysis of the workings of novelistic discourse, especially in his writing on Rabelais.⁴¹ All human utterances, by Bakhtin's account, are inescapably ingrained with the many different meanings and connotations imposed on them by previous users of language. In the novel form those intertextual qualities often take on a special intensity. The novel revels in the richness of competing voices and tones woven into it, 'dramatising as complexly as possible the play of voices and contexts enabling speech or writing as social acts'.⁴² Novels, in other words, often gain their most distinctive effects by drawing into themselves ideas and speech patterns from across an enormous

39 Brooks (1993). 40 Ibid. 8.

41 See Bakhtin (1984a), and discussion by (amongst many others) Dentith (1995) 66–8 and Holquist (1990) 89–90; see however Rimell (2002) 123–39 for criticism of Bakhtin's reading of the story of the widow of Ephesus at *Satyrica* 110–12.

42 See Branham (2002b) xix; see also Branham (2005) for discussion of the applicability of Bakhtin's approaches to the Greek and Roman novels.

range of human experience, setting them into dialogue with each other. In much the same way, the grotesque bodies of Rabelais' world are interwoven with the world around them through repeated scenes of eating and drinking, copulation and defecation, dismemberment and cannibalism. The boundaries of Rabelais' bodies, in other words, like his novels themselves, are not stable; they constantly threaten to spill out into the world around them, and to be permeated by that world: 'the body is, if you will, *intercorporeal* in much the same way as the novel is intertextual. Like the novel, the body cannot be conceived outside a web of interrelations of which it is a living part'.⁴³

Associations between body and text are deeply ingrained both in the structure of the Greek and Roman novels and in the detailed texture of the reading experiences they offer. One reason for this is the fact that broad characterisation of any of these texts is necessarily intertwined with our judgement of its protagonists. Thus the mildly titillating air of compromised respectability which is such a central feature of all the surviving Greek novels, and which has been a driving force for so much later interpretation of them – interpretation that has oscillated between praise of the novels' moral exemplarity and of their eroticism, often without sufficient acknowledgement of the way in which these two qualities are inextricably and paradoxically combined with each other – is a direct consequence of the ambiguity between seductiveness and virtuousness in their main characters' beauty. But other links are more enigmatic and more artful. In Iamblichus' *Babylonian Affairs*, for example, the author's presentation of physical doubles for his main characters is paralleled by the structure of the work, which repeatedly replays the same scenes in more than one form.⁴⁴ The bewildering experience of mistaken identity is thus something we experience through our own difficulty as readers in telling different scenes apart. In Heliodorus' *Charicleia and Theagenes*, the unfathomability and cultural hybridity of Charicleia – the Ethiopian/Greek heroine, born white from black parents – and of Calasiris – the Greek-Egyptian sage whose mendacity and accompanying physical deceptiveness we have glimpsed already – are images for, and mirrored by, the text itself. Like the bodies of Charicleia and Calasiris, the novel's tricky surface is full of puzzles and riddles; like them it does finally reveal its secrets. Like Charicleia, it also flaunts its own cultural hybridity, its own transgressive literary genealogy, by its relocation and reformation of the *Odyssey* and other founding texts of Greek cultural tradition.⁴⁵ In the very opening scene of the novel, to take just one example, Charicleia's body is set up as a text to

be deciphered, a starting point for the slow and winding move towards narrative resolution in the books which follow. Our only access to the opening scenes of the novel comes through the bewildered perspective of the barbarian bandits who encounter her nursing Theagenes on the body-strewn beach. At several points, their incomprehension of Charicleia is implicitly linked with our own:

When they had moved a little way from the ship and the corpses around it they were confronted by a sight even more puzzling than the last. A girl was sitting on a rock, a sight of such amazing beauty that she seemed to be a goddess . . . These things terrified them. Ignorance of what had happened terrified them even more so than the sight itself. Some of them said she was a goddess – the goddess Artemis, or the goddess Isis worshipped in that region; others said she was a priestess who had been maddened by the gods and had committed the great slaughter they had seen. That is what these men thought, but they did not yet know the truth. (1.2)

Charicleia's body of course turns out to be marked with the bizarre truth of her origins – and of the origins of the story she inhabits – in more literal ways than the bandits can ever know, especially in 10.15 where the black birthmark on her arm acts as a guarantee of her identity, a sign of her origins written indelibly on her skin. As it turns out, these onlookers of book 1 never will 'know the truth' in the sense that we as readers will come to know it. The 'yet' of that final phrase is not really there for the bandits, but for us, a sign of what is in store for us, and a sign that our deciphering of Charicleia and of the plot will be parallel with each other.

It is, however, the two Latin texts of Petronius and Apuleius that offer us the most visceral intertwining of corporeal and novelistic texture. One of the further points Glenn Most makes in his analysis of the dismembered bodies of Neronian literature is about the fragmented literary style that they mirror:

There is an obvious correlation between the scenes of amputation of the human bodies in the works of Seneca and his contemporaries on the one hand and the dismemberment of the body of the sentence for which Seneca was celebrated on the other. What happens to the bodies of the characters in Seneca's and Lucan's fictions corresponds to what happens to the bodies of these fictions as well . . .⁴⁶

Those insights, again, are important for Petronius, whose own text reveals in its own fragmentariness and disjointedness in such extraordinary ways, and whose cannibalisation of so many different poses and genres⁴⁷ parallels

43 Holquist (1990) 90.
45 Whitmarsh (1998).

44 Stephens and Winkler (1995) 184–6.

46 Most (1992) 408. 47 Connors (1998).

the many scenes of indiscriminate and barely controlled consumption with which the narrative confronts us. Victoria Rimell has recently made the image of text as body the single guiding metaphor for her analysis of Petronius, drawing attention to the ways in which the text offers itself to us for our consumption, but also always threatens to take control over us as readers, just as all food – and especially the food of the *Satyricon* – has the capacity to blend with and even threaten the identity of its consumer: ‘literature in the *Satyricon* is no longer just written, static and containable, but is imaged as a live body, a flesh or food ingested in the process of learning and spewed out from bodies in performance: inside the consumer, it is a volatile force transmuted in the process of digestion which may also gnaw away its host from within’.⁴⁸

The text, in other words, repeatedly challenges the distinction between inside and outside. For one thing – like Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* – it shows us bodies whose boundaries are insecure and vulnerable. For example, the orgy at the house of Quartilla (*Satyricon* 16–26) is packed with the language of permeation and penetration. Quartilla pricks Encolpius’ cheek with a hairpin (*Satyricon* 21) in an attempt to stop his resistance; the *cinaedus* (‘deviant’, ‘catamite’) who arrives immediately afterwards ‘at one moment cut into us, forcing apart our buttocks, the next moment defiled us with his stinking kisses’ (*Sat.* 21), violating the integrity of their bodies, and at the same time spreading the vile influence of his own. Those images of penetration are juxtaposed with the vision of Encolpius’ erectile dysfunction, a sign of the body’s refusal to conform, its alienness to its owner. Once again, in the description of Encolpius’ impotence, it is a *cinaedus* who breaks down the distinctions between inside and outside:

Having got to the end of his poetry, he spattered me with the foulest of kisses. And then he got on to my bed, and ripped off my covers, despite my resistance. He worked for a long time and vigorously on my groin, but in vain. Streams of sweaty gum began to flow down from his forehead, and between the wrinkles of his cheeks there was so much make-up that you would have thought he was an unprotected wall suffering the effects of a rain-storm.
(*Sat.* 23)

As before, the image of violated boundaries (the bed cover ripped away) is juxtaposed with the permeability of the *cinaedus*’ skin. And the whole episode is fuelled by Quartilla’s aphrodisiac potion (*Sat.* 20), another instance of the way in which food and drink in the novel take over their consumer’s

bodies – although in this case the effects are distorted by Encolpius’ impotence: the potion draws him even further into the threateningly night-marish eroticism of the orgy, but without the empowerment it seems to promise.

When we reach Trimalchio’s banquet, the imagery of bodies bursting out beyond their bounds reaches even higher levels of intensity. Early on, for example, Trimalchio gives a commentary on the blockage of his bowels and the medical help he has sought, before announcing that everything is on the mend: ‘Besides, my stomach is rumbling; you’d think it was a bull making that noise. So if any of you should wish to satisfy the needs of nature there is no reason to be ashamed of it. None of us was born solid. I don’t think there’s any torment so great as having to hold oneself in’ (*Sat.* 47). This rumbling of Trimalchio’s stomach is an omen of what is to come, as the imagery of regurgitation and spillage is actualised in the banquet’s dishes: the stuffed pig, who spills out sausages and black puddings when its stomach is slit (*Sat.* 49); and the cakes which spurt out saffron and other unpleasant liquid into the faces of those who touch them (*Sat.* 60). In addition – and crucially – the image of uncontrollable consumption is applied to texts within the novel. In the opening paragraphs of the work as it survives, for example, Agamemnon and Encolpius criticise contemporary conventions of oratorical education for stuffing the heads of boys with hackneyed material, repeatedly using the imagery of gluttony and luxurious cuisine to describe that process (*Sat.* 1–5).

Eumolpus, the bombastic orator and poet, shows himself to be the victim of a similar fate, despite his insistence on his own originality (*Sat.* 118), through his two excruciating long poems, which regurgitate in horrifyingly mangled form the conventional verses and themes with which he has been force-fed (89, 119–24).⁴⁹ It is hard to avoid the suspicion that Petronius’ text is doing the same to us, taking over our bodies and minds like some monstrous parasite, threatening to burst out from us again in unintended forms at any moment.

The bodies of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, however, deserve the most sustained dissection. The significance of that work’s title (assuming it is authentic)⁵⁰ is not immediately clear, given the relative absence of physical shape-changing within the novel. It is, of course, appropriate to the narrator’s own transformation into animal form, but that in itself does not account for the plural – more than one metamorphosis – unless it can be explained by the fact that Lucius himself undergoes a second transformation, back to human form,

⁴⁸ Rimell (2002) 9.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 77–97.

⁵⁰ For summary of debate see Harrison (2000) 210 n. 1; Shumate (1996) 56.

at the end of the book. Admittedly there are other examples of bodily transformations in Apuleius' text,⁵¹ but these are peripheral to the main action. The contrast with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is so packed with physical shape-changing, and where each separate transformation receives such uncompromising attention, is striking. And yet the title's importance becomes clearer, I suggest, if we recognise the prominence of the other types of (non-corporeal) transformation that Apuleius magics into being.⁵²

For one thing there are linguistic metamorphoses at the heart of the work. This is a translation and adaptation of a Greek work – the work on which the Greek text of (Pseudo-) Lucian's *Ass* also seems to have been based⁵³ – set in mainland Greece, with Greek characters speaking, via Apuleius' pen, in idiosyncratic and highly sophisticated Latin. How far, Apuleius seems to be asking us, does translation bring cultural transformation? Can the Greek *Ass* maintain its identity when it is squeezed into the body of Apuleius' extravagant Latin? Is this the same story, or does its Latinness pull it unavoidably out of shape, just as Lucius' own personality is warped and twisted by its relocation into his new donkey's body? Those questions correspond to Apuleius' fascination with questions of cultural and linguistic transformation in his *Apology*, to which I drew attention earlier.

Even more striking – especially for a reader who knows nothing of Apuleius' Greek model – are the *Metamorphoses*' shifts in tone. The work as a whole is full of non-sequiturs, and abrupt, inadequately motivated changes of direction.⁵⁴ This is a text which thematises disjunction both in its imagery and in the recurring rhythms of its paragraph structure and narrative progression. The most prominent of those disjunctions comes, of course, at the beginning of book 11, where Lucius is converted not only (back) into human form, but also into a devoted worshipper of the goddess Isis. We might expect this re-transformation to restore to us the original narrating voice of the opening books, but in many ways Lucius' voice in book 11 sounds unfamiliar. The prologue to the novel famously challenges us to identify the narrator ('who is he . . .?'). That challenge is made more difficult there by the (irresoluble) impression that the speaker of the prologue may not be the same as the teller of the story that immediately follows.⁵⁵ In book 11, the challenge

51 E.g. the witch Meroe's transformation of three of her enemies into a beaver, a frog and a ram at *Met.* 1.9, and her transformation of Aristomenes into a tortoise at 1.12; the statue of Actaeon's transformation into a stag at 2.4; the transformation of the witch Pamphile to a bird at 3.21.

52 Cf. Shumate (1996) 56–7 for a similarly broad reading of the text's metamorphoses; also Finkelpearl (1998) for an account of Apuleius' allusive reshaping of earlier genres and texts.

53 For summary of debate, see Harrison (2003) 500–1. 54 Winkler (1985) *passim*.

55 See Kahane and Laird (2001) for a wide range of different approaches to this problem.

is renewed, and it is hard to avoid the impression that we are listening here to a new narrator.

One of the effects of that shift in book 11 is to make it difficult for us to be sure about how far the two parts of the text can be unified with each other. The task of responding to that difficulty has, of course, occupied a great deal of scholarly energy on the work.⁵⁶ One approach has been to make the whole novel into an Isiac morality tale. By that standard there is a disjunction here – disjunction which is enhanced by the recurrent imagery of cleanliness, light, wholeness, in contrast with the darkness, squalor and fragmentation of the rest of the novel – and the opening ten books can be explained precisely by their difference from the Isiac ending, as embodiments of the life which can finally be rejected and comprehended with the assumption of Isiac wisdom. Alternatively, as has often been noted, book 11 invites us to consider it as a continuation under a slightly different guise of the comic absurdities which have preceded it, through its repeated hints that the new Lucius shares some of the faults of gullibility and stupidity which characterised his pre-Isiac, pre-sinine predecessor. Ultimately, of course, it is impossible to be confident in any fully unifying interpretation of the novel, just as it is impossible (for the narrator and for us) to be confident that Lucius is the same Lucius once he gets under the skin of his new donkey's body. I do not wish to suggest that the bodily changes of the novel can explain the notorious disjunctions at the end of the novel. My point here is simply that that shift of focus in book 11 is one which the rest of the work has prepared us for. It is a shift which is fully in line with the way in which the world of the novel works. By this stage we have already experienced – through ten books, and in the most grotesque physical detail – the challenge of seeing how far bodily metamorphosis brings underlying changes in identity. In book 11 we are suddenly confronted with a different question, but one which is framed in the same terms, and which is no easier to answer – about how far individuality can survive profound shifts of religious alignment; and how far the body of narrative – as *we* experience it in reading – can maintain its individuality in the face of such profound shifts in tone and generic alignment, of the kind Apuleius flaunts in wrenching us away from the nightmarish novelistic world of the first ten books. In other words, Apuleius uses the bodies of his texts to ask questions about the degree to which changes in outer form can ever co-exist with continuity of identity. The whole text forces us to experience in both comically absurd and morally resonant ways a set of related dilemmas about how far voice and identity change when other things – language, bodily shape, generic form, religious allegiance – are wrenched out of their familiar alignment. In that sense the

56 See Shumate (1996) 7–14 for summary of recent approaches.

Metamorphoses offers perhaps the most powerful example of all of the way in which the bodily texture and narrative texture of the ancient novels are interwoven with each other.

Further reading

There has been a large amount of recent work on the human body in the Greek and Roman culture of the imperial period, much of it emphasising the body's role as a locus for performance of elite identity, but also as a source of anxiety and an object of debate: see e.g. Gleason (1995) and (2001); König (2005), esp. 97–157; see also Wyke (1998b) and Porter (1999) for collections of essays covering all periods of classical antiquity. There has, however, been surprisingly little interest in treating the novels from the same perspective. One exception is Perkins (1995), who engages with Foucault (1986) in discussing the Greek novels' representations of pain and suffering by comparison with philosophical writing and Christian hagiographic texts from the same period. Goldhill (1995) similarly engages with Foucault in exposing the Greek novels' sophisticated and provocative play with the ideals of chastity and equality that these texts have often been taken to recommend. Rimell (2002) goes furthest in analysing relations between body and text in the novels, in using the body as a guiding metaphor for her characterisation of Petronius' *Satyricon*. See also Toohey (1992) and Maehler (1990) on symptoms of lovesickness; Toohey discusses overlaps in that area between the novels and medical writing of the imperial period. On eroticised viewing of the body in Achilles Tatius, see Goldhill (2001b), and further Liviabella Furiani (2000–1). On beauty in Heliodorus, see Keul-Deutscher (1996).

For sociological theorisation of the role of the body in society (focused mainly on modern society), see Turner (1996) and Shilling (1993). For analysis of the role of the body within modern (eighteenth- to twentieth-century) art and literature, from a psychoanalytic perspective, see Brooks (1993).

Time

Introduction

In his monumental work *Time and Narrative*, Paul Ricoeur distinguishes 'tales about time', like *The Magic Mountain* or *Remembrance of Things Past*, from 'tales of time', which all narratives are by virtue of the fact that they are read and unfold in time.¹ Few would put the ancient novels into the former category; they are not explicitly about time in an abstract sense, that is, they rarely discuss time in a philosophical or reflective fashion. Much scholarship has instead focused on how the novelists manage their 'tales of time' – for example how Heliodorus manipulates the temporal order of events in his narrative or how Apuleius orchestrates a subtle shifting between his narrator Lucius' past and present temporal point of view.² We can even speak of the tempo or pace of the novels when we examine the way in which they vary the relationship between narrating time (measured in words and pages) and narrated time (measured in days, hours, years). Such narratological work on the novelists' deployment of time has produced valuable insight into their story-telling technique, and I refer to it throughout this chapter.³

But there are other ways of talking about the novels' conception of time. Every novel conveys a certain temporal feeling to its readers – what Ricoeur calls 'the fictive experience of time'⁴ – not only through explicit commentary and rendering of narrative time, but also via thematic content, employment of temporal reference and the depiction of its characters' experience of time. One influential attempt to describe novelistic genres on the basis of their representation of such temporal (and spatial) experience, or *chronotope*, was proposed by the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. For Bakhtin, the ancient novel played a crucial role in his articulation of this concept, and I want

¹ Ricoeur (1985) 101. ² E.g. Hefti (1950); Winkler (1985) 135–79.

³ See in general Fusillo (1989), 213–19, (2003b) 280–8; Lowe (2000) ch. 10; Hägg (1971) on Xenophon, Chariton and Achilles; Futre Pinheiro (1998) on Heliodorus; Van der Paardt (1978) on Apuleius.

⁴ Ricoeur (1985) 100.