Voicing Power through the Other:
Elite Appropriations of Fable in the 1st-3rd Centuries CE

by

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Abstract

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As a result of its association with marginalized groups, the genre of fable is sometimes presented as accurately reflecting the voice of the Other, although the fable has traditionally always been a vehicle for the élite to establish, explain and justify their positions. While the fable is increasingly associated with the Other from the 1st century CE, the genre is still appropriated by upper-class male authors as a means of defining their positions and constructing their own ideal political, social and literary worlds. This study will focus on the voicing of the Aesopic fable in the literature of the 1st-3rd centuries CE, primarily in authors and works that incorporate at least one clearly identifiable fable exemplum told at length in the text. Elite authors in this period employ fable as a means of communicating their views of behavioural expectations not only by appropriating a genre that they have characterized as Other, but also by the voicing of fable through marginalized figures. This appropriation of the othered genre and voice allows for an exploration of boundaries that in the end will reaffirm the established order. The élite appropriation of the fable as a means of social control over marginalized groups reflects an uneasiness about their own positions and the increasing social mobility beginning in the 1st century CE. This study of the appropriation of the othered genre will contribute to our understanding of how élite authors dealt with anxieties about potential and actual disruptions in their expectations of the socio-political reality.
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Introduction

There is a contradiction in fable scholarship between the statements made by ancient and modern authors about the genre and how it was actually deployed in our literary sources. The traditional view of the genre, that it was a type of slave speech used to voice their ‘revolt’ in a ‘veiled’ form, is at odds with the voicing of many fable *exempla* in our extant sources.¹ If most authors who refer to fables belong to the élite, and they tell us specifically that the genre is associated with the Other, with everything that they, as members of the élite, are not, why are they telling us fables? Although the fable is stereotypically presented as a genre of the lower classes, in fact it has always been an élite means of expression.² There has rarely been any discussion of this marked collision in fable literature between the high and low not only in terms of the voicing of fable but also on various other levels. It is clear that an examination of the voicing and contextualizing of fable is the best means of exploring this question of disparity. Although many fable *exempla* and allusions appear in Latin and Greek literature, they have received little scholarly attention beyond attempts to identify and catalogue their appearances.³ The first extant fable collections of Babrius and Phaedrus in the Augustan period have been studied extensively, while fables appearing in nearly contemporary literary sources, primarily as *exempla*, are often ignored. I will be following in the path of previous fable scholars such as Nøjgaard, Van Dijk and Holzberg⁴ who choose to approach fable in the literary tradition and engage in text interpretation. Crusius, in a study of fable published nearly a century ago, was one of the first fable scholars to ask questions about the social, political and economic conditions that influenced the fable genre.⁵ This dissertation will investigate similar questions in an attempt to resolve the issues of disparity present in the voicing of the fable genre in Greco-Roman literature.

This study will focus on the Aesopic fable in the literature of the 1st - 3rd centuries CE primarily in Horace, Livy, Plutarch and the novel tradition in *The Life of Aesop*, authors and works that incorporate at least one clearly identifiable fable told at length in

² See Chapter 1: 13-27.
⁴ See Nøjgaard 1967; Van Dijk 1997; Holzberg 2002.
⁵ Crusius 1920: I-LXII.
the text. The figure of Aesop, who will be the focus of the second chapter, is extremely important for this study as he is an analogue for his genre. There are few details about this figure before the late biographical novel bearing his name; however, there are some details that inform the use of fable and the Aesopic persona in earlier authors. The earliest accounts record that the first fabulist was a freed slave of non-Greek origin who died unjustly at Delphi. He is presented as a mediating figure, an ambassador, who speaks for aristocratic figures but who also critiques society. The fable and fabulist act as mediators and negotiators of hierarchy, often by the élite appropriation of the voice of the Other, crossing the boundaries between high and low in terms of literary genres and socio-political status. This dissertation will focus on the voicing of fable exempla and how those who appropriate such a genre often attempt to define and delineate their own positions and those of the Other. Frequently these authors, or authorial personae, find themselves in positions that necessitate hierarchical mediation whether in the social, political or literary sphere. In using the fable to reinforce their own beliefs and positions, they also reveal contradictions, problems and anxieties inherent in contemporary Greco-Roman society.

In his book entitled The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others, Paul Cartledge states that the Greeks “constructed their identities negatively, by means of a series of polarized oppositions of themselves to what they were not.” These polarities were not simply comprised of oppositions but they contained distinctive hierarchical and agonistic associations. There are a number of such oppositions that pertain to the somewhat pejorative associations of the fable genre including Greek/Roman-barbarian, men-women, citizen-alien and free-slave. The definitions of ‘élite’ and ‘Other’ are always problematic but extremely important for the study of the voicing of the othered fable genre. The Other is a broad term and generally includes anyone, or any group, that is excluded from another. An othered status depends on the perspective of the person employing the term, as insiders frequently exclude outsiders as a means of defining and privileging their own positions. The ancients defined ‘Other’ as all those who were not élite adult males in terms of age, gender, education and socio-political status. Groups

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included among the Other are women, children, non-citizens or foreigners, slaves, freedmen, plebeians, the poor (including lower-class citizen males) and the uneducated. While the Other is traditionally characterized as non-élite, exclusions and patterns of marginalization can take place on a variety of levels, including within the élite. The distinction between élite and non-élite is of course subjective in any age and varied by author and region, while hierarchies are present both within the élite and the Other. For example, some women enjoyed élite status in the ancient world, while at the same time they were othered from the male perspective. In the Greco-Roman world of the 1st-3rd centuries CE, élite status was defined in terms of wealth (equestrian or senatorial status), family background (patrician status), and education. In employing this problematic term, I will be referring primarily to those authors and characters who are clearly highly educated and who, for the most part, were born into the upper classes of the ancient world and enjoyed privileges beyond the othered lower classes.

For the ease of the reader, and to conserve space in the text, there is an appendix of all the fable exempla and allusions referenced or discussed in this dissertation that are found in Greek and Latin sources. Therefore, for most of the fables in the text, in order to find a fable’s collection number, one need only consult the appendix under the appropriate author. The fables in the appendix are listed chronologically by author, text, fable title and where the fable can be found in the collections. I have included Perry’s Aesopica in every entry because it is the standard reference for all Aesopic fables. While it is the standard reference, it is not a text that most readers will have at hand, and therefore I have also included references to other texts that are more easily obtained, including Perry’s edition of Babrius’ and Phaedrus’ fables, as well as Gibbs’ recent English translation. When I refer to a fable in the text that only appears in the fable collections and not as an exemplum or allusion in a literary text, or if it occurs in a non-Greek or non-Latin source, I will use Perry’s fable numbers since his Aesopica is the standard reference system (e.g. The Crested Lark (PA 447) (PA= Perry’s Aesopica)). On the few occasions when I refer to a fable in a collection with a named author, such as Babrius or Phaedrus, and the fact that the fable appears in a specific collection is

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8 Perry 1952.
important to the argument, I will include the fable numbers for those collections as well as Perry’s numbers (e.g. Phaedrus 3.17 (PA 508)).

The first chapter will focus on the elusive definition of the genre which is important in terms of limiting the scope of this analysis specifically to those ‘fables’ that are associated with the Aesopic tradition and its problematic reception and interpretation. In addition, a brief account of the evolution of the fable from its Mesopotamian roots to the Hellenistic period will explore the place of fable and fabulist in the literary tradition, especially the status of fabulist, author and audience in terms of class, age and gender, as well as the genres that include fables. There are clear changes that take place in the fable tradition, especially from the 1st century CE, which have not always been highlighted or explored. However, these changes have a profound impact on the voicing of fable especially the increase in the identification of fable with slavery and all marginalized societal groups, while at the same time maintaining its élitist associations.

In the second chapter, I explore the first fabulist Aesop who is crucial to our understanding of the voicing of fable and its relationship to the Other. Our sources for this figure are few outside of the late biographical novel bearing his name, but all of these sources generally agree on two points: Aesop was a slave and of non-Greek origin. Aesop’s identification with the East reveals the memory of the fable in early Eastern traditions in which the wisdom figure, often an élitist advisor to a king, imparted knowledge using fable exempla. While this novel dates to the 2nd-3rd century CE, it is likely that many traditions about Aesop were already circulating orally in the 5th century BCE and in the 1st-2nd century CE the early collections of Phaedrus and Babrius inform us about the characterization of Aesop and his genre.10 Although in terms of proper chronology of the written texts, the Life should fall at the end of this dissertation, I have included it as the second chapter so that readers can bear in mind how contemporary oral traditions may have influenced the depictions of the Aesopic speaker from the 1st-3rd century CE. What is unique about Aesop as an advisor figure is the Greek tradition that he was a slave who was given the gift of speech and fable. The Life of Aesop, which

10 See Perry 1965.
provides the most detailed account of the fabulist, presents Aesop as a crosser of boundaries and as a mediator and a point of collision between high and low. He both participates in and critiques high philosophical and literary traditions. Aesop also criticizes his masters and the inequalities of slavery, and yet there is not a strong sense of rebellion in the *Life*. Aesop knows his place in society and advises others to engage in a similar acceptance as he is voicing élite views and concerns through fable. He is an ambassador and mediator who both transcends and transgresses a number of boundaries in the *Life*, who in some sense defies complete categorization, like the genre itself. The primary concern in this section will be an examination of the figure of Aesop and his voicing of fable, specifically how the fable relates to his status at a given point in the narrative, his audience, and those figures who are metaphorically depicted within the fable *exempla*. There are anxieties, especially evident in the character of Aesop, about the voice and, therefore, the power of the literate and educated slave who offers the élite reader a figure who should be feared, but also, perhaps more problematically, envied.

*The Belly and the Limbs* is arguably the most recognizable and ubiquitous fable told in our historical sources. It is associated with the speech of Menenius Agrippa to the Plebeians during their secession in 494 BCE. Livy’s voicing and contextualizing of this fable (2.32) will be the primary focus of the third chapter. It is Livy alone, in this passage, who labels Agrippa as a lower-class figure speaking on behalf of the Senate to the revolting Plebeians. We are mindful of this state of hierarchical conflict in communication throughout the episode as the fable discusses power and socio-political status. At first, we do indeed seem to find a fable functioning as an expression of the servile voice, as the story is spoken by one lower-class individual to an appropriate plebeian audience as an expression of discontent with servile status. In the end, however, it is not the fable that speaks for the people but rather it is the voice of the new office of tribune, and thus the Senate appropriates both Agrippa and fable as a means of communication with the lower classes. This fabulist crosses and reinforces boundaries as Livy alone in our sources presents Agrippa as plebeian, and thus creates an Aesopic figure who ultimately speaks for the conservative view of history.
Like Livy, Horace employs fables as *exempla* in connection with issues of power, conflict and disparity on a number of levels in his *Satires* and *Epistles*. Sometimes, Horace as the fabulist looks up from the perspective of the lower class and uses fable as a tactful, and clever, means of communication with a social superior but also as a means of criticizing those who believe themselves to be his superiors. Horace mentions that others accuse him of attempting to rise above his station and he often employs a fable to emphasize that his status has not changed. Horace is like other fabulists who have demonstrated social mobility, who seem to present some aspects of marginality or liminality, those who are somehow alienated from the norm, and who must construct a position in between. Horace’s social status is problematic as the son of a freedman and part of an élite literary circle that intersected with a powerful political circle. Thus, there is a conflict presented within his works in how best to please both himself as author and his patrons. Horace’s fables mirror the conflicts present within his own life and works in their concern with resolving issues of boundaries within oneself, especially slavery to vice, and in relation to the larger socio-political world. Horace takes advantage of the fable’s associations with the Other and uses it to construct a unique *persona*. On the surface, this *persona* openly declares that he accepts the status imposed upon him, but he also employs fable to assert his independence through clever deception in manipulating the genre and using it as a voice in gentle defiance of the élite.

Plutarch’s fable *exempla* have been largely ignored, even though he is virtually unique among our fabulists in his discussion of the genre and the figure of Aesop. Plutarch is aware of the dual status of the genre, as he expressly advocates its study by women and children, but also its use in rhetoric as he associates it with famous historical, philosophical and political figures. While he uses internal narrators as mediators for some of his fables, in the *Parallel Lives* and *Moralia*, he also consciously appropriates fables in his own authorial voice, and often in situations associated with power and the Other. In Plutarch, there is a marked and conscious appropriation of the fable by the author and by other élite voices. The fable is found in his works dealing with politics and power on various levels, especially when looking at conflicts within the self and society. Often the élite appropriation of fable serves as a means of putting the Other in their place, whether it is a foreign nation, woman, child or even Aesop himself. For Plutarch, the fable was
another means of constructing his own ideal world, while at the same time acknowledging that he was a mediator who attempted to reconcile the place of the aristocratic Greek male within the Roman world, and consequently his status in his own life, society, politics and literature.

The connection between the fable genre and the novel tradition is evident in the texts of Apuleius, Petronius and Achilles Tatius and should be compared to the fable presence in the Life of Aesop. Fable in the Roman period was increasingly associated with slave speech, but also with freedmen fabulists such as Phaedrus and Aesop. In fact, the fable threats spoken by one slave to another in Achilles Tatius are our only extant examples of slaves as fabulists apart from the figure of Aesop (2.20-22). In Petronius’ Cena Trimalchionis, the freedmen are characterized in part by their use of fables and animal metaphors that signal their former slave status. In the novels, we are presented with the collision of high and low literature and culture also present in the figure of Aesop and his genre. Petronius and Apuleius were both élite authors who employed élite or highly educated, although unreliable, narrators and situated them in a lower-class world. Despite the fact that these narrators feel they are élite in comparison to the other characters they meet, they are also excluded from society. In Apuleius, this is reflected in the figure of Lucius who, because of his slavery to curiosity, literally becomes the lowest of fable animals, the ass. There is a humorous exploration of marginality, and yet there is ultimately a reinforcing of traditional boundaries. The lower classes and their stereotypical voices are appropriated by an élite author who uses them as entertainment for the élite by constructing his view of what constitutes lower-class stories and culture. For the élite audience, there has always been a fascination with the Other, but it is less frightening and transgressive when it is artificially constructed and viewed through élite eyes. Figures that cross such boundaries are used to examine them, but ultimately to reinforce their meanings from an élite perspective.

In the 1st-3rd centuries CE, there is a disparity in the genre for our élite authors who voice fable, but who also emphasize the association of the fable with the Other. Mediating, or Aesopic, figures in this study are often those who voice the fable genre. They are crossers of boundaries as these figures are in some ways élite, but they are also
othered. We encounter liminal figures at various levels of narration who, according to modern views, should engage not only in a questioning of categories, but also in a rejection of those categories. However, such an examination leads to the reinforcing of such boundaries specifically by a figure that crosses them. Despite their otherness and their use of the fable as a marker of their marginal status, fabulists still accept and promote élite attitudes. The slave or othered figure is constructed by the language of fable and the élites allow such fabulists to voice their discontent within a suitable genre, which by its very nature does not permit the creation of new categories, but rather the acceptance of the established socio-political paradigm. This examination is important because I contend that this use of fable by our ‘élite’ authors is in some way a reflection of how they viewed themselves and their anxieties in the face of pre-existing but also increasing socio-political mobility in the new political climate of the Roman Empire.
Chapter 1.  
The Genre and its Reception  

Defining the Genre

What is fable? The definition of the genre is the primary and most complex question inherent in the study of Aesopic fables. On the first page of his excellent introduction to the study of fables, Holzberg aptly describes the chaotic nature of the fable collections and their contents as rubble through which the traveller must journey in order to study the genre.\(^1\) The themes, characters, and characteristics associated with fable all inform its place as a problematic genre which combines seemingly disparate elements. Defining the genre is of paramount importance for this study since it will not only limit what is deemed fable, but it will also serve as a platform for the study of the fable as a genre of both appropriated and displaced voices, especially when one considers the pejorative associations of the particularly Aesopic fable with the Other. Many scholars, both ancient and modern, have attempted to define the genre, but no definition has been universally accepted. While modern concepts will be examined, the fable will be defined primarily in terms of ancient theory and terminology in accordance with what was considered an Aesopic fable by ancient Greek and Roman sources.\(^2\)

Perhaps dating as early as the 3\(^{rd}\) millennium BCE, at least in written form in Eastern wisdom literature, and attributed to the legendary figure of Aesop in early Greek literature, the fable was influenced by a myriad of cultures, time periods, genres and philosophies.\(^3\) The dilemma of establishing a genre classification for fable is partly the result of the state of the fable collections and their manuscripts, which were freely enlarged and abridged by a succession of editors who felt little remorse over the alteration of this genre for their own ends, which was traditionally perceived as low and humble.\(^4\) In extant fable collections, the traditional animal fable is combined with a wide range of material, some of which should arguably not be classed under the modern

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\(^1\) Holzberg 2002: 1.  
\(^2\) For a summary of modern definitions of fable, see Van Dijk 1997: 3-37 and for a summary of ancient fable theory, see Van Dijk 1997: 38-78.  
\(^3\) For a history of the fable in Eastern cultures, see Perry 1965: xxviii-xxxiv. See also Gibbs 2002: xix and xxxviii. See Irwin 1992: 36-50 for Arabic animal fables.  
\(^4\) Holzberg 2002:1.
heading of fable, while in antiquity no differentiation often existed between fable and other mythoi or logoi.

In Greek, the terms ainos, logos, and mythos, and in Latin, apologus, fabula and fabella and their compounds were broad terms, like our modern ‘fable,’ that could be applied to Aesopic fables, but also had a wide variety of other applications. The 1st century CE rhetorician Theon, in the first line of Progymnasmata 3, offers his readers the first extant fable definition: a fictitious story picturing a truth (μῦθός ἐστι λόγος ψευδὴς εἰκονίζων ἀλήθειαν). The fable was in simplest terms a story (mythos, logos, fabula, etc...). Fable terminology, however, often has pejorative associations as the fable is linked with what is fictional, and therefore untrue, in its connections with oral folktale.

In Philostratus, in the 3rd century CE, Aesop is labelled both a logopoios (prose writer) and a mythologos (storyteller) by one of Apollonius’ students (Life of Apollonius of Tyana 5.14-15). In this text, Aesop’s genre is placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of literary genres, and as Kurke reminds us, the fable is also part of a hierarchical and competitive system of wisdom, and thus it is part of a discourse of power. Apollonius himself, an admirer of the genre, simply refers to Aesop’s genre as logos. Philostratus has Apollonius accurately label Aesop’s fables as multifarious (πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῆς τέχνης (5.15)), a conception reflected in the above terminology and in the varied content of the fable collections. He also assigns them their own category as a separate type of wisdom (5.14-15). The attempt to separate fable into its own genre is in some sense a modern construction; many ancient authors rarely differentiated between the Aesopic fable and

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15 For a discussion of ancient terminology, see Van Dijk 1997: 79-111. Ainos has the meaning of spoken words with a hidden meaning, but it becomes obsolete after the Archaic period. Logos is the common designation for fable during the Classical period. Mythos is common in the Imperial period, Byzantine and modern Greek, although these terms are not consistently applied. Fabula/Fabella (diminutive) is common during the Roman imperial period. For a definition of fable and an examination of the genre, see Perry 1959: 17-25.

16 All references to Theon are from Spengel 1854. Although this is certainly a wide reaching definition that applies to any mythos, here his connection of mythos with the Aesopic type makes it clear that he is discussing fables. See also Perry 1965: xix-xx. For more on Theon, see Heath 2002-3: 129-160 and Van Dijk 1997:47-51. Aphantonius (Progymnasmata 1.2-3) repeats Theon’s definition.

17 This difficulty in defining the genre also makes the identification of fables used in literature, especially allusions to them, problematic. See Van Dijk 1996: 515 and 531-2.

18 In the first theoretical discussion of fable, Aristotle lists the genre under fictional narrative (Rhetoric 2.20.2) and he connects fables with the fabulous and the untrue (Meteorologica 2.3), which is reflected in terms such as mythos and fabula.

19 Theon explains the preference for the term logos over mythos by the popularity of prose fables (Prog. 3).

20 Kurke 2011:1.
other genres. In the ancient mind, as evidenced by material in the Life of Aesop, the first fabulist was not simply a teller of moral animal fables, but he was associated with many other types of ‘wisdom’ literature. 21

This study will focus on the traditional form of the animal fable; however, all material included in the fable collections will be considered, especially when it is attached to the name of Aesop. According to the material found in these sources, fables are short stories that usually present a conflict (agon) 22 in which anonymous and stereotypical animals speak and act, but the characters may also be plants, gods, personifications, humans, or even inanimate objects. 23 They are often characterized as ‘beast’ fables since animals frequently play a major role and are anthropomorphized to support a commentary about human nature. 24 There are also elements that emphasize the oral background of fables including tripartition and repetition, brevity and simplicity of language as well as the use of formulaic phrases. 25 However similar the fable may be to other genres, what is commonly believed to differentiate it is the ‘moral’ or truth. This moral may be stated before the fable (promythium), after the fable (epimythium), or be part of the text (endomythium). 26 The term ‘moral,’ here in its general sense and not its strict connection with the fabular promythium or epimythium, should not solely be associated with the modern sense of the term and its connections with what is good and ethical, although this sense may be present, but rather the moral is better defined as a truth or lesson inherent in the fable. 27 As Chambry notes, fables are often described as a

21 See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for an examination of the Life of Aesop.
22 The conflict is often central to the fable and its moral. Conflicts include the literal battle between characters for food, power or territory, a task that must be accomplished or an internal mental conflict.
23 The prologues to the fable collections of Phaedrus, Babrius and Avianus identify the fable with speaking animals, plants and inanimate objects.
24 See Babrius’ First Prologue for the connection between animals and fables. Our modern conception of fable as ‘animal fable,’ in which animal characters speak and act as human beings, originates primarily in the 17th century animal fable collections like those of LaFontaine. Although this is a modern construct, it is also true that the majority of fables in the ancient collections involve animal characters (In Phaedrus 130/143, Babrius 85/127, Avianus 38/42, and the Life of Aesop 8/16 fables involve animals, plants or inanimate objects as characters).
25 E.g. olim (Horace, Ep. 1.1.73-75, 1.3.18-20, Sat. 2.6.79); forte (Horace, Ep. 1.7.29-34); nam exemplo est (Horace, Sat. 1.1.33).
26 For these terms, see Gibbs 2002: xii-xviii and Aphonhioius, Progynasmata 1.10-12. Often the moral is stated by the survenant, a character who does not appear until the end of the fable, but, having witnessed the action, states the moral lesson.
27 The Hindu book of fables called the Panchatantra is considered to be a nitishastra, a book of wise conduct in life, see Chandiramani 1992: 2 and 253.
reflection of lower or middle-class social values and concerns such as fidelity, love of work, resignation to destiny, and moderation. Even in the early 1st century CE, Theon’s focus was on those fables with a clearly stated moral lesson (Εἰδέναι δὲ χρῆ, ὅτι μὴ περὶ παντὸς μύθου τὰ νῦν ἢ σκέψις ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ οἶς μετὰ τὴν ἕκθεσιν ἐπιλέγομεν τὸν λόγον, ὅτου εἰκών ἐστιν (“This study is not concerned with all fables, but those whose content is followed by a moral of which the fable is the illustration”) (Progymnasmata 3)).

Although many fables in the collections have morals, sometimes it is clear that the moral is a later editorial addition and only loosely connected with the fable. It is clear that this simple ‘moral’ definition of fable may not address all of the possible forms found in the Aesopic collections. Fables should, however, provide the reader with some benefit, as Phaedrus says, through a combination of entertainment and instruction, Horace’s dulce et utile, or Lucretius’ honey on the rim. Fables normally stress the immutability of nature by showing the success of the strong, but they also portray the cunning of the weak and their triumphs over powerful, but foolish, creatures. Fables are often concerned with issues of power, specifically the maintenance or subversion of social hierarchies within a given ‘animal’ society. There is an emphasis on the establishing of boundaries and the consequences when individuals transgress these boundaries. Van Dijk, whose Ainoi, Mythoi, Logoi is the most valuable study of the genre since Perry’s Aesopica, in summarizing fable theory, identifies the liminal nature of fables which cross genre boundaries and draw their subject matter and characters from other sources such as proverbs, stories, comparisons and myths. For Van Dijk, who, after a review of all major fable definitions, calls the problem of genre definition labyrinthine, it is necessary to include almost fifty pages of non-fables and non-allusions to fables which have often been identified as such in ancient and modern sources. I agree with Kurke who, in a recent study, claims that the definitions of fable are too problematic and chooses instead decided to look at elements or discourses that are Aesopic highlighting the permeability

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29 A study of the disjunction between fable and moral often reveals the tension between the moral codes of the original fable and the concerns of a later editor (such as Christian moralists). See Zafiropoulos 2001.
30 See Horace, AP 343 and Lucretius, De Rerum Natura 1.936-950.
31 See Van Dijk 1997.
of fable.\textsuperscript{33} The fable as a mediator is reiterated many times in its use as an \textit{exemplum} that often examines hierarchies, boundaries and liminality.

For this study, then, I will be looking primarily at metaphorical narratives in which animals, plants or inanimate objects are anthropomorphized to teach a lesson about the human condition. In the \textit{Life of Aesop}, the fabulist was originally unable to speak, but like the plants and animals in his fables he was given the gift of speech to comment on the world. Similarly, the speaking slave can be argued to anthropomorphize an object, since he was, as Varro described him, a speaking tool (\textit{instrumentum vocale} (\textit{On Agriculture} 1.17.1)). This anthropomorphizing of the animal and the inanimate is a reminder of the supposed slave origins of the genre and this appropriation of the animal by the slave is analogous to the use of the slave/othered voice by the élite as a means of exploring boundaries and power relations. Despite a focus on this type of fable, which is associated with Aesop in our earliest traditions in Hesiod, Aristophanes and Aristotle,\textsuperscript{34} I will also examine any ‘fables’ that are labelled as Aesopic in the collections or within individual texts as these specific speech acts are clearly associated with the othered discourse of fable in the ancient tradition. Aesopic fables are concerned with issues of power, boundaries and socio-political relations, and, as I will show in the following chapters, they are often voiced through a speaker who is appropriating the traditional associations of the genre with the marginalized.

\textit{History of the Voicing of the Genre}

The focus of this section is not a comprehensive history of the genre, but rather a brief account of the evolution and reception of the fable from its Mesopotamian roots to the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{35} The goal is to explore the voicing of fable in the literary tradition, especially the status of fabulist, author and audience in terms of class, age and gender. I want to look specifically at the early associations of the fable with the élite and the subsequent changes in the voicing of fable as it was gradually downgraded to a genre of the Other, but still the product of an arguably élite text. Closely related to this late élite

\textsuperscript{33} Kurke 2011: 398.
\textsuperscript{34} For discussions of fable in Hesiod, Aristophanes and Aristotle, see Chapter 1: 16-34.
\textsuperscript{35} For the history of the fable, see Meuli 1954: 65-88.
appropriation of a consciously marginalized genre is the use of fable as a means of negotiating issues of power in the social, political and literary spheres. It is against the backdrop of such traditions that the rest of the chapters will examine the role of the fable voice in the first three centuries CE.

Kurke’s recent study of the Aesopic figure and his relationship to the beginnings of the prose genre in Greek literature elucidates a number of issues that are important to remember in the course of an examination of the Aesopic fable and the fabulist before the first century.\(^\text{36}\) The thesis of Kurke’s study linked the literary and socio-political hierarchy in fable and Aesop and what it reveals about the interaction of popular and high cultural forms and ultimately the origins of Greek prose. For Kurke, Aesop is connected with the invention of Greek prose in the 5th - 4th century as both Herodotus (2.134) and Plato (\textit{Phd.} 60c9-61b7) associated their prose genres with Aesop.\(^\text{37}\) One problem that I must also address in the examination of fable in the Archaic and Classical periods is the scarcity of evidence about the figure of Aesop before the 1st century CE. Kurke admits that such a study will always be speculative because for this early period it is mostly based on fragments in Aristotle, Plato, Herodotus and Aristophanes.\(^\text{38}\) And thus a major issue in Kurke’s study is the projection of later traditions about the figure of Aesop from the biographical novel bearing his name, which dates to the 2nd-3rd century CE, back onto the presentations of the fabulist’s voice in the Classical Period without much evidence for such speculation. This text does not even address in great detail any fables actually told by Aesop in the early tradition, but rather focuses on the Aesopic traditions of wisdom, advising and argumentation that I would argue are common to wisdom figures in general, and the seven sages in particular. While I agree that there are certainly some strains of the popular and low running through the figure of Aesop and his traditions, Kurke tends to view the Aesopic voice as part of a genuine lower-class discourse of revolt, which is appropriated by élite prose authors as a means of breaking with traditional poetic genres, but then disavowed once they have established themselves as they no longer have any need for the voice of revolt. Such are my concerns with Kurke’s study. There are,

\(^{36}\) Kurke 2011.
\(^{38}\) Kurke 2011: 13. For the ascription of fable to Aesop in Archaic and Classical Greece, see also West 1984.
however, a number of important arguments to which I will refer throughout the early chapters of this dissertation. Especially salient is Kurke’s discussion of the significance of Aesop’s duality within the wisdom tradition as well as the élite appropriation of the Aesopic figure in the Life and what this appropriation reveals about the anxieties of the dominant class.

We have evidence of fables in the wisdom books of Eastern civilizations as early as 1800 BCE among the Babylonians, Assyrians, Sumerians, Akkadians and Egyptians.39 Even in the Mesopotamian period, fables were part of the tradition of wisdom literature that contained an undifferentiated assortment of animal fables, proverbs and parables. Our earliest Mesopotamian animal stories, which would later be labelled fables, appear in books of wisdom that portray a king or aristocratic advisor teaching the king’s sons who are not children, but are rather on the threshold of manhood.40 Here the fable is linked with a period of change and figures who are in the process of transition or who occupy a position in between two levels of society. In these texts fables are presented as élite literature. Many early fables in fact reflect the hierarchy of the courtly monarchy and are concerned with questions of succession and the selection of a ruler. On an Egyptian student’s writing tablet we have a section of The Quarrel of the Body and the Head (PA 130) dated to the 22nd Dynasty (946-723 BCE) and, although fragmentary, it seems to present a court scene in which the head and stomach quarrel for power.41 In 2 Kings 14.9 a fable is sent by one king to another as a political message, while the King of Trees (PA 262) appears in Judges 9.7-15 as a rebuke by Jotham against the people’s choice of his murderous brother as king.42 Trends in this early period, which are still prominent in Greek and Roman fables, include hierarchical disputes between the weak and the strong.

39 For a history of the fable in Eastern cultures, see Perry 1965: xxviii-xxxiv. There are many similarities between the fables found in Greek literature and those in the folktales of ancient India including the Hindu Panchatantra (c.200 BCE) and the Jatakas, didactic tales of Buddha’s former incarnations (6th century BCE). It is also interesting to note the similarities between the Semitic legends surrounding the Story of Ahikar and the events in the Greek novel the Life of Aesop. See Gibbs 2002: xix and xxxviii.
40 Similarly, the Hindu Panchatantra presents the advisor Vishnu Sharma teaching the three sons of a king through a series of simple fables or stories (see Chandiramani 1992).
41 See Hicks 1963: 29-35.
42 In the fable, the worthy trees- the olive, fig and vine- refuse the kingship, so the trees choose the unworthy bramble that would destroy them in its desire for supremacy.
and the disparities present in the animal world used to justify those that exist in human societies.  

In contrast to the Mesopotamian/Near Eastern traditions of élite and aristocratic fabulists, when the first fables appear in Greek literature, we see a shift to lower-class speakers, but not necessarily lower-class authors. In certain authors, in particular Aristophanes, there are indications of the association of fable with an Aesopic figure, the othered individual who uses fable to critique society. While our earliest traditions about the legendary figure of Aesop record that he was a slave in the 6th or 5th centuries BCE, in our extant sources the first fabulist never uses a traditional animal fable while he is a slave; these fables are found only in his rhetoric as a freedman. There is early evidence of the Aesopic type in association with the fable; however, I would not project every aspect of the later traditions about Aesop in *The Life of Aesop* onto this period since we have almost no early evidence about his characterization. Despite the presence of the fable in early Greek literature, we do see a conscious pattern of avoidance of this genre in high forms of literature in the Greek tradition. For example, several ancient authors who write about fable history identify Homer as an early fabulist; however, modern scholars find no *mythoi* or *logoi* of the Aesopic type in the preserved texts.

Hesiod’s didactic *exemplum* of the *Hawk and the Nightingale* (*Works and Days* (200-210)) is the first fable found in Greek literature. It is part of a work that is closely connected with Eastern wisdom literature in which a scribe, advisor or king imparts knowledge to a pupil or successor, the traditional type of literature in which we would expect fable. Hesiod professes to write from the sub-élite perspective, and the work has many audiences and addressees including his brother Perses, the Muses, Zeus, Judges, Kings, etc…, figures who do not readily fit into the category of the Other. This fable acts as a transition from the previous section in which the idea that ‘might is right’ prevails in

\[\text{\textsuperscript{43}}\text{ For further details, see Adrados 1999, Chapter 4.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{44}}\text{ See Chapter 2: Aesop the Storyteller.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{45}}\text{ Elements of known Aesopic fables are present in the *Batrachomyomachia* and the *Galeomyomachia*. For those ancient authors who identify fables in Homer, see Van Dijk 1997: 389.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{47}}\text{ For connections between Hesiod and Eastern literature, see Most 2006-2007: i-xxxvi, West 1978: 3-25 and West 1988: xvi.} \]
the harsh Iron Age and it introduces the discussion of the theme of justice and injustice (202-285):

νῦν δ᾽ αἶνον βασιλεύσιν ἑρέω φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς:
ὥδ᾽ ἵρηξ προσέειπεν ἄηδόνα ποικιλόδειρον
ὑψι μάλ᾽ ἐν νεφέεσσι φέρον ὀνύχεσσι μεμαρπώς:
ῆ δ᾽ ἐλεόν, γναμπτοῖσι πεπαρμένη ἁμφ᾽ ὀνύχησσι,
μύρετο: τὴν ὅγ᾽ ἐπικρατέως πρὸς µύθον ἔειπεν:
δαιμονὶ, τὶ λέληκας; ἐχει νῦ σε πολλὸν ἄρειων:
τῇ δ᾽ ἔιξ, ἵ σ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ περ ἄγω καὶ ἄοιδὸν ἐσώσαι:
δεύσεσιν δ᾽, αἰ κ᾽ ἐθέλω, ποιήσαι ή ἠµῆσω.
Ἄφρων δ᾽, ὅς κ᾽ ἐθέλῃ πρὸς κρείσσονας ἀντιφερίζειν:
νίκης τε στέρεται πρὸς τ᾽ ἀίσχεσιν ἄλγεα πάσχει.
ἔς ἔφατ᾽ ὄκυπέτης ἵρης, ταυσότερος ὄρνις.

And now I will tell a fable to kings, who also have understanding. This is how the hawk addressed the colourful-necked nightingale, carrying her high up among the clouds, grasping and piercing her with his talons, while she wept piteously. He said to her forcefully, “Silly bird, why are you crying out? One far superior to you is holding you. You are going wherever I shall carry you, even if you are a singer. I shall make you my dinner, if I wish, or I shall let you go. Stupid is he who would wish to contend against those stronger than he is: for he is deprived of the victory, and suffers pains in addition to his humiliation.” So spoke the swift-flying hawk, the long-winged bird.48

This fable is presented as a negative exemplum of the use of power, but its precise interpretation has been disputed because Hesiod does not provide a directly stated epimythium.49 Instead, this fable functions on a number of interpretive levels which must be deciphered by the reader. It is purposely linked through a series of key words connecting fable and context not only to his general conceptions of power and justice, but also to his personal situation (or that of his authorial persona). In lines 1-10, Hesiod is expressly concerned with justice and the importance of straight, versus crooked, judgments. This crookedness is reiterated in the talons of the hawk who represents the belief that ‘might is right.’ This predator’s words are presented in direct speech symbolic of his control over the nightingale, the singer or poet, who is effectively silenced. The

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48 All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.
49 While this fable has many elements that link it to the genre, it also deviates from the traditional type in two important aspects: the absence of an introduction sketching the action of the fable; and the stronger remains completely unpunished while the weaker does not even attempt any real escape or rebellion, see Van Dijk 1997: 128.
hawk speaks forcefully and mocks his prey highlighting his power over life and death. In this predator’s opinion, fools who fight against the strong will suffer pain and humiliation. Hesiod takes up vocabulary from the fable, but he subverts it, as in his mind it is not the weaker man who is the fool but rather he who only learns the power of justice once he has suffered. Hesiod advises Perses then to heed justice and not to nourish evil and destructive outrageousness. There is a clamour when Justice is dragged off, like the nightingale who cries out, where men, gift-eaters, or hawks, carry her off and pronounce verdicts with judgments crooked like the talons of the hawk. The nightingale does not merely represent Justice, but also the poet Hesiod, the songster, who was wronged by the judges.\(^5\) The cry of the nightingale that is quickly silenced can also be taken as a representation of the poet’s work and his view of its inefficacy in the face of injustice.\(^5\)

Hesiod specifically addresses this fable to kings. It is a means of advising them about the use of their power, and how those beneath them should use power. Hesiod states that his social superiors will understand this message, because they have the capacity for understanding. In using this fable, he is negotiating issues of power, especially how one should advise a social superior. His message contains veiled criticism, which, although addressed to a social superior, was perfectly understandable for a wider, and not necessarily élite, audience.\(^5\) Although the work is addressed to his brother Perses, and in this passage Hesiod expressly states that this fable was intended for the kings, by means of his middle-class farmer *persona*, his criticism of his brother and the injustice of the judgments of the upper classes, and his preoccupation with hard work as part of the human condition, he suggests he is writing for a predominantly non-élite audience. His use of such fable material fits in well with the middle-class farmer *persona* he has assumed. This *persona* was possibly a disguise, since, in the ancient world, it was

\(^5\) Hesiod chose birds whose grammatical genders make the hawk the powerful male, while the nightingale is the weaker female. While Hesiod’s tendency towards misogyny is well documented (especially in the story of Pandora (*Th.* 585-615 and *WD* 85-109)), it is significant that he purposely links himself to the female bird. We might see this as an act of humility when criticizing his social superiors, or a reflection of the utter helplessness he felt, or one could argue that, as he later completely rejects the fable as a pattern, he fully regains his masculinity and distances himself from the female bird.

\(^5\) Although this fable seems to predate the life of our legendary Aesop, it is interesting to note that in the Greek tradition the fabulist also suffered injustice at the hands of cruel and corrupt judges and used fable to advise and criticize those who had wronged him, although without success.

\(^5\) For Hesiod’s audience, see West 1988: xiii.
predominantly the upper classes that had the wealth and leisure time to write, while his
text is not as much a true farming manual, as it is a literary production.53

While the fable is addressed to rulers, it is also clearly meant as a warning to his
brother Perses, with whom the hawk is closely linked. At lines 38-40, Hesiod accuses his
brother of snatching more than his allotment and carrying it off and greatly honouring
those gift-eating kings, who pass judgments. Eating frequently has a negative connotation
in Hesiod. At 248, he asks the kings to consider that there are immortals nearby who take
note of those who oppress others with crooked judgments. Finally at 274, it is made clear
that the fable is an example of the abuse of power. He tells his brother that Zeus
established laws and justice for humans, while animals eat each other because they do not
have justice. Hesiod states categorically that humans ought to be above the behaviour of
beasts. In the animal world, the hawk’s actions are justified by the lack of justice, but
through such behaviours humans reduce themselves to the animal state. For Hesiod, the
hierarchy of the world is defined by the relationship of each tier to Justice and Labour:
the gods always possess justice and do not need labour; humans are capable of justice and
must work; while animals know nothing of either justice or work. The kings should
understand the difference between humans and animals, and therefore that it is their
obligation to use justice as human beings. If they do so, they will not, like the hawk,
devour literal or figurative singers. In his use of this fable, Hesiod exploits the genre’s
relationship to disparity, transition and false appearances on a number of levels. In a
manner characteristic of the genre, this fable introduces a discussion of hierarchical
opposites: justice and injustice. The fable acts as a transition between sections, but it also
serves as a mediator between the author and those he advises. Initially, the fable appears
as a positive exemplum; only later does the author subvert the reader’s expectations by
completely rejecting the fable’s message. By crossing boundaries into the animal sphere,
Hesiod makes it clear that those in power have transgressed expected societal
responsibilities. Hesiod’s Hawk and the Nightingale, the first extant fable in Greek
literature, establishes some fundamental characteristics of the genre, which will be

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53 For a discussion of Hesiod’s status and the Works and Days, see Most 2006-7: i-xlvii, Lamberton 1988:
discussed in later sections. Such characteristics include the use of fable to negotiate issues of power and to advice those in power how to rule others and their own actions.

We are familiar with the use of fable as a political message in the Old Testament, 2 Kings 14.9 when Jehoash, the king of Israel, communicates with the king of Judah by means of a fable. This book, written in the 7th-6th century BCE, deals with events from the early 8th century BCE, and thus the fable is nearly contemporary with the Greek Archaic Period. Herodotus, writing perhaps 200 years later, but dealing with an earlier event, also associates fables with kings, when he describes how the Persian King Cyrus sends a fable as a political message in our first extant fable in Greek prose literature (1.141). Herodotus was aware of the fabulist Aesop and provides us with the earliest account of his origins: this logopoios was the fellow slave of the courtesan Rhodopis and the slave of Iadmon, he was killed by the Delphians and lived in the 6th century at the time of Sappho (2.134-5). Despite his awareness of Aesop, Herodotus does not attribute Cyrus’ Flute-player and the Fish, in which the fish only dance for the flute-playing fisherman once they have been caught, to the fabulist (1.141). Since most of the authors in this study who employ fable exempla never mention Aesop, the omission of the first fabulist in this context is not surprising. Herodotus is likely also influenced by the memory of the traditional Near Eastern animal fable as the typical device used by kings to assert their power.

This tale is framed by the word logos, which often contains an association not only with prose, but also is more closely connected with truth. There is, of course, a connection between prose and the low genre of fable, while poetry is often reserved for higher forms of literature, although this does not mean, as we saw in Hesiod, that it always excludes the fable genre. Kurke’s recent analysis of Aesop and Herodotus associates the historian’s style of prose storytelling with Aesopic speech. For this author, Herodotus draws on popular traditions of Ionian storytelling including the

55 Kurke 2011: 125-158 presents an extended account of the Herodotean text arguing that, despite the absence of Aesop from the text, there is nevertheless an opposition between Solon and Aesop inherent in the text, but that Aesop is deliberately omitted in order to preserve the power of his East vs West conflict and dichotomy.
56 See Kurke 2011: 361-432, for an examination of the connections between Aesop and Herodotus’ text.
Aesopic. Kurke highlights Plutarch’s discussion of the historian in *De Herodoti Malignitate* in which this ancient reading reveals elements of the Aesopic in Herodotus as Plutarch discredits him for his role as an Aesopic *logopoios*. He fashions Herodotus similarly as a low-class figure with non-Greek associations, a barbarian lover who engages in the flattery of the rich and powerful. Plutarch even credits Herodotus with attempting to usurp the voice and therefore the power of Apollo like Aesop in the *Life* (40). In the reading of prose there are issues of status as genre and decorum must correspond to the socio-political hierarchy. What is subversive about Aesopic type speech, a trait that is common in the two episodes of Aesopic type advising that Kurke identifies at 1.27 and 7.101-4, is that it flatters on the surface but invites further interpretation. Despite a protracted argument about Aesopic advising in Herodotus, Kurke ultimately acknowledges that there is not much Aesop in Herodotus, while the text does not engage fully with Cyrus’ fable.\(^57\) Rather than seeing a necessarily Aesopic influence, I agree with Dewald who identifies in Herodotus’ expert *persona* a kind of “professional outsider” who, because of this special status, knows many things about many peoples.\(^58\)

Cyrus employs this fable as a rhetorical *exemplum*, a message to the Ionians and Aeolians offering to be his subjects on the same terms as they had been with the defeated Croesus. The king’s message is clear: like the fish who did not dance for the flute-player, the Ionians and Aeolians refused to accept his use of diplomacy, and now he will use the net instead of the flute. This fable is connected with major themes of Herodotus’ work as it not only highlights the polarized conflict between East and West but also introduces the motif of sea-power in the Greco-Persian conflict.\(^59\) It is common for a leader to support his right to power by using the hierarchy of the animal world as a metaphor, and, while many animals rule, humanity is still at the top in fable literature. In this disparity between human and animal, Cyrus both parallels and reveals the greater disparity that he sees between himself as an Eastern king and those Greeks who are subject to him. In both fable and context a single speaker addresses a larger audience, and there is also a fitting opposition between land and sea powers: Cyrus the flute-player versus the coastal cities

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57 Kurke 2011: 426.
59 See Van Dijk 1997: 274.
or fish. As Van Dijk and Hirsch note, fish are a Near Eastern image for the subjection of enemies, and Cyrus clearly intends the comparison to insult the Greeks, whom he portrays not simply as fish, but dancing fish. The king is addressing ambassadors whom he considers to be an inferior audience, although they are likely aristocratic Greeks. Even in this early period, his use of the fable genre is meant in a derogatory sense. Kurke argues that this fable does not follow the traditional Aesopic pattern of the use of the genre by the weak, but rather it is a deployment of fable by the strong against the weak and, therefore, it takes on an ironic and threatening tone. However, as previously discussed, the fable begins as a genre used by the powerful to justify their positions in our Eastern sources, and in Herodotus it takes on a similar function. The exceptional example is Hesiod, who employs the genre as a means of communication with his social superiors. While the fable seems to suggest that if the coastal Greeks had come dancing out of the water at the command of Cyrus’ flute they might have been spared, we are also reminded of the reality that, whether willingly through diplomacy or unwillingly through war, their subjection was inevitable, at least in the mind of the king. For Herodotus and his 5th-century audience the fable also reinforces what they know to be true. Thus, the king, as a prime example of the élite fabulist, constructs the reality of the world and his power through his fictional logos. It is not surprising that fables are common in scenarios in which the enemy is animalized and othered to support the right to power of a military leader or force. This fable is deployed in a time of political transition; however, it is characteristic of this early period that it is used by those in power to remind the weaker of the established social and political order. We know that early fable was the weapon of the Eastern aristocrat. It was not a tool of rebellion, but rather a means of justifying and teaching about existing power relations as we find in Cyrus’ fable of subjection.

Aristophanes was consciously Aesopic, and thus his plays provide a wealth of information about the fable during the fifth century BCE, especially in terms of the status

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61 Cf. the Persian practice of dragnetting which was used by Darius to move Eretrians. In Philostratus, Apollonius describes the plight of these captured men through a metaphor of fish washed ashore (Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana 1.23).
62 Kurke 2011: 400-404. See Perry 1959: 23-5, who examines the view that the fable originally functioned as a weapon of opposition used by the weak and the small against their superiors. As my history of the fable demonstrates, this assertion does not take into account the earliest fable traditions.
of the fabulist and audience. Aristophanes is the first of our Greek authors for whom the association of fable with the Other is emphasized, and this may be explained by the influence of the tradition of the Aesopic fabulist. In the *Birds* one lower-class character scolds his friend’s ignorance, since he has not ‘thumbed’ through his Aesop, possibly a reference to an early written collection (*οὐδ’ Αἴσωπον πεπάτηκας*) (470-1). Here, however, the verb πατέω in its simplest sense of ‘to tread’ or ‘to frequent’ may suggest a familiarity with an oral genre, and not necessarily a physical, and quite expensive, reference book. We should extend the assumption of fable knowledge beyond these two lower-class speakers since, in many cases, Aristophanes’ brief allusions to fable material suggest that his audience was familiar with this genre as a type of universal knowledge. While the fable genre may have become a tool of the marginalized at this time, it is significant that Aristophanes and his audience thought that fable was typical of that class. While Aristophanes’ works display an élite education in line with other authors of the period, the material in his plays engages with a variety of literary and popular subjects that reflect a varied Athenian audience different from the predominantly upper-class and highly educated audience of symposiastic literature and *historia.* Aristophanes’ distinctive use of fable must be related in part to the audience for which it was written as he engages with critical and comedic material at a variety of levels.

The early Greek association of fable with the Other and the figure of Aesop is more pronounced in Aristophanes’ plays than in any previous sources where, as I will show, not only the lower classes but also women, children and older figures are both fabulists and internal audiences. The use of fables by these members of society functions on one level as a means of characterization; however, these fables are also used as a humorous means of criticism and insult, and, while voiced through a number of characters, they are ultimately the construct of Aristophanes. They empower their speakers and, in several cases, the fables specifically deal with the revolt of the weak against the injustice of the strong, and the power of the weak to punish the strong and to

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63 Aristophanes mentions Aesop by name eight times and recounts or refers to fables more often than most Greek writers. See the Appendix for fables in Aristophanes.

64 While most scholars believe that the fable, as a form of folk literature, was spread orally, this passage suggests that at this time there may have been a written version of the *Aesopica*. See Gibbs 2002: xi, who argues against the translation “thumb through” in favour of “going over in the mind.”

65 See Van Dijk 1997: 228.

66 For Aristophanes’ combination of high and low humour, see especially Hubbard 1991: 140-156.
change the natural order. The playwright exploits some of the common elements and themes of fable: his fables are sexual and scatological, critical of power and foolish behaviour, he focuses on themes of power, disparity and deceptive appearances as well as the incongruous collision between the high and the low. By suggesting that fables should come to life or by literally enacting them on stage, he reveals incongruities between the power structure presented in the fable and reality (Peace 114-148). In his animal choruses, we are also reminded of the use of the animal as an analogue for human society (Birds and Wasps). Despite this trend in Aristophanes to engage with lower-class speakers and audiences through fable, he still retains the memory of fable as a specifically élite mode of communication. Aristophanes speaks through these lower-class figures using fable to criticize society, but he still expresses the views of the upper classes about how and why the othered members of society should criticize the world and ultimately how they should behave.

In the Lysistrata, the title character attempts to force the men to negotiate peace by convincing the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands. At lines 671-95, the male and female choruses exchange a series of lewd jests and threats and they eventually animalise each other through their language, including a reference to The Dung Beetle and the Eagle. In this fable, the beetle takes revenge on the eagle for ignoring the laws of hospitality by destroying the eagle’s young until Zeus saves the eagle by changing its mating season. The women’s chorus threatens to become the beetle midwife to the male chorus’ eagle’s eggs, a veiled threat against the men’s testicles. Women and men are presented as different types of animals, a common means of hyperbole to emphasize gender differences. The fable conclusion discussing the eagle’s mating season reminds the audience that this play will also inevitably end with sex, when, like the beetle, war is not on earth. The plot of this play, while serious on one level, also allows for the use of sexual and bodily humour. This duality of plot is conveniently found in The Dung Beetle and the Eagle in which scatological episodes are juxtaposed with the palace of Zeus. Fable literature commonly exploits the juxtaposition of the high and the low, of the serious and the humorous, a collision of incongruous elements forcing the reader to think about the meaning of such pairings and of the fable exempla within the

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67 For an examination of women in Aristophanes, see Taaffe 1993: 1-146.
larger context. While this fable has a humorous side, its appearance should not be deceptive. It also functions as a means of empowerment for these women who take on the role of the seemingly weaker figure who has been wronged, and it expresses their hope that, like the beetle, they will be able to punish the stronger figure and effect change. If we move beyond the action of the fable to its resolution, the presentation of the fable questions the extent of the change and punishment inflicted on the stronger. In the fable, the conflict requires a *deus ex machina*, Zeus, who moves the eagle’s mating season to a time when the beetle is not seen on the earth. Similarly, while the women effect a truce, little else has changed in society.

Aristophanes reprises *The Dung Beetle and the Eagle* in *Peace* in a similar context. In a dialogue between the lower-class Trygaeus and his daughter, he tells her that he intends to harness a beetle and ride it to heaven (114-148). 68 Like the tiny beetle, which flew up to heaven to punish the eagle in the name of the hare, he intends to fly up to heaven and call Zeus to account in the name of Greece. This fable is purposely linked with the rest of the play as it picks up the scatological humour from the prologue exploiting the opportunities for comedy given by the fable. The dung beetle in the fable actually acts as the emblem of the foul world at the beginning of the play, while pleasant odours will accompany the return to peace. 69 Here our fabulist emphasizes that the action of the fable, and therefore its message, is possible by literally enacting and visualizing elements of the fable on stage. His daughter, however, questions the validity of using a fable as a metaphor for real life. While Trygaeus presents his fable as a *logos* (ἐν τοῖσιν Αἰσώπου λόγοις (129)), his daughter calls it a *mythos* (ἀπιστον...μοθον (130)) stressing its fictitiousness and untrustworthiness. We are thus invited not only to call into question the literal possibility of riding a beetle to heaven, but also the metaphorical implications of the fable for the success of the weak against the strong.

In the *Birds*, Peisthetairos, a man honourable in tribe and family (33), although not specifically a member of the upper classes, has left Athens to escape the city’s preoccupation with litigation. While he professes to dislike the rhetor’s tricks, he is a cunning speaker and fabulist. Ultimately, as the leader of the birds and the gods,

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68 For examinations of this fable, see Hubbard 1991: 140-156 and Bowie 1993: 134-138.
Peisthetairos will prove the role of fable in achieving and maintaining power. In true rhetorical fashion, Peisthetairos first attempts to convince the birds of their pre-eminence over the gods by telling them the aetiological *Fable of the Crested Lark* to prove their right to power through primogeniture (460-655). Aristophanes and his fabulist subvert expectations by turning this fable explaining the lark’s crest into a fable that supports the idea that the birds existed before the Earth was created. Thus, this aetiology cleverly takes on the role of a persuasive argument. Another of this clever speaker’s fables occurs at 652-53 when he asks how his partnership with the birds can be equal when he cannot fly and cites Aesop’s fable about the fox and the eagle. The incompatible partnership between various species, especially those from different elements, is a common fable theme. In this fable, the eagle betrayed the fox by feeding her cubs to its young, and the fox could do no more than curse the eagle. The eagle accidentally set her nest on fire and the fox got her revenge by eating the eagle’s young as they fell. Our lower-class social climber easily convinces the king through this fable and he is given an herb to make him sprout wings. In this story, our hero Peisthetairos may cloak himself in the simplicity of fable, but he is the cunning rhetor. He cleverly uses and manipulates the genre for flattery and persuasion. He takes on the *persona* of fabulist but he alters the purpose of his fables and also cloaks his true purpose and desire for power in the fables he tells. In the latter fable, while he stresses the lot of the fox, there is the clever implication, aimed at the external audience, that the eagle, in this case Tereus, will not fare so well at the end of this *fabula*, if he joins in partnership with this suitably foxy human. Our fabulist’s quest for power, and ultimate role as tyrant, reminds us that although the fable pretends to champion the weak in many of our sources, just as Peisthetairos does, it is often cleverly used as a tool by the élite to maintain or gain power.

In the *Wasps*, in particular, Aristophanes uses fables as a means of characterizing Philocleon as a lower-class old man, but there is more than simple characterization in his fable material. As we have learned, fables are often spoken by wise old advisors. While Philocleon is often dismissed as the foolish old man, he is also the fabulist, which is perhaps meant to make the audience question the validity of this assessment. His fables do have functions beyond drunken insults; they also express his point of view, advice and

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70 For Aristophanes and Aesop, see Rothwell 1995: 233-54.
criticism of the world. His fables focus primarily on the immutability of human nature and the acceptance of the natural order, which, from the élite perspective, the disenfranchised should embrace. While his fables appear to support a lower-class perspective through the class of their speakers, they also reinforce the desire of the upper classes that those under them should accept their roles as subjects. This goal certainly, in my opinion, suggests that our authors who tell fables often take on the slave voice as a means of actually reinforcing élite ideals and thus creating an image of the perfect slave.

Fables are found in the Greek Archaic period, principally in poetry, both iambic and symposiastic, a type of literature which handles themes such as satire and sexuality which are also reflected in the fables themselves. Traces of the exchange of fables at banquets exist in post-Archaic literature including Aristophanes’ Wasps and Petronius’ Cena Trimalchionis. There are a number of fables whose action takes place at banquets; often the action is concerned with the proper behaviour of both guest and host at such occasions. While fables are traditionally associated with symposiastic settings, given the small number of fables and the fragmentary nature of the fables in our archaic sources, it is difficult to do more than theorize about these early fables. In the Wasps, Bdelycleon usurps the place of the old man as teacher and attempts to instruct his father Philocleon about the symposium and the kinds of stories and anecdotes suitable for telling in the presence of the intellectual élite. This passage is concerned with familial power relations and this is reflected in the action in which the son usurps the parental role and attempts to alter his father’s physical appearance and lower-class behaviour. For Bdelycleon, the fable is not suitably grand for the symposium, but his father feels that it is perfectly at home when speaking with politicians who should not be foxy and befriend both sides (1240). The son instead suggests that the fable is best, again in a legal capacity, as a means of appeasing those whom you have offended with drunken antics (1256–61). From 1380–1448, Philocleon, now drunk from the feast, employs some of the stories his son suggested in order to appease those he has assaulted and whose property

71 For authors (mainly fragments of Archilochus) during this early period who use fable, see Adrados 1999 and his section on the Archaic period. The earliest examples in Greek literature involve only animals and are what many would label beast fables, although our evidence is confined to a few examples, some of which are fragmentary or only attested by later authors.
72 See Adrados 1999, Part 2, Chapter 3: Fable and Iambic Genres.
he has damaged. Against two plaintiffs he uses fables in which lower-class speakers (Aesop and a woman from Sybaris) offer rude, but true, advice to those who complain to show sense and fix their own problems. He tells his final fable as his son carries him into the house.\(^74\) In this latter fable, he associates himself with the framed fabulist Aesop who attempts to save himself by telling the familiar \textit{Dung Beetle and the Eagle}. Aristophanes plays with the incongruities between fable and context which influence the character of Philocleon. Both old fabulists are being dragged away as they use a fable that in the end will prove ineffective. The father presents himself hyperbolically as the heroic figure, the martyr or scapegoat, who was falsely accused, although we know that Philocleon is guilty. Given the fable and its context in terms of the Aesop character in the \textit{Life of Aesop} we might ask ourselves of what is he guilty? Like Aesop, is he guilty of hubris in attempting to usurp a position that does not belong to him,\(^75\) or is he guilty of attempting, like the beetle, to rebel against the injustice perpetrated against him by his son? Whatever the answer, note that we are left once again with the moral that the victim can have his revenge but only to a certain degree. Philocleon’s use of fable is not just a reflection of his status and age, but also of the relationship between father and son, in which the younger has infantilized the older. The father, in a period of transition into old age in which he has lost power to his son, reprises the licentious behaviours of his youth, which also include the telling of childhood fables.

Aristophanes’ use of fables is unique during this period not only in their ubiquitous nature, but because he is our first Greek source to portray the fable as a genre of the non-privileged. Aristophanes is clearly aware of the Aesopic association with fable and thus the association of fable with slavery. In his fables, and also his plays in general, the weak often have the power to bring about change and to convince the powerful, either through persuasion or force, to improve some aspect of the current social reality. There is, however, a \textit{caveat}. We are frequently left to wonder how significant or lasting such changes truly are in society as fables are ultimately élite constructs that are used as a means of reinforcing the established order.

\(^{74}\) For a study of the significance of the final scenes in the Wasps, including the fable as a parody of polite manners, see Vaio 1971: 342-3.

\(^{75}\) For Aesop’s hubris, see Chapter 2: 56, 64, 66, 74, 75, 78, 88.
Other authors, who are concerned with social and political satire, as well as moral philosophy in the Socratic tradition, consciously make use of the fable and exploit the ambiguities inherent in the first fabulist and his genre. With authors such as Herodotus and Aristophanes, we have an emerging picture of the persona of the first fabulist, which makes possible his use in philosophical texts, although I would not go as far as Kurke in suggesting that Aesop and his brand of critical and popular wisdom is a major influence on the Socratic tradition and its use of prose. Aesop was connected with philosophy and philosophical figures, but also with satire and comedy, all of which may have influenced the later representations of the fabulist, while it is less likely that Aesop directly influenced the depiction of Socrates. Aesop was associated with the philosopher Socrates, and their lives share some interesting parallels often found in the lives and deaths of religious or philosophical teachers. There are many fables, often with Socrates as the speaker, in the writings of his pupils and admirers such as Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon. All three of these authors were born into the privileged upper classes, and thus they learned the tradition of the fable as a didactic tool of the élite used to exemplify and justify proper hierarchical relationships. At the same time, they must also have been aware of the characterisation of fable as a genre of the Aesopic type figure. Plato says that Socrates saw the value of fables in his teachings, and that, while awaiting execution, he was engaged in versifying Aesop’s fables (Phaedo 60b-61b). Here, as Kurke notes, there is evidence of an antagonism already between Aesop and Apollo as Aesop is represented at first by lowly prose, while Apollo’s hymns are lofty poetry. This implies a pre-existing collection of fables in prose, possibly a written collection. The fable was traditionally associated with the low and prosaic; however, when it is appropriated by Socrates it is elevated not only in terms of the transition from prose to poetry, but also, as will be discussed below, from applications to everyday life to fables that teach about the soul. This transition of the fable from traditionally low prose into a higher poetic form

77 For more on the connections between Socrates and Aesop, see Chapter 2: 59, 79-81.
79 See Van Dijk 1997: 317-319. For a discussion of this fable, see Clayton 2008: 311-328, who argues that Plato intends to have his readers compare the lives and deaths of Socrates and Aesop in order to prove the philosopher’s greater virtue and thus be moved to imitate him.
80 See Kurke 2011: 254.
may be related to the conflict in the *Life of Aesop* in which the breaking of the boundaries between poetry and prose reflects the greater conflict between Apollo and Aesop, and, therefore, similarly between Socrates and Apollo. Aesop and Socrates are connected as subversive figures, those who are both part of the traditions of philosophy, wisdom literature and omens, while they also criticize them.\(^{81}\)

In Plato, the fables told by Socrates are less concerned with the political and instead maintain the element of teaching through fable *exempla*. These fables are concerned with hierarchies, but, instead of focusing on social or political registers, there is an engagement with the discussion of freedom and slavery of the body as opposed to that of the mind or soul. It is possibly this shift from the corporeal to the ethereal which accounts for the fact that Plato does not attribute his fable *exempla* specifically to Aesop. Both Plato and his audience belonged to the upper-class sector of the ancient world, those who were especially concerned with employing fable as a tool in discussions of hierarchy.

In Plato’s *Phaedo* 60b-61d, Socrates invents an aetiological fable\(^ {82}\) in which he anthropomorphizes pleasure and pain in order to explain their interconnectivity. This fable functions as a means of preparing the reader for the discussion of the connections between opposites, and the later argument that all things result from their opposites. The fable is occasioned by the untying of Socrates’ leg and the pleasure that results after a long period of pain. This metaphor of something being bound continues throughout the rest of the work as an expression of the relationship of the body and the soul, especially the body as the soul’s prison from which it must be set free. The fable also serves as a metaphor for the transition of the soul from the earthly to the sublime. Aesop is commonly connected with bodily imagery in the *Life of Aesop* (1, 28 and 75-6), and yet here, when a fable is employed by Socrates, it is connected with a transformation from the bodily to the exploration of the mind. Thus, our Socratic fabulist moves beyond Aesopic bodily imagery and gives his fable a Platonic/Socratic quality. In *Phaedrus* 259b-d, Socrates tells *The Fable of the Grasshoppers*, included in Perry’s *Aesopica*, although really an aetiological myth, to introduce the themes of love, music and

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\(^{81}\) For a comparison of the traditions of Aesop and Socrates, see Kurke 2006: 6-52.

\(^{82}\) See Kurke 2006: 36.
discourse. The fable metaphorically offers the promise of a similar reward as that given to the men-turned grasshoppers, for those who follow the Muses, of leaving behind the shackles of bodily needs and pleasures and living a life purely devoted to intellectual pursuits. Kurke identifies a number of pertinent connections between Aesop and Plato’s Socrates. For Kurke, Plato uses Aesop instrumentally to establish the authority and prestige of his sophia through the disruptive nature of Aesopic discourse that combines high and low forms, and at once criticizes and reinforces wisdom traditions. Thus, Plato uses prose and Aesop to challenge the old sophia. While I do not entirely agree that there is enough evidence in this early period to argue for such a strong influence of the Aesopic tradition on Platonic dialogues, I do agree that in the fables used by Plato we see that he discards the bodily Aesop in favour of intellectual Socrates. This fable explores the collision between the high and the low, the disparity between the physical appearance of the body and the lofty reality of the soul. In Plato, the fable is the true philosophical exemplum; it embodies more complex ideas about living well. There is very little to suggest that there is anything pejorative about these fables, but rather, they remind the reader of the earliest Eastern fables used by teachers to impart wisdom to their pupils. Plato himself establishes the familiar opposition between mythos and logos, but he calls himself a mythologicos, incorporating elements of reason and fiction, the tools of the traditional fabulist. In Plato, we encounter the traditional teacher, in this case Socrates, using the fable to introduce and explain more profound philosophical views about the human experience.

In Xenophon, the fable plays a similar didactic role on the lips of Socrates; however, it is used as a more concrete example of human behaviour and the natural order congruent with his general treatment of the philosopher. The fable, as employed by Xenophon, is much more akin to Roman period fable exempla that are concerned with daily struggles, and not with the moral or philosophical improvement of life and the soul. At Memorabilia 2.7, Xenophon presents Socrates as offering Aristarchus useful advice through The Sheep, the Master and the Dog about how to deal with the complaints of his female relatives that he is idle, while their productions sustain the household. In this

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83 Kurke 2011: 301-360.
84 See Kurke 2011: 265-300, for an examination of the fable in Xenophon.
fable, the sheep protests that her products are beneficial, but she receives little in return, while the dog enjoys the privilege of dining with his master. The dog answers that he protects the sheep, thus Socrates says that Aristarchus should tell the women that he is their watchdog and because of him they live in comfort and safety. This fable is told by the wise old advisor who teaches the élite young man about how to govern his world. In this fable, the disparities found in nature are used as a means of supporting and explaining those invented by human society. It is also significant that the fable is meant to be told to women, who are associated with the sheep, often the most foolish animals in fable literature. Thus, in Xenophon fables are indeed gendered; they are associated with female stereotypes and female audiences. However, by using this fable in a text intended for an élite male audience, Xenophon is purposely reacting to this stereotype, a common feature in fable exempla. Xenophon’s fable reflects the larger concerns of *Memorabilia* Book II, especially bodily pleasure and the relationships of the individual members of the household, as well as how to educate one fit to rule in society. In Xenophon, the fable is used as a persuasive argument meant to bring about harmony in the smallest ‘political’ unit in the state: the household.

In Aristotle, another highly educated and upper-class figure from the 4th century, the fable assumes a more overtly political and rhetorical purpose. In *Politics* 3.8, the fable is presented as part of a discussion of political power, specifically the importance of ostracism in checking the power of great men. For Aristotle, it would be foolish if a normal man tried to legislate for men of great power, since they would probably make the same reply as the lions in the story of Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates and founder of a Cynic sect of philosophers. In this fable, the lion asked the hares where their teeth and claws were when they once demanded equality in the assembly of animals. Thus, it is for the sake of equality that democracies practice ostracism. His use of the regal lion is significant as it connects the action of the fable, in which the few have power, to monarchies and an animal/human order devoid of democracy. This fable is specifically flagged by Aristotle as a possible élite construction used to reinforce the power of the

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85 This gendering of fable was already flagged in both Hesiod’s victimized female bird and Aristophanes’ female fabulists.
86 Cartledge 1993: 9 makes an interesting argument that Aristotle is both an insider and outsider as he was originally a northerner who spent much of his life as a resident alien in Athens.
strong and also reveals the violence and aggressive potential of the élite, while still maintaining pretensions to equality within democratic governments.

At Rhetoric 2.20, Aristotle classifies the fable and its place in public speaking beneath the use of exempla derived from facts. Aristotle defines rhetoric as the ability to discover possible means of persuasion in reference to any given subject (Rhetoric 1.2). The proofs needed for persuasion are either concrete and inartificial, such as witnesses and contracts, or artificial, those which must be constructed by the author. Fable falls into the latter category. Aristotle included fable (logos) among the proofs common to all branches of rhetoric, one type of example (paradeigma) which is invented to suit the circumstances at hand rather than a historical example (Rhetoric 2.20). Fables, unlike historical proofs, because of their inherent fictionality, were not considered to be as persuasive as their factual counterparts, but they were advantageous because they could be invented to suit the particulars of the case at hand and, as koinoi topoi, they were commonly known and believed to be true (Rhetoric 1.2.22; 2.18-19, 23-4). Aristotle makes it clear that he is referring to the Aesopic type of logos in this context by using two animal fables as exempla, each spoken in political or judicial scenarios by historical figures: The Horse and the Stag employed by Stesichorus to dissuade the people of Himera from giving Phalaris a bodyguard; and The Fox, the Ticks and the Hedgehog used by Aesop at the trial of a demagogue on charges of extortion. This episode continues the emerging trend of an Aesopic tradition including both fables and stories about this figure. We are presented with historical figures, wise men, and, in the case of Aesop, a lower-class individual who uses this supposedly sub-élite genre, and yet they employ the genre to express élite views about authority. Aesop here defends a demagogue by claiming the status quo is superior to a new bloodsucking tyrant and that the people should accept a certain measure of exploitation by the powerful. Aristotle is clearly writing in the political tradition of fable as a means of dealing with issues of power, since the fable is often concerned with hierarchies that can be exploited as

87 For the communes loci of Latin rhetoric, see Cicero, Orat. 47,126; De Or. 3.106 and Quintilian I.O. 2.1.9.
89 See Bowra 1940: 26-29.
exempla. In the fable allusion in Politics, we are reminded of Hesiod’s negative exemplum about the injustice of the natural world, and therefore its unsuitability as a metaphor for the civilized human order. Like Aristotle himself, his audience was mainly élite, and in the case of a work like the Politics, he is specifically teaching the upper-class male audience how to rule. Aristotle maintains the traditional association of fable with issues of power and politics in society, and his fables are voiced by historical figures that often use them as persuasive rhetorical exempla. Despite their deployment by figures from a variety of classes, they specifically express élite views about power.

In the Archaic and Classical periods, fables are found in political agones and are used as rhetorical exempla advising an often élite male audience. In the symposium or court (legal or social), fable is used as a means of discussing political situations and also of negotiating and revealing issues of power between social classes. Despite some associations with the marginalized through internal narrators or literary personae, many of these Greek fable authors are élite in terms of education or social status. They present themselves as didactic figures, and often mediators between various levels in the social and political world, and thus their appropriation of fable is apt as it is a locus of collision between high and low. In the Hellenistic period, the time when the first fable collections were emerging as repertoires of rhetorical exempla, there are very few fable exempla with which to engage, since our only examples are fragmentary, and thus lacking context. The first written fable collection during this period was ascribed to the Athenian orator and politician Demetrius of Phalerum (4th-3rd century BCE) (Diogenes Laertius 5.80: Αἰσωπείων λόγων συναγωγαί), unfortunately this collection has not survived, although it is likely that the collection was meant for use as a handbook of rhetorical exempla for the orator. This brief study of the deployment of fable exempla before the Roman period identifies a number of key characteristics of the genre. It was often connected with the exploration of various types of hierarchies, often political and social, but also philosophical. Many of the fabulists and authors who employ the genre are in fact

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90 See Adrados 1999, for a discussion of fables from their origins to the Hellenistic period. See also Van Dijk 1997: 230-257, for fables in Hellenistic poetry.
91 For Demetrius of Phalerum and the first fable collection, see Perry 1962: 287-346. For fable collections in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Adrados 1984: 137-195.
members of the upper classes. Exceptions are found, however, in Hesiod and Aristophanes, in which ‘pseudo’ marginalized figures use the fable as a means of instructing others, sometimes élite figures, about the use of power. We are also reminded through our élite authors and the messages of many fables that they are an important means for the upper classes to define the Other and their expectations of the Other, and through such a definition they also define themselves, while at the same time reinforcing and defining their positions of power.

Fable as the Other in the 1st-3rd Centuries CE: Age, Class, Gender, Genre and Power

Fable exempla in Greek literature from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods share many similarities with later examples in the 1st century CE, although after this period in Latin and Greek literature there is a marked increase in the identification of fable with non-privileged social groups such as slaves, freedmen, women and children. While it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the characterization of Aesop during this period, it is possible to conjecture based on the information from Aristophanes, Aristotle, and in slightly later sources, such as Phaedrus, that the tradition of Aesop as a mediating figure, the former slave who criticizes gods and kings, while at the same time supporting élite views, must have been familiar to authors in the 1st century. We also know that authors had a number of written collections from which to draw their fables, such as the texts of Babrius and Phaedrus, in the 1st – 2nd centuries CE, although it is not possible to determine with certainty whether the authors in this period relied on the written text, or whether they were still primarily influenced by the oral tradition. In fact, Seneca, who was writing at the same time as Phaedrus, discusses the fable genre, but he fails to mention the fabulist. A feature which is especially marked in this period is the conscious appropriation not only of the fable genre by arguably élite authors, but also the voicing of fable through self-conscious narrators or authorial personae that are constructed as Aesopic type figures. These figures are often mediators between various social, political or literary levels, who serve as critics and satirists, and exploit their own

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92 For a discussion of the history of fable scholarship, see Holzberg 2002: 1-10.
93 See Perry 1965, for the collections of Babrius and Phaedrus.
94 See Seneca’s Consolatio ad Polybium 8.3.
marginality while attempting to use fable as one means of constructing an idealized view of the world. The fable serves as a discourse of hierarchy, a genre whose theory seems to be purposely and strategically at odds with its often ‘élite’ practice.

Before examining the changes that take place in the voicing of fable during this period, it is important to review the changes taking place within the socio-political climate of the Greco-Roman world in the 1st century and how these changes impacted the depictions of the master-slave relationship. Slaves had long been vital for élite competition and display but they were also viewed ambivalently for the contradictory roles they played for their masters.95 Although legally and socially inferior, they served as agents of their masters and often participated in business dealings, like money-lending, as they could cross boundaries that would disgrace their masters. At this time, freedmen were gaining power as society became increasingly stratified by wealth as opposed to birth (Juvenal, Sat. 3.131) and slaves as well as freedmen held important positions in the imperial household (Pliny, Ep. 7.29). As Joshel notes in a recent article, literature was used to act out and resolve anxieties, problems and contradictions as masters told stories about slaves in order to define their expectations of the slave class.96 We do, however, also see the emergence under the Principate of the use of slavery as a metaphor for a person’s relationship to the emperor, especially a bad emperor (Cic. Rep. 2.43, Att. 7.7.7; Tac. Ann. 3.65, Agr. 2.3; Plin. Ep. 4.11.6) and the use of slavery as a metaphor for the power of vice.97 Thus, there is a conscious appropriation of the slave voice and the analogy of slavery during the 1st century to express a number of anxieties and expectations produced during this transitional period.

In this period, while there is a gradual shift to lower-class speakers, slaves are mostly absent from the fable tradition. Although Aesop is presented as a slave, our extant sources, apart from the Life, rarely portray him as the slave fabulist; it is only once he is free that animal fable is common in his speeches.98 This general downgrading of fabulist and often of audience (in terms of age, class, and gender) seems to have resulted partly from the genres into which fables were first introduced into Latin literature-

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98 See Chapter 2.
specifically comedy, in which the fable already featured prominently in Classical Greece, and satire, in which the slave, slave speech and *sermo cotidianus* were important features. Early comedy and satire boast a few examples of fables and fable allusions in Ennius, Plautus, Terence and Lucilius.\(^9\) This is not surprising given the Greek models of these Roman genres, especially Aristophanes who employed fables prolifically. In Roman comedy, fable was often associated with animals and slavery, two factors which perhaps contributed to the Roman attitude to the genre. The fable references in early Roman comedy are composed primarily of colloquialisms, sayings, and proverbial material possibly based on fable. They are concerned with animals, especially the suffering donkey and the vicious wolf, and are often voiced by and are part of the representation of lower classes, women and undesirable members of society.\(^10\) There are so few fables in Republican Latin literature, and the ones we do have are either fragmentary or lacking their context, that it is difficult to make any conclusions about the voicing of fable. It is not until the Augustan period that the fable regains prominence. It is noteworthy that certain fables are favoured by Roman authors in the late first century BCE and the early first century CE, but this partiality can in part be explained by the use of such fables as proverbs.\(^11\)

“The Revolt of the Fable” is a phrase coined in the twentieth century as a reflection of the belief that fable was slave speech or a genre aimed at criticizing their masters.\(^12\) However, this conception of fable seems to be primarily a construct of the Roman period, especially of Phaedrus’ sly definition of the genre in which he constructs fable as a tool of the slave, although he must have known about the élite associations of the genre. Although the legendary Aesop, identified in Greek sources as the father of

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\(^10\) These undesirable members of society include the *leno* (Plautus, *Pseudolus* 139-141), *servus* (Plautus, *Bacchides* 349; Terence, *Adelphoe* 538), *senex* (Plautus, *Aulularia* 226-35), *meretrix* (Terence, *Eunuchus* 832) and spendthrift (Plautus, *Stichus* 577). For a list of the fables in comedy and where they can be found in the collections, see the Appendix.

\(^11\) *The Two Wallets* is found in Seneca, Catullus, Horace and Petronius; *The Frog and the Ox* in Horace, Martial, and Petronius; and *The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints* in Seneca, Lucilius, Quintilian, Horace and Petronius (see Appendix). While Propertius and Catullus each boasts only one possible fable reference (see Appendix), Seneca, Petronius’ contemporary, dissuades Polybius (*Polyb. Cons.* 8.3-4) from occupying himself with fables as long as he has not ceased mourning, since the playful nature of fables requires a relaxed and peaceful mind.

\(^12\) See Holzberg 2002: 16 and 62.
fable, was a slave, this idea of fable as a slave genre is expressly stated for the first time when Phaedrus claims that fables were invented as a coded language between slaves to criticize their masters with impunity (Prologue 3.33-37):

Nunc, fabularum cur sit inventum genus,
brevi docebo. Servitus obnoxia,
qui quae volebat non audebat dicere,
affectus proprios in fabellas transtulit,
calumniamque fictis elusit iocis.

Now, I will give you a brief lesson,
Why fables, as a genre, were first invented.
A slave [Aesop], liable to punishment,
Because he did not dare to express what he wanted to say,
Translated his own sentiments into fables,
And thus he eluded censure by comic inventions.

As Phaedrus says, fables are appropriate for criticism, since they provide a shield for the author: the reader’s interpretation of the fable and its context ultimately gives it meaning. Phaedrus is traditionally labelled as a freedman of Augustus based of the evidence of the title of the principal manuscript of his work. It is possible that Phaedrus was not a freedman, but that his association with the fable genre actually led to his servile label in the manuscript tradition. Phaedrus may even have enjoyed élite status as he tells us that he came into conflict with the highest circles at court, including Seianus (Prol. 3. 41-44). Phaedrus emphasizes that he is writing not for the unlettered (inlitteratum plausum nec desidero (Prol. 4.20)) but for an educated audience (liber animus (Prol. 3.3)). Holzberg argues that Phaedrus’ emphasis on his writing of high class poetry juxtaposed with the low genre of fable is a means of constructing his character as a jester which permits him greater freedom of speech. Holzberg did not intend it as an argument in favour of Phaedrus’ possible upper-class status, however, I would contend that the élite appropriation of the role of jester who offers serious criticisms to society under the guise of humour, might be applied to this Roman fabulist. If Phaedrus’ origins were not servile, and he is consciously appropriating a servile genre used as a coded message, there is an

103 For the fables of Phaedrus and the rhetoric of the freedman, see Bloomer 1997: 73-109.
104 See Perry 1965: lxii-xcv. In his fable collection, Phaedrus presents his readers with a number of supposed autobiographical details, however, I agree with Perry that these are dubious at best and influenced to a certain degree by the persona and poetic pretensions of the author.
implication that the code is one that is actually constructed by the élite through the servile voice to express upper-class views. Phaedrus’ statement about the origin of the genre and the appearances of fables in literature of the Roman period seem to be partially responsible for the modern emphasis on fable as slave speech. It should be noted, however, that the use of fables in these genres as characteristic of slave speech is to a certain degree a construct of how an upper-class individual believed such characters should speak, not necessarily a completely accurate reflection of reality. There is a trend in the 1st century CE to present fable as a (pseudo) genre of the non-élite, which we will see in both Livy and Horace.\(^{105}\) While we do see a conflict presented in our earliest Greek sources in terms of the voicing of fable, it is hard to determine, given the scarcity of examples, how far we can push back the association between fable and the slave voice. Common generalizations about fables, especially the conception that fables are slave literature, are too simplistic.\(^{106}\) Not all fabulists are champions of the lower classes and certainly most fables appear in works written by highly educated and élite males. While fabulists are often depicted as lower-class individuals connected with slavery, they do not always reflect the statements of Phaedrus about Aesop’s invention of fable as a means of criticizing his social superiors under a comical veil. Phaedrus, while criticizing members of upper-class Roman society, does not often show the triumph of the weak but rather emphasizes their acceptance of their place (1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.15, etc…). While fables do not always reflect the revolt of the slave, Phaedrus does identify a general trend that takes place in the Roman period: the emphasis on fable as the speech of the Other. Many fabulists are traditionally connected with slavery, most notably Aesop, the ‘freedman’ Phaedrus and perhaps the fabulist Babrius, possibly as a result of the ancient propensity for animalizing and othering slaves. It is clear that fable is really part of a discourse of hierarchy employed not by the slave, but rather more often by the mediating figure of the freedman.

In addition to the class stigma of fables, they are gendered as well. The birth of the fable is often ascribed to female sources. In Philostratus, Apollonius attributes the

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\(^{105}\) See Chapters 3-4.

\(^{106}\) Gibbs asserts that Aesop’s fables in Greece and Rome were told by and for adults, not children, however this is clearly not the case. Although the fables told by authors such as Horace and Hesiod are clearly meant for an adult audience, in Theon, Aphthonius and Plutarch fables are specifically recommended for the education of children (Gibbs 2002: xii).
fable, through a story related to him as a child by his mother, to the Hours or Seasons who told such stories to Hermes when he was a baby and he in turn bestowed the genre on the pious Aesop (*Life of Apollonius* 5.14). In one manuscript tradition of the *Life of Aesop*, the fables are a gift of the goddess Isis (*Vita G*). Although no study has discussed the connection between these texts, this attribution of the fable to women is certainly a reflection of the female role in the early education of children. While both of these texts date to the 2nd or 3rd century CE, the gendering of fable may be pushed back to Hesiod and Aristophanes who present readers with female stereotypes and fabulists. For Hesiod, the female bird is the victim of the male aggressor (*WD* 200-210), while in Aristophanes women use fable as a means of insulting their male opponents (*Lysistrata* 671-195).

Several authors refer to fables as ‘old wives’ tales’ (Horace: *Anilis fabellas* (*Sat.* 2.6.77-78)) or tales told by nurses to their charges (Quintilian: *fabulis nutricularum* (*I.O.* 1.9.2-6)), or by mothers to their children (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.14-5), although this may simply be a reflection of the female role in early education and the care of children. These nurses would also have been slaves, reinforcing the concept of fable as slave speech.

Women, as mothers and nurses, were central to early childhood education in which fables, along with fairy tales, provided formative lessons. These nursery stories were used not only for the education of children, especially to warn them of dangers and to initiate them into societal and cultural norms, but also as a means of control over unwanted behaviours.\(^{107}\) Many of our earliest fables portray female animals, mother figures and teachers, who use wisdom and cleverness for the protection and survival of their young. These fables, while in a sense a record of female voices and concerns in the oral tradition, were frequently usurped and appropriated by the male élite in our written sources. While fables, as stereotypical representations of humans in animal form, likely always had a misogynistic quality, this feature is not emphasized in the fable references in Greek literature of the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods, but plays an important role in the collections and the literary fables in the Roman period.\(^{108}\) As fables increasingly became part of the written male sphere, especially in the extant collections

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\(^{107}\) In *The Nurse and the Wolf*, a child’s nurse warns him that if he cries he will be eaten by a wolf (*PA* 158).

\(^{108}\) For fables in these early periods, see Van Dijk 1997: 121-361.
beginning in 1st century CE, there was a shift in this genre towards an increased misogyny and negative female stereotypes. As an example, I would compare the diligent and intelligent mother in Ennius’ Crested Lark (quoted by Gellius 2.29) with the vain and foolish mother in the later Mother Frog Imitating a Cow (an extremely popular fable in the 1st century). In order to include fables in their works some male authors, who were uncomfortable with the powerful female voices in the fables themselves, appropriated and altered fable content increasing the negative qualities of the female fable characters or removing them altogether. One example is found in the fable of the Crested Lark, already mentioned above, in which Babrius (88) has replaced the provident mother bird of Ennius with the father in his collection. As women used fables in order to control their children and teach them about societal roles, so men took possession of fables and constructed them according to their own expectations of the feminine, thus subordinating the female by replacing the strong mother figure with lustful, vain, and submissive female characters.

In fables, women are found in their expected contexts: in the home and the family, as wives, mothers, and daughters. Often, when women in fables are portrayed negatively, they have transgressed the literal or metaphorical boundaries of their sphere and societal expectations. Of course the labelling of fables as feminine is pejorative, and frequently the issue of the legitimacy of fable as a genre is bound up with the class and gender of the people perceived or presented as fabulists. While female fabulists seem to be displaced in our sources, we do have a number of female characters in fables that do speak and act. These female speakers are almost without exception strong and wise figures who either use deceptive speech or who have some type of wisdom to impart. Often, when fables portray a powerful female character, they present a somewhat negative expression of that

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109 Although not an Aesopic fable, I would compare the presentation of the drunken old woman who tells the story of Cupid and Psyche (Apuleius, Metamorphoses 4.28) with the presentation of the good mother figure from fables.

110 This fable is found in Horace, Martial and Petronius (see Appendix).

111 In the fable collections, female characters are more often presented negatively than positively (Avianus: positive-21, negative- 1, 3, 12, 14, 35; Babrius: positive- 34, 78, 118, 121, 126, negative-10, 12, 16, 22, 28, 32, 35, 51, 56, 70, 98, 109, 116; Phaedrus: positive- 1.18, 3.1, 3.10, 3.17, negative- 1.19, 1.24, 2.2, 2.4, 3.8, 3.15, 4.5, 4.17, 4.24, A4, A11, A15).

112 See especially Babrius 16, 28, 32, 116 and Phaedrus 1.24, 3.15.

113 For examples of clever and wise women, see Aristophanes, Wasps, 1435-40; Phaedrus 1.18 and App. 19.
power through treachery and violence.\textsuperscript{114} Such characterizations are common in fable and folklore in which we see the powerful woman as aggressive and the assertion of female power in some sense entails negative connotations. One need only compare such figures as Medea, or the wicked queen or stepmother from folklore whose desire to protect herself and her children leads to aggression towards the often passive female protagonist.\textsuperscript{115} This rivalry between women was a reflection in a sense of the woman’s world in which other women were common adversaries in the domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{116} How these female characters are presented in fable literature reveals a great deal about the author’s anxieties about women and their roles in society, and the consequences when they transgress these roles. While a number of authors present their readers with powerful female characters, these women are expected to act only in certain situations in which such behaviour is necessary for them to play their roles effectively as mothers, wives, or daughters. When women do act apart from such expectations they are presented as negative stereotypes. Like other examples of storytelling, fables often involve multiple levels of narration, and in our sources they are a reflection of the male construction of female stereotypes. By speaking through the feminine, they make such female characters proponents of the fable’s message about the nature of women. Women, often slave women, took part in the education and socialization of the next generation of élite masters, which could cause anxiety, and therefore, fable as a genre controlled by a world view constructed by the dominant male was one means of ensuring their children learned traditional views of power. Men can use fables as a means of controlling unwanted behaviours, just as women do the same with the fables they tell their children. The male/élite author projects his fears, concerns, and expectations of women onto the fable. These authors construct a social truth through a fictional world in an act of othering the feminine through such stereotypical characters. These fables are then actively re-appropriated by the female and they acquire some truth through acceptance and repetition.

\textsuperscript{114} See especially Phaedrus 2.4 and 1.19.
\textsuperscript{115} Compare the fable of the wicked stepmother in the \textit{Life of Aesop} (37).
\textsuperscript{116} Cf. \textit{The Hen and the Snake’s Eggs} (PA 192). In Phaedrus 1.19, a dog about to give birth begged another dog for the use of her lair until her puppies were born. Her request was granted, but the owner of the lair soon found her generosity betrayed when she was driven away by the mother dog and her brood.
by the very gender being othered in an act of élite male self-definition.117 We can extend the analogy of the male/female to the master/slave relationship as women are enslaved and slaves are also feminized.

Like women, child characters within the fable tradition are found in their expected contexts, often as students of their mothers or other advisor figures who instruct them to learn from their own mistakes and those of others so that they will know how to survive and play their roles effectively in society. Children are often presented as part of a didactic relationship through which we are warned of the consequences of not heeding parental advice (PA 572). Many child figures have a wisdom (PA 401) of their own, but they are powerless victims in the face of physical strength (Babrius 89), and thus the importance of cleverness versus foolishness is stressed (Maximus of Tyre, *Orations* 19). While these children learn, they can also act as teachers pointing out the hypocritical, or the simply bad, advice of their parents (Aphthonius 17, 11). Like other marginalized members of society, the children in these fables have a unique perspective as outsiders who can see the flaws in a society and criticize a social order into which they have not yet been fully initiated as adults. At the same time, these fables also function as a means of parental social control over their children; they are a way for adults to construct the expected social behaviours of their children.

Roman rhetoric seems to have played a role in the association between fable and early education as the genre is not only associated with *communes loci* or *koinoi topoi*, but is expressly identified as part of the first lessons of the *progymnasmata*.118 The teachers of rhetoric, Theon (1st century CE), Hermogenes (2nd century CE) and Aphthonius (4th century CE), in their *progymnasmata* identify fables as one of the first lessons for the young pupil and important in exemplification in the Roman period.

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117 Compare Apollonius who tells his students that his mother told him a fable about Aesop, a fable that was likely a construct specifically of the élite male author Philostratus (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.14-15).

118 Babrius’ fables are addressed to a boy prince (*Prol*. 2), which conforms to ideas about the role of fables in early education found in Quintilian and the grammarians. Julian, in his *Orations* (7. 207), explains that moral fables are for the education of children. Similarly, in Ausonius 12, we have a record of his sending a collection of fables to a nobleman for the instruction of his children. The age of this young literary audience seems to undergo a slight shift after the late 1st-early 2nd centuries CE. Theon and Quintilian both situate fable after the *chria* as the second lesson in rhetorical education, while, beginning with Hermogenes in the late 2nd century, the fable becomes the first exercise learned by children in the *progymnasmata*. See also Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 2.29. For fables in the Roman period and their role in education, see Fisher 1987: 1-64.
Although these sources are primarily Greek, Quintilian advocated similar types of exercises (*I.O.* 12. 4.1-2, 1. 9.2-6, 6.3.44). These *progymnasmata* were intended to prepare the young student of rhetoric around the ages of 12-15 years to write speeches and to familiarize himself with the tools of the orator, including the composition of fables. Fable then acts as the introduction, once more in a period of transition, into formal education as a natural extension of the lessons and stories learned informally in the nursery. While fables could be employed as *exempla*, they were frequently used for *captatio benevolentiae*, to win the favour of the audience through humour, to relieve the audience’s mind with something light and often make fun of the opposition through animal analogies. While the grammarians and rhetoricians set out rules for the composition of fables, such as expanding and abridging, the composition of new fables, the creation of a new moral for a known fable, the most important aspect of using a fable as an *exemplum* was how the author contextualized the fable and therefore guided its interpretation. Despite the prescription of the usefulness of fable in oratory, from the time of Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 2.20) through the age of Aphthonius, the fable *exemplum* was considered less useful than historical or mythical *exempla* for the persuasive speaker and his political or forensic audience. It is no surprise then that with very few exceptions fables are found in rhetoric, not only formal forensic and political speeches, but also other forms of literature, such as dialogues and narrative tales which are heavily influenced by rhetoric.

In rhetoric, the character of the speaker and his relationship to his audience and *exempla* are important elements in determining his overall persuasiveness. When fables appear in literature, then the question of social status must be addressed in reference to a number of elements which are interconnected and help contextualize the fable: the author, authorial *persona*, fabulist, genre and audiences both internal and external. Fables are often told by an internal narrator, even in the collections. It has been argued, by Marchesi especially, that this is a form of distancing because of the lower-class or marginal connotations inherent in fables. It seems, however, that fables in the Roman

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119 For discussions of fable and exemplarity in the Roman period, see Cicero, *De Partitio Oratoria* 11.40, *Topica* 45, *De Oraatore* 2.66.264 and *De Inventione* 1.17.25; Seneca, Epistle 33; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 12. 4. 1-2, 1. 9. 2-6, 6.3.44.

120 For this argument, see especially Marchesi 2005: 307.
period are often used as a means of characterizing lower-class individuals or those who wish to appear so by assuming an authorial *persona* they think would use fables. Certainly the fable as slave genre as we have it preserved in literature is in some sense an artificial construct. Fables are characterized as the literature of the Other, the marginalized, disenfranchised, the unfree, unélite members of society, and thus in a sense a reflection of what élite males *thought* slave, lower-class, female, and rustic speech to be. This does not mean that fables were not well known and frequently told among these upper-class males.

When dealing with questions of authorship and the relationship between the élite narrator and his freedman/slave fabulist, there is a comparison to be made with Aesop and the 19th century collection of Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) who wrote a series of fables based on African stories under the guise of the freedman Uncle Remus. He recorded his stories using an African American *persona* and stereotypical language, and presented a somewhat idealistic view of life on the Southern plantation and the contented slave. Harris presents a figure very similar to Aesop in his fabulist. Remus is keenly aware that his socio-political reality requires him to satisfy the expectations of the white world, and thus he uses his wits, his ability to act the clown and as a storyteller to survive, and he teaches others how to endure the inequalities in the contemporary social order. Of course, these stories have been highly criticized for the nature of their portrayal of the African American experience by a white middle-class writer through the eyes of a stereotypical ex-slave narrator. Many of our Roman period fable authors are, like Harris, élite in terms of education, but were still marginal, often in terms of wealth or political status. There is certainly, however, some measure of truth about the slave experience that remains within the fable tradition, and thus the fable should, in my opinion, be viewed as a composite genre expressing the voice both of the élite and on some level that of the disenfranchised, and thus an apt genre for the negotiation of issues of power.

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\footnotesize{121} See *Br'er Rabbit, Uncle Remus, and the 'Cornfield Journalist*: The Tale of Joel Chandler Harris. By Walter M. Brausch (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000).

\footnotesize{122} See Dubois 2003: 187-188, for some discussion of the figures of Harris and Uncle Remus. Such a comparison is useful on one level, although one must remember there are many differences between ancient Greek and Roman society and the ante-bellum South.
From the first reference to a fable in Hesiod, fables have retained a connection to the negotiation of issues of authority between the different social classes. They consciously explore and exploit the role of the slave voice, they examine issues of power and class and disparities in the human experience. We find élite and highly educated authors appropriating not only lower-class characters as their narrators but also the stigmatized language of fable. In the idea of slave speech constructed by the literate élite we see anxieties about literate and educated slaves reflected in the type of oral and low speech attributed to them. It is curious however, that in these works the élite author is giving slavery a voice, although a highly stereotypical one. By appropriating the low speech and persona of slaves the author is allowed greater freedom for social commentary and satire. He is assuming the role of jester or mime actor, the role of the Other who stands outside society, whose message is considered more acceptable because of his unique status. These élite lions assume the ass’ skin, this low and comical veil, which allows them a certain freedom of speech in their criticism of themselves, individual folly and society as a whole. Authors use fables to create their world and to construct their view of another class. They use the slave voice to express élite views of how that class should behave, just as parents often use fable to control their children’s unwanted social behaviours. In their expectations of slaves it was important for the aristocracy to maintain the status quo and we find this expressed in fable literature in which the supposed slave genre often voices a conservative agenda and becomes another means for the upper-class male to control others. Slave owning was an expression of power and prestige and both the person of the slave and their voice were tools of their masters. In our sources, the fable is an élite creation, a tool for characterization, a disguise of the lower classes but used to speak for élite values. By using fable, the élite author has lower-class fabulists animalize or objectify themselves, they employ the speech of the Other, the oral and ephemeral, and yet they are also empowered by the fable which serves as a means of both constructing and subverting power. In this animalistic agon, there is an arena for conflict, also a sense of naturalized hierarchy adopted from the animal world suitable for a discourse of resignation designed by the

123 See Bradley 1987: 13-20 and Bradley 1994: 24, for the use of the slave by a master as a means of expressing power and prestige.
élite and endorsed through a lower-class fabulist. Fable may in some sense allow those authors who are in between, often élite in terms of education but not necessarily wealth or political status, a chance to justify themselves and find a place in the world, to reconcile their positions. Why appropriate a genre compromised by the association with the Other? By taking the voice of the Other, the dominant figures also take the power of Other and they control ideas and the means of expressing those ideas.
Chapter 2: Aesop, the Storyteller

The Life of Aesop, a biographical novel detailing the adventures of the first fabulist and dating to 2nd-3rd century CE, explores common fabular themes identified in Chapter 1, including the speech and silence of slaves, class expectations, and power relations. The fables in this novel are often advisory or critical and told in political or judicial arenas reminding us of the place of fable in agonistic rhetorical settings. Aesop is ambiguous, diverse and bivalent, moving between high and low. Like his fables, his biography suggests both a view from below as well as conservative ideals. Although the Life of Aesop is regarded as relatively unsophisticated, the contextualizing and voicing of the fables in the Life is not less complex than the fable exempla in our other literary sources. This mode of inquiry is rarely explored as the Life has traditionally been viewed simply as a vehicle for the fables it tells. However, I intend to show that the fables have a crucial role to play within the Life as they inform our understanding of the author and the society that constructed the figure of Aesop. This study will examine not only the contextualizing of the fables told by Aesop in the narrative, but also how the author situates his fables and gives them meaning within the larger frame of the novel and its themes, especially by the use of fable as a means of revealing and criticizing disparities within ancient society through the voice of the Other. There will be an emphasis on the figure of the freedman as a crosser of boundaries and as the locus of collision for the incongruous, including the élite and slave voice, and the high and low. The primary focus of this chapter will be questions of voice appropriation when dealing with fable literature in general and the figure of Aesop in particular. Many scholars, such as Kurke, influenced by descriptions in our ancient sources, as well as later traditions of the fable, have tended to see fable literature as an authentic reflection of the voice of the Other, rather than as a continuation of its traditional and early associations with élite

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125 Holzberg refutes this accusation and demonstrates important structural patterns in the novel (Holzberg 1992: 33-75 and Holzberg 2002: 76-84).
126 See Kurke 2011.
literature. The *Life of Aesop* does, in fact, present a slave figure that outsmarts his master and rises to the highest possible positions in society.\(^{127}\) At the same time, he critiques high literary culture through the eyes of the Other. And yet, in my opinion, scholars have overlooked how this biography reveals élite anxieties about the power of the literate and educated slave. For the Romans there were two categories: slave and free. In politics, freedom was essential for power and citizen males, especially élite males, controlled both people and words.\(^{128}\) Even when freed, a slave was still expected to voice his master’s concerns. Slaves were necessary for the “self-image and identity of their masters”\(^{129}\) and to “articulate individual and national identities.”\(^{130}\) The slave was an object used to display the master’s power and status, although without any status himself, and thus the élite used the slave to gain power through the othered figure. Slaves, however, were also a source of real anxiety on the part of masters. Slaves could do what the free could not or would not, they were privy to secrets about their masters, they reminded their masters that the indulgence of appetites through a slave was itself slavish, the real possibility of loss of distinction and masters felt a loss of agency and a certain amount of hostility in their reliance on slaves. Slaves consequently became instruments used for blame, scapegoats, as we find in the Aesop story, used to repair social problems and promote the proper behaviour of those who were meant to be subordinates.\(^{131}\) As an outsider, Aesop is a figure endowed with greater freedom of speech because he is not expected to engage in normative behaviours. He is a figure to be feared but also envied. He is a figure of oppositions, one who reveals tensions in society as he both subverts and supports social norms. This Aesop is a product of élite thought about how the slave should act and ultimately suffer punishment for attempting in the end to deny the established social hierarchy. He is one means for members of the élite to define themselves and their positions while working through the tensions and contradictions present in society.

\(^{127}\) For the relationship between Aesop and his master, see Hägg 1997:177-203.

\(^{128}\) For discussions of slavery and the power of masters, see Fitzgerald 2000:1-114.

\(^{129}\) Fitzgerald 2000: 5.

\(^{130}\) Joshel and Murnaghan 2005: 2.

\(^{131}\) See Joshel and Murnaghan 2005: 8.
The Figure of Aesop

According to ancient accounts, the figure of Aesop was as multifarious as the fable tradition: a slave, a storyteller, a moralist, a philosopher, an ambassador, ugly in appearance but beautiful in mind, one of the Seven Sages, a jester, a scapegoat, a hero with a cult at Delphi, who was transported to the Isles of the Blessed or even reincarnated. Despite the diverse accounts of his life, he remains an obscure and legendary figure, like Homer, whose life was embellished by later traditions and stereotypes. In this section, I will examine the persona of Aesop before the formation of the Life and in our literary sources exterior to the novel. This ‘other’ Aesop who exists outside of the novel tradition is often ignored or more problematically, the Aesop of the Life is projected onto our earlier sources or those external to the novel.  

The earliest literary evidence for Aesop is found in the 5th century BCE Greek historian Herodotus who considered Aesop to be a historical figure, a slave, who died at Delphi and who originally came from Thrace in the 6th century BCE as a contemporary of Sappho (2.134-5). In this account, he is already associated with the marginal in terms of social status and geographic origins. The plays of Aristophanes, which date to the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, mention the fabulist by name, make allusion to his fables and refer to his death at Delphi (Birds 470-1, Wasps 560-516). In the 4th century, Aristotle (Rhetoric 2.20) relates The Fox, the Ticks and the Hedgehog which Aesop reputedly told when he spoke to the Samians in defence of a demagogue on charges of extortion; a context and fable which are not included in the Life. In the Roman period, Gellius, in his Noctes Atticae (2.29), identifies Aesop as the fabulist from Phrygia (e Phrygia fabulator), and a wise man (sapiens) whose fables taught moral lessons through humour. Plutarch includes him as a marginalized dinner guest in his Convivium Septem Sapientium, while Lucian, in his True History (1.17-8), presents Aesop as a jester on the Isles of the Blessed. Before the first fable collections in the Hellenistic period, it is likely that

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132 One such scholar is Kurke 2011, who proposes the characterization of Socrates as a response to attributes of the persona of Aesop in the late novel, and not based on traditions contemporary with his biographers such as Plato and Xenophon.
133 See Nagy 1979: 280-90 and Wiechers 1961: 31-33, who argue that the conflict with Apollo belongs to the oldest core of the Aesop material.
134 For the influence of Old Comedy on the Life of Aesop, see Goins 1989: 28-30.
biographical material about Aesop was simply transmitted as part of the oral tradition. These early written collections may have included not only fables, but also information about the first fabulist, as we find in the prologues of later authors such as Phaedrus and Babrius.

In the fable collections, Aesop is presented as a character within the fables and, as in the Life of Aesop, he is a moralist, traveller, jokester and storyteller presenting his wisdom and criticism to those he meets. Aesop is especially prominent in Phaedrus’ collection of Fabulae, in which he is portrayed not strictly as a fabulist, but as the archetypal wise, but tricky, old man. Phaedrus describes him as a senex (App. 9), pater (App. 20) and sophus Phryx (App. 13) indicating his special status as a crosser of boundaries and representative of the Other in terms of age and cultural origins. The fables in which he acts as an adviser share a number of common themes: the disparity between appearance and reality (3.19), a concern with revealing inequalities and deceptions, didacticism (2.3) and the solving of problems (3.3, 4.5), and class positions and boundaries. Aesop prominently displays his concern with opposites as he advises an Athenian man that a balanced mind must work and play (3.14): a lesson that reminds us of Socrates’ fable about the necessity for both pleasure and pain (Plato, Phaedo 60b-61d). There is also an emphasis on the roles of those at opposite ends of the social ladder in terms of physical strength (App. 13), social position (App. 20, 3.5), and justice (App. 17). In Babrius’ first prologue, Aesop is simply referred to as the wise man (ὁ σοφός) from whom the Greeks first learned fables, and he is included among other non-Greek fabulists, reminding the reader that Aesop, and his genre, were seen as foreign. In summary, fable literature prior to the Life stresses Aesop’s unique status as a slave, a foreigner, an old man, and at the same time as a freedman, advisor to kings and wise man.

The Life of Aesop

Much of our knowledge of Aesop comes primarily from the biographical Life of Aesop, which often served as a preface to the anonymous fable collections, including the
Collectio Augustana and Accursiana. The information about Aesop found in the collections, generally agrees with the biographical details in the Life. The Life of Aesop, an ancient Greek novel of uncertain place and date, provides us with an elaborate and humorous account of Aesop’s adventures both as a slave and as a freedman. While the Life was composed much later than the date assigned to the figure of Aesop, it likely relies on earlier prototypes and oral traditions. The date of compilation, usually assigned to the 2nd-3rd centuries CE on the basis of content and extant papyrus fragments, make the novel nearly contemporary with authors who showed renewed interest in the fable genre, including Babrius, Lucian and Maximus of Tyre. Its form is also similar to that of several contemporary novels, which were popular during this period and show concerns with similar themes including explorations of the marginal by upper-class figures.

The fable and the Life of Aesop are also connected with the biographical tradition, in authors such as Plutarch, and there are similarities between Aesop’s biography and The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, the first century philosopher, who specifically flags the usefulness of Aesop’s fables (Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana 5.14-5). Although Philostratus and the Life display a number of similarities, rather than directly influencing each other, it is more likely that they were influenced by traditions about the lives of stereotypical philosophers. The Life appears in several recensions which differ from each other in terms of completeness and selective inclusion or exclusion of material (mostly sexual). Like the fable collections that it often prefaces, the Life shows distinctive

135 For a more comprehensive discussion of these manuscripts, see Holzberg 2002: 72-74 and Eideneier 2011.
137 See Perry 1981: 24-70, for the dating of the Life of Aesop based on the manuscripts and papyrus fragments. Very few details in the Life itself provide us with any definite terminus post quem. This text is known mainly through its Byzantine recensions and a few papyrus fragments. The earliest papyrus fragments date to the 2nd-3rd centuries, while the main recensions, G and W, belong to the 7th-12th centuries. Therefore, a date of composition in the 2nd-3rd centuries is likely given the evidence of the papyrus fragments, as well the important role assigned to Isis as a saviour figure and the large number of Latin words employed in the text.
138 For the connections between the Life and the novel tradition, see Chapter 6: 159-166.
139 See Chapter 5.
140 As a wandering teacher of philosophy, Apollonius travelled the world through Greece, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Africa, India, and Ethiopia. He resided at the court of an Eastern king and even spent five years in self-imposed silence. Early in his life, he even disregarded Nero’s ban on philosophers and entered Rome. Later, he was summoned to the court of Domitian on charges of conspiracy to kill the emperor, human sacrifice and the use of magic. He defied the emperor. Later, according to Philostratus he underwent some form of apotheosis.
connections to the oral tradition in the absence of a named author and the traditionally ‘low’ and oral nature of its multi-text tradition.\textsuperscript{141} This multi-text tradition is typical of orally transmitted stories and one can compare the \textit{Life of Aesop} with the likely contemporaneous \textit{Life of Alexander}.\textsuperscript{142} The tension between the written and the oral will reveal itself in the text in the conflict between Aesop and Apollo, and the fabulist’s transgression in having written down his genre (98-100). Apart from the possible date of composition, we know nothing certain about the origins of the author or text. Speculation would make him an educated, but lower-class figure, living in the Roman influenced Greek world, possibly in Egypt based on the importance given to Isis.\textsuperscript{143} I would argue, however, that the cult of Isis was very important in the Greco-Roman world from the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE, and there is nothing in Aesop’s adventure in Egypt that definitively identifies it as the author’s homeland. In \textit{Vita W}, we see further evidence of an élitist revision of the figure of Aesop.\textsuperscript{144} Unlike \textit{Vita G}, which presents Aesop as a threat to Apollo’s authority, \textit{Vita W} suppresses such episodes, while, as Kurke argues, there is also a domestication of Aesop in the Xanthus passages that present him eventually as the loyal slave (\textit{Vita W} 83-5). Kurke also argues for an élite author of the text of \textit{Vita G}, as a result of the general trend for authors to require the wealth and leisure time for writing as well as the education. Although the text uses koiné, there are also higher literary allusions from Homer and Menander and poetic words combined with longstanding popular oral traditions. Further, one must remember that the élite can be part of popular traditions, as common knowledge, but it is not possible for everyone to be part of educated élite traditions.\textsuperscript{145} While the text is colloquial, not written in an elevated style and contains Latinisms, this alone is not concrete evidence of a lower-class author. Petronius, for example, consciously adopted a non-elevated style when portraying and speaking for the lower classes.\textsuperscript{146} Although the style of the \textit{Life} is very different from Petronius as a whole, it does resemble the \textit{Life of Alexander}, the \textit{Ass} and \textit{King Apollonius of Tyre: works

\textsuperscript{141} For the complex textual tradition of the \textit{Life of Aesop}, see especially Perry 1933:198-244. See Holzberg 1999, for a list of some further studies on the \textit{Life of Aesop}.
\textsuperscript{142} For the \textit{Life of Alexander} and the \textit{Life of Aesop} as fringe novels, see Jouanno 2009: 33-48. See also Hägg 1983: 125-140.
\textsuperscript{143} For the importance of Isis and the origins of the \textit{Life}, see Robertson 2003: 247-66.
\textsuperscript{144} See Kurke 2011: 12 and 66.
\textsuperscript{145} See Kurke 2011: 6-11.
\textsuperscript{146} See Chapter 6: 174. The mime also adopts a similar non-elevated style, see below.
that portray the lives of élite individuals in popular form.\textsuperscript{147} As I will show, there is strong evidence in the \textit{Life} of the fears of upper-class individuals about the place of the slave, especially the educated slave. The anonymous author of the text(s), when we cautiously project the content of the \textit{Life} onto his biography, was likely someone of élite education, perhaps reacting to his own social and educational experiences in his criticism of traditional élitist systems of education, philosophy and rhetoric.\textsuperscript{148} It is possible that, like Lucian or Petronius, he was reacting to the literary norms of his age, or possibly he was someone who did not control or care about the somewhat artificial literary standards of the time.

\textit{Vita} G (the most complete text and my focus in this chapter) begins by emphasizing Aesop’s physical deformities and his inability to speak. Eventually he was rewarded with the gift of speech and the ability to compose \textit{mythoi} and \textit{logoi} for his kind treatment of followers of the goddess Isis. With his new powers, he immediately denounced the overseer of the slaves for cruelty and he was sold. He was purchased by the Samian philosopher Xanthus whom Aesop frequently deceived and outfoxed. Eventually, he won his freedom by deciphering an omen. He went on an embassy to Croesus of Lydia, who rewarded his wisdom with a large fortune. While he was serving as an advisor to the king of Babylon, Lycerus or Lycurgus, he adopted a son from a noble family, whose name was Ennus (or Helios), but, in his greed, the boy framed Aesop for treason. King Lycerus sentenced the fabulist to death, but he was saved by the executioner. He returned to court when the king of Egypt challenged Lycerus to a riddle contest.\textsuperscript{149} Aesop forgave Ennus and gave him a series of precepts to follow in order to live a better life, and in his regret the young man jumped to his death. Aesop then won the contest with the king of Egypt for which he was richly rewarded and became famous throughout the world. When he went to Delphi he was received inhospitably. As a result, he criticized the Delphians who decided to kill him. The people of Delphi planted a golden cup in his luggage and then arrested him for theft. He attempted to save his life by

\textsuperscript{147} For \textit{King Apollonius of Tyre}, see Kortekaas 2007 and Panayotakis 2012.

\textsuperscript{148} Contemporary criticisms of education, philosophy and rhetorical are common in writers of satirical works, including Petronius (see Chapter 6: 175-177).

\textsuperscript{149} The solving of riddles is a common conceit in the novel traditions (see \textit{King Apollonius of Tyre}) and another example of popular literature associated with fable. For riddles in the \textit{Life}, see Konstantakos 2010: 257-290.
telling a series of fables, but the Delphians were unmoved and eventually killed him by throwing/allowing him to jump from a cliff. In his fables, Aesop predicted not only his own death but also that those who had betrayed him would suffer just retribution. Delphi was overtaken by a plague, which was ended only when they built a hero cult and a statue to Aesop (absent from Vita G). Though a satirical fiction, the Life of Aesop offers one of the few biographies of a slave to survive from the ancient world and its contents raise a number of interesting questions about the status of the author(s) and readers of such a text.  

**Fables in the Life of Aesop**

The fables offered as *exempla* in the Life are a reflection of the larger narrative and foreshadow events within the text. The fable characters with whom Aesop associates himself reflect his elevation, subsequent loss of status and finally his death. In his first fable, he presents himself as the wise god Prometheus offering advice about the ways of life, while in his final fables he empathizes with the plight of the dung beetle and several women who are tricked or forced into sexual encounters by men. The status and functions of Aesop and his fables are shown to be intimately united: they are both able to be brought high or low. This is not surprising, as Aesop functions ultimately as a personification of the genre and so the main themes in the Life of Aesop mirror the primary preoccupations of the fable collections. Aesop acts or speaks in his own defence several times, and often serves as an orator advising a larger audience in political settings. The opposition between silence and speech and the power of the spoken word reveal the concern with expressions of power and status in this work. These boundaries are social and political, but also literal and physical as the action of the narrative moves through the ancient world, just as Aesop passes or transgresses a number of social and class boundaries. Aesop is often othered by comparing him, especially his physical appearance,

150 It should be noted that the biographical information we have about the philosopher Epictetus is very similar, including his slave origins, the fact that he was Phrygian, deformed and he even adopted a child. I do not see direct influences between these two figures, rather it is likely that the similarities are a result of traditions about the characterization of the philosopher.

151 The power of speech is epitomized especially in the Dinner of Tongues, in which Aesop argued that the tongue was both the best and the worst part of a living being (51). This idea also picks up the metaphorical use of the human body that we will see in Livy.
to various animals or inanimate objects (30, 87). Linked with this idea of the animal and alterity, Aesop is also called a sign or omen in several sections of the text (10). Animals play an important role as mediators between gods and humans (77-81) and they themselves have similar hierarchies (the eagle as the king of birds (91)). As Aesop occupies a special position within society, he is able to act as a mediator between people, states, husbands and wives. Thus the text is concerned with communication on a number of levels (between gods and humans, masters and slaves, patrons and clients, students and teachers, kings and peoples, etc...). In relation to this theme, the work also focuses on power, primarily the use and abuse of power, as well as the nature of slavery and the various types of slavery to which humans are subject. Aesop describes ‘appearance’ when he first meets Xanthus: it is like the jars in the wine shop, they are ugly on the outside but the wine inside tastes good (26). Similarly, when the Samians laugh at Aesop in the assembly, he advises them not to judge his appearance but rather his internal worth (87-88). This implies that there is often a disjunction between appearance and reality in terms of assumed and actual power. This is manifested in the lesson that one should not judge by appearance but rather examine internal value: the ugly man may be wise, the teacher may be foolish, the slave may be a philosopher. Fable is one place of examining the collision of the high and low on a variety of levels: the combination of the tragic with the comic, high and low language, the sexual and scatological juxtaposed with kings and gods. Such an examination leads to the questioning of such categories.

Aesop moves from the impudent slave to the great wise advisor and, perhaps, from piousness to hubris. When we first meet the divine in the female figures of the priestess, the Muses and Isis, we are introduced to the theme of the proper relationship between gods and humans, and the reciprocity of the patron-client relationship. Aesop is especially concerned with hierarchies in his own world, and the disparities within them: such as the overseer of slaves who was himself a slave, Xanthus who buys himself a master in the slave Aesop (28) and Aesop identifies the penalties and gifts which are different for slave and free (89). His precepts are concerned with success in daily life, specifically the treatment of slaves and one’s relationship with the divine and the king.

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152 Aesop’s experience is often considered to be a kind of initiation of the poet into his craft (cf. Hesiod (Theogony 22-34, 75-84) and Archilochus (SEG 15.517)), see Dillery 1999: 279.
(109). This concern with boundaries reinforces the critical importance of the maintenance of these boundaries for the construction of identity and self-definition at all levels of the social and political hierarchy. On his journey, Aesop crosses a number of boundaries in terms of his status, geography, and his physical impediments. Along the way, he forgets his servile origins and calls the Delphians slaves, and in many fables forgetting who you are and your proper allegiance often has disastrous consequences, as he will prove in his fable of *The Wolves, Sheep and Dogs* (97). He also transgressed the laws between human and divine by setting himself up in the place of Apollo in a shrine of the Muses.

According to the *Life of Aesop* (124-5), Aesop had offended the Delphians by suggesting that they had a great reputation abroad but lacked substance in person, thereby questioning the value and power of appearance. Further, it has been noted that Aesop, by writing down his fables, which are low and oral, transgresses the barrier between high and low literature and culture. This is likely unhistorical, and it may have been added when the fables and the biography of Aesop were joined together to lend credence to the figure of Aesop as the author of the collection that follows in the manuscript tradition.

It is also equally possible that this detail is another literary device used to show how Aesop continues to usurp the place of Apollo. Of course literary and social hierarchies are inextricable. Thus, I agree with Finkelpearl that much of the *Life* focuses on the tension between two types of intelligence: the practical applications of intelligence as seen in the everyday wisdom of Aesop (Isis) and the abstract philosophy of Xanthus (Apollo). In chapter 33, Apollo is characterized as a greedy figure who covets exclusive knowledge, but Aesop, while criticizing the type of knowledge he represents, also usurps the place of Apollo by teaching Xanthus this same type of wisdom.

Aesop was depicted as non-Greek, which is an important element of his othering, and may also reflect the tradition that the fable genre had a non-Greek origin. Like Homer, he is not consistently associated with one place, but, as Theon tells us, both Aesop and his fables were attributed to a variety of countries (*Progymnasmata* 3). This is common for authors of non-written texts. In the first chapter, the *Life* emphasizes his

156 See Chapter 1: 15.
157 See also Van Dijk 1997: 105-109.
origins through the redundancy of listing both his birthplace and his race: Φρυγίας. It is possible that the idea that Aesop was a Phrygian is a reflection of the knowledge of older foreign fable traditions among the Greeks. Phrygia also has some significance, when we recall that the Phrygian cap was a symbol of liberty like the pileus worn by freed slaves, and thus they were perhaps stereotypically freedmen. Although the Phrygians were not the same as older Mesopotamian or Indian cultures, and they were much nearer to the Greek world and had direct contact, they were non-Greek and reflect the view of fable as geographically othered. The identification of Aesop as specifically Phrygian in this text is likely a literary invention to foster his association with the Phrygian Marsyas, as well as the donkey-eared King Midas, and their conflicts with Apollo. Aesop may also be a direct reminder of one of the possible modes of transmission of this fable material from the ancient East. These fables were likely transmitted orally, first brought into the Greek colonies which had closer contact with the Near Eastern cultures, and who better than slaves of Eastern origin to tell these tales to their Greek masters who in turn adopted the fable exempla. I think that Aesop may also be compared to the male slave or paidagogos, who was sometimes an educated foreigner. I would further propose that this mode of transmission is likely responsible for the dual characterization of fable as a slave genre as well as a vehicle for élite communication beginning in the Greek period. Certainly this blanket terminology of Eastern literature and culture associated with Aesop is to a certain extent a modern construction of the ancient world based on our current views of global cultural traditions. The most important aspect of this characterization is that his geographical othering is part of the pattern of marginalization of the figure of Aesop in the Life.

158 Compare the wild boar wearing the freedman’s cap in Petronius (40) and discussed in Chapter 6: 168-9.
159 See Perry 1965: xxxiv and Holzberg 2002: 15.
160 I would cite a figure like Livius Andronicus, a freedman of Greek origin who taught in Rome.
In the *Life*, Aesop the fabulist is presented as extremely ugly and deformed, which is the basis for identifying a grotesque marble figure in the Villa Albani in Rome as a portrait of Aesop. The same holds true for a 5th century BCE red-figure kylix depicting what is assumed to be Aesop conversing with a fox, the sly and clever trickster in many Aesopic fables (Fig. 1). However, according to Plutarch’s account of the *Convivium Septem Sapientium*, at which Aesop was a guest, there were many jests on his former servile status, but nothing derogatory was said about his personal appearance. According to Phaedrus, the Athenians erected a statue of him but there is no mention of his deformity (2.9). The image of Aesop as a deformed figure, prominent only in the *Life*, may have been influenced by New Comedy and mime as well as traditional depictions of wisdom figures. In Greek myth and literature ugliness often marked individuals as special, but also as marginal in some way, and frequently these figures were wise or skilled men such as Silenus and Hephaestus. Both Socrates and Aesop are characterized as ugly and even bestial. Similarly, Nagy’s etymology of Aesop’s name as ais-opus “base face” highlights the common opposition of smart and ugly slave with the stupid and handsome “fair-haired” Xanthus. We have a similar opposition between Aesop and the beautiful aristocratic god Apollo. This is not the only proposed etymology, as discussed below, but these etymologies all seem to agree that the fabulist’s name suggests some form of otherness, or at least a concern, common in the Aesopic fable tradition, with appearance as a marker of status. Aesop remains on

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161 See Lissarrague 2000, for various possible ancient portraits of Aesop including this Attic Red Figure kylix attributed to the Painter of Bologna 417 ca. 450 BCE (Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco inv. 16552). This drinking vessel used at banquets reminds us of the connection between Aesop and the symposium. See also Baker 1969: 557-590, for Aesop’s appearance. Figure 1 is reproduced with the permission of Art Resource (© Alinari/ Art Resource, NY).

162 Socrates and Aesop (100) are compared to the satyr Marsyas in particular who also fits the pattern of the advocate of simple art or wisdom who is judged guilty, offends against Apollo, is punished and receives a hero cult (Plato, *Symposium* 215a-b; 216c-221d-3; Xenophon, *Symp.* 5.56 and 4.16-9).

163 For Nagy’s discussion of this etymology, see Winkler 1985: 288.
the margins as an example of alterity combining aspects of the barbarian, slave and deformed man that are at odds with the Greek ideal of kalos kai agathos. Adrados identifies in Aesop a type of ritual ugliness connecting him with the pharmakos tradition in agricultural festivals in which the powerful man (in this case Xanthus or Apollo) is dishonoured and his place is usurped by a once despised figure.\footnote{Adrados 1979: 107-9.}

Among all of his other unpleasant physical attributes he is here called μέλας,\footnote{The precise meaning of μέλας is left unclear in the text, see below.} the only passage in the text, and in the Aesopic tradition, that specifically flags his possibly dark skin colour, although this is also the only instance in which there is any actual description of his physical appearance. The Phrygians were not especially known for being dark, as Aesop is here depicted. In the remainder of the \textit{Life}, he is merely ridiculed for his ugliness in much more generic terms (11 and 14). It is possible that Aesop, as some modern scholars argue, may be a corruption of Aethiop, meaning Ethiopian or generally African, which is possible since some Greeks from the 6\textsuperscript{th} century may have had African slaves, although this was not common.\footnote{See Lobban 2002:11-31, who believes that Aesop was of African, specifically Nubian, origin based on his physical description and the indigenous African animals found in his fables.} It is likely that, as his alterity became more pronounced, he was increasingly portrayed as Other, which included a darker physical appearance. It is also possible that this depiction was influenced by the increased interest in Ethiopians in authors contemporary with the \textit{Life}, such as Philostratus and Heliodorus. The precise meaning of μέλας is left unclear in the text. Although it may refer to black skin colour, it may also refer to tanned skin from working outside, literally from slave labour, or even to hair colour. Although darkness is listed among the traits that make him ugly, the greater stigma seems to lie in the fact that as a figure who is μέλας, he is in opposition to the ideal of the élite Greek male. Aesop is the Other in terms of his ugliness, his race and cultural origins, his slave status and in the beginning, the trait, which the text flags as the most unsightly part of him, his speechlessness.

The ugliness of Aesop is central to many of the themes and oppositions in the \textit{Life}, especially as a visual manifestation of the idea that appearance is not always a true marker of power. Aesop’s ugliness is a convenient literary device that helps to put him at
odds with the élite ideal in terms of status as well as appearance. Aesop’s conflict with Apollo is expressed in the emphasis on imagery of light and dark in the opposition between Aesop and his antagonists. The Sun god Apollo, the fair-haired Xanthus, his adopted son Helios and the pharaoh of Egypt with his celestial regalia are all opponents of the dark Phrygian Aesop. Thus, his ugliness justifies not only his status and position as critic, but also the ultimate punishment inflicted by Apollo and the Delphians as representatives of élite values.

There are also comic elements in the Life of Aesop, and comedy is one of the only genres that routinely engages with events from the lives of slaves. The appearance of comic masks accords well with the physical description of a deformed Aesop. While it is true that non-slave masks boast exaggerated features, in part to make them more visible for the audience in their representations of stereotypical attributes of various ages and social classes, those of the slave characters have extremely deformed or grotesquely contorted faces with large lips and eyes (Fig. 2). 167 Plautus describes Pseudolus as red-haired, swarthy, with a protruding belly, a large head, sharp eyes and enormous feet (Pseudolus 1218-20). In fact, the description of Pseudolus, with the exception of his red hair, is almost identical to the description of Aesop in the first chapter of the Life, and Aesop certainly has much in common with the servus callidus. While there may be some influence on the depiction of the slave Aesop from comedy, these slave characters are also part of a common cultural tradition in their stereotyping. In the manner of New Comedy, Aesop continually opposes and derides his master, and there is an opposition between academic and popular wisdom. In the Life, the world is turned

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167 For more on theatre masks, see Marshall 2008: 126-158. Figure 2 is reproduced with the permission of the Fitzwilliam Museum (© The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).
upside down, a commonplace in comedy, in which the slave overcomes all men. There is also low humour, scatological humour, and an emphasis on the body and sexual/erotic scenes in the Life.

In a recent study of the clever slave in Plautine comedy, McCarthy made a number of important observations that can be applied to the relationship of the master and slave in the Life of Aesop and more generally to élite constructions of fable. As part of important religious festivals, Plautus’ plays actually displayed the dominants’ view of their own domination and thus comedies supported the existing hierarchies. This domination was explored through slavery as the slaves functioned as a means for masters to explore anxieties and fantasies through the subversive intellect of the clever slave. The slave hero is permitted because, while he is subversive, he is not subversive to the extent that he questions slavery itself. And thus, the authority of the dominant class consists partly in the assent of the subordinates to the power of the dominant. The dominant class uses literary representations of slaves to present through such figures the view the masters want slaves to have of their positions as slaves and the role of the master. I would argue that we see the same appropriation of fable and the othered voice in the deployment of fable as a tool of the powerful to construct their ideal view of the socio-political hierarchy. McCarthy takes the argument one step further, and posits that the clever slave figure is also a reflection of the masters’ view about their own lives as each person, regardless of status, must face contradictions and possible changes in status as there was a constant struggle to assert one’s power in relation to others in Greco-Roman society. Everyone has a need to promote and undermine rebellion since everyone is inevitably both subordinate and dominant in some aspect of their lives. I think this latter point is a good way of reading Aesop, who, for an élite audience, must present a figure of anxiety for masters but who is also a hero for his ability to elevate his status and undermine oppressive dominant figures.

Aesop’s appearance is also similar to that found on statuettes of mime actors in the late Hellenistic and Imperial periods with large eyes, a flat forehead, a pointy head,

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169 See McCarthy 2004: ix-27 and 211-213, for general conclusions about the purpose and anxieties produced by the clever slave in Plautine Comedy.
170 For Aesop as the anti-hero, see Jouanno 2003: 51-69.
and usually bald. These mimes are close in date to the *Life*, which argues for a more likely influence on the Aesopic tradition than the masks of New Comedy. There are a number of marked similarities between fable and the mimes of poets such as Herodas.\textsuperscript{171} Many of the characters speak colloquially, they are stereotypical and rarely more than three participate in the action, while many are foolish figures whose nature is the cause of their own destruction. Most mimes involved short character sketches depicting scenes from the daily lives of the lower stratum of society. For Winkler:

... the *Life of Aesop* and the mime of Apuleius’s day are two representations of a cultural forum in which speakers in grotesque disguise are allowed not only to be obscene but to utter critical truths about authority...The ritual or performative connection between a visibly shameful status and a greater freedom of thinking and speaking can be traced through all the eras of Greco-Roman culture...\textsuperscript{172}

Aesop, like the *stupidus* (the stereotypical jester) of mime, was possibly part of a low and unwritten cultural tradition in which the deformed man, or grotesque outsider, speaks comically and seriously against conventional élite wisdom and social follies. However, for Winkler, the punishments suffered by Aesop are employed less for censure than to permit the audience to freely delight in the transgressive behaviour of the social critic.\textsuperscript{173} It was common for masters to want to assert control over slaves with disturbing abilities as they threatened societal norms.\textsuperscript{174} I would add to Winkler’s argument that the perception of Aesop as engaging in transgressive behaviour is primarily an élite construction, and this need to punish the figure of Aesop on the one hand, and to deify him on the other, reveals a contemporary tension between élite conceptions of the slave and the portrayal of the social critic. The Aesopic biography, like the genre itself, is connected with the high and the low. While Aesop’s *Life* shares traits with the mime tradition, there are also some strong parallels between motifs connected with heroic figures in the mythological tradition, like Hercules, and events in the *Life of Aesop*.\textsuperscript{175}

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\textsuperscript{171} A slave character named Aesop appears in the Moicheutria (see Andreassi 2001: 34 ff.; 90ff. and Konstantakos 2006: 597).
\textsuperscript{172} Winkler 1985: 287.
\textsuperscript{173} Winkler 1985: 290.
\textsuperscript{174} See Fitzgerald 2000: 17.
\textsuperscript{175} Many hero figures have a divine helper (as Aesop has Isis), they face opposition from the beginning and must prove their worth by surmounting many challenges (as Aesop does when he is a slave), and they must overcome mental challenges and opponents (Aesop saves the Samians from Croesus, solves riddles, and defeats his adopted son). It is often their enemies who are ultimately responsible for their achievements.
Notably, like many heroic figures, Aesop overcomes challenges, he is aided by a divine helper, but ultimately he is undone by some type of hubris. Aesop is the representative of popular thought resisting élite education, and yet he also participates in the tradition he ridicules. In the figure of Aesop we have the collision of comedy and tragedy, high and low wisdom, the beautiful mind in the ugly physical body, all of which remind the reader of the disparities that exist within the real world. As a product of such incongruous elements, Aesop is permitted to critique the artificially established boundaries that permeated the contemporary Greco-Roman world.

The following sections will examine the contextualization of the fables in the Life, especially what they reveal about the voicing of fable and how they guide the reader’s interpretation of the text.176 This study will look at all the logoi presented in the text.177 Some of these logoi are not traditional animal fables, but will be considered because they are often identified as fabulae by modern scholars, and the ancient author of this text clearly associated them with Aesop’s voice. The fables will be divided into three sections based on Aesop’s status which impacts the context, the voicing as well as the purpose of the logoi: as a slave, a freedman, and finally as a sage at Delphi. There are three primary recensions of the Life (G, W and Accursiana),178 but this analysis will focus on the most complex and complete text, Vita G, with reference to sections from the other recensions only when the text is missing or incomplete.

1. Aesop as a Slave

In the Life, Isis and the Muses reward Aesop for his pious treatment of the priestess of Isis with the gift of speech and the ability to compose mythoi and logoi. This

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176 See Holzberg 2002: 76-84.
177 See Van Dijk 1996: 530-541, for a discussion of fable exempla (13 are identified), a brief analysis of fable differences based on recension and the originality of the fables present in the Life.
178 For the texts of the Life, see Jouanno 2006: 14-22.
is the only instance in the text in which Aesop’s genre is referred to as *mythos*, in the rest of the text it is given the somewhat privileged label of *logos*.\(^{179}\) This attribution of the fable to Isis and the Muses who are female, and foreign in the case of the Egyptian goddess, who is also associated with women and slaves in her worship, reinforces the conception of fable as a genre of the Other from the Greek male perspective. In seeming opposition to such a concept, this attribution also reinforces the fables as something divine and imparted as a gift of communication by a superior to an inferior.\(^{180}\) His connection with Isis is not surprising as her worship was often characterized as “popular, visible and strange,” elements we find in the figure of Aesop, although in her case strangeness does not imply deformity.\(^{181}\) Once endowed with speech, Aesop tells a number of *logoi* in didactic situations. Often, these fables serve as answers to questions posed at the symposium or by individuals from a variety of classes. They reflect and reiterate the main narrative, elaborate its themes and anticipate the outcome of the text as a whole. Aesop’s role as an outsider is emphasized when he first comes into Xanthus’ house. Aesop waits outside for a long time, as an outsider, before he is literally asked to come in and join the household. As an outsider, however, he retains his status and brings with him the ability to turn things inside-out and reveal what is hidden behind the façade of the figures within the home.\(^{182}\) When they first see Aesop, the women of the house make a lot of his ugliness, and one likens him to a dog (30). This is just one of a series of animal similes in the *Life* that serve as reminders of the place of animals in the fable tradition and also the place of Aesop as an outsider. The misogynistic tones prominent in much fable literature are present in this episode as the maids are chastised for their concern with beauty, and Xanthus’ nagging wife is similarly censured by Aesop for her lust.

At chapter 33, the first fable told by Aesop, *Zeus, Apollo and Prophecy*, presents readers with a microcosm of the main text, revealing much in the congruities and

\(^{179}\) The genre is referred to as *logos* at 93, 96, 99, 129, 130, 132, 140 and 141.

\(^{180}\) This attribution of the fable to a female source is not unique, but also found in Philostratus’ aetiology of the genre (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.14-5) which makes the Horae the first to tell fables to the baby Hermes. Although no study has discussed the connection between these texts, this attribution of the fable to women is certainly a reflection of the female role in the early education of children.

\(^{181}\) Winkler 1985: 278.

\(^{182}\) For Aesop’s subversive role in the philosopher’s house, see Hopkins 1993: 17.
incongruities it displays in relation to the larger narrative. Aesop tells this logos to Xanthus’ wife who feels deceived by a dream that she would be given a beautiful male slave and not the deformed Aesop. Of course, this underlying sexual premise in slavery, especially the slave as potential sexual partner for a wife, was especially subversive to society’s expectations. In fact, Aesop will subsequently cuckold his master thereby crossing another social boundary and usurping the place of his master in the bedroom (75-6). In this fable, Apollo asks Zeus for the gift of prophecy, but this gift makes him proud. Zeus, in his anger, sends true dreams to humans to limit Apollo’s power. When Apollo learns that his oracular power will be obsolete, he asks for forgiveness from Zeus who then sends false dreams to humans so that they cannot discern the false from the true. Many of the key themes prominent in the Life are present in this story: communication, in this case between gods and humans; disparity in status between humans and gods and what we want to be true and what is true; the theme of opposition, here between truth and falsehood and the world of humans and the world of the gods; also the theme of deceptive appearances within power relations. There is also an inversion of expected roles: the slave who teaches the philosopher and his wife about the nature of the world, while within the fable it is humanity that usurps the role of a god. The fable calls our attention to a number of similarities between Aesop and Apollo as interpreters of truth, nature and fate. I would propose that such parallels should prompt the reader to view this story as a foreshadowing of Aesop’s life. They are both given divine gifts, but because they are marveled at they become proud. As a result, Zeus takes away Apollo’s power by bestowing it on humans, while Aesop’s final fables become ineffective. Unlike Apollo, who repents and regains his prophetic power over humans, it does not appear that Aesop repents, although he does receive the reward of a hero cult. In emphasizing the ugliness of Aesop in contrast to the beauty of his mind, through the fable we see the reverse to be true of Apollo. In the fable, the beautiful young god is ugly on the inside, as he is consumed by pride and hubris. This is a foreshadowing of Aesop’s transformation. Once Aesop becomes a freedman his appearance is never again mentioned; however, the beauty of his mind is undermined by the arrogance that will characterize his final days at Delphi. The incongruities between their stories remind the reader of the rivalry between Apollo and Aesop that drives much of the story. In Vita G,
Apollo is never named, but rather often referred to as the leader of the Muses. This is just one means employed by Aesop, and our author/ narrator, to deprive the sun god of his place and his power. Several times, Aesop is referred to or likened to an omen (10), and he is indeed an interpreter of omens and linked to animals through which the gods often speak. We thus see Aesop in his role as mediator between different levels in society: between gods and humans, as well as different social classes specifically because he is the Other and therefore outside of such categories. Despite this alterity, he also participates in many of the insider categories.

In chapter 37, Aesop inverts the traditional fable, which metaphorically represents human behaviour through the animal world, by using a human analogy to explain the growth of plants in nature. A gardener, to whom Aesop and Xanthus have come to buy vegetables, asks the philosopher why the weeds and uncultivated plants come up more quickly and flourish, whereas his carefully tended plantings are slower and less productive. Xanthus cannot answer, but Aesop replies that the earth is a mother to the plants that grow naturally and she thus lavishes care on them, but she is a stepmother to the ones planted by the gardener and she does not help them flourish (The Vegetables and the Weeds). This is a didactic fable in a setting of intimate teaching. In such situations Aesop is often asked a question by his ‘student’ to which he replies by means of a logos. Although this is not an animal fable, we are reminded of the fable genre in the use of stereotypes (the wicked stepmother) and misogyny. We are also presented with the debate, which we find frequently in the Life, over the value of practical wisdom, the concern of much fable literature, as opposed to theoretical or philosophical wisdom. There is a focus on the value placed on family and blood relations, those who are included, and the Other in the stepchildren who are outsiders and, therefore, are kept marginal.

Aesop’s The Prince and his Brains (67) presents the incongruous collision of high and low language and subject matter characteristic of the Life and of fable literature in general. While Aesop is attending his master in the toilet, Xanthus expressly asks his slave, the wise man acting as bathroom slave, to teach him why men often look at their own droppings when they defecate. Aesop answers that there was once a prince who had

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183 See Chapter 1: 40-43.
loose bowels and a loose way of living so that he spent such a long time relieving himself that he passed his brains. But his master does not have to worry, Aesop says, because he does not have any brains. Here we have an expression of the lowliness of the high as the great philosopher Xanthus asks such a base question about the nature of human behaviours. Aesop, who is a keen interpreter of human action, has no difficulty answering through a criticism of the dissolute lifestyles of some powerful men. This fable questions both the right to élite status on the part of this prince, as well as the right of Xanthus to rule as master over the clever Aesop. While there is a revelation of the injustice of the inequality in these figures, Aesop remains conservative in line with the fable tradition. While he points out flaws in the social hierarchy, he does not overtly recommend revolt or change. This use of the transgressive language of scatological and sexual humour is common in works that employ fable. In Aristophanes, Petronius and the Life, such language provides a deliberate contrast with higher forms, contexts and language to emphasize discussions of disparity. Once this same dinner party resumes, Aesop continues his didactic role by solving a series of questions and riddles posed by the students in attendance. Aesop employs the mythological/aetiological logos of Dionysus and the Three Cups of Wine (68) to advise his intoxicated master not to let drink make him behave as though he were in the lecture hall.¹⁸⁴ Once again, the slave attempts to rule the master. In the logos of Dionysus, we find that humans are not only slaves to each other, but also to their own passions.

In The Sheep, the Goat and the Sow (48) Aesop presents two of the text’s major themes: deception as a tool of the powerful and the importance of playing societal roles. At a symposium, one of Xanthus’ students asks why the sheep goes quietly to slaughter, while the pig squeals.¹⁸⁵ Aesop usurps the role of teacher and answers that the sheep is used to being sheared or milked so that it goes willingly to slaughter, expecting no harm, but the pig squeals because it knows it is being led off for its meat. Here Aesop is the slave, but he is set on equal terms in the conversation; he leads the discussion and takes the place of his master. In this fable, he even imparts to the pig intelligence and human

¹⁸⁴ In the three cups of wine we are reminded of the importance of the number three in the Life, fables, and folk literature more generally.
¹⁸⁵ In Ovid’s Fasti 1.337-60, we are presented with what seems to be an aetiological fable for the sacrifice of pigs and goats which is specifically identified as an exemplum and contains a clearly stated endomythium uttered by the typical survenant.
rationality. In some sense, through such attributions he is acting as an advocate for the Other. He, like the pig, is smart enough to see what is in store for him, but the students are sheep blindly following a foolish master. The sacrifice of the pig reminds us of the pharmakos death that awaits Aesop who can see it coming, but for all his intelligence he cannot prevent it. The fables, which Aesop tells as a slave, include characters from a variety of levels from plants, to animals, to humans and gods. What seems to link most of these fables is a concern with establishing and explaining the boundaries and roles that exist within the world. Once these roles and proper behaviours are given explanations, then they are controlled by those who ultimately tell these fables.

2. Aesop as a Freedman

The logoi Aesop told as a slave were primarily in didactic settings, and the audience varied from slaves and the lower classes, to women, aristocratic students and the philosopher Xanthus. When Aesop becomes a freedman, we see a shift to fables told in a rhetorical setting as Aesop becomes the advisor to cities and kings. Aesop proves his power over his foolish master by tricking him in order to gain his freedom. When he is unable to interpret the omen of the eagle, which took the public seal of the Samians and dropped it into the lap of a slave (81), Xanthus is distraught. He attempts to commit suicide, but Aesop, who had been the persecutor of his master, becomes instead his saviour. The fabulist offers to interpret the portent in the public assembly of the Samians by purporting to have learned his interpretation skills from Xanthus himself. Unknown to Xanthus, Aesop has a plan to force his master and the people into granting him his freedom. Aesop identifies for the Samians the clear social disparities in his present situation by telling them that the penalties and gifts are different for a slave versus a free interpreter (89). Xanthus is forced to grant Aesop his freedom in accordance with the will of the Samians, and Aesop then reveals the meaning of the portent. Aesop is often connected with omens as he is called ainigma (98), here a riddle that can interpret riddles, perhaps because he is a riddle himself. Aesop recognizes the theft of the public seal by the eagle, the king of birds, as a prediction of the enslavement of the people by a king.

\[186\] In chapters 44-50, Aesop previously attributed human characteristics to an animal when he proved the master’s dog was more loyal and loving towards him than his own wife.
There is communication on a number of levels as animals and Aesop in his connection with them, in their role as the Other, act as mediators and interpreters, in this case of the divine. The Samians further associate Aesop with the alterity of the animal world when they connect his physical appearance with a number of animals (87). In this section, Aesop identifies one of the main themes of the Life, when he asks the Samians to think about the disparity between appearance and reality and likens himself to a jar of wine that men should judge rather by taste than by outward appearance. In the following chapters, Aesop continues his role as a persuasive political speaker and tells a series of logoi in his new role as saviour of the Samians and also of himself.

When the Samians ask Aesop advice about how to respond to Croesus’ demand for tribute and taxes, Aesop resumes his didacticism through exempla. In Prometheus and the Two Paths (94), at the command of Zeus, Prometheus described two opposite paths to humans: the first was steep at the beginning but the struggles ended in rest; the second path was level and pleasant at the beginning but in the end came to a hard and narrow cliff. Our author expressly states that the Samians understand the wisdom of the fable and begin preparations to fight for their freedom. This fable presents a number of elements that are diametrically opposed: freedom versus slavery, what is rough becomes paradise, and what is pleasant becomes hard, while there is an opposition between work and rest and there are disparities between what appears to be and what is true. Many elements found in the fable reflect Aesop’s own life, especially in the concern with the opposition between freedom and slavery. Prometheus is described as the subordinate of Zeus, and I would posit that there are some deliberate parallels between the clever trickster figure of Prometheus and the fabulist Aesop. They are both to be connected with punishment on a cliff, a similar cliff found in this story and one which still awaits Aesop, although there is a difference between being chained to a cliff and being thrown from a cliff like the fabulist. One might argue that Aesop takes both paths: at first he struggles until he gains his freedom, but then he embarks on the second easy path only to meet with the cliff at the end. In using this fable, Aesop helps to save the Samians from subjugation, with the next fable he attempts to save himself.

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187 Helios, Aesop’s adopted son also died by jumping from a cliff (Vita W).
Croesus, having learned of the advisor Aesop, sends an embassy to Samos to persuade the people to surrender the fabulist to him. In response to their acquiescence, Aesop again tells a fable before the political assembly. Aesop’s *Wolves, Sheep and Dogs* (97) is the first traditional animal fable told by the fabulist. Once, the wolves and sheep started a war. The dogs helped drive back the wolves, but a political wolf comes amid the sheep saying that, if they want a treaty, they need to surrender the dogs, and the foolish sheep comply. Then, however, the wolves kill them, and so, according to this fable, you ought not to surrender useful men lightly. In this fable, we have clever flattery and mirroring of the situation: Aesop casts himself as guard dog, the Samians as sheep, and the Lydians as wolves. The cunning wolf speaks in the assembly, thus Aesop makes the enemy strong and clever and deceitful. He speaks with an awareness of the political situation in which he flatters and chastises the enemy at the same time, an enemy into whose power he intends to place himself. The idea of natural enemies and predators is a reflection of the traditional opposition between East and West. The Samians will be foolish sheep, if they follow the deceitful wolf. The use of trickery and deception is prominent in this fable in a familiar political scenario. The Samians approve the fable and refuse to send Aesop, but he surrenders himself, unlike the dogs in the fable, to act as protector and to convince the king to spare the Samians. Aesop’s actions are not wholly altruistic, as we have seen throughout the *Life*, Aesop often helps people in order to gain some benefit himself.

The Near Eastern, Babylonian and Egyptian sections that follow were influenced by the Assyrian *Life of Ahikar*, which possibly dates as early as the 5th century BCE. 188 There was likely a Greek version of the text in the late 1st century, considering its role as the model for a number of Greek texts from differing cultural environments, including *The Tobit, The Alexander Romance*, the fragmentary *Tinuphis* and *The Life of Aesop*. 189 The *Life of Ahikar* likely became incorporated into the *Life of Aesop* as a result of a variety of factors, including the popularity of the Ahikar story, their common oral tradition, the characteristic depiction of the Eastern sage, their disloyalty to a god and the

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189 See Marinčič 2003: 54. Diogenes lists among the works of Theophrastus a volume called *Akikaros* (D.L. 5.50).
desire to add material to Aesop’s adventures in the East. Ahikar was the wise counsellor of the Assyrian kings Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) and Esarhaddon (681-669 BCE), who was betrayed by his adopted son Nadan, narrowly escaped execution, triumphed over the pharaoh of Egypt in a riddle contest and rebuked Nadan by a series of parables, after which he died or committed suicide. Ahikar is described as the stereotypical wise man, the sage and philosopher, the Eastern nobleman who is wealthy both in wisdom and goods. Aesop, the wise old fabulist and adviser, is a reminder of the Eastern fable tradition; however, in the story of Aesop we find an unusual alternate type of wisdom figure. The Life of Ahikar is evidence of a Near-Eastern fable tradition, although not necessarily a source for Aesopic fables, and is possibly evidence of an Aesop like figure assimilated by the Greeks. In the ancient world, Aesop traditionally belonged to the non-Greek world, although he was not on the same level as Ahikar nor was he associated with Mesopotamia, whether his origins were Phrygian, Thracian, or African, he was the barbarian and the Other.

At the court of Croesus, Aesop convinces the king to spare him by offering himself as a physician of the mind (98). Croesus is amazed and asks to be the recipient of Aesop’s teaching. Throughout Aesop’s life, we have been reminded of the opposition between speech and silence and the power of the spoken word. These themes are picked up in The Man and the Insect (99) which he uses as a means of persuading the king to spare his life. In the fable, a poor man used to catch grasshoppers and put them in brine to sell. Once, one of the insects got between his fingers and eloquently pleaded for its life. The man was moved, and he let it go, and thus Aesop falls at the knees of the king and argues that he can do no harm, his appearance means his beauty cannot deceive and, although his body is poor, he has the ability to benefit mankind. This fable reflects the disparity in power between the king and Aesop, but also mirrors Aesop’s life by showing how the weak, humble, common and ugly can have power through their voices, the grasshopper as a maker of music, and Aesop as a storyteller who benefits humanity and

191 Nagy 1990: 71 equates the relationships between figures such as Hesiod and Perses and Ahikar and Nadan whose “dramatized familiarity” assisted poets such as Hesiod in their attempts to offer advice to strangers.
192 For the similarities between this episode and the tradition of Solon and Croesus, see Kurke 2011: 398-426.
himself. Fables told to the powerful often contain veiled criticism, in this case the comparison of the stereotypically rich king to the poor and hungry man may be meant as a means of shaming by showing even a humble man has mercy, and thus a king’s mercy’s should be greater, as he is greater. Aesop becomes an advisor to the king, and he does not forget the Samian sheep, but asks for their freedom, which the king grants. In both of these animal fables, Aesop is cast as victim, or potential victim. In the latter fable, his character is able to save himself, as Aesop has throughout the Life, in the former fable the sheepdog loses his life through the treachery of the sheep, a scenario that will play itself out at Delphi with the people cast as the sheep and Apollo as the wolf.

The fables told by the freedman Aesop differ from those he told as a slave in a number of ways. While the fables he told in servitude were primarily related in private settings or as part of didactic exchanges, those told while he is a freedman are told in public, often political, contexts which reflect his change in status. He also directly associates himself with the characters within his fables, especially characters who are victims or who are at risk of being victimized. These associations serve as a constant reminder of his knowledge of the unstable position of the freedman in society. While he is no longer legally a slave, he is still subservient to various masters including the Samians, the king and the gods. The mediating role is often assumed by freedmen in ancient society because they were already marginal. This trend reminds us that, in reality, the fable is not really a genre of the slave, but rather associated in our Roman sources with the freedman. This potential role as victim foreshadows his death at Delphi and the fables he will tell in which he will cast himself in the roles of victims and othered figures.

There is a duality in Aesop’s character that extends to his relationship to philosophy: he is often connected with the Seven Sages of Greece and their high wisdom, but he also acts as a critic looking up from the lower stratum of society with his folk wisdom and simple moral fables. Many of the motifs from the Life reflect those found in the lives of other sages, including their travels, advisory roles, death and resurrection. Several of the stories and riddles found in the Life of Aesop or attributed to him in other

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193 Although there are few details, in Herodotus it seems that the island of Samos was, like the Greek states on the coast of Asia Minor, subject to him on no special terms (1.141-2).
194 See Jouanno 2006: 19-22 and Kurke 2011 chapters 2-5 for similarities between the Life of Aesop and the lives of other poets and sages. For the seven sages, see the discussion of Plutarch’s Convivium in Chapter 5:150-156.
sources are also connected with other sages, such as Bias. While Aesop does appropriate parables and riddles attributed to other fabulists, the memory of his marginality is often maintained when he is associated with such figures. In Plutarch’s *Convivium Septem Sapientium*, Aesop sits apart on a low stool, while in Lucian he is the jester to the other great men and as such he participates in the symposium, although not on equal terms with the other guests (*True History* 2.17-8). As both a participant and critic his inclusion in their circle is often marked by physical separation from the group as a sign of his marginality or special relationship to their type of wisdom.

In the interim between Aesop’s meeting with the king and his arrival at Delphi we find further evidence of his rivalry with Apollo and the opposition between light and dark, high and low literature, poetry and prose that permeate the *Life*. This rivalry and Aesop’s supposed hubris towards the divine, specifically Apollo, is the cause of his death. He writes down his oral stories and fables (*fabulae* from *fari* (to speak), thus crossing the boundary between the written and oral (100). It is ultimately this opposition between Apollo and Aesop that drives the narrative and calls into question the boundaries between high and low. Apollo is displaced when Aesop sets up a statue of Mnemosyne as leader of the Muses, and Lycurgus erects statues of Aesop and the Muses (123). Aesop is deceived by his adopted son, sometimes named Helios, another rival of the fabulist whose name connects him with the sun god Apollo (109). I also see the adopted son’s use of a letter to frame Aesop as another reflection of the opposition we find in the *Life* between the written and the oral as represented by Apollo and Aesop respectively. All of these rivalries and oppositions culminate in Aesop’s visit to Delphi.

3. Aesop at Delphi

After his success at Babylon, Aesop becomes a sage travelling to other cities to demonstrate his wisdom and learning. When the fabulist comes to Delphi, the people are delighted by his displays, but they offer him neither hospitality nor remuneration. After Aesop is freed, he seems to have shed the stigma of his appearance and the ugliness of his body is occluded by his mental powers, which reflects a shift from a beauty of the mind

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195 Riddle of the Tongues, Drinking the Sea Dry, Omen of the Human Headed Animal, etc...
towards the ugliness of hubris. As Aesop comes into Delphi, he has crossed or transgressed a number of boundaries - physical, literary and social - but in doing so he has crossed from one end of the spectrum to the other. He asserts that he was mistaken about the men and the city, and this weakness is further expressed in the growing inefficacy of his voice, which does not wholly impress the Delphians and foreshadows his death. It can be argued that by writing down his fables he has lost the power of the oral that marked his didactic and persuasive abilities. He not only disparages the appearance of the Delphians (125) and their origins (124), but also quotes Homer’s *Iliad* 6. 146 crossing from prose to poetry. He criticizes the ancestry of the people of Delphi, whose city was built from tithes of slaves (126). For Aesop, since it was an ancient custom among the Greeks to send a tenth of their spoils from a captured city to Apollo, including enslaved male and female prisoners, and since the Delphians were descended from these manumitted slaves, their ancestry was servile. The Delphians fear that Aesop will damage their reputation, and consequently their power, which is bound up in appearance. It should be noted that Delphi was also a place for displays of élite power through rich dedications and athletic competition, and thus Delphi and its aristocratic god are in opposition to the lower-class Aesop. The Delphians devise a trick against him with the help of Apollo. They plant a golden cup in his luggage and arrest him for theft. Aesop is falsely accused many times in episodes that prefigure this final accusation by the Delphians. Of course, slaves were often accused of small scale thefts by their masters, but the repeated episodes of framing are part of the scapegoat motif and establish him as a transgressor. I think the framing also displays, in the case of Aesop, the master’s fear of the slave’s power and the need to punish the slave, even on a false
charge, in order to reassure himself through the punishment of the source of his anxiety. They drag him back to the city and make him a spectacle before his imprisonment.\textsuperscript{200} The interview between Aesop and a friend who suddenly appears is an episode reminiscent of the last days of Socrates (128-9).\textsuperscript{201} When his friend asks him how they have come to this point, Aesop tells a fable similar to *The Widow and the Soldier* from Phaedrus (App. 15) and Petronius (111-112). This is the first of a series of fables that have been criticized as completely inappropriate and incongruous within the context.\textsuperscript{202} However, these *exempla* are linked by a series of themes that foreshadow and explain Aesop’s fate.

Aesop’s weeping friend laments the prisoner’s situation and Aesop responds with the fable of the *Widow and the Widower* (129). The weeping from the context is picked up within the fable as it begins with a woman’s tears for her buried husband. A man who was ploughing (clear sexual innuendo imposed on a story that begins with serious mourning) saw her and conceived a desire for her. He left his oxen standing with the plough and, pretending to weep, he approached the woman. She asked him why he was weeping, and he invented the story that he had also lost his wife. The ploughman convinces the woman that they should console each other. When he returns from their encounter and finds that his oxen have been stolen, he begins to truly weep. The woman asks him why he is crying and he responds that now he really has something to cry about. There are a number of familiar themes in this fable: trickery and deception, especially the power of verbal persuasion, misogyny, the power of fortune and nature as well as Aesop’s identification with a weak figure or victim. There is also the familiar collision and juxtaposition of the high and the low in the use of a fable that tells an explicit story about ploughing and sexual desire as a means of explaining his serious imprisonment. Of course, the parallels with the *Life* are all too clear: Aesop, like the widow, was tricked by the Delphians, but it also foreshadows what the Delphians will suffer at the hands of fate, just as the ploughman lost his livelihood.

\textsuperscript{200} This false trial and making a spectacle out of Aesop are also reminiscent of Apuleius’ ‘Festival of Laughter’ which included the false public trial and display of Lucius (*Metamorphoses* 3.1-12). For more similarities between these two works, see Chapter 6: 159-166.

\textsuperscript{201} See Plato’s *Crito*, although there are elements similar to the *Phaedo* as well. See also Schauer and Merkle 1992: 85-96, for an examination of the prison scene and its relationship to scenes of Socrates’ imprisonment.

\textsuperscript{202} See Van Dijk 1996: 520-521 and 530-541, for a list of authors and their opinions about the role of these fables in the *Life*.
His friend wonders how Aesop could have insulted the Delphians in their own land and city, especially when he was at their mercy, where was his training, his learning, how, when he had given advice to so many people and cities, could he ironically turn out to be foolish in his own case (130). Aesop, however, refers him to another fable in which a foolish woman is tricked into a sexual encounter. *The Girl and Good Sense* (131) presents themes of sexuality and bestiality, the foolishness of women, deceptive words, and a prayer to the gods that goes unanswered or does not come about in the desired manner. In Aesop’s fable, a mother’s prayer that her daughter should get some sense is misinterpreted by the daughter. When the girl sees a man in the countryside copulating with a mule, an act that he calls putting some sense into her, the daughter asks to receive sense in the same way. The mother, when she learns what has happened, tells her foolish daughter that she has lost what sense she had. Aesop expressly tells his friend that it is the same with him, and he has lost what sense he had in coming to Delphi. In the fable, the mother and daughter leave the city and travel to the country, crossing a boundary towards the rustic and the simple. At Delphi there is a similar marginality or alterity, and Aesop, in crossing metaphorically and literally into the territory of Apollo, has acted foolishly. Aesop’s closing fable in which he casts himself as a woman in a sexual situation is the final fable he tells in *Vita W* before being thrown from a cliff. *The Father and his Daughter* (141) is concerned with incest and the transgression of boundaries as a man rapes his daughter while his wife has gone to the country. The daughter replies that she would rather have submitted to a hundred men than to him. Aesop feels a similar shame at dying at the hands of the Delphians. Each of these fables about women who are tricked or forced into sexual encounters, and cast Aesop as the victim, deal with themes of loss and the crossing of a number of boundaries. We have a crossing of physical boundaries from country to city, in terms of familial relationships and the laws of nature, while the characters experience losses similar to those of Aesop, including the death of a loved one, the loss of property, trust, sense and reputation. The three fables told about women by Aesop in the *Life* all present women in sexual situations in which the man uses trickery or force (129, 131 and 136). Aesop, while presenting these women as weak and foolish, compares himself directly with them. We are presented with female stereotypes at the

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203 Compare the words of Aesop to Xanthus in chapter 85.
opposite end of the spectrum that remind us of the Aesopic concern with the disparate, especially in terms of social status. In the *Life*, while there is a strong misogynistic tone, especially in the episodes involving Xanthus’ (unnamed) wife (24), and his precepts (109), we are also presented with positive portrayals of female characters. The priestess of Isis, the Muses and Isis herself are all responsible for Aesop’s fables and therefore his success in life. In the opposition between Apollo and Isis in the *Life*, there is also a contrast between the élite male and the othered female. Aesop is associated with Isis and the feminine and therefore his casting of himself as female characters in his final fables is another manifestation of his place as Other; Aesop purposely others himself. This is another means of reminding the reader that, although he attempts to break free from his former social status, the stigma of slavery is branded on many aspects of his character.

Once Aesop is on his way to execution, as a temple thief and blasphemer, he tells a series of animal fables that also cast him as the victim. However, we see some evidence of revolt as each fable expresses the power of the weak in society and their capacity for revenge. In *The Frog and the Mouse* (133), Aesop presents himself as a lowly animal, in this case the mouse, whose posthumous revenge on the frog foreshadows his revenge against the Delphians. The mouse and the frog make friends and the mouse invites his friend to dinner. The frog, in turn, invites the mouse to his home. The frog promises to teach the mouse how to dive and binds the mouse to him before jumping into the pool. As the mouse drowns, he curses the frog who is subsequently carried off by a bird. In this fable, the rules of hospitality are broken and the mouse is bound, like the scapegoat Aesop. As Merkle notes, the details of this fable are specifically adapted to the context to foreshadow the death of the Delphians as a result of their hubris.\(^{204}\) The fabulist often has others incriminate themselves, and in this fable the frog proves to be his own undoing when he is carried off along with the dead mouse. This is a bitter indictment of the Delphians as Aesop uses the fable to express the posthumous power he will have over them. Aesop again identifies with the foolish and the weak, another reversal that foretells his end. We have a warning of the dangers of crossing boundaries, in this case between land, water and sky.

\(^{204}\) See Merkle 1992: 110-127, for a comparison of various versions of this fable.
Aesop reprises the theme of hospitality in his longest and most elaborate fable: *The Dung Beetle and the Eagle* (135-9). Aesop, who has taken refuge in the shrine of the Muses, tells this fable while he is being dragged off to remind the Delphians not to scorn the small shrine or small fabulist. The rabbit was given sanctuary by the dung beetle, but the eagle ignored the laws of hospitality and devoured the rabbit. The dung beetle got revenge by continually breaking the eggs of the eagle until they were entrusted to the lap of Zeus, but the beetle carried a big ball of dung and surprised Zeus into dropping them. Zeus hears the case. The beetle, as the consummate orator, reminds his audience that Zeus was also wronged as the god of hospitality and threatens to fully punish the transgressor. The insect would not be reconciled, and Zeus had to move the eagle’s mating season to a time when the beetle is not on earth. Similarly, Aesop asks the Delphians not to dishonour the shrine and Zeus, the god of strangers and Olympus. This foreshadows the fate of the Delphians for their treatment of Aesop. Aesop’s continual identification with the low and the victimized in the stories he tells at Delphi reminds us of his use of such identifications as a means of flattery of the powerful. However, such identifications seem incongruous and the fabulist, who has risen high, in transgressing so many boundaries, is no longer able to be embodied by the dung beetle. In the incongruous nature of the contents of many fables that mix high and low, there is some commentary on the figure of Aesop himself who, in combining elements of the high and the low, no longer has a place in the world of either the high or the low.

In the last fable in *Vita G*, Aesop responds with one final *exemplum* as the Delphians drag him to the cliff (*The Farmer and the Donkeys*). An old farmer wanted to see the city once before he died, but the donkeys, which were hitched to the wagon, lost their way in a storm and came to a place surrounded by cliffs. The farmer, now in peril, laments to Zeus that he will die because of miserable donkeys. Thus, Aesop is annoyed to die not at the hands of reputable men, but of slaves (140). While many of the preceding fables crossed boundaries from city to country, earth to sky, land to water, in this final fable the old man, who has lived his life in the country, will die because he has decided to

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205 For Aristophanes’ use of this fable, see Chapter 1: 23-29. For this fable in the *Life of Aesop*, see Möllendorff 1994: 141-61.
206 For a similar juxtaposition of high and low compare Phaedrus 4.19: *The Dogs Send an Embassy to Jupiter.*
see the city. This fatal journey from country to city may metaphorically represent Aesop’s progress from slave to sage, from the low and oral to the high and written, from the lowly Aesop to the usurper of the place of Apollo, from piousness to hubris. Like the old man he will die on a cliff. The nature of the fables told by Aesop has also changed throughout the Life as his status has changed. Rather than a natural progression from fables concerned with slave characters and animals to those concerned with gods and kings, we actually see the reverse. As his status rises, Aesop gradually tells fables concerned with lower registers and he increasingly associates himself with these ‘low’ characters. When he was a slave, Aesop told fables about gods and princes, while at the end of his life he identifies himself with the lowly dung beetle and a number of rustic lower-class characters. Although there are a few exceptions to this trend, the inversion is marked. This pattern reminds the reader that although Aesop has escaped his slave status, there are other forms of slavery to which humans fall victim, and that other vices will ultimately lead to Aesop’s death.

There are analogies between the Life of Aesop and the lives of other figures—philosophers, poets and satirists—who critique society. In the paradigm of such figures the poet is often brought to trial by a corrupt society which condemns the poet and his work. By condemning the poet, the society also condemns itself and suffers the punishment which is often predicted by the poet. The punishment can be ended, however, by the establishment of honours or a hero cult. Although this figure is often viewed or depicted as a pharmakos or scapegoat, he is usually morally justified and at times becomes representative of the divine. In Aesop’s story, the fabulist is innocent, his judges are corrupt, and the unjust trial involves unholy acts. Aesop uses a fable to foretell disaster for the people at Delphi and in the end receives a hero cult. Archilochus and Socrates, who are both connected with fables, also fit this pattern. In the case of Archilochus, although the account is fragmentary, he is regarded as blasphemous by society, he is tried and convicted, punished by imprisonment or exile and the gods send a plague which must be expiated by honouring the poet. Aesop and Archilochus both used fable for blame or mockery, although the fables we have from Archilochus are

207 For similarities between the depictions of Aesop, Archilochus and Homer, see Compton 1990: 330-347.
208 See Van Dijk 1997: 138-148. For the connections between Archilochus, poets and hero cults in the Greek polis, see Clay 2004.
incomplete. We also have a parallel in the story that Archilochus caused Lycambes and/or his daughters to commit suicide through his criticism, in the same way that Aesop caused his adopted son to kill himself after his verbal attack.  

Socrates, who is mythologized by Plato, also fits into this paradigm: the Athenians are irritated by his conversations and try to get rid of him, he is tried for impiety and corruption, and he calls the god of Delphi to witness on his behalf. He also described the Athenians with an animal parable: Athens is a large lazy horse and Socrates is the stinging fly ready to rouse the drowsy city, but he fears the horse will wake up just long enough to squash him (Apology 30c-31a). This serves as a prophecy of his death. Later, he foretells the punishment of his accusers, and he dies almost willingly as a scapegoat. Both Plato and Xenophon connect Socrates with Aesop and employ his fables as didactic exempla (Plato, Phaedo 60b-61d; Xenophon, Memorabilia 2.7). There are many connections between them: they were both wisdom figures put to death for impiety in connection with Apollo. They were ugly, lower-class, poor and the same extended to their teachings which relied on humble content, their appeal to a broad audience, and their relationship to slave status, although they were concerned with high philosophical questions (Symposium 221d7-222a6). Socrates, like Aesop, does not make a serious defence and has an ambiguous relationship with Apollo. Like Socrates’ philosophical technique of refutation and self-incrimination, Aesop often forces his opponents to incriminate themselves. In Plato’s Apology, Socrates’ quest to find someone wiser is characterized as a wandering for wisdom akin to that of the other travelling sages (22a6). Like Aesop’s death, hero cult and sometimes resurrection, Platonic dialogues often end with an underworld myth (Apology, Gorgias, Republic and Phaedo). It is often thought that the representation of Socrates influenced that of Aesop (because our sources are later), but it is also possible that the tradition of Aesop influenced the

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209 For more links between Archilochus and the Life of Aesop, see Nagy 1990: 50. Nagy links the progress of Aesop from slave to ‘poet’ with the biographical traditions that record that Archilochus was a cowherd and Hesiod was a shepherd in the Theogony.


211 For further analysis of Aesop as scapegoat, see especially Compton 2006: 19-40.

212 See Chapter 1: 29-32.

213 See Kurke 2011: 327, for further discussion of the connections between Aesop and Socrates.
depiction of Socrates. I would argue that it is more likely that many of the connections between these figures are a result of stereotypical representations of the social critic.

Aesop, in his last moments, curses the Delphians and calls on the leader of the Muses to witness this injustice and he throws himself off the cliff (142). For Hopkins, the death of the scapegoat conveniently ends the story but also reflects “the endemic hostility to the clever slave in Roman society.” This ending does reflect the hostility of the master, in particular, to the clever slave who has escaped from slavery. I would further extend this hostility in Roman society to those who cross normative boundaries and reveal discrepancies, such as the satirist and fabulist. Such anxieties about the power of the slave are revealed at a number of key points in the text. Aesop’s first master and his slave overseer are concerned about the power of his accusations against them when he gains the power of speech and they sell him to a merchant who will take him far away (9-11). Aesop is presented as a wisdom figure who frequently attempts to usurp the place of his master (28, 36, 39, etc.). Although he is the clever slave, Aesop does not go unpunished, and it is an important moment when Xanthus is finally given a just pretext for punishing his somewhat rebellious slave (58). What Hopkins fails to mention is that this ending also provides a kind of catharsis for the élite masters reading the text. To my mind, such a punishment is one way of relieving the anxieties of the élite about slaves such as Aesop, and thus permits the slave owning audience to enjoy the humour in the text at the expense of the master Xanthus. However, the eventual punishment of the Delphians also reveals the tensions inherent in an ancient slave owning society that both punishes and glorifies a figure like Aesop. The people of Delphi are afflicted with a famine and they receive an oracle from Zeus that they should expiate the death of the fabulist, while the peoples of Greece, Babylon and Samos avenged his death.

There is a comparison to be made between the death of Aesop at Delphi and that of Neoptolemus. In the story of Neoptolemus’ death, Orestes fosters false suspicions

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214 There is certainly an emphasis on the casting of figures off a cliff associated with Aesop. Both Aesop and his adopted son died from a fall from a cliff, while in Apuleius, Lucius the ass is threatened with such a punishment by the robbers. Such a death seems to be part of the pharmakos tradition. See Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride 30, for the scapegoating of the donkey.
216 For a full discussion, see Kurke 2011: 75-94.
that he has come to Delphi to avenge his father Achilles’ death at the hands of the god. Orestes has men attack him in the temple, and eventually he dies at the hands of a mob.²¹⁷ There is actual evidence of a cult to Neoptolemus at Delphi, which suggests that perhaps his story is an aetiology for ritual sacrifice, while Aesop’s story is a parody of this tradition. In both stories, there is a ritual antagonism between hero and god specifically over some type of boundary. There is also an attempt at competitive scapegoating, especially in the Aesop story, as the Delphians attempt to other Aesop by making him a criminal while he others them through fables about transgressive figures. In his death at Delphi, Aesop reflects the tradition of the pharmakos as both super and subhuman or animal as he was framed, stoned or thrown from a cliff, made a spectacle, even called katharma (trash or outcast).²¹⁸ As Compton notes, Aesop participates in the ambiguity of the sacred, as in many other aspects of his characterization he combines disparate elements into one persona: he is blessed and cursed, polluting and cleansing, despised and revered.²¹⁹ I agree with Kurke, that in Aesop’s death the conflict with the problematic figure reveals itself through his granting of both a hero cult and his death as a type of pharmakos. As a scapegoat Aesop occupies the low position, while as a hero he also occupies a high position.²²⁰ Likewise, the higher his status, the more likely Aesop is to tell fables about lower status characters and to identify with them. He has replaced one type of slavery with another; physical and legal slavery have been replaced by a certain psychological slavery.

In the Life, the Delphians falsely accuse Aesop of theft, but they also label him a blasphemer (blasphemon) or abusive speaker. It is the Delphians, in dragging Aesop from the temple of the Muses, who actually commit sacrilege. Aesop speaks against the Delphians for their inhospitality and casts them in the roles of several figures who

²¹⁷ Neoptolemus’ death at Delphi is described in detail in Euripides’ Andromache (1087-1165).
²¹⁸ The episode involving the crisis on Samos and Aesop’s self-sacrificing surrender to Croesus (98) follows a similar pattern, in which a crisis is averted by the offering of propitiation through the sacrifice of an individual by the people. There is an emphasis on his ugliness and low appearance as the Samians engage in othering the scapegoat. Aesop sacrifices himself, obtains salvation for the city, and he is rewarded with a hero cult in the same city from which he was expelled by the people. Other early elements connect him with this tradition as well including the incident with the figs (the pharmakos is given a necklace of figs) and his early farm work in which he is closely connected with digging and fertility in his phallic nature, see Adrados 1979: 107-8.
²²⁰ Kurke 2011: 76-93.
themselves have committed the worst taboos including incest and bestiality. As Kurke notes, sexual incontinence, incest, theft and greed are all part of the scapegoat ritual.\textsuperscript{221} There is a conscious playing with boundaries, reversals and transgressions found especially in the character of Aesop himself. At the end of his life, the fabulist comes into conflict both with his former role as slave and as satirist.\textsuperscript{222} We are confronted with the paradox that the mute slave could save himself from a false accusation, but the great sage cannot accomplish as much with his voice. In the \textit{Life}, Aesop crosses boundaries, just as there is a shift in the work from orality to literacy, Aesop moves from the low oral prosaic \textit{mythologos} to a figure concerned with the high (poetic) and written wisdom of Apollo. There is a marked concentration on the idea of opposition and the construction of definition through opposition. Of course, once an oral text travels from folktale type narrative to literary text there is always some sense that the élite is appropriating a traditionally lower-class genre. The very act of preservation of a ‘slave’ genre by the élite text in effect alters and negates the goal of preservation to some extent as a writer’s own biases and socio-cultural experiences produce an amalgam of high and low.\textsuperscript{223}

The \textit{Life} is not a mirror of reality, since it does not focus on normal conformist behaviours, but rather examines the boundaries of artificially established social hierarchies and anxieties, especially on the part of masters, about the permeability of such artificial constructs.\textsuperscript{224} Aesop functions as a representation of everything that is subversive in the master slave relationship- he is a figure both to be feared and, perhaps more problematic, envied. He is an outsider and in his physical appearance a “caricature of the alien other”\textsuperscript{225} and yet he is in some sense invited inside the world of his master, and he served a means for insiders to define themselves through his social mirror. As Hopkins states:

The experience and ideas about the experience are orchestrated and enhanced partly by the stories which we tell about our experiences with outsiders. And what is

\textsuperscript{221} Kurke 2011: 86-9.
\textsuperscript{222} See Marinčič 2003: 62.
\textsuperscript{223} Certainly the traditional fable was a vehicle for the élite and thus, as Dubois notes: “Putting the arguments of the fable into the mouth of Aesop, an ex-slave, displaces the source of the stories. The fable constitutes a means for the élite strain in public debate to disguise itself and pose as populism, a sort of cynical, sceptical, playful recognition of the inevitabilities of social hierarchy, injustice, and hypocrisy,” (Dubois 2003: 178).
\textsuperscript{224} See Hopkins 1993: 6-7.
\textsuperscript{225} Hopkins 1993:14.
fascinating is that these stories repeatedly reveal the dependency of the insiders on outsiders for the delineation of their identity. So too Roman masters needed slaves in order to be masters, and they needed stories about slaves in order to work through and recreate some of the problems which their own social superiority inevitably caused. In these stories, the anti-hero, the ugly hunchback dwarf slave, rather like Rumpelstiltskin, is a representative of the other, who is allowed to express what cannot easily be attributed to a free insider. He is socially despised, but symbolically central. He is created from a repertoire of social images, whose appeal lies in the tension they generate between underpinning and undermining the dominant culture. Aesop is a projection of repressed emotions; he is potent, cunning and vengeful. He is what we desire, envy, and fear.

I would agree with Hopkins that Aesop, usurped by the élite in our literary sources, is used in the Life as a means primarily for the insider to define himself and not for, as some might suggest, the outsider to define himself and express revolt. He is a convenient vehicle for revealing and relieving the anxieties of the élite. I would take this argument one step further and propose that this may be evidence that the author of our text is not the lower-class figure using fable as a means of revolt for the lower classes, but rather as a means of expressing his own place within the artificial, and therefore permeable, world of slave and free. Aesopic fable is part of the ancient competitive or hierarchical system of wisdom and the hierarchy of literary genre which cannot be separated from the socio-political hierarchy of the ancient world. Aesop’s character in the Life is keenly aware of the hierarchical nature of the world and he uses his intellect to force his powerful opponents to incriminate themselves, including Apollo. While participating in this hierarchy, Aesop also engages in a parody of high wisdom from below, especially in his conflicts with Xanthus and Apollo as well as the incongruous meeting of context and fable in the last section of the Life. Aesop uses the fable for opposition, as a kind of disguise for his message. The figure of Aesop and his life thus become an allegory of the fable itself: serving as figures or systems that are concerned with exposing discrepancies between appearance and reality especially in relation to assumptions about boundaries, power and social hierarchies, similarly bringing together and revealing incongruities in

227 See Kurke 2011: 2.
228 Aesop’s journey also calls into question ideas about freedom and slavery as Aesop is unhappy to be a slave to a master over whom he has control, but he is happy to serve the Eastern king.
229 See especially Kurke 2011 Chapter 5: The Aesopic Parody of High Wisdom.
assumptions about oppositions that exist within socio-political and literary hierarchies. Thus, Aesop is able to act as both a mediator and critic because of his unique status both as Other and as a participant in élite literary and cultural practices and positions.

In the *Life*, Aesop acts as critic and mediator in a number of situations, but his conflict with Apollo is the most pervasive and complex in the text. Aesop’s life is a progression towards *sophia*, but also contains an underlying parody of such high wisdom. Aesop not only acts as a mediator between practical and theoretical wisdom, but also between the human and divine in his interpretation of omens. Aesop’s criticism of Apollo and the Delphians has been seen by some as a criticism of élitist practices in the cult itself: that Aesop takes on the popular voice in order to reveal the tension between the Delphians’ control of the shrine and the rest of the Greek world. Aesop’s antagonism towards Apollo may also be the result of the oppositions between types of wisdom and the literary forms they represent. Aesop is concerned primarily with practical wisdom, the oral and written prose, while Apollo’s domain is high wisdom and poetic forms. While Aesop travels through the *Life*, he usurps many of the attributes and functions of Apollo, he journeys towards a more traditional élite *sophia*, he writes down his fables, literally excludes or takes the place of Apollo, and finally takes on prophetic power especially through the fables he articulates at the end of the *Life*. He repeatedly tells the Delphians through a number of stories that they do not know themselves, a saying associated with the oracle and Apollo. Thus, Aesop further appropriates the high wisdom traditionally associated with the Apolline. Aesop purposely others and verbally excludes the Delphians by representing them as inhuman and as transgressors of a variety of real and

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230 Kurke 2011: 41.
231 Kurke 2011: 53: “At the same time, it is my contention that Aesop, like other folkloric trickster figures in other cultural traditions, enabled or gave voice to critiques of power and inequitable power relations from below. In these terms, Aesop was a mobile figure within the common or “little” cultural tradition in which nonelite and elite participated together, but a figure generally banned or excluded from elite high culture. As such, stories about Aesop should give us unique access to the rifts and tensions within Greek culture- divergent views, counterideologies, and resistances to all kinds of hegemonic positions, encoded in narrative form.”

232 It is noteworthy that in Philostratus fable is the gift of the trickster Hermes, another god who came into conflict with Apollo by stealing something from the Sun God.
235 For a number of oracular responses that seem to have a connection with fable literature, see M. Guarducci. 1977. *Epigrafia greca IV. Epigrafi sacre e cristinae*, Roma.
assumed boundaries. In othering the Delphians, he forces them to stand outside, as he has excluded many characters from their accepted élitist positions in the *Life*. Throughout his history, Aesop has been defined in terms of opposition, of what he is not. This exploration of the Other often produces a text that reinforces élite socio-political views. In the end, it is not, as Phaedrus says, the slave who uses fable in our sources as a coded language, but rather the élite author. In putting down a figure like Aesop, the élite writer reinforces his own position while exploring socio-political anxieties. Aesop, however, in his congruous incongruities, reminds us that while we attempt to delineate and categorize the human experience, especially through a power centric hierarchical view, nothing is ever able to fit entirely within any single category.
Chapter 3:  
Livy’s Body Politic

Livy’s fable of *The Belly and the Limbs* (2.32), used by the élite to reinforce their positions during a time of civil discord, continues the trend we saw in Chapters 1 and 2 for the fable to act as a means of articulating a discourse of hierarchy and power. Livy, reviewing Roman history from the perspective of the civil discord of the late Republic, and bearing in mind the Augustan proposals for moral reform, stresses in his programmatic preface that the present state is neither able to endure its vices, nor the cures (...*nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus*... (prae. 9)). In employing the term *remedia*, he introduces his conception of contemporary Rome as a political body that must be cured by past *exempla.*236 This metaphor of the body politic, introduced by Livy in his preface, is featured prominently in one episode of his history. In the early Republic, Livy presents Menenius Agrippa as telling *The Belly and the Limbs* to the Plebeians to effect their reintegration into the state after their first secession in 494 BCE. This fable, although not a traditional animal fable, does anthropomorphize inanimate objects and it is directly connected with Aesop by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (6.83-6). This fable is used to introduce a pivotal conflict within Livy’s text: the conflict between the Patricians and Plebeians for political power. The fable is an apt genre to explore this *agon* between the high and the low as fables are serviceable tools for examinations of power, conflict and voice appropriation. Thus, this fable and its resolution not only introduce the conflict of the orders, but this episode also communicates Livy’s view of how all such conflicts within Roman society should be discussed and resolved.237 As a result, Livy will reprise imagery from this episode in later periods of dissention. While in later sources Agrippa is described simply as a senator,238 in Livy, Agrippa is presented as a plebeian spokesman for the Senate. Without naming the first fabulist, through his use of a plebeian figure speaking for an élite political body, Livy connects Aesop and Agrippa and thereby invokes some of the problematic associations of the first fabulist and his genre. My goal

237 For the history of the conflict between the Patricians and Plebeians, see Raaflaub 2005.  
in this chapter is to examine the unique voicing of Livy’s fable and its implications and commentaries on relationships between classes. In Livy’s account, Menenius Agrippa, although beloved by the Plebeians as a member of their class, is sent as a mediator on behalf of the Senate as a representative of their voice and ideals. He is the man in between, one who plays the role of the conservative republican Roman who, while empathising with the plight of the common people, remains a supporter of the existing social hierarchy. He represents both the historical idea of the pious man as conciliator, but he also represents Livy’s fashioning of the idealized past as a representation of the traditional Roman values that he feels have died away in contemporary society. There are certainly parallels between this republican transitional period and the increasing power of the Plebs, and the political and social changes taking place in Livy’s Rome with the emergence of the Principate which allowed for powerful freedmen to gain positions of power within the government. 

This fable deals with issues of power between three levels of society: the Senate, the Plebs, and Menenius Agrippa who occupies a position between them. While the fable does advocate the existing political structure through a plebeian mouthpiece of the Senate, there is also an emphasis on harmony, and the concept that within such a hierarchy both the leaders and those who are led have responsibilities to one another and their political and social systems. The fable is presented as successful on the surface, although in some respects Livy, through his presentation of the fable and the secession, also calls into question the efficacy of such an analogy and the use and usurpation of the ‘low’ fable and fabulist by the élite as a successful mask for the conservative agenda. This chapter will focus on Agrippa as a mediating Aesopic figure whose associations are used and manipulated by our narrator Livy to explore and construct this episode that deals with relations between classes. While Agrippa does not cross as many social boundaries as Aesop, Livy still uses his dual associations with the high and the low.

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239 For further discussion see Chapter 1: 36-37.
Livy and his Fable

Livy contrasts the oral and the visual in his juxtaposition of the terms *monumentum* and *fabula* in his preface. For Livy, *fabula* has the pejorative sense of nonsense, fiction, myth or legend, while *monumenta* are in a sense *incorrupta* (*Quae... poeticis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur* ("...traditions which are more suited to poetical legends than based on historical truths")). Monumenta are often physical things, memorials, written documents, and as such direct survivors from the past that can be examined. They are more reliable than *fabulae* that have undergone a series of repetitions and retellings. The history of fable, and the more pejorative or ambivalent attitude taken by the Romans is here reflected in his introduction. The author, his biases, and moral views play a crucial role in his presentation of history and his exemplary view of that past. As is the case with many ancient authors, little is known of Livy, and most of his biographical details and views must be gleaned with caution from his own writings. It is likely he came from a wealthy background, considering his education in Latin and Greek literature and rhetoric, as well as his life which he seems to have devoted to literature without much regard for warfare or politics. His native Patavium seems to have come under Roman control when he was still a child, but it prospered while retaining a strictly conservative view of the world, morality and manners. Livy projected the simplicity and purity of such ‘small town’ values back onto Rome when it was a small town as a contrast to the corruptness of contemporary sophisticated Rome. This traditional system was of course not restricted to Patavium but common in the Roman world at the end of the Republic. We see this penchant for the traditional conservative view in Livy’s concern with the virtues of *moderatio*, *constantia*, *gravitas*, *dignitas* and *pietas*, and his devotion to the traditional Republican Senate. In his introduction, Livy reveals the exemplary goal of his history in the questions he wants the reader to ask: what life and morals were like in the past (*quae vita, qui mores fuerint*), through what men and policies the Empire was established (*per

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241 However, as Livy’s history proceeds, such a distinction between the oral and the written is shown to be increasingly problematic as each relies to a certain degree on the other. See Miles 1995: 55-62.
242 For Livy’s biography, see Walsh 1963: 1-19 and Miles 1995: 3-7.
quos viros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum imperium sit), and how the morals gave way (prae. 9). Success and failure are presented as being decided by moral attributes as the earlier generations prospered through their harmony in politics, moderation and foresight. The decline in such morals is the cause of Rome’s decline. For Livy, the importance of history is its ability to provide lessons as concrete and conspicuous monuments for the people to choose what to imitate and what to avoid (prae. 10). These monuments of history are not simply buildings but also monumental figures, as Livy intends to commemorate the actions of the foremost people of the world (rerum gestarum memoriae principis terrarum populi (prae. 3)). For Livy, Menenius Agrippa is one such monumental figure (2.32-33). Livy maintains a sentimental view of ancient history and thus stresses the application of the exemplary lessons learned from history and its heroes. He will neither confirm nor refute stories suitable to poetical legends because he recognizes that in the same way that fables tell the truth through fiction, so these legends reveal a great deal about the society that tells them. Livy is interested not necessarily in historicity, but rather in the Roman idea of Rome and their construction of their own identity through history.243 Livy is also an active participant in this tradition.

The history of the fable already examined in Chapter 1 demonstrates some of the conflicting attitudes to the genre, and although some of these sources are later, this tradition was likely also inherited by Livy, along with the fable told by Agrippa. I would argue, however, that rather than being hampered by such a history, Livy consciously employed the problematic associations of the genre and its fabulists in an equally complex exemplum of political and social crisis. The reimagining of society is class inflected, together with the reimagining of exempla which is especially a tradition of patrician families as a means of justifying their power and influence. In Livy’s fable, we find a kind of duality, which is certainly inherent in the views surrounding fables, that they are both high and low, truth and fiction. For Livy, this fable becomes a means for him to construct his elitist view of an ideal Republican past in which the low, simple and humble were preferable to the high excesses of his time. Extravagance and excess are especially vices associated with the wealthy upper classes. For Livy, in his own day, the

243 And, as Miles points out, “Livy’s preface suggests another subject for his narrative, the collective identity of the Roman people, a subject that depends less upon what actually happened in the past than upon how the past has been remembered,” (Miles 1995: 18).
Empire is burdened by its own magnitude (prae. 4) and so he wants to turn from the present ills to the exemplary past and the time when the state was balanced and healthy (prae. 5). The present state is unable to endure its vices and also the cures (remedia (prae. 9)). For the reader part of the city’s past is bound up in organic and bodily metaphors of growth, sickness and decline.\(^{244}\) Livy wants to heal the collective body of the Roman people. This idea becomes much more concrete in The Belly and the Limbs told by Menenius Agrippa to promote unity within the body of the state.

According to Livy, who writes four centuries after the fact, the Patricians chose Menenius Agrippa, a man of plebeian origin, as their mouthpiece to persuade those soldiers who had withdrawn from the city to protest the oppressive debt laws and inequity of power in the first plebeian secession in 494 BCE, to return to the community. In Livy’s account, Menenius persuades his audience by using the simplest of rhetorical devices, a fable:

Nullam profecto nisi in concordia civium spem reliquam ducere; eam per aequa, per iniqua reconciliandam civitati esse. Placuit igitur oratorem ad plebem mitti Menenium Agrippam, facundum virum et quod inde oriundus erat plebi carum. Is intromissus in castra prisco illo dicendi et horrido modo nihil aliud quam hoc narrasse fertur: tempore quo in homine non ut nunc omnia in unum consentiant, sed singulis membris suum cuique consilium, suus sermo fuerit, indignatas reliquas partes sua cura, suo labore ac ministerio ventri omnia quaeri, ventrem in medio quietum nihil aliud quam datis voluptatibus frui; conspirasse inde ne manus ad os cibum ferrent, nec os acciperet datum, nec dentes quae acciperent conficerent. Hac ira, dum ventrem fame domare vellent, ipsa una membra totunque corpus ad extremam tabem venisse. Inde apparuisse ventris quoque haud segne ministerium esse, nec magis ali quam alere eum, reddentem in omnes corporis partes hunc quo vivimus vigemusque, divisum pariter in venas maturum conferro cibo sanguinem. Comparando hinc quam intestina corporis seditio similis esset irae plebis in patres, flexisse mentes hominum (2.32.7-12).

The Senate felt that there was no hope except concord among the citizens, and that this must be restored by any means, fair or unfair. Therefore, the Senate decided to send as their spokesman Menenius Agrippa, an eloquent man, and dear to the Plebs as being himself of plebeian origin. He was admitted into the camp, and it is reported that he simply told them the following fable in primitive and coarse fashion: in the days when all the

\(^{244}\) See Jaeger 2000: 6, especially for the organic nature of the state and its architectural metaphor, and Béranger 1953: 223-30.
parts of the human body were not agreeing together as they do now, but each member took its own counsel and spoke its own speech, the other members, indignant that everything acquired by their care and labour and ministry went to the belly, while it, undisturbed in the middle of them, did nothing but enjoy the pleasures they provided for it, entered into a conspiracy. The hands were not to bring food to the mouth, the mouth was not to accept it when given, and the teeth were not to chew it. While, in their anger, they wished to coerce the belly by starvation, the members themselves and the whole body were reduced to extreme exhaustion. Then it became apparent that the belly rendered no idle service, and the nourishment it received was no greater than that which it bestowed by returning to all parts of the body this blood by which we live and are strong, equally distributed into the veins, after being matured by the digestion of food. By using this comparison that shows how the internal dissension among the parts of the body resembled the animosity of the Plebeians against the Patricians, he won over the minds of the men.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells us that this fable is related in all sources about this incident from the first secession (6.83). Given the somewhat ambivalent attitude Livy seems to have for this fable, it is reasonable to suppose he also inherited the tradition of the fable used by Agrippa. The first known version of this fable was found in Egypt on a student’s writing tablet dated to the 22nd Dynasty (946-723 BC), before the age of the legendary Aesop. The use of the body as an analogy was also familiar from Greek literature and is centered on Greek principles that connect the individual life with the functioning of the state. Many Greek political, philosophical and satirical writers assumed this bodily analogy and applied it to the hierarchy of the polis. Aristophanes describes one function of the comic poet as the physician with the charge of curing the diseases of the state (Wasps 650-51), and Livy, in his didactic and exemplary history, has a similar agenda. Demosthenes, this time in reference to an external military danger, depicts the threat of Philip of Macedon as an attack of fever that Athens must

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245 This fable, as told by Agrippa to the Plebeians, is found in Livy 2.32; Plutarch, Coriolanus 6; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities 6. 83-6; Cassius Dio, Roman History 4. 10-13; and Florus, Epitome of Roman History 1.17.23.
246 See Hicks 1963: 29-35.
247 See Nestle 1927: 350-60, who discusses different versions of this fable, the history of the genre and the political body in general. For a history of The Belly and the Limbs, see Béranger 1953, and Hale 1968 and 1973-4.
249 See Plato, Laws 628d-e and Aristotle, Politics 1253a. Xenophon (Memorabilia 2.3.18) has Socrates use a similar analogy of a pair of hands or feet that need to work together to resolve a conflict between two brothers.
resist (*Philippic* 3.9.29). The use of the body as a metaphor is also common in Roman philosophy and politics. Cicero advocates the amputation of any diseased parts of the body state in order to save the whole (*Sic in rei publicae corpora, ut totum salvum sit, quicquid est pestiferum amputetur*) (*Phil*. 8.15-16). In the Aesopic collections, the fable takes the form of a short dispute between the stomach and the feet for superior strength over the body (PA 130). Although the fable clearly begins as a political metaphor, this function is not present in the collections, and instead its moral often stresses co-operation and friendship, and sometimes the reciprocal relationship that must exist between the master and the slave. Although Dionysius of Halicarnassus (6.83) tells us that this fable has long been associated with the first secession, Livy is our first extant source to join *The Belly and the Limbs* with this specific period of internal political dissention.

Since the fable genre and the name Aesop were already known in Greece by the 6th century, it is possible that *The Belly and the Limbs* was known in Rome in the early 5th century, but it is extremely unlikely, because of the sack by the Gauls, that Livy would have had access to a copy of any speech going that far back. Ogilvie dates the fable to the formative period of Roman historiography and the time of Fabius Pictor and refutes Momigliano, Mommsen and Meyer who date it to the 4th century. Although it is probable the fable is a later rhetorical addition by an eager historian, it is at least possible, although unlikely, that given the strong tradition the fable was actually used by the ‘historical’ figure Agrippa. Fables are common to many societies, and although similar fables in different cultures can be accounted for by contact, it is also possible for fables to arise independently. In his preface, Livy tells the reader that traditions, especially those in early history before the foundation of the city are often adorned with poetical legends, rather than strictly based on historical proofs, and, given this statement, he will neither affirm nor refute them, and it is likely this was one of his tactics in dealing with this fable

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250 Cicero, *De Officiis* 3.22, uses the body to teach a lesson in ethics and his text predates Livy. Later sources writing in Latin and Greek, such as Seneca, *De Ira* 2.31.7 also use the analogy didactically, while Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 7.13, 8.34, 2.1 applies bodily unity to harmony between people in general. See especially Caxton’s version of this fable. For a discussion of Caxton, see Hale 1968: 380.

251 In Christian writers, beginning with St. Paul, the fable is used to explain things in terms the average person could understand and to negotiate the many social classes in a diverse congregation (*I Corinthians* 6:15-16 and 12:12). See Hale 1968, for an analysis of the history of this fable in literature from Roman times to the Renaissance.


253 For native Italian folktales and fables, see Van Dijk 1996: 513-541.
Quae ante conditam condendamve urbem poeticis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur, ea nec adfirmare nec refellere in animo est (prae 6). It is unlikely, however, that the fable was actually employed at the time of the first secession, and I agree with Nestle and Hicks who believe this fable was introduced into Roman historiography early in the 1st century when Greek rhetoric was highly influential in Roman literature and history.\footnote{Nestle 1927: 350-60.} One example of a possible reference to this fable which is dated to an earlier period in Roman history is found in Plutarch, Cato Maior 8.1, as one of Cato’s apothegms: “It is hard to argue with the belly, since it has no ears.” However, I would argue that Plutarch, like Livy, is including this fable material as a result of rhetorical influences in the 1st century.\footnote{For Plutarch and his fables, see Chapter 5.} What is significant for our purposes is how Livy chose to view and present both fable and historical episode within his narrative. Livy is unique in his decidedly Aesopic presentation of Menenius Agrippa as fabulist.

The voicing of The Belly and the Limbs is extremely complex and functions on a variety of levels. Sometimes, it is difficult to distinguish between the intentions of Livy, as external narrator, and, Agrippa as internal narrator, the voices of the Senate and the Plebs and thus the ultimate meaning and significance of the fable. We have already encountered ambiguities in the interpretation of the first extant fable, The Hawk and the Nightingale, in Hesiod. It is common for fable exempla in literature, as opposed to examples in the collections, to have multiple readings. Like Hesiod’s The Hawk and Nightingale and The Horse and the Stag in Aristotle, this fable is used in a political situation with the moral that one must accept the power of the strong and the natural order or, perhaps more appropriately, the natural hierarchy. Of course, Aristotle argues that man is by nature a political animal, and thus political hierarchies are natural (Politics 1253a). In Livy’s account, the significance of this passage relies on the unique status of Menenius Agrippa who functions as a figure in between. Livy says that Menenius Agrippa literally bent the minds of the men (flexisse mentes hominum (32.12)), and the explicit goal of good oratory is to persuade the audience to accept your argument. While his deliberative oratory is often simple, although this fable is presented as a speech, it
does not follow the typical structure of Livy’s speeches, which generally use historical examples, contain some kind of preface, argumentation and an emotional appeal at the end. Livy does, however, in this speech follow many of the rules set out by Quintilian: arguments must above all suit the case at hand (5.10), the use of similitude in proof is important for convincing the audience (5.11), and one must take the character of the judge and jury into consideration and use arguments that will appeal to them (5.12). In the idea that even simple rustic Romans from early history can easily achieve a state of concord, Livy is shaming the modern audience which has just emerged from civil wars. Livy uses this fable to promote civic harmony and to emphasize this he employs the word *concordia*. At 31.9, the dictator, Manius Valerius Maximus, appointed during a time of war, begins his speech to the people by saying he is not pleasing as the author of harmony (*non placeo... concordiae auctor*). At 33.1, after Menenius Agrippa has convinced the Plebeians to return, steps were taken towards harmony (*concordia*) and a compromise was reached in the appointment of inviolate tribunes. Livy frames this passage with *concordia*, a Republican ideal, and it is the lesson that must be learned from this historical, but also fabular, *exemplum*.

Regardless of the source of the fable, by Livy’s time it is clearly an inherited tradition that he feels compelled to follow despite his somewhat ambivalent reaction to it. Livy’s reaction to this fable can be seen in a comparison of the language used to introduce the fable in the various sources. While Livy does not deal with the problematic labelling of his fable, for Plutarch, who is a prolific user of fables, it is a somewhat privileged *logos* (*τελευτῶντι τῷ λόγῳ* (Coriolanus 6)) and in Dionysius it is a fable composed in the manner of Aesop (*Roman Antiquities* 6. 83-6). When Livy recounts the speech of Menenius Agrippa to the Plebeians, he says it was told in the antiquated and primitive style of the times (*prisco illo dicendi et horrido modo*, 2.32.8). Florus seems to have a greater regard for the style and age of his speech, which he says was very persuasive to concord and told in the old style (*Exstat orationis antiquae satis efficax ad concordiam fabula*). Perhaps, as in Florus, Livy was actually adding authority to Agrippa by stressing his time as ancient and exemplary and his style as simple and unadorned, as ancient and virile versus modern and effeminate. For Quintilian, there is also some
contradiction since in the speaker purity and virility give eloquence (5.12.20).\textsuperscript{257} Livy already expressed the idea of the crudeness of the ancients when he discussed the present historians who believe they can surpass the rude attempts of the ancients (...\textit{aut scribendi arte rudem vetustatem superuros credunt} (prae. 2)). For Ogilvie, Livy faces difficulty in telling this fable, since the parable was elegant and sophisticated but Menenius, as a plebeian, is supposed to speak roughly.\textsuperscript{258} There is a difference of course, between a plain style (such as Julius Caesar’s) and a crudeness of style. While many fables could achieve status as sophisticated pieces in the hands of authors such as Horace,\textsuperscript{259} one has to remember the marginal connotations that fables had acquired by Livy’s age, although they are still the product of élite authors, like Livy, in most of our sources. In this passage, there are many levels of contention between the status of fable, narrator, author and the audiences. Livy often seems to imitate the simplicity of the original speech while at the same time adding embellishments, but he removes anything crude and does not attempt to produce something truly archaic in anything but mood. Livy therefore negotiates this problem of archaic speech by reporting the fable indirectly.

To introduce the imagery of the fable Livy stresses that the Plebeians remained on the hill without a leader (\textit{sine ullo duce} (32.4)), that is, according to the analogy, the limbs without a belly or head.\textsuperscript{260} The panic in the city caused all activities to cease, just as in the body without the members all digestion ends (32.5). This fable begins with \textit{nullam}, and throughout the rest of the \textit{fabula} Livy emphasizes that such a revolt is improper through the repeated use of negatives (\textit{Nullam... nihil... non... nihil... ne... nec... nec... nec}). There was no hope except concord among the citizens, and the Senate concluded it must restore this by fair means or foul (\textit{Nullam profecto nisi in concordia civium spem reliquam ducere; eam per aequa per iniqua reconciliandam civitati esse} (32.7)). This concern with fairness and equity will be picked up by the fable, when Menenius presents the stomach as an organ that distributes blood equally (\textit{pariter}) throughout the body. However, there is some doubt, although it is somewhat occluded in Livy, about the truth of the statements made by the Senate- belly. In Shakespeare’s \textit{Coriolanus}, there is a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{257} See also Habinek 1998: 20.
\item \textsuperscript{258} See Ogilvie’s commentary on this passage (1998).
\item \textsuperscript{259} See Chapter 4: 122-125.
\item \textsuperscript{260} This idea is later picked up by Manlius who intends to provide the Plebs with a head/ leader (\textit{ut caput attollere Romana plebes posit} (6.18)).
\end{itemize}
dramatization of the gap between the ideal body politic and the political reality in which fabular unity is an aristocratic fallacy. This conception of the great gulf between fabular hierarchy and social reality is not emphasized in Livy’s account, but its presence is felt. In Livy, the Senate chooses diplomacy, but with his use of *iniqua* we are not only reminded of the unequal position of the Plebs in the state, but also of the fact that, despite his connection with the Plebs, Agrippa is a representative or servant of the Senate. Agrippa employs rhetoric to convince the people, and, although it is concealed in a seemingly simple fable, rhetoric belongs to the educated classes. In Livy’s passage, Agrippa, although of plebeian origin, is described as an eloquent man (*facundum virum*); however, when on an embassy from the Senate he used a way of speaking suitable to the fable and the plebeian audience. By sending a plebeian, the Senate is engaging in some sly diplomacy, and yet they offer no violence to the mob and in the end acquiesce to its demands (or at least some of them). Livy again invites comparison between the archaic and modern character of the Romans. In the early Republic the Senate’s ‘by whatever means necessary’ is mild in comparison with the actions it had committed by Livy’s own time. For Livy the ideal society is presented as one in which all members play their roles and fulfill their expected responsibilities, both the Patricians and Plebeians.

At the beginning of the fable, Agrippa reinforces the contrast between now and then, how present behaviour is always measured by the past (32.9). In his fable, Agrippa mirrors the situation at hand in the complaints of the limbs, their secession, the inability of the state to function, and the inevitable conclusion of the limbs that the belly functions as the distributor of the fruits of their labour. Blood (*sanguinem*), the vital element, which only the stomach can supply, is postponed to the end (32.11). This serves as one last indication of the ultimate power of the Senate as the central figure in the body-state and as a reminder of the bloodshed that might follow civil disobedience. Livy’s alliteration of the letter ‘v’ in Menenius’ explanation of the importance of the stomach (*ventris*) reinforces the importance of the organ as a life-giving force and thus more powerful than any limb (*inde apparuisse ventris quoque haud segne ministerium esse, nec magis ali quam alere eum, reddentem in omnes corporis partes hunc quo vivimus vigemusque, divisum pariter in venas maturum confecto cibo sanguinem*). In the connection of the

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Senate with an organ of digestion, and therefore the process of consumption, destruction and rebuilding, we see a somewhat ambivalent presentation of the Senate as both a positive and negative force. There is indeed some significance in the emphasis on blood in the digestive process, here as an analogy for money, or possibly other life sustaining goods and services, and the Senate’s responsibilities as its distributor. For Livy, in his own day, riches have led to avarice and wanton pleasures that are bringing Rome towards universal destruction (prae. 12).

In his very short conclusion, Livy stresses the comparison (comparando), and how the minds of the Plebeians were influenced by Agrippa’s fable (flexisse mentes hominum (32.12)). This introduction of mentes (32.12) at the end is interesting in terms of the body politic where the head is often seen as the leader of the state. Here Livy may be expressing the power achieved by the Plebs in gaining a tribune, they now have a head with a voice, and fable is often presented in our sources as a means of expression for the Other. By putting the seat of authority in the belly, Livy may be reacting to the ancient conception that in the monarchical political body the seat of authority rested in the head. With the fall of the Tarquins such a metaphor would be inappropriate for Agrippa, and given the contemporary shift from the Republic to the Principate, Livy would want to disavow any notion of monarchy. Under leaders like Julius Caesar, the dangers of the word rex and any associated imagery had become apparent, and therefore Augustus maintained the traditional political language of the Republic by holding the office of consul and by adopting other traditional political titles and powers, while at the same time holding the place of princeps. Finally steps were taken towards harmony (concordia) which frames this passage. A compromise was reached that the Plebeians would receive their own inviolate tribunes, an addition to the power structure of the fable narrative, which both calls into question the efficacy of the fable as well as the appropriateness of the analogy of the body politic. In Livy’s fable, we see tensions between the historical use of the fable, the voice of the Senate, and Livy’s construction of the idealized past. I would postulate that this is intentional, since this fable introduces the conflict of the orders that will continue in Livy’s history. This gap between the action of the fable and the reality of the political scenario serves in part to remind the clever reader that this fable merely begins the exploration of the power of the Plebeians and it is not a
resolution, but rather it reveals real anxieties on the part of the Patricians about the power of the Plebeians. Livy in a sense glosses over the problematic qualities of the fable which does not entirely function as a successful metaphor for the historical revolt and its resolution. While the limbs reconcile with the belly without any additional control, in the real world the Plebeians understand the need for harmony, but they also acquire a voice in the form of the tribune. The tribune is also a liminal figure like the fabulist. Since the time of the Gracchi, tribunician power was held by a wealthy and influential plebeian, an élite, although not patrician, male, who represented the lower classes. For the Patricians, the tribune was a figure who served as a means of communication, whereas, in the ideal plebeian view he was a permanent assertion of their power in response to the control of the Senate and the Patricians. For Nestle, who traces the history of the fable in Greek and Roman authors, the fable is an expression of homonoia, a public spirit of cooperation that unites the city. This fable, however, does not stress what might be called a modern definition of homonoia or concordia, as mutual and equal co-operation between members, but rather there is a distinctly hierarchical presentation of the fable in which it is the duty of the Plebs to be ruled by the Senate. The belly’s lesson presents the traditional advice often given by lower-class fabulists that the non-élite members of society should accept their roles as a subjected class. This moral reveals how much the fable presents an élite world view of power, even when voiced by the non-patrician Agrippa. This fable is closely linked with the traditional near-Eastern fable in which the ruling classes learn about how they should rule and how to employ fable as a means of repression and justification of that rule by connecting artificial social hierarchies with those found in the natural world.

By comparing Livy’s account to other versions it is possible to better interpret his story, and to reveal some of his authorial biases and purposes. Dionysius of Halicarnassus was a near contemporary of Livy, writing during the time of Augustus, and as a teacher of rhetoric he imitated Classical Greek Attic rhetorical style. These two factors account

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262 Nestle 1927: 350-360.
263 Dionysius of Halicarnassus was the author of a number of rhetorical treatises including Τέχνη ῥητορική, Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων, Περὶ μμήσεως, Περὶ τῶν Ἀττικῶν ῥητόρων, Περὶ λεκτικῆς Δημοσθένους δεινότητος, Περὶ Θουκυδίδου χαρακτήρος.
for his elaboration of the fable and speech, as rhetoric played an important role in the
popularity and composition of fable, while the looking back into the Classical period,
when fable was popular in Greek literature, accounts for its popularity during the
Augustan Age as well as later during the Second Sophistic. We do not have the earlier
accounts referred to by Dionysius and it is difficult to determine whether Livy or
Dionysius is truly our earliest extant source who connects this fable with the first
plebeian secession. Like Livy, Dionysius considered history to be a means of teaching
through examples, which he approached from the perspective of the rhetorician. As a
result of this point of view, he often adapted and reworked his sources, especially in
rhetorical scenarios in which there were no extant speeches. Thus, Dionysius of
Halicarnassus (6. 83-86) provides the longest and most complex version of this secession
and the fable. When Agrippa speaks, the Plebs shout their approval and then accord him
respectful silence. He begins by using his most persuasive arguments and, like a good
orator, he gauges what he says to the feelings of his audience (83.2), which is also
reflected in his choice of a fable as a rhetorical element. Dionysius describes Agrippa as
an ex-consul (6.96), and an elder of the Senate who takes the middle ground (6.49). He
attributes the creation of the fable to Agrippa, which he composed in the manner of
Aesop to closely resemble the present situation (λέγεται μῦθόν τινα εἰπεῖν εἰς τὸν
Αἰσώπειον τρόπον συμπλάσας), and it was mainly by this means that he won over his
audience. Dionysius projects the figure of Aesop, familiar in his own time, into the past.
For Dionysius, because of its persuasive power, this speech was thought worthy to be
recorded and quoted in all ancient historians (83.2). This is in contrast to Livy’s attitude
to the fable, although he does agree with Dionysius that the power of the fable, in Livy’s
account the fable alone, was able to sway his audience. From 83-86 Dionysius’ Agrippa
stresses ideas of unity and that he has come not to accuse or excuse, but to restore the
state. The ignorant people (ἀμαθὲς πλῆθος), as Menenius Agrippa states in direct speech,
will always need prudent leadership, while the Senate, which is capable of that
leadership, will always need people to rule (85.1). Menenius Agrippa’s use of ἀμαθὲς is a
powerful reminder of his true loyalties as a mouthpiece of the Senate; however, he does
emphasize the idea that both parties have a responsibility to the other to perform their
functions. For him, in the body state, sedition is a disease that must be wisely cured
Despite Dionysius’ statement that it was largely the fable that won over the angry audience, he relates how Agrippa went over concessions concerning debt, an official treaty with the Senate and oaths from those involved that it would be upheld. The speech is so convincing that the people lament and cry out with one mind and one voice to lead them back to the city, but Brutus restrains them and first asks for a magistrate to safeguard the people’s interests (87).

Plutarch, who was writing in the mid to late 1st century CE, presents Agrippa as just one member of the Senate sent to promote peace with the seceding Plebs; he is not the lone exemplary figure. The question of the status of Menenius Agrippa is problematic, as he is labelled plebeian by Livy, while Plutarch states directly that he was one of the older members of the Senate and, therefore, a patrician (Coriolanus 6.2) since, at this time, plebeians could not hold this type of office. Livy’s unique account of his status creates a historical character that has greater potency as a mediator, and whose speech is more conciliatory because at least on the surface it is spoken by a plebeian to a plebeian audience. In Plutarch, the belly actually laughs at the simplicity of the members in their lack of understanding of its important functions within the social hierarchy as it attends to matters and acts in ways that are useful and helpful to all citizens. Plutarch’s telling of this fable makes it apparent how much the fable is actually a means of expressing élite views through popular form. He has little sympathy for Livy’s Republican ideal democracy, and he often criticizes Athenian democracy which forces leaders to bow to the people, as they become subjects to their popular masters.

Florus’ Epitome of Roman History 1.17 seems to be taken primarily from Livy’s account, as was much of his history, especially given his description of Agrippa and his style, and also the emphasis on blood as part of the digestive process. Florus was writing in the time of Trajan and Hadrian, and his panegyric of Rome is ripe with the rhetorical style of the age. It is interesting that he does not elaborate this fable but assumes the metaphor throughout his history of Rome as a living entity whose life is divided into three periods: infancy, youth and adulthood. During the Republic, and at the time of the first secession, Rome was experiencing its adolescencia in Florus’ estimation (1.17.22).

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264 For Plutarch’s account of The Belly and the Limbs, see Chapter 5: 145-146.
265 For a full account of Plutarch’s views of democracy, see Chapter 5: 147 and 155.
He refers to Agrippa as an eloquent and wise man (facundi et sapientis viri). Florus favours a Livian view of history over the Plutarchan, but, while he does present a positive exemplary episode, he also feels that it is not simply as a result of Agrippa’s fable that the people returned to the city, but that they would never have been persuaded if they had not obtained tribunes (nec nisi tribunos), thereby calling into question whether this speech and its fable had any power.

Dio Cassius, living in the 2nd-3rd century CE, was an élite writer, who had an active political career as a Roman consul and senator like his father.266 This is in contrast to Livy, who was not politically active, and it likely accounts for the highly political language in Dio Cassius. Before the 1st century BCE we only have summaries, but later his extant accounts become more detailed, especially concerning events in his own lifetime. Dio Cassius, at 4.10-13, also gives a very short version of this fable, characteristic of events in his text from early Roman history.267 For Dio, the people are easily persuaded and brought to reason in a remarkable way (θαυμασίῳ τρόπῳ): by means of a fable. And, as Hale points out, this version of the fable is primarily economic, as the wealth of the Patricians can be used to help the poor in emergencies.268 This emphasis on power through wealth is characteristic of the élite view of power in the Roman world. Here Menenius Agrippa is merely part of the envoy, just as in Plutarch’s Coriolanus 6, and he humbly begs the Plebs to listen to his fable (4.10). This dissension anticipates Shakespeare’s obstinate Plebeians. The Plebs are reconciled with the Senate and gain tribunes, but also a release from their debts and the abolition of the possibility of seizure for debt, once again emphasizing the relationship between money and power.

The story is best known from the admittedly late version found in the opening scene of Shakespeare’s Coriolanus I.i.152-9, in which Menenius imposes the idea of the body politic on a rioting plebeian mob. Unlike in Livy, Shakespeare’s Menenius provides an epimythium, or moral, which shows precisely how he envisions the application of fable to context:

Men. The senators of Rome are this good belly,
And you the mutinous members; for examine

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266 There is a later tradition that he was related to Dio Chrysostom, interesting for our purposes as he employed several fables in his works (see Appendix).
267 In regard to Dio Cassius, see also Zonaras 7.14.
Their counsels and their cares: digest things rightly
Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find
No public benefit which you receive
But it proceeds or comes from them to you
And no way from yourselves.

In the first scene of this play, Menenius’ attempt to quiet the rioting mob with his fable is only partially successful. The Plebeians constantly interrupt, and they point out the incongruities between what he presents as an image of the state and the political reality in which they live. In Shakespeare’s version, the analogy of the body politic continues throughout the play as it is reinforced by images of a diseased and healthy body, imagery of digestion and the various branches of the government represented as body parts.269 There is a direct questioning of the value of such a fable and of the fabulist who is clearly voicing the wishes of his élite masters through the pretence of fable, which, as a genre traditionally characterized as the tool of the disenfranchised, the Plebeians should recognize, understand and embrace. The mob is clearly not deceived, and we as readers, in light of such a text, should view with caution the constructions of fable in Livy, but also in other authors in this study.

All of these versions stress the principle of concordia and the relationship between discord and disease in the analogy of the political body. Livy’s version emerges as the most dramatic in its simplicity and his construction of this episode of early Roman history as exemplary for the present state made sick through discord. Livy’s version becomes even more overtly artificial through comparison with other historians, as he is creating a fabula of his own, in which we find élite hierarchical views of a lost or nonexistent idealized Roman past as he is combining truth and fiction to create a moral exemplum. In the alternate versions, Agrippa is part of an envoy, but in Livy he is the sole negotiator. There is a stronger sense that Agrippa is speaking for the Senate alone as he is an élite figure instructing the lower classes about their behaviour through fable, he is not a figure associated with the Plebs, and thus the ideal of concordia becomes less tangible.

Livy’s labelling of Agrippa as plebeian, an association presented in no other source, is particularly significant in terms of Livy’s agenda and the presentation of his history. Agrippa occupies a unique, and seemingly contradictory, position as both a

269 See Hale 1971, for the idea of the body politic in Shakespeare’s Coriolanus.
plebeian and a representative of the Senate. Livy’s account projects into the past the tradition in his own time that allowed Plebeians to attain high offices. However, this duality of social status is in a sense necessary for Livy as he uses Agrippa as a mediating force for these two disparate class groups. He also employs fable which has the dual history of being both traditionally an élite form of communication and a means for the lower classes to communicate. Thus, both Agrippa and fable play the same roles as mediators, crossers of boundaries and the locus of the collision of incongruities. 

Agrippa’s uncertain status, between the Patricians and Plebeians, also mirrors contemporary problematic societal roles. Agrippa’s own ambiguity reflects the uncertainty of positions in the state, and he uses a fable that reflects the ideas of his own place within the framework of the body. Agrippa is presented as a literal mediator— a man in between. In Livy, unlike in Plutarch or Dionysius, Agrippa is the lone representative, the same good man from Virgil, the exemplary figure who tells an exemplum (Aeneid 1.148-53). He is portrayed as canonical and idealistic rather than as realistic. In his obituary for Agrippa at the end of 2.33, Livy flags the important attributes found in this traditional Republican figure: he was a man dear to the Patricians and even more so to the Plebeians; he was a mediator and interpreter of civil concord (interpretari arbitroque concordiae civium); a legate of the Senate to the Plebs (legato patrum ad plebem), a restorer of the Plebs to Rome (reductori plebis Romanae in urbem), and he was so frugal that he did not leave sufficient funds for a funeral. At 2.32, Livy is also presented as the fabulist, and he specifically intrudes into this section to point out the nature of the fable he is about to tell and the language used. Livy is in a sense a mediator like Agrippa as he attempts to reconcile his anxieties about the present state of Rome by looking to the past. He takes exempla from the past, fashions them to speak for his own ideals, and brings them into the present in the hope that they will be relevant to the future.

There is a dual tradition about the status of the Menenii: three Menenii were tribunes (in 410, 384 and 357 BCE) and there were Menenii with the cognomen Lanatus who served as consuls, see Shatzman 1973: 71-72. It is with the latter that Menenius Agrippa is identified by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (6.49 and 96). Broughton’s Magistrates of the Roman Republic lists Menenius Agrippa as consul in 503 BCE and connected with the Lanati (Broughton 1951: 8).

See Lincoln 1989: 146.

Morwood 1998 posits that Virgil (1.148-53) may have based his description of the pious man’s ability to calm the mob on the figure of Menenius Agrippa from Livy. While this is possible, it is more likely that the pious figure as mediator was already an important stereotype in the Republican period.
It is hard to read this passage without noting some connection with the contemporary Augustan figure of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa who was originally plebeian, held the position of tribune of the Plebs and later became a senator who married into Augustus’ family. He often functioned as a representative of Augustus, primarily in military matters, but he was also responsible for diplomatic missions and public works on behalf of the Emperor. There is a long tradition of the élite employing the lower classes as vehicles and agents of their messages. In the figure of Augustus and his politics we find a similar attempt to create a mediating figure. He allied himself both with the senatorial tradition, by assuming consular power, but also with the popular party through his use of tribunician power.

In Livy, the seat of power in the body is only once placed in the belly, while in all other instances the head takes precedence. Since the belly suits the rhetorical situation, it is likely that the connection of the Senate to this organ at 2.32 is not wholly subversive. As we will see in Horace’s fables to Maecenas, they are the perfect playful medium for offering guidance and criticism to a social superior without creating offense. In this reciprocal relationship, the Senate also has the responsibility of acting as a distributor of life giving goods and services to the people over whom it rules. Every incident in this fable attempts to parallel past relations between the people and the Senate in order to lend credibility to the future events it postulates and, therefore, to show the moral must apply. As we have seen, fables are often used in political situations to justify the power of the strong. This fable of the belly and the limbs teaches friendship and cooperation, but also enforced the conservative political doctrine of obedience to rulers. The fable of the belly justifies the aristocratic economic power and leisure and consumption. Fables promote the status quo, and the moral here seems to be as much about cooperation as that the Plebeians will also suffer in a fractured society: the situation is bad but it could be worse. The point of the exemplum is to stress neither concordia nor hierarchy alone, but rather to show that concord is brought about by each party playing its role within that hierarchy.


274 In the building of the temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline, a head was reportedly found, therefore affirming the Capitoline as the symbolic head of the Roman state and, consequently, Rome as the head of the world (1.55.5-6), see Jaeger 2000: 4.
Thus, responsibility rests on the Plebeians and Patricians for the maintenance of the body state. Agrippa and fable, as they occupy unique positions in between the low and the high, are the perfect media for effecting concord. This fable is a political message, one which serves as advice and criticism, about who rules and how they should rule, as well as who should be ruled, especially from the élite perspective. We are reminded of the negative consequences when individuals attempt to transgress societal boundaries.

There is a similar attempt to transgress societal roles both by the Plebs in the fable, but also by the Senate. For Livy, it is only by playing their roles effectively that all members form a functional social system. Thus, while in Livy the fable is presented as a genre suited to a plebeian audience, its message clearly comes from and is also directed at the élite as well. After all, the traditional fable is a means of communication understood by all social levels. This fable of concordia is especially appropriate after the period of civil war in Rome at the end of the 1st century BCE, and, as well as supporting Livy’s ideal of a healthy state, is also in line with the Augustan principles of unity and a return, at least on the surface, to the values of the Republic.

Livy initiates imagery of the state as a body in the introduction, when he shows concern for the declining health of its morals. He continues this imagery throughout his work in situations involving class dissention. In the sections of Livy we have extant, no historical character uses the fable of Menenius Agrippa as an explicit exemplum. It is clear however, that Livy consciously reintroduces bodily imagery from the first plebeian secession into the events surrounding several periods of civil discord. Fabius Maximus, in a speech to L. Aemilius Paullus, describes the state as lame (si altera parte claudente re publica (22.39.3)) when there is once again class strife during a time of external warfare with Hannibal. Varro blames the nobles for bringing war against the viscera of the Republic (22.38.6). This metaphor of the body recurs frequently in the episodes involving Camillus. Livy, at 5.46.6, in the context of Camillus and the taking back of Rome from

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275 Similarly, in a lost section cited from other authors, Diodorus Siculus presents the Celtiberian military leader Viriathus, who lived ca. 150 BCE, as a traditional ‘barbarian’ fabulist, a wise man who spoke good sense, although he had no formal education, and valued simplicity of life (33.7). In discussing the people of Tucca who defected first to the Romans, then to his leadership, he told the story of the Man with Two Wives: the younger plucked out the grey hairs, the older the dark hairs, each to make her lover resemble herself, until he was bald. Likewise Tucca would soon be empty as both powers picked off their enemies in the city.
the Gauls, says that the strong body of the Roman army lacked a head, they lacked a leader like Camillus.

During the sedition of Manlius, another conflict of the orders, the Patricians want to heal the sores of the state \((ab\ sanandis\ domesticis\ (6.18))\). Subsequently, in his speech, Manlius uses a bodily metaphor, this time making the Plebeians into the head of the state when he says: dictatorships and consulships must be levelled with the ground, that the Roman Plebs may be enabled to lift their head \((ut\ caput\ attollere\ Romana\ plebes\ posit\ (6.18))\). Manlius is also closely connected with the Capitoline, the symbolic head of the state, a monument which he appropriates and exploits to add legitimacy to his authority. Livy has Manlius assume the fable’s imagery but he re-imagines the exemplum with himself and the Plebeians at the head.\(^{276}\) This is a clear example of how Livy is able to manipulate exempla and refashion meaning. The external audience is aware of the instances where bodily imagery is emphasized, and Livy clearly invites a comparison between these two chapters in the conflict of the orders. Other conflicts between the Patricians and Plebeians share elements with the first secession and Livy’s presentation of the fable and conflict. At 4.1-7, when there is dissention over a proposal to allow marriages between the Patricians and Plebeians, Livy declares both parties to be equally guilty in the conflict \((4.2.1-2)\). This recalls Livy’s moral that both parties have equal responsibilities within the state. In the fable of The Belly and the Limbs, the Senate was responsible for the distribution of blood. This blood can be seen as an analogy for money but also for the actual bloodshed that would accompany such periods of dissention. Money and debt were important factors in the revolt in 4.1-7 and this will recur in 6.35-42 when the Plebeians earn the right to be elected consuls. Livy uses the idea of the body politic to connect the three most important elements in the Roman mind: state, family, and individual body. This imagery teaches the subordination of the individual to the family and also of both to the state. In Livy’s ideal body, all of the members and organs must function properly, and no member of the hierarchy, including the belly or head, should fail to support the whole.\(^{277}\)

\(^{276}\) This is a common metaphor; even Augustus liked to be called princeps or primum caput.
\(^{277}\) Feldherr 1998: 120.
Livy was well-trained in rhetoric and could manipulate *exempla* to persuade his audiences. The episode surrounding Menenius Agrippa becomes an idealized *fabula* for how all the members should behave in society—the pious mediator, the peaceful Plebs who gain a voice through passive resistance and the Senate that takes peaceful diplomatic action and acknowledges the grievances of the lower classes while still retaining power. The fable reflects this creation of history as it advocates the concept that within any hierarchy there is a reciprocal relationship between those who rule and those who are ruled. The Senate must rule well and the people must obey. This passage is concerned with the expected fabular polarizations: the collisions of disparate elements including high and low, Plebs and Patricians, equality and inequality. Certainly this fable stresses in a popular manner the acceptance of a natural hierarchy firmly established in the minds of Roman citizens.278 As we have seen, despite common traditions about the fable as a genre for the revolt of the Other, it is often found in hierarchical and authoritarian states as a means of supporting obedience, stability and hierarchy. In Livy, there is an élitist argument against both revolt and the questioning of the ruling class.

I believe that Livy, more than any of our sources, deliberately invokes the figure of Aesop and the fable genre through Menenius Agrippa. In presenting Agrippa as both plebeian and a representative of the Senate, who uses the rhetoric and exemplarity of fable to persuade his audience while speaking for the élite perspective, and functioning well as mediator because of his special status as the Other, Livy constructs a Roman Aesop. What is the significance of what seems to be a clear Aesopic connection? The Aesop character and his genre have been traditionally used in our sources during *agones* in general, but often class conflicts in particular. The fable and fabulist are mediators and advisors that remind the reader of the fable’s contradictory roles both as a means of élite communication and slave speech. In this context, the lower-class fable and fabulist are usurped both by the élite Senate and by our élite historian Livy as a means of advising an internal plebeian audience, and more broadly Livy’s readership, especially the ruling class. This voice appropriation of fable in our extant sources has been decidedly overlooked, but it is a common device in the Roman period in which many sources proclaim the otherness of the fable, while at the same time speaking through the genre.

278 See especially Béranger 1953: 224.
and its fabulists. Through the voice of the plebeian Agrippa, Livy here plays the role of the wise fabulist, especially prominent in the Eastern tradition and found in Hesiod, who uses fable as a didactic exemplum to instruct all members of society, especially the ruling classes, about their expected societal roles by combining truth and fiction. In this Aesopic type of advising, Livy may be speaking through Agrippa, as a kind of outsider figure, so that he is permitted greater freedom of speech in using this entire episode as an exemplum to criticise the failings in contemporary society and politics. There is also something of the Aesopic type in Livy who functions as a mediator between past and present, and as a social critic of contemporary society. Certainly, Livy uses this fable to support the conservative social ideal that his history suggests that he favoured. And yet, the fable becomes not simply advice to the Plebs about their roles, but it also acknowledges that the Senate has political and social responsibilities to maintain and administer the entire state in the symbiotic relationship that existed and still exists in Livy’s Rome in the body politic. As mediators, Agrippa and his fable address the needs and concerns of both the Senate and the people, thus he acts as a physician of the whole body. The lesson is fixed on the external audience, which should surpass the past, by being able to retain harmony within their own state. The episode becomes an exemplum of how political discord within the state should be resolved through diplomacy. This fable ultimately speaks for Livy, it is an idealized image of the morally healthy and functional conservative society that has eluded Rome in his own time, and that likely never truly existed. The Augustan regime presents a similar agenda in the 1st century, and attempts to construct the present through an appropriation and recreation of an idealized, and arguably fictional, past. The fable of Menenius Agrippa may be a fabrication, and yet that is not significant. It is the collective memory of the Roman people, and historians like Livy, that forms their identity, as it is a record not so much of truth, but of their perception of themselves which can help the reader to interpret their identity.\footnote{See Miles 1995: 18.}
Chapter 4.
Horace’s Clever Fox and the Ass in the Lion’s Skin

While Livy employed fable as a means of constructing his ideal political world, Horace used the genre as one method of constructing his ideal moral world while negotiating his own problematic social position. In early Greek culture, the fable seems to have been connected with symposiastic literature which criticized society through humour. This tradition is continued in later Greek and Latin literature by the use of fable primarily in moral philosophy and comedy. In these genres, the fable is associated with issues of power between classes, often with the fabulist looking up from the (pseudo) perspective of the lower class and using fable as a (tactful) means of communication with a social superior. Although Horace presents his readers with many fables, there is very little Horace scholarship that examines his use of fables as exempla. Horace’s fables are worthy of closer examination, since his use of this genre informs the persona he employs as well as his attempts to navigate his place within problematic social and literary spheres that both revere and envy him. Horace presents himself as an Aesopic type figure, who is associated with slavery through his freedman father, and yet he is connected with the élite circle of Maecenas and high literature. He plays a didactic role in both teaching how to live well and how to play one’s role effectively in the sometimes problematic power structure of the patron-client relationship. Like Aesop, he is the social critic, satirist, and philosopher who was elevated from a low background to a privileged place among the intellectual and political élite. In his appropriation of Aesop, Horace is adopting a somewhat false disguise, another means of self-deprecation to lessen the jealousy of some of his detractors, but he also assumes the perfect position from which to critique society.

Horace had rhetorical training as he tells us that his freedman father ensured that he had the same education as the son of a knight or senator (Sat. 1.6.76-88). While he

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280 See Chapter 1: 27.
281 Nadjo 2002: 135-148 and Marchesi 2005: 307-330. A few important studies do exist, but these concentrate primarily on Epistle 1.7, which has traditionally been viewed as Horace’s recusatio, or ‘assertion of independence’ from Maecenas (see Fraenkel 1963: 327-339; Kilpatrick 1973: 47-53; Kilpatrick 1986: 7-14; Nadjo 2002: 135-148), and on The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse in Satire 2.6, a piece of poetry regarded as the most beautiful treatment of a fable found in antiquity (see Fraenkel 1963: 143; Holzberg 1991: 229-239; West 1974).
thus enjoyed an élite education, his social position was still below that of those future knights and senators with whom he was educated. As Williams successfully argues, Horace was likely not the son of a man born into slavery, but rather his father was a rich and well-connected member of the Sabine aristocracy who got into political trouble and was punished with a brief enslavement.\footnote{See Williams 1995: 296-313. Anderson 1995 and Rudd 1961 consider Horace to be the son of freedman without question. For examinations that examine the authenticity of Horace’s statements about his father, see Gowers 2003: 55-91, Schlegel 1994 and 2000: 93-119, and Freudenberg 1993: 3-51. For aspects of Horace’s biography, see Armstrong 1989: 1-26, Mayer 1994: 5-8, Perret 1964: 1-32, Sedgwick 1967, Lyne 1995: 1-11 and Harrison 2007: 7-21. For an examination of Horace’s autobiographical statements, see especially Warmuth 1992.} I would agree that his emphasis on his father’s once servile position is over-constructed and has both a political and satirical purpose. As Gowers’ recent study of autobiography in Horace reminds us, he is presenting literature and not autobiography, more specifically his \textit{persona} is based on the needs of satire including comic stereotypes, such as the humble, lower-class buffoon.\footnote{See Gowers 2003: 55-91, Schlegel 1994 and Freudenberg 1993: 3-51. As Schlegel notes, \textit{me libertino patre natum} is the refrain for the first half of \textit{Satire} 1.6 as it is repeated three times in various forms (6, 45, 46) (Schlegel 2000: 93-119). Further, preference for his status over that of Maecenas solidifies his satiric \textit{persona}. He could not be a satirist with Maecenas’ position as a low status accords with the low genre condition of satire.}

Horace employs fable as a rhetorical tool which he would have learned as a school boy in Rome. In his \textit{Satires}, Horace often uses the technique of refutation and self-incrimination in connection with his fable \textit{exempla}. These are rhetorical, specifically forensic, techniques, as Horace often becomes the skilled prosecutor who cross-examines his critics. When his opponent tells a fable, Horace first points out the discrepancies between the fable and its context, and then frequently reinterprets the fable and shows how the fable’s narrator has actually incriminated himself. Often, the characters in the fables may be representations of the reader or addressee, the narrator or Horace himself, and thereby they serve as a means of tactful admonition through example, rather than direct censure. Horace uses fables as a didactic element that teaches practical moral philosophical lessons. Frequently the fable \textit{exempla} represent the main theme of the poem or the argument.\footnote{\textit{The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse} in \textit{Satire} 2.6, for example, illustrates the contrast between the safety and simple pleasures of the country and the dangerous luxuries of the city.} This prominence given to his fable \textit{exempla} is not surprising, as fables provided Horace with a large collection of material which shows concerns with those philosophical ideas that most interested him. Horace attributes his own use of anecdotes,
fables and exempla to the teachings of his freedman father (Sat. 1.4. 103-29), who gave him the habit of noting certain sins as exempla. His advice for living well was especially centered on fabular ideas of moderation, friendship, simplicity, rejection of slavery to vices and respecting one’s place within hierarchies such as the patron-client relationship.

In his Satires and Epistles, Horace succeeded several writers of comedy and satire who are known to have employed fables including Aristophanes, Ennius and Lucilius. The Satires and Epistles, not surprisingly conversational, philosophical, satirical and rhetorical pieces, contain a larger number of fables than any other author’s works. Horace’s skilled use of context is made clear by the two similar, and yet distinct, characters fables assume in these works. In his Satires, fables are often subverted and turned against their speakers in order to expose their own failings as Horace asserts his power as fabulist in constructing his moral world. In the Epistles, on the other hand, Horace is concerned, especially in his letters to his potentes amici, with his tone and methods of tactful admonition through humour and self-deprecation as there is often an acknowledgment of his humanity and his own personal failings. In these letters, he assumes many fabular disguises playing both the crafty fox and the foolish ass, whichever is best suited to the circumstances as he is mindful of the power of the fable and the fabulist’s persona as a means of communication with a social superior.

Although Phaedrus’ statements about the origin of the genre and its use as a vehicle specifically for communication by the slave class is perhaps erroneous (Prol. 3.33-7), fables are an appropriate medium for criticism, as they provide a shield for the author: the reader’s interpretation of the fable and its context ultimately gives it meaning, especially when one is addressing a social superior. Fables without morals allow the audience to maintain a sense of agency by allowing them the act of interpretation of the fable’s message. Thus, it is not surprising that Horace employs the genre when addressing issues surrounding the proper behaviours in the patron-client relationship. Horace, like

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285 For a discussion of the connections between fable and Roman satire, see below. See Chapter 1: 23-29, for a discussion of Aristophanes’ use of fable material. Horace’s persona of the country gentleman contains an echo of the fabulist Hesiod in the Works and Days in which he assumes a middle-class farmer persona and uses fable as a means of criticising his corrupt brother and the judicial system, as well as advising his social superiors.
286 See the discussions of Satire 1.1 and 2.3.
287 See especially Sat. 1.9.20 and Ep. 1.1.73-75.
288 For more on Phaedrus, see Chapter 1: 37-39.
Livy as we observed in Chapter 3, often employs fables as *exempla* in connection with issues of power between classes. Horace states that he is accused by envious social climbers of attempting to rise above his station and he emphasizes that his status has not changed and he has no pretence to, nor desire for, elevation. Horace often connects the fable not simply with chattel slavery, but rather with all forms of slavery to which human beings are subject. Horace makes it clear that he is writing not for the mob, but rather he is concerned principally with delighting and instructing his friends, some of whom were his social peers, while others were of a higher class. This circle included Virgil, Varius, Maecenas and several other powerful contemporary literary and political figures, to whom he offers his practical philosophical advice. Horace, following the tradition of the *ainos*, familiar from Greek literature and told to convey a warning or a request in a diplomatic way, uses fable as one means of instructing and admonishing his friends of all ages and stations. Tactful admonition is achieved in several ways. By their nature, fables are humorous, and dilute some of the serious tone and the offence of censure, without losing sight of the moral lesson. Aside from providing a break in the serious tone, the fable also provides a sense of ambiguity to be interpreted by the reader: either it pertains to himself or serves as a warning of behaviours which should be avoided by all men, and not direct criticism of individuals. The narrator and reader both have interpretive functions, and Horace ensures that the representative fables are well chosen. As these fables are predominantly directed not at the uneducated, but rather at the élite schooled members of Roman society, there must be an assumption that the fables are part of a more complex system of didactic communication. He flatters the learned external

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289 See *Satire* 1.6.45-48 and *Satire* 2.3.307-232, for accusations that Horace is attempting to rise above his station.
290 See Garnsey 1996: 12-19, for a discussion of the evolution of the philosophical differentiation between slavery of the body and that of the mind or soul.
291 Horace discusses his friends and their role as his audience in several works (see especially *Sat. 1.4.71-4, Sat. 1.5.40-2, and Sat. 1.10.72-5*).
292 In *Epistle* 1.20, however, Horace acknowledges that once published his books have a wider readership.
295 “In the scale of psychological sophistication, the art of the fable would seem to be further advanced and to presuppose a higher intellectual background of culture than that of any other kind of folklore,” Perry 1959: 28. As Nadjo (2002: 140) notes, at this time there are no known Latin collections, but all cultivated readers would have known both languages and would have received a similar education, which often included fables.
audience by assuming their cultural and literary sophistication. As a professed philosopher (*Ep. 1.1.11*), Horace’s primary goal in writing the *Epistles* is to teach his friends and readers how to live well. Horace proclaims several times that he is writing for his noble friends, his *potentes amici*. Horace is writing to his friends, whether old or young, who are well-versed in literature and so he can communicate “d’intelligence à intelligence,” as they will be able to identify and interpret his allusions. Therefore, the fables serve as a kind of code to veil his messages. They are primarily intended for a select audience of friends, and indeed many of his works with fable material are addressed specifically to Maecenas, but at the same time they are also accessible to a wider audience. He was aware that the fables in the *Satires* and the *Epistles* had an internal audience, an addressee and the intended reader of the published works. Horace, in his attempts at teaching his philosophy of living well, did not restrict his messages to the intellectual and literary élite, and he is clearly aware of his wider readership in *Epistle* 1.20. There is a kind of mocking, or playing a joke on the masses and the members of the undiscriminating élite with the many levels of interpretation. Horace assumes a fabulist *persona* in line with his fabular concerns with mental, as opposed to physical, slavery, his didactic role as a mediator who advocates moderation and simplicity, and his focus on the importance of communication in the patron-client relationship.

*The Satires*

Early Roman Satire made use of fable; however, the contexts of all such fable references are lost, and therefore one cannot make any meaningful conclusions about the place of fable in early satire. Ennius recounts *The Crested Lark*, but there are also other traces of fable material. Lucilius uses *The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints, The Stag, the Horse and the Man* and probably others. Horace is the most prodigious user of fables, and between the *Satires* and the *Epistles* he tells or alludes to fables twenty-one

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296 For the various levels of interpretation in Horace, see Bowditch 2001: 209-10.
298 Nadjo 2002: 141.
299 See especially *Satires* 1.17 and 1.18.
300 *The Crested Lark* is recounted by Gellius from Ennius (*Noctes Atticae* 2.29). For Ennius and fable, see Coffey 1976: 30-1.
301 For possible fables in Ennius and Lucilius, see Plessis and Lejay 1911: LXXIX-X.
times. Eight of these fables are found in the *Satires*.\textsuperscript{302} Much of the fable material in Horace is merely allusive, single lines that seem to have their origins in fable material but have become proverbial. This speaks to the ubiquitous nature of the fable during this period, and should remind the reader of the nature of the fable references in the plays of Aristophanes which assumed the audience’s knowledge of the genre. While in Aristophanes’ time there was no evidence of a written collection, by the Hellenistic period there are accounts of written collections gathered specifically as rhetorical material, common-places for the orator, and also the young student of rhetoric.\textsuperscript{303} Three fables are told at length in Horace’s *Satires* and these will be the focus of the first section of this chapter: *The Labouring Ant* (1.1.33-38), *The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow* (2.3.314-20), and *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* (2.6.79-117). These fables are linked in their concern with the dangers of excess and luxury. For a man to have true power, he must be able to control his own passions and vices.

The first satire is an examination of *avaritia*.\textsuperscript{304} Horace illustrates how slavery to greed leads to unhappiness in life by a series of *exempla* - from mythology, history and also a fable. *Satire* 1.1 is addressed to his patron Maecenas, and, in line with the fable tradition, it is common for his pieces containing fable material to be addressed to his élite friends. Horace’s style in this satire is playful, as he tells us: *ne sic ut qui iocularia ridens/ percurram: quamquam ridentem dicere verum / quid vetat?* (“I shall not run over these as he who runs through jests laughing: although what forbids someone to tell the truth while joking”) (23-25)? He strives to combine humour with truth, one of the main goals of the fable genre which makes it the perfect medium for Horace’s messages. All men say that they bear their labours and dangers so that, as old men, they might retire in safety, when they have piled up enough wealth (*Sat*.1.1.28-32). This pile becomes representative of the argument against servile greed throughout the *Satire*, and many words, either nouns or verbs, for heap and pile are repeated (32, 34, 44, 51, 52, 70). There is also a continued emphasis on *labor*, picked up in the fable (33-38).\textsuperscript{305} This fable begins

\textsuperscript{302} For a list of these fables, see the Appendix.

\textsuperscript{303} For Demetrius of Phalerum and the first written collections, see Chapter 1: 34.

\textsuperscript{304} This attack on *avaritia* is indebted to Lucilius, see Palmer 1899: 113.

\textsuperscript{305} See Fraenkel 1957: 91-92.
with the phrase *nam exemplo est*, calling attention to the exemplarity of fable. These miserly men follow the example of the little ant of great labour: the ant that drags with her mouth whatever she is able and adds to the heap which she has been piling, neither ignorant nor incautious of the future. Who, as soon as cold weather comes, no longer forages and wisely enjoys the things she has stored. Just so, in old age the miserly men will enjoy their wealth. Horace does not dispute *The Labouring Ant* that these men might hypothetically tell, but reminds them that the ant will cease to accumulate and will use her store in the winter, while these greedy men are only concerned with gain. He instead identifies his own moral: to accumulate wealth and not to enjoy it is not providence, but greed. In this comparison with the industrious ant Horace turns the inaccurate usage of this fable against the speaker, since the ant stops accumulating during the winter and uses her store but the miser never enjoys his hoard. But whether he takes from a large heap or a small one should make no difference to a man living *intra naturae finis* - within the limits of nature (50) - just like the little ant that accumulated only what she needed for the winter, unlike miserly men who hoard wealth.

The first satire serves as an introduction to the others, and is an ethical discourse, illustrated by many examples and sketches of human behaviour. In this satire, as frequently in other works, Horace connects the fable not with the literal slavery of the body, but rather with slavery to our own vices. While most men feel that status depends on wealth (*Sat. 1.1.61-3*), he reminds them that slavery is a state of mind. He compares these greedy men to actual slaves on more than one occasion (*Sat.1.1.47 and 96*). Despite his allegedly servile background, our fabulist leads a happy life because he is content with his own resources and position. Horace’s concern with moderation is especially prominent in this fable which stresses that one should naturally live within certain limits

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306 Plessis and Lejay 1911: 15 do not see an allusion to a fable but rather relate it to the *Georgics* of Virgil (1.186).
307 All nations used the sagacity of the ant (see *Proverbs* 6:6 and Villeneuve 1962: 32), and thus Bentley conjectures *sapiens* (line 38) for *pattiens*, also accepted by many scholars, as it accords well with the ant who is “*parca, frugalis, paucis contenta*,” Bentley 1826: 354-55.
308 Marchesi 2005: 310 n. 11 does not consider this a fable but rather a proverb, but she neglects the fact that many proverbs originated with fables. Contrary to what Holzberg 2002: 32 argues, there are fables in Horace before *Satire* 2.1.
309 It is interesting to note that in the other known versions of this fable the provident ant is usually contrasted with another animal, such as a beetle, which has not made provisions for the winter (see PA 112 and 373). But here, Horace omits this part of the story, which does not apply, since the miser has not only amassed what he needs but has gone beyond.
and not go beyond what is appropriate in either direction (106-107). Frequently, as an advisor, Horace will soften his message by associating himself with the humble, or by pointing out his own failings as exempla. Horace associates himself with the tiny, but provident ant, who in this fable traditionally gives another animal advice about how to provide for himself during the winter. As Warmuth rightly notes, Horace often chooses small and humble creatures to illustrate his life and ideas. This wise, yet humble, fabulist persona created by Horace in the first satire will continue throughout the rest of this work as part of his didactic programme, especially in works concerned with social and literary boundaries and the appearance of power. Many fables advocate accepting one’s present situation and not aspiring to more than nature allows. In my view, Horace takes this one step further and proposes that the key to living well is to be happy with what you have and happiness is true power. The simple moral philosophy which pervades fables captivated Socrates, no less than Horace, who finds in them the wisdom which society most needs, a comical zoomorphic mirror of its faults, which will, as Horace hopes, make men learn by laughing at their failings.

In the interim between Books One and Two, Horace’s situation had improved in Rome. He received his Sabine farm, and this change in condition is reflected in his increased geniality, playful mood, and good-natured humour. Book Two also contains fewer personal or individual attacks, and instead favours more moralizing with a touch of humour. Horace sets the scene of Satire 2.3 during the Saturnalia, which was a time when fools played the master’s part, and such temporary inversions are often found in fable literature. A bankrupt merchant Damasippus tries to convict Horace of insanity by discoursing on the theme that all men are mad, except the philosopher, according to the teachings of the Stoic preacher Stertinius. A long lecture follows with four main points corresponding to the four passions that trouble the human spirit most: avarice, 

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311 See Rudd 1966: 129.
312 Anderson 1982: 44.
313 Horace presents him as having been financially ruined and on the point of suicide. Stertinius met him on the Pons Fabricius and saved him by preaching the Stoic doctrine that all men, save the philosopher, are mad alike, and therefore, even though Damasippus’ misfortunes are ridiculous and his conduct foolish, all men are companions of his folly. Damasippus is also a character in Cicero’s Epistles, in which he appears as a clever middleman in the purchase of estates and works of art (Ad Atticum 12.29, 33 and Ad Familiares 7.23). See Wickham 1891: 131.
ambition, the desire for pleasure and superstition. Horace paints the picture of each of these with one or more stories of individuals either made up or taken from real life, or from the figures of Greek myth and legend. At Satire 2.3.183-184, the idea of strutting and being stripped recalls The Stripped Crow (PA 101), but as there is no clear animal allusion, whether Horace was alluding to fable cannot be ascertained. The reference to a fable is more concrete a few lines later: scilicet ut plausus quos fert Agrippa feras tu,/ astuta ingenuum volpes imitata leonem? (“of course so that you, the astute fox who imitated the trueborn lion, should get the applause which Agrippa had?”) (185-6). This reference has caused much speculation among commentators, who try in vain to find the source of the allusion. The meaning, if one does not consider a fable, seems to be that the shrewd fox that imitated the lion was stepping beyond his station, just as any man who tries to surpass the laudation given to Agrippa. Several commentators identify this as an allusion to The Fox in the Lion’s Skin.  

However, I agree with Wickham, Kiessling and Denis that there is no known fable that includes a fox in a lion’s pelt, and so, there is no known fable to which Horace is alluding. Although Denis does know of a fable where a wolf tries to pass himself off as a lion, he does not give a reference for this fable, although it is possibly The Fox, the Wolf and the Lions. There are many other versions of this fable in which an animal other than a fox puts on a skin, and therefore this allusion is commonly linked with the most famous of these: The Donkey in the Lion’s Skin. It is significant to note that there is no mention of skin in Horace’s version, which many translations inaccurately include, but rather only the idea of imitation. Although the fables are different, their morals are the same: men who attempt to imitate the great will fail, because they are acting contrary to their natures. The reality of power cannot be based on appearance alone.

The Fox Imitating the Lion has a very similar moral to The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow: one should not try to imitate the great, to act against the natural order. From Satire 2.3.307-323, Damasippus, at Horace’s request, points out the vices which comprise Horace’s insanity: building fine houses and attempting to imitate and surpass the great in

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314 Hayes and Plaistowe 1900: 134; Palmer 1899: 296.
315 Wickham 1891: 148; Kiessling 1921: 243; Denis 1883: 35.
316 Denis 1883:30.
317 For this fable, see Hayes and Plaistowe 1900: 139; Wickham 1891: 159; Haight 1940: 85.
other ways- like the little frog who burst while trying to equal the size of the calf- in writing poetry, in ill-temper, and in living beyond his means. With the little fable Damasippus accuses Horace of always trying to imitate Maecenas. This fable seems to have been common in the criticism of those attempting to aspire to higher positions than befit them and we might compare Martial’s description of a small man bursting while trying to imitate a great one: *Grandis ut exiguam bos ranam ruperat olim, sic puto, Torquatus rumpet Otacilium* (“As the large ox once burst the little frog, thus I think that Torquatus will burst Otacilius”) (10.79.9). But the fable of the puffing frog is also completely absurd in its allegation that Horace is trying to puff himself up to copy Maecenas. This fable is completely wrong, like many other arguments Horace has subverted throughout the *Satires*. In *Epistle* 1.20.24-5, Horace tells us about his faults: his small stature, prematurely gray hair, and his quick, but easily appeased, temper. Other faults are mentioned elsewhere such as his fondness for drinking, partying, eating, girls, etc., but he stresses everything in moderation. Considering this information we know that Damasippus is exaggerating, and therefore the fable turns its moral back towards its narrator. Damasippus, presuming to preach the precepts of Stertinius, is himself the little frog who will burst if he keeps trying to imitate the great preacher. He must mind the moral of his own fable: do not try to be what you are not. Horace knows it; Damasippus does not, as the next fable proves.

Damasippus, at the end of his argument about the madness of men, makes reference to *The Two Wallets:* 

*dixerit insanum qui me, totidem audiet atque/ respicere ignoto disce pendentia tergo* (“he who called me insane, will hear as much in his turn, and will learn to look at what hangs from the back he cannot survey”) (2.3.298-299). In this fable each person was given two sacks: the one with their vices is strung behind them so they cannot see it, but one with the faults of others is strung visibly in front. As a result we easily criticize others, but we cannot see our own faults. This little fable provides a fitting summary to the diatribe of Damasippus, and in essence overturns everything he has said. Damasippus becomes the proof of his own argument since he only sees the

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318 Horace may be glancing at *The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow* in *Epistle* 1.19.15-6, although it is difficult to argue with any certainty without any animal references.

319 Hayes and Plaistowe 1900: 138 and Palmer 1899: 310, both see Satire 2.3.299 as *The Two Wallets* also found in Phaedrus 4.10, Babrius 66, Persius 4.23, Catullus 22.21, Seneca *De Ira* 2.28.8 and Petronius 57.

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faults of others, but he is ignorant of his own. The proof of this is given by Horace who acknowledges his own foolishness, and has the last laugh by declaring Damasippus a greater fool. This satire demonstrates the power of fable in exposing discrepancies in power relations and the use of the genre as an advocate for maintaining and being happy with one’s place in the established social hierarchy. Horace emphasizes that, unlike the characters in the fables in Satire 2.3, who suffer punishments for attempting to emulate the great, he is wise enough to understand his place in society and within the patron-client relationship.

In Satire 2.5, Tiresias, in Roman fashion, instructs Ulysses about how to repair his fortunes in a work describing at length the arts and methodology of legacy hunting. Horace humorously shifts back and forth between the Greek and Roman world, while deprecating the Greek heroes by giving them contemporary Roman vices. Horace’s Tiresias lists a series of circumstances suitable for legacy hunting using animal images in keeping with the metaphorical use of hunting imagery for the tactics of the legacy hunter (10, 24-5, 40, 44, 83). At Satire 2.5.55-57, he alludes to The Noisy Crow: plerumque recoctus/ scriba ex quinqueviro corvum deludet hiantem/ captatorque dabit risus Nasica Corano (“very often the commissioner turned scribe will fool the gaping crow and the legacy hunter Nasica will make Coranus laugh”) (55-57). Fables are frequently stories about the clever creature fooling his quarry, and so the stereotypical sly fox of this fable, who used flattery to fool the crow into dropping his cheese, is a suitable part for Ulysses, the legacy hunter, to play. The man who plays the role of the crow is also important, as the fable’s epimythium tells us: the victim must be foolish enough to fall prey to the hunter’s trick. The clever repetition of the syllable ‘cor’ in both corvus and Coranus invites us to associate them with each other. This fable is representative of Tiresias’ entire

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320 For an analysis of the Roman and Greek interactions in this satire, see Villeneuve 1962: 181; Palmer 1899: 328; Ramage, Sigsbee and Fredericks 1974: 78-9; Rudd 1966: 224-229.
321 Porfyrio sees this as The Noisy Crow, as do Hayes and Plaistowe 1900: 147 and Wickham 1891: 174, but Kiessling 1921: 289 and Plessis and Lejay 1911: 502 do not agree. The bird that crows over his meal and thereby attracts other birds is sometimes cited as the origin of Horace’s allusion and is supported by the reference to The Noisy Crow in Epistle 1.17.50-51.
322 In the Ars Poetica he says plainly: numquam te fallent animi sub volpe latentes (“never let foxy souls, who flatter deceptively, trick you (437)”). See also Apuleius’ ‘false’ preface to De Deo Socratis, in which the crow was also calling out above his booty.
speech: one should use the subtle art of flattery and trickery to get what one wants from fools, just like the fox who tricked the crow into crying out, so that he dropped his cheese. Thus, one should not be a slave to pride like the foolish bird. Horace does, however, allude to this fable on two other occasions in Epistle 1.17. 50-1 and Ars Poetica 437. In Epistle 1.17, Horace is concerned with the patron-client relationship. Using flattery and false words for personal gain is a common tool of the sycophant, as Ulysses learned in Satire 2.5. And so Horace condemns such tricks as being inappropriate to the true patron-client relationship, which must be built on truth.

Horace begins Satire 2.6 with an invocation to Mercury: he asks for nothing more than that the gifts of his little plot of land should be lasting (Sat. 2.6.1-5). Unlike the greedy, he desires only what he has and promises not to increase or diminish the little farm. He then invokes Janus as matutinus pater, the father of the early morning’s business, to be the beginning of his song. Two-faced Janus is representative of the contrasts between city life and country life throughout the rest of the satire. While in Rome, Horace is plagued by early morning court cases amid foul weather and crowds, and a hundred people harass him on other business. After his six-year friendship with Maecenas (40), he discusses weighty matters such as the weather, secrets safe in his leaky ear (46). But everyone thinks he knows more, and they are annoyed when he pleads ignorance of affairs of state. While in town he longs for the countryside with its freedom and simple meals, far from the troubled city life (60-62). He longs for pleasant dinner parties with his guests who do not gossip, but who have rational conversations and talk about that which a man should know: whether wealth or virtue bring happiness to men, whether a useful or a good man makes a better friend, and the nature of good and the highest good (71-76). Such oppositions remind us of his concern with the contrast between town and country. Amid such company, if anyone praises the wealth of Arellius, ignorant of its troubles, his neighbour Cervius tells The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse (2.6. 79-117). This symposiastic setting is the perfect place for a didactic and

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323 See Plessis and Lejay 1911: 534, for a list of where this fable is found in many authors for comparison including Aesop, Babrius, Phaedrus, Ademar of Chabannes, Romulus, and La Fontaine. This fable is one of the “best-known and most-admired” pieces of Roman poetry (see Quintilian, Inst. Orat. 5.11.19-20 and Fraenkel 1963: 143).
critical fable about the dangers of slavery to wealth, and the importance of contentment in life.

Horace often selects meaningful names, and here Cervius, suggesting deer, is a suitable teller of animal fables. He represents the speaking animal of the fable who pronounces the *endomythium*, and his name is in keeping with Horace’s simple store of country and animal imagery. Horace describes old Cervius’ stories as *anilis fabellas* (2.6.77-78) which recognizes fable as a genre of the non-élite, here the old female slave in the term *anilis*, and yet the place of the fable as the embodiment of his message in this satire signals that there is no contempt implied by Horace. The most interesting use of *fabula* occurs in *Epistle* 1.13.9 in which Vinius Asina, whose cognomen calls to mind the ass of fable, will become a *fabula* if he breaks the poems Horace has entrusted to him to deliver to Maecenas. This episode has resonances with *The Donkey Who Carried the God* (PA 182), in which a donkey becomes so proud because of the load he is carrying that he almost breaks it. This epistle is once again about decorum, how one should approach and address a social superior and Horace is doing so through the figure of the lower-class messenger Vinius and the epistle itself. Horace rarely uses the terms *fabula*/*fabella* for his fables, and Marchesi argues that he frequently uses misnomers or refuses to name the fable to distance the genre from its servile past. This argument neglects the fact that in Greek and Roman terminology the fable had a myriad of names, and even in antiquity there was no consensus for a definition or indeed labelling of the genre. And so, such a variety of terms, not only as an element of style but of diverse terminology, is customary. As I contend, Horace is deliberately invoking an Aesopic *persona* as part of his role as social critic and thus he overtly embraces the othered associations of fable by declaring it an *anilis fabella*.

This poem falls into two balanced halves: part one tells of the busy and harassing city life; part two is a rustic treatment of the popular moral problem of blessedness in human life. This dilemma is explored through a *fabula* of a town mouse and a country mouse who, after two dinner parties, each find each other’s lifestyle unsuitable. The

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325 See Hayes and Plaistowe 1900: 152; Greenough 1902:141; Wickham 1891: 185.
326 Marchesi 2005: 316.
327 Horace’s use of *fabula* is consistent with Latin usage in which it can denote a myth (*Sat*.1.1.70, *Ep*. 1.2.6), a story (*Sat*. 1.1.95, *Sat*.2.5.61) or a play (*Sat*.1.2.21, *Ep*.2.1.80).
second half of the poem also contains this balance between town and country mice, who represent the contrast between Stoic frugality and Epicurean lavishness, as well as a contrast between moderation and avarice recalling Satire 1.1.\textsuperscript{328} In the chiasmus of the first line of the fable there is a visual contrast as rusticus urbanum and murem mus are placed beside each other, while the urbanum murem literally divides the poor mus rusticus who will soon learn that such pairings are contrary to nature. Fables are often found in Horace’s works dedicated to Maecenas, and this is fitting since such moral tales shaped his character and recommended him to Maecenas (Satire 1.6.70-8). Holzberg finds veiled criticism within this fable, as the mice represent Horace and his patron, Maecenas.\textsuperscript{329} Although the city mouse could represent Maecenas, one must remember that Horace’s own philosophical inclinations were eclectic and he also stresses the mortality of the soul and the shortness of life. He believed that one should live with all the blessings life offers, and enjoy it, remembering the brevity of time (Sat. 2.6.93-97). It is perhaps better to recognize the city mouse not just as an archetype, but even as another facet of Horace’s personality.\textsuperscript{330} Horace shows how social life in Rome conflicts with his wishes, and yet ambition and obligation bring him there. Horace is not completely immune from the vices that draw men into the city. For Horace, the fable shows how much a blessed life does not come from riches, but instead from independence.\textsuperscript{331} Ramage, Sigsbee and Fredericks feel that the balanced structure indicates that Horace has found a middle ground between his two lives: he resents the city but cannot find peace in the country alone and therefore he has found his own balance between the two.\textsuperscript{332} This duality recalls the idea of two faced Janus with which the poem opened, and Horace is a figure who was aware of his special status as a man in between in terms of his social status, political affiliations, and his own personal character and inclinations towards moderation. The dangers of the city afford Horace, like the mouse, the opportunity of appreciating what he has when he sees the dangers and hassles a city life would bring. The satirist longs for country contentment, but, as Horace often argues, it is not a change

\textsuperscript{328} See Haight 1940: 87.
\textsuperscript{329} Holzberg 1991: 229-239.
\textsuperscript{330} For this argument, see West 1974: 78.
\textsuperscript{331} Acro, Sermones 2.6.79: “Uult hoc loco ostendere beatam uitam non fieri diuitiis, sed autarcia.” (“He wants to show by this that a blessed life does not come from riches, but from independence.”)
\textsuperscript{332} Ramage, Sigsbee and Fredericks 1974: 81.
of scene that brings contentment, but a change in attitude (*caelum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt* (Ep. 1.11.27)). The poor city mouse is characterized by Horace as a slave to luxury and fashion as he serves his guest slavishly (*verniliter*) and acts as *praegustator* (*praelambens omne quod adfert*). This servility contrasts sharply with the country mouse as the *pater domus*, the master of his own house and life. For the country mouse luxuries and dangers do not bring happiness, but only servitude. It is security and friendship that make life worthwhile and allow a man to be free.

In the *Satires*, Horace proves that fable was one means of telling the truth with a smile. When Horace himself narrates the fable or allusion, apart from its immediate contextual purpose, the fable often represents the whole theme of his argument. When the fable is told through an internal narrator it is sometimes misused, and so Horace turns the fable against his opponent to prove his folly and assert his own moral power. Marchesi argues that, in the *Satires*, Horace distances himself by using ambiguous terminology for his fables and by telling them through an internal narrator. While it is true that Horace’s fables are often told by a secondary source, it is likewise true that Horace himself expresses many fables in his own voice, such as Marchesi’s example in *Satire* 1.6.22. His use of internal narrators for his fables must be seen as part of his dialogues, in which, rather than distancing himself from such fables, he often uses them as a major part of his argument by turning them against their speaker. Horace is aware of the somewhat stigmatized associations of fable with the Other; however, he is also conscious of the dual tradition of fable and its associations with élite communication. Horace often uses old men, lower-class or servile speakers to instruct his audience and thus he clearly shows his knowledge of the association of fable with the Other. In *Satire* 2.6, it is his old neighbour Cervius who uses the fable of the mice to lecture about the dangers of city life, similarly an old Tiresias lectures about legacy hunting through fable in *Satire* 2.5, while in *Satire* 1.1 miserly old men might tell the fable of the little ant. In *Satire* 2.3, the merchant Damasippus attempts to lecture Horace, and in *Satire* 2.3.185-6, a country father uses a foxy fable to warn his sons about the dangers of running to extremes. While *Satire* 2.7

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333 See Duff 1936: 64.
334 Marchesi 2005: 313.
contains no fable material, it is set during the Saturnalia, a time of free speech for slaves, and Horace’s slave lectures on the dangers of inconsistency and advocates the principle that only the wise are free. In this satire, Horace assumes the character of the lecturing slave and advocates the familiar idea that a man is not free who is a slave to his vices.

In *Satire* 1.1, Horace addressed his patron Maecenas and discussed the dangers of wealth and social and political ambition, and thus he used fable as one means of communication with the élite. In the fable tradition, the genre was used to teach the ruling classes how to rule others. Here Horace is concerned especially with teaching the political and intellectual élite how to rule themselves. Horace’s use of fable is of the Aesopic type, in that he often uses the fable for harsh criticisms of fools and their follies, while the genre is also used as a means of advising a social superior through *exempla*. West’s article discussing *Satire* 2.6 begins by asking whether Horace is very different from Aesop, but he fails to resolve this question thoroughly. Their genres, as I have argued, combine philosophy and satire and various types of *fabulae* as a means of exploring truths or realities about human nature. Horace’s *persona* and his philosophy are in line with the fabulist who teaches through humour, moderation, pretense and the forms of slavery. Freedom, in Horace’s view, is a state of mind. Horace’s freedman father is the reason he is dear to his friends (*Sat. 1.6.70-1*), he is responsible for teaching Horace his moral lessons, including his fables, reproaching him when necessary and never being ashamed of his son (84-87). And Horace says: *at hoc nunc/ laus illi debetur et a me gratia maior* (“for this he is owed praise and even greater thanks from me”) (88).

Horace is not ashamed of his heritage and he would never want to be anything other than what he is, since the most worthwhile things do not depend on birth. Maecenas knows this, and he values a man for a pure life and heart (*vita et pectore puro* (64)), as he considers what is underneath to be more important than the façade. The aristocrat’s son is servile, as he is a slave to ambition, but Horace, although the son of a freedman, is not (99-104).

336 Horace identifies *laus* and *gratia* as the honours due to his father, which were traditionally owed by the *cliens* to the *patronus*. In the new system, it was the Emperor Augustus and his associates, like Maecenas, who became the patrons of all Rome.
337 See Anderson 1982: 120.
The Epistles

The *Satires* and the *Epistles* are very similar in nature and in theme and thus the fable naturally makes the transition between these works.\(^{338}\) It is not surprising then that the *Epistles* also use fables to criticize and to teach about human vices and follies. In the *Epistles*, however, there is a change in tone. These letters are relaxed reflections on living, and Horace no longer feels the need to defend himself as forcefully against his detractors. Instead of simply pointing out human faults, his letters genuinely offer advice in simple philosophical terms about how to overcome these troubles and to live well. His writings show that he was aware of many philosophies, but that he preferred to be eclectic (*Ep.* 1.1.13-15), and that he was influenced by the practical thinking of Hellenistic philosophers.\(^{339}\) Almost ten years had passed between the *Satires* and the *Epistles*, and so the epistolary form belonged to a different phase in his intellectual development, his social relations, literary position, habits, and temper. For Horace at this time *non eadem est aetas, non mens* (“his age is not the same, nor his mind”) (*Ep.* 1.1.4). He believes deeply in moderation; *nil admirari* (*Ep.*1.6.1) and *vivere naturae convenienter oportet* (*Ep.*1.10.12) are his philosophical maxims. Horace is not perfect, and instead of preaching, as he had sometimes done in the *Satires*, he often connects with the world he is criticizing by looking at his own shortcomings (*Ep.*1.5.14-15, 1.8.3-12, 1.20.25). Horace plays the role of the wise old beast whose animal stories guide readers in their quest not simply to rule men, but rather to rule themselves wisely. Book One of the *Epistles* contains nine main fables of varying lengths, some of which are reprised from the *Satires*.\(^{340}\) In the *Satires*, fables are often told through an internal narrator and are used by Horace to disprove that speaker’s argument, but in the *Epistles* the author is now directly responsible for employing fables and zoomorphic language. Thus, Horace’s *persona* is in part constructed by his fable *exempla* that distinguish him as an Aesopic teacher.

\(^{338}\) Horace also calls the *Epistles* ‘sermones’ (*Epistles* 2.1.4 and 2.1.250), which shows how closely the two genres, and consequently their stylistic elements, were joined in his mind.

\(^{339}\) See Hayes and Plaistowe 1900: 12-13; Dilke 1966: 24-26; Ramage, Sigsbee and Fredericks 1974: 34; Duff 1936: 78, for a synopsis of his philosophies.

\(^{340}\) For a list of these fables, see the Appendix. Nadjo 2002: 135-148 identifies only eight passages that evoke fables. Marchesi (2005: 319-321) sees two more fables in *Epistles* 1.13 and 1.18.
In *Epistle* 1.1, which is addressed to Maecenas, Horace uses a fable to teach about the dangers of servile imitation and applies its moral directly to himself. This poem begins with servile imagery in the retired gladiator and the old racehorse, as Warmuth rightly points out, which introduces the theme of servility to vices. But *Epistle* 1.1 is also about the study of philosophy (Ep. 1.1.10-12). Horace declares his return, in his search for wisdom, to the philosophical books and the Homeric poems that he studied in his youth. He remarks on the vices of Roman society, and at lines 70-2 he has the people ask him why he does not share in their opinions, and why he does not love or hate as they do. His response is a fable. In *The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints* (Ep. 1.1.73-75), Horace is the *uolpes cauta*, the cautious fox, who tells the ‘sick’ lion why he does not follow the servile herd into the lion’s den: ‘*Quia me uestigia terrent,/ omnia te aduersum spectantia, nulla retrorsum*’ (“because the footprints frighten me, which all point towards you, but none return again”). The moral is that a man who gives up his own judgments and adopts the popular views surrenders his independence beyond recovery. Horace, like the cautious fox, refuses to simply follow the herd to its destruction; his life must be lived as he sees fit. Similarly, his work is not emulation but rather innovation, as he states in *Epistle* 1.19.21-22, using imagery similar to this fable: *libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps,/ non aliena meo pressi pede* (“I was the first to place free footprints through the empty space, I did not follow the paths of others with my foot”). In *The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints*, Horace takes responsibility for the fable as narrator, and represents himself as a character, the sly fox, in the fable. The fable of the footprints serves as his predominant argument as it refers to all those who blindly follow the herd in their vices: they are slaves regardless of their social position. But Horace is not without faults and he uses them to mitigate the critical tone (94-108). Here the fable conveyed directly by Horace’s authorial *persona* is key to the first poem in the collection and vividly reintroduces the theme of slavery to vice with which he opened his first satire with *The Labouring Ant*.

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343 See Morris 1911: 16.
345 Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 5.11.20) cites Horace’s version as an example of the poetic use of fable.
In *Epistle* 1.3, Horace tells Julius Florus, a young literary friend of Tiberius, to leave some of his ambitions and turn to philosophy. Horace asks about the literary pursuits of Florus’ friends, and specifically about Celsus whom he criticizes through the Aesopic fable of *The Stripped Crow*, in which the crow was stripped of the feathers he had stolen from other birds and claimed as his own. The animal imagery from the fable is picked up in the rest of the epistle as Horace compares Florus to a bee flying around various fields in his literary pursuits (20-1), while in his conflict with a friend he is hot-blooded like an untamed steed (34).\(^{346}\) Such similes are meant to remind the reader or addressee that they should be above the foolish behaviour of animals, like the crow in the fable. In this fable, it is likely that Horace was following Philodemus who also employed this fable of the crow’s stolen feathers which was commonly used as a metaphor for those who show no originality in their artistic productions.\(^{347}\) The word *cornicula* is unique to Horace, and although some commentaries feel that it implies contempt,\(^{348}\) it has an undertone of joking rather than of serious derision. As Porfyrio tells us, Celsus was accustomed to pillage the material of the library of Apollo and claim it as his own. He is warned that he should not claim the verses of others, lest they should return to reclaim them and he should suffer mockery for his presumption.\(^{349}\) Horace tells Celsus not just to translate his Greek sources but also to add the originality necessary for great literature.\(^{350}\) Horace, in a friendly tone, is urging originality as opposed to servility in his literary pursuits.\(^{351}\) Horace himself in his *Odes* professes to have used Greek models, adapting their meters and spirit to his own themes, while at the same time avoiding any type of servile imitation (*Ep*.1.19). In the tradition of fable literature, we are warned against the dangers of pretense and attempting to cross boundaries.

*The Fox in the Grain Bin* (*Ep*. 1.7. 29-34), in line with Horace’s *modus operandi*, deals with questions of slavery and hierarchy, this time the idea of personal independence, decorum and respect within the patron-client relationship. Horace tells the

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\(^{346}\) Horace likes to reflect on human behaviour through an animal mirror and, in *Epistle* 1.4, he styles himself a hog from Epicurus’ herd (*Epicuri de grege porcum* (*Ep*.1.4.16)).

\(^{347}\) See Armstrong et als. 2004: 282.

\(^{348}\) See Morris 1911: 39; Shuckburgh 1956: 63.

\(^{349}\) See Porfyrio, *Epistle* 1.3.15.

\(^{350}\) Courbaud 1914: 236-7.

\(^{351}\) See Holzberg 2002: 33.
following fable, which is addressed, along with the rest of the epistle, to his patron Maecenas:

Forte per angustam tenuis volpecula rimam
repserat in cumeram frumenti, pastaque rursus
ire foras pleno tendebat corpore frustra;
cui mustela procul: ‘Si vis’ ait ‘effugere istinc,
macra cavum repetes artum, quem macra subisti.’ (Epistle 1.7.29-33).

By chance a thin little red fox had crept into a bin of grain,
Through a narrow crack, and once she had fed,
Although in vain, she was striving to get out again
With her full body; to whom the weasel said at a distance:
“If you wish to escape from there, only thin will you exit
Through the narrow hole, which you entered thin.”

This fable fits well with the preceding rustic anecdote of the Calabrian farmer (1.7.14-19) and continues the themes of giving and receiving, as well as the theme of moderation in life. These themes will be picked up again by the story of Telemachus and Menelaus’ gift of a horse and chariot unsuited to Ithaca’s landscape (1.7.40-43). Moderation is closely linked to giving, as the giver, the recipient and the gift must all be appropriate. Most of the epistle, ending in the story of Philippus and Volteius Mena (1.7. 46-95), explores giving through a number of exemplary tales. Horace carefully interrelates these stories, each to give the other meaning and to develop his argument. The fable, myth and story all have a similar moral: be happy with your lot and take only what is suited to you. But they all tell it a little differently: for the fox there is a question of freedom involved and she is responsible for her own imprisonment; for Telemachus a modest life suits a modest man and so he must return Menelaus’ inappropriate gifts; and the story of Philippus that advises men to remain in their current social condition. They are also linked by advocating moderation, and taking only what is suitable to a man’s condition and temper. Horace uses these stories and their interrelationships as exempla of why moderation and appropriateness are keys to living well.

352 For the story of Telemachus’ refusal of Menelaus’ gift, see Odyssey 4. 589-620.
354 Courbaud 1914: 293-4.
The Fox in the Grain Bin (Ep. 1.7.29-34) has been censured in the past for being inaccurate. There is a conjecture that volpecula should be nitedula, a field-mouse, as a fox does not eat grain and could not get into a bin by an angusta rima. Dilke argues that “(a) the corruption is unlikely; (b) animals in fables do not always play realistic parts; (c) in India foxes do eat corn, and in any case a fox might be hunting for a mouse… St. Jerome had known a version of this fable in which a mouse plays the principal part, while in other versions it is a fox but not a corn-bin; and Horace seems to have conflated these two.” While Horace is the only source who includes a fox slipping into a grain bin, such inconsistencies are found among many fabulists, and they are often a reflection of the author’s changes to a fable to suit his own purposes. These fables are not meant to be true in every detail, but rather to contain truth about human behaviour. It must be noted that in this fable Horace does not say specifically that the fox ate grain, only that she fed inside the grain bin, and, as Dilke suggested above, she could have been eating mice. Even if Horace does make the fox eat grain, perhaps he is not confusing two different versions, but rather has another purpose which has not previously been discussed. The main argument of this epistle is that everyone should live in accordance with their own natures. If the little fox ate too much grain, she not only disregarded the rules of moderation, but she also ate grain, which was outside her nature. She became trapped by her own greed and unnatural desire. Horace does not intend to make the same mistake and become trapped in obligations to those above him created by his own excess. Horace is especially fond of the character of the fox, the often clever advisor to the regal lion, but just like Horace, the fox in this fable also has some small vices that might sometimes get the better of him.

Horace uses this fable diplomatically as part of the recusatio as he threatens to give back everything if pressed by obligation to his patron (Ep.1.7.34). Horace criticizes and warns himself not to be immoderate. His relationship with Maecenas allows Horace the freedom of an appropriate refusal. This refusal is tactful as he reminds his patron of his own present and potential failings through a fable. The poet makes sure he is firm

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355 Bentley 1826: 31-34.
356 Dilke 1966: 100. See also Schuckburg 1956: 78 and Wilkins 1964: 140. See Jerome’s Letter to Salvina (Wright) for his reference to this fable of Aesop.
357 For discussions, see Morris 1911: 59; Wickham 1891: 250; Villeneuve 1966: 69.
without rudeness, and frequently hides his firmness under a light and charming veil of fable or tale. Kilpatrick rightly summarizes the goal of both the fable and the epistle as a tactful background to a hierarchical relationship in which the poet can ask and the patron may grant reasonable requests. It is important to note that most of his fables, like that in Epistle 1.7, appear in letters to his potentes amici or to his older friends. Horace does not see fable as a genre solely associated with the rustic or uneducated, but rather many of his fables are directed specifically at the élite, with Horace assuming the guise of fabulist. He is certainly conscious that he does represent a kind of otherness, and he occupies a difficult social position which he must defend in the Satires. In the Epistles, however, with time he has become comfortable with his position in Rome, and his concern has shifted to his place within his own life.

In Satire 2.6, Horace used the rustic fable as one means of advocating the happiness of the country life. In Epistles 1.10 and 1.14, Horace reprises the use of fable in similar discussions of the contrasts between the vices of the city and the happiness of moderation found in old country life and values. In Epistle 1.10, Horace uses a fable to consider the dangers of greed, and he also reprises the old argument of whether the city or the country brings greater happiness to men. The letter is addressed to his old friend Aristius Fuscus; from the lover of the countryside to the lover of town, this is an old dispute between them, and indeed in Horace’s works. Horace stresses the dangers of luxury, and advocates rather that it is the spirit that must remain free, for it is possible under a poor roof to surpass the lifestyles of kings and their courts (Ep. 1.10. 32-33). Horace then uses The Horse and Stag (Ep. 1.10.34-38) to show the moral dangers inherent in luxury. This fable epitomizes the familiar message: do not try to change your condition, make yourself happy with what you have, because in trying to change your

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359 The are two exceptions: Epistle 1.14 to his steward which he certainly renders concise and Epistle 1.20 to his book, directed towards all his readers
360 For the prominence of this fable in the collections, see the Appendix. This fable is found in Aristotle and is used to illustrate the term λόγος (Rhet. 2.20.5). The same fable occurs in Phaedrus 4.4, but a boar muddying the stream at which a horse drinks takes the place of the stag. See Shuckburgh 1956: 88; Dilke 1966: 109. See also Adamik 1982: 54, who goes into great detail about the later variations of this story, some of which are very similar to Horace.
condition you will become a slave to desire as the horse who, in seeking revenge against an enemy, became the slave of man. The lesson of this epistle is to live in conformity with nature (see also Ep. 1.10.12). Horace decides that each must suit his own life and needs, thus they should both be content: *laetus sorte tua vives sapienter* (“if you are happy in your lot you will live wisely”) (Ep. 1.10.44).

Horace writes *Epistle* 1.14 to the steward of his farm, who longs for the city, while Horace, stuck in the city, longs for the countryside (Ep. 1.14.10-13). The possible allusion to a fable in Horace’s story of *The Horse and the Ox (The Donkey and the Horse)* summarizes *Epistle* 1.14 and also mirrors the contrast between the desire for what one has and what one wants, which permeates the epistle. Wickham describes this as one of Horace’s compressed fables, and Kilpatrick agrees that the likely source is a fable. The Greek proverb ‘from horses to donkeys’ was commonly used to show the consequences of reversals of fortune and advocates that one should be content with one’s lot in life (Plutarch, *De Tranquillitate Animi* 13). One possible source of this allusion is the Aesopic *Horse and the Donkey* in which the ass longs for the saddle and with it the prestige of the horse’s office. Later, when the ass sees how the horse has been wounded in battle, and now reduced to farming, he is glad they did not trade places. Horace may not be alluding to this particular fable but rather to a literary source, since in the fable the horse does not long for the plough, and the donkey has been replaced by an ox. It is also possible that this alludes to a lost fable. Although they may differ, their messages are the same: be careful what you wish for, because you might not like what you get. Horace applies this metaphor directly to the country and the city slave, although there is clear reference to himself and his steward as well. This concluding fable represents Horace’s familiar maxim, which is also a fabular moral: let each man live in accordance with his own nature.

*Epistle* 1.20 is the epilogue to the collection and gives a brief biography of Horace: his birth and origins, his rise in life, his appearance, his character and his age.

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362 See Courbaud 1914: 123.
363 Wickham 1891: 281.
364 Kilpatrick 1986: 89-93.
The imagery of this epistle closely resembles that of Epistle 1.1, as Horace piles up metaphors to describe the fate of his book as it goes out into the world, from its youthful beauty in the bookseller’s shop, until the mob tires of it, like a sated lover. When youth is gone the book will no longer be dear to Rome but will become dirty, eaten by worms, and in its old age it will be sent into the colonies as a school text. Horace presents the book as a slave boy eager to live a public life until he is used up and soiled by groping hands. In the next line, the book becomes the servile ass of fable in The Man and his Donkey (Ep. 1.20. 14-16). The little book wants to go out into the world, and Horace, the unheeded advisor, will laugh just like the man who pushed forward the disobedient ass into the rocks. The ass simply refuses to obey, preferring to fall to his death. The lesson is simple and Horace the fabulist concludes the little tale with his own moral: quis enim invitum servare laboret? (“Who would labour to save the unwilling?”) (1.20.16). Most commentaries recognize the association with The Man and the Donkey. In the known version of this fable, the driver tried to prevent the donkey from going over the cliff; but in Horace, the driver, after trying in vain to pull the donkey back, gives him a little push telling him go to his destruction, since he was determined to go. Horace himself is the exasperated driver in the fable and thus he has characteristically shifted the focus of the moral. As Marchesi points out, Horace inverts the sense of the fable, by applying it also to the contentious driver, not just to the ass that declines salvation. His book refuses to be saved and so Horace, angrily, gives it a little push out into the world. Such an action may seem uncharacteristic of Horace, but he tells the reader only a few lines later that he is quick to anger: irasci celerem (25). The fable reveals a duality in Horace’s personality we have encountered throughout the Satires and Epistles. Like the book, Horace is not perfect, and he finds himself drawn towards both “elitism and popularization” in his life and literary productions. The fable is a suitable form to close his collection, as it is a reflection of his goals in the Epistles: to teach philosophy simply and with humour. By making himself a character within the fable, he shows that he knows how to laugh at himself. In this way, he constructs his persona in the Epistles not as the haughty preacher,

366 See West 1967: 19. For the importance of the cliff to the Aesopic tradition, see Chapter 2: 55, 70, 77, 79, 83.
367 Marchesi 2005: 322.
but rather as the fellow sinner stumbling blindly on the road to amendment. Horace has not reached perfection, but he has more authority than most, and he is willing to share his knowledge.

Horace knows his fables well, especially the moral of _The Lion and the Mouse_ (PA 150). He understands that a fable, although as small as a mouse, has the power to free even the great lion by chewing through complicated arguments and presenting simple, though sometimes biting, truths. While some of his fables are voiced by characters within the _Satires_ and the _Epistles_, they are ultimately the product of Horace as author. Horace uses the fable and its contradictory associations as a means of constructing his _persona_ within these two works. He plays many roles associated with fable including the moral philosopher, the satirist and social critic, the teacher and wise old advisor. Fables are particularly suited to Horace, as he does not acknowledge adherence to any one philosophical school (_nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri_ (Ep. 1.1.13-15)), but rather draws his _exempla_ from many quarters. In the _Satires_ and _Epistles_, Horace consciously presents himself as an Aesopic figure on a variety of levels. He employed the fable as one means of both communicating with and of advising the élite Maecenas and the literati, while at the same time constructing himself as the fabulist, the son of a ‘freedman’, who has no intentions of attempting to rise beyond his comfortable station. In preaching moderation and avoidance of riches and hubris, he constructs a character for himself in the _Satires_ and _Epistles_ who is both humble and wise, one who will never leave his position in between and attempt to rise above his station. From his comfortable position as fabulist, or clever fox, he is able to criticise society and his superiors through humour, sometimes self-deprecating, in an attempt to better society and himself. It is his clever Aesopic _persona_ that serves as one means for him to achieve his didactic aims by combining pleasure with wisdom. Horace uses fables not only to entertain and amuse his readers with clever allusions and memorable stories, but also to bring his message forcefully to the reader’s attention by the juxtaposition of a simple moral fable with more complex philosophical ideas and _exempla_. Horace might have viewed the fable as an analogy for his own character and position as a genre at once othered and élite, and concerned both with slavery to vices and the instruction of an élite
audience. As a genre associated with both the slave and the education of the élite, Horace could present himself as the humble fabulist while at the same time he could communicate on an equal level with his upper-class reader schooled in the rhetorical exempla of fable. Horace moves the fable beyond a means of teaching the élite how to rule others, but rather stresses that they must rule their own passions. Ultimately, he uses this somewhat servile persona to teach his élite reader that true power comes not from riches or legal freedom, but rather it is the man who can control his own passions and vices who is truly free and powerful. Despite his connection with the first fabulist, Horace is never in any danger of suffering the Aesopic fate, despite the fact that he is a figure both admired and envied, because he uses fable as one means to remind his readers that he suffers from the same follies as foolish animals and thus their human counterparts. He is empowered by the problematic associations of the genre with the Other as this othered status allows him a greater freedom of expression not permitted to the élite insider.  

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369 For Horace’s discussions of his own social status and the jealousy of some of his critics, see Satires 1.6.70-76, 1.4.103-129, 2.6.40-60.
Chapter 5.
Plutarch’s Moral Fables

There are fable footprints in Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* and *Moralia*, a fact which reflects the highly rhetorical nature of his education and works as well as the philosophical and didactic tradition in which he was writing. His fable *exempla* have been largely ignored, although he is nearly on par with Horace and Aristophanes in terms of the quantity of fable material present in his works. No author has attempted any extended discussion of Plutarch and his use of fables, and yet a strong case can be made that, like Horace, Plutarch reveals through his fables an attempt to mediate his place in society and literature by using the genre of the fable. Unlike Horace, however, Plutarch was writing in the late 1st century CE from the perspective of an upper-class Greek. Plutarch almost completely ignores any sense of the fable as a means of criticism or revolt by the lower classes, and seeks an overt re-appropriation of the genre, and its fabulists, by the élite as one means of constructing his ideal moral and socio-political world. Plutarch’s goal in his literary works, like that of fable literature, is to provide moral advice about living well. His fables display a familiar duality in their roles as a means of educating and addressing women and children, while at the same time they are also a method of teaching upper-class males how to behave properly in society and how to rule others and themselves. He thus looks to the past, and to several Greek authors who employ the fable, re-appropriating the genre which, while taking on the guise of speaking for the Other, remained a means of expression and self-definition for the élite. Plutarch uses fable as a means of discussing and reconciling the relationship between high and low, ruler and subject, past and present.

*Fable in 1st–2nd Century CE Philosophy*

Authors in the 1st–2nd century Greek world were writing in the tradition of the Second Sophistic, a looking back to the literature of the Classical Greek past with an emphasis on rhetoric. This movement was based primarily on gender, culture and
class. The display of oratory was central to élite Greek male culture during this period, as epideictic speeches, aimed at the pleasure, admiration and respect of the audience, were important gauges of power for the educated aristocratic Greek male. There was a distinct concern with ancient Greek models and exempla and frequently this involved the appropriation of the voices of figures from the historical and mythological past. This period is often viewed as a reaction by Greek culture to Roman rule, in which Greek authors revisit politically important historical events and figures as a means of creating power and authority through literary and cultural productions, as opposed to the true political power which at its highest levels was in Roman hands. While this might be an overstatement, there was, if nothing else, a consciousness that the Greeks were in some sense alienated from their past which became idealized in writers of the Second Sophistic and this past was used as a model for contemporary society. The past is employed as a didactic tool for the present as it often teaches how one should live and rule in contemporary society through the artificial, almost alien, mirror of the past. There is a similar methodology in the deployment of fable that uses the mirror of the animal to communicate behavioural expectations.

In the 1st-2nd century, philosophical works also showed a renewed interest in using the moral philosophical fable as an exemplum. This is exemplified by the philosophers Dio Chrysostom and Maximus of Tyre as well as by Plutarch who was writing in the same philosophical tradition looking back to figures like Socrates and Plato, as well as to Aesop. The philosophical and didactic fables in these authors of the 1st-2nd century were employed to articulate thoughts about the disparity that exists between the ideals of the past and the present. This emphasis on the philosophical moral fable was also particularly evident in Plutarch. During the 1st-2nd centuries CE, there was a resurrection of the moral philosophical fable as an exemplum for how to live a successful life. This marked emphasis on discussions of practical morality, rather than abstract and theoretical philosophical discussions, was naturally drawn to the pre-existing corpus of fable material. Despite its deployment in what might be called upper-class

371 For this theory, see Vasunia 2003: 371-390.
372 For fables in Dio Chrysostom and Maximus of Tyre, see the Appendix.
philosophy and rhetoric in an author like Plutarch, the fable still maintained its associations with the Other, although this Other was invariably a construction of élite voices. In putting forth an agenda similar to Livy’s, Plutarch attempted to use ancient wisdom and exempla as a means of instructing his own age. He was especially concerned, like Horace, with addressing his intellectual peers, the highly educated élite members of the Greco-Roman world who held important political and social positions. Plutarch was thus primarily concerned with the fable as a discourse of power, as a means of using the Other to reinforce his conservative views about the world.

Plutarch: Philosopher and Fabulist

Plutarch was born ca. 46 CE in the town of Chaeronea in Boeotia to a prominent and wealthy family, a fact which allowed for a traditional Greek education for the scholar, teacher, historian, biographer, essayist and Platonist. He studied at the Academy in Athens under Ammonius, an Egyptian (Demosthenes 2), he had a number of influential senatorial friends, he was widely travelled and became a priest of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi and he was active in local political matters. As a Roman citizen and a prominent intellectual figure, he seems to have had ties to élite intellectual and political circles judging by the dedications of his works to proconsuls and governors. His two bodies of work as they are preserved today, the Parallel Lives and the Moralia, are closely connected by his love of moral philosophy and combine a variety of genres including biography, letters, lectures and dialogues. He advocated common morality, the principle of humanity and healing one’s soul by curing vices. He also had a strong belief in the power of Rome to direct Greek political life. There was a concern, especially in the Lives, with showing the likeness between Greek and Roman heroes of the past. This

373 See Russell 1993: xv.
374 For an in depth discussion of the Platonism of Plutarch, including his role as a Platonic interpreter and the parallels between Plutarch and Plato, see Jones 1980.
376 The Parallel Lives are dedicated to Q. Sosius Senecio who was twice consul under Trajan. See Jones 1971: 39-47.
377 See Jones 1971: 88-102, for Plutarch’s moral and didactic goals in the Parallel Lives as well as theories concerning the reasons for comparisons between Greek and Roman figures.
comparison rested primarily on moral responses and qualities which were the same in each man and that must be censured or lauded in ordinary social and political life. In his biographies, he is concerned with moral characters that can sometimes become stereotypical, like the figures we find in fable literature. Running throughout his works is the concern with how to rule in various spheres, especially how one should rule oneself, but also important was how a political leader should govern those subject to him. An élite male leader must be careful not to be ruled by the common mob nor by his own desires for prestige or power.

Fables in the Parallel Lives

The fable, as a vehicle of politics and power, is already familiar to us from Livy. In Plutarch’s Parallel Lives, fable is also the tool of the political speaker; however, these speakers have some connection with the lower classes, or rose to power by means of popular support. Most of these individuals who employ fable are from the remote past, at least in the view of Plutarch who was writing about figures from Classical and Hellenistic Greek history, as well as about figures from the Roman Republican and early Imperial periods. During these periods, as discussed at length in Chapter 1, the fable was commonly a part of political writing, social criticism, philosophy and historiography. While it is possible that these historical figures employed the fable, which served as a common store of exempla, whether there is any historicity to their deployment is uncertain. I suspect that, as discussed in Livy, these fables are later rhetorical additions. Plutarch’s inclination towards the genre is strong evidence that he is responsible for some of the attributions of fable to these historical figures. Ultimately, to a certain extent, we must remember that these texts and their speakers are constructs of Plutarch. In De Herodoti Malignitate 40, Plutarch compares the way that Aesop has ravens and apes speak his fictions to Herodotus’ use of Scythians, Persians, Egyptians, and finally the Pythian god as his mouthpieces for the sayings that he invents himself (οὐκέτι Σκύθαις

378 “In philosophy Plutarch does not go very far below the surface. He is, however, deeply concerned with the application of philosophy to the concrete problems of daily conduct (φιλοσοφία βίου κυβερνήτης),” (Babbitt 1949: xiv) a concern which is of course familiar from the fable genre.

οὐδὲ Πέρσαις οὐδ᾽ Ἀἰγυπτίοις τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ λόγους ἀνατίθησι πλάτων, ὥσπερ Αἴσωπος κόραξι καὶ πιθήκοις, ἀλλὰ τῷ τοῦ Πυθίου προσώπῳ χρώμενος, ἀπωθεῖ τῶν ἐν Σαλαμίνι πρωτείων τὰς Ἀθήνας). Despite the criticism that Herodotus usurps the voices of others to express his views, Plutarch similarly assumes the voices of others as a means of expressing his moral philosophy, including the voice of the figure of Aesop in the Convidium Septem Sapientium. In the Lives, we are presented with Plutarch’s characteristic moral biography, and perhaps this is a good time to call to mind the biographical nature of the Life of Aesop and its use of the fable as an expression of the conflicts and realities of power relations within a highly stratified Greek world. In the Life, Aesop advises both the Samians (94, 97) and Croesus (99) about how to rule through a series of fable exempla. Many fables are about how to rule and how to be ruled and we find this preoccupation in Plutarch’s biographies that present fable material.

Themistocles rose to power in the late 6th to early 5th century BCE in Athens with popular support (Themistocles 5.4), although he remained at odds with the nobility. Plutarch reports that he was not from a conspicuous family and that his mother was either Thracian or Carian (1). According to Plutarch, he also increased the power of the common people through his naval programme (19.4). He is described as well schooled in rhetoric and philosophy (a type of education not available during this period, and evidence of the influence of later traditions, including Plutarch’s own biases), and he even received a reward for his wisdom as a leader (17.1). Plutarch emphasizes the cleverness and trickery of Themistocles in several episodes (10.4, 11.1, 12.3-7, 15.2, 19.1) and Timocreon even accuses him of being foxy (ἀλώπεκες) (21.5), which is reminiscent of the clever fox of fable, although this is not necessarily a fable allusion. There are several aspects of Themistocles’ biography that fit in with the traditional story of the Aesopic or fabulist figure: according to Plutarch (and also contemporary political slander), Themistocles has a low and foreign background, he participates in popular wisdom and philosophy, he is a trickster figure, he is accused of hubris and treachery because of the evidence of a letter (22ff.), he becomes an advisor to an Eastern monarch but must endure the jealousy of other members of the court and in the end he commits

380 See also Chapter 1: 21, for Plutarch’s possible characterization of Herodotus as an Aesopic figure.  
381 See Chapter 2.
suicide (28). In Plutarch, *Themistocles* 18.6, in order to express the lack of gratitude shown to him by the Athenians, the great general Themistocles compares himself to a plane tree whose good services were not appreciated. When a storm threatened, the people would shelter under his branches, but when the weather was fair they would strip his foliage at their own discretion. While this is arguably just a comparison in Plutarch’s account, in the fable collections the tree actually speaks to those who shelter under it but who are ungrateful afterwards because they feel it is a rather useless tree (PA 175). Such a fable recalls the response of Cyrus to the coastal Greeks in Herodotus, or the biblical fables used as political messages, in which a leader employs the genre to articulate his place in the world. However in this case, Themistocles is assuming the role of the disenfranchised figure who suffers unjustly at the hands of the masses. This fable is consistent with Plutarch’s own views of the problem of inconsistency in democratic government, and thus we find Plutarch adapting the fable and an early Greek political leader as a means of expressing his own views about power. Themistocles’ supposedly humble origins mark him out as a type of marginal figure, and yet as a political leader he is élite. He is a figure of dualities, who employs the genre of fable to express his position within the political hierarchy. This fable is employed by Plutarch to criticise those men who themselves become slaves to the masses as popular politicians. Plutarch as narrator is especially concerned with how a leader should rule, and this idea will be picked up in each of the instances of fable in the *Parallel Lives*.

Plutarch notes that Demosthenes was also from humble and obscure beginnings, orphaned and poor, but he became a distinguished figure through his intellect and oratorical skill (3). In *Demosthenes* 23.4-6, Alexander demanded that the Athenians surrender ten of their popular leaders, including Demosthenes who tells the Athenians the *logos* of how the sheep surrendered their dogs to the wolves. Plutarch does not have Demosthenes tell the fable in full, but he merely alludes to it. He compares himself and his fellow orators to dogs fighting in defence of the people, and labels Alexander the Macedonian arch-wolf. This same fable was also told by Aesop in the *Life of Aesop* to

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382 For the fable used by Herodotus and Biblical sources, see Chapter 1: 15-22.
383 This is part of the account of Aristobulus of Cassandreia, according to Plutarch (*Demosthenes* 23), and thus one of the only instances where we have a source that might make this fable contemporary with the incident and not a later addition by another writer or by Plutarch himself.
convince the Samians not to hand him over to Croesus (97). This is a direct and deliberate appropriation and fashioning of an Aesopic type figure, an evocation of the fabulist in a familiar scenario. Plutarch specifically presents Demosthenes as marginal as he shares other Aesopic traits including a humble background, difficulty speaking in his early years, the fact that he faced ridicule for the abnormal nature of his body and came into conflict with cities and kings (3). In his presentation of the people as sheep, we find a familiar upper-class view frequently expressed in Plutarch, that the people are a foolish mob that needs to be led. Once again, the fable becomes part of a political speech by a popular figure in order to instruct his audience about the important role of the ruler in society.

Lysander, the Spartan general, when he was accused of being unscrupulous and subtle by those who loved honesty and simplicity in their leaders, ridiculed those who demanded that the descendants of Heracles not wage war by deceit by saying “where the lion’s skin will not reach, it must be patched with the fox’s” (ὁποῦ γὰρ ἡ λεοντῆ μὴ ἔφικνεῖται, προσραπτέον ἐκεῖ τὴν ἀλωπεκῆ (7)). Although there is no attested fable about a fox’s skin, this saying conforms to the fabular presentations of noble lions and clever foxes and reminds us of Timoecreon’s statements about the foxy nature of Themistocles. Lysander is an interesting figure who has associations with the lower classes. His father, Aristocleitus, was a member of the Spartan Heracleidae, although he was raised in poverty (ἐν πενίᾳ (2.1-4)). He would have been supported by a rich family, but he would have lacked a certain amount of social and political status. While Plutarch does present Lysander as a figure associated with the lower classes, it would be wrong to assimilate him completely to the Aesopic boundary-croser. Plutarch accuses him of a certain measure of subservience in his dealings with the powerful, but this was a guise for achieving his ends (2.3). Plutarch’s text questions whether the crafty but servile fox, who in fable literature often serves a regal lion slavishly, is the best example for an élite leader.

In his biography of Agis, the king of Sparta, Plutarch states that a man cannot be a ruler and slave, a flatterer and a friend. In his own voice Plutarch tells the fable of the serpent whose tail rebelled against the head as an example of the effects of the leadership of those with popular favour (Agis 2). In the fable, the rebellious tail demanded the right
to lead. The head was badly lacerated when compelled, contrary to nature, to follow the part with no eyes or ears. Thus, says Plutarch, this has been the experience of many whose whole political activity is directed towards the winning of popular favour. For Plutarch there is a natural order, the multitude (τοὺς πολλούς) must be told that they cannot have the same man as their ruler and their slave. From the first chapter of the Agis, in which he compares popular leaders to shepherds ruled by their sheep, Plutarch advocates that one must not, as a leader, be a slave to glory and be ruled by the masses instead of by oneself (διὰ μὴν ἀληθῶς οἱ πρὸς ἐπιθυμίας ὄχλον καὶ ὁρμὰς πολιτευόμενοι πάσχουσι, δουλεύοντες καὶ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἵνα δημαγωγοὶ καὶ ἄρχοντες ὄνομαζονται (1)). Such a sentiment applies not only to Agis, but also to Tiberius Gracchus whom Plutarch makes his counterpart in the Roman tradition. Plutarch, of course, addresses this fable to his upper-class and predominantly Greek audience, those in political power, who must be careful not to become slaves to the masses. This fable is the only example in the Lives of the genre used by Plutarch as the narrator; the others are spoken by internal narrators who are not strictly upper-class figures. This is significant, since Plutarch appropriates both the lower-class genre of fable and several marginal leaders as a means of voicing élite concerns about the proper way to rule.

Central to Plutarch’s Coriolanus is the conflict between the Patricians and Plebeians and the concern with how one should rule and be ruled. Coriolanus represents the conservative patrician view that ultimately leads to his destruction when he comes into conflict with the people and their tribunes. Menenius Agrippa, our fabulist, who tells The Belly and the Limbs as a means of bringing about reconciliation, represents the opposing viewpoint, although he remains tied to traditional views of Roman hierarchy. In Coriolanus 6, the Senate sends Agrippa as their spokesmen, along with those older senators, who have favour among the people. After making many gentle requests and using persuasive rhetorical arguments, Agrippa ends his oration with a fable (mythos) (6.2). The fable in the speech of Menenius Agrippa in Plutarch’s Coriolanus is long and certainly rhetorical, and demonstrates the incongruous collision of consciously high rhetoric with the genus humile of fable. In this revolt of the members, the limbs accuse the belly of making no contribution to public welfare while the rest of the body underwent hardships to minister to its appetites, but the belly laughs at their simplicity in
not knowing that it only received nourishment to disburse it again (6.3). Here the stomach puts a stop to the body parts by laughing at them, in contrast to Livy’s fable in which the Senate is exposed to ridicule. Coriolanus continually disrespects the different levels of society and thus comes into conflict with the people ultimately leading to his destruction. He refuses to respect the new changes in the old bodily hierarchy: the tribunes. Eventually, he is banished from Rome thereby making himself the Other through his failure to assimilate to the new social order (21). While Plutarch often criticizes those who becomes slaves to the mob, in the figure of Coriolanus we find that Plutarch also advocates moderation in order to rule effectively.

In the Coriolanus, as opposed to Livy’s narrative, we are presented with a biography of a political figure, one who has an élite perspective and Plutarch makes it clear that he dislikes and does not sympathize with the plebeians. This rather long fabular episode intrudes into the narrative, although some bodily imagery will be picked up in 12 when the Senate hoped that the turbulent plebeians would be purged away like unhealthy and disturbing refuse from the body (καὶ τὴν στάσιν ἅμα σκεδάσειν ἡλπίζον, εἰ τὸ θορυβοῦν μάλιστα καὶ συνεπηρμένον τοῖς δημαγωγοῖς óδιπερ περίττωμα τῆς πόλεως νοσερὸν καὶ ταραχὸδες ἀποκαθαρθείη). In the voicing of this fable, we are reminded of the élite appropriation of fable and the servile narrator as a means of deceiving the (internal) audience into believing that the speaker of a fable must support the position of the Other. Here, our élite author Plutarch makes it clear that Menenius Agrippa is the mouthpiece of the Senate and speaks on their behalf (ὑπὲρ τῆς βουλῆς). When his fable begins, he labels it a mythos, but once completed it moves from the realm of the untrue to factual logos as it embodies the current political situation and its resolution. In this fable, the Senate laughs directly at the Plebeians and their foolishness in not recognizing the important functions of the ruling class. In Plutarch’s view, it is the nature of the world for the élite to rule and for the people to be ruled. In this scenario, we have a clear use of fable by the élite, an appropriation of the voice of the Other to reinforce their status and the status quo in a society of hierarchies. The Senate speaks through the medium of the lower classes as a means of communication supposedly on a level that they understand, but the fable has ultimately become the deceptive tool of the élite. In this passage, the people gain a voice not through the fable, the medium the élite have constantly labelled
as plebeian, but rather through the tribunes of the people. The collision of high and low elements in this genre ultimately reminds us of the agonistic qualities of fables and that the genre is often part of political conflicts in which the strong élite voice dominates and appropriates the fable as a symbol of their power by using it as a mask of the Other. While Menenius Agrippa ultimately speaks for the Senate, we find that this fable is especially convenient for Plutarch’s agenda and indeed he will reprise the analogy of the body politic in Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae 32 in a similar argument against sedition. We find the same concerns in this fable that permeated the other fables found in the Lives. Plutarch views the world from an élite perspective; he is concerned with advising his upper-class audience about their roles as leaders, and not as public servants. Plutarch makes it clear that he dislikes popular leaders who give in to the mob in their desire for power; however, he also dislikes those conservative politicians who do not practice moderation. In Livy, there was a focus on concord and the need for everyone to play their proper roles in society. Plutarch truly takes an élite perspective that belittles the Plebeians and puts them in their place through a fable of subjection. While, for Plutarch, Coriolanus is not an ideal conservative figure, he stresses that one must not go too far in the opposite direction and become a slave to popular politics.384

The fables told in the Lives are often presented as a response by leaders who are criticized by the people en masse, the lower classes, or specific detractors. These fables focus on the conflict between those who rule and those who are ruled, and the proper behaviour expected of the ruling lion and the rest of the animal world. It is significant that most of the leaders who either voice fable or who are associated with the genre by Plutarch have origins in the lower classes or rose to power with the help of popular favour; however, they are not entirely othered figures, and frequently they occupy élite political positions. The fable used in rhetoric as a political message and an expression of how the hierarchy of the world behaves is certainly a traditional scenario for this genre. Despite their overt associations with the lower classes, none of these figures could be described as lower-class; however, it would also be problematic to label them as solely

384 For more discussion of Plutarch’s Coriolanus story and its role as an exemplum of how one should rule, see Russell 1963 and Lehman 1952.
élite. While many of them present élite values, they are also figures in between as they rose to power through popular support and yet were from the educated and therefore wealthy classes. The history of fable allows its use as an exemplum by those from the distant past, and yet, there is also a reflection of contemporary attitudes that the fable has a duality in its mediation between oppositions. Plutarch’s fables in the Parallel Lives ultimately betray his concerns with élite values and the role of the aristocratic leader in the Greco-Roman world and it is likely that many of the fables are for the first time attributed to these figures by Plutarch. I believe that his presentation of these specific figures as fabulists is part of his agenda. He does not criticize these politicians for their servile associations, which, although they were already part of the traditions surrounding these figures, are flagged by Plutarch. His fables specifically question and criticise those who come to power through popular favour and as a result become servile to the mob or their own ambitions. A true member of his audience, his élite circle, must guard against such subservience.

Moralia

In the Moralia, a collection of Plutarch’s non-biographical material, the fable is especially prominent in episodes discussing the role of the leader and those who are ruled and didactic pieces detailing Plutarch’s views on proper social roles and how to live life well. Unlike many authors who use fables and provide no statements about the genre, Plutarch tells us about the fable, Aesop and how the genre should be learned and employed. In Quomodo Adulescens Poetas Audire Debeat 1, he is concerned specifically with the reading of poetry as a preparation for the young man to study philosophy. Young men should, among the tales from other poets, read Aesop’s fables (τὰ Αἰσώπεια μυθάρια) because such works can provide useful lessons and pleasure through the combination of truth and falsehood. Teachers should make use of those philosophical discourses that seem not at all serious or philosophical because they are more enjoyable for the young.385 This sentiment was certainly shared by Horace and thus the two authors have similar methods and aims in their use of fable material. Plutarch similarly piles up

385 Dio Chrysostom makes similar statements about the genre (72.13).
exempla- historical, mythological and fictional- to prove his point. Many of his works that include fables have a conversational tone and are set at a dinner party once again perhaps reflecting the earlier use of fable in symposiastic poetry. In Quaestiones Convivales 1.1.5, The Fox and the Crane is told at length to illustrate how the conversation, like the food, should be suitable for the digestion of all the guests at the dinner. A number of Aesopic fables are similarly told in the Convivium Septem Sapientium as part of a discussion of leadership and the social hierarchy. Theon, a near contemporary of Plutarch, in his Progymnasmata, includes the practice of learning and composing fable as one of the rudiments learned by the educated élite. 386 Like Horace, Plutarch not only connects his fable with human vice, but more specifically with slavery to vice (De Communibus Notitiis Adversus Stoicos 19). Fables are often part of a discourse of power and hierarchy, whether social, political or literary, although Plutarch often favours the fable as a means of teaching highly educated upper-class political figures how to perform their offices.

While he uses internal narrators as mediators for some of his fables, he also consciously appropriates fables in his own authorial voice, and often in situations associated with the marginalized. Frequently, in the Moralia, his fable exempla and references occur when he is addressing or offering advice on methods of addressing othered members of society such as women and children. 387 In Consolatio ad Uxorem 6, he reminds his wife about Aesop’s fable concerning grief. In his Conjugalia Praecepta, Plutarch makes it clear that fables are good moral exempla for women since they are concerned with the home (The Woman in Labour (39)) and female experiences as well as being a reflection of female vices, especially vanity (The North Wind and the Sun (12) and The Children and the Mirror (attributed to Socrates) (25)). 388 Plutarch writes this

386 In the longest passage extant dealing with fable, Theon shows concerns and ideas familiar from Plutarch (Progymnasmata 2). He emphasizes the importance of the typical promythium and epimythium, the personification of animals as a means of exemplification and that the fable’s purpose is to give useful advice. Like Plutarch, he advocates fable as an exemplum to be memorized by children. For Theon, the exercise of relegating the fable to the distant past gave authors a greater license for using the impossible to prove a truth. For Theon, see Chapter 1: 10-12.

387 For a similar deployment of fable, see Xenophon’s Memorabilia 2.7 and the discussion of this fable in Chapter 1: 31-32.

388 While he includes no animal fables, animals are prominently featured for comparison with human faults. Conjugalia Praecepta contains a number of animal metaphors and similes: pleasure loving men are like goats or dogs (7), women should not be made to bow like the horse (8), women are compared to cats and...
piece giving advice on marriage as a wedding present for two young friends: Pollianus and Eurydice. These fables, while addressed to both parties in the larger text, refer almost exclusively to female faults and vices, and offer the husband methods of ruling his wife and of ensuring that she behaves properly. Plutarch styles himself as the old advisor or the father figure teaching this young couple about the proper conduct in marriage. His primary concern in these fables is the proper rule of the family and how each of the members of the family should govern their own vices.

In contrast, he also associates fable with several famous historical figures, and as a means of didactic expression among upper-class dinner guests at the symposium. Fable and philosophy were closely linked as early as works outlining the life of Socrates, in the fables of Horace, and this tradition finds renewed life in the works of Plutarch. Simple fable references are commonly found in his philosophical works such as Quomodo Quis Suos in Virtute Sentiat Praecepta 7, in which he alludes to the ubiquitous The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints. He employs such fables, especially animal fables, to teach proper behaviours in a variety of social settings and the proper conduct in life in general which will lead to harmony, success and happiness. Rather than strictly a fable, Plutarch’s Bruta Animalia Ratione Uti, often called Odysseus and Gryllus, is an allegory about the nature of humanity and a criticism of contemporary society as refracted through assumed animal eyes. This piece is presented as an agon in which Odysseus attempts to convince Gryllus to become a man again, while Circe accuses our hero of seeking not what is truly good, but rather emptiness in the form of reputation. Ultimately I would flag elements of the Aesopic in the character of Gryllus, the philosopher pig, the low and ugly figure, whose stereotypical name suggests inarticulateness or difficulty in speaking (Grunter, or Swine), who competes with the heroic wisdom figure Odysseus in a contest which ultimately reinforces upper-class perspectives. In a context familiar to fable and philosophical questions, Plutarch discusses the proper behaviour of guests at the symposium in Quaestiones Convivales 1.1.5. For Plutarch, just like wine, the conversation should be shared by all and those who propose complex and obscure topics

390 See also Plutarch’s De Amore Prolis 32 and De Sollertia Animalium 63. See Newmyer 1999: 99-110 and Barrow 1967: 112-118, for animals in Plutarch.
for discussion are as unfit for polite society as the crane and the fox in Aesop’s fable who each in turn served the other an inappropriate dinner.\textsuperscript{391} Thus, philosophers who engage in subtle disputation and arguments are irksome to most of the guests who in turn sing songs, tell foolish stories and talk about the market-place. This exclusiveness defeats the aim of fellowship at the party which relies on moderation and appropriateness.

Fable is commonly employed in the \textit{Moralia} as advice for living well. Often, Plutarch himself voices the fables and sometimes he puts them into the mouths of more traditional fabulists. In \textit{De Fraterno Amore} 12, Aesop relates the \textit{Cat and the Hen} as a warning to estranged brothers not to be deceived by those who foster discord for their own ends. Plutarch often highlights the Aesopic origins of these fables. Plutarch names Aesop as a fabulist 9 times, while Aristophanes names him 7 times, and most of the other authors in this study, including Horace, do not name him at all.\textsuperscript{392} For Plutarch, in \textit{De Communibus Notitiis Adversus Stoicos} 19, examples of vice are a good way of preventing it, but most of us lack virtue, reason intoxicates us and fills us full of confusion not less than the bitches which Aesop says burst while drinking up the sea in their craving for some hides floating on the water. Thus, we too expect by means of reason to attain happiness and virtue but this very thing undoes us. In \textit{De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta} 27, Plutarch as speaker advises men not to ignore the body for the mind. He quotes the words of the ox to his fellow servant, the camel, who was unwilling to lighten his burden: “before long you will be carrying me as well as the load.” Of course, the ox fell dead and so will the mind when it is unwilling to relax. It is important to administer to the body, while at the same time not to become its slave. He is also keenly aware of the association of the Aesopic with both the bodily and the intellectual.

The \textit{Convivium Septem Sapientium} contains themes familiar to Plutarch and fable literature: how to live well and the proper conduct of the ruler.\textsuperscript{393} As discussed in Chapter 1, the symposium was one early performative context in which we would expect to find...

\textsuperscript{391} The fox entertained the crane serving clear broth on a flat stone so that the crane went away hungry and was made ridiculous when trying to eat the food. In turn, she served the fox dinner in a long necked jar and thus the fox got his just desserts as he was unable to reach his meal.


\textsuperscript{393} For an overview of the seven wise men tradition, see Aalders 1977: 28-30.
the genre of fable as a means of criticism and ridicule. In the *Convivium Septem Sapientium*, two fables are voiced by Aesop, who is included as a wisdom figure, although not one of the canonical seven according to Plutarch. Plutarch includes not only the servile in the figure of Aesop, but other marginal figures as well by adding a female element in the figure of Eumetis. Aesop, while included at this banquet, remains a marginal figure as he is literally seated apart on a stool next to Solon. His social separation is reflected in a visual and physical marginality. Aesop, according to Plutarch, was sent by King Croesus to Periander and the god at Delphi and he was present at the meeting between Solon and Croesus (cf. Plutarch’s *Life of Solon*). In this piece, Plutarch includes a number of riddles, intellectual *agones*, parables and stories familiar from the *Life of Aesop* and the fable collections, although here they are not always strictly assigned to the first fabulist. This text reflects concerns found in fable literature about forms of government and how to rule and how to be ruled (2,7), about the meaning of equality and inequality (14) and moderation. However, rather than being an advocate for equality, Solon accuses Aesop of supporting the traditional monarchical system (5). Here Plutarch, through the voice of Solon, identifies the characteristic Aesopian conservative stance that favours the established hierarchy. It is important to note that the seven wise men traditionally have a similar conservative view of the world as highly educated, and often élite, political figures. Along with much of fable literature, these wisdom figures stress the importance of moderation as well as the proper governance of the self and of others. For Plato (*Protagoras* 343a), their mottos include ‘know thyself’ and ‘moderation in all things.’ While Plutarch is relying on earlier Greek wisdom traditions, he is appropriating the voices of these intellectuals and their stories to construct his own moral and political views about how the contemporary Greek world should behave. Aesop, as both a guest and an intruder, is another means for Plutarch to remind his readers that in order for society to function a proper hierarchy must exist and be respected by both the educated aristocratic Greek male and the rest of society. If someone who is marginalized

394 The literary symposium has a long history, including accounts by Plato and Xenophon.
395 Plutarch’s seven wise men include Thales, Bias, Pittacus, Solon, Chilon, Cleobulus, and Anacharsis. For the earliest list, see Plato, *Protagoras* 343a, in which he includes Myson instead of Anacharsis.
396 See the *Riddle of the Tongues* (3) and the *Riddle of Drinking the Sea Dry* (6).
recognizes and accepts this conservative view, then this is one more means of justifying and proving its validity for Plutarch.

As an ambassador to an eastern king in Plutarch and in the Aesopic tradition, Aesop is both a powerful figure as his spokesman, but he is also the mouthpiece of his ruler’s concerns. His fables become a servile genre used to voice élite views. Although these views are associated with the Herodotean accounts of Croesus, the Aesop of the *Convivium* is ultimately a construct of Plutarch based on earlier traditions about the role of Aesop. It is interesting, however, that most of the fables related at length in the narrative are either attributed to other wise men or they are appropriated by other figures who remind Aesop of his own fable precepts. Through these appropriations, Aesop is assimilated to the other wise men, and yet there is still a suggestion of something marginal about this fabulist. As Kurke notes, Aesop was part of the wisdom tradition of the Seven Sages, but as a purveyor of his own low and bodily *sophia* he was in competition with other sages, and thus in élite texts the value of his popular tradition is often contested and Aesop is occluded. This is further reflected in Plutarch’s pitting of Solon and Aesop and their wisdom against each other.397 The solving of the riddle of the human headed horses is here attributed to Thales. In Phaedrus 3.3, when a farmer asks for an interpretation of such a monstrous portent, it is Aesop who gives a better explanation than the soothsayer. In Plutarch, the solving of the riddle is elevated to a discussion between Periander, Thales and Diocles the priest. It is clear that Plutarch presents Aesop as the traditional marginalized figure, the teller of moral animal stories who does not fully participate in the higher level of thought represented by the more canonical seven wise men. In 12, Anacharsis tells Aesop one of his own fables, *The Fox and the Leopard*, to remind the fabulist that it is not only outward appearance that matters, but one must look within. Aesop is accused of a concern, seen in much fable literature, with appearance, which is bound up with issues of power. At the dinner, Aesop criticizes the diners for complaining against rulers and he makes fun of his own servile origins and the follies of the dinner guests. Thus, we are presented with an Aesop who is concerned with hierarchies and the social order within and outside of his fables.

397 See Kurke 2011: 125-158 and 136.
The Fox and the Leopard was told in response to a discussion about the nature of the house and household: a fitting subject for fable material. At 14, Cleobulus tells The Dog in Winter and in Summer as an example of the changeability of the mind according to one’s circumstances. For Cleobulus, this must be an appropriate metaphor as he tells us he is referring primarily to those who present the duality so often found in fable: at one time they are prepared to live the simple Spartan lifestyle, while at other times they would not be content with all the wealth of private men and kings. These two fables told by other diners are concerned principally with themes prominent in fable literature: power, appearance, domestic situations and various forms of human slavery. The audience for these fables is varied. The former is actually addressed to the fabulist himself, who is expressly identified as the ‘author’ of both. In the context of the dinner party, we find fable as an appropriate exemplum for all the wisdom figures that are present, but there is a difference between fables told by Aesop and those refracted through élite speakers. In appropriating Aesop’s fables, they reveal the inconsistencies and contradictions found within the genre. While taking possession of the fable and its exemplarity they also deride its lower-class ‘creator,’ and they endorse the message of the fable as true and appropriate to the context, audience, and narrator. In the final section, when Aesop criticizes the privileging of the story of Arion, Diocles defends such a story as one which is given authority because of its age-old status. Aesop knows his fables are praised, although only when figures such as Chersias are making fun of him, when serious discussions are taking place Homer is praised as the inventor of such wisdom. Plutarch repeatedly presents Aesop as a figure who puts himself and his wisdom in their places; thus, through Aesop, he supports the traditional élite male view of the low or othered place of Aesop, his genre and consequently his class.

Aesop tells two fables in his own voice in Plutarch’s Convivium which are short in comparison with those appropriated by other dinner guests. This trend serves as a means of marginalizing Aesop and both supporting and displacing the role of fable as slave voice. In his first fable, slavery is directly addressed as well as the importance of

398 Several of these stories have parallels in the works of Herodotus (Arion (1.23-4) and Periander (5.91-3)).
399 At 14, when Cleodorus discusses the origins of fables and the accomplishments of Hesiod, he refers to The Hawk and the Nightingale as the source of Aesop’s fables, a kind of wisdom which is beautiful and ingenious and uttered by many different kinds of tongues.
maintaining one’s proper position in society. *The Boastful Mule* (4) was proud of his horse ancestry as he gazed at his reflection in the water, then he remembered his father was an ass and gave up his pride of spirit. Aesop tells this fable in response to the refusal of one of Periander’s guests to attend once he knew of his seemingly low position at the table. Thales, when he learned about the refusal, took up the man’s place and was happy to have such a position beside a famous musician. Aesop’s fabular response seems redundant in this instance. He is, in fact, mocked by Chilon, who feels that his fable is long and unnecessary as he runs on like the mule. Here, the hierarchy of animal stereotypes is applied to humans as the horse represents aristocratic blood, while the ass represents the low and servile, just like the mule to which Chilon compares Aesop. In this text, Aesop plays a very similar role to that found in Lucian’s *True History* (1.17-8) in which the first fabulist acts as jester on the Isle of the Blessed. Despite his intellect, Aesop is never able to escape the stigma of slavery, a fact emphasized several times by our élite and conservative author Plutarch.

At 13, we have a similar scenario in which Aesop defends himself against his treatment by the other dinner guests by telling *The Shepherds, the Lamb and the Wolf*, in which the wolf laments what he would suffer if he should eat a sheep like the shepherds. This fable identifies the double standard found in this text in the treatment of Aesop. Here, the guests are the shepherds but Aesop is presented as the wolf that stands outside and watches while they enjoy the privilege of devouring a sheep as an analogue for their philosophical discussions. A number of dualities, oppositions and *agones* are positioned within this presentation of Aesop and his fables all of which use the fabulist and the genre as metaphors for the social structure and vehicles for the presentation and maintenance of such hierarchies and how to deal with intrusions into such structures. From the beginning, Aesop is an insider and outsider whose presence at the dinner of the seven sages argues for an inclusion that is subverted by his physical marginality and his position as a figure whose *logoi* are both mocked and yet appropriated by the other wisdom figures. For Plutarch, Aesop is aware of the place of his genre, and thus his own marginality, as he becomes self-critical putting himself physically beyond the group and also placing his

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400 See Chapter 6: 159-166, for a discussion of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* and the donkey in fable and folklore.
genre at the bottom of the hierarchy crowned by Homer and Hesiod. The figure of Aesop is narrated through Diocles and our author Plutarch, and further two of his fables are specifically told by other members of the dinner continually appropriating his voice. In our extant sources, it is, for the most part, the élite author who has been responsible for the telling and preservation of the genre. Such sources also inform us that they are precisely those who should not be telling fable as it is the genre of the Other. However, fables seem to be appropriate in our élite sources when they are specifically addressing issues of slavery, whether literal or metaphorical. In the two fables told by other dinner guests, there is a concern with slavery to desires and to the appearance of power as opposed to the pursuits of the philosopher, which have true value. In the fables told by Aesop, there is a distinct emphasis on physical or genetic slavery and marginality. Thus, there is an opposition here in philosophical terms: Aesop’s fables relate to the low and bodily, while the fables told by the other guests have an element of the psychological which elevates them beyond traditional practical exempla. In the tradition of the philosophical fable the genre is appropriated and made acceptable in such contexts by its application to ‘higher’ philosophical forms of thought.

In this text, Aesop tells us that ass bones are used by Phrygians to make flutes (5). This is a perfect analogy for the figure of Aesop whose origins link him with the servile ass, and yet he makes the music of fable in élite settings. In the Convivium, Aesop’s interactions are limited to communications with those who are élite in terms of their education and often socio-political status. For the most part, his attitudes are consistent with his characterization in the Life of Aesop, in which he shows deference towards those who are his social superiors and uses fable for criticism and advice. While in the biographical novel Aesop participates in a variety of types of wisdom, including the solving of riddles, omens and social, moral and political didacticism, in the Convivium Aesop is relegated simply to the animal fable. Aesop is excluded from various types of high wisdom. Plutarch, more than any of our sources, presents an Aesop who is not only marginal, but who also accepts and personally reinforces his own otherness. Such a presentation of Aesop is one means for Plutarch to support his own conservative views in this work. Plutarch’s overarching aim in the Moralia is to teach how to rule on a variety of levels - from political, to domestic, to oneself. For Plutarch, the conservative élite male
view of all aspects of society is the right path to follow and he uses wise men of the past and the figure of the marginalized Aesop to support his agenda.

Like the Aesop in the *Convivium Septem Sapientium*, Plutarch maintained very traditional views about moral philosophy and the social and political hierarchy that also permeated the world. He played a didactic role partly through the fable as he explored the place of Greeks in the Roman world, but also more broadly how all persons should rule and be ruled. He was not only concerned with political power, but also with smaller units such as the roles of those in marriage, in the household and within society as a whole. For the Greek élite in the Roman world, fable presented a unique reflection of their situation and the perfect tool to teach them how to prosper in a society in which ancient Greek dominance had been replaced by Roman rule, and as such their positions needed to be defined and justified. In his *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*, Plutarch addresses a young upper-class Greek male who wants to enter public life about how to succeed in the contemporary political climate (1). Through a number of Aesopic allusions (12, 14, 32) and animal metaphors (4, 5) Plutarch constructs the ideal path for a young politician. The people are many times likened to animals that must be properly guided by leader who should not become servile either to the mob or to his own vices and passions (4, 5, 29). He also reminds his readers that leaders should not be too servile to Rome (18-19). Like the moral of many fable *exempla*, Plutarch insists on the established hierarchy (32). Plutarch is aware of the othered nature of the fable and yet he also shows a consciousness of the older memory of the fable tradition as a tool used by ancient philosophers to instruct their students, as a tool at the symposium, a genre of the political speaker, and a genre used by foreign monarchs to teach successors how to rule. Thus, he consciously exploits fable and its associations by using it in a variety of expected contexts, but ultimately as a tool for his arguably élite and conservative views about the world. For Plutarch fable was a discourse of socio-political hierarchy, and like his élite appropriation of the Greek past, his use of fable was another means of constructing and delineating his view of the ideal functioning of contemporary society in terms of moral, social and political conduct.

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401 For a discussion of this text, see Jones 1971:110-121.
Chapter 6.
Fable, Folklore and the Novel

Fable in the Novel Tradition

The ancient novel developed in the 1st-3rd century CE and was influenced by oral storytelling and folklore. As a fictional means of entertainment and instruction, the fable, told through a series of speaking characters was naturally long associated with folklore and other oral forms of early storytelling like the novel. The novel and fable are also connected in the lack of any singular ancient term for their genres, as well as their struggle, common for some forms of prose literature, to find respect within the ancient and modern literary canon.\footnote{For the novel genre and its terminology, see Schmeling 1996: 11-28, Whitmarsh 2008: 185-200 and Holzberg 1995: 1-42.}

At Metamorphoses 1.1, the narrator introduces his work as a fabula, a broad term whose ambiguousness and inclusiveness is familiar from our examination of fable terminology in Chapter 1.\footnote{Apuleius will use the term fabula many times to describe a wide array of folktales (1.20), conversations, and stories (1.26 and 2.12). See Mason 1978 for an examination of the meaning of fabula in Apuleius’ introduction as well as elements of myth, folklore and fable in the Metamorphoses. See Svendson 1983: 25, for the inclusiveness of material and genre in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses.}

When Petronius’ Trimalchio relates his biography, he justifies himself by saying it is fact and not fiction but here uses the word fabula (factum, non fabula 76.4). Similarly in Leucippe and Clitophon, Clitophon characterizes his adventures as factual logoi, although he says that they are really like fictional mythoi (1.2). Achilles Tatius has Clitophon specifically indicate that there is a deliberate contrast between mythos and logos and he thus plays with the concept of truth in fiction, which is also part of many ancient discussions of the value of fable. The connection of both the novel genre and the fable with the fictional and therefore what is untrue and false often results in a negative view of the merit of these genres. The audience for the ancient novel is as problematic as the status and identity of its authors. Earlier scholarship often stressed that the novel’s audience was characteristically juvenile and/or female. In the modern view, these novels would have been read by the Greek and Latin speakers of the Roman Empire, although, as with much ancient literature, I agree that it is likely that the readership was largely a well-educated male audience,\footnote{For the readership of the ancient novel, see Gaisser 2008: 300-301, Schmeling 1996: 87-106, Hägg 1983: 81-108, Whitmarsh 2008: 261-271 and Whitmarsh 2001: x-xii.} while
many of the adventures of the characters within these novels explore the margins both socially (in the world of slaves) and geographically (outside the Greco-Roman world).\footnote{405} While fables are often moral, didactic and critical in nature, this is not necessarily true of the novel genre as a whole, although many novels do contain these elements, such as Apuleius’ warnings about the dangers of curiosity. In the novel tradition, the fable acts as a didactic \textit{exemplum}, the perfect vehicle for criticism and as a means of expressing the author’s views about contemporary society, morality and politics.

The pervasive connection between the fable genre and the novel tradition is especially evident in the texts of Petronius, Apuleius, Achilles Tatius and, as one might expect, the \textit{Life of Aesop}, a novelistic text which was discussed in Chapter 2.\footnote{406} Petronius, Apuleius and Achilles Tatius explore themes that are bound up with fable literature including the slave voice, the animal and the Other, the anti-hero and marginality.\footnote{407} As we explored in Chapter 1, fable in the Roman period was increasingly associated with slave speech, but also with freedmen fabulists such as Aesop and possibly Phaedrus and Babrius.\footnote{408} As the slave voice often functioned as an extension and agent of its master, so we often find fable and those who articulate the genre to be mouthpieces of the élite voice of the master or author. The fable sometimes appears to be popular and oral (non-élite), although its literary tone is very much high culture (élite), especially with the influence of the Second Sophistic.\footnote{409} Both the fable and the novel, while often presented as oral and told by a specific storyteller, are often connected with higher forms of literary production and upper-class authors/narrators.

In Petronius, fables occur as allusions and proverbs almost without exception in the speeches of the freedmen in the \textit{Cena Trimalchionis} as a means of characterization and a satirical examination of the connections between appearance, voice and status. In Petronius’ \textit{Cena}, in particular, there is a contemporary exploration of the meaning of

\footnote{405 We do have evidence of well-educated women reading and writing in figures like Leucippe (Achilles Tatius 5.18). For women in the ancient novels, see Schmeling 1996:151-208.}
\footnote{406 The \textit{Life} does differ from the other novels primarily in its presentation of the fictionalized biography of a semi-historical/legendary figure. There are also short allusions which have been identified as fables in other novels including Heliodorus, \textit{Aethiopica} 2.33-\textit{The Eagle and the Arrow} and Longus, \textit{Daphnis and Chloe} 1.20-22-\textit{The Wolf and the Heron} and 1.25-\textit{The Fox and the Lion Hunting} (see Appendix). See especially Van Dijk 1996: 513-541.}
\footnote{407 The other novels also fit similar patterns, but they do not generally include fable material.}
\footnote{408 For Phaedrus’ status, see Chapter 1: 37-39.}
\footnote{409 For the Second Sophistic, see Chapter 5: 137-138 and Chapter 6: 177-178.}
status in a world in which the prominent roles given to freedmen under the emperors allowed for increased social mobility for those of the freedman class.\textsuperscript{410} This led to a questioning of the social and political status of all members of society. We find a literary criticism of the \textit{nouveaux riches} by the upper classes as a response to the dangers that their new social mobility and power imposed on the traditional hierarchy.\textsuperscript{411} Achilles Tatius’ \textit{Leucippe and Clitophon}, while in some ways a very traditional Greek romance recounting the adventures of a young couple separated by fate and then reunited, also explores the margins of the world, the genre and social status. Despite the assertion that the fable is presented by some authors as a slave genre, the fable threats spoken by one slave to another in Achilles Tatius are our only extant examples of slaves, apart from the legendary Aesop, as fabulists who tell traditional animal fables (2.20-22).\textsuperscript{412} This exceptional episode is another argument against the assertion that fable is necessarily slave speech. In Achilles Tatius and Petronius, characters tell fables, but the main narrative is not fabular. In Apuleius, however, Lucius and other characters literally enact episodes that have counterparts in fable literature in an act of bodily appropriation of the genre. In the figure of Lucius, we are presented with an élite individual who, as a result of his psychological slavery to curiosity, is literally transformed into the animal slave who speaks as the élite narrator under the guise of an ass. In Apuleius’ text, we find the familiar fable progression in which the main action of the story is a result of \textit{curiositas} and the final book of the novel serves as a kind of \textit{epimythium}, or moral lesson, to the whole. These three novels use the fable genre as a means of criticizing various political and moral failings, in an attempt to express the élite author’s behavioural expectations of contemporary society.

\textit{Apuleius}

Apuleius and the Greek \textit{Ass}, to which the \textit{Metamorphoses} is closely related, involve the conceit of the talking animal, in this case the ass. Talking animals are typical

\textsuperscript{410} For the ambivalence of the upper classes to the freedman in Petronius, see especially Bodel 2011; 1999; 1994; 1989.
\textsuperscript{411} See Barja de Quiroga 1995: 326-348, for the social mobility of freedmen and the response of the upper classes in the early Empire.
\textsuperscript{412} See Chapter 1: 38 and Chapter 2.
of the fable genre, and the ass is a common figure in both fable and folklore. There seems to have been an earlier folktale about a man turned into an ass, and we see this dual tradition of the Aesopic ass and folkloric man-turned-ass in the pseudo-Lucianic Greek Ass. The Ass shows signs of an oral background, especially in the use of low and vulgar Greek. Although there are similarities in plot between the Ass and Perry’s Aesopica 179, in which the ass prays to Jupiter to be released from his present hardships, he is sold and receives a new master but each situation increases his misfortunes, there is no one fable that could be identified as the sole basis for this story. There are five episodes in the Ass that contain fabular associations, although none of them should be expressly considered fables. Apuleius, writing in the tradition of the Greek Ass, in addition to the fabular suffering of the curious ass includes two additional episodes closely related to fables. As Van Dijk rightly notes, while there are Aesopic parallels in Apuleius, this does not imply that actual fables are alluded to, but rather there are motifs common in both the Metamorphoses and Aesopic fable, but elements crucial to the fable are often absent in Apuleius. For example, Lucius the Ass does break into the dining room and cause destruction, but, unlike in the fable, he simply fears for his life and he is not trying to imitate his master’s dog (The Donkey in the Dining Room (9.1)). Apuleius boasted in both the Apology and the Florida of his highly superior rhetorical and philosophical education, the results of which are apparent in everything he wrote. This education would have familiarized him with the rhetorical use of fabular exempla, which would explain his greater use of them than the author of the Ass. Apuleius also includes a fable (The Fox and the Crow (4.108-111)) in the preface to his De Deo Socratis, demonstrating his familiarity with the rhetorical use of exemplary fables. In Apuleius’

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413 Werner 1918: 225-261 discusses the relationship between traditional ass tales, the fable, folklore and Apuleius’ tales.
415 For other fables in Apuleius, see the Appendix and Scobie 1975: 30-32.
416 For fables in the Ass, see Appendix.
417 Although Van Dijk (1996: 517-9) sees connections between fables and several episodes in the Metamorphoses, there are often differences that may account for a common source but perhaps not the specific borrowing of fable.
418 See Van Dijk 1996: 517.
419 For Apuleius and the high rhetorical style of the Second Sophistic, see Bradley 2012 and Sandy 1997.
420 See Hunink 1995: 292-312. This text also highlights the close relationship between Socrates and the fable genre.
Metamorphoses, the enslavement of the main character to curiosity⁴²¹ is reflected in his characterization as a donkey, the quintessential, and constantly beaten, bestial symbol of slavery.⁴²² In becoming an ass, Lucius is literally alienated from his body.⁴²³ In the end, his slavery to curiosity and physical pleasures is replaced by slavery to the goddess (11.15). It is in fact the proverbial curiosity of the ass, which we see in fables, that drives the story (Unde etiam de prospectu et umbra asini natum est frequens proverbium (9.42)). One particularly appropriate example of the curiosity of the ass is the fable of the ass that peeks into a shop and lets all the birds escape (PA 459). This dissertation has already defined fables as metaphorical stories that comment on human nature, and here we have the transformation of a stereotypical curious man into his animal counterpart in a novel that ultimately advocates the moral that one must beware of slavery to curiosity.

In Apuleius, we also find a number of proverbial expressions that may have their roots in fable as well as several donkey scenes that have some connection with extant fables, although it is not always possible to ascertain how novel and fable are related. We thus possibly see the memory of specific fabulae within Apuleius and the earlier versions of the man turned ass story, or perhaps the fables and the ass story arose from the same sources. Much of the fable material found in Apuleius is parafabulistic in nature, as Van Dijk has identified in the plays of Aristophanes, as the fable elements are literally enacted by Lucius and some of Apuleius’ characters.⁴²⁴ Many of the references to fable material relate to the ass, especially its servile status (The Donkey in the Dining Room (9.1)), its curiosity (The Peeping Ass (9.42)) and its suffering (The Donkey and the Priests of Cybele (8.24)). There is an abundance of fable material in Apuleius (see Appendix), which is consistent with his main theme, which itself has fabular qualities, and his widespread use of digressive material, which is itself liminal and conducive to fable. Apuleius assembles a number of anecdotes, fables, proverbs and traditions about the donkey and uses them to construct what many have read as a deeply religious and moral

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⁴²¹ Lucius is presented as a slave to curiosity, although at 1.2 he denies such an association.
⁴²² Although Lucius’ character begins as a free man, he literally undergoes the animalization of slavery when he becomes a donkey, however, he does not become a human slave but rather an animal slave. Bradley 2000 is right in connecting the world of animal and slave but perhaps goes too far in his use of the Metamorphoses as an exact parallel to slavery in Roman society.
⁴²³ For a further discussion, see Fitzgerald 2000: 94-97.
⁴²⁴ See Chapter 1: 24.
story, with a fabular type *epimythium*, about the dangers of pleasure and curiosity.\(^{425}\) As this dissertation focuses specifically on fable *exempla*, the discussion of Apuleius will be brief because it is not profitable to argue whether these episodes are or are not fables or whether the fable or folklore motif came first. What should be examined is how these inserted episodes with fable associations, as well as associations with the *Life of Aesop*, explore the theme of slavery and the voice of the marginalized on a variety of levels.

The *Life of Aesop* and Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* share several episodes that should perhaps be seen as a reflection of their connection with folklore and fable motifs: obscenity, disregard for decorum, stereotypical characters, phallic episodes, the stealing of a cup (9.9) and crimes and punishment, talking animals, the ugliness of slaves (8.23) and slaves in peril, a fondness for riddles, and Isis as a saviour figure.\(^{426}\) As Mason argues, in the first chapter of Lucius’ tale, his description of the *Metamorphoses* as a *fabula graecanica* likely has more than one meaning which is typical of Apuleius, and fable is probably one of the elements to which this description alludes.\(^ {427}\) There is further evidence that Apuleius might have had access to a version of the *Life of Aesop* given two similar episodes that involve the sale of a slave (*Met. 8. 23-5 and Life 22-7*) and the stealing of a cup (*Met. 9.9-10, Ass 41.4-5 and Life 127-8*).\(^ {428}\) In the tradition of the Aesopic fable, the donkey is stupid, stubborn, sexual and curious, all elements of the characterization of the ass in both the *Ass* and Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. It seems likely that, rather than a direct borrowing, these episodes were common in the oral tradition, and thus found their way into works which are concerned with similar motifs. While these novels do share similarities, there is a major distinction to be made between Apuleius’ high literary register, and the low register of the *Life*. Although we are dealing in the *Life* with an arguably ‘low’ text and figure, there is still primarily an expression of élite views. Apuleius and the *Life* explore themes that are bound up with much of fable literature including the speech and silence of slaves, the rewards for piety, metamorphosis, the disparity between appearance and reality and the consciousness of

\(^{425}\) For the text as a narrative of religious experience and conversion, see Shumate 1996: 1-328.

\(^{426}\) For similarities between Apuleius and the *Life*, see Winkler 1985: 280-286 and Scobie 1975: 31ff.

\(^{427}\) Mason 1978-1998:1-10

\(^{428}\) For the stealing of the cup in Apuleius and the *Life*, see Zimmerman 2007: 277-292.

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the recording of oral tales in written form. In the Life of Aesop, although Isis does not, as she does for Lucius in the Metamorphoses, provide a bodily transformation for the fabulist, who is as ugly as an ass, she does provide him with a voice, which in a sense removes him one step from the mute ‘animalistic’ slave. Speech and writing are prominent forms of power within the narratives. Both of these novels warn against slavery to vice; Lucius’ vice is curiosity, for Aesop it is hubris. Aesop is a figure who is ugly and phallic like the donkey (Life 30 and 75). As Winkler notes, they are both grotesque, deformed and without honour, they are figures who are immediately physically punished for their transgressions, and therefore they can speak and think with greater freedom than would be permitted to ordinary citizens. Thus characters, like Aesop and Lucius the Ass, are avenues for putting unthinkable or transgressive issues on trial.

In the Metamorphoses, as we find in fable literature, there is a constant blurring of the lines between animal and human. In addition to the transformation of Lucius, there are a number of episodes that explore the boundaries between the human and the animal: characters with animal names (1.5), stories about the nature of animals (1.9, 2.25), humans that dress as animals (4.14), talking animals (2.1), humans with animal qualities (3.22) and bestiality (10.19). In particular, Apuleius uses the theriomorphic associations in Egypt to bring together the human and the animal and the lessons inherent in his fabulae. At 11.8, the procession of Isis includes a number of animals (monkey, ass and bear) dressed as humans in a pleasing spectacle that also reminds the reader of the crossing of literal and metaphorical boundaries in Lucius’ quest for enlightenment. The Egyptian hieroglyphs, presented as writing in animal shape that contains knowledge or wisdom of some kind, function as an analogue for the novel in its entirety which was itself a didactic text in animal guise. The same may be said of the fable. In the novel, Lucius makes progress, the point of which is to rise above the status of ass through the agency of Isis, a goddess traditionally associated with the Other. Apuleius enjoys playing with such inversions. He introduces elements of the high and low into a single

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429 See Finkelpearl 2003: 38.
430 Compare Sallust, Catilinarian 1, who says that men should excel all animals and not pass life in obscurity like beasts, who are groveling and subservient to appetites, but rather men should attain glory through intellect and not the body.
431 See Winkler 1985: 281.
433 For the alterity of Isis, see Chapter 2: 65.
narrative such as the use of epic language for low content\(^{434}\) and the juxtaposition of the written with the oral.\(^{435}\) Apuleius communicates élite views through popular material, but he elevates both the main narrative and the inserted tales, and he plays with boundaries in his use of an élite narrator in the form of an ass. There is a foreshadowing of the outer narrative in these tales, which, although they are presented initially as entertainment, often, like fable, serve the dual function of entertainment and instruction.\(^{436}\) Like many of the protagonists in fable literature, Lucius does not readily recognize and learn the lessons presented by the text. Lucius and Psyche\(^{437}\) are figures who do not necessarily learn from their stories, although in the end they receive salvation from a god as an act of grace; a conclusion very unlike fable literature, in which fools meet with disaster. Even Loukios, in the Ass, suffers a kind of punishment in the final scene in his sexual humiliation. Thus, while Apuleius presents a text heavily influenced by the fable, he also undermines the point of fable literature by presenting a main character that, although he suffers in the form of the ass, is not punished for his foolishness. Lucius, although he is of the same intellectual upper-class as Apuleius, becomes the stereotypical ass and fool of fable in this text.

Within the text there are no fable exempla told in extenso, however, many episodes have analogues in fable narratives.\(^{438}\) These episodes fall into three main categories: short sayings (3.22, 9.42); stories about the nature of the donkey (4.1-3, 5.9, 8.24, and 9.1) and lewd tales (9.27). At 3.22 Photis invokes the fable when she accuses Lucius of the sly behaviour of a fox (vulpinaris). Despite the associations of the fox with cunning and trickery, we are also reminded of the fables in which the fox gets into trouble because of his slavery to his own desires, such as greed (PA 24). Thus, while her

\(^{434}\) Finkelpearl 2001: 14.

\(^{435}\) See Finkelpearl 2001: 209, for the conscious juxtaposition of oral tales in the written text.


\(^{437}\) The longest piece of digressive material in Apuleius is the “Tale of Cupid and Psyche” which spans most of Books 4-6 and combines elements of (Platonic) myth, folklore and fable. It is described as narrationibus lepidis anilibus fabulis (4.28), again invoking the ambiguous term fabula. The primary connection between this tale and fable literature is in the use of animals and inanimate objects as helper figures who speak to the heroine and aid her in her agones. Some of these figures include talking country ants (6.10), a reed (6.12), waters (6.14), Jupiter’s eagle (6.15) and the speaking tower (6.17). Apart from the fabular anthropomorphization of these characters, Psyche is also a figure who must undergo a series of tests, including trickster figures and contradictions between appearance and reality, as she crosses boundaries in status between high and low. For studies of “Cupid and Psyche,” see especially Edwards 1992, DeFilippo 1990, Kenney 1990, and Walsh 1970:190-223.

\(^{438}\) See Appendix.
comments might suggest a clever Lucius, in reality Apuleius subverts expectations and presents the other side of the stereotypical fox. Similarly, in *The Peeping Ass* (9.42), also found in the fable collections (PA 459), Lucius literally becomes the moral lesson of his own fable. Just as his peeping out of curiosity has betrayed those who were sheltering him, so it is his own curiosity about magic that has trapped him in his asinine shape. Even though he is élite, Lucius’ rhetorical training would have familiarized him with the supposedly non-élite fable genre and its lessons. However, he is oblivious to the obvious morals of the stories in which he participates. From the first chapter of the *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius stresses Lucius’ high status which provides a sharp contrast with his later animal slavery (1.2). This theme of Lucius’ ‘distinction’ runs through the narrative. In the beginning, Lucius emphasizes traditional birth, rank and wealth, while in the end he gives up his wealth and position for ‘true distinction’ as a devotee of the goddess and her teachings. As narrator, Lucius seems to sympathize with the plight of slaves and the ass, but he also mocks them. As a donkey, he participates in the Other, but he still views them from the élite perspective. After hearing the tale of “Cupid and Psyche” he is sad not to have tablets and a stilus to write down the tale (6.25), while he is also afraid that his audience might reproach him as an ass lecturing on philosophy (10.33). Both the writing of literature and philosophy are especially élite pursuits. He speaks through fables that preserve the power of the élite narrator emphasizing male power, the power of the human over the animal, the objectifying of the animal while at the same time assigning it human characteristics. In the fables about donkeys that are referenced in Apuleius, the animal is silent, which reminds us that we have an élite narrator (human male) assuming an asinine disguise which permits him to tell these stories. The narrator chooses to speak through the animal or pseudo slave, both of which are inherently voiceless. In these appropriations, Lucius, as narrator, functions as a liminal figure; he is both inside and outside of the stories he tells, as in many fables, he is clearly voicing human, and ultimately élite, concerns and views of the world through an animal voice.

In the *Metamorphoses* our élite author Apuleius presents his readers with the adventures of an upper-class young man, who is already a slave to curiosity. The entire

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439 For Lucius’ status, see Mason 1983: 135-43.
text becomes a sort of fable which deals with various types of slavery. For Lucius, his transformation is a physical manifestation of his otherness as a result of his slavery to curiosity. Lucius’ addiction to servile pleasures (*serviles voluptates* (11.1-2)) leads him into a world concerned with alterity and an examination of the fringes of society like the world of magic and people who are on the margins like bandits, robbers, murderers and slaves. In the stories told in the *Metamorphoses*, many characters other themselves by breaking the laws of society and of nature. When Lucius plays the stereotypical role of the curious and foolish donkey in the fable, we are aware that the animal must act in accordance with an unchangeable nature, but Lucius, in the guise of the animal, is outside of such conditions. The élite lion literally wears the ass’ skin as a means of completing the *persona* of storyteller, a mask, tragic and comic, suited to the folkloric and fabulistic content. The élite reader, like the curious Lucius in the text, also undergoes a similar metaphorical metamorphosis into asinine shape which permits him greater freedom to follow the ass through the succession of transgressive stories about murder, sex, magic and all of the lower registers that are more permissible for the othered ass. Thus the élite reader can freely explore these literary boundaries as an ass, while Apuleius offers an ending that permits them to return to the norm. Here, because Lucius is both human and élite, he is able to transform both beyond his asinine slavery and his slavery to human vices and become in some sense divine. All of his tales of alienation end in an initiation that removes the stigma of the Other and they remind us of who really tells fables.

**Petronius**

Fable allusions in Petronius’ *Satyricon* occur almost exclusively\(^{440}\) in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. The fables and zoomorphic language characterize the status of Trimalchio and his freedmen guests, and the concentration of many of these fable allusions on the immutability of nature reflects and foreshadows Trimalchio’s inability to break with his servile past.\(^{441}\) Trimalchio truly embodies the donkey of fable literature who attempts to change his nature by wearing the regal lion’s skin, but his servile past is betrayed by his

\(^{440}\) The singular exception is Petronius’ “Widow of Ephesus” (111-112), which is not a traditional animal fable. For possible fable allusions in Petronius, see Van Dijk 1996: 522-3.

\(^{441}\) For Petronius’ portrayal of character, see Rankin 1971: 11-32.
braying, which is made clear by the foxy satirist.\textsuperscript{442} As a freedman, Trimalchio occupies a liminal position in society, a place which is often associated with speech through fable material. Bodel has conducted a number of studies about the status of the freedman Trimalchio and the role of slaves at the time of the \textit{Satyricon}, and many of his conclusions should be kept in mind when reading for fables in this text. Under Roman law, slaves were less than human, almost animal, and they were important to the economic and cultural identity of the slave owning classes. In simplest terms they were a status symbol.\textsuperscript{443} During the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE there were frictions that resulted from the rapid rise of freedmen, as the wealth of these newly rich ex-slaves began to override the landed aristocracy.\textsuperscript{444} Some administrative positions were filled by both freedmen and the freeborn as conventional status distinctions based on a political career became blurred.\textsuperscript{445} The ambivalence already felt by masters about slaves remained tied to the freedman who crossed new social barriers thereby increasing the anxiety of the dominant class about their own positions. There was a similar need in the literary imagination to control the ex-slave by presenting an élite view of the place and expected behaviours of the freedman. The fable is the one genre that, at least in the Roman élite literary imagination, preserves traces of a fiction produced by slaves, and so it is possible that slaves and freedmen in turn appropriated the animalized language of fable and the slave-animal equation, that had already been assigned to them, as a means of voicing their own perspective.\textsuperscript{446} Horsfall disagrees with the proposition that those proverbs that appear to be influenced by fable material prove that such fables were common in the speech of contemporary freedmen.\textsuperscript{447} While I would agree that in the \textit{Cena} fables are part of the literary imagination, and not necessarily societal reality, there is some evidence that fables were

\textsuperscript{442} See \textit{The Fox, the Donkey and the Lion’s Skin}: A donkey put on the skin of a lion and went around frightening all the animals. The donkey saw a fox and tried to frighten her too, but she had heard his voice first, so she said to the donkey, “You can be sure that I too would have been afraid, if I had not already heard the sound of your bray.” \textit{Likewise, there are certain ignorant people, whose outward affectations give them an air of importance, but their true identity comes out as soon as they open their big mouths} (Gibbs 322).

\textsuperscript{443} See Bodel 1994: 252-3; 2011: 311-316.

\textsuperscript{444} Bodel 1999: 41-44.

\textsuperscript{445} Bodel 1989: 229.

\textsuperscript{446} See Fitzgerald 2000: 99-102. Compare also Phaedrus’ comments in his prologue to Book 3 (33-37).

\textsuperscript{447} See Horsfall 1989: 83. Horsfall says there are five fable references in the \textit{Cena} and then unfortunately only lists four: “63.2, \textit{asinus in tegulis} (Babr. 125); 56.9, \textit{murem cum rana alligata} (Perry appx. 384), \textit{mus in matella} (Babrius 60); 74.13, \textit{inflat se tanquam rana} (Phaedr. 1.2),” Horsfall 1989: 83, n. 73.
known to a variety of social groups at the time of Petronius.\footnote{448 For the authorship and date of the Satyricon, see Rose 1971: 30-33 and 38-60, Bagnani 1954a: 3-27, Sullivan 1968: 158-213 and Conte 1996: 1-36.} Although Phaedrus cannot be proven to have been Petronius’ source, he does provide a possible example of a contemporary freedmen,\footnote{449 See Chapter 1.} engaging in the type of discourse that Petronius uses to characterize his social class.\footnote{450 The Latin collection of Phaedrus is dated to the time of Tiberius because of his references to Sejanus (Prol. 3.41) and his association with Augustus in the title of the primary manuscript. At chapters 111-112, Eumolpus tells the “The Widow of Ephesus” to illustrate the fickleness of women. “The Widow of Ephesus” is an example of a Milesian tale, a short, witty, satirical story, and, although it is not a canonical ‘beast’ fable, it is included in Phaedrus’ collection (App. 15) (see Conte 1996: 105-6; Courtney 2001: 166; Rimell 2002: 123). This does not mean that Petronius necessarily drew his fable from Phaedrus, but rather it is likely they used a similar written collection.} Phaedrus also informs us that fables, such as The Battle of the Mice and the Weasels (4.6), were commonly depicted in taverns (historia, quot sunt, in tabernis pingitur). While this does not indicate a specifically freedman audience, the tavern is a place that would have been frequented by their class. Although the fable was in general a means whereby the élite could ‘other’ slaves and define themselves, it was also, as we explored in Chapter 1, a means for the weak to communicate with the strong. So too, in the case of Phaedrus and the freedmen portrayed by Petronius, the fable can be presented as a tool employed by the weak, but in works in which the weak figure is a fabulist whose character, speech and viewpoints are constructed by an arguably élite author and society.

Fables often expose the discrepancy between the appearance and reality of power, a theme commonly addressed in the Cena in association with the ambiguity of the status of freedmen.\footnote{451 For themes of concealment and pretence in the Satyricon, see Rankin 1971: 32-51.} Trimalchio is well aware of the status he occupies between slave and free man and uses appearance in the form of dress and ostentation to rise above the reality of his origins. His gilt ring indicative of the gold ring of the equestrian class (32.3), his scarf banded with purple suggestive of the senatorial order (32.2), his change exclusively from commerce to agriculture, the traditional source of revenue of the élite senatorial class, are all examples of pretensions to what he is not. He is not ashamed of his servile past, but these pretensions to higher status in his present circumstances are reminders that the freedman, in Petronius’ opinion and likely for other élite male readers of this text, can never truly be élite. The boar with the freedman’s cap also shows that, while Trimalchio
may wear the cap of a freedman, he is still a boar (41). Throughout the text, there is a tendency, as we saw in Apuleius, to emphasize the connection between animal and slave. Several instances of foods, and thereby animals, which are not what they seem to be (33, 40.4, 69.6-70, etc...) also reflect this theme. The reader is continuously reminded of slavery by attendants and freedmen, and by animals such as the boar with the freedman’s cap, the boy dressed as Bacchus and the puns made on liber (41.6-8). The description of a dinner party was a common topic in literature since it lent itself well to the discussion of serious topics as well as comments on social behaviours. In the Cena, there is a clear parody of symposiastic literature, one of the genres associated with the fable particularly in Aristophanes, Plutarch and Horace. The entire banquet becomes a metaphor for the host’s attempted metamorphosis, although his behaviours, and status as spectacle (27.2), suggest he is transgressing societal norms (res novas (27.3)).

Petronius allows his characters to reveal themselves frequently through their speeches. In his depiction of the freedmen in the Cena, he uses features in their phonology, morphology and syntax that reflect the relaxed atmosphere of the dinner but also elements that point directly to their lower-class background. The use of proverbs and popular philosophy, such as fables, is also characteristic of freedmen, as well as prayers and curses, simple comparisons and metaphors. The use of parataxis for

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452 Slaves were already associated with animals in the Greek imagination in literary sources such as Aristotle and Xenophon and in the terms for slaves and cattle which were similar: andrapodon and tetrapodon. In Latin sources, such as Cato (Agr. 2.7) and Varro (Rust. 1.17.1) and the Lex Aequilia on property, slaves and livestock are mentioned in close association. When Trimalchio dries his hands on the hair of a slave boy (27.6) he is using him like Aristotle’s ‘animal tool’ (Politics 1254b20-6 and 1256b22-6), and only when he is drunk does he allow a different attitude to slaves to emerge (71.1).


454 For discussions of the similarities, see Slater 1990: 50-87; Courtney 2001: 214; Sullivan 1968: 82, 126-8. For a list of fables in Horace, see Appendix. The characterization of Trimalchio is indebted to Horace’s Cena Nasidieni (Sat. 2.8), and Seneca’s portrait of Calvisius Sabinas (Ep. 27) and Ep. 12, and the treatment of slaves (Ep. 47). In Plutarch’s Convivium Septem Sapientium, many of the same themes are present, such as the concern with rule and status, as well as the freedman Aesop who is a fable telling dinner guest.


457 According to Horsfall 1989: 83, “It is also tempting to suggest that a fair number of the very many proverbs used by Petronius’ freedmen appear to presuppose an animal-fable, though that does not prove that such fables necessarily circulated among them, whether in the nursery or at school or at dinner.” The very history of the genre disproves this statement to a certain extent, and one must remember that in the Cena fables are part of the literary imagination and not necessarily societal reality.


proverbs and clichés is similar to the stylistic simplicity of fables.\textsuperscript{460} Often, in the \textit{Cena}, animal names are used as terms of abuse (37.6, 42.4, 44.14, 57.1, 58.10, 74.10-14 and 77.2).\textsuperscript{461} In Petronius, it is the freedmen characters, and Trimalchio in particular, who employ fable material and animalized language that ultimately betray their status.

The only short study of the use of fables in Petronius was conducted by Marchesi, and some of her observations and conclusions are worth noting.\textsuperscript{462} For Marchesi, there is an uncomfortable proximity between animals and slaves which is reiterated through many voices, beginning with the boar in the freedman’s cap. During the dinner, fable allusions surface for the first time only when the host is absent. The abundance of proverbs, anecdotes and animal language as well as fable, a genre traditionally used by the lower classes in comedy,\textsuperscript{463} are all part of this servile repertoire of speech. The use of fable and associated animal imagery brings to the forefront the memory of their servile origins, which the host especially has attempted to overcome. Trimalchio endeavours to control appearance and so, when his guests refrain from using fable allusions in the presence of the host, perhaps, as Marchesi contends, they are conforming to the unwritten rules of their host. This is supported to a certain extent by the words of the narrator who says that now that the tyrannical host is gone the others are invited to speak: \textit{Nos libertatem sine tyranno nacti coepimus invitare convivarum sermones} (41.9-10). It must also be pointed out that, despite this possibility, the freedmen are only allowed to speak at length when their verbose host is absent and, as a result, there is no lengthy comparison possible with how they speak when he is present. Trimalchio himself contradicts the assertion that there is an attempt to deny his servile past since, although he attempts to assume elevated status, he is also proud of his past and displays it in murals and presents his autobiography at the dinner. Trimalchio further shows the conflict within his character in terms of roles and status as at one time he harshlypunishes his slaves, while at another he frees them and invites them to dine with his guests.\textsuperscript{464} As Marchesi asserts,

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\textsuperscript{460} See Nøjgaard 1967, for stylistic elements common to fables.
\textsuperscript{461} See Rimell 2002: 55. Trimalchio’s reactionary use of fable in response to Fortunata’s insult ‘dog’ betrays his servile origins. The use of animal insults is common in the \textit{Cena} and showcases the unpleasantness of being associated with animals.
\textsuperscript{462} See Marchesi 2005: 323-327. While her comments about Petronius are fairly sound, some of Marchesi’s conclusions about the use of fables by Horace are not, see Chapter 4: 123-5.
\textsuperscript{463} See especially the discussion of Aristophanes in Chapter 1: 23-29
\textsuperscript{464} For further discussion, see Walsh 1970: 128-130.
\end{flushright}
he is not embarrassed by his past but maintains he has broken free of it.\textsuperscript{465} The mention of the stereotypically servile language of fable and the animal allusions are a constant reminder that Trimalchio’s metamorphosis has been ineffectual. In his anger, drunkenness or playfulness Trimalchio loses control of his façade and he reverts back to his servile language. For Marchesi:

\begin{quote}
Fable, insofar as it connects animal characters and human behaviors, performs as a freed genre- that is, it situates itself in the same ambiguous cultural space defined by the intersection of freedom and servitude in which Roman society located the freedman...Likewise, for both the author and his readers, the same fables work as one of the ambiguous markers through which they articulate their identity as freeborn.\textsuperscript{466}
\end{quote}

These two points are important in the overall place of fable, which, as we have seen, is frequently characterized as a slave genre but in our sources it often belongs to the freedman whose ambiguous status is reflected in and refracted through fable. Her second point is especially salient as it identifies fable as a marker used by the élite to identify the Other and, therefore, to define themselves by articulating the norm through the alien.

There are no fables told at length in the \textit{Cena}. Instead, they are often introduced proverbially and are therefore difficult to identify with certainty and must be approached with caution. As Van Dijk notes, only two fable references are agreed upon by commentators and critics: \textit{The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow} and \textit{The Farmer and the Frozen Viper}, both of which are applied by or to our host Trimalchio in situations that emphasize the dangers of appearance versus reality, especially in terms of social status.\textsuperscript{467}

No other character is as conscious of his status and the perception of those around him as Trimalchio. He does not conceal his servile past but he also attempts to adopt the manners of an aristocrat to show he has broken with his past. His appearance does not fit the reality and his manners are frequently exaggerated either in his attempts at elevated behaviours or in his reversion to servile and animalistic acts.\textsuperscript{468}

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\textsuperscript{465} See Marchesi 2005: 324. \\
\textsuperscript{466} Marchesi 2005: 308-9. \\
\textsuperscript{467} See Van Dijk 1996: 516 and 522-3, for an analysis of some of the possible fables in Petronius. Salles 1981: 9-10, lists nine episodes from the \textit{Satyricon} that may refer to fables. \\
\textsuperscript{468} Compare with Aristotle, \textit{Politics} 1254b20-6 and 1256b22-6, in which he likens slaves to animals and outlines the differences between the free man and the slave.
\end{flushright}
At 63, Trimalchio begins to use fables as insults, although here it is self-deprecating. After Niceros has finished his werewolf tale, Trimalchio will tell his own ‘ghost’ story but he says: *Nam et ipse vobis rem horribilem narrabo: asinus in tegulis* (63.3). This reads like a reference to a fable, *The Donkey on the Roof*, in which a donkey plays on the roof breaking the tiles in imitation of a monkey who had done the same thing the day before.\(^{469}\) The donkey on the roof was proverbial and equivalent to the modern ‘bull in a china shop’,\(^{470}\) but it was also considered a portent, foretelling something marvelous and unusual. Trimalchio’s ability to tell a folktale is not like that of Niceros; he is in unfamiliar territory and cannot tell a story so well as his companion.\(^{471}\) Animal analogies are one of the main forms of insult at the dinner, which can be gentle or biting as they recall the animalized past of those present. Like the ass on the roof, Trimalchio attempts to imitate his betters, but in the end his clumsy imitation only proves his otherness to Petronius’ readers, who were, for the most part, composed of the intellectual élite.\(^{472}\)

When Trimalchio becomes angry, he loses control of the polite façade, which he attempts to maintain throughout the dinner, and this allows the low language of fables to seep into his speech. At the beginning of 74, the drunkenness of the guests and the host is signalled by the change in the slaves going off shift and a new squad coming on. Trimalchio begins kissing a favourite boy which provokes a fight with Fortunata who calls her husband a dog. Trimalchio abandons the pretentiousness of his speech and draws on the low language of fable suitable to the insults of a freedman. His response is a fable reference as he recounts his wife’s humble past. He says: *At inflat se tanquam rana*

\(^{469}\) Domestic animals on the roof are found in Livy as a portent (21.62.3 and 36.37), often an evil omen, which fits in well with the subject of the story and the superstition evident in the werewolf story and the witches in Trimalchio’s tale.

\(^{470}\) See Gibbs 2002: 163. Commentaries generally agree this is proverbial for a marvel and cite Livy and Babrius as examples of possible sources, see Sage 1969 (ad loc); Maiuri 1945 (ad loc); Marmorale 1962 (ad loc); Smith 1975 (ad loc); Friedlaender 1891 (ad loc); Rose 1922 (ad loc); Horsfall 1989: 83 n. 73.

\(^{471}\) This interpretation is supported by Friedlaender’s commentary on this passage, who believes that in connection with the fable Trimalchio means that he cannot tell the story as well as Niceros. Smith 1975 disagrees with this interpretation but offers little evidence of any other interpretation, except the apparent connection between the use of the proverb as a portent for something marvelous, such as the story Trimalchio is about to tell. Rose closely connects *horribilem* and *asinus in tegulis* as if it is the ass on the roof that is horrible and not the subject of the story Trimalchio is about to tell. He discusses many instances of omens with animals on the roof and the roof as the site of magic and death (Rose 1922:34-56). The instances he cites are from later times and far off places that have little connection with Trimalchio.

(“She puffs herself up like a frog”) (74.13). This is a reference to *The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow* and was proverbial for someone who tries to imitate his betters and inevitably meets with misfortune. And so, by this fable, he says that she puffs herself up, she thinks she can equal her superiors, the woman who was once a slave and dancer. As is common in Horace’s *Satires*, the moral of this fable is turned back on its speaker as this fable also applies to Trimalchio who is incapable of equalling his betters, despite puffing himself up with finery and pretence.

Trimalchio then recounts how he became a freedman and acquired his wealth (74-77). At the end of his biography, he emphasizes the role of astrologers in his life, one of whom tells him: *Tu viperam sub ala nutricas* (77.2). In *The Farmer and the Frozen Viper*, one possible source of Trimalchio’s statement, a farmer nurses a frozen viper which rewards his kindness by biting him, since that is in the animal’s nature. This fable is spoken by an astrologer but paraphrased by Trimalchio with what must be his own words, since he calls Fortunata a viper again (*viperae huius sessorium* (77.4)). It is noteworthy that courtesans were often linked with vipers. Insults that compare men to beasts serve to animalize the victim, and are especially biting for freedmen as they recall their servile origins. This is evidenced by Trimalchio’s violent reaction to being called a dog by his wife (74). Despite his attempts to show that he has moved beyond his servile past, he is constantly reminded of it through animal imagery.

Trimalchio ends his biography at 77 and here attempts to break his connection with the animal world as he says of himself: *Sic amicus vester, qui fuit rana, nunc est rex* (“Thus your friend, who was a frog, is now a king”) (77.7). With this phrase he sums up his rise from low origins by associating himself with an animal, in his slavery, and human, in his freedom. This reference is often compared to *The Frog Prince* from Grimms’ *Fairy Tales*. The problem with this interpretation, as has been pointed out, is that the frog began as a prince whereas Trimalchio did not, or at least he does not tell us

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473 Marchesi 2005: 327, Marmorale 1962 (ad loc), Friedlaender 1891 (ad loc) and Horsfall 1989: 83 n. 73, suggest comparison with Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.314-320 and Phaedrus 1.24.9. This was one of the most popular fables in Latin literature and is found in Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.314 and *Ep.* 1.19.15 and Martial, *Ep.* 10.79.9-10.
474 For the self-incriminating nature of the allusions in the Cena, see Walsh 1970: 119-120, 123-4 and 132.
475 Maiuri 1945 (ad loc) and Friedlaender 1891 (ad loc) agree that this originates in Phaedrus’ *The Farmer and the Frozen Viper*.
476 See Smith’s comments on chapter 77 (1975).
that he was of princely status.\textsuperscript{477} This is also possibly a play on Trimalchis name meaning ‘three times king’ in a possible combination of Greek and Eastern terms.\textsuperscript{478} Fables such as the \textit{The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow} or \textit{Jupiter and the Frogs} do not present a frog becoming king, but they do highlight the fact that the frog has always been and will always be small. The importance of Trimalchis statement lies in his consciousness of the close link between animal and slave and his need to escape that connection in order to have a place in society. It is clear, however, that he is not capable of this, since his dinner of animal imagery is a constant reminder of the status of slaves as others, of who really eats and who gets eaten.\textsuperscript{479} Trimalchio, in his social mobility, is a dangerous figure who threatens the structure of a slave owning society. To relieve the anxieties of the élite about such a figure, he is criticized and mocked by Encolpius and, ultimately, Petronius.\textsuperscript{480} While Trimalchio is a hyperbolical literary creation, he does reflect a real contemporary trend, in which important administrative positions were increasingly occupied by powerful freedmen, thereby displacing the élite from certain political posts. Suetonius’ biography of the emperor Claudius, for example, reveals the anxieties of the élite about the power of his freedmen at court who were given special powers and controlled the government according to their own interests (24-29). Trimalchios attempts to imitate the great are ultimately unsuccessful, and remind and reassure readers that one cannot truly overcome servile status. The entire dinner reveals the ambivalent position of the freedman in society.\textsuperscript{481}

In Petronius,\textsuperscript{482} an élite author writes from the perspective of a non-élite individual in his narrator Encolpius, who, like Apuleius’ Lucius, is an educated, but unreliable, narrator. Petronius constructs an artificial world of freedmen and slaves based on his upper-class perspective. Often, it is the élite narrator who appropriates fable for his lower-class individuals in Latin literature, perhaps because it is a mode of speech he

\textsuperscript{477} Smith 1975 mistakenly sees this as the Frog-Prince from the fairy tale. Both Friedlaender 1891 (ad loc) and Marmorale 1962 (ad loc) see this instead as a reference to an unknown fable. Courtney 2001: 120 finds a reference to a folk-tale and thinks it perhaps even a pun on Trimalchios name of king.

\textsuperscript{478} For the etymology of Trilmachios name, see Bagnani 1954b: 79.

\textsuperscript{479} See Rimmel 2002: 49.

\textsuperscript{480} For Petronius’ life and dates see Schmeling 2011: xiii-xvii.

\textsuperscript{481} Bodel 1994: 238, argues that Trimalchios ambivalent nature is also reflected in his concern with death and the underworld as like a shade he has the form, but not the substance, of a human.

\textsuperscript{482} For Petronius as author, see Rankin 1971: 1-10.
learned in his rhetorical training, one that was accessible in his experience, and traditionally associated with the Other. In the *Satyricon*, there are striking collisions between the high and the low. The title itself, although problematic like many ancient titles, seems to at least signal some connection with satyrs and their unique positions as crossers of boundaries, inasmuch as they are human, animal and in some sense divine. The novel is characterized by an “undulation of values (from high to low),” with the ultimate lesson that “all appearances are deceptive.”⁴⁸³ Figures like Eumolpus, the free but poor poet, and Encolpius, the educated lower-class narrator who is not above assuming the guise of a slave (103 and 117), “..live on the border of two conflicting codes which ancient literature kept well apart. The “low” of material themes attracts them, but their education draws them towards the “high”, towards examples of mythical heroes.”⁴⁸⁴

There are a number of marked similarities between Petronius’ characters who tell fables, such as Trimalchio and Encolpius, and other figures with fable associations, such as Aesop.⁴⁸⁵ Our Trimalchio, certainly a stereotype, nevertheless reminds us of Aesop as the foreign freedman fabulist who has become wealthy, although he is still excluded from society and remains on the margins. Our narrator Encolpius, is similarly a figure who inhabits the margins. Encolpius’ problems recall the Aesopic tradition as he functions as a social critic who also participates in the system he criticizes, he has offended a god, he is plagued by misfortune, and he was possibly expelled from Massilia as some type of *pharmakos*.⁴⁸⁶ Petronius’ parodic construction of Trimalchio reveals elite anxieties about such figures in contemporary society. In Petronius “...two different cultural paradigms, the orthodox and the alternative, collide and clash: his satire is his way of narrating this collision.”⁴⁸⁷ In line with the penchant for collision and juxtaposition, Petronius is part of an anti-intellectualism in which he participates in high wisdom and literature, but also critiques and subverts it but without any true protest or desire for reform.⁴⁸⁸ Such a method is common in fable as well which, although it functions as a parody and criticism

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⁴⁸³ Conte 1996: 106.
⁴⁸⁴ Conte 1996: 110.
⁴⁸⁶ See Petronius 17 and 136-7 for his conflict with Priapus. See also Rankin 1971: 32.
⁴⁸⁷ Conte 1996: 115.
of human society, rarely prescribes change, but rather urges readers to accept the status quo. It seems that the appropriation of slave speech and persona by an upper-class narrator again allows him special status as a critic of society who reinforces élite social values through his presentations of the Other.

Fable, primarily beast fable, was a genre closely connected with slavery by those who were characterized as fabulists, who were either slaves or freedmen like Trimalchio and his guests, and by the talking animal characters, which reflected the animalization of the slave. Phaedrus tells us that it was a common perception that fables were invented as a language for slaves to express their sentiments in a veiled form (Prol. 3.33-37). Fables likely did not circulate among all slaves, but there is a literary tradition where fables are linked with the speech of slaves and the literary creations of Petronius suitably betray their origins by using this genre. In the Satyricon, all of the beast fable references occur in the Cena Trimalchionis, and are put in the mouths of the freedmen, and Trimalchio in particular. The fable allusions are primarily used as a means of comedy, when characters relax their speech, as angry insults and at times of drunkenness. Each of these episodes represents a break in the façade that Trimalchio has created through actions and language. Trimalchio employs the greatest number of recognizable proverbs derived from fables, and in so doing, through his language, he inevitably breaks down the appearance he has tried to create of being of higher status than his slaves and freedmen guests. The moral of many of the fables told at the dinner only reinforces the status of the freedmen, since, in the fables they tell, most of the creatures cannot escape their conditions just like the fabulists who tell them. At the moments when appearance breaks down, fables come out in the speech of the freedmen, and especially Trimalchio, making plain their servile connections and the reality of their origins. The entire Cena is concerned with pretence on the part of Trimalchio who attempts to portray himself as a man who has escaped his servile associations, but who in fact betrays them frequently through his ignorance, excess, and vulgarity. This disparity, as well as the animal who attempts to change its nature by dressing in another animal’s skin, are common concerns in fables which make

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489 It is possible that there were other fable references in sections of the Satyricon that are not extant, especially given “The Widow of Ephesus” told by Eumolpus.
them well suited to the Cena and its preoccupations with exposing the reality of hierarchy.

Achilles Tatius

Just as the fable collections are anonymous or pseudonymous, the authors of many of the Greek novels are not named. One reason for the absence of a named author can be traced to the perception of both genres as low and, therefore, not necessarily appropriate genres for élite authors. Similarly, we know very little about Achilles Tatius and can only speculate about the date of Leucippe and Clitophon. The Souda provides a few supposed biographical details about Achilles Tatius, such as the association with Egypt, but the information, like much of the supposed biographical material about ancient authors, especially poets, may simply derive from a reading of the text.490

Leucippe and Clitophon seems to date to the late 2nd – early 3rd century as part of the Second Sophistic movement, in which authors were looking back to 5th century Greek culture. The novel, like the fable, although perceived as ‘low’ and anonymous, could also accommodate itself stylistically to the ‘high’ form of literature during this period. As part of this movement, we see a tendency towards displays of knowledge and argument and also an interest in Greek education and ideas. This was primarily an élite movement, in which authors appropriated voices from the past as a means of empowerment and creation of identity through cultural and literary production in the face of Roman power.491 We find the élite voice thus expressing its own power through a medium that was in a sense alien and foreign to the contemporary period. The language appropriation in the Atticizing movement similarly adopted the linguistic forms of the 5th century Attic dialect to replace the contemporary koiné. There is a similar voice appropriation at work in the use of the fable by the élite to reinforce their social and political positions through an alien or othered medium. This looking back to the 5th century included recollections of

490 This Egyptian connection is common in many works that deal with fables and their themes, especially the Life of Aesop, and to some extent reveals a memory of the fable as a foreign import into Greece and Rome. It is worth noting, however, that Egyptian connections are common in many novels as part of the themes of adventure and separation. See especially Heliodorus and Xenophon of Ephesus. For biographical information about Achilles Tatius, see Gaselee 1961: vii.
491 For this theory, see Vasunia 2003: 371-390.
fable literature prominent in authors like Aristophanes, Herodotus and Plato.\footnote{For the Second Sophistic and the novel, see Bowie 1970, Sandy 1997, Vasunia 2003, Whitmarsh 2005, Holzberg 1995: 87-92 and Henderson 2011.} The use of the fable in an agonistic setting to argue superiority and to attack one’s enemies is especially reminiscent of the 5th century models, as opposed to some of our Roman sources, such as Horace, who use fable in discussions of moral philosophy.

_Leucippe and Clitophon_ presents us with a number of motifs, themes and episodes we have come to expect from works that are traditionally associated with the fable. This novel explores the lives of slaves and the lower classes, shows a concern with appearance versus reality within the social hierarchy,\footnote{See Holzberg 1995:16.} and the insertion of marginal details, digressions and stories that seem liminal like the slave, but they are often linked by themes or events that mirror the main action. There is a crossing of geographical and class boundaries. The voicing of the fables through slaves in Achilles Tatius, although unique, is still filtered through multiple levels of narration as the author and the first person narrator Clitophon present the world through élite eyes. As the center of the action, all of the feelings and experiences are conveyed through our young hero as he speaks for other élite males, women and slaves as the narrator of their stories and thus he appropriates both their voices and their power. This occurs especially at 8.5, when Clitophon recounts Leucippe’s adventure to Sostratos. Ultimately, these fables are the property, not of our slave speakers, but rather of the élite author and narrator Clitophon, and thus inside and outside of fable and the frame we are in a world constructed by the élite. The concern with rhetorical agones, which are the traditional place for fable, is apparent in the long and elaborate fable of Satyros and in the trial speeches at the end of the novel. In the novel and the fables, we find the familiar concern with opposites: the weak and the powerful, the male and female. In the votive painting with which the novel opens there are oppositions between land and sea, East and West, nature versus human made, and in the story of Zeus and Europa themes and motifs that prefigure the action (1.1).\footnote{The Myth of Philomela, Procne and Tereus is also found in this novel and the fable collections, although it will not be treated as a fable exemplum (5.3).} The idea of the painted scene reinforces the fictional quality of the narrative and the power of the author in the construction of text through a seemingly incongruous joining of reality and fiction. In the manner of fable, Achilles Tatius personifies the
natural world and attributes human qualities to animals to comment on human behaviours.495

The earliest fables in Eastern literature often involve a rhetorical battle, the verbal *agon*, in a contest for supremacy between two opposing forces. One example, previously examined in Chapter 1, is the early Egyptian fable in which the stomach and the head quarrel for power.496 There are also examples of such *agones* in the collections of Babrius (15, 65, 68) and Phaedrus (4.25, App. 51).497 Achilles Tatius shows a fascination with debates, especially in the court speeches in Book 8, and the fable genre presents ready-made *exempla* for such argumentation. At 2.38, in the debate about the false attractions of women, Menelaos says that when outward adornments are removed women would be like the jackdaw with its stripped plumage in the beauty contest of the birds in the fable of *The Stripped Crow*.498 This fable is used as a metaphor for the guise and spectacle of beauty, as a *persona* or mask it functions as a liminal space both concealing and exposing reality. Here, Menelaos’ fable purports to reveal the reality of female vanity, but it also reveals the internal fabulist’s biases and misogyny, as he appropriates a genre that often expresses negative views of women.

This agonistic fable setting is reprised in the verbal fable battle between the slaves Conops and Satyros at 2.20-22.499 Like Conops’ name, meaning ‘gnat,’ Satyros suggests some connection with the marginal, with the satyr as a liminal figure that is both human and animal.500 He is thus a fitting character to tell fables that link humans and animals. Satyros is also marginal as the clever slave. He acts as the vessel for his élite master, while still serving the stigmatized function of the slave. Within the context of the novel, Satyros also plays the role of surrogate for Clitophon, the slave is a figure who represents his master but Satyros is also of a lower social status. His role as an analogue to his

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495 Achilles Tatius describes the flora, fauna and the waters as lovers (1.17), children tell fables about plants (1.17), there is speculation that Zeus would make the rose the king of the flowers (2.1), while the eagle is the king of the birds (2.12), the elephant is a doctor (4.4), the grasshoppers sing of Aurora and the swallows of the banquet of Tereus (1.15), while the phoenix performs funeral rites for its father (3.25). Apuleius, of course, does this primarily in the figure of Lucius turned ass, but it is also common in Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*, in which we actually have the character of Dorkon wearing a wolf’s skin (1.20-22).

496 See Chapter 1: 15.

497 There are also many other fables that present such *agones* in Perry’s *Aesopica* (12, 14, 20, 46, 202, 219, 222, 223, 229, 257, 271, 284, 584).

498 See also Horace and Philodemus.


500 See Whitmarsh 2001: xxviii.
master is evident in the relationship between Satyros and Leucippe’s maid as another pair of lovers (1.16). Despite his status, he proves a clever figure who, in several cases, drives the plot. At 2.4, Satyros actually plays the role of teacher when he advises Clitophon about love, while several of the devices used to further the plot are the product of this slave who in essence ‘writes’ the story as he engineers Leucippe’s first false death (3.21), Clitophon’s marriage to the rich widow Melite, and he fosters the courtship in Book 1. Of course, the satyr often has a role to play in sexual intrigue. For the most part, then, he serves as an intermediary between the lovers (2.9, 5.18), and a crosser of boundaries as he literally procures a duplicate key so Clitophon can enter the women’s quarters (2.19). Slaves are natural messengers and crossers of boundaries because of the ambivalent feelings of the élite towards their social status. Like the figure of Aesop in the Life, Satyros is tied to the traditions of the servus callidus, the clever slave in New Comedy who often acts on behalf of his somewhat foolish young master in order to help him get the girl. However, despite the presence of fabular material in New Comedy, there is nothing in this genre that resembles the exchange of fable tales between two slaves; thus, the use of Satyros and Conops as fabulists is unparalleled. The unique nature of this episode reinforces the main argument of this dissertation that in our extant sources the fable is actually a tool of the élite, although it is often voiced through othered speakers. This series of agonistic fables is more significant to the larger frame as it foreshadows events but it is also the catalyst for the escape and subsequent shipwreck that drives the rest of the story.

Conops’ role in this section, as the agent of Leucippe’s mother, is to ensure the proper behaviour of the young, in this case to prevent any sexual encounters between Leucippe and Clitophon. Fable literature is similarly concerned with controlling the social behaviour of children, and thus this genre is rather apt for the context. Such a

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502 See Chapter 2: 61, for similar connections between Aesop and the servus callidus.
503 See Chapter 2: 59-64, for a discussion of the associations between fable, Aesop and New Comedy. For a list of fables in Roman Comedy, see the Appendix.
504 See Van Dijk 1996: 525.
505 The policing of sexuality is common in New Comedy and the Greek novels which are often centered around love stories that encourage the proper behaviour of a young couple in sex and marriage. Similarly, it is commonly argued that traditional fairy tales, like Cinderella, are metaphors for young girls coming to sexual maturity, and thus reveal attempts by parents to control sexual behaviour (see Bettelheim 1976).
use of fable not only demonstrates the desire of parents to control their children through a genre like fable, but it also reveals anxieties on the part of parents about children transgressing societal boundaries.506 There is an analogy to be made between the anxieties of parents about the behaviours of their children, and their attempts to control them through fable, to the appropriation of the fable genre, and its messages, by the élite in order to control the behaviours of servile figures, as discussed in Chapter 1.507 Satyros mocks Conops, who is meddlesome, talkative and greedy, vices which mirror those of the insect. Conops responds with *The Lion and the Cock, the Elephant and the Gnat* to tell him that although he is of little account, like the gnat, he does have power, in this case of exposing deception, and Satyros should fear him. In this fable, the lion overcomes his shame at being afraid of the cock when he learns about the danger the gnat poses to the elephant. Conops is the *polypragmon*, the stereotypical busybody, as his unique name suggests, who prefers to discover what is hidden in this passage about deception.508 Some scenes and motifs from this fable are connected with the main narrative of *Leucippe and Clitophon* such as the planned suicide (3.16-17), the concern with the relative power of the strong, casting the slave as insect, and deceit and deceptive appearances as vehicles of power. Conops’ fable is less connected to the context and adds a number of superfluous characters who have no counterparts in the narrative frame, and it displays less art than Satyros’ rhetorical fable.

Satyros responds with his own fable about the *Gnat, the Lion and the Spider*. Satyros claims that he heard his fable (2.21) from one of the *philosophoi*, and he negates his opponent’s fable by referring to it as a *mythos*, while he characterizes his own as being more trustworthy as a *logos*. This attribution of the fable to a philosopher seems to be both a satirical statement, but also privileges Satyros’ fable, and looks forward to his success, by looking back to the classical texts in which philosophers, such as Socrates, employ the genre. Satyros’ fable is twice as long and employs a number of rhetorical techniques, including military and musical imagery, which remind us that the fables are

506 However, this is also a unique use of fable being applied specifically to the sexual behaviours of adolescents. This use of fable in essence infantilizes these adolescent figures, a transitional and therefore othered group whose sexual behaviour is being policed partly through the fable genre. This idea is similar to the commonly held view that many fairy tales are meant to warn young girls of the dangers inherent in sexual maturity.

507 See Chapter 1: 43.

508 For a discussion of Conops, see Morales 2004: 84-87.
being told in a competitive context. The gnat is described as a braggart as he attempts to
deny the lion’s claim to rule over him by listing the qualities that detract from the lion.
They join battle and the gnat wounds the lion on the lip. The lion is unable to attack so
small an opponent and finally gives up from exhaustion. The gnat gloats but, in his
careless exultation, he becomes trapped in a spider’s web. In the final act, he laments that
he challenged the lion when a paltry spider has gotten him. Therefore, the implied lesson
is that Conops should beware of spiders. The élite lion clearly represents Clitophon,
who is annoyed by Conops’ attempt to thwart his escape with the heroine, and for a while
the gnat succeeds in buzzing around him. However, he and the reader did not entirely
expect the appearance of the tricky arachnid Satyros who will trap Conops with his own
vices at 2.23. This fable also cleverly plays with the reader by subverting expectations,
a common device in fables like the Dung Beetle and the Eagle in Aristophanes in which
the beetle proves more powerful than the eagle and Zeus. In the fable, the braggart was
overconfident and did not see the trap ahead. Satyros foreshadows Conops’ fate, the slave
who is a slave to his belly and his bragging, and he traps Conops by means of a dinner
and a sleeping draught.

The Lion, the Gnat and the Spider also functions as a means of foreshadowing the
action of the novel, especially the suffering of the élite lion Clitophon. The lion’s
emotional reactions recall Clitophon’s love pains, while the wounds of the gnat are
paralleled in Clitophon’s description of himself as bitten by a gadfly when he is deceived
by the false story of Leucippe’s murder (7.4). Similarly, the wound the gnat inflicts on
the lips of the lion recalls Clitophon’s deception when he pretends to have been stung by
a bee and seeks a cure from Leucippe that will result in their first kiss (2.7). Of course
deception often functions as a means of furthering the plot. In Satyros’ fable, there is an
implied critique of Clitophon, who is a rather useless aristocratic lion, the slightly passive
hero of these stories who needs the action of another character to further the plot of his
life. As the narrator of his own story, it is hard for Clitophon to criticize himself, but
Achilles Tatius can have other characters act as critics, as there is a questioning of social

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509 It is characteristic of Achilles Tatius not to close the narrative, just as the ending of the novel does not
return to the frame, and here the fable lacks an epimythium.
510 The spider is often the trickster figure in African legends and fables. The figure of Anansi (Ananse) in
some traditions is responsible for bringing stories into the world by cleverly passing a series of tests. For
Ananse, see Vecsey 1981: 161-177.
roles by this slave fabulist. While Clitophon is élite, he does experience liminality within the text and as the narrator he is distanced both from the author and the characters within his narrative. In his description of the exchange between Conops and Satyros, Clitophon appropriates the language of fable and the slave as part of his narrative. He also presents himself as a figure who is not really in control of his story, but as a man who relies on his slave to engineer many elements of his adventure. Clitophon will experience a certain lack or loss of agency; however, this position is temporary. Ultimately, we find the standard social roles reinforced by our élite narrator Clitophon, who retains his upper-class views and values while experiencing social, physical and geographical marginality.

In his use of fable as a debate between two slaves about disparities of power that exist between them and the rest of the world, Achilles Tatius reminds us of the power of the low fable within the larger literary tradition of the novel genre. These two fables might seem superficial and to be part of a rather unimportant episode within the novel, but in reality the contest is significant since it not only foreshadows the plot but it also initiates the entire narrative of boundary crossing that will follow as the élite lovers are thrust into the servile and bestial world represented within these fables. The fables themselves further act as an analogue for the entire novel as these two slaves engaged in a fabulistic *agon* act as agents of their masters and thus their fables become a means both to explore and reinforce established boundaries through the slave voice.

Since Achilles Tatius is unique in ancient literature in his use of fable as a means of critical debate between two slaves, this episode begs the question: why do authors in the Roman period, primarily Phaedrus (*Prol.* 3.33-7),\(^{511}\) tell us that this is a slave genre, and yet this is our only example of slaves employing it? The answer, I believe, is twofold. Slaves are rarely given a voice, and when they do speak, they are predominantly constructed by élite authors, and so they have very little opportunity to actually tell fables. Also, despite the connections between fable and slavery, as this dissertation has argued, fable had always been and continued to be a product of élite thought. This singular use of fable as slave speech is unique to Achilles Tatius and cannot be used to generalize about the connection between the slave and fable. Of course, we see conflicts not only in the fables themselves, but also in their place within literature and text. There

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\(^{511}\) See also Chapter 1: 37-39.
is an inherent contradiction in the situating of fable within slave speech, as these fables have a profound connection to the plot of *Leucippe and Clitophon* and as they reflect it in miniature as devices that both recall earlier events and foreshadow the story’s evolution. The fables themselves are contests for supremacy and reinforce the idea that hierarchies exist at all levels of society, even between slaves. However, such hierarchies are not always absolute as appearances are deceptive, and cleverness does sometimes win the day. It is significant that the lion and the gnat cannot fight because of their unequal stature, or in human terms their status, while the spider proves to be a more appropriate opponent in place of the lion. In these two fables told *in extenso*, two slaves exploit the fable’s ability to reveal and conceal the truth of power relations and various kinds of slavery by using these fables for warnings and veiled threats. Fable, and its collision of oppositions and incongruities, is often a means of expression in a topsy-turvy world in which we are presented with explorations of deception, appearance, status and the use of guise and disguise to call into question human perceptions of power. Such digressions function as anticipatory tales but also beg the reader to engage in a kind of revision of meaning and reinterpret important events through the discursive material.\footnote{512 We find the fable traditionally associated with marginal figures such as women, slaves and barbarians. It is also relegated to a marginal place in the text as digressions, voiced by the male élite (sometimes through a liminal intermediary) as a means of asserting mastery under a comical veil.\footnote{513 Digressions are by their nature marginal and alien as they break the main narrative, however they reclaim their status through relevance to the very text in which they intrude.\footnote{514 Achilles Tatius’ text, while in many ways presenting the idealized and somewhat stereotypical élite urban couple interested in chastity and marriage, which are certainly élite social and moral values, also deals with the liminal and the breaking of boundaries. There is especially a break with the tradition of the Greek romance as his main characters plan premarital sex, Clitophon is unfaithful to Leucippe and Melite’s infidelity is not punished in the end.\footnote{515 Thus, in Achilles Tatius, there is a greater exploration and questioning of assumptions about proper modes of conduct presented in}}}}
the other novels, and the novel pushes the boundaries both geographically and in terms of the characters’ actions and experiences. The rather artificially constructed teleology of the narrative must involve a return to the community in the normative élite role of marriage.\textsuperscript{516} And yet, the text takes place on the margins both geographically and socially. The action is part of a liminal space between youth and marriage in which young people traditionally explore boundaries and experiment with identity. This is reflected in the novel in the extreme themes of physical separation and marginalization. However, in the élite tradition, the goal of testing of such categories and hierarchies is not to undermine them, but rather to reaffirm traditions principally in terms of cultural identity and social status.

The three novels discussed in this chapter explore the world of the lower classes primarily through the eyes and voices of élite and/ or highly educated characters and authors. The main characters explore the margins of their worlds in terms of both geography and the social status of those they meet. Their adventures often involve temporary changes in status in which élite characters are reduced to servile roles in a world constructed according to an élite author’s view of lower-class experiences. These lower-class characters and experiences are defined partly through fable. There are critical and satirical elements that focus specifically on social roles and hierarchies found especially in Apuleius and Petronius. In Apuleius, Petronius and Achilles Tatius, we see a collision between high and low society as the main characters’ journeys often involve not only crossings of physical boundaries, but also temporary changes in status and perspective, which will often end with escape from their topsy-turvy world and a return to the norm.\textsuperscript{517} Such an ending ensured that, while the élite authors and readers could explore and define the world of the Other, in our extant texts there was often the promise of a return to social conventions. At the end of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century there is a shift to the margins and a focus on alterity and the mutability of identity with the expansion of the Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{518} These three élite authors consciously immerse their characters in

\textsuperscript{516} For the importance of marriage as a social boundary in the Greek novel, see Egger 1994: 260-280.
\textsuperscript{517} For the combination of the marginal or popular and the sophisticated in the novels, see Schmeling 1996: 107-114 and 209-220.
\textsuperscript{518} See Whitmarsh 2011: 69-107.
othered or marginal areas of the world as one means of criticizing society. In this engagement with the Other, the élite author has his characters assume stereotypical *personae* that remind us that the fable is similarly a medium that purports to speak for the slave and the Other. In reality, however, when the fable travels from oral tale to written text it becomes the property of the élite author and/or narrator for his own empowerment, entertainment and an examination of the construction and meaning of disparity in society.
Conclusion

This dissertation began by asking why the fable, although often argued to accurately reflect the voice of the Other, is often found in élite literature written by and for highly educated adult males. The earliest Eastern fables were used to teach the ruling classes how to rule and also as a means for one leader to communicate his power to another leader. Fables, according to their history, are subject to appropriation; first from the East by the Greeks and finally by the Romans. The fable remained a discourse of power on a variety of levels, one used to construct, explain and justify the stratifications found in social, political and literary hierarchies. The figure of Aesop represents another facet in the appropriation of the genre. It is possible that slaves, like Aesop, while not the inventors of the genre, appropriated its animal characters as particularly appropriate for their positions as animalized, othered and marginal figures. I would not, however, argue as Kurke does that the Aesopic voice and fable are used in our extant sources as a genuine tool of revolt against institutions and literary genres.\textsuperscript{519} In Aristophanes and, of course, the figure of Aesop, the fable is employed by the lower classes, and yet during the same period the fable retains its connections with élite thought and expressions of power in authors like Aristotle, Plato and Xenophon. As this dissertation has shown, in its association with both the élite and the Other, the fable was an appropriate place for the privileged to examine the permeability of boundaries through a transgressive figure. I agree with McCarthy that the voice of the slave and also the othered figure are a means for the privileged to explore their anxieties about the contemporary socio-political structure.\textsuperscript{520} The power of the dominant class is dependent upon the acceptance of that domination by the subordinate class. In the fables in this study told by the élite through othered figures the lesson is often that the subjected should accept their place. The fable has traditionally always been a vehicle for the élite to establish, explain and justify their positions. The fable ultimately suggests that as a genre it is part of a hierarchical agonistic tradition in which the relative value of members of a society is established.\textsuperscript{521}

\textsuperscript{519} See Kurke 2011 and Chapter 1: 14-15.
\textsuperscript{520} See McCarthy 2004 and Chapter 2: 62.
\textsuperscript{521} See Steiner 2012:1-2.
Slaves often functioned as intermediaries, not only in the literal sense as representatives of their masters or as substitutes for other relationships, but also metaphorically. Slaves were vessels through which masters explored and relieved anxieties about their own status. Since they were considered lesser beings, slaves were able to engage in transgressive behaviours that their free masters were not. And thus, the slave was a place for masters to explore the boundaries of societal expectations while not crossing them. Similarly, élite authors appropriated the slave and the fabulist persona as a means of exploring and criticizing disparities in their contemporary socio-political worlds by assuming an othered voice or genre. In the ancient world, the master and slave often had an agonistic, but interdependent relationship. We see such a relationship between Aesop and his masters: both Xanthus and, arguably, Apollo. In these relationships, Aesop is a figure of discomfort for the élite as he attempts to appropriate their positions, and yet Aesop is also dependent upon them for his success. His punishment reveals the anxieties of the élite about the power of the slave over his master. Aesop is used by the élite to explore the world, including the foolish master, but ultimately, as a figure who attempts to usurp the place of the élite, he must be punished.

In the Life of Aesop, there are clear anxieties about the place of the slave which, along with an ultimately conservative moral to many fables, argues that the text is primarily an élite construction. Aesop is a transgressive figure, one who reveals the permeability in the social structure of the ancient world. Aesop’s othered nature allows him the freedom to be a critic of a variety of social and political disparities. Ultimately, however, he attempts to usurp roles that are outside of his position as mediator, and this leads to his destruction. Aesop’s punishment at Delphi and his eventual status as hero, reveal the tensions about such figures in society. Aesop is a figure both to be feared and envied by the élite as he undermines and reinforces their political and social positions. Therefore, when élite authors appropriate Aesop and his genre, they can explore aspects of the marginal through this othered figure, but in using his voice they also appropriate his power, and through that power they support their own agendas.

Livy, in his construction of an ideal episode in history through a fable exemplum, reveals his anxieties about the contemporary political climate. He uses the unique

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522 For the slave as intermediary, see Fitzgerald 2000: 13-41.
mediating figure of Menenius Agrippa, whom he alone labels as a plebeian mouthpiece of the Senate, as a means of showing how the power structure in contemporary society should depend on the fulfillment of mutual obligations by all classes. His fable is about how to rule and how to be ruled and he uses it to construct an idealized history as a means of criticizing and ameliorating the present. Horace, Livy’s contemporary, assumes an Aesopic persona as one means of relieving the anxieties of his contemporaries about his power in the highest literary and political circles. His fables are often a means of expressing the proper behaviour in the patron-client relationship. Horace’s position as an Aesopic, or mediating figure, allows him to criticize society, including his social peers, his superiors and himself. Horace’s self-deprecation and his insistence on his lower-class status allow him the freedom to be a satirist. Horace uses the genre of the slave and the slave figure to warn of the metaphorical dangers of slavery to vice, but also to establish his own social and moral positions.

Plutarch’s fables construct his ideal moral and political view of the world. Many of his fables detail the proper behaviours of all members of society in marriage, at the symposium, in education and in everyday life and politics. Plutarch was especially concerned, like Livy, with recreating an ideal past, partly through fable, as a reaction to discontent with the present political and moral situations. During the Second Sophistic, the appropriation of the Classical past, arguably the height of Greek civilization, revealed a discontent with the present. His conservative views were in line with fable literature which he used to advise the élite about the dangers of popular favour, giving too much control to the people, and he also advocated respect for the current political structure. Like his élite appropriation of the Greek past, his use of fable was another means of constructing and delineating his view of the ideal functioning of contemporary society in terms of moral, social and political conduct.

The novels in this study use fable to explore the marginal and the othered, and to criticize the current socio-political climate with the goal of reinforcing societal norms advocated by élite authors. Such explorations, however, do reveal contemporary socio-political anxieties. In Achilles Tatius, the fabulistic agon between two slaves is a means for each of them to attempt to assert dominance. Satyros, the clever slave and, therefore, the victor in the contest, is used as one means of criticizing his somewhat powerless
master, as Satyros’ agency drives the early stages of his master’s love affair and it is his fabular victory over the slave Conops that will allow for the exploration of literal and metaphorical boundaries. This figure’s power over his master is negated, of course, to a certain extent by his slave status and his role as servant from which he does not attempt to break free. In Petronius, there are similar anxieties about the power of slaves and the permeability of class in the parody of the freedman Trimalchion. Our élite author has the freedmen in the Cena, and Trimalchion in particular, express themselves through fable as one method of defining their status as they are stereotypically one class of people who should employ fable. He uses the fables they tell to reassert upper-class authority over these speakers as their fables often reinforce the conservative élite view of the world as they warn of the dangers of crossing boundaries. In Apuleius, the entire text contains fabular elements, especially in the suffering of the donkey, and it explores the fable moral of the danger of slavery to vice, in this case to curiosity, through the élite man-turned-ass. In this text, the author reveals not only an élite fear about the real possibility of physical slavery in the ancient world, but he also reveals his concerns about contemporary society’s slavery to various vices. Apuleius teaches that even an élite individual can become a slave, since, as it was for Horace, slavery is a state of mind.

While the fable is increasingly associated with the Other in the first three centuries CE, the genre is still appropriated by upper-class male authors to define their own positions. Elite authors employ fable as one means of communicating behavioural expectations not only by appropriating a genre which they have characterized as Other, but also by the voicing of fable through marginalized figures. The juxtaposition of the high and the low in fable literature allows for an exploration of boundaries and anxieties that in the end will reaffirm the established order. In a sense, by taking on the fable, there is a kind of theft of the voice of the Other effectively silencing any potential response. Thus fable often serves as a vehicle for the élite to use the voice of those they wish to control and to reinforce their current socio-political reality. The élite appropriation of the fable as a means of social control over marginalized groups reflects a certain amount of uneasiness about their own positions and the increasing social mobility in the 1st century CE. The civil wars at the end of the Republic, the change from Republic to Principate and the decreased power of the Senate, the emergence of powerful freedmen, despotic
emperors, the increased inclusion of foreign peoples in the Roman Empire and the Greek acknowledgment of a certain loss of control in their reactionary looking back to the Classical period in the Second Sophistic, all created social and political tensions and uneasiness in many of the writers examined in this study. These authors, who express themselves through fables, reveal anxieties produced in periods of change and transition and use the othered genre of fable, and the character of fabulist, as a means of exploring contemporary anxieties. The ultimate goal of this exploration is to use the mediating figure and genre as a means, in their literary productions, of creating their ideal moral, social and political worlds. Thus, in our extant sources, at least, fable remains an élite tool, like the body of the slave, for expressing their anxieties, fears and, in the end, their own power.
Appendix: Chronological List of Fable References and their Sources

The following abbreviations indicate the most widely used modern and ancient sources in which to find versions of the fables included in this study.

Abbreviations:


Although there are a handful of fables told in their entirety in the authors that follow, for the most part the fables appear as allusions, they are often proverbial in nature and, therefore, many are shorter than two lines. In those instances where the fable reference is often disputed, I have added an asterisk.

Fables in Greek Authors from the Archaic Period – 1st Century BCE

**Hesiod** (Archaic Period)
*Works and Days*

**Herodotus** (late 5th century BCE)
*Histories*
1.141 *The Flute-player and the Fish* (Gibbs 290, PA 11, Theon, *Prog.* 2)
7.152 *The Two Wallets* (Gibbs 527, PP 4.10, PA 266, Catullus 22.21, Horace, *Sat.*2.3.299, Seneca, *De Ira* 2.28.8, Petronius 57.7)

**Aristophanes** (5th-4th century BCE)
*Peace*

*Birds*
471-6 *The Fable of the Crested Lark* (Gibbs 499, PA 447)
652-3 *The Eagle and the Fox* (Gibbs 154, PP 1.28, PA 1)
808 *The Eagle and the Arrow* (Gibbs 43, PA 276, Heliodorus 2.33)

*Lysistrata*
695 *The Dung Beetle and the Eagle* (See Above)
Wasps 1401 Aesop and the Bitch (Gibbs 571, PA 423)
1427-31 The Chariot Driver (Gibbs 344, PA 428)
1435-40 The Woman and the Jar (Gibbs 180, PA 438)
1448 The Dung Beetle and the Eagle (See Above)

Plato (5th-4th century BCE)
Phaedo
60-61b Pleasure and Pain (PA 445)
Phaedrus
259b-d The Grasshoppers (PA 470)

Xenophon (5th-4th century BCE)
Memorabilia
2.7 The Sheep, the Shepherd and the Dog (Gibbs 67, PB 128, PA 356)

Aristotle (4th century BCE)
Rhetoric
2.20 The Horse and the Stag (Gibbs 47, PP 4.4, PA 269, Horace, Ep. 1.10.34-8, Theon, Prog. 2)
The Fox, the Ticks and the Hedgehog (Gibbs 29, PA 427, Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 18.5.174)

Politics
3.8 The Lions and the Hares (PA 450)
Meteorologica
2.3 Aesop and the Shipbuilders (Gibbs 557, PA 8)

Unknown Author (1st–2nd century BCE)
Batrachomyomachia
Battle of the Frogs and Mice (Gibbs 139-140, PA 384, Life of Aesop 133)

Fables in Latin Authors from the 3rd Century BCE-2nd Century CE

Ennius (c.239-169 BCE)
Frags. The Crested Lark (quoted by Gellius, Noctes Atticae 2.29.3-16) (Gibbs 293, PA 325)

Plautus (c.254-184 BCE)
Pseudolus
139-41 The Wolf and the Shepherd (Gibbs 38, PA 234, Terence, Eunuchus 832)
Bacchides
349 The Donkey and the Mule (Gibbs 64, PA 263)
Stichus
577 The Wolf and the Nurse (Gibbs 283, PB 16, PA 158, Terence, Adelphoe, 538)
Aulularia
226-35 The Ox and the Ass (not in PA)*

Terence (c.190-159 BCE)
Adelphoe
538 The Wolf and the Nurse (Gibbs 283, PB 16, PA 158, Plautus, Stichus 577)
Eunuchus
832 The Wolf and the Shepherd (Gibbs 38, PA 234, Plautus, Pseudolus 139-141)

Lucilius (died c.102 BCE)
Satires
Frag. 980-990 (Marx): The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints (Gibbs 18, PA 142, Horace, Ep. 1.1.73-75, 1.19.21-22, Seneca, De Otto 1.3, Quintilian, I.O. 10.2.9-10, Plutarch, Quomodo Quis Suos in Virtute Sentiat Profectus 7)

Cicero (106-43 BCE)
On Divination
1.15 The Eagle and the Farmer (Gibbs 73, PA 296)
2.13.30 The Astronomer and the Thracian Women (Gibbs 314, PA 40)

Lucretius (c.94-49 BCE)
De Rerum Natura
4.710 The Lion and the Elephant (Gibbs 247, PA 259)*

Catullus (c.87-54 BCE)
22.21 The Two Wallets (Gibbs 527, PB 66, PP 4.10, PA 266, Herodotus 7.152, Horace, Sat. 2.3.299, Seneca, De Ira 2.28.8, Petronius 57.7)

Horace (born c.65 BCE)
Satires
1.1.32-38 The Labouring Ant (Gibbs 513, PB 140, PA 166)
1.6.22 The Donkey in the Lion’s Skin (Gibbs 322-3, PB 139, PA 188& 358)*
2.1.64 The Donkey in the Lion’s Skin (see Above)*
2.1.77-8 The Serpent and the File (Gibbs 305, PP 4.8, PA 93)*
2.3.186 The Fox Imitating the Lion (The Donkey in the Lion’s Skin Above, or Zeus Makes the Fox King of the Animals (see Perry’s Appendix 107), or The Fox and Lion Hunting (Gibbs 343) or The Fox, the Wolf and the Lions (Gibbs 330, PB 101))
2.3. 299 The Two Wallets (Gibbs 527, PB 66, PP 4.10, PA 266, Herodotus 7.152, Catullus 22.21, Seneca, De Ira 2.28.8, Petronius 57.7)
2.3. 314-20 The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow (Gibbs 349, PB 28, PP 1.24, PA 376, Horace, Ep. 1.19.15, Petronius 74.13-4, 77.7, Martial, Ep. 10.79.9-16)
2.5.56 The Noisy Crow (Gibbs 104, PB 77, PP 1.13, PA 124, Horace, Ep. 1.17.50-1, AP 437, Apuleius, Preface to De Deo Socratis 4.108-111)
2.6.79-117 The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse (Gibbs 408, PB 108, PA 352)
Epistles
1.1.73-75 The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints (Gibbs 18, PB 103, PA 142, Lucilius, frag. 980-990, Horace, Ep. 1.19.21-22, Seneca, De Otio 1.3, Quintilian, I.O. 10.2.9-10, Plutarch, Quomodo Quis Suos in Virtute Sentiat Profectus 7)
1.3.18-20 The Stripped Crow (Gibbs 326, PB 72, PP 1.3, PA 472, Lucian, Apology 1-4, Achilles Tatius 2.38)
1.7.29-34 The Fox in the Grain Bin (Gibbs 443, PB 86, PA 24)
1.10.34-38 The Horse and the Stag (Gibbs 47, PP 4.4, PA 269, Aristotle, Rhetoric 2.20, Theon, Prog. 2)
1.14.43 The Horse and the Ox (Gibbs 418, PA 565)*
1.16.45 The Donkey in the Lion’s Skin (Gibbs 322, PA 188)*
1.17.50-51 The Noisy Crow (see Above)*
1.19.15 The Mother Frog Imitating a Cow (see Above)*
1.19.21-22 The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints (see Above)*
1.20.14-16 The Man and His Donkey (Gibbs 486, PA 186)

Ars Poetica
139 Mountain Labouring to Bring Forth a Mouse (Gibbs 280, PP 4.24, PA 520)
134-135 The Fox, the Goat and the Well (Gibbs 113, PP 4.9))*
437 The Noisy Crow (see Above)

Pompeius Trogus (late first century BCE)
Historiae Philippicae,
in Justinus’ epitome
43.4.4 The Dog and Her Puppies (Gibbs 116, PP 1.19, PA 480)

Livy (59 BCE- 17 CE)
Ab Urbe Condita
2.32.5-12 The Belly and the Limbs (Gibbs 66, PA 130, Plutarch, Coriolanus 6, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities 6. 83-6, Cassius Dio, Roman History 4. 10-13, Florus, Epitome of Roman History 1.17.23)
21.62.3 The Donkey on the Roof (Gibbs 339, PB 125, PA 359, Livy 36.37.2, Petronius 63.3)*
36.37.2 The Donkey on the Roof (See Above)*

Ovid (ca.34BCE-17CE)
Fasti
1.337-60 The Goat and the Vine (Gibbs 157, PA 374)
2. 243-66 The Raven and the Figs (not in PA)*

Propertius (born c. 50 BCE)
Elegies
2.14 The Doctor at the Funeral (Gibbs 586, PA 114)*
Phaedrus (born c. 18 BCE-died c.54 CE)
*Fabulae*

Seneca (c. 4-65 CE)
*De Otio*
1.3 *The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints* (Gibbs 18, PB 103, PA 142, Lucilius, frag. 980-990, Horace, *Ep*. 1.1.73-75, 1.19.21-22, Quintilian, *I.O.* 10.2.9-10, Plutarch, *Quomodo Quis Suos in Virtute Sentiat Profectus* 7)

*De Ira*
2.28.8 *The Two Wallets* (Gibbs 527, PB 66, PP 4.10, PA 266, Herodotus 7.152, Catullus 22.21, Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.299, Petronius 57.7)

Petronius (c.27-66 CE)
*Satyricon*
44.18 *The Mouse in the Pot* (Gibbs 425, PB 60, PA 167) or *The Cat, the Mouse and the Oath* (Gibbs 118, PA 615)*
56.9-10 *The Frog and the Mouse* (Gibbs 139 & 140, PA 384)*
57.7 *The Two Wallets* (Gibbs 527, PB 66, PP 4.10, PA 266, Herodotus 7.152, Catullus 22.21, Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.299, Seneca, *De Ira* 2.28.8)*
58.9-10 *The Mouse in the Pot* (Gibbs 425, PB 60, PA 167)*
63.3 *The Donkey on the Roof* (Gibbs 339, PB 125, PA 359, Livy 21.62.3, 36.37.2)*
77.2 *The Farmer and the Frozen Viper* (Gibbs 440, PB 143, PP 4.20, PA 176)
111-112 *The Widow of Ephesus* (Gibbs 577, PP App. 15, PA 543)*

Pliny (23-79 CE)
*Natural History*
8.61 *The Dogs and Crocodiles* (Gibbs 102, PP 1.25, PA 482)
32.13 *The Beaver and his Testicles* (Gibbs 451, PP App. 30, PA 118)

Martial (c. 40-102 CE)
*Epigrams*

Quintilian (c. 35-100 CE)
*I.O.*
10.2.9-10 *The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints* (Gibbs 18, PB 103, PA 142, Lucilius, frag. 980-990, Horace, *Ep*. 1.1.73-75, 1.19.21-22, Seneca, *De Otio* 1.3, Plutarch, *Quomodo Quis Suos in Virtute Sentiat Profectus* 7)

Fronto (ca. 100-170 CE)
*Epistles* (p. 152 Van de Hout)
*The Vine and the Holly Oak* (not in PA)
Florus (c. 2nd century CE)
1.17.23 The Belly and the Limbs (Gibbs 66, PA 130, Livy 2.32, Plutarch, Coriolanus 6, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities 6. 83-6, Cassius Dio, Roman History 4. 10-13)

Apuleius (born c.125 CE)
Praefatio to De Deo Socratis
4.108-111 The Noisy Crow (Gibbs 104, PA 124, Horace, Sat. 2.5.56, Ep. 1.17.50-1, AP 437)
Metamorphoses
3.22 The Foxes and their Tails (Gibbs 398, PA 17)*
4.1-7.13 The Two Suitors (Gibbs 468, PP App. 16, PA 544)*
5.9 The Bald Man and the Gardener (Gibbs 583, PA 560) and The Donkey and his Masters (Gibbs 10, PA 179)*
8.24 The Donkey who Carried the God (Gibbs 278, PA 182) and The Donkey and the Priests of Cybele (Gibbs 6, PP 4.1, PB 141, PA 164)*
9.1 The Donkey in the Dining Room (PB 129)*
9.27-8 A Domestic Triangle (Gibbs 578, PB 116, PA 350)*
9.42 The Peeping Ass (PA 459) and Demosthenes and the Athenians (Gibbs 2, PA 460)*

Aulus Gellius (born c.130 CE)
Noctes Atticae
2.29.3-16 The Crested Lark (quoted from Ennius) (Gibbs 293, PA 325)
5.14 The Shepherd and the Lion (Gibbs 69, PA 563)

Fables in Greek Authors from the late 1st Century BCE - 4th Century CE

Diodorus Siculus (late 1st century BCE)
19.25 The Lion and the Maiden (PA 140)
33.7 The Man with Two Wives (PP 2.2, PA 31)

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st century BCE- 1st century CE)
Roman Antiquities
6.83-6 The Belly and the Limbs (Gibbs 66, PA 130, Livy 2.32, Plutarch, Coriolanus 6, Cassius Dio, Roman History 4. 10-13, Florus, Epitome of Roman History 1.17.23)

Josephus (36-95 CE)
Jewish Antiquities
18.5.174 The Fox, the Ticks and the Hedgehog (Gibbs 29, PA 427, Aristotle, Rhetoric 2.20)
Theon (1st century CE)

Progymnasmata (Spengel)

2

The Flute Player and the Fish (Gibbs 290, PA 11, Herodotus 1.141)
War and Insolence (PB 70)
The Dog and its Puppies (Gibbs 116, PP 1.19, PA 480)
The Horse and the Stag (Gibbs 47, PP 4.4, PA 269, Aristotle, Rhetoric 2.20, Horace Ep.1.10.34-8)

3

The Hawk and the Nightingale (Gibbs 131, PA 4, Hesiod, W&D 200-210, Plutarch, Convivium 14)
The King’s Son and the Lion Cub (not in PA)
Zeus and the Camel (Gibbs 510, PA 117)
The Dog and his Reflection (Gibbs 263, PA 133)

Plutarch (c.46-120 CE)

Lives

Agis

2

The Snake and his Tail (Gibbs 346, PB 134, PA 362)

Coriolanus

6

The Belly and the Limbs (Gibbs 66, PA 130, Livy 2.32, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities 6. 83-6, Cassius Dio, Roman History 4.10-13, Florus, Epitome of Roman History 1.17.23)

Demosthenes

23.4-6

The Wolf, the Sheep and the Ram (Gibbs 31, PB 93, PA 153)

Lysander

7

The Fox and the Lion Hunting (Gibbs 343, PA 394)

Phocion

9.2

The Coward and the Ravens (Gibbs 251, PA 245)*

Themistocles

18.6

The Travellers and the Plane Tree (Gibbs 82, PA 175)

Moralia

Animine an Corporis Affectationes Sint Peiores

1

The Leopard and the Fox (Gibbs 191, PA 12)

Apopthegmata Laconica-Lycurgus

1.1

The Hunting Dog and the Watchdog (Gibbs 68, PA 92)

Conjugalia Praecepta

12

The North Wind and the Sun (Gibbs 183, PA 46)

25

The Children and the Mirror (Gibbs 495, PP 3.8, PA 499)

39

The Woman in Labour (Gibbs 538, PP 1.18, PA 479)

Consolatio ad Apollonium

19

The Privilege of Grief (PA 462)

Consolatio ad Uxorem

6

The Privilege of Grief (See Above)

De Communitibus Notitiis Adversus Stoicos

19

The Wolves and the Hides (Gibbs 442, PA 135)

De Fraterno Amore

12

The Cat and the Hen (Gibbs 310, PB 121, PA 7)
De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta
27 The Donkey and the Ox (Gibbs 65, PA 181)

De Vitando Aere Alieno
8 The Greedy Boy (Gibbs 539, PB 34, PA 47)

Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata
Scirulus The Old Man and his Sons (Gibbs 493, PB 47, PA 53)

Septem Sapientium Convivium
3 Aesop and the Soothsayer (Gibbs 317, PP 3.3, PA 495)
4 The Boastful Mule (Gibbs 206, PB 62, PA 315)
12 The Leopard and the Fox (Gibbs 191, PA 12)
13 The Shepherds, the Lamb and the Wolf (Gibbs 392, PA 453)
14 The Dog in Winter and Summer (Gibbs 267, PA 449)

The Hawk and the Nightingale (Gibbs 131, PA 4)

Quaestiones Convivales
1.1.5 The Fox and the Stork (Gibbs 156, PP 1.26, PA 426)
5.1 The Clown, the Farmer and the Pig (Gibbs 592, PP 5.5, PA 527)

Quomodo Quis Suos in Virtute Sentiat Profectus
7 The Fox, the Lion and the Footprints (Gibbs 18, PB 103, PA 142,
Lucilius, frag. 980-990, Horace, Ep. 1.1.73-75, 1.19.21-22, Seneca, De
Otio 1.3, Quintilian, I.O. 10.2.9-10)

Babrius (late 1st century CE)
Fables

Dio Chrysostom (1st – 2nd century CE)
Discourses
72.12-6 The Owl and the Birds (Gibbs 488, PA 437)
12.7 The Owl and the Birds (See Above)

Appian (2nd century CE)
Bella Civilia
1.101 The Man and the Flea (Gibbs 120, PA 272)

Lucian (2nd century CE)
Apology
1.3.18-20, Achilles Tatius 2.38)

Pseudo Lucian (2nd century CE)
Ass
26 The Two Suitors (Gibbs 468, PP App. 16, PA 544)*
43 The Bald Man and the Gardener (Gibbs 583, PA 560) and The Donkey
and his Masters (Gibbs 10, PA 179)*
35-39 The Donkey who Carried the God (Gibbs 278, PA 182) and The Donkey
and the Priests of Cybele (Gibbs 6, PP 4.1, PB 141, PA 164)*
40-41 The Donkey in the Dining Room (PB 129)*
43, 56  *The Peeping Ass* (PA 459) and *Demosthenes and the Athenians* (Gibbs 2, PA 460)*

**Hermogenes** (2nd century CE)

*Progymnasmata*

1  *The Apes Found a City* (Gibbs 447, PA 464)

**Maximus of Tyre** (2nd century CE)

19.2  *The Lamb, the Shepherd and the Cook* (PA 465)

32.1  *The Stag, the Lion and the Shepherd* (not in PA)

36.1  *Prometheus and the Creation of Mortals* (not in PA)

**Cassius Dio** (2nd - 3rd century CE)

*Roman History*


**Longus** (2nd - 3rd century CE)

*Daphnis and Chloe*

1.20-22  *The Wolf and the Heron* (Gibbs 46, PP 1.8, PA 156)*

1.25  *The Fox and the Lion Hunting* (Gibbs 343, PA 394)*

**Life of Aesop** (2nd - 3rd century CE?)

33(G)  *Zeus, Apollo and Prophecy* (PA 385)

37  *The Vegetables and the Weeds* (Gibbs 501, PA 119)

48  *The Sheep, the Goat and the Sow* (Gibbs 397, PA 85)

67  *The Prince and his Brains* (PA 380)

68  *Dionysus and the Three Cups of Wine* (not in PA)

94  *Prometheus and the Two Paths* (PA 383)

97  *The Wolves, Sheep and Dogs* (Gibbs 32, PA 153)

99  *The Man and the Insect* (Gibbs 272, PA 387)

125  *The Driftwood on the Sea* (PA 177)

126  *The Delphians and their Ancestors* (Gibbs 504, PA 383)

129  *The Widow and the Widower* (PA 388)

131  *The Girl and Good Sense* (PA 386)

133  *The Frog and the Mouse* (Gibbs 139-140, PA 384, *Batrachomyomachia*)


140  *The Farmer and the Donkeys* (not in PA)*

141  *The Father and his Daughter* (Gibbs 136, PA 379)

**Philostratus** (3rd century CE)

*Life of Apollonius of Tyana*

5.14-15  *The Invention of Fables* (not in PA)*

200
Achilles Tatius (3rd century CE)
*Leucippe and Clitophon*
2.20-21 *The Lion and the Cock, the Elephant and the Gnat* (Gibbs, 247, PA 259)
2.22 *The Gnat, the Lion and the Spider* (Gibbs 243, PA 255)

Heliodorus (3rd century CE)
*Aethiopica*
2.33 *The Eagle and the Arrow* (Gibbs 43, PA 276, Aristophanes, *Birds* 808)

Aphthonius (4th century CE)
*Progymnasmata*
1 *The Cricket and the Ant* (Gibbs 126, PA 373)

*Fabulae*
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