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***nihil amplius spectari debet quam...Derrida at the Theatre***

'While reading in a certain way, one can, I won't say try to hear &ndash; because I don't think one can really hear Plato &ndash; but one can pose the question of Plato's signature, even if it is inaccessible, one can pose the question of this dramaturgy of signatures and voices.' – Derrida 'Dialanguage'

The relationship between Plato (his 'dramaturgy of signatures and voices') and Platonism (as an effect of the texts signed by Plato) is a constant tension in Derrida's work and is based on the imagery of a family drama of father (Plato) and son (Platonism). Derrida's readings of Plato and Platonism operate within the Nietzschean inspired reversals of Platonism prevalent in the theoretical climate of post-war France. The works of Derrida, Deleuze and Foucault, all respond in differing ways to the *theatrum philosophicum* of Platonism and the part it has played in the staging of a metaphysics of presence. It is the basic assumption of Derrida's attack on logocentrism that the privileging presence of the speaker and the audience in the speech act is an offspring of the Platonic tradition of philosophy. Nevertheless, while his critics have returned to the paternity of Plato's texts to pre-empt Derrida's ideas, little work has focused on the traditions of Platonism, in their filial translation of the father Plato, to critique Derrida's family drama of Platonism.

This paper listens in on such a moment in the history of Platonism: Apuleius' *Florida* 18. In this text, Apuleius the *philosophus Platonicus* is holding forth (*dissertare*) before an audience at the theatre in Carthage. Beginning with reference to specific stage directions to his performance, he states that when in a theatre what ought to be looked at (*in auditorio hoc genus spectari debet...*) is not the physical layout of the theatre, the genre of the performance (tragedy, comedy) nor even the actors on the stage, but above all of these things, what ought to be looked at is the *ratio* of the audience and the *oratio* of the speaker (*sed istis omnibus superessis nihil amplius spectari debet quam conuenientium ratio et dicentis oratio*). While commentators have pointed to the importance of the combination *ratio et oratio* in this text (and the *Florida* as a whole) as a translation of the Greek *logos*, mirroring Apuleius' own highlighting of the object of interpretation, they have failed to appreciate the radical procedure of their split between audience and speaker for the history of Platonism.

Apuleius' performance causes some severe problems to Derrida's celebrated critique of Western metaphysics through its privileging of the spoken over the written word, by uncovering the theatricality of his project and going beyond the limits of the family scene. Derrida's grammatology, from the scene of writing to Plato's pharmacy as theatre, incorporates several motifs of dramatic imagery. However, despite Derrida's representation of the Platonic *logos* at the centre stage of the Platonic tradition, he does not account for the translation of this scene onto the audience.

This paper will interrogate the idea of the object of interpretation in the theatrical motifs of Derrida's showy critique of logocentrism through the notion of the splitting of *logos*

(between the *ratio* of an audience and the *oratio* of a speaker) in the Latin tradition (and translation) of Platonism as represented by Apuleius.