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CHIARA ROLLI

**HAUNTED BY A MONSTER: MARY SHELLEY'S
TRANSLATION OF APULEIUS AND
‘FRANKENSTEIN’**

1. *An incomplete translation*

In the autumn of 1817, just after returning the final batch of corrected first proofs for *Frankenstein*,¹ Mary Shelley began a translation of the story of Cupid and Psyche from the second-century AD Latin novel *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass* (*Metamorphoseon libri XI* or *Asinus aureus*) by the rhetorician and philosopher Apuleius. Although she did not complete the translation (the latter covers approximately one third of the

¹ I am very grateful to Nora Crook for her generous contribution of expertise on this point. When exactly Mary Shelley ended revising *Frankenstein*'s final proofs is still debated. On 22 November 1817, William Godwin finished his reading of a proof copy for the 1818 edition. The Shelleys, however, had no doubt seen these proofs before Godwin did. See, Charles Robinson, *Frankenstein Chronology*, web address <http://shelleygodwinarchive.org/contents/Frankenstein/frankenstein-chronology/#1816-1817>.

original tale),² her unfinished work is illustrative of her reading fluency in Latin, as well as of her intense intellectual activity at Marlow in 1817.³

Mary Shelley's version of Apuleius survives in a small notebook housed in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress (shelf mark MSS 13,290), which includes miscellaneous fragments, Italian transcriptions, Latin exercises and glosses, as well as Percy Bysshe Shelley's review of *Frankenstein*.⁴ That 'The Modern Prometheus' is discussed in the same notebook containing Mary Shelley's translation is highly significant – at least, on a symbolic level – for what I intend to discuss here. As we shall see, there are close correspondences and similarities between the two texts, but they have not yet been explored.

Perhaps owing to its incomplete state, Mary Shelley's rendering of Apuleius has received little attention: setting aside the preface to the published edition of '*Cupid and Psyche*',⁵ the only analysis of her translation dates back to more than fifty years ago.⁶ More recently, scholars have focused either on parallels between Apuleius's version of the story and Mary Shelley's literary production after 1817 – especially, *Mathilda* (written between 1819 and 1820), *The Last Man* (1826), and some of her

² Mary Shelley translated the passage spanning from Book IV, section 28 to Book V, section 13 of the *Metamorphoses*. In the Latin text, the story extends as far as Book VI, section 24.

³ See F. L. Jones, *Unpublished Fragments by Shelley and Mary*, in "Studies in Philology", XLV, 3, 1948, p. 472.

⁴ On '*Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*' is written in Percy Bysshe Shelley's hand. For a detailed description of the notebook, see A. A. Markley, *Poems, Uncollected Prose, Translations, Part-Authored and Attributed Writings*, in *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*, General Editor N. Crook, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2002, vol. IV, p. LXV.

⁵ See *ibidem*, pp. LXII-LXV.

⁶ See J. de Palacio, *Mary Shelley's Latin Studies: Her Unpublished Translation of Apuleius*, in "Revue de littérature comparée", XXXVIII, 4, 1964, pp. 564-561. De Palacio explores Mary Shelley's translation in the light of the original Latin text.

poems –⁷ or on *Frankenstein's* reception of Apuleius's tale.⁸ The time seems ripe to build on these studies, to consider Mary Shelley's version from a new perspective – namely, in the light of 'The Modern Prometheus' – and to indicate fruitful lines of inquiry for future research.

2. A missing personal evaluation

In his comment on Mary Shelley's translation, Arnold Markley plausibly suggests that:

“The treatment of the themes of the funereal bridal bed and the monstrous bridegroom in 'Cupid and Psyche' is a strange inversion of the Frankensteinian situation. Perhaps after writing *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley needed to immerse herself in a horror-dispelling fable of love and delight.”⁹

Even though Markley does not provide evidence for this conjecture, his speculation may be corroborated by Percy Bysshe Shelley's and Thomas Jefferson Hogg's enthusiastic comments on *Cupid and Psyche*. In fact, several contemporaries and members of the Shelley circle were fascinated by the story. Notably, the tale inspired John Keats's *Ode to Psyche* (1819) and influenced Thomas Love Peacock's pastoral romance

⁷ See, in particular, A. A. Markley, *Curious Transformations: Cupid, Psyche, and Apuleius in the Shelleys' Works*, in “Keats-Shelley Review”, XVII, 1, 2003, pp. 120-135.

⁸ To date, the only study on *Frankenstein's* reception of *Cupid and Psyche* is B. E. Stevens, *Cupid and Psyche in Frankenstein: Mary Shelley's Apuleian Science Fiction?*, in *Frankenstein and Its Classics: The Modern Prometheus from Antiquity to Science Fiction*, editors J. Weiner, B. E. Stevens and B. M. Rogers, London, Bloomsbury, 2018, pp. 123-144. Stevens concentrates on bedroom tableaux.

⁹ A. A. Markley, *Poems, Uncollected Prose, Translations, Part-Authored and Attributed Writings*, cit., p. LXIV.

Rhododaphne, or The Thessalian Spell (1818). Also Lord Byron knew the story well and repeatedly alluded to it in his poetry.¹⁰

In one particularly memorable letter, addressed to Hogg on 8 May 1817, Percy Bysshe Shelley told his correspondent about the pleasures of reading *The Golden Ass*:

“I am in the midst of Apuleius – I never read a fictitious composition of such miraculous interest & beauty. – I think generally, it even surpasses Lucian, & the story of Cupid and Psyche any imagination ever clothed in the lan[g]uage of men. [...] the splendour of Apuleius eclipses all that I have read for the last year. This light will pass away, & when I am at a sufficient distance from this new planet, the constellations of literature will reappear in their natural groupes.”¹¹

Using an astronomical metaphor, Shelley vividly describes Apuleius’s “miraculous interest & beauty” in terms of a “new planet”, whose blinding light eclipses “the constellations of literature”.¹² A few years later, Hogg published an essay on Apuleius in the columns of “The Liberal” (1823), wherein he equally (yet, less poetically) extolled the “loveliness” and “pleasure” of the tale:

“The story of Cupid and Psyche is not only one uniform piece of loveliness, but is so delicate (even in the modern and least estimable sense of the word) that it might be read at school by a class of young ladies. This episode is entirely the invention of Apuleius; it fills more than two whole books, and is replete with erudition and pleasure.”¹³

¹⁰ See Lord Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto III, 104 (1816), and *Don Juan*, III, 74 (1820) and IX, 45 (1823-1824).

¹¹ *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Edited by F. L. Jones, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964, vol. I, p. 542. Many aspects of the story of *The Golden Ass* – but not the episode of Cupid and Psyche – are found in *Lucius or the Ass*, a prose tale attributed to the second-century Greek satirist, Lucian of Samosata. Both Shelleys read Lucian in 1816. The theme of transformation, which is a distinctive feature of Lucian’s text, may have influenced the composition of *Frankenstein*. See A. Bowen, *Mary Shelley’s Rose-Eating Cat, Lucian, and Frankenstein*, in “Keats-Shelley Journal”, XLV, 1996, pp. 16-19.

¹² *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, cit., vol. I, p. 542.

¹³ T. J. Hogg, *Apuleius*, in “The Liberal”, II, 1823, pp. 173-174.

Certainly, Percy Bysshe Shelley's enthusiasm for Apuleius had a profound impact on his wife and "may have led him to encourage Mary [...] to undertake a translation of the tale of Cupid and Psyche."¹⁴ Even though she quite likely eulogized the work of Apuleius, as her husband and their contemporaries did, it is nonetheless worth stressing that her personal evaluation is missing.

In this respect, the journal entries where she kept records of her translation are of no use, being "for the most part reduced in length and severely factual."¹⁵ On 3 and 4 November 1817, for example, she recorded:

"Monday November 3

Shelley comes down Friday with Colson who stays until Sunday – talk with him – Peacock drinks tea here. Shelley remains until the next Sunday writing, reading and walking. Write the trans. of Spinoza from S's dictation; translate Cupid & Psyche – read Tacitus & Rousseau's confessions.

Tuesday – 4th

Read Tacitus – Translate Apuleius. Read Rousseau's confessions – write to Mr. B.[axter] & invite Christy – walk and work."¹⁶

Mary Shelley set out to translate Apuleius at Marlow between Thursday, 23 October to Monday, 3 November 1817. Her journal indicates that further progress was made on 4 and 6 November (the entry for 7 November just reads "translate"). The translation was taken on 8 November to London, where she continued working at it on 13 November. She may have translated Apuleius on 14, 15, 16 November as well, for which dates

¹⁴ A. A. Markley, *Curious Transformations: Cupid, Psyche, and Apuleius in the Shelleys' Works*, cit., p. 126.

¹⁵ P. R. Feldman and D. Scott-Kilvert, *Introduction*, in *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-1844*, Edited by Id., Baltimore – London, John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. XVII. As the editors note, throughout the years, Mary Shelley's entries and style changed radically. See *ibidem*, pp. XV-XXIII.

¹⁶ *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-1844*, cit., p. 182.

she simply recorded “Translate.”¹⁷ Her journal makes no other references to translating Apuleius, and she very likely ceased her labours on 16 November.

As I intimated above, critics have already discussed Mary Shelley’s translation of the Latin text and it is not my intention here to repeat their observations. What is important to stress, though, is that her rendering of it into English “is generally faithful and reliable, but by no means literal.”¹⁸ This is of particular relevance for my argument, because in her not-quite-literal-translation I would like to read some (more or less conscious) allusions to *Frankenstein*. Let us, then, collate Apuleius’s Latin text with Mary Shelley’s translation and ‘The Modern Prometheus’.

3. *Cupid and Psyche and Frankenstein*

According to the Graeco-Roman legend, Psyche is a young princess, who becomes renowned for her beauty. Feeling threatened, the goddess Venus asks her son Cupid to marry her to a monster. But Cupid falls in love with Psyche and steals her away to a magic palace, where she is attended by invisible servants. The condition of her marriage is that she does not seek to know his identity, which Cupid does not reveal to her. Eventually, Psyche asks and obtains to see her sisters. It is at this point in the story that Mary Shelley’s translation breaks off.

The narrative continues with Psyche’s envious sisters, who visit and persuade her to discover her husband’s identity. Predictably, Psyche disobeys Cupid’s edict: holding a lamp over her sleeping husband, she finds out that he is the god of Love. Upon losing Cupid for breaking the

¹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 182-184.

¹⁸ J. de Palacio, *Mary Shelley’s Latin Studies: Her Unpublished Translation of Apuleius*, cit., p. 567.

prohibition, Psyche undergoes a series of arduous tasks to appease Venus. Ultimately, she is reunited with her husband, is transformed into an immortal and bears Cupid a child, Voluptas.

It is against this background that one should situate a discussion of possible connections, allusions and echoes between Mary Shelley's translation and *Frankenstein*. To start with, I would like to focus my attention on the description of a monster – the monstrous creature Venus wants Psyche to be sacrificed to:

“Let this girl be ensnared by a burning love for the lowest of mankind,” – Venus demands – “some creature cursed by Fortune in rank, in estate, in condition, some one so degraded that in all the world he can find *no wretchedness to equal his own*.”¹⁹

If we intersect this rather literal translation with Mary Shelley's, we shall observe one striking difference in the rendering of the Latin phrase *miseriae suae comparem*: “This virgin may be inspired with a[n] ardent passion for [the] base by a man in the lowest step of degradation a wretch of mean birth, a beggar *sullied even by crime*.”²⁰

“Mary sometimes expands a clause or idea in the original into something more elaborately particularized.”²¹ This is the case, for example, of *homo extremus* – in Mary's version: “a man in the lowest step of degradation”.²² Seen from this angle, the expression with which Mary concludes the portrait of the monster, “sullied even by crime” deserves

¹⁹ Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, Edited by E. J. Kenney, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 44-45 (emphasis added): *uirgo ista amore fragrantissimo teneatur hominis extremi, quem et dignitatis et patrimonii simul et incolumitatis ipsius Fortuna damnauit, tamque infimi ut per totum orbem non inueniat miseriae suae comparem* (IV, 31).

²⁰ M. Shelley, ‘*Cupid and Psyche*’: *From the Latin of Apuleius*, in *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*, cit., p. 284 (emphasis added).

²¹ J. de Palacio, *Mary Shelley's Latin Studies: Her Unpublished Translation of Apuleius*, cit., p. 567.

²² M. Shelley, ‘*Cupid and Psyche*’: *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 284.

attention. The phrase is completely absent in Apuleius. Instead, it tellingly echoes the creature's description of himself in *Frankenstein*. In the final dialogue with Walton, before springing from the cabin-window, the creature asserts:

“No *crime*, no mischief, no malignity, no misery can be find comparable to mine. [...] You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my *crimes* [...]. Am I to be thought the only *criminal* [...] ?”²³

In her translation, not only does Mary Shelley add, but she also subtracts. In the aforementioned passage of *Cupid and Psyche*, for instance, the reference to Fortune (*Fortuna damnavit*) is omitted. As a result, the monstrous lover, whom the infuriated Venus designs for Psyche, is all the more similar to some of the creature's most poignant self-portraits. “I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property [...] Miserable, unhappy wretch!”²⁴ he tells Victor on the glacier, referring to himself. Likewise, before ascending his funeral pile, the creature dramatically observes: “I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. [...] But it is true that I am a wretch”.²⁵

When Psyche is taken to the mountain, where she is to be sacrificed to an unknown, monstrous husband, she describes the latter as *qui totius orbis exitio natus est*. The passage literally translates as he “who is born for the ruin of the whole world”.²⁶ In Mary Shelley's hands, the mysterious bridegroom is turned into a being “who owes his existence to the

²³ Id., *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, Edited by L. S. Klinger, New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017, pp. 275-276 (emphasis added).

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 158-159.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 276.

²⁶ Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 48-49 (IV, 34).

destruction of all life”.²⁷ As is well known, a stifling atmosphere pervades *Frankenstein*, with the creature constantly stressing his desire to annihilate Victor, as well as those he loves. As he reminds his creator on Mont Blanc, “I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you curse the hour of your birth”.²⁸ At the end of the novel, the ominous promise has been fulfilled. Ultimately, the creature confesses:

“I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept, and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing. I have devoted my creator [...] to misery. I have pursued him even to that irremediable ruin. There he lies, white and cold in death.”²⁹

Where both the monster of Apuleius and Victor’s creature are portrayed as morally and physically hideous,³⁰ innocent and pure characters, instead, are beautiful and lovely. At the outset of *Cupid and Psyche*, Mary Shelley writes that Psyche was “so lovely” (*tam praecipua*) “and of such exquisite fairness” (*tam praeclara pulchritudo*) “that I cannot express it”.³¹ Once more, the English version reveals some interesting changes.

Particularly significant, in this sense, is the translation of *praecipua*. The Latin prefix *prae* gives to the adjective the value of a superlative. Therefore, *praecipua* (which is referred to Psyche’s beauty) should really be “singular, extraordinary”. “Lovely”, however, may be a reminiscence of *Frankenstein*. Elizabeth Lavenza is not only “the most beautiful child” that

²⁷ M. Shelley, ‘*Cupid and Psyche*’: *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 287.

²⁸ Id., *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, cit., p. 186.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 276.

³⁰ In the prophecy of Apollo, Psyche’s husband is called *saeuum atque ferum uipereumque malum* (“something cruel and fierce and serpentine”): Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 46-47 (IV, 33). Mary Shelley did not translate the oracle, but left a blank space, possibly intending to fill in the gap later. See M. Shelley, ‘*Cupid and Psyche*’: *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 286.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 282 and Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 40-41 (IV, 28).

Victor's mother "had ever seen", but, as an adult, her mien is "uncommonly lovely".³² Similarly, William is presented as a "lovely darling boy" and "a beautiful child".³³ The portrait of Victor's mother, who appears to the creature as "a most lovely woman", with "lovely lips", suddenly reminds him that he is "for ever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow".³⁴

No less importantly, Safie is described as a "lovely stranger", whose cheeks are "tinged with a lovely pink",³⁵ while, in a further reference, she is evoked as a beautiful woman – in his account, the creature hints at "the exquisite beauty of the Arabian".³⁶ It is possibly no coincidence that the phrase "exquisite beauty" resurfaces in the translation of *Cupid and Psyche*, where Mary Shelley utilizes it with reference to Psyche:

"Many of the inhabitants of the town and many of the strangers whom the fame of such *exquisite beauty* had drawn thither, wonderstruck at the sight of her loveliness declared that she was the goddess Venus herself and ought to be worshipped with religious adorations".³⁷

Also in this case, "exquisite beauty" is not a literal translation of the Latin, *eximium spectaculum* being rather "an extraordinary sight".³⁸ Unsurprisingly, this is not the sole example of Mary Shelley using the same expressions both in *Frankenstein* and in her translation of *Cupid and*

³² M. Shelley, *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, cit., p. 37 and p. 109.

³³ Ibidem, p. 109 and p. 182.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 183.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 155.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 178.

³⁷ Id., '*Cupid and Psyche*': *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 282 (emphasis added). See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., p. 40 (IV, 28): *Multi denique civium et aduenae copiosi, quos eximii spectaculi rumor studiosa celebritate congregabat, inaccessae formositatis admiratione stupidi et admouentes oribus suis dexteram primore digito in erectum pollicem residente ut ipsam prorsus deam Venerem uenerabantur religiosis adorationibus*. Mary Shelley curtails the Latin text here.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 41.

Psyche. It may not be coincidental that, after seeing the enchanted palace where Psyche lives, her sisters burn “with the gall of increasing envy”.³⁹ In like manner, the creature admits: “when I viewed the bliss of my protectors [the cottagers], the bitter gall of envy rose within me”.⁴⁰ After being beaten by Felix, the creature flees and returns to the cottage, fearing “some dreadful misfortune”.⁴¹ So does Cupid warn Psyche of Fortune’s *exitiabile periculum*, “dreadful misfortunes”,⁴² though *exitiabile periculum* should literally be rendered as ‘mortal danger’.

4. *Apuleius's influence on Frankenstein?*

Mary Shelley’s enthusiasm for the Latin language and literature variously and repeatedly shows in her works, letters and journals. Although incomplete, her translation of the Cupid and Psyche episode witnesses to her progressive attainments as a Latin scholar. Penned in the same small notebook, where Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote his famous review of ‘The Modern Prometheus’, Mary Shelley’s translation of Apuleius deserves further exploration. In particular, what has been entirely overlooked is the influence that – either consciously or unconsciously – the recently completed *Frankenstein* may have exerted on it.

As I have attempted to suggest, Mary’s version of *Cupid and Psyche* is seemingly interspersed with echoes of and allusions to her novel. Of course, the examples I have offered are all speculative and by no means

³⁹ M. Shelley, ‘*Cupid and Psyche*’: *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 292. In this case, Mary Shelley’s translation of the Latin *gliscentis inuidiae felle fraglantes* is literal. See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 58-59 (V.9): “now inflamed by the poison of their growing envy”.

⁴⁰ M. Shelley, *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, cit., p. 169.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

⁴² *Id.*, ‘*Cupid and Psyche*’: *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 290. See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 54-55 (V, 5).

conclusive. There are certainly many more similarities between Mary Shelley's rendering of Apuleius and *Frankenstein* that deserve further exploration. One may think, for example, of the passage wherein Psyche is to be sacrificed to her monstrous husband. This dramatic excerpt abounds in terms referring to the semantic fields of distress and anguish, which repeatedly appear also in *Frankenstein*.

It is equally important to stress that the relationship between the two texts is not only lexical, but works on many levels. For instance, in both cases, curiosity plays a crucial role in terms of the ruin or the destruction of the protagonists. Cupid warns Psyche of the dangers of her *sacrilega curiositate* ("through her sacrilegious [*sic*] curiosity she should sink from her high happiness to the utmost misery").⁴³ Likewise, Walton wants to satiate his "ardent curiosity",⁴⁴ but, in order to avoid loss and death, he has to refrain from completing his journey. Finally, Frankenstein broods on the catastrophic outcomes of his "curiosity"⁴⁵ and rebukes Walton for his "senseless curiosity", when the latter wants to gain from Victor "the particulars of his creature's formation".⁴⁶

The similarities do not stop here. Rage, revenge and ruin are pivotal elements in both stories. In her translation, Mary Shelley highlights how Venus seeks "ample vengeance" and asks her son to "terribly vindicate my despised beauty".⁴⁷ As Psyche herself notes, "the name of Venus is the sole

⁴³ M. Shelley, 'Cupid and Psyche': *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 291. See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 56-57 (V, 6): *se sacrilega curiositate de tanto fortunarum suggestu pessum deiciat*.

⁴⁴ M. Shelley, *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, cit., p. 12.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 111.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 264.

⁴⁷ *Id.*, 'Cupid and Psyche': *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 284. See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 44-45 (IV, 31): *vindictam [...] plenam [...] in pulchritudinem contumacem seueriter vindica*.

cause of my ruin".⁴⁸ Owing to the goddess's rage, Psyche wanders restlessly while pregnant, and undergoes a series of inhuman ordeals which are, in fact, aimed at her destruction. Both Victor and the creature are inflamed by rage and revenge, and the novel is interspersed with passages where creator and creature act for one another's ruin.⁴⁹

Finally, in *Frankenstein*, as well as in Mary Shelley's translation, extremes entail solitude and sorrow. Psyche reaps no advantages from her "divine beauty", but "remained at her father's house an unsought virgin weeping her solitary lot".⁵⁰ On the contrary, and yet similarly, the "deformity" of the creature makes him "an imperfect and solitary being", "solitary and detested", even by his creator.⁵¹

Arguably, Mary Shelley was haunted by *Frankenstein* when she translated Apuleius. But what if, instead, Apuleius were among the numerous sources and texts that influenced *Frankenstein*? In 2003, Markley suggested that

"One does not have to look far to find similarities between the nature of Apuleius's plot in *The Golden Ass* and the fiction of Mary Shelley. After all, many of her works, including *Frankenstein*, involve the fantastic or the supernatural."⁵²

⁴⁸ M. Shelley, 'Cupid and Psyche': *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 287. See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., pp. 48-49 (IV, 34): *iam video solo me nomine Veneris perisse*.

⁴⁹ For example, upon his seeing the creature on the glacier, Victor trembles "with rage and horror" ("my rage" – he states – "was without bound"). When the creature meets William, he tells Frankenstein's little brother: "You belong [...] to my enemy – to him towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge". In like manner, after destroying the creature's companion Victor thunders: "Begone! I am firm, and your words will only exasperate my rage", while the creature replies "You can blast my other passions, but revenge remains – revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food!". See M. Shelley, *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, cit., p. 136, p. 183 and p. 216.

⁵⁰ Id., 'Cupid and Psyche': *From the Latin of Apuleius*, cit., p. 282 and p. 285. See Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, cit., p. 50 (IV, 32): *Psyche uirgo uidua domi residens deflet desertam suam solitudinem*.

⁵¹ M. Shelley, *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, cit., p. 151, p. 149 and p. 170.

⁵² A. A. Markley, *Curious Transformations: Cupid, Psyche, and Apuleius in the Shelleys' Works*, cit., p. 130.

According to her journal, Mary read Apuleius – presumably, only the “Story of Phsyche [*sic*] in Apuleius”, as she herself noted in her reading list for the year 1817 –on 20 and 21 May 1817, when the novel had just been completed.⁵³ However, she may have read the Cupid and Psyche tale, or even the entire *Golden Ass*, in an English version many years before. In 1566, William Adlington gave the first English translation of Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* and in 1795 Thomas Taylor published *The Fable of Cupid and Psyche, Translated from the Latin of Apuleius*. It is also worth recalling that William Godwin retold the story of Cupid and Psyche in his book of mythology for children, *The Pantheon: or, Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (1806). This account “is highly likely to have been Mary Shelley’s first exposure to the tale as a young child.”⁵⁴ The question remains open. Perhaps, future archival discoveries will illuminate us.

⁵³ *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-1844*, cit., p. 99 and p. 170.

⁵⁴ A. A. Markley, *Curious Transformations: Cupid, Psyche, and Apuleius in the Shelleys’ Works*, cit., p. 124.

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