Ancient Narrative
Volume 1 (2000–2001)

ANCIENT NARRATIVE

Subscriptions
Barkhuis Publishing
Zuurstukken 37 9761 KP Eelde the Netherlands
Tel. +31 50 3080936 Fax +31 50 3080934
info@ancientnarrative.com www.ancientnarrative.com

Ancient Narrative

Volume 1 (2000–2001)

BARKHUIS PUBLISHING &
THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY GRONINGEN
GRONINGEN 2002

Graphical design: Barkhuis Publishing
Printed by: Drukkerij Giethoorn ten Brink

This book was printed with financial support from
IWI – Innovatie Wetenschappelijke Informatievoorziening

ISSN 1568 3540
ISBN 90 807390 1 4

Table of contents

‘True Histories’ and ‘Old Wives’ Tales’: Renaissance Humanism and the ‘Rise of the Novel’

ROBERT H.F. CARVER
Durham

1. (Hi)stories of the Novel

Over the past forty years, the prose fiction of the ancient world has experienced not merely a renascence, but a metamorphosis. Yet the flood of books, articles, and international conferences that has swept it from the margins to the centre of academic discourse has also served to normalize and legitimate that oxymoronic (and potentially still contentious) term, ‘Ancient Novel’. It may have been inevitable (in the English-speaking tradition, at least) that ‘Ancient Novel’ should have supplanted earlier labels such as ‘Romances’, particularly given the vested interest that most of us have in linking our own fields of research to the dominant literary mode of the modern world. But the appearance of a new journal entitled *Ancient Narrative* is especially welcome since, by relieving us of some of the teleological bias – the sense of modern novel as end-point – inherent in the label ‘Ancient Novel’, it may help us to determine more precisely the relationship (whether genetic or generic) between ancient and modern fictions.

Traditional (English) accounts of ‘The Rise of the Novel’ (Watt 1957, McKeon 1987) virtually ignored ancient prose fiction, choosing to see the novel as an eighteenth- (or, at best, a seventeenth-)century phenomenon, the product of the spread of Protestantism and an emergent (and literate) bourgeoisie. Watt functions today as a respected point of departure for most specialists in the novel, but his basic assumptions remain deeply entrenched in English studies generally. Indeed, objections have been voiced as recently as 1990 to attempts to extend or ‘diffuse the definition of the novel’: ‘The question of beginnings … is easily blurred into pedantry, triviality, and the stalking of game that has been chosen for the chase. Making all prose fiction,

from all ages and places, into the novel is not a serious way of dealing with either formal or historical issues' (Hunter 1990, 7).

As though picking up Hunter's gauntlet, Margaret Anne Doody has given us *The True Story of the Novel* which seeks to establish the place of the 'ancient *plasmata*' in 'the bloodline of Western fiction' (Doody 1997, 172). It has been justly praised for its 'verve and wit' (Kermode 1997) and it is hard to think of many recent works that display such an imaginative sweep, so cornucopian an enthusiasm for fictions of all kinds. Anyone who has contemplated 'the evolution of the Novel' will have a sense of the enormity of Doody's undertaking. The Modern Novel, it might be argued, is a bastard child in a dysfunctional family, the product of so much generic fornication and multi-generational incest that any 'bloodlines' are lost in a sea of miscegenation.

Doody has two main solutions to these genealogical problems. The first is to collapse distinctions into identities, severing the Gordian knot of the origins of fiction with a single slice of the pen: 'Romance and the Novel are one' (Doody 1997, 15). The second is to appropriate some of the techniques of fiction itself. One senses, even from the cover, that *The True Story of the Novel* plays ambivalently both within and against the Academic Establishment. In its first incarnation, it sported the credentials of a respected University Press (Rutgers, 1996), but it was quickly taken up by a commercial publisher (HarperCollins 1997) and repackaged, so that it now looks less like a forbidding scholarly monograph than an historical novel (or, indeed, romance), the title chiselled into the mock-marble of a dust-jacket bordered by an acanthus frieze inspired by the Temple of Isis at Pompeii.

These traces of the ludic and the fabulous inscribed on the book's surface – as if to say, 'Here is an academic work that dares to be popular' – are mirrored within the text itself. In the third and final section ('Tropes of the Novel'), Doody gathers us up into a kind of Merkelbachian fantasia, in which the whole of the Novel – ancient, medieval, Renaissance, and modern – participates in the mystery cult of the Mother Goddess. And she concludes with 'a vision or mock vision of our Goddess of the Novel' based on the Isiac epiphany in Book 11 of *The Golden Ass*: 'She is obviously a Madonna of the Future, even though she has a shepherdess' crook in her left hand, and about her gigantic right foot a little donkey plays perpetually' (Doody 1997, 484).

Critics who have condemned this kind of critical writing as 'mock-scholarly and self-engrossed' (Deluna 1997, 993) may have missed the Lucianic play within the title: Doody's *True Story* is also a *Vera historia*; and passages such as her 'mock vision' – clearly indented and delineated from the body of the main argument – represent a legitimate reclaiming of the discursive latitude of the Menippean tradition. One might argue, too, that it is impossible to present a 'history of the Novel' without shaping it into *some* kind of narrative; and the particular *muthos* (the 'plot' or 'myth') of the Novel which she adopts allows her to make connections and provide insights that a more conventional narrative would perhaps not permit.

But Doody challenges traditional notions of academic veracity in more fundamental ways. She has been attacked for making 'no distinction between historical fact and aesthetic myth .... If we want to make art-myths in the manner of Nietzsche and Wagner, well and good: but let us be frank about it, rather than disguising them as (dis)provable intellectual history' (Hawes 1997, 20).

Here is the crux of the problem: *The True Story of the Novel* is a treasury of illuminating analysis, suggestive collocation, and imaginative synthesis, and its central assertion of the inter-relatedness of ancient and modern fiction is (in its broad terms) clearly correct. The weakness lies in the middle section ('The Influence of the Ancient Novel') which seeks to bridge the gap between the two. There are far too many occasions, in this section, where Doody's statements are demonstrably wrong,[1] or (perhaps more worrying still) where complex arguments are constructed on the bases of unsubstantiated assertion or unwarranted inference. Part Two is full of dangerous elisions that cannot be excused by invoking Lucianic licence.[2] Doody, for ex-

[1] Doody, for example, perpetuates the old myth (Carver 1999, 258–259) about Boccaccio's rôle in the recovery of F (Laur. 68.2): 'We know that he obtained an important manuscript of Apuleius' works, the Monte Cassinus Codex … Boccaccio took it to Florence'. And she presents a very garbled account of Boccaccio's autograph copy of Apuleius (L1, Laur. 54.32): 'In the fourteenth century it was suggested that a manuscript of Apuleius, likewise found in Florence, could have been transcribed by Boccaccio himself' (Doody 1997, 204).

[2] Doody (1997, 172) makes it clear that before we reach Part III (where 'the reader and I will be released from all the bondage to history as chronology, and will be free to play with the tropes of fiction') she intends 'to establish the humble but basic connection' between 'Novels of Antiquity and Novels of Modernity'. Indeed, she wants her reader to be 'truly convinced that ancient novels have played an important part in Western fiction from the Middle Ages through the Age of Reason.'

ample, concludes a discussion of Marie de France's late twelfth-century *Lais* by observing that 'The fiercely comic adultery story in *Equitan*, with its climax of the murderous boiling bath, is reminiscent of the adultery stories in Apuleius.' This looks promising: there are certainly intriguing structural affinities between Marie's verse adaptations of what appears to be Celtic (Breton) story-matter and the Milesian tales familiar to us from Apuleius and Petronius.[3] The treatments of adultery in *Equitan* and *The Golden Ass* are not, in fact, close enough to be decisive (the moralistic end of Marie's adulterers – 'hoist by their own petard' – seems, for instance, distinctly un-Apuleian) and it remains to be determined whether such morphological similarities are the product of filiation (a genetic relationship) or merely instances of 'parallel evolution' (to borrow a term from the Darwinists) in which homologous narrative structures spontaneously develop in separate communities exposed to similar conditions (in this case, infidelity). Doody, however, raises none of these issues, moving, instead, straight from her (implied) hypothesis of influence ('reminiscent') to her conclusion, without any intervening demonstration of proof: 'The great European stockpot of stories is now fully available' (Doody 1997, 187).

This image of the stockpot – with its beguiling, but misleading, suggestions of the plenitude and accessibility of early fictions – is used to fatten up some very slender claims. Here are just two (in relation to the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries): 'Chrétien presumably did not read Heliodorus – at least not unmediated; he seems to have been influenced, however, by works with Heliodorus in their background'. 'It is almost harder to believe that Boccaccio did not know Heliodorus (in some form) than that he did' (Doody 1997, 190, 201).

Doody is able (in a single sentence) to combine unsubstantiated assertion ('It is impossible not to believe that among the works Boccaccio came into contact with in some manner were some of the Greek prose fictions') with a self-affirming defeatism ('– though we shall never know which ones') (Doody 1997, 201) which obviates the need to engage in the kind of empirical research (tracing manuscript circulation, sifting library catalogues, collating allusions etc.) that might help to clarify the issue. And the same strategic

[3] A similar problem is posed by the thirteenth-century *fabliaux*, the structure of which is often tantalizingly close to that of the inset tales in Apuleius – stories of adulteries concealed and uncovered. Yet there is, to date, no clear evidence that they were influenced by *The Golden Ass*.

combination of elision and conflation appears in the claim that 'In *Fiammetta* Boccaccio does not eliminate the figures of the Greek novel, which he flourished so outrageously in *Filocolo*' (202) – the unproved case of Greek influence in *Filocolo* is used to bolster an even weaker claim in the later romance. Doody's refusal to see borders (between West and East, between Latin and Greek, between Christian and Islamic) as impermeable barriers is (potentially) very salutary, but her unwillingness to discriminate – to accept or construct hierarchies for the transmission and availability of ancient fictions in the Middle Ages and Renaissance – can be seen here to be deleterious.

If 'Truth', at the micro level of verifiable fact and rational argument, is a principal casualty in Doody's quest for a grand narrative, it is not the only one. Doody is commendably candid about her concern to emphasize 'continuities' over 'discontinuity' (xviii; cf. 9 and 164); but her opening assertion that the Novel in the West 'has a continual history of about two thousand years' (1) cannot go unchallenged. In fact, the 'history of the Novel' is less of a continuum than a succession of *lacunae*, hiatuses, false starts, deadends, reinventions and, above all, quite dramatic oscillations in attitudes towards fiction.

Take the early Middle Ages: is it merely chance that what appears to be another Latin novel, Apuleius' *Hermagoras*, is lost, while the pseudo-Apuleian *Herbarium* survives? That Apuleius' philosophical works are separated from the rest of the corpus and travel north to be taken up by the Carolingian revival, while the *Metamorphoses* and the declamatory works fester in the south? Or that, during this same period, a major dismemberment of Petronius' *Satyrica* takes place? These examples might suggest that readers (and scribes) in the eighth and ninth centuries were looking for memorable quotations, edifying *sententiae*, models of good style, or philological curiosities, rather than a connected plot. Even when the section of Petronius that we value most highly today – the *Cena Trimalchionis* – was discovered in the 1420s, it was promptly lost again for nearly 250 years (Carver 1999, 255–256).

Doody's commitment to the notion of continuity obscures the remarkable shift that takes place in the West's attitude towards fictional narrative from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. And while she makes good use of the editions and translations of the ancient novels that appeared during the

Renaissance, she underplays the vital contribution of Humanist debates over the status of fiction.[4]

2. Cervantes' Canon: The Humanist Case against Romances

A useful retrospect on these arguments is provided by Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616), himself a vital mediator between early and modern fictions.[5] After Don Quixote's return home from his first adventure (slumped ignominiously on the back of an ass), the curate, the barber, the housekeeper, and the niece decide to cure him of his madness by burning his books while he is asleep (1,6). The niece, concerned at the pernicious effect of these volumes on her uncle, is keen to burn everything. But the curate, whose hostility towards romances is in part a product of his own susceptibility to such fictional entertainments, attempts to distinguish between what should be burned, what treasured, what censored, and what reserved for later judgement. That ambivalence is symptomatic of the complex negotiations that take place within *Don Quixote* between earlier forms of fictions.

The curate appears to be a responsible man and an astute critic, but as the Inquisition of the Library proceeds, he becomes exhausted by the task of sifting and discriminating between the various types and qualities of fiction before him and proposes that the rest of the volumes should be condemned unread. As it happens, his earlier distinctions prove to be purely academic, since the housekeeper takes matters into her own hands during the night and burns all of her master's books regardless (1,7). One might choose to draw a parallel with modern critical debates. If there is something Quixotic about Doody's tendency to subsume the 'reality' of literary history into her own vision of the Novel, we could see the Anglo-American practice of the Wattian school as an example of over-zealous housekeeping: Watt himself chose

---

[4] Doody makes brief references to Humanist attacks on fiction, quoting, for example, William Tyndale's dismissal (*Obedience of a Christian Man*, 1528) of 'fables of loue and wantonnes and ribauldry, as filthy as hart can thinke', and asserting (*pace* Lewis 1954, 229) that this 'is *not* the inevitable attitude [*sc*. to medieval story] of the humanist *per se*' (Doody 1997, 229). Her statement (241) that Amyot in 1547 'belongs to an age in which it is becoming *necessary* to defend the fictional' overlooks the earlier history of Humanist opposition to story. Doody makes use of Ascham and Cinthio but does not mention Macrobius, Boiardo, Erasmus, Vives, Scaliger, Tasso, or Pinciano.

[5] It is not uncommon in literature departments to hear *Don Quixote* described as 'the first novel' or (with a slight concession) 'the first modern novel'.

to adopt 'a working definition' of the novel that was 'sufficiently narrow to exclude previous types of narrative' (Watt 1957, 9).

The intervention of the canon (*el canónigo*) of Toledo towards the end of Part One (ch. 47) provides a more general discussion of the limitations of contemporary fiction. He begins with a moral / political objection, considering 'books of chivalry to be mischievous to the State' (*perjudiciales en la república*): 'this sort of writing and composition is of the same species as the fables they call the Milesian, nonsensical tales that aim solely at giving amusement and not instruction, exactly the opposite of the apologue fables [e.g. Aesop's] which amuse and instruct at the same time.'[6] Moral objections, however, quickly give way to aesthetic ones: how can such works succeed in their 'chief object' (*el deleitar*, 'amusement') 'when they are so full of such monstrous nonsense' (*yendo llenos de tantos y tan desaforados disparates*)? The canon's Aristotelian-Horatian bias becomes clear as he elaborates the theme: 'the enjoyment of the mind' (*el deleite que en el alma*) depends on the perception of beauty and harmony (rather than ugliness and disproportion), on 'verisimilitude and truth to nature' (*la verisimilitud y de la imitación*),[7] and on unity of action ('I have never yet seen any book of chivalry that puts together a connected plot complete in all its members [*un cuerpo de fábula entero con todos sus miembros*], so that the middle agrees with the beginning, and the end with the beginning and middle'). And he concludes the attack with a set of charges which (typically of Humanist criticism) blends the aesthetic with the moral:

> *Fuera desto, son en el estilo duros; en las hazañas, increíbles; en los amores, lascivos; en las cortesías, mal mirados; largos en las batallas, necios en las razones, disparatados en los viajes, y, finalmente, ajenos de todo discreto artificio, y por esto dignos de ser desterrados de la república cristiana, como a gente inútil.* (Cervantes, Part 1, ch. 47, 568)

---

[6] *Y, según a mí me parece, este género de escritura y composición cae debajo de aquel de las fábulas que llaman milesias, que son cuentos disparatados, que atienden solamente a deleitar, y no a enseñar; al contrario de lo que hacen las fábulas apólogas, que deleitan y enseñan juntamente* (Cervantes, Part 1, ch. 47, 566)

[7] *… tanto la mentira es mejor cuanto más parece verdadera, y tanto más agrada cuanto tiene más de lo dudoso y posible* ('fiction is all the better the more it looks like truth, and gives the more pleasure the more probability and possibility there is about it') (Cervantes, Part 1, ch. 47, 567).

> (And besides all this they are harsh in their style, incredible in their achievements, licentious in their amours, uncouth in their courtly speeches, prolix in their battles, silly in their arguments, absurd in their travels, and, in short, wanting in everything like intelligent art; for which reason they deserve to be banished from the Christian commonwealth as a worthless breed.) (Ormsby 1885, vol. 2, 332)

The canon's talk of banishing works of fiction is not the idle Platonic gesture it might seem. In 1514, the greatest of the Spanish Humanists, Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540), had described the usurpation of the philosophers' domain by 'some worthless poetasters, like the Trojan pig, stuffed with old wives' tales [*referti anilibus fabellis*]'. He calls upon the buried philosophers to take action:

> Why do you not evict these petty poets and insipid men [*istos poetistas et vanos homines*] from your dwelling place and govern with peace and justice this noble republic of yours, free from impurity, flourishing, undefiled and unpolluted by human scum? … How true I find that saying of Plato to be … that republics would be blessed if they were ruled by philosophers … If only his authority or that of the divine Socrates were now in force, who expelled Homer and these lying poets from the city as corrupters of public morals … (Vives, *In suum Christi Triumphum praelectio, quae dicitur Veritas fucata*) (Matheeussen 1987, 80–81)

In 1529, Vives named names, condemning, as being designed merely to 'stimulate pleasures', the works of certain poets, as well as

> the fables of Milesius, as that of the Golden Ass, and in a manner all Lucian's works, and many others which are written in the vulgar tongue as of Tristan, Launcelot, Ogier, Amadís, and of Arthur the which were written and made by such as were idle and knew nothing. The books do hurt both man and woman, for they make them wily and crafty, they kindle and stir up covetousness, inflame anger and all beastly and filthy desire. (Vives, *The Office and Duetie of an Husband*, trans. Thomas Paynell, London, *c.* 1558, fol. O7^{r-v}) (Ife 1985, 14)

> *voluptates titillant pleraque Poetarum opera, et Milesiae fabulae, ut Asinus Apuleji, et fere Luciani omnia, quales crebrae sunt in linguis vernaculis scriptae Tristani, Lanciloti, Ogerii, Amadisii, Arturi, et his similes; qui libri omnes ab otiosis hominibus, et chartarum abundantibus, per ignorantiam meliorum sunt conscripti: hi non feminis modo, verum etiam viris officiunt, quemadmodum ea omnia, quibus nutus iste noster ad pejora detruditur, ut quibus armatur astutia, accenditur habendi sitis, inflammatur ira, aut cujuscunque rei turpis atque illicita cupiditas.* (Vives, *De officio mariti*, Bruges, 1529) (Ife 1985, 177)

For Vives, these sorts of fictions pollute both home and state. In 1531, such sentiments were translated into action: a decree was passed forbidding the export to the Indies of 'romances' such as the *Amadís* because they were deemed to be unsuitable reading matter for the Indians. This ban was extended in 1543 to cover *romances que traten de materias profanas y fabulosas e historias fingidas*, and in 1555 an attempt was made (in a petition) to apply it to the whole of the Spanish peninsular (Ife 1985, 16).

This last attempt was unsuccessful, but the tendency to disparage both chivalric romances and the Milesian Tales and *novelle* with which they were closely associated was a common feature of the Northern Renaissance.[8] There is a marked congruence between the views of Vives (the Spanish Catholic) and Roger Ascham (the English Protestant). Ascham's attack on fiction in *The Scholemaster* (published in 1570, two years after his death) emerges from a general indictment of Italy as '*Circes* Court', a place of licentiousness and enchantments from which English travellers return transformed: 'And so, beyng Mules and Horses before they went, returned verie Swyne and asses home agayne: yet euerie where verie Foxes with suttle and busie heades; and where they may, verie wolves, with cruell malicious hartes' (Ascham 228). Ascham responds to the flood of Boccaccio-inspired *novelle* that threatens to engulf his isle. Things were bad enough before the

[8] The immediate source for the canon's identification of the romances with Milesian tales is generally taken to be Alonso López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poética* (Madrid, 1596), 2,8 and 2,12 (Eisenberg 1982, 11). A slightly earlier instance is to be found in *Filosofia secreta donde debaxo de Historias fabulozas se contiene mucha doctrina provechosa* (Madrid, 1585; facsimile 1995) by Juan Pérez de Moya (*c.* 1513–96).

Reformation when vernacular literature was dominated by Arthurian romances:

> In our forefathers tyme, whan Papistrie, as a standyng poole, couered and ouerflowed all England, fewe bookes were read in our tong, sauyng certaine bookes of Cheualrie ... [231] ... for example, *Morte Arthure*: the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poyntes, in open mans slaughter, and bold bawdrye: In which booke those be counted the noblest Knightes, that do kill most men without any quarell, and commit fowlest aduoulteries by sutlest shiftes: …. This is good stuffe, for wise men to laughe at, or honest men to take pleasure at. Yet I know, when Gods Bible was banished the Court, and *Morte Arthure* receiued into the Princes chamber (Ascham, 230–231).

But these romances – produced, 'as some say ... by idle Monkes, or wanton Chanons' (231) – pose far less danger to young persons than the 'bawdie bookes' that 'sutle and secrete Papistes at home' have caused 'to be translated out of the Italian tonge' (230):

> And yet ten *Morte Arthures* do not the tenth part so much harme, as one of these bookes, made in *Italie*, and translated in England. They open, not fond and common wayes to vice, but such subtle, cunnyng, new, and diuerse shiftes, to cary yong willes to vanitie, and yong wittes to mischief, to teach old bawdes new schole poyntes, as the simple head of an English man is not hable to inuent, nor neuer was hard of in England before, yea when Papistrie ouerflowed all. Suffer these bookes to be read, and they shall soone displace all bookes of godly learnyng. (Ascham, 231).

We should note how the 'novelty' of the *novella* – the artful contrivance of the plot which uses tricks and twists to achieve its (often erotic) narrative end – is here read by Ascham in moral terms: with their 'subtle, cunnyng, new, and diuerse shiftes' such works corrupt both the appetites ('willes') and intellects ('wittes') of the young. As a consequence, 'our Englishe men Italianated' 'make more accounte ... of a tale in *Bocace*, than a storie of the Bible' (232).

3. Humanist Fictions (I): The Satirical Impulse

3.1. Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More

Hostility towards Catholic Europe and the fictions that it had spawned would continue to be expressed in Protestant England until the end of the sixteenth century (and beyond). In the *respublica litterarum* at large, however, there was considerable variation in attitudes towards fiction. In Chapter 5 (*De historia*) of his *Declamatio de incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum atque artium* (1530), Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim lumps together (as *fabulosae historiae*) Lucian, Apuleius, and the Arthurian romances, condemning them as *fabulosa ac simul inerudita deliramenta poetarum, comoediis ac fabulis fabulosiora* ('fabulous and, at the same time unlearned absurdities of the poets, more fabulous than comedies and fables') (fol. E. 4^{v}).

Agrippa's dismissal of *fabulosae historiae* involves an elaboration (or distortion) of an earlier attack on medieval romances made by Desiderius Erasmus. In his *Institutio principis christiani* ('The Education of a Christian Prince', 1516), Erasmus condemns the continuing vogue (*permultos videmus … delectari*) for 'stories of Arthur, Lancelot and the rest' which are 'not only abounding in tyranny, but also utterly unlearned, foolish, and old-womanish' (*non solum tyrannicis, verum etiam prorsus ineruditis, stultis & anilibus*). Erasmus, however, adds a significant coda: 'It would be more profitable [for the young prince] to invest [his] hours in comedies or the fables of the poets than in absurdities of this kind' (*consultius sit in comoediis aut poetarum fabulis horas collocare, quam in eiusmodi deliramentis*). (Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, IV-1, pp. 179-80; Lewis 1954, 28; Adams 1959–60, 41).

Erasmus was instinctively more generous than many of his peers in his view of the possibilities of fiction. And he shared with Thomas More a particular regard for the satirical fictions of Lucian. Their translations of a selection of Lucian's dialogues were published in 1506, an expanded collection appearing in 1514. The two Humanists showed how the snarling, Cynical spirit of Lucian could be muzzled and the irreligious 'scoffer' made to exemplify the most successful (Horatian) mix of edification and delectation, profit and delight. In the prefatory letter to *Luciani somnium siue gallus*, Erasmus writes:

> *Omne tulit punctum (vt scripsit Flaccus) qui miscuit vtile dulci. Quod quidem aut nemo mea sententia aut noster hic Lucianus est assecutus.* (*Luciani ... opuscula*, 1506, fol. xvi^{v})
>
> ('He has won every vote' (as Horace said) 'who has mixed the useful with the sweet.' In my opinion, indeed, if Lucian hasn't attained this, no one has.)

More echoes the sentiment:

> *Si quisque fuit vnquam vir doctissime: qui Horatianum præceptum impleuerit: voluptatemque cum vtilitate coniunxerit: hoc ego certe Lucianum in primis puto præstitisse.* (*Luciani ... opuscula*, 1506, sig. AAa^{r})
>
> (If ever there was any one, Most Learned Sir, who satisfied the Horatian injunction and joined pleasure with usefulness, then I certainly think that, in this, Lucian particularly excelled.)

Erasmus and More may have failed to imbue any lasting love of Lucian in their younger friend, Vives (who went on to dismiss the satirist as 'an ass, decked out and puffed up with the pomp of words, but utterly devoid of substance');[9] but their contribution to literature in making Lucian available in Latin can hardly be over-estimated.

Erasmus' attitude towards Apuleius was somewhat more ambivalent. The first authorized edition of the *De copia* appeared in Paris in 1512. Dedicated to John Colet and his new school, St Paul's, it became one of the most famous and popular educational treatises of the sixteenth century. At the beginning of the *De copia* (1,9), Erasmus holds up Apuleius as a model of the rich style, to be observed and emulated:

> *Praecipuam autem vtilitatem adferet, si bonos auctores nocturna diurnaque manu versabimus, potissimum hos, qui copia dicendi praecelluerunt: cuiusmodi sunt Cicero, A. Gellius, Apuleius, atque in his vigilantibus oculis figuras omneis obseruemus, obseruatas memoria reconda-*

[9] Vives, *De disciplinis*, Part 2, book 3, ch. 7: *Asinus est, verborum apparatu instructus ac tumens, rerum inanis prorsus* (Noreña 1970, 179).

> *mus, reconditas imitemur, crebraque vsurpatione consuescamus habere in promptu.* (Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, I-6, p. 34)
>
> (But it will be of especial advantage if, night and day, we turn over in our hand the good authors, most of all, those who excel in the copiousness of their speech – of such a kind are Cicero, Aulus Gellius, and Apuleius. And with ever-wakeful eyes, we should observe all their figures of speech; having observed them we should store them in the memory; having stored them, we should imitate them; and, by frequent employment, we should become accustomed to having them at the ready.)

Erasmus' injunction to thumb Cicero, Aulus Gellius, and Apuleius 'night and day' is nicely edged – Erasmus is himself imitating a passage in the *Ars poetica* (268–269) where Horace criticizes the unmusical verses of Ennius and enjoins his readers to 'turn over the Greek models in your hand by night, turn them over by day' (*vos exemplaria Graeca | nocturna versate manu, versate diurna*). It is a neat irony that the Horatian formula should be employed in endorsing two such un-Horatian writers as Gellius and Apuleius, Gellius (an affecter of archaism) being an avowed admirer of Ennius. The coupling of the 'Father of Eloquence' with the exemplars of 'degenerate Latinity' is nevertheless remarkable, especially in a text-book designed for the use of impressionable pupils in a model school designed by a high-minded educationalist like Dean Colet.

In Book II of the *De copia,* Erasmus twice praises Apuleius' description of Hippias in the *Florida* and cites, as an imitative model in his chapter on place-description (*Loci descriptio*), the palace in Book V of *The Golden Ass* (*Regia Psyches apud Apuleium*).[10] And both Lucian and Apuleius furnish examples to illustrate his account of 'Fictional Narratives' (*De fictis narrationibus*):

> *Porro, quae risus causa finguntur, quo longius absunt a vero, hoc magis demulcent animos, modo ne sint anicularum similia deliramentis, et eruditis allusionibus doctas etiam aures capere possint. Quo de genere sunt Luciani Verae narrationes, et ad huius exemplum effictus Asinus Apulei, praeterea Icaromenippus, et reliqua Luciani pleraque* (Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, I-6, p. 257)

[10] *Opera omnia* I-6, 198, 208 (Hippias), 214 (Psyche's Palace).

> (But those works which are devised for the sake of amusement allure minds the more, the further they are from the truth, provided that they do not resemble the absurdities of little old women, and that they are also able to capture learned ears with their erudite allusions. Of this type are the *True History* of Lucian and the *Ass* of Apuleius (fashioned on Lucian's model) as well as the *Icaromenippus* and a great many of the other works of Lucian.)

Erasmus appears to be undercutting his own distinction when he separates Apuleius from the *anicularum deliramenta,* given the fact that the narratrix of 'Cupid and Psyche' is described as a *delira ... anicula,* 'a silly little old woman' (*A.A.* 6,25). Yet comparison with the passage from the *Institutio principis christiani* cited above would suggest that the *deliramenta* he envisages here are the 'unlearned' chivalric romances. Erasmus shows no inclination to read allegorical significance into *The Golden Ass,* or derive from it moral or spiritual edification: the fictions are there to amuse (*risus causa*), the intellectual component being the interplay between the ingenious author who garlands his narrative fancies with 'erudite allusions' and the educated readers who delight in their ability to recognize and appreciate those allusions.

We should note, too, that Erasmus (unlike Cervantes' Aristotelian canon) has no expectation of verisimilitude – narratives which blur the boundary between Truth and Fiction might offend his Platonist instincts. The work for which he is most famous today – *The Praise of Folly* (*Moriae Encomium*) first published in 1511 – acknowledges (in the preface) both Lucian's and Apuleius' *Ass* as satirical precedents; but while Erasmus manages to elaborate such rhetorical tropes as prosopopoeia far beyond the usual confines of pseudo-doxology (so that Folly threatens to become not merely a didactic tool but an autonomous 'character'), there is very little about the work that could be called 'novelistic.' The closest he comes to such a use of fiction is perhaps in 'The Shipwreck' (*Naufragium*), one of the best known of Erasmus' *Colloquia* (1518), those delightfully dramatized dialogues whose influence can still be seen in Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* (1613).

More's Lucianicity in *Utopia* is of a more sober and controlled kind than that of *The Praise of Folly* – indeed, the work presents itself, without any element of the fantastic, as an accurate record (a 'true history') of Hythlodaeus'

description of a distant country. The Utopians' rational decision to limit their own losses in warfare by means of mercenaries, secret agents, and assassinations (2,204-211) has long been seen as an undermining of the martial ideals of chivalric romance (Lewis 1954, 29). The requirement that parties contemplating marriage should see one another naked before entering into the contract may be read, similarly, as a subversion of the erotic-aesthetic idealizations that characterize romance of all kinds.[11] But unlike comparable fictions from the eighteenth century (Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Voltaire's *Candide*, Johnson's *Rasselas*, to name the most obvious examples), there is no attempt to create characters or construct a narrative within the landscape of Utopia.[12] Indeed, both More and Erasmus are typical of Northern Humanists in their subordination of fiction to didactic (or merely epideictic) ends. If Humanists have a preferred mode of fiction, it takes the form of satire (whether called Varronian, Menippean, Lucianic, or Erasmian).

3.2. Vives, *Veritas fucata*

The range of such works is enormous, even extending to satirical fictions about Fiction itself. One of the most entertaining of these is a dialogue entitled *Veritas fucata, sive de licentia poetica, quantum Poetis liceat a Veritate abscedere* ('Truth Falsified, or Concerning Poetic Licence: To what Extent Poets are Permitted to Depart from the Truth'), composed (curiously enough) by Vives himself in 1522 or 1523. *Veritas fucata* is learned, playful, and actually rather more amusing than many of the so-called 'novels' that emerge in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. The opposing kingdoms of Truth and Falsity have called a truce and Falsity sends a delegation to persuade Truth to submit to them, since she cannot survive unsupported by fiction. The delegation is led by Homer and Hesiod, with Apuleius and Lucian as the two footsoldiers (*ille* [sc. *Homerus*] *quidem Hesiodo comitatus & duobus a pedibus Luciano atque Appuleio iter ingressus est*, sig. Biv^{r}).[13] As they are going along, Lucian remarks that he was once turned

[11] More, 2,189. Logan et al. point to the precedent in Plato's *Laws* (VI. 771E-772A).

[12] Characterization is the monopoly of the narrative frame. One might, at most, see an affinity between Lucius, the (still-)credulous Isiac initiate, and Hythlodaeus ('Dispenser of Nonsense'), the describer and endorser of all things Utopian.

[13] DeSmet 1996, 118-123, discusses the appearance of Lucian and Apuleius in two Menippean satires by Nicolas Rigault, *Asinus sive de Scaturigine Onocrenes* (1596) and *Funus parasiticum* (1599).

into an ass. Apuleius is delighted to hear this since he himself has been 'changed into an ass by a great many people, above all by Martianus Capella, Sulpicius Apollinaris, Battista Pio, and Filippo Beroaldo.'

On arrival, Plato and Homer swap insults until the latter becomes anxious at the news that Socrates is on the warpath, with his 'nets and needles'. While they are waiting on Truth's answer, Varro and Ausonius become argumentative, and in order to jolly the party along (*Ad exhilarandum conuiuium*, sig. Cii^{r}), Apuleius 'said something about his Ass' while 'Lucian expounded his *True (Hi)stories* which neither he nor anyone else either saw or heard or will believe' (*Lucianus suas veras narrationes exposuit. quas nec ipse, nec alius, quisquis vel vidit vel audiuit, vel credet*, sig. Cii^{r}). Truth, meanwhile, stays up all night, turning these matters over in her mind. She shudders at the thought of being dressed up in counterfeit colours (*fucata*), but acknowledges that she will have to make some concessions if she is to have any impact on the obstinate minds of men. So she decides that the orders of Falsity should be accepted, but with certain conditions: Fiction is neither to be accepted nor rejected completely (*fucum in totum nec admitti nec reiici*). Homer is summoned and ordered to take back to the kingdom of Falsity ten conditions (usefully summarized by Nelson 1973, 46–47).

The Ninth Condition provides a carefully delimited place for Milesian Tales: anyone who freely chooses to be a devotee (*assectari*) of Falsity and turns his back on morality and utility (*nec ad mores aut vitae vsum deflexerit*, sig. C[iii]^{v}), may be given Milesian Citizenship and go and live in voluptuousness with Apuleius, Lucian, and Clodius Albinus.

The Second Condition declares that 'The historically confused period before the institution of the Olympic games (that is, four hundred years after the destruction of Troy and thirty years before the foundation of Rome) is a field free for embellishment, as long as a nucleus of truth is retained.' And the Fourth Condition permits 'A mixture of truth and invention ... in the relation of things that happened before the Olympic games which are known to be fabulous and are presented as such' (Nelson 1973, 46, 47). One of the obvious objections of Humanists to medieval romances was that the 'history' that they presented as 'true' conflicted with recoverable historical 'fact'. Vives here defines the 'historically confused period' as a licensed space for invention. The Greek romances are obviously not set during this remote period, but their very lack of insistent historical or political detail may have been to their ultimate advantage as far as the Humanists were concerned.

The whole of Vives' dialogue, of course, is so highly ironic that one cannot put too much store by these concessions and it is perhaps significant that the *Veritas fucata* (1522 / 1523) was generally not included in the major editions of Vives' works – he may have felt (with the benefit of hindsight) that he had already compromised himself enough. But we need not see any irony in the Seventh Condition which specifies (on pain of being 'expelled from the schools and academies without honour', Condition 10) that 'In the exposition of arts and learning ... no deviation from Truth is permitted save for the use of metaphor' (Nelson 1973, 47).

4. Humanist Fictions (II): The Cornucopian Impulse

One can easily assemble a list of negative reasons which retarded the emergence of a 'Humanist novel': Platonic, Patristic, and Macrobian suspicions about poetic feigning in general and *aniles fabulae* in particular; neo-Classical disdain for the language, structure, and (perceived) breaches of decorum of medieval romance; and moral objections to its subject-matter (bellicosity and lasciviousness).

But there were positive reasons as well: the vast majority of Humanists preferred to use fiction for other purposes. The view of literature espoused by Renaissance literary theorists is (in the best sense of the word) utilitarian: *delectare, docere, movere*. It is not enough for works to *teach* by *delighting*; they should also aim to *move* the reader to imitate the models they provide in style, thought, and action. At the lowest level, apologists will defend fictions as being legitimate forms of recreation, designed to refresh the mind worn out by weightier concerns (e.g. Poggio's preface to his Latin translation of Lucian's *Onos*); at the highest level, they will resort to the subtle arsenal (built up since Late Antiquity) of allegoresis (e.g. the interpretation of Isis / Ceres that Guillaume Michel appends to his 1522 translation of *The Golden Ass*). But the most common Humanist approach to works of fiction is to regard them as quarries for words, phrases, places, tropes, and types – as encyclopaedias of moral and literary *exempla*.

When Humanists do engage in extended works of imaginative fiction, it is remarkable (given the richness of materials available to them) how little concern they often show for narrative. Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (begun 1480s, published 1504) is almost devoid of anything that modern readers would consider to constitute a plot – the prose passages serve as trellises to support

(and display) the verse eclogues – yet it 'went through more than one hundred editions' and has been described as 'one of the most successful novels ever written' (Kidwell 1993, 2). The plot of John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wyt* (1578) – which launched the Euphuistic revolution in Elizabethan prose and earned the accolade of the 'earliest English novel' (Bond 1902, viii) by spawning a host of imitative romances – could be summarized in two sentences, but as a rhetorical showcase – a manual of delectable instruction – it proved enormously popular. If these are 'novels', they are novels without narrative. This phenomenon is perhaps less surprising given an intellectual mindset in which even someone like Richard Stanyhurst (1547–1618), who goes to the effort of translating the first four books of Vergil's epic (1582), is able to refer to the literal story of the *Aeneid* as a mere 'Canterbury tale' (Lewis 1954, 28)

4.1. François Rabelais

It may seem slightly perverse to cite Rabelais as a prime example of 'Humanist Fiction' given his express disavowal ('To the Reader', xxix) of any edifying purpose ('... it brings forth to you no birth / Of any value, but in point of mirth'). But the *Lives, Heroic Deeds & Sayings of Gargantua and his Son, Pantagruel* (1532–1552, 1564) is not some freak eruption of individual creative genius. The plenitude that it exhibits (aptly described as 'cornucopian', Cave 1979) is achieved through its voracity, its impulse to swallow all other types of discourse (particularly Humanist ones) and then regurgitate them in altered form. It is a *satura* in the original sense of the word – a medley or hodge-podge, a *farrago* of (often barely) mixed ingredients: 'true history' *topos* (the genealogy of Gargantua has been found in a 'great brazen tomb' underneath a flagon: 'a fat, great, gray, pretty, small, mouldy little pamphlet, smelling stronger, but no better than roses ... yet so worne with the long tract of time that scarcely could three letters together be there perfectly discerned', *Gargantua*, ch. 1, 3); chivalric romance (burlesqued in Rabelais' accounts of the incredible deeds of the giants); Classical epic (mock-epic catalogues, such as the 'Names of the Noble and Valiant Cooks who went into the Sow', *Quart Livre*, ch. 40, 771–772); Aesopic apologue (e.g. the Fable of the Horse and the Ass, *Cinquiesme Livre*, ch. 8); Erasmian pseudo-doxology (Panurge's praise of debts, *Tiers Livre*, chs 3–4); Morian Utopia (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 1); and so on.

There are vast stretches of the work, however, which contain no narrative at all, but are, instead, enactments of the rhetorical trope of *amplificatio*: the principle of lexical multiplicity which Erasmus promulgated in *De copia* as a means of enhancing discourse, has hypertrophied into an end in itself.[14] The constitution of Rabelais' discourse does, it is true, change over time. In the first two books, much of the narrative impetus is provided by Rabelais' parody of the classical *paideia* in the accounts of the education of the two giants. The introduction of the lovable rogue, Panurge (*Pantagruel*, ch. 9), seems to offer a new narrative dynamic to the work, particularly when he relates 'the manner how he escaped out of the hands of the Turks' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 14, 251). But the bulk of the *Tiers Livre* is taken up with dialectic (the debate over marriage) and it is only with the sea-voyage of the *Quart Livre* that we even glimpse the outlines of a plot. It would be tempting to read the suggestion that Rabelais, in this section, 'is trying his hand at comic romance' (Coleman 1971, 119) in the light of the fact that the *Quart Livre* finds Pantagruel 'taking a Nap, slumbering and nodding on the Quarter-Deck, by the Cuddy, with an Heliodorus in his hand, for still 'twas his custom to sleep better by Book than by Heart' (ch. 63, 839).[15] The contribution of Heliodorus to Rabelais' discourse seems as limited, however, as that of Apuleius who figures in the Land of Satin in the posthumously-published and possibly spurious *Cinquiesme Livre*: *J'y vy la peau de l'asne d'or d'Apulée* ('I saw the Skin of Apuleius's golden Ass', ch. 30, 974). Rabelais' obvious master in the exposition of the ludicrous and the fantastic is Lucian; if one wished to add an 'Ancient Novelist' as a significant influence, it would have to be Petronius (minus his *Cena*).

For while Rabelais, by extending the limits of Menippean satire, opens up new possibilities for the literary artist wanting to explore 'the human condition' in all its aspects, he provides none of the narrative structure that will be necessary for the emergence of a recognizable novel. Not only is the reader's 'belief' 'necessarily suspended' in 'this most consciously fictional of all works', but the principle of 'fragmentation' intrinsic to Rabelais' 'wil-

---

[14] It is interesting, given the grotesque images of parturition in the early chapters of *Gargantua* (1534), that Rabelais should have written to Erasmus from Lyons in November 1532, expressing a sense of filial gratitude: 'Father have I called you, nay mother I would name you …'. Quoted in Coleman 1971, 18–19.

[15] *Pantagruel tenant un Heliodore Grec en main sus un transpontin au bout des escoutilles sommeilloit. Telle estoit sa coustume, que trop mieulx par livre dormoit que par coeur.* Cf. Doody 1997, 235, 248.

fully deviant discourse' 'repeatedly blocks the reader's attempts to constitute a story or meaning according to habitual rules of reading' (Cave 1979, 181, 186, 205).

And this, of course, is as Rabelais intended it. He had at his disposal a panoply of models for prose fiction, but while it may be true that 'Allusions to and plays on novels cluster' in the last three books (Doody 1997, 248), Rabelais consistently chooses to pursue a direction other than the novelistic. One can easily draw a line from Rabelais, through Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), to Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1767) and see these as different manifestations of the Menippean impulse. Indeed, these works remind us that the great achievements of nineteenth-century 'realism' in the Novel came at a price: in some respects, the scope of fictional discourse actually shrank during this period, and works such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) might be regarded as recovering some of the cornucopian qualities of Renaissance fiction.

5. Romance Redeemed

None of the examples of Humanist fiction that we have discussed to date, however, will explain the appearance of works such as Montemayor's *Diana*, Sidney's *Arcadia*, and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and the *Persiles* which stand as the Renaissance's great bridges to the modern novel. Nor (despite its evident popularity) will the Italian *novella* – the fourteenth-century product of the convergence of Apuleian Milesian tale and thirteenth-century French *fabliau*. Short by nature, tightly constructed, and driving, with remarkable discursive economy towards a narrative climax, the Boccaccian *novella* is more easily adapted to the stage (e.g. Shakespeare's *All Well's That Ends Well*), than expanded to fill the ample structure of a modern novel.[16]

We cannot simply appeal, either, to 'the picaresque' as the begetter of the realist novel. Rabelais' wily Panurge can be read, it is true, as a proto-*picaro*; and *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) provided Spain with 'an anti-heroic reaction to all the *gesta*, chivalric novels and pastoral romances' (Coleman 1971, 152). The links between *The Golden Ass* and *Lazarillo* have

[16] The *novella* does, however, come to play an important part in later works as intercalated narrative. The Felismena story in Montemayor's *Diana* is taken from Bandello.

long been noted. Bakhtin (writing in the late 1930s) discerned structural affinities between servant and ass which would prove to be essential ingredients in his history of 'the Novel': Lazarillo and Lucius 'share the same chronotope' (time-space relation) as 'privileged witnesses' to their masters' goings-on (Bakhtin 1981, 125). It has also been argued that the anonymous author of *Lazarillo* found, in Diego López de Cortegana's translation of Apuleius' fiction, *son premier modèle et sa source directe d'inspiration* (Villanova 1979, 268). But if *Lazarillo* 'creates a new way of writing fiction' (Coleman 1971, 152), the 'new way' does not appear to have gained any followers until the appearance of Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599).

This is the area in which Doody's failure to explore discontinuities or to discriminate between genres proves most costly. The taxonomic *fiat* whereby Doody abolishes the (admittedly often complacent) distinction between 'Novel' and 'Romance' (15) allows us to build useful connections, but where, for example, does it leave Epic, which is linked so intimately to both Romance and Novel?[17] Doody asserts, 'However much epic quotation may be taken aboard, the Novel [147] never succumbs to the epic' (146–147). The great contribution, however, that the sixteenth century made to 'the Novel' was to redeem the discredited form of medieval romance by elevating its new incarnations to the status of epic.

The chivalric romances available to a Renaissance reader were not a homogeneous mass. Twelfth-century France had witnessed an unprecedented efflorescence of imaginative literature, which included both *chansons de geste* (most famously, *The Song of Roland*) and – a more sophisticated (and more novelistic) form – Arthurian Romances (as provided by the likes of Chrétien de Troyes). Throughout the thirteenth century, the Arthurian matter was reworked in prose cycles; and in the Iberian peninsular during the fourteenth-century it spawned a philoprogenitive form of sub- or neo-Arthurian literature, the *Amadís de Gaula.* This was revised, reshaped, and restyled in the fifteenth century by Rodríguez de Montalvo (Eisenberg 1982, 30), and printed at the beginning of the sixteenth century (1508), soon finding its way

[17] Given the trend in recent criticism to collapse the distinction between Romance and Epic (Burrow 1993), one could make a case for subsuming all of these terms – Epic, Romance, and Novel – into some earlier notion of *epos* in its widest sense of 'narrative discourse'.

to Italy (where Torquato Tasso's father, Bernardo, began an adaptation of it), and into France (where it was endlessly elaborated from 1540 onwards).

Amadisian prose-romance was enormously popular and (in Montalvo's version, at least) was sometimes exempted from the critics' general censure of *libros del caballerías* (Forcione 1970, 67, 83). Cervantes' curate, for example, decides to save the original *Amadís de Gaula*, as being the first of its kind, but condemns to the flames its endless progeny of imitations and continuations.[18]

In Italy, however, the status of romance was far more enhanced by the production of two major works of verse fiction which (like *The Golden Ass* and *Don Quixote*) revolve around the fortunes of a hero who has been in some way transformed (in Orlando's case, by the madness induced by love). Conte Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–1494) was not only the first person to translate *The Golden Ass*; he also helped to revolutionize Renaissance romance by combining the Rolandian material (the paladins of Charlemagne) with the Arthurian in his *Orlando innamorato* (1476, 1483, 1495).[19] The *Orlando innamorato* was left unfinished at Boiardo's death, but Ludovico Ariosto's 'continuation', the *Orlando furioso* (1516), proved an enormous success and was robustly defended by critics such as Giraldi Cinthio. Cinthio has to work hard to justify Ariosto's multiple plotting in the face of (neo-)Aristotelian notions of Unity of Action (the narrator's 'Now as I should do wrong to keep you ever attending to the same story', *Orlando furioso,* 8,21, is indicative of his general approach); but the whole thrust of the *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi* (1549 / 1554) is to show how the contemporary 'mode of composing Romances' (as practised by Ariosto and, less perfectly, by Boiardo) 'has for us taken the place of the heroic poems of the Greeks and the Latins' (Snuggs 1968, 6).[20]

The special status of these two 'epic romances' (to use Burrow's term) is acknowledged in *Don Quixote* when the curate declares (Part 1, ch. 6) that

---

[18] Sidney is responding to the massively expanded French version when he observes: 'I have known men that even with reading *Amadis de Gaule* (which God knoweth wanteth much of a perfect poesy) have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage' (*Defence,* 92). Doody (1997, 238) rightly points to the success of collections of *exempla* culled from the French *Amadis.*

[19] On the traces of Apuleian influence in *Orlando innamorato, see* Cavallo 1993.

[20] There is nothing egalitarian, however, about this view of romance. Cinthio observes (contemptuously) that the subject of Orlando is so common that even 'slippermakers' are composing works about him. The *treatment* of the subject is all.

some romances are to be spared burning (condemned merely to perpetual banishment) because they were sources for Matteo Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, while Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is to be saved in Italian, but burned in translation. Boiardo appears to be an exception to the curate's general principle that romantic procreation is degenerative.

6. Heliodorus

It is in the context of this epicizing elevation of particular romances that the reception of Heliodorus needs to be viewed. The *editio princeps* of the *Aethiopica* had appeared in 1534, Amyot's French version in 1547. Doody (1997, 232–246) provides a rich reading of the various Renaissance editions and translations, observing, for example, the eirenic emphasis of Warschewiczki's dedication (to the King of Poland) of his Latin translation (1552) and the favourable contrast that Thomas Underdowne makes in 1577 between Heliodorus and 'the stories of Arthur and Amadís which "accompt violente murder ... manhode"' (Doody 1997, 237, 242). But while Doody alerts us, very interestingly, to Martinus Crusius' praise of Heliodorus in 1584 for 'creating a kind of "Tragicomedy"' (Doody 1997, 246), she overlooks, or chooses to ignore, the far more influential criticism of Julius Caesar Scaliger and Alonso López Pinciano, both of whom identify the *Aethiopica* with epic. In his *Poetices libri septem* (Lyon, 1561, 144), Scaliger advises the aspiring epic poet to read the *Aethiopica* 'with the utmost care' (*accuratissimè*) and 'set it before his eyes as his best model'; while in his *Philosophia antigua poetica* (Madrid, 1596, 262), Pinciano equates Heliodorus with Vergil and Homer (Forcione 1970; Hägg 1983, 1, 200; Carver 1997, 212–213).

Amplitude without prolixity; narrative multiplicity without formlessness; love-interest without undue lasciviousness: these were some of the ways in which the *Aethiopica* was able to satisfy the appetites of romance readers (and writers) while also meeting the approval of eminent Humanists. And its capacity to appeal to Catholics and Protestants alike is evident from its influence upon such writers as Torquato Tasso (Stephens 1994) and Sir Philip Sidney.

Sidney's debt to Heliodorus, Achilles Tatius, and Apuleius has been dealt with at length elsewhere (e.g. Carver 1997). But the climax of the discussion of *libros del caballerías* in *Don Quixote*, where the canon suddenly

changes tack and opens up the possibility of romance being elevated to epic, would serve as an excellent description of Sidney's own project in the *New Arcadia*, left unfinished at his death in 1586. In spite of all that he has said 'in condemnation of these books', the canon

> found one good thing (*una cosa buena*) in them, and that was the opportunity they afforded to a gifted intellect for displaying itself; for they presented a wide and spacious field over which the pen might range freely, describing shipwrecks, tempests, combats, battles, portraying a valiant captain with all the qualifications …; now picturing some sad tragic incident (*un lamentable y trágico suceso*), now some joyful and unexpected event; here a beauteous lady, virtuous, wise, and modest; there a Christian knight, brave and gentle; here a lawless, barbarous braggart; there a courteous prince, gallant and gracious; setting forth the devotion and loyalty of vassals, the greatness and generosity of nobles. 'Or again,' said he, 'the author may show himself to be an astronomer, or a skilled cosmographer, or musician, or one versed in affairs of state, and sometimes he will have a chance of coming forward as a magician if he likes. He can set forth the craftiness of Ulysses, the piety of Æneas, the valour of Achilles, the misfortunes of Hector, the treachery of Sinon, the friendship of Euryalus, the generosity of Alexander, the boldness of Cæsar, the clemency and truth of Trajan, the fidelity of Zopyrus, the wisdom of Cato,[21] and in short all the faculties that serve to make an illustrious man perfect, now uniting them in one individual, again distributing them among many; and if this be done with charm of style and ingenious invention, aiming at the truth as much as possible, he will assuredly weave a web of bright and varied threads (*una tela de varios y hermosos lazos tejida*) that, when finished, will display such perfection and beauty that it will attain the worthiest object any writing can seek, which, as I said before, is to give instruction and pleasure combined; for the unrestricted range (*la escritura desatada*) of these books enables the author to show his powers, epic, lyric, tragic, or comic, and all the moods the sweet and winning arts of poesy and oratory are capable of; for the epic may be

[21] Cf. Sidney's list of exemplary figures (*Defence*): 'See whether wisdom and temperance in Ulysses and Diomedes, valour in Achilles, friendship in Nisus and Euryalus, even to an ignorant man carry not an apparent shining'. Sidney alludes to Zopyrus two pages further on.

> written in prose just as well as in verse' (*la épica también puede escrebirse en prosa como en verso*)' (Ormsby 1885, 1, 333-334; Cervantes, Part 1, ch. 47, 568-569)

Almost all of the Renaissance Humanists' concerns about fiction come together in this passage. We note the stress on the epideictic, encyclopaedic, and exemplary potential of the form; the neo-Aristotelian bias towards verisimilitude; the Horatian concern with combining the *dulce* with the *utile* (Sidney's 'delightful teaching'); and the (not original) assertion that 'the epic may be written in prose' (Sidney himself regarded the *Aethiopica* – and, we can infer, his revised *Arcadia* – as 'an absolute heroical poem', *Defence* 81).[22]

Cervantes' own engagement with ancient fiction is too large a subject for the present study, though we might note, in passing, that however pure his proclaimed intentions, the genius of Cervantes' writing lies in its heterogeneity. The author's declared aim in *Don Quixote* is to destroy the influence of the *libros del caballerías*, but the work actually appropriates the form of romance to its own ends. Indeed, this account of an incurably curious man who has been metamorphosed, not by magic, but by the influence of fictions, gathers other modes into it as it progresses ('true history', picaresque, intercalated *novella*, and so on) to form a cornucopian discourse which, in its fusion of high and low registers, is novelistic (one might even say, Milesian), rather than Menippean. When Cervantes turned to write the *Persiles y Sigismunda*, he wanted, famously, to *competir con Heliodoro* (prologue to the *Novelas ejemplares*, 1613), though even as he fulfils the programme outlined by the canon in the earlier work, the influence of Apuleius is felt (Riley 1962, 207; Wilson 1994, 88–100).

From Sidney, Cervantes, and the Renaissance world of Heliodorean epic-romance, it is a relatively easy leap to the eighteenth-century 'Novel' privileged by Watt and his followers.[23] Samuel Richardson salutes *The Arcadia* by giving the name of Sidney's heroine to his own in *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and reveals his extensive debt to Heliodorus in

---

[22] Another weakness in Doody's model of the Novel is her privileging of prose (e.g. 1997, 10, 16). The Renaissance critics are generally much less concerned with this distinction.

[23] The third person of Watt's Trinity, Daniel Defoe, has a rather different genealogy: *Moll Flanders* (1722) belongs (loosely) with the picaresque. If *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) has any Classical forbear, then it is surely the *Odyssey* with its prototype of the *Homo economicus*.

Clarissa (Doody 1994). Henry Fielding burlesques Richardson in *Shamela* (1741), but attempts a more subtle form of parody in *Joseph Andrews* (1742) which not only declares that it is 'written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of *Don Quixote'* (title page), but also asserts itself (in the Preface) as 'A comic Epic-Poem in Prose'.

It would be temerarious to suggest that Renaissance responses to ancient prose fiction and medieval romance defined the achievement of the eighteenth-century Novel; but they certainly opened a path to it. Without the transformations and accommodations that occurred during the sixteenth century in the intellectual culture's attitude towards prose narrative, the Story of the Novel would have been very different indeed. [24]

Bibliography of Works Cited

Primary

Agrippa von Nettesheim, Heinrich Cornelius 1530. *Declamatio de incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum atque artium*, Antwerp: I. Grapheus.

Ascham, Roger. *The Scholemaster (1570)* in *Roger Ascham: English Works*, ed. W.A. Wright, Cambridge: CUP, 1904.

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Don Quijote de la Mancha I*, ed. J.B. Avalle-Arce, Madrid: Alhambra, 1979.

Erasmus. *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1969–.

Lucian, 1506. *Luciani viri quam disertissimi complura opuscula longe festiuissima ab Erasmo Roterodamo & Thoma moro interpretibus optimis in latinorum linguam traducta*, [Paris:] Ascensianus.

Matheeussen, C., C. Fantazzi, and E. George (ed. and trans.) 1987. *Juan Luis Vives: Early Writings*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.

More, Thomas. *Utopia: Latin Text and English Translation*, ed. G.M. Logan, R.M. Adams, and C.H. Miller, Cambridge: CUP, 1995.

Ormsby, J. (trans.) 1885. *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, 4 vols, London: Smith, Elder & Co.

Pinciano, Alonso López 1596. *Philosophía antigua poética*, Madrid: Thomas Iunti.

Rabelais. *Lives, Heroic Deeds & Sayings of Gargantua and his Son, Pantagruel*, trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart and Peter le Motteux, London: Chatto and Windus (n.d.).

Scaliger, Julius Caesar 1561. *Poetices libri septem*, Lyon: Antoine Vincent.

[24] The assistance of the University of Durham Staff Travel Fund and the Arts and Humanities Research Board is gratefully acknowledged.

Sidney, Sir Philip. *A Defence of Poetry*, in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. K. Duncan-Jones and J. van Dorsten, Oxford: Clarendon, 1973.
Snuggs, H.L. (trans.) 1968. *Giraldi Cinthio On Romances: Being a Translation of the Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*, Lexington: University of Kentucky P.
Vives, Juan Luis 1523. *Ioannis Lodovici Vivis Valentini Veritas fucata, sive de licentia poetica, quantum poetis liceat a veritate abscedere*, Louvain: Theodornecus Martinus Alostensis.

Secondary

Adams, R.P. 1959–60. 'Bold Bawdry and Open Manslaughter: The English New Humanist Attack on Medieval Romance', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 23.1, 33–48.
Bakhtin, M.M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas P.
Bond, R.W. (ed.) 1902. *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, vol. I, Oxford: Clarendon.
Burrow, C. 1993. *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton*, Oxford: Clarendon.
Carver, R.H.F. 1997. '"Sugared Invention" or "Mongrel Tragi-comedy": Sir Philip Sidney and the Ancient Novel', *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel*, 8, 197–226.
Carver, R.H.F. 1999. 'The Rediscovery of the Latin Novels', in H. Hofmann (ed.), *Latin Fiction: The Latin Novel in Context*, London – New York: Routledge, 253–268.
Cavallo, J.A. 1993. *Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato: An Ethics of Desire*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickenson UP.
Cave, T. 1979. *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*, Oxford: Clarendon.
Coleman, D.G. 1971. *Rabelais: A Critical Study in Prose Fiction*, Cambridge: CUP.
Deluna, D.N. 1997. Review of Doody 1997, *MLN* 112, 990–993.
De Smet, I. 1996. *Menippean Satire and the Republic of Letters, 1581–1655*, Geneva: Librairie Droz.
Doody, M.A. 1994. 'Heliodorus Rewritten: Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and Frances Burney's *Wanderer*' in Tatum 1994, 117–131.
Doody, M.A. 1997. *The True Story of the Novel*, London: HarperCollins. First published New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1996.
Eisenberg, D. 1982. *Romances of Chivalry in the Spanish Golden Age*, Newark: Cuesta.
Forcione, A.K. 1970. *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the Persiles*, Princeton: Princeton UP.
Hägg T. 1983. *The Novel in Antiquity*, Oxford: Blackwell.
Hawes, J. 1997. 'Stinging Wasps proves painful': Review of Doody 1997, *The Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 21 March, 20.
Hunter, J.P. 1990. *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, New York: Norton.
Ife, B.W. 1985. *Reading and Fiction in Golden-Age Spain: A Platonist Critique and Some Picaresque Replies*, Cambridge: CUP.
Kermode, F. 1996. Review of Doody 1996, *London Review of Books*, 1 August, 14.

Kidwell, C. 1993. *Sannazaro and Arcadia*, London: Duckworth.
Lewis, C.S. 1954. *English Literature of the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, Oxford: Clarendon.
McKeon, M. 1987. *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1742*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.
Nelson, W. 1973. *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Noreña, C.G. 1970. *Juan Luis Vives*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
Riley, E.C. 1962. *Cervantes' Theory of the Novel*, Oxford: Clarendon.
Stephens, W. 1994. 'Tasso's Heliodorus and the World of Romance', in Tatum 1994, 67–87.
Tatum, J. (ed.) 1994. *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.
Villanova, A. 1979. '*L'Ane d'Ôr d'Apulée*, source et modele du *Lazarillo de Tormes*' in Augustín Redondo, ed., *L'Humanisme dans les lettres espagnoles: XIXe Colloque international d'Études humanistes, Tours, 5–17 juillet 1976*, Paris: Urin, 267–285.
Watt, I. 1957. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*, London: Chatto & Windus.
Wilson, D. de A. 1994. 'Homage to Apuleius: Cervantes' Avenging Psyche', in Tatum 1994, 88–100.