TECHNIQUES OF DESCRIPTION IN APULEIUS' CUPID AND PSYCHE

TECHNIQUES OF DESCRIPTION IN APULEIUS'

CUPID AND PSYCHE

By

SARAH PARKER, MA

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AUTHOR: Sarah Parker, BA (Brock University), MA (University of Ottawa)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Paul Murgatroyd

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Apuleius' techniques and employment of setting, ecphrasis and characterization in the tale of Cupid and Psyche. Although some scholarly work has been done concerning Apuleius' narrative style, it has largely excluded this story and focused rather upon the larger framework of the Metamorphoses. This study is both a re-evaluation of earlier scholarly conjecture as well as a new interpretation and more detailed examination of these narrative devices within a much overlooked segment of Apuleius' novel. The first two chapters comprise an extensive analysis of the author's use of setting and ecphraseis with particular focus upon the following: the structural impact of and the manner in which these two elements are integrated within both Cupid and Psyche and the Metamorphoses as a whole (for example, parallels, links and prefiguration), their vividness or otherwise and how this is portrayed, the methods by which Apuleius employs setting and descriptions to colour mood and atmosphere and point up analogies and/or antitheses, as well as the significance which the two aspects play in conveying major semes and thematic threads throughout the narrative. The latter two chapters focus upon Apuleius' methods of characterization, including an examination of the minor and principal characters' actions, spoken words and thoughts, authorial intrusions and judgements, set descriptions, the significance of names or their absence, antitheses and/or analogies between characters and between characters and their environments. Characters' roles and narrative functions are also examined at length. The analyses have been undertaken in conjunction with both modern narratological methods and traditional classical methods of text analysis. This dissertation furthers knowledge about Apuleius' narrative techniques, and demonstrates his careful attention to structure, style, the impact of characters and the importance borne by set

descriptions. It also	contributes, therefore,	to our knowledge of the	ne ancient novel and narrate	ology
in general.				

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Preface

This thesis aims to further our knowledge about and offer new insights into Apuleius' methods and usage of setting, ecphrasis and characterization within Cupid and Psyche. Although the focus of the dissertation is restricted to the Cupid and Psyche tale, it tells us a great deal about Apuleius' novelistic style in general and his relation to the tradition of the ancient novel, as well as shedding light on Apuleius the man. Some work has been done from a narratological perspective on certain aspects of the tale (e.g. Frangoulidis' studies), but the studies have not consisted of comprehensive examinations of the above narrative elements. In fact, the majority of narratological studies of Apuleius' Metamorphoses have focused upon the rest of the novel to the exclusion of the inset tale of Cupid and Psyche. This is true of J. J. Winkler's pioneering work, entitled Auctor and Actor (1985), which covers in detail various points in the novel but only briefly touches upon Cupid and Psyche. The topic, therefore, remains largely untouched by other scholars, and much of the material which does exist concerning these topics has either been written with another focus in mind (e.g. a philosophical inquiry) or comprises only a brief mention in an article or commentary.

I have approached my study using some techniques and terminology established by modern narratologists, but have also relied heavily upon more traditional approaches to classical texts, such as looking for the influence of literary predecessors on the author's choice of subject, diction, etc. and the impact which earlier authors may have had on Apuleius. For the sake of clarity, after a concise review I have frequently adopted definitions of terms offered by narratologists. Yet, at times, it has been necessary to modify these definitions as they apply to this study of Apuleius' work. Furthermore, to facilitate the reading of the dissertation, instead of

including a separate introductory chapter in which the terms employed are defined, I have chosen to elaborate upon them individually, as they are met in each chapter.

A word needs to be said at this point about the inclusion of an analysis of 4.6 in a work which purports to deal with setting, ecphraseis and characterization exclusively in *Cupid and Psyche*. I have decided to discuss this passage at length because of its significance as the dismal locale in which the abducted Charite listens to the extraordinary story told to cheer her, and for its striking contrasts with the fantasy of the tale. Furthermore, the robbers' cave is meaningful as the home of the drunken old narratrix.

For the text of *Cupid and Psyche*, I have adopted E. J. Kenney's (Cambridge, 1990b) readings where variants exist. The text used for 4.6 is that established by J. Arthur Hanson in Volume I of the Loeb edition of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1989). I have adhered to the abbreviations for classical authors and their works provided in the *OLD* (combined edition; Oxford, 1982) and Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*⁹ revised by Jones and McKenzie (with supplement; Oxford, 1968). Translations given throughout the thesis are my own, unless otherwise noted. All references in the dissertation to a masculine reader do not imply that only males would have read Apuleius' work, but I have simply chosen to use one gender for the sake of brevity and readability.

I would like at this time to thank my supervisor, Dr Paul Murgatroyd for his shrewd and constructive criticism and his constant encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. Thanks are also due to my other two readers, Dr P. Kingston and Dr A. Booth, for their support and many valuable suggestions. A particular debt of gratitude is owed to my spouse, Jeff McFarlane, to whom this thesis is dedicated, for his assistance with my computing problems and many years of immense patience and understanding.

Chapter 1: Setting

Although setting is not essential to a narrative, its presence is often of narrative significance. Gerald Prince in A Dictionary of Narratology (s.v. setting) defines setting as "the spatiotemporal circumstances in which the events of a narrative occur". He also adds that setting may be of varying prominence, consistency, precision, and objectivity, and that it may be presented in an orderly or disorderly fashion. The importance of setting varies according to each reader and text in relation to the action and characterization. Some settings are essential to the action of a narrative and in these cases, each component of the setting performs a significant function (for example, causal or analogous). Other settings are symbolic, while others still are absolutely irrelevant to the narrative, being presented simply because they are there.

Details of setting can be introduced in a contiguous fashion (e.g. a description of a locale) or they can be scattered throughout the narrative. Apuleius presents his reader with detailed descriptions of setting at several points in the Cupid and Psyche tale. For the purpose of this chapter, the points at which setting is of significance to the narrative will be examined. I shall adopt Prince's definition of setting as above, as well as examining various other aspects of setting including: the human, divine and animal inhabitants of a given locale, their customs, the surrounding environment, and material objects within the setting. Apuleius occasionally offers minor details of setting elsewhere, but I shall only examine setting where a sufficient amount of detail is given for the reader to create a clear mental image of where the narrative events are actually taking place. The following passages will be examined in this chapter: the robbers' cave and its environs at 4.6; the *locus horridus* summit of Psyche's third task at 6.13-15; the underworld

¹ For further details regarding setting see Prince 1987, pp. 86-7 and 1982, pp. 73-4; Bal 1985, pp. 43-45; Toolan p. 103ff.; Fowler 1977, p. 38ff.

and its entrance at 6.16.3ff.; Cupid's palace and surrounding gardens at 5.1.2-5.2.2 and the temples of Ceres and Juno at 6.1.2ff. and 6.3.3-4 respectively.

Loci horridi et loci amoeni

Prior to examining the above specified settings, it is useful, if not necessary, to establish the traits common to both *loci horridi* and *loci amoeni*. The topoi of the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus* have a well established tradition dating back to Homer (*see* Andersson, Curtius, De Biasi, Elliger, Gruzelier, Hägg, Kenney, Keuls, Mugellesi, Schiesaro, Schönbeck, Zeitlin). It is evident from the presence of standard features of the *locus horridus* and the inversion of numerous traits of the *locus amoenus* at 4.6 that Apuleius was familiar with and was drawing upon both of these traditions.

The *locus amoenus* is characteristically a beautiful and serene natural locale which typically includes trees, meadows, a non-turbulent source of water such as a spring, birds, lush vegetation, flowers, and both cool and refreshing breezes and shade (see Curtius p. 195ff. and Gruzelier on 2.101ff.). Some examples of *loci amoeni* include islands (Hom. *Od.* 19.131-141; Lucian *VH* 2.5), gardens (Hom. *Od.* 7.112-132; A.R. 3.220; Longus 2.3.3-4, 4.2; Ach. Tat. 1.15), a clearing in the midst of wild woods (Theoc. *Id.* 22.36-43), more general locations comprising, for example, a hill and plain (Verg. *G.* 3.322-38; Ov. *Met.* 10.86-106), and Calypso's cave and its environs (*Od.* 5.55-74). In the cited instances, fertility is emphasized and the absence of any sudden or sharp contrasts within a given *locus* lends a sense of tranquillity to the scenes. The *locus horridus* commonly features several of the aspects found in the *locus amoenus* (such as water, trees and shade), but their effect upon the atmosphere is antithetical. Instead of an idyllic calmness, the atmosphere is oppressive and sinister. Standard attributes of the *locus horridus* include barrenness

of soil, and an absence of crops, fruit², meadows, flowers and wildlife. Water and wind, if present, are generally threatening and lack refreshing properties. Sunshine, or any other source of light, is often absent or obscured by smoke or clouds, and the overall ruggedness of the locale is stressed.

According to my research, *loci horridi* can be categorized into the following divisions: the underworld (Hes. *Th.* 726ff.; Verg. *G.* 4.467-80, *A.* 6.237ff.; Ov. *Met.* 4.432ff.; Sen. *H.F.* 549-57 and 662ff., *Nat.* 5.15.4, *Phaed.* 1201ff., *Oed.* 569-81); threatening groves (Sen. *Oed.* 530ff., *Thy.* 641ff.; Luc. 3.399-425); other geographical features including valleys, islands, fields, water scenes and a more general setting (Eur. *Hipp.* 1199-1212; A. R. 4.595ff., 4.1232ff.; Lucian *VH* 2.29-30; Verg. *G.* 4.418ff., *A.* 1.159ff, 7.563ff.; Stat. *Theb.* 7.34ff.), battlegrounds (Luc. 6.90ff., Tac. *Ann.* 1.61); Scythia and other locations deemed cold and inhospitable (Hom. *Od.* 11.14-19; Hdt. 4.28; Verg. *G.* 3.352ff.; Ov. *Met.* 8.788-91, Tr. 3.10.70ff., *Pont.* 1.3.51ff., 4.7; Sen. *Dial.* 1.14; Luc. 5.436ff.; Mela 3.5; Plin. *Nat.* 2.68.172; Curt. 7.3.11ff.); Corsica (Seneca *Anth. Lat.* 237, replete with military imagery); the abodes of unpleasant tenants, such as those of the Gorgons (Ov. *Met.* 4.776-86), Envy (*Met.* 2.760-64), and a witch (Luc. 6.642ff.); volcanic mountains (Claud. *DRP* 1.160-78, Sil. 14.55-69; *Aetna* 175-88, Lucr. 6.680-702); caves (Hom. *Od.* 9.182-192 *et passim*; Ov. *Met.* 11.592ff.; Verg. *A.* 7.563-71 [entrance to underworld and home of Allecto]; V. Fl. 1.574ff.) and mountains with caves (Hom. *Od.* 12.73-110; Verg. *A.* 11.522-31, Stat. *Theb.* 10.84ff. [also home to unpleasant tenants]).

The Robbers' Cave: 4.6

In his description of the robbers' cave and its surroundings, Apuleius effectively reverses the traits of a *locus amoenus* and employs many standard attributes of a *locus horridus*. The author immediately plunges the reader into the ecphrasis of this *mons horridus*, which is especially

² Any type of vegetation which does thrive in this environment immediately conjures up negative associations, such as the poppies and soporific herbs in Ovid's Cave of Sleep (*Met.* 11.605-6) and the bitter berries of the laurel at Sen. *Oed.* 530ff.

unpleasant on account of its jagged rocks and inaccessibility. Instead of a meadow, valleys full of ponds and thorny hedges surround this very high and eerily shady mountain. The water, furthermore, is not cool, refreshing and pure, but stagnant and confining. In line with the Homeric and Vergilian depictions of a mountain with a cave, Apuleius too emphasizes dense foliage, the area's inaccessibility and its narrow path. But he introduces novel details as well - the thorny hedges, sunken valleys filled with confining waters, undas argenteas, mention of downward flowing water; and, of particular note, is the inclusion of man-made structures.

The abundance of models upon which Apuleius might draw, and the absence of direct verbal echoes, make it impossible to state with certainty that he was influenced by any one author. It does seem likely, however, that his decision to describe the water as *stipati*, *ignavi*, and *stagnantibus*³, has been influenced by delineations of water in the underworld (especially Sen. *H.F.* 682ff.). Indeed, his entire ecphrasis may intentionally conjure up the underworld. In addition to the unpleasant and forbidding atmosphere shared with all underworld depictions, specific similarities are as follows: slow moving water (cf. Sen. *H.F.* 679ff. and *Oed*. 547), woods which cast darkness (cf. Verg. *A.* 6.238 and 7.565-6), and a fence (cf. Hes. *Th.* 726ff.). Apuleius may be engaging in this type of associative play in order to reinforce the unpleasantness of the mountain.

The subject matter of 4.6, following Apuleius' introductory statement to the ecphrasis, is presented as follows: introduction of the mountain, valleys, water, and lastly, the man-made structures (tower, fence and hut). The initial statements concerning setting are general, yet, as the description progresses, sharper detail is given and the focus is narrowed. For example, at the start the mountain is depicted as wild, shaded, very high and with steep slopes; all attributes which could be discerned from some distance. The subsequent emphasis, however, on the spring "with huge bubbles" indicates that the narrator is sharpening the focus. As the narrator zooms in on the

³ Cf. also Lucan's description of the Bosporus at 5.442-3, ...maestoque ignava profundo / stagna iacentis aquae...

fence and hut, the reader is brought directly on to the mountain top, and details are offered as though the reader himself were there looking at these structures.

The impact of the forbidding natural description at the start of 4.6 is reinforced by Apuleius' inclusion of various man-made buildings. Their incorporation, along with the mention of people, creates a smooth progression into 4.7 where the narrator introduces the robbers and details of the cave's interior. This dual emphasis upon the mountain's natural and man-made defences creates a foreboding setting from which there appears to be no escape and suggests to the reader that an equally sinister narrative will follow. Two additional equally important narrative functions are fulfilled by the ecphrasis. First, the forbidding portrait, achieved by listing the mountain's threatening attributes, helps to set the mood of this passage and of the subsequent narrative. The second function is in terms of reader response to the passage. The chilling effect upon the reader, which the sombre, ominous mood has, is amplified by an increasing sense of confinement within the passage. The author heightens this closing-in effect by directing his reader from the open mountain to the smaller hut, and by repeatedly stressing words and phrases which denote confinement (for example, ambiebant, cohibebat, porrectis undique lateribus, vice structi parietis).

Throughout this passage, Apuleius directs the reader's attention upwards and downwards. Beginning with the mountain peak, the description then shifts over the slopes down to the surrounding valleys. The focus is next redirected to the top and follows the downward flow of water over the slopes into the enclosing valleys with stagnant streams. The final sequence commences with the cave, then points the reader to a high tower, and moves quickly down to the cave around which a fence runs. This directional symmetry in the sequences has a twofold purpose. First, it serves to stress the complete disagreeableness of the mountain and second, it brings the reader ultimately to the cave, which Apuleius has stated he will describe, and thus piques the interest of the reader who anticipates, but does not receive, a description of the cave

proper. This omission, characteristic of Apuleius, who frequently teases his reader mischievously, serves to create an aura of mystery surrounding the locale in which the Cupid and Psyche tale is told.

Vividness in the description is achieved by means of sensual appeal. Not only is there visual appeal with undas argenteas, but Apuleius also includes details which stimulate the reader's olfactory and tactile senses (for example, agminibus stagnantibus, cavaeque nimium spinetis aggeratae). Particular details, such as the water⁴, the inclusion of very many precise aspects of the mountain, and the narrator's addition of points which do not comprise part of the description itself (eg: ovili stabulationi commodae, Ea tu bono...atria) lend a concrete and sharp feel to the narrative and bring about verisimilitude.

Apuleius deftly employs the descriptive pause at this point to catch the reader's attention by slowing down the pace of the narrative with an apt period of stillness following the ass' journey. The pause also introduces an element of variety to the narrative and allows the focus to be redirected from the ass' personal escapades to those of the robbers. As at 5.1, the pause signals a change of setting and is used to develop contrasting moods; here, through the portrait of harsh reality and later, one of an idealized world of fantasy. An additional parallel with 5.1 can be seen in that the pause marks a change of fortune for the characters. Thus far, the robbers have been successful in their plundering of Milo's house, but when the narrative resumes with the robbers' tales, they are exclusively stories of losses sustained. Psyche's misfortunes, namely her preparation for death, suddenly change to a life rich with material wealth and her ultimate fortune of immortality.

The relation of the descriptive pause here to the Cupid and Psyche tale also extends beyond the two aforementioned points. The setting and atmosphere delineated at 4.6 are

⁴ The water receives a great deal of emphasis - fons, bullis, undas, rivulis, agminibus, maris, fluminis - and consequently, its description augments the realism.

analogous to both the ensuing tales⁵ and characters. Just as the mountain and cave are bleak, uncultivated, ugly and threatening, so too are the personalities of the robbers and the old woman who narrates *Cupid and Psyche*, pointing up the antitheses between the opulence of Cupid's palace (a *locus amoenus*) and the analogous kindness extended to Psyche by the household staff. A second striking difference between 4.6 and 5.1 is the emphasis placed upon external and internal traits. At 4.6, the stress is upon the natural ruggedness, whereas in the cultivated domain of Cupid, substantially greater weight is given to the palace and its magnificent interior. Apuleius details the use of gold, silver and ivory and the absence of guards in the palace, and in doing so, heightens the initial impact of the mountain's description by drawing such a marked contrast. Furthermore, the pervasive offensiveness of this locale, its inhabitants and their narratives results in the reader, who has been granted no break from the disagreeable scenario, welcoming the fantasy of *Cupid and Psyche* all the more.

In short, numerous contrasts and correspondences exist between the points at which setting is stressed. In addition to exhibiting Apuleius' cleverness and elegance, these contrasts and correspondences serve as binding threads, and accentuate particular attributes and themes to underline their importance or to create an emphatic portrayal of the setting (particularly through the use of sharp contrasts). Correspondences, furthermore, demonstrate Apuleius' attention to a balanced structure (for example, ring composition) and can also serve as red herrings.

Sound effects such as alliteration, assonance, rhyme and homoeoteleuton are employed by Apuleius throughout this ecphrasis. Careful attention is paid to sound effects, thus indicating that Apuleius, generally a stylish writer, was aware of their significance. Numerous examples of the aforementioned techniques are found throughout 4.6: perque prona, cuncta cohibebat, margines

⁵ Note, for example, the abject account of the robber whose greed compels him to roll an old woman out of bed for her sheets. The contrast between this sombre setting and the mockheroic tone of the robbers' tales also makes "a comic contribution" (Sandy 1994, p. 1533) to the subsequent narrative.

montanae, id inaccessis cingitur, convalles lacunosae cavaeque, fons affluens, agminibus stagnantibus, ovili stabulationi, undas argenteas, quicquam quam, et cetera. Several phrases attest to the use of various techniques, and some seem designed to achieve specific effects⁶. The first sentence of the ecphrasis (and the first word of the second) is striking for homoeoteleuton, with us, ibus and the very similar idus. A staccato effect is achieved with the expression et ob id, and as Ferguson notes (p. 66), "the three short harsh words express well the toilsomeness of the place". In agminibus...cohibebat one again finds homoeoteleuton (ibus), a similarity in sound between the first two words (agm and agn), a high frequency of nasals, assonance of i, rhyme (stipati maris vel ignavi fluminis) and alliteration at its close. The concluding sentence of 4.6 is replete with alliteration and harsh q and c sounds which impress the harshness of the locale upon the reader.

Apuleius pays careful attention not only to sound, but also to word-placement, thus lending a polished expression to 4.6. Two points link the ecphrasis' introduction and conclusion. The first example is the emphasis upon size (the mass of the mountain is contrasted with the robbers' hut) and the second is the focus upon darkness (umbrosus and noctibus). On several occasions a sense of balance is achieved by the careful placement of nouns and adjectives, for example; horridus silvestribusque frondibus umbrosus (note also the chiastic arrangement), stipati maris vel ignavi fluminis, and the noteworthy combination of chiasmus and alliteration in the phrase caulae firmae solidis cratibus.

Additional considerations of word arrangement are also important here. A concentration of adjectives in the first two sentences up to *cavae* emphasizes the sinister nature of the mountain. That the mountain is inescapable is stressed through the striking placement of the verbs

⁶ The sentence leading into the description, *Nam et meum...sedulo sentiatis*, has a high frequency of nasals and the letter s, contains assonance (vowel sound u) and alliteration at the end with *sedulo sentiatis*. The very idea that the narrator has become an ass is undermined, if not completely dismissed, by an astute reader cognizant of Apuleius' display of literary skill. The frequency and alliteration of the letter s creates a hissing effect, also picked up in the following sentence (see further below), possibly emphasizing his distaste for the notion that he is now asslike and fitting in suitably with the subsequent mood.

ambiebant, cohibebat and particularly excubabant. Juxtaposition is employed for emphasis: firmae solidis stress that the defences are impenetrable, while vertice fons and casula cannulis stress physical proximity. The concentration of nouns denoting water in its various forms in the sentence De summo...cohibebat gives special prominence to this element. The use of a tricolon crescendo culminating in the water's slow movement, much like water in the underworld (see above p. 4), places this attribute in relief.

In this connection, Apuleius' careful use of the effects of sentence lengths calls for comment. The short, sharp sentence with which the description commences immediately engages the reader. The longest sentence of the passage?, *De summo vertice...cohibebat*, turns upon four participles, *affluens*, *delapsus*, *dispersus*, *irrigans*, thus creating a smooth, fluid sentence suitable for describing the motion of water, particularly slow-moving water. As De Biasi (p. 17) contends, such a lengthy sentence serves to slow the rhythm of the passage and consequently lends variety to the narrative. The brevity and terseness of the next sentence grasp the reader's attention (with asyndeton occurring after *turris ardua*). The contrast between the two stresses the fluidity of this sentence even more emphatically.

Apuleius has chosen words for their dual applicability or to stress inaccessibility and size. The adjectives horridus and asperrimus, describing the mountain and rocks, are relevant to both physical locales and the robbers who are introduced in 4.7 as rough and uncultivated. Another possible link to the robbers lies in agminibus, which as well as its overt meaning of streams, may be calling up its other meaning, a company of people, aptly described here as stagnans. An additional unpleasant image is created through the use of evomebat due to its association with vomiting. The choice of this word over others serves to point up the completely disagreeable

⁷ It is perhaps also significant that this sentence is the central one. Often in depictions of *loci amoeni* water holds a central position, and Apuleius may be playing upon this. Cumulative detail in a lengthy sentence often stresses the importance of the attribute under discussion and paints a very vivid picture.

nature of the spring and water⁸. The sole colour adjective in the description, *argenteas*, may evoke money, which would have an appropriate association with a robbers' den. Again, Apuleius' use of the phrase *bono...periculo*, doubtless presents a touch of irony, occurring as it does, in the description of a perilous place.

Furthermore, numerous words in 4.6 are applicable to military contexts: asper, cingere, ambire, agmen, cohibere, turris, cratis, firmae, speculator. Their impact is twofold. In addition to being examples of pregnant diction, horridus, asper and cohibebat are used to reinforce the atmosphere of the passage, through their common meanings 'dreadful' and 'oppressive'. Several of the other words reinforce the idea that the mountain is impenetrable to attack (e.g.: cingere, ambire, cratis, and firmae).

Apuleius also employs words rarely or never used before to describe the mountain and the structures on it¹⁰. Although Apuleius seems to have been fond generally of rare diction, the use of such words elevates the tone of the passage, brings out the singular nature of and lends variety to the depiction, which allows it to be impressed readily on the reader's mind. *Perobliqua* appears to be a *hapax legomenon*, as *cannula* may also be, since it is restored only by conjecture at Vitr. 2.1.5. Other rare usages, notably all within one sentence, include the adjective *ovilis*, found earlier only at Stat. *Theb*. 1.580 and Var. R. 2.1.18, the nouns *caulae* (Verg. A. 9.60 exclusively) and *stabulatio* (solely at Col. 6.3.1 and Gel. 16.5.10), and the seemingly unique absolute use of the

⁸ This verb is also found at 5.23, evomuit stillam ferventis olei, and at 6.14, fontes horridos evomebat. In addition to being a link with the Cupid and Psyche story, in particular with a locus horridus, the verb seems to be employed when the substance being spewed forth has a negative connotation or effect.

⁹ See OLD asper s.v. 9c; cratis s.v. 2; firmus s.v. 3b, 4, 6; TLL asper II.811.66ff.; cratis IV.1111.67ff.; firmus VI.815.66ff.

¹⁰ The expression *descriptionem exponere*, leading into the description proper also seems to be an unusual phrase.

passive of *attendere*¹¹. Such a striking number of unusual words within one sentence here particularizes the fencing, thus lending realism and intensity to the description.

As well as employing fullness for vividness (eg: silvestribusque frondibus), Apuleius uses it twice to reinforce the mountain's inaccessibility and size¹². Contrary to De Biasi's belief (p. 18) that structi is superfluous with parietis, the adjective serves rather to amplify the fence's, and therefore the mountain's, impermeability and unapproachability. The other instance of fullness occurs with the phrase summo vertice. If one considers the numerous adjectives describing height in 4.6, and remembers that the description of the mountain stresses the altitude from the outset (in primis altus, perobliqua), what could pass for a seemingly pleonastic use of the adjective attains real point. In contrast, the use of the diminutives casula cannulis coupled with parva play up the tiny dwelling of the robbers¹³.

Psyche's Third Task: 6.13-15

The setting given for Psyche's third task of obtaining water from a mountain summit exhibits numerous standard features of the *locus horridus*¹⁴. Venus' brief description of the peak introduces a sinister and oppressive atmosphere which is emphasized by the mountain's height and the dark and confining water in a valley (as at 4.6). Subsequent standard traits include stress upon the ruggedness of the locale (*inaccessa salebritate*), and an absence of vegetation. A seemingly

¹¹ Linguistic usage here and below has been checked in TLL, OLD, and Ibycus.

¹² It is possible that *lacunosae* is pleonastic because of *cavae*. This depends, however, upon the manner in which one interprets *lacunosae*. [According to the *OLD* it can be translated in two ways: 1) "containing pools of water, full of puddles" (this usage is exclusive to Apuleius), or 2) "containing hollows, pitted"].

¹³ For links with the Cupid and Psyche tale see p. 6f.

¹⁴ For a list of these traits see p. 2.

unique attribute, however, is the presence of wildlife - snakes/dragons¹⁵. Normally missing from depictions of *loci horridi*, these beasts here enhance the forbidding atmosphere through their physical description (*saevi*) while their role as guards (*excubantibus*) stresses that the locale is inescapable. The talking water appears to be another novel feature. So terrifying is this extraordinary water, which here utters threats (*cave, peribis*), that it is even feared by gods.

This setting conjures up associations with the underworld, a point made explicit at 6.13.4. As in other underworld descriptions (see p. 4), there is emphasis upon the darkness of the water, conveyed by the use of *ater* and *fuscus*, both of which have also been chosen for their more poetic meanings of "dusky", "funereal" etc., and their applicability to underworld descriptions¹⁶. The motion of the water, naturally denoted as downward flowing, is described in detail at 6.14.2-3 (*qui statim...latenter incidebant*). Reinforcing the ominous atmosphere, the water's insidious nature¹⁷ is further played up with the adverb *latenter*, which, in conjunction with the other underworld associations, makes it possible to view this segment as foreshadowing Psyche's actual descent (see further below). Venus' opening question to Psyche (*Videsne...Stygias...paludes et rauca Cocyti fluenta...?*) echoes Vergil's underworld landscape at 6.323 and 6.327 (*Cocyti stagna alta vides Stygiamque paludem* and *rauca fluenta*), as critics point out¹⁸. The noun *fauces* also appears in numerous underworld depictions, notably at Verg. A. 6.273, *in faucibus Orci*, 6.240, *atris faucibus*,

¹⁵ It is difficult to determine whether the *dracones* are snakes or dragons, although the phrase *longa colla porrecti* suggests that the latter interpretation may be preferable. At *Met.* 6.2.5 (...per famulorum tuorum draconum pinnata curricula), an interpretation of dragon is clearly intended.

¹⁶ OLD s.v. ater 8b; fuscus 1; TLL ater I.1018.40ff.; fuscus VI,1.1654.42ff.

¹⁷ As stated on p. 2, water in a *locus horridus* is often depicted as threatening and lacking refreshing properties.

¹⁸ Purser p. 101; Kenney 1990b, p. 208; Schiesaro 1985, p. 220, and Gatscha p. 8.

7.570, pestiferas fauces, G. 4.467, Taenarias fauces, and Sen. Phaed. 1201, fauces Averni¹⁹. Although these examples refer to the underworld's entrance, the use of fauces at 6.14.3, is in my opinion, a pointed association with other infernal descriptions, particularly in light of additional links with the underworld. A final association with the infernal locus horridus is evoked in the phrase fontes horridos, for which the only known parallel occurs in Seneca's lower world delineation at Nat. 5.15.4. In addition to foreshadowing Psyche's subsequent task, these netherworld associations serve to intensify the ominous mood, by creating a terrifying and threatening setting. They also stress that Psyche's task is arduous, if not impossible, to complete, and thus elicit an appropriately desperate response in Psyche (6.14.6) and raise the reader's level of concern as suspense mounts concerning the girl's fate and her safety.

Psyche's tasks up to this point have occurred in settings where no or very little detail is given. The reader is quite unaware of the location of the seed sorting (6.10, except that Psyche is at Venus' domicile, itself not locatable), and the scene of her second task of collecting a tuft of gold wool is described in some but not much detail (6.11-13). Hence, this is the first task for which the setting is clearly delineated, and therefore it is notable and heralds something significant. As the tasks increase in difficulty, setting is brought to the forefront and to the reader's attention to play up the danger, create tension and build up to Psyche's katabasis, already foreshadowed by the numerous associations with the underworld²⁰.

¹⁹ The sole exact verbal parallel to the expression faucibus lapidis exists at Apul. Met. 2.4.14, the ecphrasis on Byrrhena's atrium. I find this rather curious, as there was also a verbal echo of this ecphrasis at 4.6 with the use of atria. In this particular situation the snakes standing guard are reminiscent of the dogs at 2.4, and I suspect that Apuleius may be playing with the reader by creating links between the passages where setting is important.

²⁰ The progression in details concerning setting corresponds to the level of difficulty of the task. Mirroring the setting's threatening nature are the animals involved in each task. First, the ants are innocuous insects. The sheep from which she must retrieve wool are quite threatening (6.12.3), but not as frightening as the *dracones* of 6.14.4 and 6.15.5. (It is interesting and perhaps relevant that Jove's eagle is described as *rapax aquila* at 6.15.1). The most horrifying wildlife which Psyche must encounter, however, is Cerberus, who is described at 6.19.3.

In contrast with the descriptive pause on the robbers' cave and its environs, this *locus horridus* is variously depicted at several points (6.13-15) by means of description, speech and action. Patterning in the presentation of the latter three enhances the effectiveness of detail accumulation. The setting is first presented from Venus' point of view as she points out the peak to Psyche from the distance. She offers general details of the mountain and stream, which are sufficiently realistic to dispose the reader to accept that a genuine place is being described (see further below). Following Psyche's approach, the narrative tempo slows with the insertion of an ecphrasis on the summit, now viewed from the girl's perspective at a much closer range²¹ and includes more specific and frightening items. Subsequently, direct quotations of the waters' admonitions introduce a novel aspect of portraying the setting. This pattern of speech followed by description is then repeated in 6.15.

The final details are presented from the beak of Jove's eagle and in the summary of his successful completion of the task. Instead of reiterating the same points from the eagle's perspective however, very specific and terrifying details are given in both the bird's speech and the synopsis of his actions. At the close of 6.14 the description seems to have come to an end, but then, the reader is surprised with additional details from the eagle. As a result of their late and unexpected inclusion, the impact of these final details is increased. The eagle's description of the stream and his comment that gods fear it intensify the water's treacherous nature. More precise features of setting (e.g.: inter genas saevientium dentium et trisulca vibramina draconum) are offered as the eagle himself approaches to retrieve the water. Thus, as the characters come near the mountain, features of the setting, only discernible at close range, are highlighted. The presentation of setting in this way permits Apuleius to maintain the lively tempo of the narrative, and add an element of variety to his descriptive techniques. By choosing to integrate description with action and show it from various characters' perspectives, the author achieves an effect equal

²¹ This is very similar to the zooming in which occurs at 4.6.

in force to that of the descriptive pause and effectively imparts features whose impact might be lessened in a set description.

The major distinguishing features of the scenery, save the snakes/dragons, are furnished in Venus' opening question: there is a summit on a very high cliff of a steep mountain and dark waters flow into the reservoir of an adjoining valley. Details offered at this point, such as the height of the peak, the colour and temperature of the water and the fact that, once contained, it nourishes Stygian marshes and the Cocytus, all augment the threatening and sombre atmosphere. At 6.14, the presentation of scenic details becomes more focused as precise details regarding virtually every aspect of the scenario are given, culminating in another distinguishing feature - the snakes/dragons. The forceful impact of details is achieved via the repetition of certain points, especially height, and a concentration of adjectives starting at 6.14.2 *immani* to *excubantibus* (6.14.4), many of which build upon the insidious nature of the locale as portrayed at 6.13. The viva-voce warnings of the water raise the reader's apprehension about the dire circumstances in which Psyche finds herself and promote a funereal mood.

In this setting, a sharpening of focus builds up the threatening details. Venus points out only the mountain and water in the distance. Psyche physically encounters the mountain, water and then the dracones. As the focus sharpens in 6.15, the water and dracones are exclusively and sharply delineated as the eagle flies very near to them. The impact of the opening sentence in which the locale's principal threatening attributes are presented (steep mountain, dark water and underworld associations) is rendered more forceful by a pointed progression in detail concerning the mountain peak, water and dracones. At 6.13.4, the mountain is described as steep, at 6.14.2, details regarding a slippery and rough rock on the mountain are given. The water at 6.13.4f. is portrayed as black, cold and flowing into a valley; at 6.14.3 it is further described as horridos and the size of the channel which it has created is specified; at 6.14.5, it speaks, at 6.15.3, it is further characterized as sanctissimi nec minus truculenti and as feared by the gods. The dracones, who are

initially described at 6.14.4f. as savage, with long necks and ever watchful, have flickering three-forked tongues and try to attack the eagle with snapping jaws at 6.15.5²². The repetition of these three attributes combined with new increasingly specific and telling details creates a very vivid description and is a forceful method of heightening their menacing qualities, the difficulty of Psyche's task and the absolute terror which she would have felt in this situation.

The pervasive atmosphere of the passage is similar to that at 4.6 and helps to set the mood for Psyche's fourth task which proves to be even more ominous. By means of the description, Apuleius also creates a sense of foreboding, resulting from which the reader anticipates that something evil will happen to Psyche. In addition, this sombre and oppressive mood aptly mirrors Venus' harsh sentiments towards Psyche (6.13.3, ...sed contortis superciliis subridens amarum) and Psyche's stupefaction in the face of her predicament at 6.14.6. The physical setting for the third task, moreover, is appropriate for Psyche's suicidal frame of mind. The aggressiveness and ferocity of both the water and dracones reflect Venus' behaviour. As Venus' frustration and anger with Psyche increase, the risk to Psyche's well-being rises, commensurate with the danger of the task²³. Furthermore, numerous features in this segment lend a sense of otherworldliness and foreboding to the passage. The seemingly realistic portrayal of a wild peak

²² Their association with the dragons in Heracles' labour of the Apples of the Hesperides and with those that protected the Golden Fleece (Kenney 1990b, p. 209f.), in addition to evoking sinister predicaments, may suggest that Psyche will ultimately be successful in her task, as Heracles and Jason were. If this is the case, Apuleius again plays with his reader at 6.21.2 when Psyche collapses. However, consideration of aid granted to her in earlier crises, the echoes of earlier successful descents by others, and indicators such as this, suggest that she too will succeed. Herrmann (1970, p. 83) changes his earlier belief that these dragons were suggested to Apuleius by those guarding the apples of the Hesperides, stating:

Ces reptiles sont ceux qui attachent deux Aloéides, Otos et Ephialte, à une colonne au sommet de laquelle siège, non pas une chouette, mais la nymphe Styx, l'Océanide éponyme de la source et symbole de la haine, à qui, pour prix de son aide dans sa lutte contre les Titans, Jupiter a accordé que les dieux ne jureraient que par son eau²³.

23 Voir Hygin, fab. 28.

²³ For Venus' violent reactions to Psyche see 6.10.1, 6.11.2, 6.13.3 and 6.16.2 where her reaction is described as *maiora atque peiora flagitia comminans*.

and dark waters (6.13.4)²⁴ inclines one to suspend disbelief as Apuleius builds on it. In spite of this, the description quickly takes on a sense of the unreal with details such as *Stygias inrigant* paludes et rauca Cocyti fluenta nutriunt, its general associations with the underworld, snakes/dragons, talking waters and Jove's talking eagle which lends divine aid.

Clarity is achieved in this description through the introduction of several telling details. Precision is lent to the depiction of the water's movement (6.14.3) by means of the inclusion of the size of the channel through which it passes, the seemingly superfluous detail that the channel is ploughed and specific information about the water's path. The specification that the snakes/dragons are located *dextra laevaque* (6.14.4) lends further verisimilitude to the scene, and details such as those given at 6.15.5 (*saevientium dentium et trisulca vibramina*) bring the images directly before the readers' eyes.

Apuleius' choice of words and phrases and his careful attention to word placement and repetition lend force to his descriptive style. From the outset at 6.13.4, height is emphasized: celsissimae illi rupi montis ardui..., ...de summi fontis penita scaturrigine, montis extremum petit tumulum, saxum immani magnitudine procerum. Not only does the immediate mention of a mountain recall the ecphrasis at 4.6, but the existence of verbal echoes suggests that the similarity is not accidental. At 4.6, very jagged rocks render the mountain inaccessible. The peak's description at 6.14.2 as inaccessa salebritate evokes the former ecphrasis. A second echo occurs with the verb evomebat, its object at 6.14 being fontes horridos, in contrast with the undas argenteas at 4.6. As stated earlier, the expression evomebat is not particularly pleasant, thus underlining that both the water and the locale are horridos.

Psyche's third task exhibits links with both her preceding and subsequent tasks, with the earlier narrative in the Cupid and Psyche tale and the ecphrasis on the robbers' cave. From the

²⁴ Apuleius may have the Arcadian Styx in mind. For evidence in favour of this conjecture see Herrmann 1952, p. 21; Kenney 1990b on 6.13.4; Wright p. 283.

moment that Psyche enters Cupid's palace at 5.2, disembodied voices speak to and comfort her. Throughout the four tasks animals and objects, not normally capable of speech, are endowed with this faculty. For example, at 6.10, the ant does not address Psyche directly but summons his colony to aid the girl. Her second plight is overcome by means of the assistance of a talking reed. In order to draw attention to the importance of the setting and to build tension, the third task involves two otherwise dumb participants, the water and the eagle. And the girl's success in the underworld is owed exclusively to the advice of a talking tower. Similarities exist furthermore in the presentation of the tasks: Venus issues her command, which is followed by the direct speech of the helper and a summary of the action. Another noteworthy connection with the earlier tasks and her next undertaking, is the fact that no other mortal beings are involved in these scenes²⁵. The absence of people heightens Psyche's solitude and, with regard to her assigned toils, it adds an element of fear and stresses her vulnerability.

The three main distinguishing features of the scenery also help to link this description with the earlier and later narrative. The mountain here, in addition to recalling that at 4.6, creates a tie with the mountain on which Psyche is left to die at the very beginning of the tale (4.35.2). The association with death that the mountain has at 4.35.2 and at 6.13.4 forms a connection with the peak from which the sisters descend to Cupid's palace (5.14.1) and ultimately to their deaths (5.27.2ff.). Dracones bring to mind the oracle at 4.33.1f., where the king's son-in-law is described as vipereum, the representation of the sisters as anhelantes vipereum virus (5.12.3), and the sisters' story that Psyche's husband is in fact a serpent (5.17.3). Water creates additional links: the specific mention of the Styx (6.13.4 and 6.15.4) recalls the oracle at 4.33.2 (fluminaque horrescunt et Stygiae tenebrae); the fons at 6.13.4 recalls the spring near Cupid's palace at 5.1.2 (fontem vitreo latice perlucidum). Water is also present in the second task, in the form of a river into which Psyche contemplates throwing herself (6.12.1), and in the fourth task the Styx of 6.13.4 recurs in the

²⁵ Human beings are also absent from the description of the mountain and environs at 4.6.

tower's description of the river of the underworld at 6.18.5 (cum ad flumen mortuum venies). Finally, the dracones and their savage snapping recall the biting sheep of 6.12.3 and in their role as guards look forward to the description of Cerberus at 6.19.3.

As in the earlier locus horridus at 4.6, water plays a central role here. Its significance is emphasized by the numerous and diverse ways in which it is depicted (note in particular the repetition, and thus importance of fons): fontis atri fuscae undae, Stygias paludes, rauca Cocyti fluenta, fontis...scaturrigine, rorem rigentem, fontes horridos, vocales aquae, sanctisssimi nec minus truculenti fontis...stillam²⁶, aquas, Stygis, nolentes aquas. The water, described in a less than favourable manner, engages in equally distasteful behaviour. Apuleius reinforces this unpleasantness very vividly: the plethora of water words, the colour (6.13.4, atri fuscae), temperature (6.13.5, rigentem) and noise of the water (6.13.5, rauca Cocyti fluenta) have visual, tactile and aural appeal and add realistic chilling detail, while the issuing of threats to both Psyche and even Jove's eagle at the close of the scene leaves a lasting impression of its overall nature with the reader.

Other appeals to the various senses pervade this description. The repetition of words connected with stone at 6.14.2-3 creates a tactile impression of hardness, and the adjective *lubricum* at 6.14.2 conveys a sense of the rock's slipperiness. Aural appeal is achieved not only by *rauca* (6.13.4), but also by means of the numerous words to denote water which evoke the sound of moving water. Furthermore, the adjective *vocales*, direct quotation of the water's words (6.14.5) and those of the eagle (6.15.3-5) all have aural appeal. Sound play is again in effect at 6.15.5 with the flickering of the *dracones*' tongues and the snapping of their jaws. An odour is subtly communicated to the reader at 6.13.4 through the use of the word *paludes*.

Like horridus, lubricum which describes the saxum of 6.14.2, also appears to have been chosen for its pregnant usage. Its primary meaning is "slippery, not providing firm footing" (OLD: s.v. 1) and is extended to apply to situations and undertakings, thereby suiting Psyche's

²⁶ There is also play on the water theme with *porrigens remigium* (6.15.6).

predicament with a translation of "hazardous" (OLD s.v. 4). A further use of pointed diction lies in Apuleius' choice of letalem to characterize the difficulty of her task. This adjective is especially appropriate in a description evocative of the underworld. *Immanis* at 6.14.2 has been chosen for its numerous meanings of "savage", "frightful in aspect or appearance" and "enormous" (OLD s.v. immanis, 1, 2, 3; TLL VII,1.439.28ff. and 440.43-60), which allow its application to both the size of the rock and the overall nature of the locale. The waters are described at 6.15.4 as formidabiles, noteworthy here as the longest word and adjective in the clause. The word has particular impact because it is paired with the adjective Stygias and thus draws more attention to the terrifying nature of the water27. In addition to his employment of a great number of adjectives throughout this description to emphasize height, darkness and the severity of the locale28, Apuleius also pairs adjectives with nouns in ways previously unexampled. Fuscus (6.13.4) is not used elsewhere to depict water and the expression cautibus cavatis (6.14.4) is not directly paralleled²⁹. Novelty is not absent from his diction either, and the following are words which are exclusive to Apuleius or rarely employed by authors before Apuleius³⁰: 6.13: conceptaculum (Fron. Aq. 22.1.2; Gel. 18.10.9; Plin. Nat. 2.115.12; 4.88.11; 11.138.6), the adjective penitus (Pl. passim; Gel. 9.4.6); 6.14: salebritas (hapax); proserpere (only Pl. As. 695; St. 724; Var. L. 5.68, gram. 140), inconivus (first in Apul.), and at 6.15: truculentus applied to water (only at Catul. 64.179 and 63.16 of the sea), gena as "jaws"

²⁷ There may be a verbal link between this setting and the underworld as both *immanis* and *formidabilis* are used to describe Cerberus at 6.19.3.

²⁸ For example the repetition of *Stygias* with *paludes* at 6.13.4 and with *aquas* at 6.15.4, followed shortly thereafter by the noun *Stygis*.

²⁹ The closest parallel in meaning to this expression occurs at Verg. A. 3.229 and Ov. *Met.* 9.211 with the phrase *sub rupe cavata*. The Apuleian phrase therefore, appears to be an epic one and consequently lends dignity and solemnity to the description. It is also interesting and perhaps significant that one of the two parallels originates in a work with the same title.

³⁰ For the effects of novel diction see p. 10.

(only at Stat. Theb. 2.130 and 10.290; TLL VI,1.1766.67ff.), saevire with dens (only Sen. Tro. 1095; TLL dens V,1.541.62), vibramen (first and only usage), praeminor (first in Apul.).

Apuleius' attention to sound is also obvious in this description. Venus' opening question (Videsne...verticem) contains a high frequency of the letter s, whose hissing sound creates an unpleasant effect (see above note 6). Alliteration, assonance, homoeoteleuton and other sound play seem also to exhibit Apuleius' careful attention to their significance. If, for example, the sound is perceived as harsh, it may add to the atmosphere: fontis atri fuscae (note also the 'f' in the next word, defluunt), rorem rigentem, primum praedicti, perque proclive, cautibus cavatis, fuscae...undae proxumaeque...inclusae, inaccessa salebritate, 'quid facis? vide' and 'quid agis? cave' (rhyme and a staccato effect), aquas istas Stygias (homoeoteleuton and many s's), deorum deos, saevientium dentium.

Word placement is notable on several occasions. There is a chiastic arrangement at the start of the ecphrasis (6.14.2): saxum immani magnitudine procerum, striking furthermore for its emphasis upon size which is achieved by placing immani and magnitudine side by side. Juxtaposition is again utilized to stress the genuinely horrible nature of the water at 6.14.3 horridos evomebat, the darkness of the water atri fuscae at 6.13.4, and the ever-watchful vigilance of the snakes at 6.14.4, lucem pupilis. It is in addition employed at 6.15.4 to heighten the impact of divine fear of the Styx, numina deorum deos.

To ensure that his reader will not forget the setting for this third task Apuleius adds details to the description's close which, like the traits given at the start, have a lasting impact. The threatening nature of the locale is indelibly impressed upon the reader's mind by the water which issues threats and by the introduction of telling details concerning the *dracones*. These details, namely the flickering tongues and snapping teeth of the dragons, create an unsettling portrait of the scenario which remains with the reader long after completing 6.15.

Psyche's Descent to the Underworld

Psyche's fourth and final task prescribed by Venus is undoubtedly her most difficult one. Commensurate with the build-up in the tasks' degree of difficulty, Apuleius increases the quantity of detail in his depiction of their setting; the more challenging the labour, the more sinister the environment in which it must be carried out. The lengthy coverage that Apuleius affords to this task, in contrast with the previous three, reflects its protracted difficulty.

The darkness and sinister nature of the underworld portrait are an apt reflection of Venus' wrath, at its full pitch at 6.16.2, maiora atque peiora flagitia comminans...renidens exitiabile...tu quidem magna videris quaedam mihi et alta prorsus malefica... The setting is also analogous to Psyche's mental state. Her downcast and desperate state of mind, which leads her to contemplate suicide (6.17.1-2), is a natural reaction to the very thought of katabasis, even before the horrifying details are offered by the tower. The logical link which exists between suicide and the underworld is emphasized through the introduction of words denoting both physical and mental darkness and gloom (see below).

Until the tower's speech commencing at 6.17.3, the setting for this trial is described only as inferos...ipsius Orci ferales Penates (6.16.3) and ad Tartarum Manesque (6.17.1). But the mere mention of the underworld would cause Apuleius' reader to envision its terrifying attributes so frequently expounded in literature, such as the river Styx, Charon, and Cerberus³¹. Once the more precise points are presented by the tower at 6.18, Psyche's reaction to the katabasis suitably mirrors the desolation and gloominess of both the setting and atmosphere, conveyed through particulars such as the following: conterminam deviis abditam locis (6.18.1), iter invium (6.18.2), tenebras (6.18.3), mortiferae viae (6.18.4), flumen mortuum 6.18.5), atra atria (6.19.3), vacuam Ditis domum (6.19.3). Novel and bizarre elements and denizens create an eerie, sombre and sinister overall atmosphere which in turn leaves the reader feeling somewhat unsettled.

³¹ The specific literary parallels will be discussed below.

Analogy exists furthermore between the dismal surroundings and the equally glum inhabitants whom Psyche encounters. The first of these characters, an ass-driver (6.18.4), is simply described as lame. Charon is portrayed in greater detail (6.18.5-7) as avaricious, squalid and old (squalido seni). The third person who attempts to distract Psyche aptly mirrors the pigrum fluentum (6.18.8) which she is crossing. This character, again aged, is made additionally foul to behold by the striking detail of his putris manus³². Emphasis upon age occurs again in Psyche's encounter with some geriatric weavers (6.19.1). There are perhaps two reasons for this stress upon old age. First, the elderly are physically unappealing, and second, the narratrix of the Cupid and Psyche tale is herself an unattractive old woman. Cerberus, the final and most terrifying inhabitant with whom Psyche must deal before requesting a bit of Proserpine's beauty, is described in telling and aptly horrifying detail (see below).

As soon as the reader is aware that Psyche's final chore takes place in the underworld, tension is immediately created as a result of concern for this silly yet sympathetic character. Hopes for Psyche's success, which seems imminent at 6.20.1-5, are quickly dashed, however, at 6.21.2 where she collapses and is described as lying *immobilis et nihil aliud quam dormiens cadaver*. The underworld setting, therefore, functions to foreshadow this symbolic death for Psyche who, once resurrected, becomes immortal (6.23.5) and no longer a part of our world.

The setting also plays a critical role in terms of the subsequent narrative. The emphasis upon darkness, its geographical position under the earth and the sombre atmosphere throughout the delineation are of particular importance for their contrast with the tale's final scene (6.24), the wedding feast of Cupid and Psyche. After Psyche's collapse at 6.21.2, there is no further mention of the underworld or things associated with it. Instead, there seems to be deliberate stress upon height and the heavens on two occasions; at 6.21.2 Cupid flies *per altissimam...fenestram*, and at

³² Kenney 1990b on 6.18.8, Walsh 1970, p. 57 and Wright p. 281 see a Vergilian motif in this image, inspired by Palinurus begging Aeneas for entry into the boat. Note especially *Aen.* 6.370.

6.22.1, he makes his way to Jove caeli penetrato vertice. The prohibition to eat sumptuous food at 6.19.5 now yields to the gods serving nectar (6.24.2) and Psyche, once ordered to sit on the ground while at Dis' palace (6.19.5), here reclines with Cupid on summum torum (6.24.1). A deliberately sharp contrast also exists between the gloom of 6.16-6.21.2 and the levity of the final scene. Sensory appeal is heightened as vibrant colour replaces gloominess at 6.24.3 (Horae rosis et ceteris floribus purpurabant omnia), and the terrifying barking of Cerberus (6.19.3 and 6.20.4) is replaced by uplifting music (6.24.3: Apollo cantavit,..suavi musicae,..Musae...chorum canerent aut tibias inflarent...). The foul odour associated with the putris manus of the dead man floating on the water's surface (6.18.8) is replaced by the pleasant scent of roses and balsam (6.24.3).

Links also exist between the underworld setting and the ecphrasis on the robbers' cave at 4.6. There is a parallel between the *spiraculum Ditis* (6.18.2), which must be some sort of hole³³ into which Psyche can enter, and the cave itself. The mountain's inaccessibility and darkness (*umbrosus*) are echoed in the location of the underworld's doorway (6.18.2: *iter invium*) and the pervasive darkness (for example, 6.18.2: *per illas tenebras*). The water in 4.6 is depicted as moving *in modum stipati maris vel ignavi fluminis* and the Styx is described as *pigrum fluentum* at 6.18.8. The *turrim praealtam* of 6.17.2 recalls the man-made tower, *turris ardua*, of 4.6 and the robbers standing guard, *excubabant*, are recalled at 6.19.3 where Cerberus *excubans servat vacuam Ditis domum*. Ea tu bono certe meo periculo latronum dixeris atria is recalled by atra atria Proserpinae at 6.19.3. Furthermore, throughout the underworld portrayal, there is significant emphasis upon money and Charon's greed (for example, 6.19.6: avaro navitae data...stipe; to be discussed at greater length below). This also serves as an association between the two passages, in light of the activities in which the robbers engage prior to returning to their cave with their plunder. Furthermore, at 6.19.4, *unius offulae praeda* brings to mind the robbers' *praeda*. The demonstrable links tie the

 $^{^{33}}$ See Sen. Her. F. 664ff., where specus is used to describe the entrance to the underworld (there is also a high cliff mentioned as at 4.6); Hes. Th. 740 χάσμα; E. HF 23 στόμα.

narrative together, for as the ecphrasis at 4.6 marks the setting in which Charite's trials start, the underworld landscape marks the setting in which Psyche's labours come to an end.

The underworld passage has connections with numerous other points earlier in the Cupid and Psyche tale. Preparations are made at 4.33.4-5 for Psyche's funereal wedding which foreshadow her descent to the underworld and ultimately her wedding among the gods on Olympus (6.24). Psyche's plan to leap from a tower in order to access the underworld most quickly and easily (6.17.2) recalls her descent from a lofty crag (4.35.4) into a valley near Cupid's palace at the start of the tale. Cupid's palace itself (5.1-2) serves as another link with the underworld scenario which also features a palace. The details given, however, of the luxurious and affluent home of the winged god at 5.1-5.2.2 are in sharp contrast with Proserpine's atra atria (6.19.3). The ferocity of Cerberus (6.19.3ff. and 6.20.2), an impediment to Psyche's easy obtainment of some of Proserpine's beauty, forms a link with Psyche's second and third tasks. In order to retrieve some golden wool, the young girl must get past sheep which attack men with poisonous bites (6.12.3-5), and to obtain water from a summit, she must pass by threatening dracones (6.14.4 and 6.15.5-6). The talking tower of 6.17.3 with obvious aural appeal, also creates a noteworthy link with Psyche's earlier tasks in which equally unusual animals and objects (ant, reed and eagle) have the power of speech. Finally, there is a thematic link of death throughout the story, with the attempted murder of Psyche's allegedly serpentine husband at 5.22.1-2 and the actual deaths of both of Psyche's sisters at 5.27.1-5.

The structure of this passage is similar to that of 6.13-15 with two parallel segments. The setting is first introduced to the reader in Venus' instructions to Psyche at 6.16.3 (inferos...Orci ferales Penates). An equally minimal, yet still disturbing, amount of detail is given in the summary of Psyche's action (6.17.1-3, Tartarum Manesque, inferos). 6.17.3 marks the beginning of the tower's instructions to Psyche, in which the majority of the setting's particulars are put forth. Throughout the tower's account of what Psyche must do to succeed, the progression in the presentation of

details imparts a sense of actually partaking in the journey to Taenarum, then descending and moving onward through the underworld. Features and inhabitants of the underworld are presented in an orderly manner as the girl will encounter them. The centre of the description is the mid point of Psyche's journey and Apuleius has positioned very terrifying elements herein. It is here that Psyche must encounter the most dreadful of the underworld denizens, Cerberus and Persephone, who reside in an equally treacherous palace. This same sense of movement is achieved in the final summary of Psyche's speedy accomplishment of her task (6.20.1-5) by highlighting only the main points and characters by whom she passes. Like the previous summary, the passage is succinct and only a few extra colourful details are given to add to the setting (6.20.2: canis horrenda rabie, 6.20.3: sedile delicatum...cibum beatum), and heighten the terrifying atmosphere. By taking both Psyche and the reader through the underworld twice, Apuleius reinforces its sinister nature and increases reader tension.

The most immediate effect of this dynamic presentation of details, combining instructions and action with static description, is to give variety to the passage. Both Venus' speech and more notably the tower's, draw the reader into the setting (as discussed above) in a way that a static account of the details could not. Taking the reader into the scenario heightens vividness and lends greater force to the impact of this setting. The build-up to this last scene is gradual with more specific points of setting being added for every task. Consequently, the immense amount of information regarding setting stresses the importance and gravity of Psyche's appalling labour, whose frightfulness is mirrored by the threatening underworld portrait. Furthermore, this is the first full and detailed account of a scenario since the ecphrasis on Cupid's palace (5.1-2) where Psyche's adventures begin. As such, the impact of the setting is felt more strongly due to ring composition and the detail here given indicates that the narrative has reached another climactic point - the end of Psyche's enterprises.

Apuleius' underworld scenario invites comparison with earlier models. Standard attributes of setting for this *locus horridus* at 6.18-20 are numerous and include³⁴: mention of Taenarus as the entrance to the lower world (cf. Pi. P. 4.43f; E. HF 23f.; Verg. G. 4.467; Sen. Her. F. 663; Sen. Phaed. 1201; Apollod. 2.5.12; Paus. 3.25.5; see also Mynors on Georgics 4.467), emphasis upon darkness (cf. Bacchylides 5.61; Lucr. 3.1011; Tib. 1.3.67; Ov. Met. 4.432 and 438; Sen. Ep. 24.18; Sen. Dial. 6.19.4), the presence of water (cf. Verg. G. 4.478; Tib. 1.3.68 [also notable for the darkness of the water]; Ov. Met. 4.434; Sen. Her. F. 679ff.), particularly slow-moving water pigrum fluentum at 6.18.8 (cf. Verg. G. 4.479; Hor. Carm. 2.14.17-8; Ov. Met. 4.434; Sen. Her. F. 686), Cerberus (cf. E. HF 24; Verg. G. 4.483; Hor. Carm. 3.11.17ff. Tib. 1.3.71-2; Ov. Met. 4.45; Sen. Oed. 581; Sen. Ep. 24.18), and the palace of Dis and Persephone (cf. Hes. Th. 768; Bacchylides 5.59; Ov. Met. 4.438).

Vergilian echoes abound in Apuleius' depiction of the underworld³⁵. Ranging from direct verbal echoes to similarities in motifs, the examples of Vergilian phrases from book 6 of the *Aeneid* are as follows³⁶:

1) Met. 6.18.5: ad ripam ulteriorem sutili cumba

Aen. 6.314 and 6.413-4: ripae ulterioris amore and cumba sutilis

³⁴ For additional references to the underworld see K. F. Smith and P. Murgatroyd on Tib. 1.3.67ff., R. G. Austin on *Aeneid* 6; Nisbett and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 1.34.10; P. Shorey and G. J. Laing on Hor. *Carm.* 3.11.15ff. and R. A. B. Mynors on *Georgics* 4.467ff. See also p. 2 for references to modern scholarship dealing with the *locus horridus* and ancient references.

³⁵ Walsh (1970, p. 57) finds the similarities so striking that he refers to the description as being "virtually a mosaic of Virgilian phrases".

³⁶ See Wright pp. 280-1; Purser p. 108ff.; Grimal 1963, p. 123ff.; Kenney 1990b, p. 212ff.; Walsh 1970, p. 57; Gatscha p. 8.

Two additional parallels occur between Aen. 6 and this passage which are unrelated to setting:

¹⁾ Met. 6.18.3: offas polentae mulso concretas and Aen 6.420-1: melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam/obicit

²⁾ Met. 6.19.4: Hunc offrenatum unius offulae praeda and Aen. 6.421-2: Ille fame rabida tria guttura pandens/ corripit obiectam

Another parallel exists between Met. 6.18.2, spiraculum Ditis et per portas hiantes monstratur iter invium and Aen. 7.568-9, saevi spiracula Ditis/monstrantur.

2) Met. 6.18.7: squalido seni (to describe Charon)

Aen. 6.299: terribili squalore Charon

3) Met. 6.19.3: Canis...tonantibus oblatrans faucibus mortuos

Aen. 6.400-1: ianitor antro aeternum latrans exsanguis terreat umbras

4) Met. 6.19.3: vacuam Ditis domum

Aen. 6.269: perque domos Ditis vacuas

Perhaps less immediately obvious, but equally striking, is the resemblance of the dead old man on the water's surface who begs for entry into the boat at *Met*. 6.18.8 with Palinurus (first introduced at 6.337) who begs Aeneas to take him to a resting-place *per undas* at 6.370-1. Apuleius' description of Cerberus at 6.19.3 (see below) invites comparison with Vergil's at 6.417ff. Both authors characterize the animal as *immanis* (6.19.3 and 6.418); Vergil's *latratu...trifauci* (6.417) becomes barking from his *teriugo...capite* at *Met*. 6.19.3, and in both cases (*Met*. 6.19.3-4; *Aen*. 6.417-425), the dog is sedated by some sort of food³⁷.

Numerous scholars note the Vergilian imitations found in Apuleius' underworld account, but few elaborate upon the effect that these echoes have on this setting. Yet the similarities invite comparison between the physical settings and the respective characters and journeys of Aeneas and Psyche³⁸. Such comparison identifies frequent differences between the two accounts in detail and encounters, and the Apuleian katabasis has its tone elevated by this contrast with an epic model. Finkelpearl (1998, p. 111) believes that the allusions to the epic show that the novel is

³⁷ Although Cerberus is described elsewhere with several of these listed traits (for example at Hor. *Carm.* 3.11.15-20) he does not possess all of these attributes and I think that the similarities between the two accounts are too numerous to be overlooked.

³⁸ Harrison (1998, p. 56) attempts to determine the purposes of alluding to Vergil's work. He believes that these range from attempts on Apuleius' part to lend his work epic grandeur, to display his own learning, to create a comic inversion of an epic scene or simply to reuse "convenient literary material in the construction of a long fictional narrative". This scholar believes that as well as the underworld scene of *Aeneid* book 6, that found at *Georgics* 4 is crucial to the episode of Psyche's descent. His discussion focuses upon similarities between Orpheus and Psyche, and not upon the physical setting, and therefore, will be discussed in chapter four.

striving to imitate it, and that Vergil is invoked for his *auctoritas*, to provide validity for Apuleius' portrayal of the underworld and to offer it a more elevated tone. A familiarity with the Vergilian model on the part of Apuleius' reader would permit a "filling out" of any missing details, and, at the same time, would conjure up the more developed eeriness and pathos of Vergil's account.

Apuleius differs from other underworld descriptions, and in particular from book 6 of the *Aeneid*, in his emphasis upon direct and unusual³⁹ encounters with inhabitants - the assdriver, the dead man floating on the water's surface and the weavers - rather than simply observing the shades (Verg. *Aen.* 6 passim, Hom. *Od.* 11.568ff.). Apuleius also omits reference to such famous sinners as Ixion and Tantalus who inhabit the underworld (cf. *Aen.* 6.601ff.; Tib. 1.3.73-80, etc.⁴⁰). The real stress in the description seems, in my opinion, to be upon the inhabitants with whom Psyche meets. The three denizens mentioned above have no parallels in other underworld descriptions. They are striking not only for their novelty but also when one contemplates what these three are doing in the nether regions. There appears to be no logical reason for a donkey, its driver or weavers to be in the underworld. In addition to this, there is the odd yet memorable coincidence that both the donkey and driver are lame. Especially uncanny is the image of someone swimming in the Styx, rendered more horrific by the image of the old man's rotten hands (*supernatans...putris adtollens manus*). A final point which draws attention to these characters is their grouping in a unit of three, itself a powerful and magical number⁴¹. Along with the other inhabitants that comprise Apuleius' peculiar version of the underworld, the author

³⁹ The requests made of Psyche would customarily be those of a goddess in disguise. These three appeals for assistance, however, do not seem to be from a divinity and parallels for them, save the second request, are lacking from both literary and folk-tale sources (Kenney 1990b on 6.18.4 and 6.19.1). In my opinion, that the entreaties of the weavers are described as *subdolis* at 6.20.2 further suggests that some divine power (most likely Venus) is at work to keep Psyche in the underworld, for the weavers themselves would have nothing to gain by attempting to hinder her progress.

⁴⁰ For a list of further references see Murgatroyd 1980 on Tib. 1.3.73-4ff.

⁴¹ See OCD³ s.v. Numbers, Sacred.

stresses the presence of these eerie characters through vivid and memorable details in order to underline the threat which they pose to Psyche who could be physically harmed by these most frightening individuals.

The length of the katabasis in Vergil (6.236-896) allows the author to develop a detailed topography of the underworld. In contrast, the brevity of the Apuleian description does not permit such clarity. Though sufficient detail is offered to the reader to produce an appropriate aura of mystery and terror, most conspicuous by its absence is the clear division of the underworld into various regions, most notably into Tartarus and Elysium. This omission imparts a sense of unfamiliarity and vagueness to the setting which enhances the atmosphere. Apuleius stresses only dread and dismal aspects thus removing any modicum of light, both physical and emotional, from the portrayal in order to underline the gravity of Psyche's predicament. Furthermore, Psyche does not have a companion to assist her in her journey, as for example Aeneas does. Hence, the fact that she is alone raises the anxiety level. The absence of Elysium coupled with Psyche's solitude removes hope temporarily for her and, on account of the continuing gloomy atmosphere, leads the reader to believe at 6.21.2 that her curiosity has genuinely been her downfall. By using this ploy, the joyfulness of the final wedding celebration scene at 6.24 is amplified and is all the more welcome to the reader on the heels of the description's suspenseful and anxiety producing close.

Ring composition brings a sense of completion: Psyche has completed her descent and assigned task, thereby returning to the upper-world. This sense of finality also imparts a notion of Psyche's mortality when she collapses at 6.21.2, thus heightening tension for the reader. Contrasts which heighten the terrifying atmosphere also abound in this passage. Psyche's physical beauty, which proved to be the cause of her troubles (4.28.2ff. and 4.30.3) and her youth are in contrast with the aged and unattractive residents of the underworld (as above). At 6.19.3, there is a pointed contrast between the physical presence of Cerberus and the dead at whom he barks in

vain which underlines the setting's otherworldliness. This is played up further by the use of vacuam with domum, as applied to things in the underworld (OLD s.v. vacuus 1e). Chiaroscuro is also present on a couple of occasions. At 6.19.6, Psyche's return from the nether regions points up the light of the stars which she will see upon her arrival (ad istum caelestium siderum redies chorum). A similar distinction between light and dark occurs at 6.20.4 and 6.20.5, where Psyche ab inferis recurrit, and immediately at the start of the following sentence Apuleius places a phrase underlining brightness, et repetita atque adorata candida ista luce. These two examples of chiaroscuro amplify the underworld's darkness and add to the vividness of the image.

In addition to the aforementioned examples of sensory appeal (page 24), Apuleius includes both tactile and gustatory appeal. The seat which Psyche spurns is described as a sedile delicatum (6.20.3) and further tactile appeal is made in the tower's instructions to sit on the hard ground instead (6.19.5: humi reside). Within the same sentence, a contrast is drawn between the taste of cibum beatum and cibario pane. Another appeal to the sense of taste occurs at 6.19.5, panem sordidum.

As in the settings previously analysed, Apuleius delights in employing recherché vocabulary and unusual turns of phrase which often make the scenario more memorable because they strike the reader as curious. Apparent neologisms are: fusticulos (6.18.4, TLL VI,1.1656.65-9); fluentum (6.18.8, in singular, TLL VI,1.949.50ff.); teriugus (6.19.3). There is one hapax legomenon, prospicua, applied to the tower at 6.20.1. Furthermore, several words and phrases are used throughout the account which are not commonplace: invium (6.18.2, joined with a word meaning path, only Verg. A. 3.383 and Liv. 33.15.10: TLL VII,2.237.67ff.); sutilis (6.18.5, of a boat only Verg. A. 6.414; Plin. Nat. 24.65); naulum (6.18.7, only Juv. 8.97); textrix (6.19.1, only Tib. 2.1.65 and Mart. 4.19.1); offrenatum (6.19.4, only Pl. Capt. 755 and Apul. Apol. 77).

Apuleius also alters the meaning of several words and combines adjectives and nouns in seemingly new and unusual manners. At 6.18.5 the depiction of the river Styx as *flumen mortuum*

is remarkable. The adjective is elsewhere applied to water only at Sen. Ep. 67.14, Demetrius ...vitam securam et sine ullis fortunae incursionibus mare mortuum vocat, and Plin. Nat. 4.95, hoc est mortuum mare [of the northern Ocean] (TLL VIII.1497.28). Both of the earlier examples clearly have different meanings from that which Apuleius intends to convey, and the epithet mortuum evokes several associations for Apuleius' reader on account of its applicability to both the dead of the underworld in addition to its meaning of "lifeless" and "still". The adjective amnica is nowhere else employed with a word denoting money before Apuleius' phrase amnica stipe at 6.20.2 (TLL I.1941.79ff.). It therefore seems to be a novel and noteworthy way to communicate a word for "toll". A couple of words in the passage are conspicuous for alterations to their customary meanings. Canalis at 6.18.2, rather than its more usual interpretation as a channel for water vel sim., here denotes a path on which someone can pass. This particular application of the word is not attested prior to Apuleius (TLL III.225.63ff.).

Kenney (1990b on 6.18.5 and 18.6) draws attention to the official language employed by Apuleius to depict Charon (praefectus, portorium and exactor)⁴². Following this humorous and subtly mocking portrait of Charon, however, the official language continues with the use of viaticum (6.18.6) and naulum (6.18.7). The employment of nautical/harbour diction primarily achieves a comic effect. This is most pronounced in the contrast between the official language and the reference to Charon in the same passage as squalido seni (6.18.7).

In addition to pointed usages of language, Apuleius enlivens the description through the use of bold expressions and words with multiple meanings. The description commences with a very forceful first impression of the underworld, *ferales Penates* (6.16.3), the combination of which is unparalleled. *Ferales* conveys both a meaning of "dismal" and "bringing death" (*TLL* VI,1.486.43), the latter of which is apt considering the turn of events at 6.21.1. Another strong

⁴² At Aen. 6.298 and 326, Charon is referred to as portitor. As there is only this one example of "official" nomenclature, it is difficult to determine whether Apuleius is building upon a Vergilian motif.

phrase *mortiferae viae* occurs at 6.18.4, equally apt for its meaning of "bringing death" and its applicability to Psyche's collapse. The entrance to the underworld, frequently depicted as a cave (see above), is vividly portrayed at 6.18.1 by the phrase *portas hiantes*. The image of a mouth to the underworld is effectively conveyed by using the verb *hio* which usually is applied to the mouth (*OLD* s.v. *hio*; *TLL* VI,3.2810.77ff.). An unparalleled and bold phrase *atra atria Proserpinae* (6.19.3) is emphatic furthermore for the numerous nuances of *ater* meaning "black", "squalid", "illomened", "funereal", "terrible" and "causing fear" (*OLD* s.v. *ater* 1, 4, 6, 7, 8; *TLL* II.1020.61ff.). At 6.20.5, in addition to a contrast between darkness and light, Apuleius heightens the contrast by the addition of *candida*. The adjective, moreover, carries with it connotations of prosperity (*OLD* s.v. *candidus* 7; *TLL* III.244.28ff.) thus lending a greater degree of emotionality to the conclusion by deceiving the reader into believing that Psyche's trials have been completed successfully.

Several words are of consequence for their differing meanings. Manes (6.17.1) is most likely to be interpreted as the "spirits of the dead" (TLL VIII.294.57-83). It may, however, be pleonastic following Tartarum, if it is rendered as the "underworld" (TLL VIII.298.70ff.). Yet a third interpretation of "death" (TLL VIII.299.76-84) is perhaps preferable here because Psyche believes that she is heading to her destruction (ad promptum exitium; OLD s.v. manes 1, 3, 4). Psyche's desperation is conveyed through words denoting both physical and mental darkness and gloom: tenebras (6.18.3, OLD s.v. tenebrae 3;) atra (OLD s.v. ater 10). Another such word is the adjective beatum (6.20.3). This adjective is most readily translated as "rich" with food, but may also have a secondary meaning of "bringing happiness" (OLD s.v. beatus 1b, 3b; TLL II.1918.11ff. and II.1915.33ff.) to contrast with Psyche's difficulties and the compulsion which she is under to eat poorly.

Apuleius also demonstrates attention to sound effects including assonance, alliteration, homoeoteleuton and a high frequency of consonants. Some examples are: 6.18.4, claudum asinum lignorum gerulum cum agasone simili (homoeoteleuton and frequency of nasals); 6.18.5, praefectus

Charon protenus expetens portorium (frequency of 'p'); 6.18.7, squalido seni and nauli nomine (alliteration); 6.18.8, supernatans senex mortuus putris adtollens manus (alliteration and frequency of 's'); 6.19.3, atra atria (assonance and alliteration) and formidabilis tonantibus oblatrans faucibus (homoeoteleuton and balance with nom., abl., nom., abl.); 6.19.4, praeda facile praeteribis ad ipsamque protinus Proserpinam (assonance and alliteration); 6.19.5, panem sordidum petitum (homoeoteleuton); 6.19.6, istum caelestium siderum redies chorum (assonance and homoeoteleuton). The recurrence of a consonant producing a particularly harsh or hissing sound no doubt is intended to represent something unpleasant, (as in the examples given for 6.18.5 and 6.18.843) and add greatly to the distasteful nature of the setting and inhabitants.

Near the beginning of the underworld depiction (6.17.2) Apuleius stresses Psyche's movement up and down in much the same way that he directs the reader's attention up and down in 4.6. Within the first few sentences of 6.17, there is a marked contrast between her descent ad Tartarum Manesque and her journey ad quampiam turrim praealtam. Height is further emphasized in 6.17.2 in the word praecipitem, which is almost immediately followed by the contrasting notion of descent (ad inferos...descendere). 6.17.3, however, commences with diction conveying a sense of altitude with the words turris and praecipitio and the movement concludes with a very strong expression, ad imum Tartarum, which underlines the truly inhospitable nature of the underworld and stresses its depth by contrast. The purpose of the up and down motion is to highlight the seemingly contradictory route which Psyche intends to take to the underworld⁴⁴ and to build

⁴³ Wilkinson (p. 9) states that "it was one of the most generally held opinions on these matters in antiquity that an excess of sibilants was cacophonous." On p. 13, Wilkinson also quotes Dionysius of Halicarnassus *De Compositione Verborum* 14, "s is an unattractive, disagreeable letter, very offensive when used to excess. A hiss seems a sound more suited to a brute beast than a rational being."

⁴⁴ See Kenney 1990b on 6.17.2 for references to other sources where a tower serves as a direct route to the underworld.

tension by teasing the reader through the repetition of phrases indicative of the depths of the lower world without actually developing its landscape.

As stated earlier, there are numerous references throughout this scenario to money and traits associated with it. The concentration of these phrases commences at 6.18.4, duas stipes, and continues with: portorium (6.18.5); avaritia, exactor, gratuito, pauper, viaticum and aes (6.18.6); nauli nomine de stipibus (6.18.7); damnum (6.19.2); praeda (6.19.4); opipare (6.19.5); avaro navitae data...stipe (6.19.6); sumptisque rite stipibus (6.20.1); amnica stipe vectori data (6.20.2); navitae reddita stipe (6.20.5). Besides creating a thematic link with the ecphrasis on the robbers' cave at 4.6, the emphasis upon money highlights the avaricious nature of the underworld, particularly Tartarus, which consumes both the bodies and souls of its inhabitants. The significance imparted to money suggests an obsession with physical things and their acquisition, whereas the most important union to take place at 6.24 is a higher spiritual one, the marriage of Cupid and Psyche.

Combinations of words and word placement are of significance and interest at numerous points throughout the description. At 6.18.2 Apuleius reveals his attention to symmetry by balancing nouns for "path" with those expressing "house" or a component thereof, *iter*, *limine*, *canale* and *regiam* (A, B, A, B). In the latter half of 6.19.3, a concentration of nouns denoting parts of a house, *limen*, *atria* and *domum* is employed to create a varied and more vivid image of the palace which Psyche will enter by mentioning parts of the house as one would encounter them upon entering, rather than simply the *domum* alone. There is a vivid concentration of adjectives connected with slowness, death and filth at 6.18.4-8 which emphasize the foul and frightening place and inhabitants: *mortiferae*, *mortuum*, *moriens*, *squalido*, *pigrum*, *mortuus* and *putris*.

Juxtaposition serves various roles in this setting. At 6.17.2 the frightening nature of Psyche's destination is stressed through the juxtaposition of *Tartarum Manesque*. A contrast which underlines the significance of material prosperity is made conspicuous at 6.18.6 through the juxtaposition of *pauper* and *viaticum*. More frequently, however, this technique is utilized by

Apuleius to accentuate a point or attribute. *Mortuus* and *putris* are emphatically placed to underline the foulness of the old man at 6.18.8. The mysterious nature of the underworld is neatly emphasized via the placement of *deviis abditam* to characterize the isolation of the entrance (6.18.1).

Apuleius' portrait of Cerberus is one of the most forceful images in the passage and it is the image upon which he focuses most carefully and for the greatest time (6.19.3-5)⁴⁵. In 6.19.3, Apuleius slows the narrative tempo down by dwelling upon the dog's attributes with a dense concentration of adjectives and participles which take the reader's attention. The dog's size and terrifying nature are emphasized by the adjectives praegrandis, immanis, formidabilis (6.19.3) and the rather odd⁴⁶ yet memorable expression satis amplo capite (6.19.3). Of particular note is Cerberus' characterization as immanis for the adjective immanis has the same meanings here as it does at 6.14.2, "savage", "frightful in aspect or appearance" and "of enormous size"⁴⁷. The dog's most striking feature, however, are his three heads (teriugo ...capite) which are rendered even more remarkable by Apuleius' use of a word not attested before for 'triple'. Beyond visual appeal, Cerberus' ability to inspire terror is amplified through the use of aural appeal as the dog barks with thundering jaws (tonantibus oblatrans faucibus). A forceful image in itself, the novelty of the phrase "thundering jaws" and the juxtaposition of tonantibus and oblatrans make the portrait even more memorable as does his position, like that of a guard-dog, in front of Proserpine's palace⁴⁸. A

⁴⁵ Unlike the earlier settings, Apuleius does not devote a great deal of space to any one particular point of this setting.

⁴⁶ It strikes me as odd that the dog is described as "huge" but with a head that is only "big enough". I think that Apuleius may have done this on purpose so that the reader will remember it.

 $^{^{47}}$ For references to OLD and TLL, along with the possibility of a verbal link between this setting and the previous one, see p. 19f.

⁴⁸ As far as my research indicates at this point, the placement of Cerberus in front of Proserpine's palace is novel.

notion of terror is highlighted again in the description of the dog's role, excubans servat (6.19.3). Placing the participle and verb, which have the same basic meaning here, side by side underlines the animal's vigilance, his threatening nature, which in turn mirrors that of the locale, and stresses the difficulty of Psyche's task to pass by the dog.

The terrifying first impression of the underworld is brought out by the repetition of proper names associated with the lower world. Venus' initial command to Psyche at 6.16.3 is for the girl to take herself to the palace *ipsius Orci* and to approach Proserpine (6.16.4), both frightening personages. The next mention of Psyche's descent is at 6.17.1, ad Tartarum Manesque; the former term is repeated strikingly at 17.4, ad imum Tartarum. Emphasis upon proper names continues at 6.18.1-2, where the isolated and mysterious Taenarum and the *spiraculum Ditis* are introduced, and the palace of Orcus is again specified. Since he could be certain of the associations with these proper names for the reader, Apuleius is able by their employ to amplify the forbidding nature of the scenario and heighten tension.

Although Apuleius does not dwell upon any one element of this setting, certain points are played up by means of repetition. All of the denizens whom Psyche will encounter according to the tower's instructions at 6.18.1ff. are repeated in the synopsis of her actions at 6.20.1-4. Two of these denizens, however, Cerberus and Charon, are more prominent due to Psyche encountering them twice - once on her way to Orcus' palace and again on her return to the upper world after completing her task (6.18.5, 6.19.3, 6.19.6, 6.20.2, 6.20.4). The repeated meetings of Psyche with both Cerberus and Charon are another means by which Apuleius emphasizes their frightening and foul natures, first brought to light in memorable descriptions at 6.18.5ff. and 6.19.3. The motif of death, a natural association with the underworld, is subtly reinforced throughout this passage by the frequency of words and phrases associated with it: exitium (6.17.1), extinguere (6.17.3), mortiferae viae (6.18.4), flumen mortuum (6.18.5), mortuos and moriens (6.18.6), senex mortuus (6.18.8), mortuos (6.19.3), infernum meatum and mortui (6.20.2). This again

amplifies the reader's sense of the terror which Psyche must be experiencing and serves to colour the mood of the passage.

Cupid's Palace

The ecphrasis on Cupid's palace at 5.1.1-5.2.2 is the first point in *Cupid and Psyche* where the setting is prominent. Additional aspects of the setting are presented in the dialogue between Psyche and her servants and the narrative depicting her first evening in the palace (5.2.3-5.3.5). The identity of this residence's owner is revealed neither to Psyche nor the reader and consequently an air of mystery, which continues for much of the tale, is established. The reader is unaware too of the palace's precise location, its purpose in the centre of the grove and the identity of its inhabitants. The only details given concerning the home's location are that it is in a valley (4.35.4) and is situated in the very centre of the grove therein, near the spring (5.1.2)⁴⁹. This aura of mystery tends to draw the reader, who is intrigued by the richly appointed home, into this description.

Serenity characterizes the mood of this passage. This change in atmosphere is in sharp contrast to the preceding death scenario, replete with sorrow and utter hopelessness on the part of Psyche's family and the citizens of the kingdom⁵⁰. The immediate shift to calmness (Psyche...tanta mentis perturbatione sedata, 5.1.1) conveyed in the first impression of the scene also

⁴⁹ Throughout the story, geographical details are often very confusing and unclear, if indicated at all, thus leaving the reader unaware of the characters' positions. For example, at 5.9.1, the sisters are said to return home, but we have no idea about the location of their homes.

⁵⁰ Although Psyche is sorrowful when faced with her own death, she exhibits bravery and resolve when addressing her parents at 4.34.3ff. Her behaviour here is in contrast with her suicidal tendencies when faced with her later trials (6.12.1, 6.17.1).

diffuses the high level of tension of the earlier narrative (4.33-35) and consequently alters the tempo of the passage⁵¹.

Ring composition is also in evidence as the serenity with which Psyche's adventure begins is mirrored at its close with the wedding scene of 6.23-24. The levity and brightness of both the opening and closing scenes are in deliberate contrast with the other points at which setting is significant. For example, brightness is immediately stressed at 5.1.2 with a vivid image (fontem vitreo latice perlucidum), and the same theme is underlined frequently throughout the passage⁵². The light-hearted atmosphere⁵³ and resplendence of the final scene, though not as elaborate as in this ecphrasis, are imparted to the reader by means of details such as singing, dancing, and the sprinkling of flowers and perfumes (6.24.3). At the three other spots where setting is highlighted the ecphrasis on the robbers' cave at 4.6, the last point at which setting has been delineated, the summit from which Psyche must retrieve water to complete her third task (6.13.4ff.) and the underworld at 6.16.3ff. - a sombre atmosphere is played up by an emphasis upon darkness. For example, the mons of 4.6 is depicted as umbrosus and lookouts stand guard at night, the waters which flow from the summit at 6.13.4 are depicted as fontis atri fuscae...undae and references to the dismal nature of the underworld include tenebras (6.18.3) and atra atria (6.19.3). Sharp contrasts such as these between the settings heighten the impact of the palace's resplendence. In addition to this, the correspondences between this ecphrasis and the final scene of the Cupid and Psyche tale demonstrate Apuleius' attention to a balanced structure and serve as binding threads which tie the tale together and impart a sense of completion to Psyche's adventure.

⁵¹ The tempo is also slowed down through the introduction of an ecphrasis, the ideal medium to impart a sense of calm into a narrative.

⁵² Examples of phrases denoting overall effulgence: 5.1.1, roscidi; 5.1.3, luculentum and aureae columnae...argenteo caelamine; 5.1.5, gemmas; 5.1.6, solidati massis aureis splendore proprio coruscant, ut diem suum sibi domus faciat licet sole nolente.

⁵³ The atmosphere of the palace description is light-hearted in contrast with the sombreness of the preceding funereal wedding.

The peacefulness experienced by Psyche during her approach to and inspection of this palace is in contrast with her desperation when faced with the terrifying atmosphere surrounding Proserpine's palace (6.19.3ff.). Apuleius displays cleverness and compositional elegance by linking two additional elements of the royal abodes. The spectacular walls of Cupid's palace are covered with embossed silver animals, the ferocity of which is underlined by the words *bestiis* (5.1.3) and *efferavit* (5.1.4). Such a description immediately brings the ferociousness of Cerberus to mind (6.19.3, *formidabilis* and 6.20.2, *canis horrenda rabie*). Furthermore, the opulence of Cupid's palace looks forward to that of Proserpine's at 6.20.3 (*sedile delicatum vel cibum beatum*).

Links also exist between this setting and other points in the subsequent narrative. The theme of wild animals is picked up again in the sisters' ruse to deceive Psyche into believing that her husband is a ferocious snake at 5.17.2ff⁵⁴. It is also a prominent feature of Psyche's second and third tasks where she encounters savage sheep (6.12.3ff.) and *dracones* (6.14.4). Wealth serves as another thematic link with both the earlier and later narrative at 4.6, the robbers' cave, and at 6.16.3, the underworld scene. A final association with the other tasks exists at 5.2.2 with its emphasis upon the absence of guards (*nullo vinculo*, *nullo claustro*, *nullo custode*). The image of this vast mass of treasures⁵⁵ standing unguarded contrasts sharply with the emphasis that is placed upon the act of keeping watch at the robbers' cave, in Psyche's third and fourth tasks, and Cupid's confinement in his mother's home. At 4.6, the cave is protected (*excubabant*) by robberguards at night. In Psyche's third task, the water which she aspires to obtain is watched over by *dracones* ...in perpetuam lucem pupulis excubantibus (6.14.4) and her fourth attempt to retrieve something is hindered by Cerberus who *semper excubans servat vacuam Ditis domum* (6.19.3). The theme of guardianship also extends to divinities. Cupid's confinement is described as *solus*

⁵⁴ See further Murgatroyd 1997, p. 360.

⁵⁵ See Murgatroyd 1997, p. 358 for the possibility of Apuleius inverting a Homeric reference (*Od.* 7.91ff.).

interioris domus unici cubiculi custodia clausus coercebatur acriter at 6.11.3, and this notion is underlined when his escape is made known at 6.21.3 (quo cohibebatur). Thus in addition to highlighting the affluence and safety of Cupid's palace⁵⁶, the emphasis upon the non-presence of guards is an important thematic link throughout the narrative. As the final impression of this palace with which the reader is left, it lends additional weight to the overall atmosphere of peace and creates a link with the opening tranquil scene at 5.1.1 (suave recubans, tanta mentis perturbatione sedata, dulce conquievit).

Several distinct literary reminiscences from the epic genre may function to elevate the tone of this passage. As Kenney (1990b, p. 137) notes, the ecphrastic tradition to which this palace description belongs includes Alcinous' palace at *Od.* 7.84-132, Menelaus' palace *Od.* 4.43-6, Aeetes' palace at A.R. 3.215-37 and Cleopatra's palace at Luc. 10.111-26. Other epic models to which Apuleius may have looked for inspiration, direct or otherwise, include Priam's palace, *Il.* 6.243f., Ovid's description of the palace of the Sun, *Met.* 2.1ff., Mars' abode at Stat. *Theb.* 7.40-63, the palace of Aeetes at V. Fl. 5.408-454 and Latinus' palace at Verg. *A.* 7.170-19157. The frequency

⁵⁶ There may also be another loose link to this same theme in the "abduction" scenes of both Charite and Psyche. Charite's place of imprisonment is most unpleasant and she describes her predicament as *inque isto saxeo carcere serviliter clausa* (4.24). Her "watch-guard" is the old woman who cooks for the robbers. Psyche's "abduction" by Zephyr/Cupid is on the contrary to an idyllic locale in a valley and *florentis caespitis gremio* (4.35.4), the agreeable nature of which is delineated further in 5.1, and her watchmen are very helpful, if incorporeal, voices (5.2.3).

Fama", which he erroneously calls a "description du palais de la Renommée dans Ane d'or". Herrmann (1952, p. 18) believes that this Apuleian phrase, along with the invisible servant voices in the palace, "évoquent celles du palais de la Renommée au sujet duquel Ovide écrit: (*Mét*. XII, 47) « tota fremit *vocesque* refert »". I think that this scholar's assessment is incorrect, as there is a decided lack of similarities between the two descriptions. Furthermore, he does not provide any evidence to support his claim.

of this type of description as a component of epic settings suggests that Apuleius' use of it is deliberate. In addition to elevating the passage's tone through association with the grandeur of epic, the evocations also suggest that the mysterious owner of such an abode will be of an importance to rival the above examples.

Murgatroyd (1997) has examined and analysed extensively the ecphrasis at 5.1.2-5.2.2. As I am in agreement with the majority of his opinions, I shall deal briefly with the remainder of relevant aspects and would direct the reader to the above article for more detailed information and references concerning these points. Murgatroyd (1997, p. 360f.) shows the structure of the passage to be composed of three segments: 5.1.2, the natural surrounds; 5.1.3-7, Cupid's palace and 5.2.1f., the storehouses on the other side of the palace. Stress is placed upon the palace itself through its central position and the elaborate detail afforded it in contrast to the two shorter surrounding descriptions. The entire passage, moreover, is framed at 4.35.4-5.1.1 and 5.3.1 with Psyche resting.

It is ironic that such an intricate and elaborate description underlining the magnificence and splendour of Cupid's palace is produced by the old woman in the robbers' cave. In contrast to the uncouthness of the narratrix, the ruggedness of the terrain (4.6), and the presumed poverty of the robbers' cave/home itself, this ecphrasis dwells upon natural and "man-made" grandeur and effulgence from its outset⁵⁸. The beauty and visual appeal of the scenario are analogous to the palace's owner (see also 5.22) and his future wife, and the opening of book 5 contrasts sharply with the unpleasantness of the crag on which Psyche was left to die (4.35.2, scopulum montis ardui...in summo cacumine)⁵⁹. While Murgatroyd (p. 364) maintains that "sight is the only sense

⁵⁸ For a complete list of the nouns and adjectives employed in the passage to stress these attributes, see Murgatroyd 1997, pp. 362-3.

⁵⁹ Murgatroyd also mentions (1997, p. 365) that there is a contrast between the natural environs and the ornate buildings. Although I agree that the natural surrounds are not as "remarkable, odd or luxurious" I think that their description as *lucum proceris et vastis arboribus*

appealed to", there is surely an appeal to one's sense of smell in the passage through the specific use of citron wood (5.1.3). The pleasing fragrance associated with citron is an ingenious touch to an ecphrasis laden with visual appeal and a choice which lends itself well to the splendid attributes which follow.

The placement of this description at the start of a book signals its significance. In addition to the aforementioned links with the subsequent narrative (p. 40), the palace merits such lengthy depiction as it is the locale in which much of the action of book 5 takes place, most notably the initial union of Cupid and Psyche. It is noteworthy also for its length and as the first detailed setting since the ecphrasis on the robbers' cave. Perhaps most importantly, however, it is the affluence of this palace which sparks the jealousy of Psyche's sisters. The events which then ensue, the lovers' separation and reunion, are a result of this jealousy and the sisters' attempts to fool credulous Psyche.

Ceres' and Juno's Temples

Setting is brought out to a lesser degree at two additional points in Psyche's journey. Following Cupid's desertion of Psyche at 5.24, Psyche's wanderings take her to two temples at 6.1.2ff. and 6.3.3-4. Both settings are conveyed to the reader in single descriptive passages. The shrines are seen from a distance at first, but the details subsequently communicated about the temples are those which Psyche can see at a closer range as she looks around. The first temple which Psyche approaches is located *in ardui montis vertice*. This phrase recalls *scopulum montis ardui* at 4.35.2, used to depict the spot upon which Psyche is left to die in accordance with the oracle (4.33). The height of the mountain is stressed again, particularly through the use of a comparative adjective in the phrase *emensis celsioribus iugis* (6.1.3). An emphasis upon height also

immediately brings to mind the description of the peak on which the robbers' cave is located (4.6 in primis altus fuit) and more importantly, its threatening nature. Altitude also creates a link with the subsequent narrative concerning Psyche's third task at 6.13.5ff. where the stream from which she must obtain water is located insistentem celsissimae illi rupi montis ardui verticem. Here too, the height of the peak underlines the danger of the place and the passage's sombre atmosphere. It would seem, therefore, that this temple should belong to someone who will not aid Psyche in her search for Cupid, as proves to be the case at 6.3.2.

Although it does not convey any elements of the setting itself, Psyche's question unde autem scio an istic meus degat dominus? (6.1.2) creates suspense regarding the ownership of the temple and lures readers into expecting a spectacular shrine and good fortune for Psyche as they recall the splendid interior of Cupid's palace and her treatment therein. Characteristically, however, the reader's expectations are thwarted when a shrine with mundane objects is encountered rather than an opulent palace and Psyche receives no assistance there. The reader's disappointment, therefore, parallels Psyche's frustration when she is rejected in her appeal for assistance.

The subsequent details concerning the temple indicate that it is the shrine of some rustic god or goddess⁶⁰. It is not, however, until after the close of the description that the divinity's identity is overtly revealed. By leaving the identity a mystery (rata scilicet nullius dei fana caerimoniasve neclegere, 6.1.5), albeit not a terribly enigmatic one given the contents of the temple, Apuleius piques his reader's curiosity and recalls the description of Cupid's palace at 5.1ff., where the ownership is not immediately revealed.

⁶⁰ The rustic god or goddess could be Ceres, Silvanus or Vertumnus (*see* Murgatroyd 1980 on Tib. 1.1.13-14 and 1.5.27f.).

Unlike the delineation of the physical structure of Cupid's palace at 5.1.3ff., Apuleius presents the contents of the temple in specific detail without describing the temple itself⁶¹. The types of grain are identified as *spicas frumentarias* and *spicas hordei* (6.1.3). Although the former expression initially strikes one as pleonastic, the novelty of the phrase (*OLD* s.v. *frumentarius*¹; *TLL* VI,1.1406.30f.) renders it memorable. Further details concerning the arrangement of the grains *in acervo*⁶² and more specifically, *flexiles in corona* leave the reader, having been offered these few vivid details, with an image of the entire temple which he must complete for himself.

The novel use of language and attention to sound is minimal in accordance with the brevity of the description. There is a seemingly novel pairing of *opera* with *messoria* (*OLD* s.v. *messorius*; *TLL* VIII.862.9f.) and an apparently unique Apuleian use of *mundus* with the meaning "equipment" (*OLD* s.v. *mundus*², *TLL* VIII.1634.47-50). The use of homoeoteleuton, alliteration and the frequency of nasals in the phrase *operae messoriae mundus omnis* are noteworthy and the disarray of the harvesting equipment is accentuated by the juxtaposition of *incuria confusa* at 6.1.4.

A description of the setting at this point in the narrative has real purpose. The narrative tempo is slowed down momentarily by the descriptive pause. This change in tempo from the angry departure of Venus at the close of book 5 and Psyche's desperate roamings with which book 6 commence lends variety to the narrative. Contrary to the elaborate and intriguing description at 5.1ff., the shrine's mundane and dull contents do not grasp the readers' attention for too long. After being unaware of a defined setting for some time, the reader is aided by clear points concerning setting at this juncture to visualize the drama of Psyche's trials. As the readers'

⁶¹ At 4.6 a similar situation arises in which the reader who expects a description of the robbers' cave has his expectations thwarted in typical Apuleian style.

⁶² Psyche's first task prescribed by Venus at 6.10.3 requires her to sort a pile of grains. His decision to mention the particular grains, rather than some other element of the temple, may have been intentional in order to create a correspondence with the later narrative and structural balance.

attention is not distracted for any period of time, the description does not detract from forward movement in the plot.

The valley location of the second temple which Psyche visits at 6.3.3 is in direct contrast with Ceres' mountain top shrine. The introductory statement to this short description immediately calls the surrounds of Cupid's palace at 4.35.4 and 5.1f. to mind. Four details concerning this temple are striking for their similarity to Cupid's palace. The love god's residence is situated in a valley below steep cliffs, vallis subditae (4.35.4) and this temple is located in a similar area, subsitae convallis (6.3.3). Groves are a component of the setting in both instances (5.1.2 and 6.3.3)⁶³. The comment upon the manner in which the temple has been constructed, fanum sollerti fabrica structum (6.3.3) brings to mind the splendour of Cupid's palace, est aedificata non humanis manibus sed divinis artibus (5.1.2). A fourth point of similarity is provided by the precious contents found in this temple (dona pretiosa ac lacinias auro litteratas, 6.3.4) and those belonging to the palace at 5.1.3ff. On account of these striking similarities, the reader along with Psyche, is deceived for a second time into believing that the temple may well belong to Cupid, only to have his expectations dashed.

Several additional details concerning setting are given in the next sentence which further the contrast between the two temples that Psyche visits. The offerings at this unspecified temple are not simple agricultural produce but *dona pretiosa* and *lacinias auro litteratas*. Telling detail such as the precious metal with which the cloths are lettered underlines the affluence of the temple. In contrast to the state of disorder and neglect found at Ceres' temple, here the altar is depicted as *tepentem* (6.3.4) and by implication, well tended. Apuleius plays with his reader again by means of this contrast between temples. The portrait of an affluent temple conjures up the image of a more powerful god or goddess, who ultimately is disclosed as the queen of the gods. Through

⁶³ The grove at 6.3.3 is described as *sublucidum*. It is interesting to note that a similar adjective, *perlucidum*, is employed to describe the spring contained within the grove at 5.1.2.

this contrast in temple depictions, Apuleius manipulates his reader into expecting, but not receiving, a different response to Psyche's pleas.

Vividness is achieved in this description by means of specific details such as the visual appeal to lighting in the phrases *sublucidum lucum* and *lacinias auro litteratas*. The latter embroidered inscriptions, furthermore, appear to be unique (Kenney 1990b on 6.3.4). There is tactile appeal in the reference to the altar's temperature, *aram tepentem*. Such details, in addition to creating a memorable scenario, lend a sense of realism to these temple descriptions.

Chiaroscuro in the passage is achieved through the use of *sublucidum* and *auro*. The former adjective, which appears to be uniquely Apuleian (*OLD* s.v. *sublucidus*), also serves to create an air of mystery in the passage. This is further underlined by the obscurity of the temple owner's identification at 6.3.4, *lacinias...quae cum gratia facti nomen deae cui fuerant dicata testabantur*. Whereas at 6.1.2ff. it is at least evident that the divinity is rustic, the identity of the god or goddess is even less obvious at 6.3.3-4. An additional important similarity between the two temple settings is that in spite of the physical details which are offered, the reader, still unaware of the town or country in which the buildings are located, must supply much to these settings.

The introduction of this second partially defined setting enhances visual clarity for the reader. This is achieved through the rapid and elliptical description of the temple, evocative of the manner in which Ceres' shrine is limned. Yet, like the previous temple scene, on account of the setting's brevity, the description does little to create a clearly defined atmosphere. As the first landscape depictions since the ecphrasis on Cupid's palace at 5.1ff., attention is drawn to the temples for narrative variety, and similarities to the palace serve as a red-herring to deceive the reader whose disappointment parallels Psyche's own ill-success when she fails to obtain assistance.

The Absence of Setting

Elsewhere in the Cupid and Psyche tale the setting is absent or indistinct at best⁶⁴. This studied lack of clarity has various effects on the narrative. Perhaps the most obvious effect is to circumvent repetition of setting descriptions and any ensuing narrative monotony. Apuleius, however, only dismisses details of setting in circumstances where the setting is either irrelevant to the action⁶⁵ or where its absence has real point.

From the outset of *Cupid and Psyche*, an element of mystery is conveyed to the reader through the lack of a specified geographical locale (4.28.1, *in quadam civitate*). Nowhere in the tale is a town or country mentioned. The effects of this are numerous. A paucity or absence of setting maintains the focus on the characters' emotions and their interactions. For example, at 5.28.1 and 6.1.1, Psyche's distress at the loss of her husband and her inability to find him is not overshadowed by the introduction of distracting details regarding whither she is wandering, nor is Venus' exchange with Ceres and Juno at 5.31 undercut by a lengthy introduction on the setting. Furthermore, as at points where setting is analogous to the action, Psyche's clouded judgement and hopelessness following Cupid's departure at 5.24 are brought out by Apuleius' omission of details of setting (i.e. she neither knows what to do nor where she is).

The lack of a distinct setting for so much of the episode causes the points at which setting is detailed to be brought to the forefront. When setting is specified, its narrative prominence and importance (see above *passim*) is consequently underlined and signalled to the reader by means of the contrasts between its clarity and vagueness of the surrounding landscape.

⁶⁴ For example, at 5.25.2-3 a few scenic details are offered to colour the passage but their impact on the narrative is negligible.

⁶⁵ The location, for example, of Psyche's sisters' homes is irrelevant to their sinister behaviour. At 5.21.2, the sisters sail away from the rock from which they are transported to Psyche's home, yet at 5.26.1, Psyche is said to have wandered to the city of one of her sisters.

In conjunction with the element of mystery in the story, the absence of setting stresses the tale's whimsical nature. Produced by the drunken old woman to divert and cheer Charite up, the fantasy is enhanced by Charite's, the old woman's and the reader's inability to locate much of the action, thereby creating a sense of otherworldliness. The mysterious, misty setting, characteristic of folk- and fairy-tales⁶⁶ and so appropriate to this story, is suitable for the peculiar encounters that Psyche has on her travels. Psyche meets with several gods as she wanders about the countryside (Pan at 5.25.3; Ceres at 6.2.2; Juno at 6.4.5) as well as several normally inanimate objects (reed at 6.12.2; water at 6.14.5; tower at 6.17.3ff.) and an eagle (6.15.3f.), all of which now speak to her. The indistinct setting of these unusual encounters indicates that Psyche is not in a familiar place.

The details regarding setting which are offered by Apuleius allow better visualization of the story, but they never overpower the characters' actions, which are of greater importance. Nevertheless, Apuleius employs the absence of setting to intrigue his readers by having Psyche roam about in an unfamiliar and fantastic land. He also teases his readers into wrongfully thinking that following a lengthy paucity of setting, it will be clearly defined with the two temple descriptions at 6.1.2ff. and 6.3.3-4 and that therefore a significant event or encounter will occur there. This mischievous manner in which the author piques his readers' interest is further accentuated by inconsistencies in the narrative about the mode of travel used to reach the sisters' kingdoms (by ship at 5.14.1; 5.21.2 and 5.27.1; by foot at 5.26.1). All of these techniques leave readers unable to identify the locales and, as a result, this enhances the truly fanciful and folkloric nature of the tale.

⁶⁶ See Thompson 1946 for the characteristics of folk-tales.

Psyche's wanderings in mysterious and fantastic settings may have been suggested to Apuleius from various literary predecessors. The indefinable landscapes⁶⁷ in which Psyche finds herself recall the wanderings of Odysseus in places equally difficult to pinpoint⁶⁸. This piquant variation on Odysseus may allude to Psyche's ultimate success and return home. Two other mythological females parallel Psyche's situation more closely. Both persecuted by Hera and, more significantly, pregnant, Io and Leto travel to equally unclear and unusual locales (A. *Pr.* 707ff. and 788ff.; h. *Hom.* 3.20-82 and 3.216ff.; Call. *Ap. passim*). In addition to providing Apuleius with an opportunity to show his cleverness, Psyche's similarity to both Io and Leto creates pathos.

Conclusions

Although setting does not frequently figure prominently, the detailed settings of the robbers' cave and those found throughout the Cupid and Psyche tale are more than simply decorative delineations included to demonstrate Apuleius' descriptive technique. In addition to breaking up the monotony of the narrative, the settings have been carefully contrived in order to colour mood and atmosphere, create analogies and point up correspondences and contrasts with the remainder of the narrative.

Apuleius varies his methods of presenting setting. Descriptive pauses such as those found at 4.6 and 5.1f., draw attention due to their length and slower tempo; other settings are presented by means of static description, dialogue and action (6.13-15; 6.18-20). This diversity prevents repetition and the use of dialogue heightens the impact and memorability of setting by presenting it from different points of view.

⁶⁷ The motif of a pregnant woman wandering in unknown territory is not listed in Thompson's index of folk motifs. Wright (p. 276) lists an "exclusively Balkan" motif that the pregnant wife will not deliver the child until she finds her husband.

⁶⁸ For other Odyssean scenes in the Metamorphoses see Harrison 1996.

Vividness, sensory appeal and telling details promote both verisimilitude and otherworldliness in the settings. Apuleius is fond of visual appeal, particularly chiaroscuro, and aural appeal⁶⁹. Appeal to tactile, gustatory and olfactory senses plays a lesser role in creating a vivid image.

The settings are also often analogous to either the characters or their treatment - Charite does not receive favourable treatment at the *locus horridus* of 4.6; many pleasant things come about for Psyche in the palace at 5.1; the denizens of the underworld (6.18) are as glum and grim as their domain. This analogy has an impact upon the mood and atmosphere of a given passage, which then extends into the subsequent narrative⁷⁰.

Setting is also employed in the above instances to elicit a reaction from the principal character and suggest the same response from the reader - both Psyche and the reader are misled by the temple descriptions (6.1.2-5; 6.3.3-4); tension and fear are built up in the delineation of the threatening man-made and natural surrounds of the robbers' cave (4.6), in the depiction of the stream and environs from which she must obtain water (6.13.4ff.) and the underworld scenario (6.18-20). By contrast, tension is diffused and replaced by a sense of wonder and awe in the palace description (*locus amoenus* at 5.1f.).

The correspondences and contrasts between the settings in question and the larger narrative of the *Metamorphoses* demonstrate Apuleius' careful attention to a balanced structure. The correspondences also serve as links to integrate the seemingly autonomous *Cupid and Psyche*

⁶⁹ For example, 4.6 - undas argenteas and silvestribusque frondibus umbrosus; the contrast between the sparkling palace and the grove in which it is situated at 5.1; at 6.19.6 upon Psyche's return from the underworld she sees stars. Aural appeal is most pointed with the talking water, eagle and tower (6.14.5, 6.15.3f. and 6.17.3ff.).

⁷⁰ For example, the atmosphere in Psyche's third and fourth tasks which is conveyed to the reader by means of numerous unpleasant details, is ominous and terrifying. Consequently, this suggests to the reader that an equally unpleasant experience will befall Psyche.

narrative into the framework of the entire novel⁷¹. These correspondences and contrasts within and between the settings, evident at every turn where setting is highlighted, help to sharpen a setting's portrayal for readers. This is particularly striking when a detailed setting has been omitted for some time, as is the case between the setting at 4.6 and 5.1.

Apuleius provides his readers with just enough setting detail to visualize the scenario. In not providing an abundance of information, the author does not divert his readers from Psyche's current plight as well as the characters' interactions and actions. The settings, however, are not just places where the action occurs. Setting is often used to pique the readers' interest - at 4.6, Apuleius states that he will describe the cave but fails to do so; at 5.1, we are left to wonder who is the owner of such a magnificent domicile; at both 6.1.2 and 6.3.3, again the proprietors are left unknown; at 6.13-15 and 6.17-20, the *dracones* whose eyes never close, talking waters and the very peculiar denizens of the underworld leave readers wondering what sort of place Psyche is in. Setting also lures Psyche into hoping for better fortune (6.1.2 and 6.3.3). It plays a further role in Psyche's trials when elements of the setting actually advise Psyche (talking water at 6.14.5; eagle at 6.15.3f.; tower at 6.17.3ff.) and the attractiveness of the palace encourages Psyche to be bolder (5.2.1). In contrast to the boost to Psyche's confidence which the resplendence of the palace offers, the threatening and terrifying details of setting in Psyche's trials cause Psyche to give up hope (6.14.1) and contemplate suicide (6.17.2). The nastiness of these locales also reflects the fear which Psyche feels.

The setting has symbolic value which is reflected in the characters' semantic structure (Fowler 1977, 41). The roughness and nastiness of the setting at 4.6 symbolizes the robbers' characters and their subsequent abusive treatment of the old woman (4.7) and larcenous acts (4.8ff.). The opulence of Cupid's palace and the kindness demonstrated towards Psyche therein

⁷¹ See for example n. 8 and the similarities between 6.13-15 and 4.6 (p. 24). There is also the possibility that the *turris ardua* of 4.6 is a link to the *praealtam turrim* (6.17.2) from which Psyche will descend to the underworld.

relate significantly to the generosity and tenderness which Cupid shows to Psyche while she resides there.

In terms of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole, setting is relevant to the theme of finding salvation in the spiritual rather than the material and sensual which applies to both Psyche and Lucius⁷². Psyche does not find her ultimate salvation in the opulent palace where she has been saved from death, but finds it upon her return from the underworld (6.21.2ff.). The setting also is relevant to the theme that bad things befall those bereft of divine grace⁷³. Once Psyche loses Cupid's favour at 5.23-24, she finds herself in places and situations which are less than desirable and which cause her to feel despair and hopelessness. The theme of metamorphoses⁷⁴ is also reflected in the various changes in setting. The rocky cliff of 4.35.2 changes to the splendid palace and its environs at 5.1ff which then is replaced by the rugged and threatening locales of Psyche's trials which is followed by a happier scene at the close of the tale.

The placement of setting is of significance at both 4.6 and 5.1. Their position at the start of the tale and at the beginning of the book signals that the settings are scenes where something significant will happen. Up to 4.6 the robbers have been quite successful in their escapades, but after the description of the mountain on which their cave is, the tales recounted are tales of loss. A similar change of fortune occurs for Psyche. Until 5.1, her lot has not been favourable, but after

 $^{^{72}}$ Although Psyche is surrounded by tremendous wealth (5.2.1), it is her spiritual relationship with Amor I (Kenney 1990b, p. 20) which saves her. Lucius does not find salvation from his plight, a direct result of his sensual escapades with Fotis in Book 2, until he becomes a priest of Isis in book 11.

 $^{^{73}}$ For themes see Kenney 1990b, p. 19f; James 1987, p. 140ff.; Tatum 1972, p. 307ff.; Scobie 1973, p. 66.

⁷⁴ There are numerous metamorphoses that occur in the tale. These include: changes in Psyche's personality from a simple girl to a cunning individual and Cupid's metamorphosis from a mischievous home-wrecker to a loving husband; a transformation from physical to spiritual love between Cupid and Psyche; a shift from happiness to sadness and back to happiness for Psyche; etc. See the above footnote for some scholarly references.

the description of Cupid's palace, she leads a happy existence until her husband's departure at 5.25.

In more general terms, Apuleius employs several standard techniques in his delineation of settings. In addition to sensory appeal, Apuleius achieves vividness by piling up adjectives and nouns denoting a particular trait (for example, the sinister nature of the mountain at 4.6). The impact of any given setting is greater by having a character as the focalizer since we then see these places through the eyes of an individual rather than an omniscient narrator⁷⁵. As the character and reader approach a setting, more specific details are offered the closer one gets to it. When buildings are depicted, as at 5.1, 6.1.2ff. and 6.3.3-4, Apuleius zooms in on the interior of the structure after viewing its exterior from the distance. Apuleius tends to include details of colour in these settings (4.6, undas argenteas; 5.1.3, aureae...argenteo; 6.1.3, spicas frumentarias; 6.3.4, auro; 6.13.4, atri fuscae; note also the above examples of chiaroscuro) and often highlights the shape of things, particularly when they are jagged and threatening (e.g. 6.15.5, trisulca vibramina). Also noteworthy in Apuleius' settings is the absence of any indication as to the season, time of day, indigenous population and their customs and language, as well as the names of towns and their surrounds. These omissions are, however, entirely apt for settings in a never-never land.

⁷⁵ At 4.6 Lucius, the narrator, who clearly knows more than he can see, is also a character in the narrative. Consequently, I feel that this adds to the impact of the description, as we are to imagine that he is there experiencing this.

Chapter 2: Ecphrasis

In very general terms, an ecphrasis can be defined as an extended and elaborate description. Ecphrasis was a standard rhetorical exercise in imperial times1, and school texts defined it as an expository speech which vividly evokes the scene for the reader. The four extant treatises on the progymnasmata, which include ecphrasis, come from the first to fifth centuries (see Becker p. 5ff., Bartsch p. 7ff. and Palm p. 110ff.). The work of Theon (first century; Spengel II.118) defines ecphrasis as λόγος περιηγηματικός ἐναργῶς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον and stresses that its virtues are clarity and vividness, ἀρεται δὲ ἐκφράσεως αἴδε, σαφήνεια μὲν μάλιστα καὶ ἐναργεῖα τοῦ σχεδὸν ὁρασθαῖ τὰ ἀπαγγελλόμέα (Spengel, II.119). The other three definitions found in Hermogenes (second century), Aphthonius (fourth century) and Nicolaus (fifth century) respectively, are very similar and stress the above two points of importance: λόγος περιηγηματικός, ώς φασι, έναργής καὶ ὑπ΄ ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον (Spengel, II.16), λόγος περιηγηματικός ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον (Spengel, II.46) and λόγος ἀφηγματικός ὑπ' ὄψιν ἐναργως ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον. As Bartsch (p. 10) notes, the ancient authors consistently make reference to four appropriate topics for ecphrasis: persons, circumstances, places and periods of time. This list is supplemented by each individual author: Theon includes customs, Hermogenes adds crises, Aphthonius considers plants and animals to be appropriate topics and Nicolaus also adds statues and paintings2.

¹ Bartsch (p. 8, n. 7) notes that ecphrasis was not adopted as a regular term until the second Sophistic. Becker (p. 5, n. 2), using *Ibycus*, notes that of over 500 occurrences of the word ἔκφρασις very few occur before the third and fourth centuries. Longinus does not mention ecphrasis and both Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Quintilian censure ecphrasis (*Rh*. 10.17 and 2.4.3).

² Bartsch (p. 10, n. 10) notes that contrary to modern usage, the ecphrasis in antiquity was not employed primarily to depict works of art and he further adds that it may not be accurate to apply it to descriptions of paintings before the late third century A.D. For examples of the various topics from the ancient authors, see Bartsch, p. 10.

Modern narratologists consider the ecphrasis to be the 'paradigm example of narrative pause' during which the plot does not advance (Fowler 1991, p. 25). Hamon (1981, p. 11) adds that a descriptive passage 'is what stops, blocks and suspends the momentum of reading', and as such a device, it brings about a need in the reader, now transformed into an interpreter, to decipher its meaning and function in the work. Barthes (p. 13) views ecphrasis as a detachable polished piece which has its own function and is used to describe places, times, people or works of art. Although ecphrasis is not constrained by any desire for realism, truth or verisimilitude, Barthes (p. 16) believes that details in a description can signify the 'real' in the absence of any other signified object³. Details in an ecphrasis can range in meaning from their simple existence being their meaning⁴ to having a demarcative, dilatory (delaying what follows) and decorative function according to Hamon (1982, p. 178).

Although views differ concerning the function of ecphrasis and its relation to the rest of the narrative, all scholars acknowledge its vividness and often make note of its ability to move a reader and arouse emotion. Becker (pp. 11-12) further adds that "the ecphrasis is not to describe just the visible appearance of the work and the world it represents, but to include the judgements of the describer". If the reactions of the describer are included in the ecphrasis, as at 5.22.3-4, clarity and vividness are enhanced, the reader is drawn in by the descriptive passage and his or her reaction to the description may be coloured by the expression of emotion⁵.

³ Barthes discusses what he refers to as the 'real' on pp. 15-16. He states that semiotically the 'real' is a 'concrete detail constituted by direct collusion of a referent and signifier' and further adds that the 'real' is assumed not to need independent justification and that it is powerful enough to negate any notion of function.

⁴ Chatman, p. 145, discussing Barthes' views. Barthes' theory of ecphrasis includes the notion that verisimilitude is a 'referential illusion' and that 'things depicted no longer need meaning: they simply are: that is their meaning'.

⁵ Becker, p. 13 and Bartsch, p. 15. Nicolaus (Spengel III.493) states the following regarding Demosthenes' ecphraseis: πάθος ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγειν πειρᾶται διὰ τοῦ λόγου (Becker, p. 13 n. 22).

In this chapter I shall examine the ecphraseis in the Cupid and Psyche tale, which include Venus' return to the sea at 4.31.4-7 and her ascent to heaven at 6.6, the physical description of Cupid himself at 5.22 and the closing description of Cupid and Psyche's marriage feast at 6.24. In order to analyse these ecphraseis and their significance, it is necessary to offer a working definition of the term ecphrasis. Although 'ecphrasis' is a very difficult term to define conclusively, for the purpose of this chapter 'ecphrasis' designates a description of a person, object or event excluding setting6 (as dealt with in the previous chapter) in which the detail, often seemingly superfluous, is so full, elaborate and specific that the reader's attention is drawn to the subject on account of its apparent realism. So striking are the details of the Apuleian ecphraseis that the reader may be able to visualize what is being described as though he were looking at a picture of it. Furthermore, by its very nature ecphrasis creates a pause at the narrative level, and consequently the particulars put forth in the delineation serve in no way to advance the narrative. This absence of advancement in the plot often (though admittedly not for everyone) readily invites the reader to wonder why Apuleius has chosen to insert ecphraseis, what his source(s) of inspiration was/were for their powerful images and what their functions are in the overall narrative structure7.

⁶ Although for many narratologists setting falls under the term ecphrasis, for working purposes I shall regard the two as distinct topics.

⁷ Van Mal-Maeder analyses Apuleius' descriptions in book 2 of the *Metamorphoses*, and concludes (p. 174) that ecphraseis "fonctionnent comme des mises en abyme [mise en abyme designe «toute enclave entretenant une relation de similitude avec l'oeuvre qui la contient»]"; tantôt préfigurant quelque événement à venir, elles remplissent le rôle de prolepses, parfois aussi, elles sont riches en signaux "anaphoriques", et possèdent alors une fonction récapitulative, ou, plus profondément, elles peuvent être le lieu emblématique d'un débat philosophique et artistique sur la mimesis." Many of her observations on the functions of ecphraseis are applicable to those found in *Cupid and Psyche*, as discussed in detail below.

Venus' marine retinue at 4.31.4-7

The first ecphrasis to be examined is the return to the sea of Venus and her marine cortège at 4.31.4-7. The ecphrasis depicts both the goddess accompanied by her attendants and the sea over and in which they travel. Intermingled with the descriptive details are various points which fall outside the definition of ecphrasis. At 4.31.4 the image of Venus walking on water is enhanced by the depiction of her feet as *roseis* and the previously turbulent sea (*vibrantium fluctuum summo rore*), which has subsided with the touch of the goddess' feet is described as being *sudo vertice*. 4.31.5 offers no additional details in terms of the ecphrasis and merely serves to identify the subsequent list of unusual individuals. It is at 4.31.6 that the ecphrasis proper commences and continues until *curru biiuges alii subnatant*. The final sentence of 4.31.7 merely sums up the scenario.

The image of Venus returning to the sea attended by her marine cortège has both literary and artistic predecessors. Kenney (1990b on 4.31.4-7) lists the following as Apuleius' literary models: Homer *Il.* 13.27-31 and 18.37-49; Moschus *Europa* 115-24 and Vergil *Aen.* 5.816-26. Two additional marine trains of attendants can be found at Statius *Ach.* 1.52-60 and *Silv.* 3.2.35-508. None of these specified predecessors, however, depicts a retinue of Venus and consequently, this ecphrasis comes as a surprise9. More direct sources of inspiration may have come from numerous artistic models including *LIMC* II.1.118 (Aphrodite 1211 and 1212), as noted by Kenney¹⁰ (1990b, p. 125) and the North African mosaics of Venus referred to in Lassus' article¹¹.

⁸ The later ecphraseis of Claudian *Epithalam. Hon. Aug.* 144-179 (Venus' marine cortège) and Philostratus *Imagines* 2.18.4 (a nymph and her attendants) exhibit distinct similarities to Apuleius' ecphrasis, which suggest that the marine retinue image was traditional.

⁹ It is surprising that no ecphraseis of Venus' marine retinue exist on account of her numerous connections with the sea (for example, her birth from the foam of the sea, Aphrodite's role as a protectress of sailors, metaphorical images of the sea of love, etc. For various literary references, see Nisbett and Hubbard on Horace *Carm.* 1.5.16).

¹⁰ Kenney (1990b, p. 125) also states that Apuleius may have been familiar with Scopas' sculptured group of Neptune and his retinue as mentioned by Pliny *N.H.* 36.26. This possible

Before an attempt is made to analyse possible literary models, the main features of this ecphrasis need to be outlined. Of obvious importance to a marine description, the condition of the water is one of the first elements in the ecphrasis (4.31.4). Although the marine cortège belongs to Venus, her presence is not the prime focus. Apuleius places the emphasis rather upon her attendants in 4.31.6 by presenting the reader with a list of escorts (Portunus, Salacia and Palaemon) who are less commonly represented than the more usual Nereids at 4.31.6 and Tritons who are presented engaged in various activities at 4.31.7. In order to exhibit what details Apuleius may have derived from literary predecessors, a brief survey of the similarities and differences will be presented.

Contrary to Kenney's assertion (1990b on 4.31.4-7) that Hom. *Il.* 18.37-49 was one of Apuleius' models, I believe that the catalogue of Nereids surrounding Thetis had little influence upon this ecphrasis, save perhaps the presence of the Nereids themselves¹². Nereids are, however, found elsewhere in literature and as the offspring of the sea-god Nereus they are natural marine attendants.

Poseidon's departure with his marine retinue at *Il.* 13.27-31¹³ exhibits a sufficient number of differences as to indicate that Apuleius is not closely or consciously imitating it. There are,

model will be dealt with after the literary predecessors. For examples of Venus being attended by her more common escorts, Erotes, see *LIMC* Aphrodite 1213-1215.

- ¹¹ Slater (1998, p. 20) also notes that "This theme of the 'marine thiasus' is well known in Roman art, from tiny decorative reliefs to large mosaics. Apuleius relies on his reader's ability to flesh out a mental picture of this scene from previous experience with some such work of art, whether in mosaic...or another medium." As evidence, he includes a mosaic of a marine thiasus, DAI Rome Inst. Neg. 64.77.
- ¹² Kenney (1990b on 4.31.6) notes that listing the Nereids' names was traditional in epic and cites as evidence the Homeric example and Verg. *Aen.* 5.825-6. As Apuleius has given the entire ecphrasis a stately flavour (to be discussed below), the absence of the Nereids' names may be a deliberate epic inversion.
- ¹³ Although Kenney limits the representative passage to lines 27-31, as in the Apuleian passage there is a lead-up to the ecphrasis, as a description of the horses which pull Neptune's chariot commences at line 23.

however, certain similarities which indicate that Apuleius may be developing a standard part of his intellectual heritage. In the introductory segment of this description Poseidon steps upon his horse-drawn chariot (l. 26) in order to drive over the waves, and Venus at 4.31.7 is drawn forth in her chariot by Tritons that have been yoked together. In Homer's description unspecified sea creatures cavort about beneath the sea-god (ἄταλλε...ὑπ' ἀυτου, 13.27) and, symbolic of Neptune's power, the sea itself parts before him in delight (ll. 27-29). Apuleius elaborates upon his Homeric example, however, by specifying the individuals accompanying Venus. Notably, some of Venus' attendants are situated beneath the goddess, whose power is conveyed by the calming of the sea once she steps foot upon it at 4.31.4.

Also very similar to the Homeric account is Moschus' portrayal of Zeus and Europa's retinue. The sea calms (l. 115, γαληιάασκε θάλασσα), sea creatures gambol about (l. 116), Nereids are present (l. 118, but they ride on sea monsters) and Tritons playing music accompany Zeus (l. 123). The latter is particularly noteworthy as one of the Tritons at 4.31.7 is depicted as playing his conch¹⁴. An additional point from Moschus which may have been in Apuleius' mind when composing his own ecphrasis is the introduction of a dolphin at 4.31.6. At *Europa* 117, a joyful dolphin springs up from the depths, frolicking around Zeus. Apuleius does not directly imitate this image, but cleverly varies it; he introduces the animal by referring to Palaemon as *auriga* parvulus delphini at 4.31.6.

The Vergilian portrayal of Neptune's retinue at *Aen*. 5.816-826 contains many of the elements found in 4.31.4-7. Schiesaro (1988, p. 148) believes that comparison with the Vergilian model "permette alcune osservazioni sulle modalita di ripresa, da parte di Apuleio" and is "evidente il gusto per la dilatazione descrittiva (in Virgilio la scena è appena accennata, e occupa

¹⁴ Tritons are commonly represented as playing conch shells. See Kenney (1990b) on 4.31.7 for references. I have not, however, found another example of a Triton thus depicted in a marine retinue.

in tutto sette versi, neppure consecutivi) e per la ricerca di particolari secondari...". Neptune's chariot is drawn by yoked animals¹⁵ (l. 817), at l. 820 *subsidunt undae*, Neptune is attended by various sea-creatures (l. 821, *immania cete*), and most notably in ll. 823-4, Vergil presents a list of attendants (Glaucus, Palaemon, Tritons and Phorcus) in addition to listing the accompanying Nereids in lines 825-6.

The first of the two later marine cortège examples in Statius bears little marked resemblance to Apuleius' ecphrasis. At Statius *Ach.* 1.57 the waves are calm in the presence of Neptune (*placidis...undis*) and Tritons¹⁶ who bear the god's arms gambol about the divinity (II. 55-57). The second description at *Silv.* 3.2.35-50, perhaps itself based upon *Aen.* 5.816-26, exhibits closer parallels. The retinue (particularly II. 35-39) is striking for three reasons. Statius has a Triton swim in front, then introduces a direct invocation to Palaemon, as at *Aen.* 5.823. Most important, however, is the sentence which spans lines 35-38, and lists Proteus and Glaucus, both gods of the sea, and the merman Triton, son of Poseidon and Amphitrite. In light of these similarities between Statius and Vergil it is possible that Apuleius, true to his sophisticated style, may be expanding upon both these particular models by substituting for Glaucus, Phorcus and Proteus, more recherché divinities associated with the sea such as Portunus and Salacia¹⁷.

Common features repeatedly appear in Apuleius' predecessors to suggest that there may have been a tradition in marine-retinue descriptions which Apuleius could subsequently adapt and develop his own work. Details common to these descriptions include the following: the waves or sea subside (*Aen.* 5.820; *Il.* 13.29; *Europa* 115; *Ach.* 1.54 and 1.57); a chariot, and

¹⁵ In the other possible models/predecessors the means by which the chariots are drawn is only specified at *Il.* 13.23.

¹⁶ The Tritons are depicted at l. 54 as proceeding *cantuque quieto*. Their instruments, however, are not mentioned. See footnote 14.

¹⁷ The purpose of introducing these unusual divinities is subject to dispute and will be dealt with below.

particularly mention of the chariot's axle (*Aen.* 5.820; *Il.* 13.26 and 13.30); sea-creatures are present (*Aen.* 5.822, *immania cete*; *Il.* 13.27; *Europa* 116; *Ach.* 1.55); and accompanying sea-divinities are also specified (*Aen.* 5.823; *Europa* 118 and 123; *Ach.* 1.55; *Silv.* 3.2.35ff.).

In spite of the numerous similarities between 4.31.4-7 and its potential models/ predecessors, there are also a considerable number of noteworthy dissimilarities between them. Firstly, no other divinities walk upon the water in earlier marine depictions. Unspecified seacreatures appear frequently in the other authors (e.g. Verg. Aen. 5.821; Mosch. Europa 116; Hom. Il. 13.27), yet Apuleius does not introduce additional non-specific animal escorts. He maintains a sharper focus upon the named individuals and introduces only an oblique reference to a seaanimal with the phrase auriga paroulus delphini at 4.31.6. Tritons actually draw Venus' chariot at 4.31.7 (curru biiuges alii subnatant) rather than simply swimming about the divinity (Statius Silv. 3.2.35-6 praenatet) or being listed as escorts (Aen. 5.824; Statius Ach. I.55). Further innovations to the traditional marine-retinue ecphrasis include a more elaborate and full image of the divinity involved. Apuleius enhances the picture of Venus by describing physical attributes, such as her feet at 4.31.4 and her seemingly unique ability to walk on water. He also creates a vivid image of the goddess relaxing while her followers see to her needs; for example, Tritons shade the goddess from the sun and hold her mirror for her (4.31.6). This representation of escorts attending to the divinity is not met in any of the earlier marine retinues but occurs subsequently in both Claudian and Philostratus (Epithalam. Hon. Aug. 149 and Imagines 2.18.4) which suggests that Apuleius may have exerted some influence upon these later authors¹⁸.

Just as no single literary model provides all the components of Apuleius' ecphrasis, no one example from art can be said to serve as a complete model. Thus Amat (p. 125) remarks

¹⁸ Like Apuleius, Claudian refers to the female's foot, specified as *niveae* by Claudian (l. 152), touching the water. See also Schiesaro (1988, p. 149), who makes note of a significant likeness between Apuleius' description of Venus' retinue and Philostratus' description of Galatea at *Imagines* 2.18.

pertinently that the ecphrasis 'paraît être le reflet de souvenirs composites plûtot que la reproduction d'un original actuellement disparu.' Robertson and Vallette (p. 36 n.1) also add that "La brilliante description d'Apulée est inspirée par des œuvres d'art hellénistiques, comme celles qui ont pour sujet le cortège triomphal ou les noces d'Amphitrite", but fail to offer any precise examples. Pliny's description of Neptune's retinue sculpted by Scopas (N.H. 36.26) exhibits two correspondences with the inclusion of Nereids and Tritons. It differs from 4.31 in that Thetis and Achilles accompany Neptune and the Nereids are riding upon dolphins, sea-horses or sea-animals. No additional attributes are striking and it is unlikely that this sculpture had much influence upon Apuleius.

The same is true of the vase-painting in *LIMC* II I.118 (Aphrodite 1212) cited by Kenney (1990b on 4.31.4-7). The painting, in which a pair of swans draws the goddess over the sea, bears little direct relevance to this Apuleian ecphrasis. The painting is significant for its attestation to the diversity of creatures drawing Venus' chariot. A closer parallel is provided by a coin dating to the reign of Nero (Aphrodite 1211), for there Aphrodite is being drawn by a pair of Tritons. This image is very similar to that created at 4.31.7, where Apuleius has yoked Tritons swim in front of Venus' chariot. It is, moreover, noteworthy that on the reverse of the coin Aphrodite is holding a mirror in her right hand; Apuleius portrays a Triton holding it before his mistress (4.31.7, alius sub oculis dominae speculum progerit). All in all, however, the similarities between the Apuleian ecphrasis and artistic examples are not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that Apuleius drew directly upon them. Since elsewhere he draws heavily upon literary examples and the entire passage has an epic flavour, greater influence will have been exerted by literary predecessors¹⁹, most notably Homer *Il.* 13.27-31, Vergil *Aen.* 5.816-26, Moschus *Europa* 115-24 and Statius *Silvae* 3.2.35-50.

¹⁹ See also Kenney (1990a, p. 180 n. 16) regarding the literariness of Apuleius.

The stately tone of this ecphrasis, signalled by the opening phrase of 4.31.4 (sic effata²⁰), has various purposes within the narrative. First, it contrasts with Venus' base behaviour demonstrated at 4.31.1-3 in her indignant and jealous tirade against Psyche and the inappropriately non-maternal manner in which she kisses Cupid at 4.31.4. In addition to this, the epic flavour underlines and prefigures Venus' power²¹. Contrary to this belief, Slater (1998, p. 20) affords no significance to the ecphrasis and erroneously concludes that "Seeing Venus thus [i.e. in a marine thiasus as at 4.31.4-7], whether in a work of art or through the medium of Apuleius' description, does not seem problematic: she and her companions are simply objects of beauty." The goddess' authority, rather, is conveyed via the calming of the sea at the touch of her foot (4.31.4), the grandeur of her retinue²² and the ominous undertones of the passage. This stress upon Venus' power performs a couple of functions. First, it cleverly accentuates the hybris involved in the reverence that people have been extending ironically to Psyche (4.28.3). The latter will soon learn that the goddess who had been recently spurned by worshippers (4.29.3ff.) is a force to be reckoned with. Not only must Psyche endure a funereal wedding (4.32.1ff.) but the young girl also feels the impact of Venus' might when she must undertake numerous tasks and face refusal of aid from both Ceres and Juno (6.3.1-2 and 6.4.5) who dread to cross Venus. This evocation of the goddess' power also prefigures the control which she will wield over Cupid following his injury and separation from Psyche (5.23.6ff.).

In terms of the *Cupid and Psyche* narrative, the pause occasioned by the ecphrasis performs various functions. It permits a change of scene and a redirection of the focus from

²⁰ Kenney (1990b on 4.31.4) refers to this phrase as an 'epicizing tag'.

²¹ Kenney (1990a, p. 178) likens Venus at this point to Virgil's Juno given the context, tenor and tone of her speech upon her entry at 4.29.5.

²² Harrison (1991, p. 563) suggests a textual emendation *-fit statim-* in order to underline what the scholar feels is the central point of the passage, 'namely, the extraordinary swift attendance of Venus' marine retinue...'.

Venus and her desire to harm Psyche to the actual accomplishment of the goddess' wishes commencing at 4.32ff. Furthermore, immediately following this ecphrasis Venus ceases to be the central character and the reader's attention becomes focused upon Psyche instead. The pause, therefore, serves to put a full stop to the preceding narrative. It is also after this point in the tale that Cupid's behaviour changes dramatically. Prior to this ecphrasis, Cupid is described as behaving in his customary fashion (4.30.4-5) as an irresponsible and mischievous marriage wrecker. Yet, in his subsequent speaking appearance at 5.5.2²³, the god has undergone a complete metamorphosis. He is here and afterwards portrayed as a compassionate, loving husband who strives to protect his wife from her scheming sisters, but who falls under the influence of his powerful mother Venus (5.29-30) and finds himself confined in her domicile (6.21.2). In addition, some of the tension that has been building since 4.30 with the commencement of Venus' tirade is alleviated by the ecphrasis and the reader's attention is diverted by this visually appealing passage²⁴. The placement of an ecphrasis forcefully signaling Venus' might immediately after the goddess' outburst, helps to colour reader reaction to Psyche's misfortunes in 4.32, and inclines one to feel sympathy for the girl.

The actions of Venus' attendant Tritons who shade her face and carry her mirror are indicative of Venus' arrogance and preoccupation with her beauty. These facets of the goddess' character are particularly relevant in light of Venus' jealousy and subsequent treatment of Psyche whose beauty she attempts to defile by means of physical violence (6.10.1) and who she belittles by means of verbal abuse, referring to the girl as *deformis ancilla* at 6.10.2. Venus' obsession with her appearance also serves as a motivating factor in Psyche's descent to the underworld (6.16.5-6).

²³ Cupid reappears at 5.4.3 but he does not speak with Psyche. 5.5.2 is the first scene during which they engage in conversation.

²⁴ Although the passage is visually appealing it does have ominous undertones. See below, p. 69.

This ecphrasis does not present the reader with an abundance of detail, but the precise nature of the details is sufficient to draw his attention. The use of sensory appeal also contributes to the overall appeal and interest level elicited by the description. 4.31.6, striking on account of the numerous proper names within one sentence, further captures one's attention because of the exhibited diversity of sensual appeal. Nereids are portrayed as *chorum canentes*, Portunus' beard is *caerulis*, Salacia is depicted as weighted down *piscoso sinu*²⁵ and Palaemon is described by the diminutive *parvulus*. The inclusion of aural, tactile, visual and olfactory appeal within one sentence adds to the overall richness of the image, created by Portunus' blue-green beard, the abundance of fish, and the segment's musical frame created by Nereids singing and a Triton gently blowing on his conch shell. Furthermore, the entire ecphrasis is framed by water images; Venus stepping on the sea at 4.31.4 and Tritons swimming below Venus' chariot at 4.31.7.

Apuleius also draws attention to Venus' attendants by balancing the number of syllables in 4.31.6 from adsunt to Palaemon (13, adsunt...canentes; 12, et...hispidus; 12, et...Salacia; 13, et...Palaemon). This particular segment of the sentence is the most intriguing in the ecphrasis due to the inclusion of these unusual personages. The purpose of Apuleius' inclusion of these characters is, however, subject to scholarly dispute. Purser believes (p. 10 on 4.31) that the author simply desired 'to accumulate a few out-of-the common names.' Kenney (1990b on 4.31.6) feels that 'Apuleius was no doubt less concerned with mythological accuracy than with the general effect and the sound of the names.' Neither scholar adds any further comments on the effect of this listing of names. Schiesaro (1988, p. 148), views Apuleius' elaboration of the personages listed at Aen. 5.816-26 as testimony "dell'insistito virtuosismo mitologico di Apuleio." Not only is the

²⁵ The phrase *piscoso sinu* creates an unusual image of a divinity holding an abundance (*gravis*) of fish scooped up in the folds of her robe. I also suspect that the phrase may have been included for its olfactory appeal on account of *gravis* meaning 'strong (usu. in a bad sense), rank' (*OLD* s.v. *gravis* 8, *TLL* VI,1.2296.79ff.) and the odour naturally associated with fish.

mixture of Greek and Latin names is not only exotic but the wonder and oddity of it draw the reader in.

In addition to satisfying his desire to create a vivid image, I suspect that Apuleius has chosen to include Portunus, Palaemon and Salacia because they are less commonly depicted divinities than Nereids and Tritons. The infrequency of their depictions in addition to their intricate and interwoven mythologies accord well with the author's fondness for recherché references. Consequently, as well as presenting these three individuals, who are not linked elsewhere in literature with Venus, in a unique manner (see below), Apuleius plays with his reader's knowledge of current mythology. Portunus a god of harbours and gates is frequently identified with Palaemon (Ov. Fast. 6.546-7; Hyg. Fab. 2.5.3-4; Fest. Verb. 242.1-2; Serv. A. 5.241.9; Serv. G. 1.437.7). Wissowa in Myth. Lex. (Portunus, p. 2788), followed by Purser (p. 10), thinks that as Salacia in this particular passage is to be equated with Amphitrite (cf. RE s.v. Salacia 1819), so Portunus should be considered as Neptune. The connection with Neptune is strengthened by the introduction of Palaemon, who was originally Melicertes, the son of Athamas and Ino, transformed into a divinity by Neptune (Kenney 1990b on 4.31.6 and Hyg. Fab. 224.5.3-4, ...Melicertes Athamantis filium in deum Palaemonem). Salacia, an old Roman sea-goddess, is identified with Tethys (Cic. Tim. 39 and Serv. G. 1.31), with Amphitrite, and Servius makes her the mother of Triton, who is usually the son of Amphitrite and Neptune (A. 1.144; RE 1818-1819). Most commonly, however, Salacia is known as Neptune's wife (Sen. Fr. Haase p. 426, collocamus...Neptuno Salaciam; Gel. 13.23.2; Apul. Apol. 31; Serv. A. 10.76.13-14). The numerous interconnections between these divinities suggest that Apuleius was aware of and deliberately exploits the intricacies.

Schiesaro (1988, p. 148-9) argues that Apuleius has been influenced by visual representations²⁶ of the time period in his identification of Portunus with Glaucus or Poseidon, and his representation of Palaemon as a young man riding on the back of a dolphin. Although this may be a possibility, his argument lacks conclusive evidence²⁷. Furthermore, because Apuleius exhibits a distinct fondness for literary borrowings and elaboration elsewhere, I believe that he is more likely to have been influenced more strongly by a literary predecessor.

Another unusual point concerning Portunus, Salacia and Palaemon, which highlights their presence, is that unlike the daughters of Nereus and Triton, these three divinities engage in no activity. They are simply described with a distinctive attribute. The description of these seadivinities is unique as no literary parallels exist for their given characteristics²⁸.

Sound play is noteworthy in the introductory phrase (4.31.5) and 4.31.6 itself. The tempo of non moratur marinum obsequium (4.31.5), which underlines the promptitude of Venus' retinue, is ironically slowed down by the startling number of nasals. Consequently, the reader's focus is drawn to this passage and what follows. The brevity of the description is stressed by the staccato sound of Portunus caerulis barbis hispidus, which is striking also for balance, homoeoteleuton and the frequency of labials. Alliteration occurs in the phrase chorum canentes as well as gravis piscoso sinu Salacia. The latter is also notable for the preponderant letter s which creates a displeasing

²⁶ Schiesaro (1988, p. 148) contends that Apuleius' identifications are a result "sulla scia non solo di monete romane del periodo, ma anche,... di raffigurazioni plastiche."

²⁷ For example, he makes reference to Roscher-Lexicon vol. III.1, coll. 1261-2 as evidence for coins, but elaborates no further upon what sort of images actually are present on coins from the reigns of Antoninus Pius to Severus. He also (p. 149) draws attention to Pausanias' description of Poseidon's temple (II. 1,7-8). Several of the divinities present in Apuleius' ecphrasis form part of the statuary of the temple, but the comparison is weak. Schiesaro undercuts his own argument for the influence of visual representations upon Apuleius by concluding that "Non tutti i particolari...coincidono: si pensi però che la dedicazione di questo grandioso ciclo di statue da parte del sofista Erode Attico si colloca negli anni di Apuleio, a testimonianza, se non altro, di un indirizzo preciso del gusto dell'epoca."

²⁸ Kenney (1990b on 4.31.6) notes that Palaemon is often depicted astride a dolphin in art and Hoevels (p. 34, n. 61) adds that Palaemon is rare in literature.

sound apt for ominous undertones. The absence of sound play in the remainder of the ecphrasis renders this segment even more emphatic and, when coupled with the above points concerning 4.31.6, makes it evident that Apuleius intends to focus his reader's attention upon this part of the description.

Apuleius achieves vividness in 4.31.7 by offering particular details which have sensory appeal. Tactile appeal is conveyed by noting the material from which Venus' sunshade has been fashioned and emphasizing the intensity of the sun's rays by delineating it as *flagrantiae* solis...inimici. Other cues which enable a reader to visualize the scene are conveyed more indirectly. For example, one must assume that Venus is in a relaxed pose, perhaps reclining, in order for one of the Tritons to carry a mirror before her eyes.

The image created by Apuleius in this ecphrasis is fantastic, otherworldly and appropriate for a diversionary tale, such as *Cupid and Psyche*. The mood of this passage, however, though not overtly threatening, is ominous. Apuleius conveys this mood through his delineation of Venus' power and his choice of diction. The description of Portunus' beard as *caerulis* can also convey a meaning of dark or dusky and the adjective is used in association with the underworld and death (*OLD* s.v. *caeruleus* 9; *TLL* II.106.75ff.). *Gravis*, which is used to depict Salacia at 4.31.6, when applied to a human being, can also be interpreted as oppressive, troublesome or obnoxious (*OLD* s.v. *gravis* 10; *TLL* VI,1.2282.25ff.). The overall ominous undertones and threatening images continue with the depiction of the sun, *flagrantiae solis...inimici* at 4.31.7. Language appropriate to military contexts as *inimici* occurs in the phrase *Tritonum catervae* and the *exercitus* and *curru* at 4.31.7. Such diction aptly mirrors Venus' sentiments and mood and prefigures the dangers in store for Psyche. The application of *gravis* to Salacia also prefigures Psyche's pregnancy (for *gravis* = *gravidus* see *TLL* 6,1.2276.73ff.; *OLD* s.v. *gravis*, 2).

The structure of the ecphrasis briefly presents Venus first, focuses at length on her attendants, then returns at 4.31.7 to Venus reclining on her chariot to close the description. By

contrast, in the ecphrastic counterpart to this voyage to Ocean at 6.6, the chariot which Vulcan has crafted for Venus is the primary focus of the description. The ellipsis of Venus' chariot in this ecphrasis allows the reader's attention to linger upon the splendour, and inferred might, of Venus and her attendants. In 6.6, the structure of 4.31 is inverted as the chariot is brought to the forefront and the ensuing stress upon vehicular magnificence signals the potency of its owner. The reversal in structure indicates that Apuleius is creating correspondences, of which he expects the reader to be cognizant, between the two ecphraseis.

The ecphrastic theme of Venus' voyage to the sea, serves as a link, albeit contrasting, with the later narrative. At 5.31.7, furious on account of recently discovering what Cupid has been up to (5.29.2ff.), Venus hastily leaves Ceres and Juno and departs in the direction of the sea. Venus is neither escorted by any retinue nor does the scenario indicate that she wields any authority at this point. It is furthermore interesting that prior to her very abrupt departure for Ocean at 5.31.7, the goddess has had an encounter with Cupid in which she threatens that she will give birth to a son better than Cupid who will not betray her (5.29.2ff.). Prior to her regal departure at 4.31.4-7, the exchange with Cupid is of a completely different nature. At 4.31.1ff., she seeks his assistance in an impassioned plea and shows her devotion with overtly seductive kisses (4.31.4). There may also be a connection between this ecphrasis and the larger framework of the novel's narrative. The image and theme of a marine Venus is employed at 2.17 to depict Fotis prior to a night of passion, ...ad hilarem lasciviam in speciem Veneris, quae marinos fluctus subit, pulchre reformata... The author's use of this image serves as another link to integrate thematically the tale of Cupid and Psyche within the Metamorphoses.

A final point concerning this ecphrasis and the whole *Cupid and Psyche* narrative is that in spite of its function as a link to the subsequent narrative, the description does not provide a viable setting for Venus' Ocean domicile. At 5.28.2, Venus is visited by a bird at her home which is simply located *Oceani profundum gremium*. When she returns to her home the direction in which

she travels is *pelago*. The mysteriousness of precisely where Venus is heading mirrors the enigma surrounding the choice of her escorts and is apt for a tale which is meant to divert and cheer a young woman (4.27).

Venus' chariot and her ascent to heaven at 6.6

The counterpart to Venus' marine retinue is found at 6.6; an ecphrasis depicting Venus' chariot and her companions ascending to heaven. Walsh (1970, p. 211) proclaims that this 'picturesque account of the procession, with Venus in her golden car, is a sophistic set-piece in Apuleius' most witty style.' The ecphrasis offers more than a witty diversion, however, and has real purpose in terms of the earlier and subsequent narrative. The description which the author gives of Venus' chariot and her retinue is rich and exotic. It is also full of activity, replete with the sprightly movements and happy chattering of numerous birds.

Apuleius offers very little detail regarding the chariot itself and focuses primarily upon Venus' avian escorts. The structure of this ecphrasis has been carefully contrived with each sentence presenting a separate topic: 6.6.1, the chariot of gold which will convey Venus to heaven; 6.6.2, Venus' doves which will draw the chariot; 6.6.3, her attendant sparrows, etc.; 6.6.4, the yielding clouds and opening heaven²⁹. Ring composition also exists in this ecphrasis; at 6.6.1 Venus caelum petit and in the final sentence of the description (6.6.4), cedunt nubes et Caelus filiae panditur. In terms of its structure, this ecphrasis presents information in an order reverse to that seen at 4.31.4-7, where Venus' attendants are depicted first, followed by only a brief mention of the chariot in which she is drawn. At 6.6, the details are introduced in a more logical, rather than

²⁹ The last half of 6.6.4 (*nec obvias...canora familia*) does not add to the picture being presented, but does have an impact upon the mood of lightness. The absence of eagles and hawks underlines the safety and the pleasantness of the locale and this contrasts with Venus' behaviour in 6.7. The mention of birds of prey at the close of this segment is ominous and may be present to prefigure the troubles which will hereafter befall Psyche.

elliptical, fashion as Apuleius describes the chariot first and then the individuals who will convey it.

Careful attention is paid by Apuleius in this ecphrasis to sound and balance, as though the author is showing his own fine workmanship like that of Vulcan at 6.6.1. Alliteration and assonance are noteworthy at 6.6.1 construi currum quem, 6.6.2 quae circa cubiculum, quattuor candidae columbae, and 6.6.3 melleis modulis and ceterae quae...cantitant. These sound effects give the passage a musical tone and are an effective means by which to express the birds' singing. Apuleius also balances his phrases at 6.6.1, limae tenuantis detrimento conspicuum et ipsius auri damno pretiosum and at 6.6.2 picta colla torquentes iugum gemmeum. Such precision enhances the overall beauty of the passage.

Certain oddities of expression exist in this passage. At 6.6.2, the doves, initially described as white are said to have 'painted' or 'coloured' (picta) necks. On account of Apuleius' attentiveness to detail, the adjective picta immediately following 'white' is, in my opinion, a novel³⁰ and memorable manner in which to describe the sheen of the doves' feathers and the reflection of light on them rather than a deliberate or careless contradiction. The sparrows of 6.6.3 are subsequently depicted gannitu constrepenti. This expression is both odd and memorable as gannitus, itself a rare word, is nowhere else used of birds' chattering, but is more commonly applied to dogs' barking and human utterances (TLL, VI,1.1692.30-44). The use of gannitu in this context, along with constrepenti, underlines the sparrows' noisy chatter in contrast to the harmonious songs of the other birds. Gannitu, furthermore, can be interpreted as 'amorous utterance' (OLD s.v. gannitus, II; TLL, VI,1.1692.37-40). This interpretation would form an apt connection with Venus, yet is unusual in terms of love imagery as sweet nothings are usually whispered.

³⁰ No other examples of *picta* being used to portray birds' plumage could be found by means of an *Ibycus* word search.

Although there are no direct models for this ecphrasis³¹, at *Il.* 5.722-31 Homer presents a description of the assembly of a chariot and at Ovid *Met.* 2.105-110 the chariot of the Sun is described. These two predecessors offer descriptions with which Apuleius may have been familiar and which may serve as points of contrast concerning the manner in which the chariot is presented. Unlike the Homeric example of the assembling of a chariot at *Il.* 5.722-31³², Apuleius does not list the components of the chariot nor does he ever refer to the chariot as *aureus*. Instead of emphasizing the quantity of gold used to create such a vehicle (*Il.* 5.724, 5.727, 5.730 and Ov. *Met.* 2.107-108) Apuleius inverts this convention and stresses its value through the loss of gold, thus underlining the intricacy of the carving and the quality of Vulcan's workmanship. This is a novel and striking manner in which to describe Venus' car which results in the reader's attention being drawn immediately from the description's start.

The drawing of Venus' chariot by doves and its attendance by sparrows are unique to Apuleius. The closest literary model is found at Sappho fr. 1.8-10 (Page), where sparrows pull Aphrodite's golden chariot³³. Swans are the conventional conveyors of Venus' chariot in Roman poetry (Page, p. 8), and numerous examples of this practice exist³⁴. Therefore, in addition to the remarkable details concerning the chariot's fabrication, the image of Venus' fantastic vehicle is

³¹ Throughout both Greek and Latin literature there are numerous chariots either made from or decorated with precious metals. For example: Hom. *Il.* 23.503 and 10.438; *h. Hom.* 4.4; Pind. O. 3.20; Bacchyl. 13.194; S. OC 692; E. Ph. 2; Callim. Dian. 111 and 118; Curt. Alex. 10.1.24; Stat. Silv. 1.2.143, etc. None of these examples offers a full ecphrasis.

³² Ovid's chariot of the Sun at *Met.* 2.105-110, also crafted by Vulcan, is spectacular with its gold and jewels. There is, however, no emphasis placed upon the creatures drawing the chariot or the companions of the Sun.

³³ Kenney 1990b on 6.6.3 refers to Xen *Ephes*. 1.8.2 where Erotes ride on the backs of sparrows. Page on Sappho fr. 1.10 also cites Ar. *Lys*. 723ff. where an amorous woman plans to fly below the Acropolis on a sparrow's back as an example of sparrows in an erotic context.

³⁴ Hor. *Carm.* 3.28.15 and 4.1.9ff.; Prop. 3.3.39; Ov. *Ars* 3.809f., Ov. *Met.* 10.708 and 717-8; Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.141 and 3.4.21-3; Sil. 7.440; see also Hardie, p. 123. These examples of swans drawing Venus' chariot do not exhibit the same detail found in this ecphrasis.

enhanced by its unusual conveyors, who otherwise would surely not be able to draw a chariot.

The novelty of this memorable scene is thus impressed upon the reader's mind.

Telling details in 6.6 provide much sensory appeal, and it is on account of this copiousness that the description is rendered so vivid. Beyond the brilliance of the golden³⁵ chariot at 6.6.1, visual appeal continues with the description of *candidae columbae* with *picta colla* and *iugum gemmeum* (6.6.2). Apuleius also introduces chiaroscuro by contrasting gold and jewels with the darkness of clouds at 6.6.4. Aural and subtle gustatory appeal are conveyed at 6.6.3 with the description of sparrows *gannitu constrepenti* and *dulce cantitant aves melleis modulis suave resonantes* and *canora* (6.6.4). The birds' noisy chatter which announces Venus' arrival (6.6.3, *adventum deae pronuntiant*) plays an anticipatory role in the narrative; at 6.8.1-4 Mercury, as crier, proclaims the reward of kisses from Venus for anyone who finds Psyche (6.8.4, *pronuntiante Mercurio*).

The description is furthermore remarkable for its lightness and the happy atmosphere which it conveys. The doves of 6.6.2, commonly lovers' birds, proceed hilaris incessibus and are subsequently described as laetae. Sparrows which follow the chariot (6.6.3) lasciviunt with gaiety. The pleasantness of the sounds created by Venus' other winged attendants is emphasized by means of the repetition of words expressing sweetness dulce... melleis...suave. Even Heaven opens cum gaudio at 6.6.4. The ecphrasis also prefigures the final wedding celebrations of Cupid and Psyche at 6.24 (to be discussed below) where pleasant music (suavi musicae at 6.24.3) and the joyfulness of the event are emphasized. On the other hand, the merriment of this scene is in sharp contrast with the ominous undertones of its counterpart at 4.31.4-7, and more pointedly, with Psyche's desperate state in 6.5.

³⁵ 'Gold' and the adjective 'golden' are only used in *Cupid and Psyche* in connection with divinities or their possessions: 5.1.3, Cupid's palace; 5.6.6, Cupid's gold and jewels which Psyche wishes to give her sisters; 5.29.1, Venus' golden bedroom; 6.3.4, cloths lettered with gold in Juno's temple; 6.11.5, sheep with golden wool (connection with Venus; the second task for Psyche). For the applicability of 'golden' to various divinities, including Venus and Amor, see Henderson on *Rem.* 39 and Campbell, p. 224.

Additional narrative functions are served by this ecphrasis. Its introduction slows the narrative tempo and the description's beauty and levity provide a welcome break by bringing about an effective change in tone due to the ecphrasis' richness and liveliness. Its effect is not altogether pleasant, however, as the powerful image of Venus makes Psyche's destruction seem imminent, thereby raising reader tension concerning Psyche's fate. The ecphrasis may temporarily alleviate some tension, but in essence builds upon that which immediately precedes. For example, the last mention of Venus at the close of book 5 depicts the goddess as indignata. Furthermore, the mood and atmosphere of book 6, up to this point have been dismal, as both Ceres and Juno have spurned the perterrita Psyche (6.5.1) whose downcast state of mind is summed up at 6.5.4, where she prepares herself ad certum exitium. The happiness expressed in this passage and the non-threatening nature of Venus' escorts deceives the reader into initially thinking that a change of fortune may be in order for Psyche. At the same time, however, some expectation of malice is engendered by the use of detrimento and damno (6.6.1) in the chariot's description. The second half of the final sentence of the ecphrasis (nec obvias...canora familia) is even more threatening; it could have easily been omitted without greatly affecting the description's vividness, yet Apuleius has chosen to make particular reference to eagles and hawks (see further below). This sense of foreboding is quickly realized once Venus has ascended to Olympus, reiterates her desire to exact vengeance upon Psyche³⁶, and enlists the aid of the gods in doing so (6.7.3ff.).

The ecphrasis also provides Apuleius with a neat means of smoothly effecting a change of scene. The transition from Juno's temple and Psyche to Venus is eased by Psyche's question at 6.5.4, qui scis an etiam quem diu quaeritas illic in domo matris repperias?. The details at 6.6.4 of Heaven opening and Aether receiving Venus bring the reader to Olympus, where Venus finds Mercury.

³⁶ Venus is not always favourable towards lovers: see, for example, Hor. Carm. 1.33.11ff.

As at 4.31.4-7, the change of scene marked by the ecphrasis is from the earth to Heaven and from real to otherworldly.

Analogous to the beauty of this passage is Venus' physical beauty. Unlike 4.31.4-7, however, this ecphrasis is not analogous to Venus' mood. A description emphasizing the joyfulness of Venus' attendants comes, in fact, as an unexpected and surprising inclusion in the narrative due to the goddess' previous conduct and her subsequent request for Mercury's assistance in seeking out Psyche for persecution. The contrast between the splendour of the chariot along with the gaiety of the birds and Psyche, who is on the verge of giving up all hope, points up the young girl's desperation and dismal plight as specified at 6.5.2ff. Images of beauty and sweetness in this ecphrasis also form another link with Mercury's proclamation at 6.8. In addition to the evident connection between Venus and erotic imagery, the language used to describe the reward for the person who finds Psyche at 6.8.3 (savia suavia...adpulsu linguae longe mellitum) shows similarities to the author's choice of words at 6.6.3 to depict the singing of the birds accompanying Venus' chariot (melleis modulis suave).

The image of Venus riding in this chariot and being received by Heaven, as well as the mention of Vulcan, Caelus and Aether, restates her authority and causes the reader to wonder what Venus will do next. Her might is further underlined in this passage, as at 4.31.4-7, by the sheer number of her escorts. At 6.6.2, the reader is informed that numerous doves reside around Venus' abode (*de multis...*) and at 6.6.3, not only do an unspecified number of sparrows accompany Venus, but she is also attended by *ceterae...aves*. The great number of divinities and animals allied with Venus in this description contrasts with Psyche's isolation as she searches for Cupid. The fact that the clouds yield and Heaven opens to Venus at 6.6.4³⁷ are additional signs of her potency. Apuleius both stresses the goddess' sway and engages in playful reader deception by adding that the highest aether receives Venus with joy, an emotion analogous to the happy

³⁷ See below for Venus' connection to Heaven (Caelus filiae panditur) at 6.6.4.

atmosphere of the entire passage and one which suggests to the reader that the subsequent narrative will be equally agreeable. And yet, in spite of this portrait of a forceful and influential deity, Venus, like Cupid, will have her power curtailed by the end of the tale, and will undergo a metamorphosis.

In addition to the theme of travel, there exist several other connections that link 4.31.4-7 with 6.6. At 4.31.6, the daughters of Nereus sing in harmony and at 4.31.7, a Triton blows on his conch shell. At 6.6.3, birds onomatopoeically sing *melleis modulis suave*. Even though the chariot does not feature until the very end of the description at 4.31.7, Apuleius specifies that Tritons swim below *biiuges*. The doves at 6.6.2 are said to go under *iugum gemmeum*.

To turn to the other individuals in the ecphrasis, Venus' companions at 6.6 are entirely apt in this otherworldly context (i.e., birds physically able to draw a chariot), unlike her rather more mysterious companions at 4.31³⁸. Although there is a connection between Ovid *Met* 2.106 and 6.6.1, there may be another reason for Apuleius' mentioning Vulcan, particularly the circumstances surrounding the giving of the chariot to Venus and its direct sexual link³⁹ (6.6.1, ante thalami rudimentum nuptiale munus obtulerat). Vulcan is commonly presented as a cuckold (Hom. *Od.* 8.266ff.; Ov. *Ars* 2.561-92), while Venus carries on her many affairs (compare also 6.8.3). While not a cuckold, Venus too has been deceived by her own son about a love affair and it has proven to be a source of great consternation.

The role which birds play in this description may be of greater significance than simply chariot conveyors and attendants. Throughout *Cupid and Psyche*, birds play various roles. The first

³⁸ See Kenney 1990b on 6.6.2 and 6.6.3 for references to doves as Venus' birds and connections between Venus and sparrows. Propertius 3.3.31 *et Veneris dominae volucres, mea turba, columbae,* should be added. No references to doves drawing Venus' chariot appeared as a result of an *Ibycus* search.

³⁹ It is also interesting that Venus' seductive kissing of Cupid prior to the ecphrasis at 4.31.4-7 is picked up shortly after this ecphrasis at 6.6.8.2-3, where the specified reward for anyone finding Psyche is kisses from Venus.

appearance of a bird is at 5.28.2 (avis peralba illa gavia) where Venus, at the bottom of the sea, is informed by this garrulous creature (5.28.6, verbosa et satis curiosa, 5.28.8, loquax...avis) of Cupid's goings-on. There is, therefore, a connection between the bird as informant and Venus' reaction to the information at 6.6. An additional link between these two passages is created by the use of ganniebat at 5.28.6 (the only application of the verb gannio to birds, TLL 6,1.1692.16-17) and the noun gannitus at 6.6.3. After this ecphrasis birds next appear at 6.15.1 where a rapax aquila, supremi lovis regalis ales, aids Psyche in accomplishing her third task of retrieving water. At 6.6.4, Apuleius makes special mention of the absence of birds of prey, notably aquilas vel accipitres rapaces. On account of the god's association with the eagle at 6.15.1, the latter may be a subtle allusion to Jupiter's lack of intervention, and his ultimate resolution to the familial conflict prompted by Cupid's appeal at 6.22. Furthermore Venus is said to depart from Heaven at 6.7.2, ovans, after Jove nods his brow and does not interfere⁴⁰.

The role and tone of the birds, which function as a thematic thread, undergo changes during the course of the story. The first bird, which plays the role of informant at 5.28.6, is overtly hostile towards Psyche and Cupid and its behaviour is described as *Veneris fili lacerans existimationem*. The sparrows, doves and other birds of 6.6.2-3 are only indirectly hostile to the lovers in that they attend Venus and draw her chariot. The tone changes again with the third appearance of a bird and points up a hint of irony. Jupiter's eagle offers nothing but assistance to Psyche at 6.15.1, despite the earlier characterization of birds of prey as threatening at 6.6.4.

A lack of clarity concerning the location of Venus' domicile, expressed in the ecphrasis at 4.31.4-7, is echoed in this description. In the earlier account the reader is led to believe that Venus is returning to the sea because she resides therein. At 6.6.1, however, Venus abandons her land search and heads for the sky, where doves are said to be stabled around her bedroom (6.6.2). The

⁴⁰ Apuleius may also be playing on the image of yielding to someone with the phrase nubes cedunt at 6.6.4.

absence of any specific location for her abode enhances the otherworldly nature of both descriptions in addition to maintaining a folkloric and fantastic element to the tale.

The ecphrasis also provides Apuleius with an opportunity to deftly exploit a connection between the sky and the ocean at 4.31.4-7 and 6.6. Venus' tie with the sea, as discussed earlier and most evident in her birth from the foam of the sea when Uranus' testicles struck its surface, is picked up in the final sentence of this description. Cicero (*N. D.* 3.59), speaking of the numerous Venuses, relates that *Venus prima Caelo et Die nata*, the second Venus was born from the sea foam and is the mother of Cupid by Mercury and the third Venus was married to Vulcan. Apuleius, obviously familiar with the various myths surrounding Venus, has cleverly employed these three at 4.31.4 with her return to the ocean, at 6.6.1 with the mention of Vulcan and at 6.6.4, with *Caelus* receiving his daughter.

Cupid: 5.22

The description of Cupid's physical appearance at 5.22.2-7 is outstanding for its vividness and the sense of awe and wonder that it inspires as the reader responds to both the god himself and to Psyche's reaction upon seeing her husband for the first time. Cupid is presented here with many features found in earlier literary depictions. Apuleius' portrayal differs however, from earlier depictions by furnishing greater detail than his predecessors. Another noteworthy point concerning this description is that its presentation varies from the two previously examined ecphraseis. In this example the subject, Cupid, is described in a fragmentary fashion and there is an intermingling of points superfluous to the ecphrasis with those relevant to it (for this technique, see also chapter on setting).

The passage commences with Psyche seeing her husband for the first time (5.22.2), followed by the response of the flame and blade which was to be used to decapitate Cupid. So awe-inspiring is the sight of the god that these two inanimate objects are momentarily personified

as the *lucernae...lumen hilaratum increbruit* and *acuminis sacrilegi novaculam paenitebat* (5.22.3). Psyche's reaction to this vision indicates that she too is overwhelmed initially by the sight (...*tanto aspectu deterrita et impos animi marcido pallore defecta tremensque...* 5.22.3), but her spirit is quickly restored (...*saepius divini vultus intuetur pulchritudinem, recreatur animi*, 5.22.4). The presentation of these reactions prior to the full and detailed account of the god's appearance sets the stage for a spectacular sight, which the reader now anticipates and is given at 5.22.5-7. This 'indirect' form of ecphrasis, via an onlooker's reaction to that which he sees, adds to the vividness of the passage according to the ancients (see above, footnote 5 for references). Apuleius' use of this technique is unique to this exceptional representation of Cupid⁴¹.

The structure of this ecphrasis is carefully balanced. 5.22.1 focuses upon Psyche, 5.22.2 upon Cupid, 5.22.3-4 details Psyche's response to seeing Cupid and 5.22.5-7 describes the god. The greatest space is given to the physical description of Cupid, and by placing it as the final segment of the chapter, Apuleius has an opportunity to build up to it. At 5.22.2, the reader's curiosity is piqued by the bit of information offered about Cupid (omnium ferarum mitissimam dulcissimamque bestiam...formonsum deum formonse cubantem) and one would expect the description to commence hereafter. Apuleius teases his readers, however, and directs the focus again upon Psyche. Consequently, the reader expectation is high by the time that the actual details are given which results in the description having a more forceful impact.

In conformity with rhetorical practice⁴², Apuleius commences his description with Cupid's head. The main attributes highlighted are the god's head and hair, neck, cheeks,

⁴¹ Schlam (1976, p. 32) states that 5.22 'may have been inspired by a sculptural representation of this subject. The extant versions of Psyche with Eros asleep do not illustrate this scene.'

⁴² A descending order of details is recommended by Aphthonius *Progymnasmata* 12 (Spengel II.46).

shoulders and wings. In accordance with ecphrastic technique⁴³, Apuleius omits details concerning the remainder of Cupid's body and employs the rhetorical device of paraleipsis, summing up the condition of his body with the phrase *glabellum atque luculentum* (5.22.7). The description of Cupid thus far has been so full, enumerating each detail as Psyche's gaze travels down the god's body, that Apuleius' summation of the remainder of it is amusingly coy. This is most pronounced in the cessation of physical details before any sexual references are made⁴⁴. As Psyche continues to direct her view towards the bottom of the bed, the final details of the ecphrasis are presented, namely the god's weapons, referred to here as *propitia tela*.

Sound play and careful attention to word placement are of significance in this ecphrasis. Apuleius frames the two superlatives *mitissimam dulcissimamque*, themselves juxtaposed to draw attention, with words denoting wild animals. This framing highlights the subsequent gentleness and softness in the description of Cupid. The next phrase, *Cupidinem formonsum deum formonse cubantem*, exhibits the same attention with the balance of *Cup-*, *formons-*, *formons-* and *cub-*, and the entire segment of the sentence commencing with *omnium* up to *cubantem* is noteworthy for homoeoteleuton of -um, -am and -em. There is a musical quality to the phrases *lacteas genasque purpureas pererrantes* and *alios antependulos*, *alios retropendulos* (5.22.5). The juxtaposition of *lumen lucernae* at 5.22.5 draws attention to the light's response to Cupid's resplendence. 5.22.6 is striking for the emphatic juxtaposition of the diminutives *plumulae tenellae* and the frequency of the letter I which lends a sensuous quality to the passage (Kenney 1990b on 5.22.6). The numerous I's continue at 5.22.7, which contains alliteration and the use of another diminutive, *ceterum corpus glabellum atque luculentum*. These sound effects in conjunction with the overall attention to word

⁴³ Kenney (1990b on 5.22.7) cites Ov. *Am.* 1.5.23, Stat. *Silv.* 1.5.57 and Plin. *Ep.* 3.6.3 as examples of the use of this type of summary. McKeown on Ov. *Am.* 1.5.23 also mentions Ap. Rhod. 2.390f, Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.40, Calp. *Ecl.* 7.57 and Mart. 11.8.11.

⁴⁴ This is similar to Ov. Am. 1.5.23-25, singula quid referam? ... Cetera quis nescit?

placement give the passage a polished and elegant feel appropriate for this splendid description of a beautiful, divine and extraordinary personage.

There is a great deal of sensory appeal in this ecphrasis, and in fact, appeal is made to every faculty save the aural. The absence of aural appeal is noteworthy in itself, as one can envision Psyche standing silently gazing upon this wonder of Cupid sleeping silently⁴⁵. The ecphrasis is prefaced by a contrast between darkness and the coming of light which is provided by the lamp. Apuleius plays upon an increase in light, not only of the lamp but also of Cupid's resplendence throughout this passage. The lamp's light increases at 5.22.2 upon seeing Cupid. In addition to the obvious appeal of the god himself, which is accentuated by the number of words denoting effulgence, particularly that of his hair and wings (*splendore nimio fulgurante*, 5.22.5; *micanti flore*, 5.22.6; see below for further details concerning adjectives), gustatory and olfactory appeal are expressed in the description of Cupid's hair ointment and his cheeks (*ambrosia* and *lacteas* 5.22.5)⁴⁶. The smoothness of Cupid's body is highlighted at 5.22.7 with the sensuous epithet *glabellum*, and contrasts with the sharpness (*acuminis*) of the razor at 5.22.2. Further appeal is made to one's sense of touch with the detail that his wings are *roscidae* (5.22.6)⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Compare Lucius' reaction upon seeing Photis in the kitchen at 2.7; Isto aspectu defixus obstupui et mirabundus steti....

⁴⁶ Although ambrosia is employed in this context as an unguent, it also has gustatory appeal as it is commonly ingested (see 6.24.2). For ambrosia as a cosmetic ointment see Mynors on *Georgics* 4.415-418 and Thomas 1988 on 4.415. Gatscha, p. 8 notes a parallel use of the adjective *lactea* at Verg. *Aen.* X.137, *cervix...lactea*.

⁴⁷ The literal sense of *roscidae* ('wet, wet with dew, dewy') is illogical in this context. There is absolutely no reason why Cupid's wings should be wet as he lies asleep in bed. No parallels exist for this usage of the adjective, and it is possible that Apuleius may either be deliberately attempting to intrigue his reader or simply be using this adjective in order to create a link with the palace ecphrasis at 5.1.1. Kenney's translation, 'wings sparkled dewy-white' (*pinnae roscidae candicant*) is nonsensical and offers no insight into this unusual application of *roscidae*. I suspect that the reader is not to think of the wings as simply wet at this point, but rather that they glitter so much that one is to compare their scintillation with the manner in which water droplets sparkle with the introduction of light. If this is the correct interpretation, the subsequent phrase *micanti flore candicant* would be entirely apt.

Earlier depictions of Cupid in both Greek and Latin literature indicate that the divinity has several standard attributes. Cupid is customarily represented as a youthful and visually attractive deity (Alcman, Page *PMG* fr.58; Catullus 64.95; Hor. *Carm.* 1.30.5 and 1.32.10; Ov. *Rem.* 23, *Met.* 10.515-517; Prop. 1.6.23, 1.7.15, 1.9.21, 2.12.1 and 2.12.13, *puerilis imago*; see also *LIMC* III, 1.851 and 953). From early Greek literature on, Cupid is portrayed as winged (Sappho, *PLF* 47 Lobel/Page where he is likened to the wind. See also Prop. 2.12.5, *ventosas alas*). Often, Cupid's wings are golden (Anacr. Page *PMG* 379; E. *Hipp.* 1270-1275; *Hel.* 668; Ar. *Av.* 574, 704, 1737; *AP* 12.77), and in Ovid they are also depicted as jewelled at *Am.* 1.2.41, and *Rem.* 39, and sprinkled with wine at *Ars* 1.233. Another frequently attested attribute of the god is his resplendence (Anacr. Page *PMG* 358.2 χρυσοκόμης; *Anacreont.* 41.12 χρυσοχαίτας; E. *IA* 548 χρυσοκόμας, *Hipp.* 1274 χρυσοφαής; Ov. *Ars* 1.232, *Am.* 2.1.38, 2.9b.33-34, *Rem.* 701 (of his wings) *purpureus*, Ov. *Am.* 1.2.42 and 2.18.36, *Rem.* 39; Mart. 8.50.13 *aureus*). In Latin literature, Cupid has several standard attributes: his bow, quiver, arrows and torch⁴⁸.

The numerous literary portrayals of Cupid cited above indicate that Apuleius was working within a clearly defined tradition. In conformity with this tradition, Apuleius presents his reader with a portrait of a beautiful, young, effulgent divinity, complete with his bow, quiver and arrows⁴⁹. The ecphrasis of Cupid, however, is not paralleled elsewhere in its detail and the manner in which Apuleius describes the god involves various novel elements: the degree of detail concerning his hair and wings; the anointment of his locks with ambrosia, the description of his cheeks and neck as well as his smooth, beautiful body.

⁴⁸ For numerous literary references to these attributes see *LIMC* III.I.954; McKeown on Ov. *Am.* 1.1.21-22 and 1.2.45-46; Murgatroyd 1994 on Tib. 2.6.15-16; Kenney 1990b on 4.30.4 and Booth on Ov. *Am.* 2.9A.5.

⁴⁹ As the scene is supposed to take place at night (5.21.5), and Psyche approaches with the lamp at 5.22.2, Cupid's torch is absent for obvious reasons.

In both Greek and Latin literature, there are numerous other references to Cupid. A concentrated description of Eros occurs at AP 5.177.3-4: ἔστι δ' ὁ παῖς γλυκύδακρυς, ἀείλαλος, ωκύς, ἀθαμβής,/ σιμὰ γελῶν, πτερόεις νῶτα, φαρετροφόρος. This delineation of the god does not, however, offer any physical details. Additional concentrated portrayals of Cupid at Plato Smp. 203 C-D, Meleager AP 5.178 and 12.76, Asclepiades AP 12.77, Propertius 2.12 and Cornutus Theol. Gr. Comp. 25 lack the quantity of physical detail provided by Apuleius, nor do they contain such densely packed description. They focus rather upon Love's attributes (see further Enk on Prop. 2.12). Although there is no single direct literary precedent for this ecphrasis, Moschus' poem "Ερως Δραπέτης exhibits some similarities to the passage. The first likeness is that Moschus' poem is the only other concentrated description of Eros/Cupid that enumerates his physical features. Moschus characterizes Eros' skin as οὐ λευκός but like fire (l. 7), his eyes as piercing and resplendent (δριμύλα καὶ φλογοέντα, l. 8), his hair as εὐπλόκαμον (l. 12). He further mentions Eros' forehead, little hands, naked body, wings and his weapons which include a bow, an arrow and quiver (Il. 12-20). In spite of the description's fullness, a significant absence from it is the vividness which Apuleius imparts to his ecphrasis by means of numerous and telling details. The discernible similarities between the two suggest that Apuleius may have been familiar with Moschus' poem and may be elaborating at length upon certain elements. Cupid's neck and cheeks, for example, lacteas and pupureas at 5.22.5, resemble line 7 of Moschus' poem. Apuleius fills out his description of the god's hair and wings, and subtly conveys Cupid's nakedness with the epithets glabellum and luculentum. It is clear that Apuleius is not simply reiterating Moschus' portrayal of Eros, yet he may be embellishing upon this model, as he appears to do in other contexts (e.g. both setting and character portrayals) with various predecessors. The emphatic detailed portrait of Cupid enables Apuleius to stress how spectacular Psyche's husband truly is and what a terrible loss it is for Psyche when he leaves her at 5.24.

Throughout this ecphrasis Apuleius employs either unusual or new language which lends itself to the overall marvelous impression of the description. The choice of genialem to characterize Cupid's hair at 5.22.5 is noteworthy as the adjective is used to describe hair elsewhere only at Apul. Met. 2.27 (genialem canitiem; TLL VI,1.1807.79-83) The adjective is defined by the OLD as meaning 'festive, jovial, jolly' (s.v. genialis 3b) in this context. Its association with marriage, however, is likely intended, and as at 2.27, genialem conveys that the hair is visually appealing and/or abundant (see Kenney 1990b on 5.22.5). The author may also intend that a touch of irony be conveyed by the adjective's use, for as Cupid lies contentedly asleep, his happy state of mind will soon be shattered when he realizes that Psyche has betrayed his confidence at 5.23.6. Equally memorable is the phrase ambrosia temulentam, for which no parallels exist. Apuleius is playing upon the meaning of 'drunk' and its associations in this phrase; if the hair is 'drunk with ambrosia', it is soaked with ambrosia (cf. madidus as 'wet', TLL VIII.13.41ff., as 'drunk', TLL VIII.37.32ff. and the idiomatic English expression 'to be soaked' meaning to be inebriated). There may also be a continued play upon happiness, often associated with the state of being intoxicated, and the irony which ensues, as with genialem. The use of the adjective lacteas to describe Cupid's neck is poetic; it is employed to depict body parts only at Verg. Aen. 8.660 and 10.137; Hor. Carm. 1.13.2 and Stat. Silv. 2.1.50-51 (TLL 7,2.852.40ff.). Novel language continues with antependulos (only in Apuleius) and retropendulos (hapax legomenon) and the quite rare plumulae, employed elsewhere only by Columella at 8.5.1950 and glabellum (Met. 2.17; Fl. 3.30; TLL VI,1.1998.19-26). The rarity of language suits the novelty of this description and the god's singularity. Cupid's wings are limned with an unparalleled use of roscidae (5.22.6; used of feet at 2.4.4) and their white appearance is conveyed with the phrase micanti flore candicant. In addition to a possible play upon the primary meaning of 'flower, bloom' for flos (OLD s.v. flos; TLL VI,1.928.4ff.) with which one more readily associates roscida, this phrase creates a link with the

⁵⁰ It has been conjectured at Var. R. 3.5.11.

ecphrasis at 5.1f. on Cupid's palace and surrounds, where Psyche (5.1.1) is said to rest *in ipso toro roscidi graminis suave recubans*. Furthermore, the associations with a flower are apt in a description of the god of Love. A flower is generally aesthetically appealing, has a delightful fragrance, is fresh, has petals which are tender and soft to the touch and in most cases, it delights its onlooker.

Throughout the description, a great number of words are connected with both colour and light: *lucerna*, 5.22.1; *luminis*, *claruerunt*, *lucernae*, *lumen*, 5.22.2; *pallore*, 5.22.3; *aurei*, *lacteas*, *purpureas*, *splendore*, *fulgurante*, *lumen*, *lucernae*, 5.22.5; *micanti*, *flore*, *candicant*, 5.22.6; *luculentum*, 5.22.7. Several groupings of words are also of note; 5.22.5, *splendore nimio fulgurante* and *lumen lucernae*; 5.22.6, *micanti flore candicant*. In addition to creating a very vivid image, the quantity of words and their emphatic placement stress Cupid's marvelous effulgence and the sense of awe which Psyche feels. This is heightened by the author's use of chiaroscuro; it is dark in the room and all around the couple. Psyche's lamp casts light, but Cupid is the brightest person or object in the room. The adjectives denoting colour, namely *aurei*, *lacteas*, and *purpureas*, emphasize the god's youthful beauty, underlined at 5.22.7, and the colour of Cupid's complexion (*purpureas*) sharply contrasts with Psyche's whiteness (*marcido pallore*, 5.22.3)⁵¹. Cupid's resplendent physical appearance and his earlier compassionate behaviour add to the impact of Psyche's devastating loss at 5.24.

The image of Cupid created by Apuleius is wonderful and lush. The richness is brought out most emphatically at 5.22.5 in the description of his hair⁵². His locks themselves are *genialem*,

⁵¹ Booth, on the use of *purpureus* at Ov. *Am.* 2.1.38, states that when the adjective is used of Cupid/Amor 'it seems to indicate his youthful, healthy glow... perhaps in contrast to the usual sickly pallor of his victims'. Such is the case here, although Psyche does not fall in love with Love until 5.23.3.

⁵² Apuleius' excursus on women's hair at 2.8-9 and his description of Photis' hair at 2.9 show similar attention to particular detail. The manner in which he depicts Photis' hair as cervice dependulos, per colla dispositos and conglobatos bears a resemblance to the description of Cupid's hair. It seems as though Apuleius may have deliberately varied his language at 5.22.5, ...pererrantes crinium globos decoriter impeditos, alios antependulos, alios retropendulos....

and his head is golden⁵³. The copiousness of his hair is further brought out by the term *globos*, which implies thickness (*OLD* s.v. *globus* 1 defines the terms as a 'compact mass'; *TLL* VI,1.2054.18-21). In order to render the image even more vivid, Apuleius adds details about the position of the god's hair which hangs both in front and behind his head.

Although Cupid is dormant throughout the ecphrasis, the reactions of Psyche and those of the personified lamp and razor convey his latent power. The inclusion of the responses of an inanimate object alongside a human's is a subtle means by which Apuleius can play up the wonder of the ecphrasis proper at 5.22.5-7. At 5.22.2, the lamp lumen hilaratum increbruit upon seeing Cupid. Kenney (1990b on 5.22.2) finds its reaction to be understandable "for it has up to now been denied its traditional role of confidant and voyeur"54. In addition to this point, the lamp's gladdening and brightening allows Psyche to see the god more clearly, and consequently feel her pain more deeply. Beyond the obvious contrast in emotions felt by human and object, the strength of the lamp's reaction underlines the reason for Psyche's suicidal state in 5.22.3. Its delight, moreover, may prefigure Psyche's own happiness (5.22.4 and 5.23.1) and the readers', upon seeing such a splendid sight. In contrast, the razor's regret mirrors Psyche's immediate feelings of fear and despair in 5.22.3, which are sufficiently great as to prompt her to contemplate suicide again. So mighty is Cupid's power that the razor flies from Psyche's hand and by simply gazing upon Love's physical beauty, Psyche is rapidly restored (recreatur animi). The speed with which Psyche recovers control of her distraught emotions simultaneously stresses both Cupid's potency and his exquisiteness.

⁵³ Gold is customarily associated with divinities (see above for its usage in this tale). Love himself is golden, as is his mother Aphrodite/ Venus at Mimn. fr. 1.1-3 (Diehl).

⁵⁴ Apuleius is exploiting the amatory connection of lamps: Ar. Ec. 7-11; AP 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8, 5.128, 5.165, 5.166, 5.191, 5.263, 6.333; Musae. Hero and Leander passim; Prop. 2.15.3, 3.8.1; Mart. 10.38.7-8 and 14.39; Lier, p. 43-45.

Cupid's physical description contains elements which convey his power. The use of both aurei and ambrosia create an immediate association with deities and their power; the former for its customary association with gods, and the latter for its ability to bestow immortality (for aureus see note 35; ambrosia, TLL I.1867.30-55). Cupid's supernatural hair, dripping with ambrosia, creates a link with the final scene of the tale where Jupiter offers Psyche a cup of ambrosia to imbibe in order that she may become immortal like her divine husband (6.23.5). The most forceful representation of Cupid's power is the reader's final impression of the ecphrasis. As the description closes with arcus et pharetra et sagittae and the last word of 5.22.7 is tela, now propitia, Apuleius signals to the reader the true nature of Cupid's character in the story and his ability to do good rather than be a mischievous home-wrecker. The god's weapons create a link, albeit contrasting, with 4.30.4, where Cupid is characterized as satis temerarium, armed with torch and arrows, and up to no good. The god's unfavourable reputation is echoed in Jupiter's speech to Cupid at 6.22.3ff. where he depicts himself as wounded by Cupid's assiduis ictibus crebrisque. In spite of his initial portrayal, however, Cupid has shown himself to be a compassionate, loving husband. And yet, Apuleius creates a highly ironic situation with Cupid's dual nature. For following the representation of Cupid and his weapons as destructive forces at 4.30.4ff., and after portraying Psyche in a pitiful state, believing that she is going to her death (4.35), the young girl finds herself in a splendid home where she wants for nothing materially. By contrast, after this declaration of Cupid's power to do good, his propitia weapons, immediately examined by Psyche 5.23.1, cause her to fall in love with a god who is about to abandon her and to experience numerous trials at the hands of Venus before her salvation.

The mood of this ecphrasis is one of wonder and awe. This atmosphere is underlined by the otherworldliness of some of Cupid's attributes and the vividness of the passage. Vividness is achieved through the emphatic use of superlatives, the careful placement and repetition of words and the particular detail which is provided. Cupid's description at 5.22.2 as omnium ferarum

mitissimam dulcissimamque bestiam immediately sets the tone, and is followed by tanto aspectu at 5.22.3. The emphatic language continues with the phrase formonsum deum formonse cubantem, notable for the repetition of the root formons. The image is rendered even more memorable and striking by the very peculiar nature of the phrase 'sleeping handsomely'55. Psyche's response to seeing Cupid is presented in an exaggerated manner (tanto aspectu deterrita et impos animi marcido pallore defecta tremensque, 5.22.3), yet it is this overwhelming emotional reaction which stresses the impact of Cupid's beauty.

As stated earlier, the frequency of words denoting light and colour assist in creating a brilliant portrait of Cupid. Apuleius also offers very particular details which enable the reader to envisage the god more clearly. The particulars concerning the placement of Cupid's hair are striking, as is the description of his wings. Rather than simply state that Cupid is winged as his predecessors do, Apuleius provides more detail than witnessed elsewhere about Cupid's wings, even going so far as to specify their position *per umeros* (5.22.6). The wings' refulgence is rendered even more brilliant by the subsequent phrase *micanti flore candicant* and the very particular and vivid information that the dainty and delicate small feathers on his wings' tips quiver while he sleeps, *extimae plumulae tenellae ac delicatae tremule resultantes inquieta lasciviunt* (5.22.6). The restless frolicking of Cupid's wing tips looks forward to the fact that they will soon be put to use at 5.23.6, as does the use of *volatilis* at 5.22.6. The verb *lasciviunt*, which is not common in *Cupid and Psyche*⁵⁶, also looks forward to the sparrows which accompany Venus' chariot at 6.6.3 (*lasciviunt passeres*). Moreover, the verb is particularly well chosen here for its applicability to the

⁵⁵ The meaning of this phrase is unclear. I suspect, however, that Apuleius may be attempting to conjure up the image of a child (Cupid as *puer*) sleeping tranquilly, and like a child with no worries. The previous depiction of his hair as *genialem* and *temulentam*, which suggest a carefree state of being support this notion.

⁵⁶ The only other instance of this verb in the tale occurs shortly after this ecphrasis at 5.25.3, where Psyche happens upon Pan and Echo on a grassy bank (*lasciviunt...capellae*).

god of Love and its usage in amatory contexts (*TLL* VII,2.982.61-80). A final note concerning Cupid's wings is that the stress which has been placed upon them at this point underlines the importance of the unifying motif of flying throughout the tale⁵⁷. The enumeration of Cupid's weapons in the ecphrasis' closing sentence rounds off the precision of the passage and stresses their narrative significance.

The introduction of an ecphrasis at this juncture is of various significance. Firstly, the ecphrasis slows the narrative tempo and marks a halt to the rash action which Psyche is about to undertake. The scene is frozen and catches a very significant moment in the story. The description, moreover, provides a resolution to the 'mystery' surrounding the identity of Psyche's husband which the author has teasingly played up throughout the tale, and most notably in book 5 (5.4.3, 5.8.4, 5.15.4, 5.16, 5.19). Commencing with the omen at 4.33.1-2, it is likely that Apuleius' readers would suspect that Psyche's husband is Cupid, due to a familiarity with other literary depictions of the god. The identity of the palace's owner is referred to three times in the palace ecphrasis. Apuleius hints that its owner is divine by stating that its magnificence is such that the abode must surely belong to some god (5.1.3-4), perhaps even Jupiter (5.1.7). In order to divert the reader's attention away from Cupid, Apuleius maintains the mystery about her husband for an extended period of time. The sisters' speculations at 5.16.3-5 that Psyche may be married to a god is a red herring, and yet Apuleius distracts the reader again with the sisters' ruse at 5.17.2ff. to tell Psyche that she is married to a snake. This beastly image is picked up at 5.22.2 with the phrase omnium ferarum...bestiam. Cupid's designation as a wild beast at this point is noteworthy and deserves attention. Cupid is described initially in the omen as ferum vipereumque malum (4.33.1). Apuleius picks up on this motif and portrays the sisters at 5.17.4 playing upon Psyche's

⁵⁷ The theme of flying is significant in terms of Apuleius' use of space in the narrative. Throughout the story, the author makes frequent mention of downward and upward motion, and many of the characters are capable of flight, be it independently or with the aid of an agent, as is the case with the sisters. See also *passim* the function of the birds in the tale.

fears that she is married to a wild beast (*bestiae*). *Ferus* is commonly applied to Cupid (for example, Hor. *Carm.* 2.8.14; Ov. *Am.* 3.1.20)⁵⁸, but nowhere else is he designated as a wild beast. This novel appellation is ironic when one considers the love and tenderness he shows towards his wife. Consequently, this ecphrasis brings with it a sense of satisfaction to readers who suspected Cupid's identity all along, yet may be a shock to those who were not attuned to the clues provided by the author⁵⁹.

The description also offers a sense of closure to the palace description. The reader was left wondering to whom the palace belonged at 5.1ff., and the revelation of Cupid's identity here provides the palace with an owner analogous in his beauty. This wonderful vision of Cupid also impacts directly upon Psyche's character; the sight is so spectacular that it restores not only her strength but also her characteristic curiosity. Her characterization at 5.23.1, insatiabili animo Psyche, satis et curiosa, contrasts with the opening sentence of 5.22, corporis et animi alioquin infirma. Her curiosity at his point, however, has got the better of her as following this ecphrasis, Cupid no longer defers to his wife's wishes as he had done previously (5.6.2-5, 5.6.10, etc.). Psyche's emotional state no longer wavers once she has seen Cupid and the turmoil she felt at 5.21.4 (odit bestiam, diligit maritum) is replaced exclusively by feelings of love (5.23.3).

⁵⁸ See Lier, p. 29 for additional epithets of Love.

Psyche's husband which he characterizes as 'a genuine and exciting mystery' (p. 90). He notes clues and deceptions which commence with Venus' tirade at 4.31.3, amore fraglantissimo teneatur hominis extremi, and continue throughout the tale. His enumeration of the various possible answers to the question- Who is Psyche's husband?- is thorough, perceptive and stresses the points at which both Psyche and Cupid are identified. See also my discussion of Cupid's characterization in chapter 4. Kenney (1990a, p. 175) is in agreement with Winkler that an attentive and skilled reader would have little difficulty deciphering Cupid's identity; however, he emphasizes the duality of Cupid's identity throughout the tale, Amor I and Amor II, paralleled by Venus I (Urania) and Venus II (Vulgaris) (p. 177). The conflicts between Venus I and Amor II and vice versa are what he believes the plot pivots on. I am in disagreement with Kenney's theory, and discuss the inconsistencies in his argument at length in chapter 4 in my analysis of Venus' character.

This ecphrasis exhibits several links with the description of Cupid's palace and its surrounds. The presentation of details in both ecphraseis is logical; at 5.1f., details are presented as Psyche sees them upon entering the palace and at 5.22.5-7, the description of Cupid commences with his head and ends with the weapons at the bottom of the bed. The resplendence of the divinity is reminiscent of the palace's effulgence brought about by the precious metals used to decorate Cupid's home at 5.1.3, aureae columnae, parietes omnes argenteo caelamine. Psyche's initial feeling that she was looking upon omnium ferarum mitissimam dulcissimamque bestiam (5.22.2) creates a link with the entrance to Cupid's palace at 5.1.3, where wild animals greet the visitor upon entering (bestiis et id genus pecudibus occurrentibus ob os introeuntium). As noted above, the adjective roscidae to denote Cupid's wings (5.22.6) is used of the grass surrounding the palace at 5.1.1. The home itself is described as a luculentum...diversorium at 5.1.3. This adjective is applied to Cupid's body at 5.22.7. Psyche's state of mind also creates another link; at 5.1.1 Psyche is refreshed following her rest on the dewy grass (sufficienti recreata somno), and upon seeing Cupid, recreatur animi (5.22.4).

Further connections exist between this ecphrasis and the instructions of Psyche's sisters at 5.20, as well as their departure and Psyche's torment at 5.21. At 5.20.4, the lamp's light is stressed caecae tenebrae custodia liberata lucerna and at 5.20.5, praeclari...de luminis consilio. The manner in which Psyche is instructed to proceed at 5.20.4, nudoque vestigio pensilem gradum paullulatim minuens and the sisters' departure at 5.21.2, flatus alitis impulsu look forward to the little feathers of Cupid's wings quivering. A weapon with which Psyche is to decapitate Cupid is mentioned at 20.2, novaculam praecutam, and again at 5.20.5, telo, which is picked up at 5.22.7 in the description of Cupid's weapons as propitia tela. A final similarity lies in Cupid's characterization at 5.20.5 as noxii serpentis and bestiam at 5.21.4. This image is subtly recalled with the phrase omnium ferarum ...bestiam at 5.22.2.

The great brightness of the scene brings about additional parallels with the golden chariot of Venus at 6.6 and the colourful scenarios at 4.31 and 6.24. It is worth noting that whenever divinities are delineated in ecphraseis, there is emphasis upon resplendence. This radiance is furthermore in contrast with the darkness of the robbers' cave (4.6), the dark waters of the Styx which Psyche must retrieve in her third task (6.13.4, fontis atri fuscae...undae), and the physical and emotional darkness of her Underworld task (6.16.3ff.). These numerous contrasts between darkness and light and the frequent examples of chiaroscuro found within individual descriptions throughout the Cupid and Psyche tale indicate that the luminous/dusky motif is a recurrent thread through the tale.

The Wedding Feast: 6.24

The tale of Cupid and Psyche closes with an ecphrasis (6.24.1-3) which is remarkable for the amount and variety of activity which takes place within it. Earlier ecphraseis which serve as descriptive pauses at 4.31.4-7 and 6.6 detail individuals and animals engaged in various activities, but at 6.24, the number of divinities celebrating Cupid and Psyche's wedding and the amount of information provided regarding their goings-on create a very lively, busy, and engaging scenario. The scene is so animated that one would suspect that the narrative is describing an artistic portrayal of Cupid and Psyche's wedding, yet no extant representations exist⁶⁰.

This ecphrasis of a wedding feast immediately brings to mind Psyche's earlier funereal nuptials at 4.33.4ff. It also brings a sense of relief to the reader that Psyche's first experience with a wedding situation has not foreshadowed ultimate disaster for the girl. The numerous and pointed contrasts between the earlier episode and this passage underline the joyfulness of the tale's conclusion: those in attendance enjoy food and drink (6.24.2), there are flowers, fragrant

⁶⁰ Schlam 1976, p. 32. See his plate VI.4 for a cameo depicting a very different marriage scene of Cupid and Psyche which exhibits no similarities to *Met*. 6.24.

balsam, music and dancing (6.24.3-4). The 'wedding' of 4.33.4ff. emphasizes sadness, mourning and darkness: for example, iam taedae lumen atrae fuliginis cinere marcescit, et sonus tibiae zygiae mutatur in querulum Ludii modum cantusque laetus hymenaei lugubri finitur ululatu (4.33.4) and 4.35.2, taedasque nuptiales, quibus praeluxerant, ibidem lacrimis suis extinctas... In contrast to this, there is a complete absence of darkness and lamenting in the final scene. Details at 6.24.3 concerning the instruments being played emphasize a richness of sound which is in direct contrast with the lone doleful tibia of 4.33.4. While the people of the kingdom lament the girl's fate, there is a suspension of public business at 4.33.5. This inactivity sharply contrasts with the vibrant and bustling activity of the wedding-feast. The pathos aroused by Psyche's tears at 4.33.4, puella nuptura deterget lacrimas ipso suo flammeo, gives way to overt happiness, most emphatically portrayed by the image of Venus' rejoicing at 6.24.3.

Structural links exist which tie this final ecphrasis to the description of Venus' marine cortège. Both ecphraseis are crowded and lively scenes involving Venus and other divinities engaged in various activities. At 4.31.7, the single conch of a Triton sounds *leniter*. In the final scene, there is singing and the playing of musical instruments. The daughters of Nereus at 4.31.6 are depicted as *chorum canentes* and the Muses at 6.24.3 are portrayed as singing a chorus, *ut Musae quidem chorum canerent*. The links are of significance structurally as the ecphrasis at 4.31.4-7 is the point at which Venus' power is first underlined following her outburst of anger against the individual who has caused her godhead to be slighted. The concluding scene on the other hand, presents a now tranquil and reconciled Venus celebrating the marriage of this same individual.

The transition from 6.23 to this ecphrasis is effected smoothly by means of links between the two passages: the gods have already assembled themselves on Olympus at Jupiter's behest (6.23.1), thus their gathering at 6.24 need not be explained; the Muses, who are prominent characters in the celebration, are alluded to at 6.23.2 (*albo Musarum*); Jupiter announces at 6.23.3 that Cupid and Psyche are to be married; Venus is instructed by Jupiter not to be downcast as

Psyche shall be immortal (6.23.4), hence Venus' jubilation at 6.24.3; and the cup of ambrosia at 6.23.5, ambrosiae poculo, is picked up at 6.24.2 where Jupiter is served a cup of nectar. There also exists a similarity of phrase and image between Jupiter's instructions at 6.23.3, amplexus Psychen and Cupid's action (6.24.1), Psychen...complexus. At 6.23, Apuleius uses these similarities to set the stage for the final ecphrasis which leaves a more lasting impression with the reader than if the author had concluded the fabula simply with Jupiter declaring that the marriage of Cupid and Psyche will be ever-lasting at 6.23.5.

At 6.24.3-4 Apuleius employs vivid sensory appeal to create an enticing scenario. Visual appeal is highlighted at 6.24.3 with the phrase *Horae rosis et ceteris floribus purpurabant omnia*. The brightness of colourful flowers is stressed by the use of the uncommon and very apt verb *purpurabant*⁶¹. The visual emphasis of the phrase is complemented by both tactile and olfactory appeal associated with the delicacy and fragrance of flowers, particularly the rose⁶². The pleasant odour is reinforced by the phrase *Gratiae spargebant balsama*. Other pleasant odours played up by Apuleius include the scent of the *poculum nectaris*⁶³ (6.24.2) and the aroma of the food which Vulcan is cooking (6.24.3). Apollo provides aural appeal (*cantavit ad citharam*), and the music is depicted as *suavi* (6.24.3). The prominence of sound is achieved by adding that the Muses were either singing songs or a chorus or playing flutes, and a Satyr and little Pan played the reed-pipe. Its conspicuousness is highlighted by the unusual and unparalleled expression *Musae... canora*

⁶¹ This verb is only used elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* in the participial form *purpurantes* at 10.22. Its use here appears to be unparalleled elsewhere (*OLD* s.v. *purpuro*, 'to make rosy or bright').

⁶² For the amatory connection of roses see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 1.5.1. The rose also creates a link with Apuleius' transformation back to human form towards the end of the *Metamorphoses*.

⁶³ An example of nectar having a pleasant odour can be found at Lucr. 2.848, ...nardi florem, nectar qui naribus halat.

personabant (6.24.3)⁶⁴, and most strikingly, its creation by the divinities of music themselves. Consequently the splendour and extraordinary beauty of the scenario are forcefully represented.

The ecphrasis' main features are presented by Apuleius in such a way that it appears as though he intends his reader to envision the scene's activities, which the reclining divinities are viewing, as taking place simultaneously. Cupid and Psyche recline *summum torum*, the place of honour (Purser, p. 121)⁶⁵, and all the other gods take their places around them in order of precedence. The gods' seating arrangement, the first piece of information given to the reader about the feast, serves as a backdrop for the activities. The goings-on subsequently presented are those which the diners can see from their fixed positions⁶⁶. There is a sense of stillness conveyed by this image of the divinities in a state of relaxed reclination, stressed by the placement of *accumbebat* and *complexus* at the start and end of a sentence in 6.24.1. Apuleius at this stage maintains a focus upon the most significant divinities of the entire story by only naming Jupiter and Juno of those banqueting. As the sole deity to be mentioned twice in the ecphrasis, attention is drawn to Jupiter and by inference, his authority, by means of which he has recently resolved

⁶⁴ The use of the neuter plural adjective *canora*, employed substantively here, is unparalleled. I interpret the expression *canora personabant* to mean that the Muses are singing melodious things (i.e. songs) loudly (*OLD* s.v. *persono* 4). Rather than simply depicting the Muses as singing, Apuleius may have chosen this expression to draw attention to their singing and underline the participation of the Muses and the marvellous scene of divinities actively involved in the celebration which precedes and follows this statement.

⁶⁵ Psyche's position *summum torum* is noteworthy at this point. After Cupid's departure at 5.24.5, Psyche has been at a disadvantage whenever she encounters various divinities. She is frequently portrayed in the role of the underdog engaged in activities on the ground (such as tidying up the harvesting implements in Ceres' temple at 6.1.5, sorting grains at 6.10.3, etc.) or direct reference to her position on the ground is made (5.24.1, 6.19.5, 6.20.3). In this final scenario, however, she is in an elevated position and no longer assuming a subservient role.

⁶⁶ At 6.24.1 *toti dei*, all the gods, are said to take their positions at the dinner. In the following sentence, however, several divinities are engaged in serving refreshments and enjoying the festivities. A temporal indicator, *tunc*, occurs as the first word of 6.24.2 and it appears as though Apuleius intends for his reader to envision all the gods reclining first (perhaps their attendance at the wedding is to stress the importance and grandeur of the occasion), followed by several of deities getting up to perform their various tasks while the others remain seated.

the conflict between Venus and Psyche (6.23.2ff.). The god's significance is further underlined by the fact that he alone has his own cupbearer (6.24.2). No name is given to the cupbearer for two reasons. Apuleius fails to name the *rusticus puer* in order to focus upon this individual and, as is the case elsewhere with other individuals, in order to refer to Ganymede in a previously unparalleled manner. Although Ganymede is portrayed as a shepherd in literature, an *Ibycus* search failed to find a parallel for the expression *ille rusticus puer*. Attention is also drawn to this segment as the noun *pocillator*, which refers to Ganymede both here and at 6.15.2, is employed exclusively by Apuleius. Rather than simply naming the cupbearer with a single word, Apuleius takes 5 words to do so and this in itself is eye-catching (6.24.2, *suus pocillator ille rusticus puer*). Ganymede's presence is appropriate here for several reasons. Jupiter is sometimes represented as having a romantic interest in Ganymede (e.g. Thgn. 1345-8), which is an apt association for a wedding scene. Furthermore, Ganymede's situation parallels Psyche's in several respects: they are both children of royalty, their beauty is the reason for their subsequent difficulties, both are carried up to Olympus and the two ultimately become immortal (see Ov. *Met.* 10.155ff. for Zeus carrying him off).

The remainder of the divinities who comprise the main participants are employed in various activities, but minimal detail is provided (6.24.2-3): Liber pours wine for the other gods⁶⁷, Vulcan cooks, Hours sprinkle flowers, Graces sprinkle balsam, Muses sing or play flutes, Apollo sings to the lyre, Venus dances, a Satyr and little Pan play the reed-pipe. All these activities are appropriate for a wedding feast and for the divinities performing them. Consequently, they lend realism to the event, the setting of which is otherworldly. The positioning of the divinities' names at the start of each clause (from *Vulcanus* on 6.24.3) draws attention to their presence and

⁶⁷ It is unclear whether the reader is to assume that Liber is pouring wine for other unnamed gods (6.24.1, *toti dei*) or only for those divinities who are mentioned in this passage (6.24.2, *ceteris*). If numerous other deities were to be included in this image, it would add to the liveliness of the ecphrasis.

highlights the extraordinary nature of this celebration. The description of the gods' functions is concise, however, thus giving the passage a lively tempo and conveying a spirited atmosphere.

To introduce novelty to this seemingly 'normal' wedding celebration, Apuleius places Vulcan in an unparalleled role of cook (as Purser points out on 6.24). He also introduces the characters Paniscus, paralleled only at Cic. Div. 1.23 (plural Panisci; see also Pease on 1.23 and Borgeaud, p. 118 for possible explanations of the word's meaning) and Saturus, the spelling of whose name the OLD s.v. Saturus cites as an unparalleled variation of Satyrus, and as such the spelling is eye-catching68. Apuleius may have found it humorous to place Vulcan in the role of chef and Bacchus in the role of wine steward (cf. Ov. Am. 1.15.35-6 where the poet wishes that Apollo will serve him cups filled from the Castalian spring), but the purpose of introducing the latter two individuals here is unclear. Purser omits to elaborate upon their presence. Grimal (1963 on 6.24.3) states that they are 'deux divinités qui figurent un <type>, celui des démons rustiques qui accompagnent ordinairement Dionysos. Ils <déclament> en s'accompagnant réciproquement du chalumeau pastoral,....' Kenney (1990b on 6.24.3) believes that this passage recalls the wedding of Daphnis and Chloe at Longus 4.39.2, where the couple erects altars to Shepherd Eros and Soldier Pan. Paniscus may be present simply to add a 'pastoral note', but I would suggest that Paniscus may also look back to the unexpected chance meeting that Psyche had with Pan and Echo (5.25.3ff.) immediately following Cupid's departure, during which Pan inexplicably knew of her circumstances and encouraged her not to commit suicide but rather to worship Cupid and lay aside her grief. The happiness, for which Pan advises her to strive, comes to fruition in this final scene, and therefore his presence is not inappropriate. The use of the diminutive *Paniscus* may also look forward to the infant of 6.24.4. The presence of Bacchus, Pan and the Satyr are of additional significance to the passage and what immediately follows. These deities are included

⁶⁸ Given Apuleius' fondness for striking and unusual language and word plays, Kenney (1990b on 6.24.3) is likely correct in stating that Apuleius is aware of 'learned speculation concerning Satyrs and satire (*satura*)'.

in the celebrations for their association with sexuality and powers of fertility. As participants in the feast, they help to effect a smooth transition to the final sentence of 6.24.4, where the reader is informed of the result of their powers of fertility⁶⁹, the birth of the couple's daughter *Voluptas*, whose name is prefigured by the pleasure which both Cupid and Psyche are experiencing at the banquet.

The stern tone of Jupiter's decree at 6.23 contrasts with the atmosphere of beauty and happiness at 6.24. The actions of celebratory eating and drinking as well as the inclusion of colourfulness and music in the scenario convey joyfulness. The brightness of the flowers which the Hours spread about is indicated by the verb *purpurabant* at 6.24.3 (see above). The use of this particular verb may be deliberate in order to pick up on the earlier delineation of Cupid's cheeks as *pupureas* at 5.22.5 and, by inference, the overwhelming brightness and splendour of Cupid himself. This lightness is in direct contrast with previously examined settings in which darkness creates a sombre and often threatening atmosphere (e.g. 4.6, 6.17ff.) suggestive of ill fortune.

A rapidity of tempo is achieved by means of terse enumeration of the celebratory acts. 6.24.1 details Cupid and Psyche reclining, with Juno and Jupiter in a like position, and 6.24.2-3, a single sentence, contains numerous clauses which highlight verbs. The cumulative impact of the verbs is to convey the bustling activity of the scene. The verbs are often positioned at the end of the eight clauses and the absence of a lot of detail stresses the significance of the actions themselves. Attention is also drawn to the verbs by their rhyming endings (see below). Of the ten main verbs in this sentence, five are employed to denote either singing or playing of musical instruments, and the other five denote activity. The first four verbs (ministrabat, coquebat, purpurabant, spargebant) detail the business of the scene, while the next six stress the music being created and Venus' expression of joy in dancing to the music (personabant, cantavit, saltavit,

⁶⁹ Apuleius may stress deities connected with fertility in order to bring back to the reader's mind that Psyche is pregnant. So much has occurred during Psyche's trials, that it is easy to forget that she is in fact pregnant.

canerent, inflarent, dicerent). In addition to the striking number of verbs in 6.24.2-3, two of them are rare or unparalleled applications of the verb: purpurabant (see above) and the use of dicerent meaning 'to play on' (OLD s.v. dico² 1c; TLL V,1.977.77-8). Furthermore, the participle superingressa is also unusual (see below). Emphasis upon celebratory singing, dancing and instrument playing is of significance to both the happy atmosphere of this passage and as a contrasting point with the weeping (4.33.3-4, 4.34.1, 4.34.3ff.) and doleful music of Psyche's funereal wedding (4.33.4).

Attention is drawn to 6.24.2-3 on account of its length, causing the reader to focus upon the events underway. Sandwiched between two shorter sentences, all the activity of the scene takes place in 6.24.2-3, to which attention is drawn by the use of a tricolon crescendo. The first sentence of the ecphrasis is a general introduction, the second and slightly longer one details the seating arrangement, while the greatest space is granted to recounting the joyous activities of this third stressed sentence. The cumulative effect of the short phrases depicting the deities' actions adds to the reader's impression of an engaging and spirited wedding reception. In his list of actions, Apuleius does not linger at any length on any given divinity; for the most part, the reader is given the name of a deity and what role he or she is undertaking. Only Ganymede (suus pocillator, 6.24.2) and Venus are described in slightly more detail; the participle superingressa (6.24.3) characterizes Venus' entrance and her dancing is formonsa. Furthermore, both individuals are depicted with unusual words - pocillator and superingressa; the former is only attested in Apuleius and the latter is first attested here (Kenney 1990b on 6.24.2 and 6.24.3)⁷⁰. The quantity of information, however, is insufficient to slow the tempo and thus draw the reader's attention. Our attention is drawn on account of other reasons; the periphrastic reference to Ganymede causes the

⁷⁰ Verbal links are also recognizable between 6.15.2 (Psyche's third task of retrieving water) where Ganymede is *Iovi pocillatorem* and the image of Venus dancing *suavi musicae* (6.24.3) which is reminiscent of the type of music created by the birds attending her chariot at 6.6.3 (*dulce cantitant aves melleis modulis suave resonantes*).

reader to consider this individual's identity, if only momentarily. The oddness of the expression *suavi musicae superingressa*⁷¹ causes Venus to stand out amongst the participants. In addition, the very act of Venus dancing is outstanding for the complete change in sentiment toward the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. Throughout the entire tale, Venus has tormented and persecuted the couple. Not only is she shown to accept the marriage of her son and the now divine Psyche⁷² here, but Apuleius portrays her as approving and celebrating the event; behaviour entirely in contrast with her previous conduct.

Succinctness is achieved by a noticeable decrease in the number of adjectives (when contrasted with the three other ecphraseis) and the staccato sound of certain phrases in the passage. Several phrases exhibit alliteration and frequent usage of the letter *c*, *Vulcanus cenam coquebat* (6.24.2), *quoque canora*, *cantavit ad citharam*, *scaena sibi sic concinnata* (also alliteration of s), *quidem chorum canerent* (6.24.3). Alliteration and the frequency of s at 6.24.3, *Venus suavi musicae superingressa formonsa saltavit*, while adding a musical quality may also contain a hint of irony. Venus has been characterized as less than congenial throughout the narrative and, as noted in chapter 1, n. 43, the excessive use of the letter s created an unpleasant sound according to the ancients.

In terms of Apuleius' ecphrastic technique, the lack of detail provided at 6.24 is not in accordance with his style shown in the ecphrase at 4.31, 5.22 and 6.6. More information has been provided in the latter three passages, which enables the reader to visualize the topic more clearly. As this ecphrasis at 6.24 is the story's closing passage which eliminates any nagging doubts about Psyche's present good fortune, its primary function is to end the story on a happy note and

⁷¹ No parallels exist for this expression and Apuleius is the first author to employ the verb *superingredior*, meaning 'to enter following (on a cue)', *OLD* s.v. *superingredior*.

⁷² Venus' disapproval of the match stems from her distaste for a mortal daughter-in-law. Her acceptance of their nuptials highlights her snobbery, an amusing touch which adds to the happy tone of the passage.

convey the felicity of Cupid and Psyche's reunion and legal union. The use of an ecphrasis to present this scene enables Apuleius to stress effectively the couple's happiness and to render the scenario more memorable for the reader. The other ecphraseis have been placed at points in the narrative where a build-up of tension requires alleviation. These ecphraseis, however, simultaneously and subtly build more tension by means of ominous undertones or repercussions (see above). Apuleius need not go into great detail about any of the individuals present because he is not attempting to prefigure any more events or consequences to actions undertaken after this point. Therefore, the rapidity of this ecphrasis is entirely apt given its function.

Kenney (1990b on 6.24) states that 'the opera ends amidst general rejoicing'. The rejoicing may be of a general nature, yet the participants in the wedding feast are of significance. Most of the divinities in attendance at the banquet, save Liber⁷³ and Saturus, have played a previous role in the narrative. Jupiter's presence is not surprising given his recent decree at 6.23, nor is Venus', given her prominent role throughout. The other gods, however, have earlier associations with Venus or the conflict between the goddess and Psyche. When Psyche entreats Juno at her temple (6.3.3ff.), the young girl is rebuffed by the goddess, who fears reprisal from Venus (6.4.4-5). The play upon Vulcan = fire (see Kenney 1990b on 6.24.2) exploits an association with the god which was not played up at 6.6, where he is the skilled craftsman of Venus' chariot which the goddess uses to seek assistance in her persecution of Psyche. At 5.28.7, Venus, in a rage, speculates as to whether Cupid is having an affair with one of the Nymphs, Hours, Muses or Graces before the gossiping sea-bird informs her that his lover is Psyche. Apollo is only mentioned at the start of the tale at 4.32.6, yet his role is significant, for he issues the oracle with which Psyche's funereal wedding and the entire *Cupid and Psyche* episode commence. The reference to Pan at 5.25.3 follows Cupid's departure and occurs at a critical juncture in the narrative in terms of the conflict

⁷³ There is no other reference to Liber in *Cupid and Psyche*, and surprisingly only two references to him in the entire *Metamorphoses* (2.11 and 8.7).

between Psyche and Venus. Psyche's vulnerability is at a high point: she is no longer under Cupid's protection, she has departed from the palace, and has just attempted suicide. These associations with points in the narrative at which Venus' malevolence or Psyche's desperation are stressed lend impact to this final reconciliation scene.

In terms of a literary model for this banqueting scene, Purser (on 6.24) states that 'The model is at the end of Iliad i'. Kenney (1990b on 6.24) also suggests Hom. *Il.* 1.601-11 and adds that 'the details of this one [i.e. a divine banquet] are closely paralleled at Lucian 24 (*Icarom.*) 27-8'. To claim that 'the details of this one are closely paralleled' at *Icarom.* 27-8 is inaccurate; certain similarities occur; however, they are hardly more plentiful than similarities between *h. Ap.* 186-206 and the passage under discussion. Again, the feast scene at Hom. *Il.* 1.601-11 is not very similar to 6.24. In it, Apollo plays his lyre and the Muses sing (Il. 1.603-4; *Met.* 6.24.3), after which the gods return to their respective homes. A third similar point at Il. 609-11 is that Zeus returns to his $\lambda \dot{\epsilon} \chi o_{\zeta}$ and Hera rests beside him (cf. Juno reclining in Jupiter's arms at 6.24.1). As these are the only likenesses between the two passages, there is insufficient evidence to claim this Iliadic passage as a direct model for Apuleius.

The assembly of the gods at the Homeric Hymn to Apollo lines 186-206 exhibits several similarities to 6.24, but again does not provide enough detail to classify it as a direct model: at line 189, the Muses sing; the Graces and Hours dance at line 194; Aphrodite dances (l. 195); Hebe⁷⁴, the gods' cupbearer, is present (l. 195); Apollo plays the lyre (l. 201). Numerous other divinities are in attendance, however, who do not appear at 6.24: Harmonia, Artemis, Ares, and Zeus with Leto, not Hera. Rather than looking to either one of these for immediate inspiration, it seems more likely that Apuleius, familiar with the literature, has altered his wedding feast to include

⁷⁴ Ganymede, Jupiter's personal cupbearer (*Met.* 6.24.2), serves as a replacement for Hebe, the cupbearer of the gods. She is not serving beverages at line 195, but is dancing.

divinities essential to the plot of the story, as well as those who have associations with weddings, namely the Hours and Graces⁷⁵.

The dinner scene at Lucian *Icaromenippus* 27-28, is unlikely to have inspired Apuleius since the differences between the two are noteworthy. In attendance are Pan, Ganymede in his role of cupbearer, Apollo playing the lyre, Muses singing, Dionysus providing wine, and Aphrodite perfume. Again, numerous other deities are present who are absent from 6.24: Hermes, Corybantes, Attis, Sabazius, Silenus, Demeter, Heracles and Poseidon, with play upon the metonymy of Demeter = grain and thus, bread and Poseidon as god of the sea = fish. There is however, no mention of Graces or Hours who add much to the tone and beauty of 6.24 which are certainly unparalleled in Lucian. Nor is there the same emphasis upon music at *Icar*. 27-28, where the focus is rather upon eating and drinking. Therefore, in contrast to Kenney (1990b) on 6.24⁷⁶, I find this passage to be insufficiently similar to *Met*. 6.24 to concede that it 'closely parallels' it.

Apuleius' concern for the overall structure of both *Cupid and Psyche* and the main narrative of the *Metamorphoses* is such that links also can be found between Charite's circumstances and this final scene. The old woman narratrix states in the last line of 4.27 that she will divert Charite with a charming story from her distress which began when her own wedding was interrupted, *sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protinus avocabo*. Subsequent to the departure of Cupid at 5.24.5, however, the tale has been far from amusing. The happiness displayed in the conclusion, therefore, brings with it a sense of resolution to Psyche's crisis, and by inference to Charite's, whose spirits should be lightened after listening to the happy outcome and whose marriage to Tlepolemus (*Met*. 7.13-14) is prefigured by this joyous occasion.

⁷⁵ The Hours are customarily linked with marriages of gods and heroes. Their common associates, the Charites, are often depicted singing and dancing and perform at Peleus and Thetis' wedding (for references see *OCD*³ s.v. Horae and Charites).

⁷⁶ Purser (on 6.24) simply makes note of *Icar*. 27-28 as 'another parody of a banquet of the gods'.

In conclusion, the ecphraseis at 4.31.4-7, 6.6, 5.22 and 6.24 are remarkable for their clarity and vividness. They are polished, elegant and appealing descriptions which inspire a sense of awe and wonder in the reader, and whose fantastic and otherworldly elements are apt for the narrative of *Cupid and Psyche* itself and the tale's function as a diversionary tactic for Charite. In several ways, the presentation of the ecphraseis exhibits similarities to Apuleius' techniques for the depiction of settings; realism is achieved via telling and cumulative details, and a fondness is shown for elaborate sensory appeal. Rich and exotic in their detail, the clarity with which these descriptions are expressed is such that the reader is able to visualize the subject being presented as though he were looking at an artistic rendition of it. Although the ecphraseis demonstrate links with earlier literary depictions, and sometimes with visual representations, of a similar topic, none of the passages under examination can be said to have a model, and consequently Apuleius demonstrates originality in his descriptions. Where similarities are noteworthy, it is likely that the author has been inspired by literary rather than artistic sources, which is not surprising in light of the literary nature of his work and the numerous references to other authors' works throughout.

General Considerations

The number of ecphraseis within the Cupid and Psyche tale is sufficiently few that their presence is noteworthy and they take the reader's attention by freezing the narrative and focussing upon significant places, people and events. As they are well integrated into the preceding and subsequent narrative, the ecphraseis are not obtrusive. There does not appear to be any pattern for the placement of descriptions at set intervals, yet the positioning of an ecphrasis at the commencement of book 5 and the conclusion of the tale is of importance. The fantasy of the fairytale requires an otherworldly setting, provided by 5.1, and it is appropriate that Psyche's ordeals should conclude in an equally unreal place.

The descriptive pauses usually provide the reader with a sense of relief and calmness which is conveyed by the lightness of their atmosphere. Their placement at climactic points in the narrative draws further attention to them and underlines their role as a welcome break in the narrative. For example, the ecphrasis on Cupid's palace is positioned at a point where the author leads the reader to believe that Psyche is going to her death. Instead, she finds herself in a luxurious and affluent palace, under protection from her persecutor. 5.22 marks a turning-point after which Psyche is no longer under Cupid's protection, and at 6.24, after enduring her numerous trials, Psyche is finally safe. In contrast to these three, 4.31 and 6.6 underline Venus' power. The former is noteworthy for its uniquely ominous tone⁷⁷, and its positioning after Venus' cry for vengeance stresses the goddess' power to harm Psyche and signals the start of Psyche's problems. 6.6 contains many elements which express a welcome lightness of atmosphere at this juncture, but it also includes subtle undertones of Venus' malevolent power. Furthermore, its placement after Psyche's resolution to submit to Venus at 6.5.4 is ominous.

Functions

Various functions are assumed by ecphraseis within *Cupid and Psyche*. Common to all four examples is the representation and prefiguration of a divinity's power; 4.31.4-7 and 6.6 prefigure Venus' power; 5.22 creates a powerful image of Cupid which foreshadows his ability to influence Jupiter at 6.22-3, and 6.24 underlines Jupiter's authority. The first three descriptions also function to diffuse tension in the narrative. Both 4.31.4-7 and 6.6 are strategically positioned following Venus' outbursts and 5.22 halts Psyche's rash plan to decapitate Cupid. The fourth example, as the final passage of the tale, diffuses any lingering anxiety in the reader concerning Psyche's fate.

⁷⁷ The ecphrasis on the robbers' cave at 4.6 is also ominous but it falls outside the narrative structure of the tale.

The ecphraseis in the tale provide significant links to earlier and later points in the narrative. For example, at 4.31.7, the Triton's act of shielding Venus from the harmful rays of the sun stresses her preoccupation with beauty and her jealousy stemming from the worship of Psyche, the very act upon which the plot initially turns. It also looks forward to Psyche's descent to the underworld, the pretext for which is to obtain some of Proserpine's beauty (6.16.4ff.). Contrasting links, such as the departure of Venus at 5.31.7, aid in pointing up the regal nature of her earlier departure for Ocean, and connections of a similar kind emphasize highlighted points (for example, the resplendent magnificence of both Cupid and his palace at 5.1). Ties also exist with the larger narrative framework which assist in integrating the tale within the novel. The image of a marine Venus recalls Apuleius' delineation of Fotis at 2.17 (see above). More significantly, Psyche's situation and trials exhibit correspondences with Charite's fate, and the successful union of Cupid and Psyche prefigures Charite's rescue and happy marriage in book 7. Links such as these demonstrate Apuleius' attention to detail, structure and thematic unity throughout the narrative. The author's attention to these issues often provides the reader with a sense of resolution (for example, the revelation of Cupid's identity as Psyche's husband at 5.22 resolves the mystery developed throughout the narrative, and the final ecphrasis offers a sense of completion to the story itself), and so the reader does not feel that the tale is a disjointed insertion into the novel's framework.

Additionally, the ecphraseis, themselves narrative pauses, function to mark a change of scene at 4.31.4-7 and 6.6. Apuleius employs the ecphrasis to shift attention from the action at hand to a focus upon an individual, as is seen most pointedly at 5.22. This ecphrasis marks a significant point in the narrative at which Cupid is named for the first time and following which his behaviour towards Psyche alters radically. A behavioural change for Cupid, however, is first signalled by the description at 4.31.4-7. Prior to this point, Cupid is delineated as a young, impetuous knave. His subsequent portrayal is that of a compassionate and loving husband.

Psyche's betrayal of her husband's trust at 5.22, causes him to abandon her, which serves as a critical juncture in the narrative after which she is no longer protected in his palace.

By means of focussing upon characters, moods either analogous to or contrasting with the participants of the descriptions are emphatically pointed up in every example. The beauty of Venus' chariot corresponds with the goddess's own attractiveness, but at the same time, contrasts with her angry mood. The majestic image of Venus' departure for the Ocean at 4.31.4-7 further contrasts sharply with her mindset. The joyfulness of the characters at 6.24 mirrors the mood of the passage and the reader's sentiments. Evidently Apuleius has introduced and constructed an ecphrasis here in order to heighten the impact of the story ending on a happy note.

Thematic threads are often highlighted in ecphraseis. As the description itself takes our attention, its contents solicit interpretation from the reader; Apuleius indeed has a means to highlight points of narrative importance in an ostensible digression. In the four examples, an emphasis upon the effulgence of the divinities and their domains, points up an important thematic contrast between light and darkness (see also above on setting, e.g. 4.6). Music is a significant element in three of the four descriptions: 4.31.7, a Triton sounds his conch; 6.6.3, numerous birds chatter happily; and in the final scene, there is much singing and playing of instruments⁷⁸. As noted above, music is of consequence at Psyche's funereal wedding, and, throughout her trials, sound is frequently played up as threatening (see above, e.g. 6.14.5, talking water). A final thematic link is the role of birds within the story. Initially allied with Venus (see above on 6.6), their role changes in the narrative to that of assistants to Jupiter and Psyche.

⁷⁸ 5.22 is noteworthy for its complete absence of any noise.

Standard Features and Techniques

Apuleius shows an enlivening variety in his ecphrastic technique⁷⁹. The descriptions are presented by means of static description (*passim*), activities (most noteworthy at 6.6 and 6.24), and observer-reaction to the spectacle (novel to 5.22). They are presented in a concentrated fashion (6.6) or elements are intermingled with details which fall outside the ecphrasis (4.31.4-7). Varying degrees of detail are presented; very precise information is offered at 6.6 (about the birds) and at 5.22, whereas simple enumeration of the divinities present is provided at 4.31.6 and 6.24.2-3. This variety in presentation prevents repetition and adds a certain level of reader-interest to an aspect of narratives which might otherwise be dismissed by critics as superfluous and uninteresting.

Apuleius' attention to the internal structure of these ecphraseis is noteworthy. 5.1 can be broken down into three segments: 5.1.2, the natural surrounds of the palace; 5.1.3-7, Cupid's palace; 5.2.1f., the storehouses behind the palace. The greatest emphasis is placed upon the most significant component. In the final ecphrasis, a tricolon crescendo stresses the felicity of the celebrants. 4.31.4-7 is noteworthy for the ellipsis of Venus' chariot, and in contrast, its complementary ecphrasis at 6.6 presents details in a reverse order. Each sentence of 6.6 provides the reader with a separate topic and ring composition is in evidence with Venus heading for Heaven at 6.6.1 and the clouds opening upon her arrival at 6.6.4. The structure of 5.22 varies again by presenting details of Cupid in a fragmentary fashion which piques reader curiosity. The reader expects a description of Cupid, which is delayed by Psyche's, the blade's and flame's responses to the sight at 5.22.3-4, and which is eventually thwarted by the summing up of Cupid's body below his shoulders (paraleipsis). Each ecphrasis is carefully structured and the employment of varying techniques avoids monotony and repetition.

⁷⁹ The ecphrasis on Cupid's palace (5.1ff.) employs many of the standard features and techniques used in the other four ecphraseis in the tale. Therefore, I have chosen to include it in this discussion. For its functions within the narrative, see chapter 1.

Common to the ecphraseis is the presentation of telling detail. The reader is offered numerous details, most frequently ones which appeal to various senses, and which enhance the vividness of the descriptions. For example, at 4.31.7, Apuleius provides the information that Venus' sunshade is fashioned from silk, the doves of 6.6.2 are depicted as having *picta colla*, and their yoke is jewelled, etc. In 5.1, 5.22 and 6.6 an accumulation and repetition of details concerning light and colour, in addition to chiaroscuro, appeal to the reader's visual sense and create an emphatic image. Sensory appeal is found in all the ecphraseis, with the senses of sight and hearing being most prominent. Just as visual information is highlighted, so too is aural appeal at 4.31, 6.6, 6.24, and its absence at 5.22, where the other four senses are involved, is striking. The central segment of 4.31, devoted to Venus' attendants is framed by the music of Nereids and a Triton blowing his conch-shell. Telling and cumulative detail at 6.6.3, stresses the happy and melodious chattering of the birds escorting Venus' chariot. The prominence of verbs at 6.24 which depict singing or playing of musical instruments draws attention to the sounds of the participants.

All the ephraseis contain novel elements. Venus' marine cortège (4.31.4-7) is comprised of the fantastic, recherché divinities Portunus, Salacia and Palaemon. Furthermore, it is the only example of a marine retinue in which a divinity walks on water. At 6.6 doves assume a new role as conveyors of Venus' chariot which is attended by sparrows and various other sweetly singing birds. The chariot itself, fashioned from gold, is remarkable on account of the very loss of gold; such an unusual statement enhances the spectacular scene. The extraordinary description of Cupid at 5.22 in which great and precise physical detail, unparalleled elsewhere, is given of his upper body, includes an unparalleled depiction of his wings as *roscidae* and of the little feathers on their tips which are said to 'frolic', followed by a paraleiptic summary of the remainder of his body. Also new to this ecphrasis is the inclusion of Psyche's dramatic reaction to seeing Cupid which, in turn, colours the reader's emotional response to the passage. In the concluding

ecphrasis, remarkable for the number of divinities present and the roles which they have assumed in the celebration, novelty exists in Apuleius' periphrastic reference to Ganymede and to Vulcan's role of cook for the wedding feast. The inclusion of such new features both makes the descriptions more memorable and demonstrates Apuleius' ingenuity.

The use of both new and unusual language renders Apuleius' descriptive technique even more noteworthy. Novel diction coupled with frequent sound play stresses the spectacular visions and impressions left upon the reader by these descriptions. Subtleties in language and in the content of the descriptions themselves are employed to convey ominous undertones concerning what is to come for Psyche. For example, at 5.22 Cupid's magnificence means that Psyche has a great deal to lose and at 6.6.1 the inclusion of detrimento, damno, and nec obvias...canora familia at 6.6.4 foreshadow Psyche's subsequent trials.

The role of ecphraseis within the Cupid and Psyche tale is more than simply ornamental. In addition to presenting the reader with an emphatic image of a given subject, they are instrumental in foreshadowing events, and highlighting mood, tone, and atmosphere. In fact, the ecphraseis require interpretation and the examination of 4.31.4-7, 6.6, 5.22 and 6.24 has revealed that they are a significant aspect of Apuleius' narrative technique and his methods of characterization.

Chapter 3: Minor Characters

The terms 'character' and 'characterization' have received substantial attention in narratological treatises. Prior to examining the characters in the Cupid and Psyche tale and the manner in which they are presented, I shall first offer a brief survey of the varying views that have been advanced on character¹. Both formalists and structuralists consider characters to be products of the plot whose status is functional (Chatman, p. 111). Martin (p. 119) adds that structuralist theories view character as "simply a collection of words, on a par with other verbal elements of a narrative". Bal elaborates upon these opinions, defining character as an actor provided with distinctive characteristics which together create the effect of character. For Bal, a character, being a complex semantic unit, must resemble a human, whereas an actor, simply a structural position, need not necessarily do so (1985, p. 79). Margolin (p. 7) defines character as a focal point of human interest for the reader and for the integration of static and dynamic motives (ideas, setting, atmosphere and mood). Its function is to assist in formulating expectations for the future action in the narrative and to build narrative illusion.

Modern theories of character often look back to E. M. Forster's distinction of flat and round characters (p. 106ff.). "Flat" characters are those who possess a single trait or very few. Their behaviour is highly predictable as they remain unchanged by circumstances and they are easily remembered because there is less for the reader to remember. The round character displays a variety of traits which may be conflicting or contradictory. Consequently, the behaviour of a round character is unpredictable and may surprise the reader in a convincing manner, moving

¹ For a good summary of views on character see Martin, pp. 116-122. For a more detailed view of character and characterization see Bal 1985, pp. 25ff. and 79-93; Elwood pp. 73ff.; Chatman pp. 111-132; Rimmon (Kenan) pp. 33-41; Atchity pp. 108-114; Forster p. 103ff.; Margolin pp. 1-14; Docherty p. 7ff.; Toolan p. 98ff.

the reader to feelings (p. 112, see also Bal 1985, p. 81). The round character may inspire a stronger sense of intimacy, and the reader may remember these characters as "real" people.

Characterization is defined by Elwood (p. 133) as the impression upon the reader of one dominant character trait through repetition. Bal (1985, p. 85) likewise emphasizes repetition as an important principle in character construction and it is by means of data repetition that odd facts coalesce, complement each other and form an image. Characterization is achieved in several ways. Elwood (p. 150) notes six means of characterization: 1) suggested words and phrases specific in detail; 2) pictorial writing; 3) appeals to senses; 4) figures of speech; 5) contrast; 6) evocation of memory images and sensations. More specifically, Margolin (p. 8) divides characterizing statements into three distinct types: 1) statements made by the narrative agent about itself which are not always reliable; 2) statements regarding verbal, mental and physical acts of the narrative agent; 3) static elements such as name², appearance, cultural and natural settings.

For the purpose of this chapter I shall adopt Bal's definition of character that the term indicates an individual in the narrative endowed with distinctive characteristics and resembling a human being. In order to determine the manner in which individuals are delineated, I shall examine actions, dialogue, thoughts and statements made by the character in question or other characters, authorial intrusion and judgements, set descriptions, the effect of names or their absence, contrasts between characters and their impact on sharpening characterization, and analogies between environment and character traits. Equally significant, the function of a character in the narrative will be analyzed. The following chapter will treat the principal characters of Venus, Cupid and Psyche, and here I shall first consider the minor characters in the

² Docherty (p. 74) elaborates upon the significance of a name. He defines it as a locus around which characterization takes place, i.e., traits and qualities are ascribed to a proper name and thus the named character is made. In the Cupid and Psyche tale, names and their associations are of great significance.

story: Psyche's sisters, the bodiless voices at the palace, Zephyrus, Pan, the informant tern, Ceres, Juno, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus' handmaids *Consuetudo*, *Tristities* and *Sollicitudo*, as well as Psyche's four assistants - the ant and company, a talking reed, Jupiter's eagle, and the tower.

Psyche's Sisters

The characterization of Psyche's sisters is effected by means of several techniques: authorial/narratorial judgements, actions, dialogues, character qualification by both the sisters themselves and other characters, along with a small amount of direct characterization. According to Forster's classification of characters, Psyche's sisters are simple or flat characters, with the dominating trait of jealousy supplemented by the secondary traits of malevolence and greed. Although they remain unnamed throughout the tale³, they are essential to the plot and are textually prominent⁴.

Psyche's sisters first appear at the very outset of the story at 4.28.1 where the narrator, the drunken old woman, informs the reader that they are princesses and refers to them as being forma conspicuas and as having gratissima specie, which is immediately undercut by Psyche's tam praecipua tam praeclara pulchritudo (4.28.2). While the sisters' beauty idonee tamen celebrari posse laudibus humanis (4.28.1), Psyche's beauty is unable to be suitably praised by humans. Some other additional, but minimal, information on their social status and appearance is provided at 4.32.3. Apuleius now describes their previously very pleasing beauty as temperatam formonsitatem nulli

³ According to Billaut (p. 123), the number of characters bearing a name in Apuleius is a little less than 33%.

⁴ Little seems to have been written directly about the sisters' characterization. Numerous scholars recount the actions of the sisters but few develop their significance. Kenney (1990b) discusses several points of interest in his commentary on book 5, and Frangoulidis develops the similarities between Venus and Psyche's sisters (1994) and the sisters' ruse and Psyche's trick (1995). No one article deals with their characterization, as greater attention has been focused upon Cupid, Psyche and Venus.

diffamarant populi, whose impact is again diminished by comparison with Psyche's loveliness. In subsequent appearances, the sisters are depicted in increasingly unfavourable terms⁵. The narrator also indicates that the sisters are married to *procis regibus* and that their marriages are beatas⁶. Their first two appearances present the sisters as appealing characters; they are very beautiful princesses who are seemingly blessed in their marriages. This portrayal elicits a positive response to the sisters in the reader, who may be curious to learn more about the two women.

The reader continues the process of 'inference-based fleshing-out" (Toolan, p. 99) of seemingly slight textual data in the sisters' subsequent appearance. Kenney (1990b on 5.7.1) believes that the sincerity of the scene of family grief at 5.4.6ff., in which the sisters rush to be with their parents is undercut by the narrator's use of *illae*, which he deems pejorative. In their first appearance, however, there is no suggestion of malevolence in the sisters' behaviour and it seems unlikely that *illae* should be interpreted as pejorative at this point. They are described as propereque maestae atque lugubres deserto lare certatim ad parentum...perrexerant (5.4.6). The reader has no reason to suspect that their grief is not genuine and their haste to see their parents, stressed by (propere, certatim, perrexerant) is not characteristic of someone who shows no concern for others. Cupid also stresses the speed with which they rush to the cliff on which Psyche was abandoned (protinus aderunt, 5.5.3). So, in this way, Apuleius depicts the women as loving sisters and devoted children. With this initial characterization, Apuleius tricks his reader, who falsely ascribes to the sisters traits such as loving concern and dutifulness. The reader is lulled into a false sense of

⁵ I wonder whether the reader is to assume that the sisters were never very attractive and that this information has come from an unreliable narrator, since the old woman is a drunk, or whether Apuleius has deliberately attempted to create an image of an ideal royal family to contrast with their subsequent misfortune.

⁶ Beatas has likely been chosen for its applicability to emotional happiness and financial prosperity (OLD s.v. beatus 1 and 3; TLL s.v. beo II.1909.32ff. and II.1917.31ff.). Its meaning at this point is ambiguous, although I suspect that Apuleius intends the reader to interpret it as emotional happiness, as it contrasts with Psyche's unhappiness (4.32.1-4).

⁷ For the pronoun *ille* used in pejorative contexts, see Callebat 1968, p. 276ff.

security; so when the sisters display their malevolence, which is implied at 5.11.1 (see below) to have existed all along, its impact is greater when contrasted with their initial portrayal.

Cupid's warning to Psyche at 5.5.3 not to heed her sisters' lamentations piques reader curiosity about the women and the traits they must possess that make it necessary to ignore them while they grieve. The language used by the god to describe Psyche's sisters and the terrible outcome should Psyche heed their lamentations is forceful and suggestive of death: exitiabile periculum, gravissimum dolorem and summum exitium (5.5.2-3). Psyche's tearful outburst of concern for her sisters who are de se maerentibus (5.5.5) suggests that the sisters, as Psyche knows them, have not shown themselves to be as malicious as Cupid's warning suggests and that the three women have strong feelings of affection for one another. Cupid again admonishes Psyche that she will regret (paenitere, 5.6.3) the destructive (damnosa) things that her heart demands and saepe terruit ne quando sororum pernicioso consilio8 suasa de forma mariti quaerat (5.6.6). In spite of this, Psyche, after resorting to threats of suicide (5.6.4), still persists in wanting, not only to see her sisters (5.6.5 and 5.6.8), but also to give them gifts (5.6.5). Emphasis, however, is placed upon the sisters' grief throughout both Cupid's speech and Psyche's demands. The sisters are turbatae (5.5.3), they lament and Psyche laments her inability to comfort them while they mourn for her (5.5.5). So great is her distress that her pleasant surroundings are now just a "rich prison" in which she is locked (5.5.5). Apuleius teases his reader at this point. The repeated warnings of Cupid and the forcefulness of the expressions which he employs to talk about the sisters begin to colour the reader's reaction to the sisters and create suspicion about some possible ill-will they may bear towards Psyche. At the same time, neither Psyche nor the reader knows Cupid's identity at this point. Therefore, it is difficult for either one to believe everything that the unknown husband suspects, particularly as the young woman is forbidden from even looking

⁸ This phrase is echoed at 5.24.5 in Cupid's address to Psyche where he reminds her that he warned her of the repercussions of heeding her sisters' advice, *perniciosi magisterii*.

upon him. Furthermore, emphasis has been placed upon the sorrow that both Psyche and her sisters feel, and, at this juncture, nothing has occurred to arouse reader suspicion regarding the sisters, other than Cupid's warning. The reader is left wondering whom to believe; are the sisters going to do something to Psyche, or is her husband fabricating a story to turn her against them?

The first encounter between Psyche and her sisters leads the reader to believe that her siblings are truly touched by news of their sister's death. They hasten to the rock upon which Psyche was abandoned (4.35.2) and emphasis is placed upon their celerity and mourning, festinanter adveniunt ibique difflebant oculos et plangebant ubera...crebris earum heiulatibus saxa ...resultarent (5.7.1). At 5.7.2 they call their sister's name and their cries are described as sono penetrabili vocis ululabilis. Psyche refers to their lamentations as miseris (5.7.2), and adds at 5.7.3 that her sisters are mourning, lugubres voces...diutinis lacrimis madentes genas siccate tandem. Apuleius stresses the sisters' distress and once the three are reunited at 5.7.5, they appear to be genuinely happy to see each other as tears of joy flow and they kiss (festinantibus saviis). There has been no indication from the sisters that their joy is not genuine. Apuleius continues to tease his reader by offering a mixed portrayal of the sisters; Cupid repeatedly stresses that they are pernicious and should be dismissed, whereas Psyche is anxious to see them, the three women seem to love each other, and the sisters themselves have done nothing to reveal themselves as evil.

The sisters' thoughts and actions are afforded textual prominence and offer the reader the clearest opportunity for character assessment. Once the sisters have experienced and enjoyed Psyche's riches, their greed and jealousy become overt in their actions and dialogue as well as in the narrator's comments. The sisters' key traits are repeated in order to underline their importance. At 5.8.2, they *praecordiis penitus nutrirent invidiam*, their envy drives them to question Psyche satis scrupulose curioseque about the owner of the house (5.8.3), Psyche sends them home

(5.8.5) auro facto gemmosisque monilibus onustas and the ironically egregiae sorores⁹ are described as gliscentis invidiae felle fraglantes multa once they have left the palace (5.9.1). The two phrases which underline the sisters' envy introduce the notion of malevolent ill-will within the sisters. Both expressions are memorable and emphatic; their envy is depicted in a striking manner and the close repetition of invidia draws it to the reader's attention. By doing so, Apuleius creates both suspense and a sense of foreboding in the reader who is left to wonder what the outcome of this envy will be, particularly in light of Cupid's earlier cautions.

The pointed contrast drawn between the sisters' behaviour and Psyche's generosity helps to sharpen the characterization of all three individuals¹⁰. Apuleius thus reinforces the pernicious nature of Psyche's siblings which renders them crucial to the narrative. Jealousy and greed motivate the sisters to devise a scheme to secure Psyche's downfall, a critical event upon which the plot of the story turns.

A dialogue between the sisters at 5.9.2ff. demonstrates the unreliability of attributes and circumstances reported by a character about itself (Bal 1985, p. 89; Margolin, p. 8; etc.). An assessment of their miserable fate by one sister contradicts the old woman's account at 4.32.3. Rather than having royal husbands, they live *maritis advenis ancillae deditae extorres*. Her envy, which was first revealed at the palace, is complemented by her ranting in which she criticizes Psyche for not knowing how to use properly her riches (5.9.4). She draws to her sister's attention the contrast between the remarkable wealth of the palace as manifested in the plentiful gold and jewels (5.9.5 *passim*), and her inability to access any money because her home is bolted up by her

⁹ Egregiae is employed ironically by Cupid at 5.24.5 in reference to the sisters, consiliatrices egregiae. For egregius used ironically see *TLL* V,2.289.24-43.

¹⁰ The sisters are very difficult to distinguish, as their behaviour seems to be identical. Only the dialogue (5.9.2ff.) in which exaggerated accounts of their dire circumstances are offered provides the reader with distinguishing information. I suspect that Apuleius has deliberately delineated them in this manner in order to stress their unpleasant attributes by means of repetition (see further below).

husband (5.9.8). Her jealousy extends beyond the materialistic to the handsomeness of Psyche's husband¹¹ which, in her opinion, makes her youngest sister the most fortunate woman in the world. Although there may be some kernel of truth to what the sister says, particularly with regard to financial prosperity¹² and having to live far from their parents (5.9.3, degamus longe parentum), any veracity is clouded by the sister's superficial and voracious nature which is reinforced in the second sister's laments at 5.10ff. Consistency in the sisters' characterization makes them convincing, memorable, sharply defined and recognizable.

Throughout the first sister's speech, there are many realistic touches which lend verisimilitude to the sisters. Rather than providing the reader with just an outline of the sisters' characters, Apuleius makes his reader aware of their thoughts and provides insight into the sisters by means of their speeches. The exaggerated account of their miserable fates highlights their jealousy which prevents them from appreciating their own prosperity. They are envious of Psyche's possible deification and her divine husband (5.9.6, deam quoque illam deus maritus efficiet), her material wealth (5.9.5, ...quanta in domo iacent et qualia monilia...), and the fact that Psyche is younger than they are, 5.9.4, fetu satiante postremus partus effudit. The reader learns more about their psychological motivation from the points which the sister chooses to address. Her reference to Fortune at 5.9.2, while looking back to Cupid's warning to Psyche at 5.5.2 where he tells her that minatur Fortuna saevior, indicates that the sister feels cheated by powers beyond her control, she is neither in control of her destiny, nor is she to blame for what has happened to her. Their birth rights as the elder sisters (natu maiores, 5.9.3) have been denied them and they resent this.

¹¹ Beauty is a thematic link throughout the narrative, and is key to the jealousy which Venus feels (see Singleton on Venus and beauty).

¹² At 4.32.3, their marriages are depicted as *beatas*. Following this sister's complaints, is the reader now to infer that *beatas* exclusively meant emotional happiness at 4.32.3 or does the sister exaggerate her penury? Apuleius engages in word-play at 4.32.3 with the use of *beatas*; it serves as a pointed contrast with Psyche's emotional state at 4.32.2 if interpreted as "happy", and adds to the irony of this sister's tirade if translated as "wealthy". See footnote 6 also.

She laments that they have been treated as exiles and are forced to live *longe parentum* (5.9.4)¹³. Psyche's sister reveals to the reader her insecurity (possibly an inferiority complex) when she criticizes Psyche for not knowing how to use her wealth properly (5.9.4, *nec uti recte...novit*). Their pettiness is underlined in their concern for the physical appeal of Psyche's husband (5.9.6). A very perceptive psychological touch on Apuleius' part is evident at 5.9.6-7 where, after speculating that Psyche will be made divine if her husband is a god¹⁴, the sister makes an attempt to rationalize what she has just said (*sic est hercules, sic se gerebat ferebatque*, 5.9.6). This sort of behaviour is characteristic of someone who is attempting to justify or excuse poor behaviour. The sister's complaints start with Psyche's wealth, her god husband and her youth. By the end of her speech, however, this sister is so irrational that she mentions that her husband is *patre meo seniorem*, *cucurbita calviorem* and *puero pusilliorem*, a statement which is of no relevance to Psyche's situation, nor has any reference to the size of Cupid's genitals been made¹⁵. The statement does, however, reveal that the sister is motivated by jealousy in connection with youth, beauty and sex, along with material wealth to which she alludes earlier. For her, these are the things which will make her happy and prosperous.

Reinforcement of the sisters' personalities effectively points up the contrasts between themselves and Psyche. The sisters are envious, malicious, greedy and self-centred, whereas

¹³ A touch of irony exists here as at 5.14.1 they fail to visit these same parents and at 5.17.1, they virtually ignore them, *parentibus fastidienter appellatis*.

¹⁴ The sisters' rantings are an effective means of prefiguring the eventual outcome of the story. Their speeches "plant" ideas, such as Psyche's deification, in the reader's mind.

¹⁵ Walsh (1970, p. 204) considers the sisters' dialogue to be "a splendidly amusing dialogue in which they contrast their sister's blessings with their own." Purser (p. lxii), who seems in his introduction to place little value on characterization, incorrectly concludes that "There is nothing remarkable in the way that Apuleius treats of the two sisters, except the quite able rhetorical speech he puts into their mouths, the manner in which they... bully their parents (5.11), and the incorrigible and amusing realism with which the author of the *Metamorphoses* describes the little, old, bald-headed husband of the first...and the rheumatic, gouty, much bepoulticed husband of the second (5.9, 10)."

Psyche is generous, naive, loving towards her family and trusting. The second sister, in an equally venomous tirade, complains about her role as nec uxoris officiosam faciem sed medicae laboriosam personam sustinens (5.10.2). Apuleius adds a realistic touch which heightens the woman's resentment and self-concern at 5.10.2 where she complains that she has to spoil her hands with her husband's fomentis olidis et pannis sordidis et faetidis cataplasmatibus. As with the first sister's speech, there may be some truth to what she says, but the graphic detail about her husband's bandages seems exaggerated; these medicaments do, after all, belong to her spouse and one would assume that she would be willing to do this for him. Self-centredness results in a lack of compassion, and assisting her husband is simply a dreadful task which this woman is compelled to do. She states that they have to endure their lot in life servili ...animo and laments her husband's inability to pleasure her sexually (rarissimo venerem meam recolentem, 5.10.1)16. That sex is a motivating factor for this sister is clear from her immediate pick-up at 5.10.1 on her sister's concluding plaints about a less than satisfactory sex life. Good fortune befalling another is intolerable to her (5.10.3); there is a bitterness present in this sister as though she has been hard done by. This sister demonstrates an equally warped perception of what occurred at the palace (5.10.4-5) and like the first sister, she attempts to justify her desire to harm Psyche by convincing herself and her sibling that they were treated very poorly by the young woman (5.10.6). In a highly ironical manner, which emphasizes the degree to which envy has clouded the sister's judgement, this woman states that Psyche behaved superbe and advoganter (5.10.4) towards them, iactatione inmodicae ostentationis tumentem suum prodiderit animum (5.10.4) and threw them deque tantis divitiis exigua. These very words more effectively depict the sisters themselves, and the application of such expressions to Psyche undermines the sisters' credibility and the veracity of

¹⁶ Kenney (1990b on 5.10.1) notes the play upon Venus as goddess and sexual activity. I wonder whether Apuleius has chosen this expression deliberately to draw the reader's attention to the similarities between Venus and the sisters, not only with regard to their jealousy of Psyche but also in their overwhelming desire to do her harm. Frangoulidis (1994) elaborates upon the intratextual connections between Psyche's sisters and Venus.

the sisters' earlier concern for Psyche. Its impact on the reader is substantial, for along with the first sister's speech, this causes the reader to reassess any original judgement on the sisters' characters. The sister feels justified in her distaste for what she considers mistreatment¹⁷ of elder sisters (*ut par est*, 5.10.6) and at 5.10.6-8 their malevolence and self-concern is exhibited at its height. In addition to vowing arrogantly and enviously to cast Psyche down from her great wealth, the sisters plan to engage in equally deplorable actions which include failing to relate to their grief-stricken parents or anyone else that Psyche is not only alive but living prospetously. Her concern with superficiality and for what others think is exemplified in her illogical statement, *nec sunt enim beati quorum divitias nemo novit* (5.10.8). The once *beatas* marriages which the sisters entered have now become homes which are poor but *plane sobrios*, (5.10.9); so greatly has her emotional state altered her perspective. It also offers psychological insight into this sister, who like her sibling, tries to justify her behaviour (5.10.9, *ad superbiam poeniendam firmiores redeamus*) and make herself feel better after railing so vehemently against Psyche.

The sisters' two speeches characterize them effectively. Their words stress their enviousness and malice towards Psyche. The impact of their emotions is all the more forceful on account of the synonymous characterization of these two women. The malevolent traits of the first sister are reinforced by the statements of the second, whose points of complaint parallel those of the first sister: sex (5.10.1), money (5.10.5ff.) and youth (5.10.9, sciet se non ancillas sed sorores habere maiores). Furthermore, these two characters contrast sharply with the beauty of the palace setting and its analogous servants. The wealth of Cupid's palace incites generosity in Psyche, who wishes to give gifts to her sisters (5.6.5), whereas in her elder siblings it arouses envy and greed (e.g. 5.9.1, etc.). After these speeches, any positive feelings which the reader may have had for the sisters are gone. The reader no longer wonders whether Cupid was correct in warning Psyche

¹⁷ It is only shortly hereafter that we learn that the sisters never did care (5.11.1, simulatos redintegrant fletus).

against her family who had shown themselves previously to be nothing but loyal. Now the reader is left to wonder what terrible fate will befall Psyche, particularly since the speeches have fostered reader sympathy and concern for the girl.

It is only after the sisters' exchange that the narrator overtly refers to them as malis (5.11.1) and indulges in passing judgement on them (ut merebantur). The reader now learns that their mourning, which was once presented as genuine, is feigned, simulatos redintegrant fletus (5.11.1), and that all along the sisters were only pretending to be concerned for Psyche. This is a surprising revelation, as no clues were given by Apuleius in the sisters' behaviour to lead the reader in that direction. The intensity of the sisters' evilness increases dramatically and the language employed by the author to depict both them and their actions is forceful. At 5.11.2, the two women are vesania turgidae and strive to undertake what the narrator terms a dolum scelestum immo vero parricidium. The insidious nature of their plot is accentuated by the narrator's selfcorrection and the use of parricidium suggests that the sisters' plan is not to cast Psyche down from her riches as indicated at 5.10.6, but to kill her. This notion itself and the inconsistency create narrative suspense. The reader, whose expectations are ultimately thwarted, is led astray by the narrator's inclusion of parricidium until the sisters' plan is ultimately revealed at 5.2018. Cupid's address to Psyche at 5.11.3ff., in which he calls her sisters perfidae lupulae and pessimae illae lamiae (5.11.5), contains language applicable to military contexts (comminus congredietur, insidias, armatae). The use of such language, though not always specifically referring to the sisters' traits, and the repeated allusions to their malignity in Cupid's statements, emphasize their vileness, create a foreboding atmosphere and elicit both reader anxiety and sympathy for Psyche.

The build-up in the portrayal of the unpleasant sisters continues by means of an intensely emphatic appellation first by the narrator and then by Cupid. In a sharply defined and effective

¹⁸ Parricidium may even look forward to Psyche's pseudo-death at 6.21.1 where she falls into her Stygian sleep. Without the sisters' interference, Psyche may not have attempted to discover what her husband looked like.

contrast to Psyche who laeta florebat (5.12.1), the once pleasantly attractive sisters have become pestes illae taeterrimaeque Furiae anhelantes vipereum virus (5.12.3), and to such a description the reader brings all the negative associations of Furies. In this manner, the function of characterization, to make a reader feel strongly and in a specific way towards the person being characterized (Elwood, p. 76), is enhanced. The intensity of their hostility is put across in Cupid's description of their actions which again uses military terminology (5.12 4, inimicus...sumpsit arma et castra commovit et aciem direxit et classicum personavit...mucrone destricto). The sisters' hatred is internecivum and the rocks resound with their funestibus vocibus (5.12.6); both expressions are suggestive of death. This is Cupid's final caution to Psyche about her sisters. It is the culmination of warnings which have gradually increased in intensity in a fashion similar to the narrator's increasingly hostile feelings. The threat which Psyche's siblings pose is reinforced by Cupid's use of powerful expressions such as dies ultima, casus extremus and iugulum tuum petunt (5.12.4) which strengthen the reader's belief that it is Psyche who will be destroyed by her sisters' plans, and that jealousy motivates Psyche's siblings. Suspense builds as the reader wonders what sinister plot they will devise to destroy Psyche. The god's words also add a touch of irony to the narrative for the sisters' plans are to bring about Cupid's death, while in reality it is Psyche who suffers the consequences of their proposed action.

The author gradually increases the degree of the sisters' wickedness and brings it to the forefront in such a way to make the sisters believable characters; the reader comes to expect that they will behave in a particular fashion and the two do not fail to disappoint. In a striking image at 5.12.3, the sisters are depicted as breathing viperous poison. As well as heightening their evil nature, the expression forms a thematic link with serpents (with the oracle at 4.33.1 and Psyche's third task at 6.14.4) and foreshadows the lie that the sisters tell Psyche at 5.17.2ff. Prefiguration of the sisters' deaths occurs in Cupid's comparison of them to Sirens *funestis vocibus* leaning forward

from a cliff (5.12.6)¹⁹. The first sister, leaping from the rock whence they had previously been received by Zephyrus, cries out to Cupid and the wind as she plummets to her death at 5.27.3. The second sister dies in a similar fashion (5.27.5).

The sisters' reappearance at 5.14.1 highlights the contrast between their characters and Psyche's naive simplicity. Psyche's delicateness and naïveté (as at 5.11.5, genuina simplicitate...animi tui teneritudine) cause her to want to see her sisters in spite of repeated warnings and she pleads with Cupid to germani complexus indulge fructum (5.13.4). Much of the sisters' characterization functions to point up their wickedness and Psyche's loving and giving nature²⁰, with the result that the reader comes to expect the worst from the pair. They, in a particularly nasty touch, fail to visit their parents (ne parentibus quidem visis, 5.14.1; also 5.17.1 parentibus fastidienter appellatis), whereas Psyche shows genuine sisterly concern in her pleas to Cupid at 5.13. The elder sisters' deceitful cunningness²¹, displayed at 5.14.4-5 in their pretence of joy at the revelation of Psyche's pregnancy, underlines Psyche's guileless nature, and serves an important function of alluding to the identity of Psyche's mysterious husband. Their statement (5.14.5) that should the child be as fair as his parents prorsus Cupido nascetur is the most overt reference to Cupid's identity before Psyche sees him.

¹⁹ In his commentary on 5.12 (p. 55), Beck suggests that this image may have been inspired by an Etruscan vase on which two Sirens are sitting on a cliff and a third casts itself into the sea while Ulysses' boat sails past.

²⁰ I shall discuss Psyche's characterization below and in doing so, will make reference back to the main points which highlight the sisters' evil doings. At this point, I am not going to elaborate upon Psyche's traits.

²¹ Apuleius includes a clever play upon Psyche's rich stores of treasures (first mentioned at 5.2.1) by depicting the sisters as thensaurumque penitus abditae fraudis vultu laeto tegentes (5.14.3). Numerous examples of the cunning nature of the sisters exist: 5.16.5, quam concolores fallacias adtexamus; 5.17.2ff., where they lie to Psyche about her husband's identity; 5.20, they produce a very elaborate and well devised plan; 5.21.1, they immediately depart after saying that they will wait for Psyche.

Apuleius also stresses the sisters' highly agitated state by means of a contrast with Zephyrus' tranquillo spiritu (5.16.1). Their subsequent dialogue at 5.16.2 and attack upon the unsuspecting Psyche at 5.17.2 do not characterize the sisters any further, but reinforce previously presented traits²²: greed (5.16.3, opibus istis quam primum exterminanda est), jealousy (5.16.4, deo profecto denupsit et deum nobis praegnatione ista gerit), malevolence (5.17.2ff.), insincerity (5.17.1, lacrimisque pressura palpebrarum coactis²³) and self-centredness (5.16.4, statim me laqueo nexili suspendam). Realistic elements are included in the sister's speech which make it convincing. Her inability to feel happiness for Psyche leads the sister to suspect that Psyche's husband is divine if she does not know his form (5.16.2-3). This leap in logic is complemented by the same sister's extreme reaction to the possibility of good fortune for Psyche at 5.16.4, when she states that should this be true, she will hang herself. Their attack upon the unsuspecting Psyche at 5.17.2ff. effectively highlights their intense jealousy and its effect upon them. At 5.17.3, the gruesome details given about Psyche's serpentine spouse are menacing, much like the sisters themselves, and this episode introduces a new trait of the sisters. Their plan is clever and well contrived²⁴ as is shown by their reference (5.17.4) back to the oracle of 4.33.1 (saevum atque ferum vipereumque malum) in order to lend credibility to their statements. Psyche, who is still unaware of her husband's identity and very trusting of her sisters, is easily duped by this elaborate and believable ruse. The perniciousness of the plan is augmented by the fact that the deception has been fabricated by her sisters, with whom she has had a loving relationship. Furthermore, the oracle was believed by Psyche's entire family, and her husband, though generous and loving, will

²² Other examples of these traits exist in 5.16ff.

²³ Finkelpearl (1998, p. 97) notes that the expression *lacrimis coactis* is nowhere else used of deceitfully forced tears, and she correctly concludes that the above quoted expression brings out the theatricality of the moment.

²⁴ The deliberateness of the sisters' deception of Psyche highlights the simplicity of Psyche's earlier lies about her husband's identity at 5.8.4-5 and 5.15.4-5. Psyche is so simple that she is unable to remember what she told her sisters the first time (5.15.4).

not even allow her to see him. Consequently, why should she believe what he says over her sisters' pretence of concern? The two women prey upon Psyche's credulity in an attempt to devalue her pleasant living circumstances (5.18.3), while simulating concern for her safety (5.18.2). All of this follows their outlandish allegation that her husband is fattening her up in order to eat both her and the baby, opimiore fructu praeditam devoraturam (5.18.1). Jealousy has caused them to invent such fantastic lies, and, with Kenney (1990b on 5.17.3), one wonders whether the sisters themselves are beginning to believe their fictions.

Ironical self-characterization is employed at length: 5.17.2, pervigili cura rebus tuis excubamus; 5.17.3, socia scilicet doloris casusque tui; 5.18.2, tua cara salute sollicitis; 5.18.3, piae sorores. The influence which Psyche's relatives have been able to exert over her is so immense that they are able to convince her that she has been sleeping with a snake (5.17.3 and 5.18.3), when she must realize that this is not the case. Irony continues in Psyche's address in which she calls them carissimae sorores ...in officio vestrae pietatis permanetis (5.19.1) and at 5.19.4 in her appeal to their earlier assistance, ceterum incuria sequens prioris providentiae beneficia conrumpet. So many ironical statements have the effect of eliciting a strong feeling of disdain for the older siblings and sympathy for Psyche as the victim of their complicity.

The final scene in which the sisters take part prior to their deaths, details the steps necessary to ensure the murder of Psyche's allegedly serpentine husband. So heinous is the crime which they encourage Psyche to commit that the reader wishes them ill. In this segment, 5.19.5-5.21.2, the sisters demonstrate no redeeming qualities. Military diction at 5.19.5 emphasizes the severity of the attack, the deliberateness of it and the sisters' premeditated cunning. The older sisters are facinerosae mulieres (5.19.5), and with destrictis gladiis they attack Psyche's frightened thoughts. Feigning concern for their sister, their true interest lies in acquiring Psyche's riches with which they offer to assist her (5.20.6). The sisters' cowardly behaviour, previously unexampled, is highlighted in their rapid departure to a place far away from the palace for fear (eximie metuentes)

of being near the scene of the crime (5.21.2). As contempt for the sisters and sympathy for Psyche has grown throughout the narrative with every characterizing piece of information about the sisters, their ultimate downfall and deaths at 5.26.2ff. are welcome to most readers.

Even the death scenario of the first sister²⁵ continues to characterize this woman as an envious self-serving individual. She demonstrates her false concern by embracing Psyche (5.26.2, mutuis amplexibus) after deserting her at 5.21.1. The jealousy which drove both sisters to want to see Psyche ruined manifests itself again before Psyche can finish telling her why she has come to visit (5.27.1). As in the previous scene, new traits of the sisters are revealed. The language used to describe her emotions (illa vesanae libidinis et invidiae noxiae stimulis agitata, 5.27.1) casts the reader back to the description of their growing envy at 5.8.2 and 5.9.1 and their heightened emotions at 5.11.2 (vesania turgidae). With lust now motivating her, her overwhelming desire to believe that Cupid wants to marry her causes the older sister to stoop to lying to her husband that her parents are dead (!), rushing protinus to the rock and leaping thence caeca spe...inhians (5.27.1-2). The reader's final impression of the sisters is that they are absolutely despicable characters, for whom no sympathy should be felt. Irony abounds in the fact that the sisters themselves are duped, and that the end result of their deception, designed to bring about Psyche's death, is their own demise. Their violent deaths are warranted, and the graphic description, rather than being upsetting, is welcome to the reader who is relieved that retribution has been taken upon the sisters²⁶.

The death scene also provides the reader with a sense of closure and points up an effective contrast between the differing fates of Psyche and her sisters when they leap from a

²⁵ Frangoulidis (1994, p. 70) states that "With the death of the sisters the earthly obstacle that stands in the way of Psyche's blessedness is ultimately removed." The significance of their deaths in terms of Psyche's character development will be dealt with later.

²⁶ Krabbe adds (p. 95) that "When they plunge to their death (5.27), their end is in keeping with fairy-tale justice. The lie Psyche tells them and the violence of their death are overshadowed by their lust, greed, envy, and malice."

rock. At 4.35.2, Psyche is abandoned on a rock, whence she is carried by Zephyrus to a remarkable palace. The first sister at 5.27.2 rushes to the same rock, hoping for marriage with Cupid, but instead of Zephyrus' gentle breezes another wind is blowing (alio flante vento) and she plummets to her death. Psyche's second sister suffers the same fate (5.27.5). Ring composition is also in evidence by means of the rock; the adventures at the palace started when Psyche was carried from the rock and following the deaths of her sisters, who leap from the same rock, the fantasy life which she led there is over.

The fact that the sisters lack names needs to be addressed. The allotment of a name to a character tells the reader about the character's sex/gender, social status, geographical origin (Bal 1985, p. 84) and may have a bearing upon his/her characteristics. A name is a point around which characterization can take place (Docherty, p. 74). It can serve as a label for a trait or cluster of traits (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 33). Names are also of significance sometimes to the theme of a novel, as is the case with Cupid and Psyche. Brotherton (p. 50) notes that substitutions for proper names, largely in terms of occupation and relationship, are usually applied to incidental characters. This, however, is clearly not the case with Psyche's sisters who have greater narrative significance than some of the other minor characters.

The sisters perform various important narrative functions such as foreshadowing, and pointing up Psyche's dominating trait of simplicity (and other traits to be discussed). From the tale's outset, the sisters are the focus of Cupid's repeated warnings to Psyche. These warnings, along with the sisters' attacks upon Psyche, undermine the girl's happiness and confidence. This brings about a change of character in Psyche whose positive mindset is destroyed by Cupid's departure, for which her sisters are primarily responsible. Their enviousness also serves as a contrast with Psyche's naive happiness. The nebulous setting in which the sisters move from Cupid's palace to their own and their parents' homes helps to sustain the fantasy of the

narrative²⁷. Most importantly, however, they turn the story's plot at a crucial juncture by cajoling their younger sister to attempt murder. This is a critical turning point in Psyche's fortunes, and is the point at which the action of the narrative commences, i.e. the start of Psyche's wanderings. The sisters are present in the narrative to perform this essential role, and once it has been fulfilled, Apuleius kills them off; they are no longer narratively necessary. It is neither essential to attribute names to these characters, nor does the reader need to be provided with much background information about them. In conformity with this, Apuleius keeps direct background characterization to a minimum; all that the reader learns about the sisters is that they are older than Psyche, married to foreigners and beautiful, but less lovely than their sister. Their traits are adequately depicted and reinforced in an indirect fashion by means of self-characterization in dialogue, thoughts, and emotions, as well as characterization by other individuals' statements and opinions, and the occasional narratorial judgement. The inclusion of a name would do nothing to develop them as individuals.

Psyche's sisters are simple and synonymous characters whose dominant trait is jealousy complemented by malevolence. These traits are effectively highlighted in several descriptive clusters throughout the narrative: 5.8.2, copiis affluentibus satiatae praecordiis penitus nutrirent invidiam; 5.9.1, sorores egregiae...gliscentis invidiae felle fraglantes; 5.11.1, comam trahentes ut merebantur ora lacerantes simulatos redintegrant fletus; 5.11.2, vesania turgidae...perfidae lupulae magnis conatibus nefarias insidias...comparant; 5.11.5, illae lamiae noxiis animis armatae; 5.12.3, pestes illae taeterrimaeque Furiae anhelantes vipereum virus; 5.12.6, in morem Sirenum...funestis vocibus saxa personabunt, etc. The two are so similar in their thoughts, actions and speech that it is difficult to distinguish between them. Their likeness accentuates their threatening and pernicious natures

²⁷ The sisters' whereabouts are murky at best. For example, at 5.11.2 the sisters return home. At 5.14.1, they approach the rock *de navibus* whereas at 5.17.1 their action is depicted as *pervolant*. At 5.21.2, a ship is necessary again to depart as it is at 5.27.1, but at 5.26.1 Psyche walks to this same sister's palace.

which are repeatedly stressed in Cupid's warnings to Psyche (as above) and by means of their own behaviour. The cumulative impact of these frequent allusions to malignity is forceful; it invites feelings of dislike for the women and inhibits sympathy for them by the time of their deaths.

Inconsistencies in the sisters' characterization are present as functional devices. The initial portrayal of their sisterly compassion and concern for Psyche and the absence of malicious intent in their actions are necessary for the sisters to establish in their credulous sibling a sense of trust and a familial bond. They are successful in attaining this, as Psyche continues to want to comfort and see her siblings in spite of frequent warnings about the threat which they pose. Furthermore, were the sisters portrayed as evil from the outset, there would be little scope for plot development, suspense and intrigue. The initial depiction of the sisters as loving causes the revelation of their true natures to be all the more forceful because the reader does not suspect it. Apuleius is able to build up the intensity of their enviousness and its destructive consequences by presenting it repeatedly and in various manners (as above on means of characterization). The author also introduces new character traits at various points in the narrative, which make the sisters dynamic characters. Consequently, he creates a vivid and memorable portrait of these mortal villains, who, in addition to pointing up Psyche's more favourable characteristics, arouse in the reader strong feelings of disdain for them and sympathy for Psyche.

Non-Human Minor Characters

Throughout the tale, numerous minor characters are significant to the plot. Minor characters have a single defining attribute which makes them memorable and recognizable (Atchity, p. 109), and which is often supplemented by complementary traits. In my discussion of these characters, I include animals and normally inanimate objects, which, though clearly not

human beings, demonstrate characteristics generally associated with humans and thus, constitute characters (Bal 1985, p. 79 and Prince 1982, p. 71).

Psyche's Incorporeal Servants

The first minor character whom Psyche encounters upon her arrival at the palace is a vox quaedam corporis sui nuda (5.2.3). Its characterization is achieved obliquely by means of its own speech and by narrative concerning the actions undertaken by both it and other similar bodiless characters. This incorporeal voice tells Psyche that what she beholds belongs to her, and that she should rest, bathe and enjoy a refreshing meal. The kindness of Psyche's extraordinary servants is first expressed in the voice's address to the young woman at 5.2.4, where it identifies itself and the other voices as Psyche's attendants and states that they will tend to her sedulo. In this particular instance, unlike the case of the sisters, self-characterization proves to be credible, and the subsequent actions of the servant voices demonstrate their beneficence, diligence and attentiveness. The narrator then informs the reader that the voices provide their guest with a sumptuous meal, nectar-like wine and musical entertainment (5.3.5). The richness of the refreshments and the sound of music, in the absence of either visible person or instrument, enhance the spectacular atmosphere of the scene for which incorporeal servants are apt. The provision of such delights indirectly characterizes the voices as benevolent and concerned for Psyche's well-being; they are providing the girl with the best. Their compassionate care is stressed in their prompt attendance (statim) to the girl after Cupid's first visit, novam nuptam interfectae virginitatis curant (5.4.4), and the voices serve as a solace to her loneliness (5.4.5, sonus vocis incertae solitudinis erat solacium). The voices' characterization reveals that they are ideal servants.

Cupid's household staff extends a warm welcome to Psyche and even to her sisters (5.15.3), whose wickedness remains unmoved by their sweet singing. This final scene in which the

voices appear prior to Psyche's departure from the palace further characterizes them as devoted servants (5.15.2, iubet citharam loqui: psallitur; tibias agere: sonatur; choros canere: cantatur) capable of soothing those in distress (5.15.2, dulcissimis modulis animos audientium remulcebant). Additional emphasis is placed upon the pleasant nature of the voices in the following sentence, 5.15.3, ...illa mellita cantus dulcedine mollita. Their inability to soothe Psyche's wicked sisters with their harmonious strains underlines the vileness of the pair, who persist in wanting to deceive their sister.

The bodiless voices function to complement the pleasant surrounds in which Psyche finds herself. Synonymous with their environment, including both the interior and exterior of the spectacular palace, the voices help make Psyche feel at home and enhance the agreeable atmosphere. Functions vital to the narrative are performed by the voices: they keep Psyche at the palace, they comfort her after intercourse so that Psyche accepts sex (5.4.5), and they counteract the young girl's solitude and fear, which she would likely be feeling upon finding herself in an unfamiliar place. The extraordinary nature of bodiless voices as attendants also parallels Psyche's marvellous surroundings and the mysterious manner in which they are able to accomplish their tasks adds to the palace's overall aura of mystery.

In addition, the voices perform various functions in terms of the characters' behaviour. At 5.8.1, Psyche permits her sisters to listen to the voices after showing them the riches of the palace. The girl's actions suggest that the voices are a source of wonder and delight for Psyche, who may be motivated by pride to point out her servants to her siblings. This results in the voices fostering the jealousy of Psyche's sisters, as do all of Psyche's possessions, and one sister complains that Psyche, voces ancillas habet (5.9.3). Psyche's attendants and the manner in which they treat the girl are also in sharp contrast to Venus' hostile handmaids who first appear at 6.8.5 (to be discussed below). Furthermore, bodiless voices as the palace's domestic staff immediately suggest to the

reader that the owner of the domicile is a divinity. Hence, Apuleius may have selected voices as attendants to offer the reader a clue regarding the proprietor.

The Garrulous Bird

The characterization of the informant tern²⁸, who first appears at 5.28.2, is noteworthy for its vividness. Effected by means of epithets, the bird's actions and verbs employed to denote its activities, the characterization of the bird as a gossip is well developed. The bird finds Venus at Oceani profundum gremium (5.28.2, Kenney 1990b on 5.28.2, "the lowest depths", "a remote bay" of the Ocean), swimming and bathing. The animal, shattering the tranquillity of the picture, proceeds at once to tell Venus that Cupid is injured. Its focus, however, is upon Cupid's allegedly distasteful behaviour and its impact, of which the bird provides a greatly exaggerated account. Its performance as a gossip is memorably portrayed in its initial address to Venus. The bird quickly informs Venus of Cupid's wound, one of two pieces of true information in its address²⁹, and proceeds to convey rumours passing per cunctorum ora populorum (5.28.3). Exaggeration is present in the bird's report of Cupid's injury as it claims that Cupid, who has been burned by stillam ferventis olei (5.23.4), lies gravi vulneris dolore maerentem, dubium salutis (5.28.3). Inaccuracies continue in the gossip's amusing report that Cupid has now withdrawn to "whoring in the mountains" (montano scortatu), and Venus to swimming in the sea. According to the bird everything is uncouth because of the withdrawal of the divinities, and it goes so far as to claim that all there are no marriages, friendships or love for children (5.28.5), but that all is foul. The bird's address to Venus is a splendid portrayal of a gossip, who, after briefly touching upon the

²⁸ The choice of a sea-bird as a gossip and informant for Venus is apt for a goddess born of the sea (4.28.4). For additional links with the sea, see also my chapter on ecphrasis on 4.31. For birds as Venus' attendants, see the ecphrasis at 6.6 (also chapter 2). For arguments supporting a translation of 'tern' for *gavia*, see Arnott, pp. 261-2.

²⁹ The second correct bit of information is the identification of Psyche as Cupid's lover.

truth, recounts all malicious rumours and reproaches, which are completely untrue, and seeks to place blame upon the individual in question for problems whose magnitude is greatly overstated. The bird's gossiping nature is further pointed up in the length of the sentence in which the bird lapses into direct speech (5.28.4-5). Within this sentence, there is an accumulation of unpleasant details about life on land, with one clause tacked on to another, culminating in the bird's final summation that all is ruined. It is in the bird's second direct address to Venus, however, that the reader learns that, true to the nature of a gossip, the bird has saved the juiciest information, the revelation of Psyche's identity, for last.

The lengths to which the bird goes in its prattlings render it a very memorable character, and its false accusations of sexual misconduct on Cupid's part leave the reader with a feeling of distaste, and even dislike, for the bird. The narrator confirms the reader's response to this meddlesome bird's account by describing it as a verbosa et satis curiosa avis (5.28.6, a talkative and very interfering bird) and loquax illa avis (5.28.8, that gossipy bird). Its actions are pointedly portrayed through the use of lacerans existimationem ganniebat³⁰ at 5.28.6, and nec...conticuit at 5.28.8, which implies that the bird could not resist passing on this piece of information. Venus' violent reaction to the bird's information, Venus irata at 5.28.6, further colours reader reaction to the animal.

The most critical piece of information provided by the bird to Venus is that Psyche is Cupid's lover. Its role as a gossip is again effectively played up in its feigned ignorance at 5.28.8, puto...si probe memini, which contrasts with the assertiveness of its earlier statements when recounting every sordid detail of Cupid's behaviour and its impact. The bird's introduction on the heels of Psyche's sisters' deaths, after which the reader hopes for some reprieve for Psyche,

³⁰ This is an unusual image of a bird screeching or speaking in an ill-mannered fashion, and the use of the verb *gannio* aptly captures the spirit of a malicious gossip. This choice of verb is particularly apt for the loud and raucous noise which a sea bird, such as a tern (see *OLD gavia*), actually does make.

makes its characterization as a malicious gossip all the more distasteful. Its function, however, extends beyond that of informant; Venus has been absent from the narrative since her departure for Ocean at 4.31 and the tern, who actively seeks out the goddess, is an effective means of reintroducing Venus to the action, eliciting a strong reaction from her and setting the stage for plot advancement. Its words to Venus cause the deity to abandon her relaxation, depart from the sea and return to her bedroom. It is there that Venus finds Cupid and duly chastises him for not obeying her commands of 4.31.1-3. Had the tern not convinced the goddess, whose insecurity makes her quick to believe its words, Venus may have remained in a state of relaxation for a longer period of time. The bird's words, therefore, play a critical role of rekindling Venus' wrath. The goddess' belief in the animal's gossip unveils Venus' gullibility and naïveté, traits which are more commonly associated with Psyche, and which are stressed at greater length in her encounter with Ceres and Juno (see below).

The portrayal of this sea bird is in stark contrast with the beauty of the ecphrasis at 6.6 where birds are the attendants and conveyors of Venus' chariot. At 6.6 doves and sparrows sing sweetly and joyfully (6.6.2-3, ...dulce cantitant aves melleis modulis suave resonantes...) and share none of the malicious attributes of the tern. I suspect that Apuleius is playing with a reversal in situations between 5.28 and 6.6. At 5.28, Venus is relaxing, while the bird is expressing hostile emotions; at 6.6, Venus is motivated by her anger towards Psyche and her desire to find her, while the birds are joyful and sportive.

Venus' Handmaids

Psyche first encounters Consuetudo after Mercury has made his proclamation at 6.8.2-3. Of Venus' three handmaids, the greatest textual prominence is granted to Consuetudo who vehemently attacks the girl both physically and verbally at 6.8.6ff ('...ancilla nequissima, dominam habere te scire coepisti?'...et audaciter in capillos eius inmissa manu trahebat eam nequaquam renitentem.).

The goddess' servant briefly comes to life in her address to Psyche and remains memorable due to her vicious verbal assault. Consuetudo's immediate appellation of Psyche as ancilla nequissima is incongruous with the reader's perception of Psyche's character, and seems particularly harsh and unwarranted. Apuleius achieves effective characterization by deftly including in the servant's speech such touches as blatant self-concern (...istud quoque nescire te fingis quanto labores circa tuas inquisitiones sustinuerimus, 6.8.6), a sense of self-importance and an air of superiority, which are particularly incongruous with her role as Venus' attendant (6.8.7, Sed bene, quod meas potissimum manus incidisti...). Sollicitudo and Tristities, in compliance with Venus' orders, treat Psyche equally poorly, (6.9.3) ...Psychen misellam flagellis afflictam et ceteris tormentis excruciatam.... The latter two, who do not speak, are characterized exclusively by means of their violent torture of the girl³¹. Consequently, they are present as colourless yet savage entities in order to reinforce both the ferocity shown towards Psyche and the aversion which the reader feels for all three of Venus' attendants. The three handmaids are also characterized by means of their names, and in the case of Sollicitudo and Tristities, the negative associations which a reader brings to them³².

The behaviour of Venus' servants prefigures and parallels the goddess' own harsh treatment of Psyche, as exemplified in her malevolent greeting of the girl at 6.9.1-2, immediately followed by physical violence at her hands (6.10.1). The handmaids' synonymous characterization

³¹ Scazzoso (p. 165), who attempts to draw parallels between Lucius' fate in book 11 and Psyche's situation, argues that the handmaids' torture of Psyche is significant for its connection with mystery rites:

^{.....}nella scelta dei nomi delle ancelle di Venere Apuleio attesta chiaramente l'allegoria; la cosa più interessante da notare è tipo di tormento usato, ossia la flagellazione, che era una pratica preliminare di alcuni riti misterici-bacchici, riguardanti la purificazione.

He does not, however, elaborate upon their characterization in the story.

³² An earlier reference to an unpersonified use of *consuetudo* at 5.4.5, *per assiduam consuetudinem*, has quite another connotation. At this earlier point in the narrative, habit is not a hostile or disagreeable thing as its personified entity proves to be. At 5.4.5, I suspect that it has been employed for its meaning of both habit and "amorous association" (*OLD s.v. consuetudo* 5), the latter of which is clearly not intended at 6.8.5. The introduction of *consuetudo* as one of Venus' handmaids is a clever play, I suspect, upon this earlier example.

reinforces Venus' ill will towards her victim and elicits reader sympathy for Psyche, who, in contrast to these four females, appears to be desperately helpless. *Consuetudo* plays an additional role of foreshadowing Psyche's trials and in particular, her descent to the underworld, when she says to Psyche that she is *inter Orci cancros* (6.8.7), and that she will surely pay the penalty for her great defiance. Shortly hereafter at 6.10.2, Venus assigns Psyche her first task, and at 6.16.3 she is told, *protinus usque ad inferos et ipsius Orci ferales Penates te derige*. The trio also form a pointed contrast with the very accommodating attendants who see to Psyche's needs during her stay at Cupid's palace. The voiceless servants greet her hospitably and provide her with refreshments, a bath and an opportunity to rest (5.2.3ff.). At the doors of Venus' domicile, however, Psyche is accosted, verbally assaulted and subsequently roughed up (6.8.5ff.) by the servants.

The ascription of Consuetudo, Sollicitudo and Tristities as attendants to Venus is unparalleled. Although these three traits are customary tribulations of the lover (Kenney 1990b on 6.8.5 and 6.9.2), their role as servants to the goddess of Love is novel and significant. The allocation of three handmaids to Venus, in addition to reinforcing the malignant treatment which Psyche receives, is apt for the number's association with the divine (OCD³ s.v. numbers, sacred)³³. The three servants also elicit paradoxical behaviour in Venus. Habit, Anxiety and Sadness are not the traits or emotional responses which one would immediately associate with Love, and, in the case of Venus' household, they exhibit immense ferocity and hatred towards Psyche. Furthermore, in response to Consuetudo's behaviour, Venus exhibits a paradoxical response of laughing with her mouth wide open (6.9.1, latissimum cachinnum extollit) and following the torture of Psyche by Sollicitudo and Tristities Venus again laughs heartily (6.9.4, rursus sublato risu), in a seemingly unreasonable response to the situation, and one which emphasizes Venus' nature (to be discussed below).

³³ Scazzoso (p. 165 n. 17) refers to the number three as "numero mistico per eccellenza".

The Compassionate Ant

Psyche is aided in her sorting task at 6.10.2ff. by an ant who takes pity on the girl. Again, Apuleius does not develop this character at length, nor does the overall narrative necessitate the development of a clearly defined character. As with the three subsequent assistants, the ant does not reappear in the narrative once she has helped Psyche. Nevertheless, the author leaves the reader with a memorable and incisive picture of this first helper.

The ant is initially depicted as parvula atque ruricola certa difficultatis tantae laborisque miserta contubernalis magni dei socrusque saevitiam execrata...(6.10.5). This description of the ant as a small country-dweller is in contrast with the divine dwellings34 of the gods with whom Psyche has been dealing. Though only an insect, the ant exhibits more compassion than any of the divinities whom Psyche has encountered since Cupid's departure. The exchange is not exclusively solemn, however, and humour exists in the image of this tiny ant as Psyche's helper. Her small size is stressed through the use of the diminutives formicula and parvula, and yet, in the role of leader, she effectively rounds up an army of ants (6.10.5, discurrens naviter convocat corrogatque cunctam formicarum accolarum classem). The humour is particularly pointed in the contrast between such a tiny assistant and the importance of the god whom the ants are helping (6.10.6, magni dei [i.e. Cupid]). Having grasped the magnitude of Psyche's dilemma, the ant delivers a passionate address to her people at 6.10.6 in which she enlists the aid of her community to help this puellae lepidae and asks them to pity Psyche's plight. In her stately petition, the ant refers to her fellow creatures in lofty heroic terms, calling them the Terrae omniparentis agiles alumnae (6.10.6). As Kenney (1990b on 6.10.6) notes, this expression, as well as the intervention of the ants, may be derived from epic (Verg. A. 6.595 and 4.402-7). The epic tone, therefore, adds to

³⁴ The exact location of Venus' home still remains a mystery. Following her visit to Jove's *regias arces* at 6.7.1, Venus is said to return home at 6.7.5. Psyche reaches Venus' home on foot (6.8.5), but Venus' last appearance at 5.31.7 has her heading in the vicinity of the sea.

the dignified manner of the tiny ant³⁵. The ants' industriousness and high level of organization is effectively played up through the use of military diction in the expression *cunctam formicarum accolarum classem* (6.10.5) and the image of the ants, strikingly called "six-footed peoples", eagerly rushing in waves to assist Psyche, much like little soldiers, *ruunt aliae superque aliae sepedum populorum undae summoque studio* (6.10.7). The dignified language used both by the leader ant and of the ants as a group adds to the colour and wittiness of the scene. This emphasis upon humour, effected by the ants' characterization, is a welcome relief following Venus' hostility and her assignment of a seemingly impossible task to Psyche (6.10.2-3).

The collective action of the waves of ants reinforces the characterization of the single ant as a helpful, compassionate and beneficent animal. Thus far, the individuals whom Psyche has met in Venus' household have exhibited cruelty and subjected her to torment and torture. The ant's kindness, therefore, points up the cruelty of the goddess and her associates³⁶ and fulfils the role of thwarting Venus' desire to see Psyche fail. Reader anxiety for Psyche's safety is also dissipated by the benevolent characters of the ants who, despite their small size, exhibit strength in the face of Venus' anger. Rambaux (p. 187) further adds that of the minor characters whom Psyche encounters "Leur générosité active est d'autant plus frappante que, du fait de leur faiblesse, ils ont beaucoup plus à redouter des représailles de Vénus que Cérès ou Junon." Within the ant's speech, however, is the first clue that Cupid is influencing the behaviour of the

³⁵ Finkelpearl (1998, p. 48) believes that the speech of the ant, a tiny and very active creature, functions to deflate its epic source because it borrows from the description of Tityos, the enormous and stationary son of Gaia who spans nine acres. She concludes that "On the literary level, it demonstrates the fluid tininess of the novel against the static grandeur of epic". Unfortunately, she does not pass any judgement on the effect of this connection on the ant's character.

³⁶ Contrast the ant's manner of referring to Psyche as the *Amoris uxori puellae lepidae* (6.10.6) with the greeting which Psyche receives from *Consuetudo*, who immediately calls the girl *ancilla nequissima* (6.8.6).

animals³⁷, and thus, Psyche's success in completing her subsequent assignments is prefigured by means of the ant's characterization³⁸.

Psyche's Reed Assistant

The reed (harundo viridis) that addresses Psyche at 6.12.2 is described as musicae suavis nutricula leni crepitu dulcis aurae³⁹ divinitus inspirata (6.12.1). The inclusion of words such as suavis, nutricula, leni, dulcis, and divinitus inspirata suggest to the reader that the reed will show kindness and offer aid to Psyche. This is particularly noteworthy through the use of nutricula, a very

³⁷ This is a recurrent motif throughout Psyche's trials. At 6.12.1, the reed is depicted as *divinitus inspirata*, Jupiter's eagle is mindful of Cupid's role in the abduction of Ganymede (6.15.2) and thus aids Psyche. Only during Psyche's katabasis is there is no direct mention of Cupid's aid. By this point in the narrative, however, Cupid's influence has been well established and thus the tower's kindness is not out of context. Cupid's direct intervention at 6.21.2-3 signals that he has been involved in and aware of Psyche's final task. Scazzoso (p. 166) correctly asserts that Psyche's helpers have a symbolic value:

Anche il modo con cui le prove si svolgono reca indiscutibili indizi: gli aiuti divini partono indirettamente da Eros, figura del mistagogo; le formiche, la canna palustre, l'aquila, oltre ad avere ciascuno connaturato un valore simbolico, rapresentano il concetto misterico della providenza nel pericolo, e, da un punto di vista di prassi iniziatica, gli ammonimenti dello Ierofante, che durante la prova sorreggevano e guidavano il mista...

His interpretation of Eros as a mystagogue and of the story as an initiatory rite is beyond the scope of this thesis. I do believe that the four helpers represent the divine influence of Providence, which attempts to aid Psyche in the face of danger.

³⁸ Kenney 1990b on 6.10.5. The ant refers to Psyche as *contubernalis magni dei* (6.10.5) and *Amoris uxori puellae lepidae* (6.10.6). The ant is kindly disposed towards Cupid, and thus the reader anticipates that the ants will be willing to aid his wife.

³⁹ This phrase brings to mind Zephyrus who is compliant with Psyche's wishes and usually offers unwavering assistance to both Cupid and Psyche (cf. his reluctance at 5.14.2). Although the identity of the breeze is not given at this point, the similarities between the earlier descriptions of Zephyrus and this reference to a sweet and gentle breeze are noteworthy (cf. 4.35.4, mitis aura molliter spirantis Zephyri, see also the analysis of Zephyrus' character below for additional line numbers). The agent which divinely inspires this reed (6.12.1, divinitus inspirata) is Cupid, one would assume, on account of his presence during Psyche's first trial. Throughout the story so far, Zephyrus has been the kind-hearted wind associated with the lovers (note in particular that he is the wind which rescues Psyche and delivers her to Cupid's palace, presumably upon Cupid's orders, 4.35.4). Therefore, this allusion to Zephyrus may be deliberate in order to reinforce the idea that Psyche will be successful in completing this labour, now that she has the combined forces of Cupid and Zephyrus working on her side.

unusual way to describe a reed, and a word which brings with it associations of loving care. This unusual assistant addresses the girl, and to underline the importance of its words and the notion of divine influence, Apuleius employs the verb vaticinatur (6.12.1)⁴⁰. The elevated tone continues as the reed refers to its waters as sanctas and demonstrates human-like compassion by advising her against suicide and calling Psyche's death miserrima (6.12.2). The reed's character is also conveyed by means of its eloquent and lofty expression. Its opening address to Psyche is carefully structured and balanced (Psyche tantis aerumnis exercita, 6.12.2) and there is a build-up in the importance of what the reed is saying, culminating in its instructions. For example, the accumulation of particulars heightening the fearsomeness of the sheep (6.12.2-3), initially depicted only as formidabiles, demonstrates the reed's emphatic style of speech (note also non numquam)⁴¹. The reed is not, however, without a sense of self-importance, and perhaps, a slight degree of arrogance. The forceful picture of man-eating sheep created by the reed renders its words of counsel even more important to Psyche and allows its kindness to be highlighted by

Apuleius by Ovid's account of Midas at Met. 11.190-3 where the reeds, stirred by the breeze, repeat buried words. Kenney also concedes that a connection with Pan may be significant. I suspect that Apuleius is playing upon both the idea of the reed rustling in the breeze as talking and the reed's association with Pan (creation of pipes at Ov. Met. 1.689-712; Midas, 11.146ff.) who earlier in the narrative, demonstrated humane behaviour towards Psyche (5.25.3ff.). Note also the link with Psyche's last task and divine influence, where the tower's task is called vaticinationis munus (6.20.1). Walsh (1970, p. 214) believes that "the popularity of 'human' reeds in love romances tempts us to believe that Apuleius drew his influence from there", and cites Longus (2.34) and Achilles Tatius (8.6.7) as evidence. Sandy (1994, p. 1528) argues against Walsh's contention, claiming that the two passages, which have more in common with Ov. Met. 1.690-712, are aetiological in nature and that "the Quellenforschung method tells us once again ... that the theme of a talking reed was an element of common cultural experience and that a number of authors for one reason or another found it appropriate at a given point in their own, unrelated literary efforts".

⁴¹ The sheep truci rabie solent efferari cornuque acuto et fronte saxea et non numquam venenatis morsibus in exitium saevire mortalium (6.12.3). The careful build-up in detail about these ferocious animals shows the reed's rhetorical ability.

offering Psyche the opportunity to relax secretly along with it under the shade of a plane tree⁴². The inclusion of *latenter* (6.12.4) in the reed's speech demonstrates its desire to make conspicuous its own power and stress that, in spite of the rabid behaviour of these savage animals, it can resolve Psyche's plight.

This characterization of a normally inanimate object is unusual⁴³ and memorable. The reed's actions are complemented by the narrator's assessment of it at 6.13.1 with the phrase harundo simplex et humana. Apuleius' application of simplex to the reed may be picking up on the more common application of this adjective to Psyche (e.g. 6.15.3). Yet, contrary to Kenney's interpretation of simplex as "laudable frankness" in the context of the reed versus Psyche's "culpable simplicitas" (6.13.1), I feel that the reed's kindness and compassion is similar to that of Psyche's character, and by means of the use of simplex, Apuleius may be pointing the reader in that direction.

The reed performs a vital narrative function of preventing Psyche's third suicide attempt (see 5.22.3-4 and 5.25.1). As with the ant, the reed amplifies Venus' ferocity and brings about the completion of another task by advising Psyche on how to obtain the wool. This in turn fuels

⁴² See Hoevels p. 189f. for the plane tree's association with the reed and the pair's presence in bucolic poetry. Hoevels sees a link between the reed and Psyche's encounter with Pan at 5.25. He states:

^{...}Sie [Die Platane] ist deswegen der hervorragendste Baum der griechischen Bukolik, weil sie an den seltenen und gerne aufgesuchten Quellen des trockenen Arkadien wächst und dort den Hirten Schatten bietet. Deshalb ist natürlich auch das Rohr mit ihr vergesellschaftet, aus dem sich Hirtenflöten schneiden lassen. So muss der Abschnitt über die zweite Aufgabe, die ja schon durch die Schafe der bukolischen Welt zugeordnet ist, als Parallele der Panszene gelten, in der der gute, ebensfalls in die Nähe der Weissagung gerückte Rat von dem hircuosus deus kommt, während das Rohr dafür göttlich inspiriert ist.

He also acknowledges (p. 189) a connection between Pan and the reed, here representing Syrinx, the nymph beloved by Pan and who was transformed into a reed. Herrmann (1952, p. 80) emphatically declares that this reed "fut jadis Syrinx", but fails to elaborate upon an association with Pan. If the reed has any connection with Syrinx, the myth of her transformation complements this motif throughout the entire novel. If Apuleius intended for these links between Pan's appearance and Psyche's third task to exist, they add structural unity to the narrative and significance to Pan's unexpected appearance. See also below on Pan.

⁴³ The reed's ability to speak directly to someone seems to be novel.

Venus' anger, prompting the assignment of a yet more difficult enterprise and thus moves the plot forward.

The Regal Eagle

Jupiter's eagle offers assistance to Psyche in her third task of obtaining water from a mountain summit. The narrator describes the bird as *supremi lovis regalis ales ...rapax aquila* (6.15.1). This lofty appellation creates an image of an important creature whose affiliation with the sovereign deity evokes great power and authority. Consequently, the reader expects the eagle to exhibit dignified behaviour commensurate with the narrator's description. The inclusion of the adjective *rapax* in this first sentence underlines the power of a predatory bird and looks forward to the eagle's function as the conveyor of water in Psyche's third task (*OLD* s.v. *rapax* 1). Although he is a "rapacious" eagle, he is mindful of Cupid's potentially harmful power (*deique numen in uxoris laboribus percolens*, 6.15.2). The fearful respect, therefore, which the eagle feels is subtly conveyed through the use of *percolens*.

In the role of Jupiter's regalis ales, the eagle, himself a servant, humorously exhibits a haughty and condescending demeanour when he first brusquely addresses Psyche, At tu simplex alioquin et expers rerum talium (6.15.3). The bird's arrogance is emphatically evinced when tells the girl that although gods fear these waters, he will fill the pitcher which Venus has given her (6.15.4-5). Like the reed, the eagle emphasizes the significance of his help by offering Psyche a frightful account of the water (6.15.3, sanctissimi nec minus truculenti fontis...). In spite of the danger, he curtly orders Psyche to hand over the little pitcher, sed cedo istam urnulam (6.15.5).

Once the eagle approaches the water, however, the reader becomes aware that he has truly put himself out for Psyche. The bird bravely dares to fly between *genas saevientium dentium* et trisulca vibramina draconum (6.15.5), and in spite of the waters' warnings (6.15.6, ut abiret innoxius praeminantes), he heroically continues his quest. He even demonstrates cunning as he

invents the pretence that he is obtaining the water ob iussum Veneris petere eique se praeministrare (6.15.6). The latter comment adds an ironical touch since Psyche herself is worshipped as Venus at the tale's outset (4.28.3). His fib and the fact that in order to obtain the desired water⁴⁴, even he has to resort to lying is a comical twist on the bird's earlier portrayal as an upright, powerful creature who holds a significant post as Jupiter's attendant. Nevertheless, the eagle's feat does characterize him as a caring, spirited and ingenious bird.

Throughout this episode the reader is aware of the factors motivating the bird to behave as he does. At 6.15.1, before the eagle's appearance, Apuleius informs us that *Providentia[e] bona[e]* is at work⁴⁵. Additional motivation is supplied with the explanation that the eagle is *memorque* veteris obsequii, quo ductu Cupidinis Iovi pocillatorem Phrygium substulerat...deique numen in uxoris laboribus percolens... (6.15.1)⁴⁶. The inclusion of this information predisposes the reader to anticipate a favourable reaction to Psyche's dilemma from the eagle, as proves to be the case. Consequently, the eagle's initial inflated self-image becomes all the more farcical.

More actively involved in a dangerous activity than the other three helpers (i.e. he is solely responsible for moving the action of the plot), the eagle has to go to lengths which point up the magnitude of the task facing Psyche. The ferocity of the eagle's nature (6.15.1, rapax) is in direct contrast with his treatment of Psyche; one would expect a predatory bird to be ferocious, but instead he is moved by Psyche's plight. Further contrasts also exist between the character of

⁴⁴ The water and the sheep are both described with the adjective *formidabiles* (6.12.2 and 6.15.4). Apuleius may have repeated this adjective to accentuate that the water is equally formidable to man-eating sheep; a point which may not immediately come to mind.

⁴⁵ Both Kenney (1990b on 5.3.1) and Rambaux (p. 187) identify *Providentia* with Isis, and mark the direct intervention of the divine in this episode.

⁴⁶ Kenney (1990b on 6.15.2) draws attention to the now explicit intervention of Cupid. The eagle's actions (percolens) look back to Pan's advice to Psyche at 5.25.6 (Cupidinem deorum maximum percole), where the reader is given the first clue that Cupid is in the background throughout Psyche's ordeals.

Jove's eagle and the informant tern of 5.28, who proves to be a malicious and destructive individual.

The eagle's main function in the narrative is to keep Psyche alive. At 6.14.1, he hampers the success of her fourth suicide attempt. As a servant of Jupiter, he maintains his servile role as a pawn of the gods and ensures that Psyche achieves her goal when the magnitude and impossibility of the task facing her (6.14.6) overwhelm her.

The Kind-Hearted Tower

The tower⁴⁷, from which Psyche planned to leap at 6.17.2, shows concern for Psyche's fate and warns her against attempting to take her life for the fifth time. Although the tower's role as Psyche's helper in her most threatening task is its primary function in the narrative, Apuleius still creates a memorable character. He achieves this first by having the tower talk and second, by endowing it with a remarkable degree of feeling and knowledge. Furthermore, the extraordinary attention to detail shown by the tower stresses its remarkable nature. With compassion⁴⁸ equal to that exhibited by the previous three assistants, it recounts every step that Psyche must take in order to overcome every obstacle (how to pass by Cerberus safely, not to eat what Proserpine offers, etc.), thus ensuring a safe return from the underworld⁴⁹. As a final caution, the tower explicitly warns Psyche not to open the box of divine beauty which she has been sent to retrieve

⁴⁷ Lamarque (p. 65ff.) makes note of the same examples of talking doors etc. as Purser does on 6.17 (see footnote 51), as well as the Aristophanic parallel of leaping from a tower as the most direct route to Hades (*Frogs*). After citing the literary predecessors upon which Apuleius may have drawn, he proceeds to offer a highly speculative (in my opinion) theory that Apuleius looked instead to Zoroastrianism and its *dakhmas*, "Tours du Silence" (!) as a source of inspiration for the talking tower at 6.17.

⁴⁸ Note the tenderness with which it addresses Psyche at 6.17.3, misella.

⁴⁹ The tower's instructions to Psyche to go to Taenarus (6.18.1) is, according to Harrison (1998, p. 68) a clue that Apuleius is being influenced not only by the *Aeneid* but also by Orpheus' descent to the underworld, *Georgics* 4.467, *Taenarias...fauces*. See further my chapter 4 on Psyche's character.

(6.19.7). In an ironic twist, the genuine concern for Psyche's well-being demonstrated in the thoroughness of its instructions, rouses the girl's insatiable curiosity which causes her to disobey its directives. In addition to underlining Psyche's *curiositas*, the tower's lengthy and explicit account, from which nothing is omitted, points to divine [Cupid's] intervention. The narrator reinforces this notion at 6.20.1 where the application of *prospicua* to the tower and the designation of its task as *vaticinationis* clearly indicate that it is conveying the precepts of a yet unidentified power.

The tower's instructions have an immediate impact upon Psyche; its kind words fortify her inner strength, cause her to reconsider suicide and dare to attempt the prescribed descent to the underworld. In a bid to discourage Psyche's plans to die, the tower exhibits extraordinary learning about the separation of the body and soul and its fate upon death (6.17.4). Within the tower's directives, Apuleius has inserted another striking aside at 6.18.6 which characterizes the structure as possessing moral rectitude, ergo et inter mortuos avaritia vivit nec Charon ille Ditis exactor tantus deus quicquam gratuito facit. This statement is superfluous to the advice that the tower is giving Psyche, yet is a realistic touch which makes it a more believable character.

Humour abounds in the structure's characterization. The most amusing aspect of this helper's character is its ability to feel so compassionately for Psyche. It is in fact so keenly perceptive that at 6.17.2-3, without any words being said, it knows that Psyche plans to commit suicide. Stone is employed customarily to convey the absence of feeling⁵⁰, yet this tower is remarkable for its humanity⁵¹. Kenney (1990b on 6.17.2) dismisses the tower's assumption of the

⁵⁰ See Murgatroyd 1980 on Tib. I.1.63-4 for references to ancient authors.

⁵¹ Kenney (1990b on 6.17.2) aptly refers to the tower as "impressionable and communicative masonry". He does, however, have difficulty accepting that the tower can respond to Cupid's power, as it is not a living thing. Its personification should be viewed rather as an indication of the potency of Cupid's force. Purser on 6.17 rightly draws attention to comparisons made between the tower and talking doors at Catullus 67 and Propertius 1.16, and the wall which is addressed in the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe (Ov. *Met.* 4.73).

role of cicerone as a piece of "gratuitous pleasantry". The ability, however, of a stone structure not only to talk but also to feel and convey very detailed information concerning something about which it can have no first-hand experience has real point and humour. As mentioned above, the attribution of the trait of probity to the tower, as indicated in its aside at 6.18.6, heightens the wittiness of its characterization.

Zephyrus

Several divinities also appear as minor characters in the narrative to whom various functions, ranging from mechanical to pointing up humour in the story, are ascribed. Zephyrus is the first divinity encountered, and although he remains dumb throughout the narrative, he is characterized effectively by means of authorial description and by his own actions in his brief narrative appearances. The reader's first impression of Zephyrus is favourable; the wind is depicted as mitis aura molliter spirantis Zephyri...suo tranquillo spiritu. Emphasis is placed upon his dominating trait of gentleness (mitis, molliter, sensim, tranquillo spiritu, paulatim, leniter) as he places Psyche in the grassy turf surrounding Cupid's palace. Synonymous with the pleasant environment, kind-hearted Zephyrus ensures the girl's safety during the descent into the valley. This important first impression of the wind has an immediate impact upon the reader and causes him to be well-disposed towards it. The initial emphasis upon his dominant characteristic of gentleness, which is repeatedly stressed throughout the tale, adds to the agreeable atmosphere and suggests that Psyche will be looked after in her mysterious surrounds. This sudden shift from what the reader anticipates will be Psyche's death on the mountain top, to a tension-diffusing scene in which tenderness is played up is surprising. Zephyrus' role as aid to Psyche's divine, but as yet unknown rescuer, is critical to the plot's progression.

Apuleius' choice of Zephyrus for Cupid's servant plays upon earlier literary examples of the wind's connection with lovers and most notably, his role as conveyor. Kenney (1990b on 4.35.4) draws attention to Boreas' abduction of Orithyia (Pl. *Phdr*. 229b-c, A.R. 1.212-215, Ov. *Met*. 7.702-10), stating "That Zephyrus should be given the task of carrying her off would not surprise readers conversant with the stories of Boreas and Orithyia". More pointed associations exist, however, at Ov. *F*. 5.201-4, where an amorous Zephyrus is the pursuer, and at Call. fr. 110.51-9 and Catul. 66.51-8, where Zephyrus conveys the lock of hair and places it in Cypris' lap. Kenney also notes that Zephyrus is Eros' father at Alcaeus fr. 327 L-P. Apuleius develops these earlier literary examples, particularly I suspect the Callimachean and Catullan examples where Zephyrus himself transports the beloved lock of hair. Zephyrus' role as Cupid's servant is unique to Apuleius, but is greatly enhanced by the wind's previous associations with lovers.

The reader's first impression of Zephyrus as a peaceful individual continues throughout the narrative. Each point⁵² at which the wind is characterized highlights its loyalty initially to Cupid and then to both Cupid and Psyche. At 5.6.8, the reader learns conclusively that Zephyrus is the palace owner's servant, and will transport Psyche's sisters there in order that the girl might be comforted. The fact that Zephyrus, the palace owner's servant, becomes Psyche's servant indicates that he considers her to be mistress of the palace. Zephyrus' allegiance to Psyche is exhibited at 5.7.4, where he obeys her command and dutifully brings her sisters statim clementissimis flatibus innoxia vectura. Zephyrus is keenly aware of the sisters' vile and two-faced characters after their speeches at 5.9ff. In spite of this, his deferential role, from which he never deviates, constrains him to carry the sisters to the palace, albeit reluctantly at 5.14.2, quamvis invitus, susceptas eas gremio spirantis aurae solo reddidit. The wind's reluctance to carry them underlines their insidious natures, and suggests to the reader that the sisters are coming to destroy Psyche. It also parallels and reinforces Cupid's reluctance on two occasions. After warning Psyche about her siblings, Cupid hesitates before giving in to his wife's wishes and

⁵² Zephyrus is also mentioned at 5.7.4, 5.8.5, 5.13.2, 5.17.1, 5.21.2, and 5.26.7. No additional characterization takes place at these points where Zephyrus is said simply to carry someone. His willingness to obey orders, however, characterizes him as a dutiful servant.

loving words at 5.6.10 and 5.13.6, and instructs Zephyrus to bring Psyche's sisters to the palace. Furthermore, Zephyrus' disinclination to carry the sisters looks forward to his refusal to do so at 5.27.2.

Zephyrus' role in the narrative as Cupid's loyal servant prevents him from making choices about the individuals whom he brings to the palace. His unbending character allows Psyche the freedom to make her own choices and mistakes; he cannot prevent the arrival of evil in Cupid and Psyche's home as he is ever mindful of his servile status (5.14.2, nec immemor Zephyrus regalis edicti). In Zephyrus' next appearance, a contrast is again drawn between his gentleness and the sisters' wickedness. Zephyrus tranquillo spiritu (5.16.1) carries the two women who immediately start to rail against Psyche. The contrast between his character and that of the sisters subtly colours reader reaction to the women and reinforces their negative qualities. At 5.27.2, however, Zephyrus' allegiance to Psyche brings about a surprising change in his role. The formerly gentle conveyor refuses to blow, alio flante vento, and disregards the sister's command "suscipe dominam", whereby he makes himself an accomplice to her murder. His reluctance to bring the sisters to the palace at 5.14.2 (quamvis invitus....gremio spirantis aurae) sets the stage for character change by revealing his emotions and showing him in possession of traits other than immediate compliance. This final incident at 5.27.2 highlights most emphatically his devotion to both Cupid and Psyche and underlines the powerlessness and wickedness of the sisters.

Analogies exist between Zephyrus⁵³ and the servants of the palace. The extraordinary bodiless voices whom Psyche encounters at 5.2.3 exhibit comparable kindness and gentleness towards Psyche. Their remarkable characters and ability to perform countless tasks complement the spectacular nature of Zephyrus who carries individuals about on command. Zephyrus' characterization also adds to the sense of otherworldliness which Cupid's palace has. Similarities

⁵³ Zephyrus is overtly referred to as a slave at 5.6.8, tuo famulo Zephyro and 5.13.2, Zephyro nostro.

can also be detected between Zephyrus' foreknowledge of the sisters' malevolence and the cognizance of Psyche's later assistants concerning her plight and its gravity.

Zephyrus' primary role in the narrative is to convey the sisters both to and from the palace⁵⁴, regardless of their intent or his feelings towards them. Critical to the plot development on account of his functionalism, the wind performs several notable functions: his initial conveyance of Psyche to Cupid's palace, without the arrival of whom there could be no story; the essential arrival and departure of the sisters upon whom much of the plot turns at this point; his loyalty which results in a lack of interference, allowing for the consequences of Psyche's demands to be felt and the fulfillment at 5.27.2 and 5.27.5 of her sisters' deaths.

Zephyrus is not fully developed as a character for several reasons. The absence of a fully disclosed personality fits his role as a mysterious, invisible servant who lacks physical form. This, in turn, suggests that if the palace should have such a kind-hearted and extraordinary servant, its owner must be a god. Hence, it provides another clue to the reader about the proprietor's identity. Zephyrus, although very functional, is not very important to the plot, and therefore minimal characterization is required.

<u>Pan</u>

Pan's role in the narrative is both functional and comical. Immediately following Psyche's first abortive attempt at suicide, she encounters Pan sitting with the nymph Echo on the banks of the very river which refused to allow Psyche to drown. At 5.25.5 Pan, who mysteriously knows what has happened to the young girl⁵⁵, directly addresses Psyche. He encourages her to remain

⁵⁴ At 4.35.4 Zephyrus brings Psyche to the palace; 5.7.4 brings sisters to the palace; 5.8.5 carries sisters from the palace; 5.14.2 conveys sisters to the palace; 5.16.1 from the palace; 5.17.1 to the palace; 5.21.2 from the palace.

⁵⁵ Cf. Zephyrus' ability to know that Psyche's sisters will bring harm, hence his reluctance at 5.14.2; the ant at 6.10 realizes the magnitude of Psyche's dilemma; the reed at 6.12.2 knows that Psyche is *tantis aerumnis exercita*; the eagle is aware that Venus has assigned the third task (6.15);

hopeful, to make supplication to Cupid⁵⁶ and performs his critical primary function of telling Psyche not to try to kill herself⁵⁷. Kenney (1990b on 5.25.3-6) notes Pan's significance as a lover's helper in *Daphnis and Chloe*, and adds (5.25.4) that the planting of Pan at this juncture signals that Providence, Cupid, is at work here as throughout Psyche's trials. Herrmann (1952, p. 19) explains Pan and Echo's presence in terms of Venus' revenge against the god,"...I'amour de Pan pour Echo était attribué à une vengeance de Vénus contre le dieu coupable d'avoir vaincu Adonis." He views Pan's role in the narrative as almost insignificant, except to give her ridiculous advice ("un conseil absurde", see also n. 56). Schlam (1992, p. 95) suggests that the god's presence may be a deliberate Platonic reminiscence, the introduction of whom "may reflect his role as teacher and mystagogue in the circle of Dionysus, as well as recall the prayer addressed to Pan by Socrates at the close of the *Phaedrus* (279B)."

Contrary to the opinions of both Kenney and Herrmann, I believe that Pan plays a significant role in the narrative and he is not just, as James (1987, p. 155) would have it, "a benign comforter". His advice to worship Cupid in prayer is not the route pursued by Psyche and

the tower at 6.17.3 somehow knows the landscape of the underworld; Ceres and Juno are cognizant of Venus' plight at 5.31.3. These points add to the aura of mystery and otherworldliness present throughout the tale.

ssistance indicates "an ungodlike ignorance of the true state of affairs." She goes on to speculate whether Pan's speech is designed to make him "a figure of fun, a rustic god indeed who...misreads Psyche's plight." Following this statement she adds that Pan is aware of Psyche's circumstances and that prayer to Cupid is normal procedure for someone in her predicament (p. 154, see also 1988, p. 118). The reader, however, is informed of the fact that Pan is aware of what is going on before he speaks (5.25.4, utcumque casus eius non inscius). James adds (p. 154) that Psyche sets out as a suppliant and is forced to address him in prayer, but fails to note that Psyche never does supplicate Cupid. She states (p. 154) that "Venus is the 'Love' whom Psyche must seek out as the sole avenue to her husband." It is possible, however, that if Psyche had heeded Pan's advice she may have been successful in her quest as ultimately it is Cupid who intervenes to rescue her. Psyche's failure to follow instructions points up the girl's simplicity.

⁵⁷ Pan's advice not to commit suicide *praecipitio* (5.25.6) looks forward to Psyche's suicide attempt at 6.17.2, where she prepares to leap from a tower. For a possible link with Psyche's third task see footnote 47.

consequently its effectiveness cannot be measured and therefore does not merit the designation "absurde" given by Herrmann. Kenney's assertion that Pan signals that Providence is at work here is mistaken. In the preceding scene (5.24), Cupid, who is upset that Psyche has disobeyed him, has abandoned her as punishment. Therefore, it is very unlikely that Cupid would be working behind the scenes already. The fact that Pan is represented here with Echo adds a touch of irony to his assumption of the role of a praeceptor amoris, for Pan, in addition to being unable to give Psyche sound advice here, is often represented as unsuccessful in his pursuit of Echo⁵⁸. The god's association with savage love creates additional irony. Borgeaud (p. 122) states that "Par la médiation de Pan, les pouvoirs d'Aphrodite se trouvent donc situés dans un espace où leur finalité ultime (l'union conjugale) est niée", whereas both Cupid and Psyche are in pursuit of a higher love, which culminates in their marriage at 6.24. Pan's dominating traits of kindness and compassion, however, emphasized even before he speaks⁵⁹, cause the reader to respond favourably to him. Much stress is placed upon his rusticity⁶⁰, which makes Pan both amusing and endearing to the reader on account of his countrified simplicity. As a result of his characterization, the reader is inclined to believe that he is giving Psyche good counsel which will render her quest successful, thus raising our hopes for the couple's reunion. Pan's compassion towards Psyche also serves to underline by contrast Cupid's anger in the preceding scene. Consequently, Pan's role as a red herring has greater impact than has been recognized by critics.

 $^{^{58}}$ For references to the numerous myths, see Kenney (1990b on 5.25.3-6) and Borgeaud, p. 124-5.

⁵⁹ 5.25.4, clementer ad se vocatam sic permulcet verbis lenientibus. Pan's numen is also depicted as salutari at 5.26.1. This further accentuates his beneficence, and simultaneously points up the irony of the scene.

⁶⁰ At 5.25.3 Pan is described as deus rusticus; at 5.25.4 as hircuosus deus; and at 5.25.5 he refers to himself as sum quidem rusticanus et upilio.

His introduction to the narrative alleviates the tension created by Cupid's departure at 5.24; he keeps Psyche alive, and adds much humour to the narrative.

Several effective contrasts are created by the insertion of Pan's address to Psyche at 5.25. Psyche's loss of love at 5.24 contrasts with the tenderness shown by Pan to Echo, Pan...complexus Echo and the simple fact that the lovers are together. Moreover, the portrayal of a gentle river and kids frolicking in the green grass while Pan, at ease and unconcerned, teaches Echo to sing61 adds a sense of tranquillity to this agreeable setting. Not only does this scenario diffuse the tension created by Cupid's departure, but it also contrasts sharply with Psyche's devastation and loss, as well as with the following scene in which Psyche devises a plot to murder her sisters. A final contrast occurs between Psyche's failure to follow Pan's advice and her compliance with instructions given by the reed, eagle and tower. Psyche's disobedience, while pointing up her own foolishness, humorously undercuts Pan's powers⁶². His self-professed powers of perception at 5.25.5, verum si recte coniecto, quod profecto prudentes viri divinationem autumant are insignificant, for Psyche's appearance and behaviour makes her condition of being in love so obvious that his alleged power of divination is nothing but comical. The humour is played up further by Pan's prefacing his address with the depreciatory self-characterization sum quidem rusticanus et upilio (5.25.5). Pan's connection with the erotic life of Arcadia and sexuality (see Borgeaud, pp. 115f.) makes his calling Cupid an adolescentem delicatum luxuriosumque (5.25.6) comical. He does, however, acknowledge Cupid's might with the designation deorum maximum (5.25.6), which suggests that Pan is fully aware of the god's power and that his advice to Psyche should have

 $^{^{61}}$ Apuleius may be adding an ironic twist on Longus III.23 where Pan is jealous of Echo's musical talents.

 $^{^{62}}$ Apuleius gives mocking portrayals of most of the divinities in this story. This is generally believed to have been done as a rejection of the conventional gods and in order to stress Isis' power.

been followed. Cupid's identification as the greatest of the gods also looks forward to his intervention which saves Psyche at 6.21.3.

Like Zephyrus, Pan, who remains predominantly functional, is not a rounded-out character. The rustic god possesses a dominant trait of kindness, complemented by compassion. These characteristics suffice to portray the divinity in order for him to fulfil his functions in the story, hence his lack of development as a personality.

Ceres and Juno

Humour continues in Apuleius' characterization of both Ceres and Juno. Walsh (1970, p. 218) states that "At the divine level Ceres and Juno are [likewise] wittily drawn, playing out their parts as embarrassed neutrals caught between their fear of Cupid and their obligation to Venus". Their first appearance occurs at 5.31 where they encounter Venus in a rage. Characterization of the goddesses occurs obliquely and the reader is left to infer what traits they possess from their discussion with Venus. Throughout the dialogue, it is unclear which goddess is speaking. Like Psyche's sisters, the two deities are synonymous characters and thus, it is unnecessary to draw a clear distinction between them here. Psyche's subsequent encounter with each goddess individually in book 6, reinforces their complementary natures.

The goddesses' placatory question of greeting to Venus at 5.31.1, which emphasizes her great beauty ...visamque vultu tumido quaesiere cur truci supercilio tantam venustatem micantium oculorum coerceret, demonstrates their friendliness towards her. In order to mollify Venus' fury (5.31.3...palpare Veneris iram saevientiam...), the pair calmly make an appeal to the goddess' common sense (5.31.5, mulier cordata), and remind her that Cupid is only behaving as she would. The reader's first impression of Ceres and Juno is that they are collected, compassionate and kindly disposed towards Venus. Their words of consolation, however, do little to comfort Venus as they comically contain open flattery of Cupid (5.31.3, quid tale, domina, deliquit tuus filius ut

animo pervicaci voluptates illius impugnes et, quam ille diligit, tu quoque perdere gestias?; 5.31.4, quod aetatem portat bellule; 5.31.5, formonso filio; 5.31.7, blandiebantur). In spite of knowing what has transpired between Cupid and Psyche (5.31.3, tunc illae non ignarae quae gesta sunt)63, the goddesses' initial feelings of consolation for Venus are transferred to Cupid and Psyche, as they refer to Psyche as a puellae lepidae and question Venus whether Cupid puer tibi semper videtur? (5.31.4). The two, who show themselves to be lacking tact, repeatedly point out what should be, but is not, obvious to Venus; Cupid has grown up, he needs to be treated as an adult, love affairs should not be condemned by a person like Venus, and they conclude at 5.31.6, quis autem te deum, quis hominum patietur passim cupidines populis disseminantem cum tuae domus amores amare coerceas et vitiorum muliebrium publicam praecludas officinam?64 This lack of discretion is most pronounced in their attempt to draw to Venus' attention her over-reaction to Cupid's affair; they humorously and inappropriately bring up points which Venus perceives as an affront, namely her role as Cupid's mother (5.31.5, mater autem tu...) and reference to her own numerous love affairs (5.31.5, ...amores revinces et tuas artes tuasque delicias...reprehendes). The platitudes which Apuleius puts into the mouths of Ceres and Juno⁶⁵ are an attempt on their part to underline that Venus need not behave so violently, rather than deliberate insults levelled at the goddess. Yet, by pointing out to Venus that she is behaving unreasonably, the two goddesses draw attention to the comedy of

⁶³ This is another example of divinities being aware of the situation (cf. Pan's knowledge at 5.25). Perhaps in this case, the reader is to infer that the garrulous bird who informs Venus of Psyche's identity at 5.28, has also broadcast rumours to the other gods.

⁶⁴ Kenney (1990b on 5.31.6) says of vitiorum muliebrium publicam...officinam "this is open mockery". I suspect that this statement could be perceived rather as a means of drawing to Venus' attention the double standard whereby she finds fault with Cupid for the very things which she does. Purser (p. Iviii) misses the true affection felt by Ceres and Juno for Venus when he characterizes the pair as like "Roman matrons of high respectability, who, quite calm and full of common sense in dealing with their fellows' troubles, take a feline delight in putting their claws into a member of the same high social circle, by giving the most aggravating good advice".

⁶⁵ For example, 5.31.4, quod autem, oramus, isti crimen si puellae lepidae libenter adrisit? An ignoras eum masculum et iuvenem esse vel certe iam quot sit annorum oblita es?

Venus' reaction and to their own lack of diplomacy, which itself fuels the humour. Kenney (1990b on 5.31.3-7) notes the humour of the scene in which the goddesses "dispense conventional wisdom as women of the world" and states (5.31.4) that "their language trivializes the matter". Their genuinely sympathetic appeal to Venus is rather an attempt to minimize the loathsomeness of Cupid's affair which functions to point up Venus' violence and inappropriate reaction, as well as to suggest to the reader that this compassion will continue to incline the goddesses to be well disposed towards Cupid and Psyche.

It is only after the dialogue that a motive, *metu sagittarum* (5.31.7), is given for the goddesses' actions, and suspicions that self-interest may have sparked their kind words are confirmed. Kenney states (1990b on 5.31.3-7) that Ceres and Juno, "like everybody else on Olympus...are terrified of Cupid's irresistible and...irresponsible power" and draws attention (5.31.2) to the fact that the motives of Ceres and Juno are "not quite so altruistic". Grimal (1963, p. 23) takes a more extreme view of the two goddesses, stating "Cérès et Junon, silhouettes effacées, ce qui ne les empêche pas de se montrer, par lâcheté, d'une cruauté inadmissible envers leur suppliante". The reader, however, has no reason to doubt the sincerity of Ceres' and Juno's efforts to assuage Venus' anger while they speak to her, and both goddesses later draw attention to their affection for Venus (cf. 6.3.1 and 6.4.5). Although the pair clearly disagree with Venus' treatment of Cupid and Psyche, neither one indulges in open chastisement of Venus, such is her power.

The exchange between Venus, Ceres and Juno performs various important functions. In terms of plot advancement, their comforting words fuel Venus' ire, which results in her immediate departure, thus opening the way for Psyche to meet the goddesses alone. Venus' sudden and angry departure at 5.31.7 (*indignata*) sets the tone for her encounter with Psyche at 6.9, where her fury manifests itself in the form of physical violence. Like Psyche's encounter with Pan, the wittiness of this scene alleviates the tension of the preceding one in which Venus rails at Cupid. As kind-hearted and consoling individuals, the pair contrast sharply with Venus'

tempestuous outburst. Wittiness is also put across in Ceres' and Juno's expressions which humorously pick up on Venus' own words^{66.} The goddesses' expression of favourable sentiments towards Cupid and their obvious disagreement with Venus' reaction suggests that they will assist Cupid and Psyche (see also below). The later rejections which Psyche receives from both goddesses therefore come as a surprise. Sympathy shown by the pair for Cupid and Psyche elicits a similar reaction in the reader. In addition, Ceres' and Juno's characterization raises reader expectation for Psyche's success, but ultimately, their concern proves to be only a diversionary tactic.

Ceres' self-serving nature is highlighted in her response to Psyche's plea for assistance. Although Psyche has devotedly cared for her shrine with no regard for her own safety (6.2.2) while doggedly pursued by Venus, Ceres does nothing more than acknowledge her diligence, in spite of stressing the vehemence of Venus' search and her wrath at length (6.2.2). The goddess refuses her aid (6.3.1f.), stating that she does not want to offend Venus, cum qua etiam foedus antiquum amicitiae colo, bonae praeterea feminae. Consequently, the prayer offered to Ceres in which Psyche enumerates many of the goddess' spectacular powers and attributes (6.2.4-5) adds irony to her rejection of Psyche. Kenney (1990b on 6.3.1-2) points out the humour of the scene stating that "Ceres' rebuff signals a deliberately bathetic descent to the level...of bourgeois comedy". Ceres' behaviour at this point is amusingly ironic in light of her earlier difference in opinion with Venus during which exchange she exhibited no fear of reprisal from the goddess. A high level of self-interest is also pointed up, as now Ceres fears Venus' malam gratiam (6.3.1). Her changing allegiance from Cupid to Venus, and her unwillingness to put herself out for Psyche shows that she is both selfish and fickle. There is humour in the contrast between the goddesses' treatment of

⁶⁶ For example, 5.29.2, Venus refers to Cupid as *puer* and calls his embraces *licentiosis et immaturis...amplexibus*. She also calls him *nugo et corruptor et inamabilis* (5.29.4). Ceres and Juno try to make Venus see that he is no longer a boy and play down the extent of his love affair by referring to his actions as *puellae lepidae libenter adrisit* (5.31.4). The two scenes present the reader with very different perceptions of Cupid's character.

Venus at 5.31 and Ceres' now referring to Venus as a bonae feminae (6.3.1) and their relationship as a foedus antiquum amicitiae. Grimal (1963 on 6.3.1) notes that Ceres' reference to a foedus antiquum is a "parodie des alliances familiales, qui étaient si importantes dans la vie romaine". There is further wittiness in a goddess offering trite excuses which demonstrate her subservience to and fear of Venus. Ceres' self-professed feelings of compassion for Psyche at 6.3.167 prove to be insufficiently strong to influence her behaviour, and directly after stating that she has been moved by Psyche's prayers and would like to help, she instructs the girl to leave her shrine immediately and be thankful that she has not been held captive.

Ceres' characterization as unsympathetic performs various functions. First, it underlines both Psyche's desperation and the magnitude of her plight, exacerbated by the rejection because now she must continue wandering about. The reader, who on account of the favourable sentiments of Ceres and Juno expressed in 5.31 was anticipating that Psyche would receive help, now feels sympathy for the girl. Juno's subsequent rejection of Psyche elicits a similar reader response. In contrast to the characters of both Ceres and Juno, however, are the assistants in Psyche's four tasks, who one would expect to be less compassionate, as they are all objects and animals that lack speech and a tower is customarily inanimate. This portrayal, therefore, of Ceres for whom Psyche has performed a service and even worshipped, emphatically points up the mercilessness of the goddesses and the benevolence of Psyche's later helpers. Furthermore, this scene, in which Ceres draws attention to Venus' overwhelming irascibility and persistence (6.2.2)

⁶⁷ Since Ceres is not moved by Psyche's plight and tells the girl to be thankful that she hasn't been held captive (which I consider to be an unnecessary and particularly nasty thing to say to someone as desperate as Psyche, for whom the goddess is supposed to feel sorry), I doubt the sincerity of her compassion. Contrary to my view, Michèle Brossard (p. 117) considers Ceres' address to Psyche at 6.3.1, tuis quidem lacrimosis precibus et commoveor et opitulari cupio, as an indication of her benevolence. He believes that the same is true of Juno's supposed desire to help the girl and Pan's comforting words to Psyche. "Ils ont en commun un trait de caractère: la bonté et leur bienveillance à l'égard de Psyché...". Juno demonstrates some kindness towards Psyche, however, by not turning her in to Venus, as she had been requested to do.

and her own disinclination to upset the goddess, also amplifies Venus' might and portrays her as a formidable opponent for Psyche.

Juno's characterization continues at her temple (6.3.3ff.) in an exchange with Psyche. The goddess, whose authority is emphatically stressed in Psyche's address to her at 6.4.1-3 (reginam dearum, 6.4.2; 6.4.3...Lucinam appellat...Iuno Sospita, etc.) and her apparition at 6.4.4 (Iuno cum totius sui numinis augusta dignitate praesentat), also spurns the girl. She offers two reasons for the rejection, after stating that she too would like to help Psyche. The first and most significant argument is that she must not cross Venus (6.4.5, sed contra voluntatem Veneris nurus meae, quam filiae semper dilexi loco, praestare me pudor non sinit.) This reason, following an outline of Juno's dominion as queen of the gods, pointedly emphasizes the intensity of Venus' anger and adds to Venus' portrayal as a fierce and fearful opponent to Psyche. Humour can also be detected in this response, notably Veneris nurus meae, quam filiae semper dilexi loco, and the contrast between it and the goddesses' earlier flattery of Cupid and reference (5.31.5) to Venus' love affairs by means of which her son Vulcan was cuckolded. Juno adds another commonplace excuse saying that shame, pudor, does not allow her to cross Venus. It did not, however, prevent her from finding fault with the goddess at 5.31. Her prosaic response, which characterizes her as dull and powerless, contrasts with the image of a potent deity created in Psyche's prayer. The bathos in Juno's arguments continues in her second, and less convincing reason (tunc etiam); Juno cannot harbour another's slave against his/her master's wishes. Its addition seems like an afterthought or justification in Juno's mind for her lack of assistance. The goddess humorously behaves as though she is bound by human laws; in order to be a law-abiding individual, she must not interfere, and thus need not accept responsibility for what may happen to Psyche. This excuse shows that she fears Venus, which results in her demonstrable lack of clemency towards Psyche, parallel in effect to Ceres' rejection of the girl. That fear of reprisal motivates both goddesses stresses their apprehension and contrasts with the image of beneficent and potent divinities created in Psyche's

prayers to them at 6.2.4-6 and 6.4.1-3. This undercuts their power while simultaneously emphasizing Venus' dominion. In addition to this, Ceres' and Juno's alleged inability, rather than unwillingness, to assist Psyche leaves the reader with an impression of self-serving divinities. This is particularly true in Juno's case, who in the role of Sospita and particularly Lucina, should assist the pregnant Psyche. The emphasis which is placed upon Juno's role as helper in childbirth at 6.4.3, in addition to her seemingly favourable disposition towards Cupid and Psyche at 5.31, initially raise reader expectation for Psyche's salvation⁶⁸, only to have it dashed once Juno herself speaks.

Psyche's second rebuff is significant in terms of plot development. The dual rejection experienced by Psyche causes her to summon up her strength and give herself up to Venus, which then sets the stage for the assignment of her four tasks. Ceres' and Juno's excuses focusing on Venus cause Psyche to realize that Venus is so powerful and vindictive that even goddesses are rendered helpless and that she must, therefore, placate the goddess (6.5.3), and not Cupid, as Pan had suggested. It is by these means that the exchanges between principal characters and these two self-centred goddesses, for whom minimal characterization is provided, prove to be functionally significant to the narrative.

Mercury

The reader next encounters Mercury. Very little is learned about the god, and his presence in the narrative is purely functional; he serves as a "cog". At 6.7.1 the narrator refers to him as *dei vocalis*, and in her speech (6.7.3), Venus addresses him as *frater Arcadi*⁶⁹. His compliance

⁶⁸ Reader expectation is also elevated by the description of the dedicatory cloths which Psyche sees affixed to tree branches and door posts at 6.3.4. The lettering on these cloths indicates that they have been offered to Juno *cum gratia facti*.

⁶⁹ This address picks up on the Arcadian motif present at 5.25 with Pan and 6.13-15 with the portrait of the Styx inspired by the Arcadian river of that name. See further Herrmann (1952, pp. 18-21) for other possible links with Arcadia.

with her wishes, overtly stated at 6.8.1, is secured by her flattering statement⁷⁰ scis nempe sororem tuam Venerem sine Mercuri praesentia nil umquam fecisse... The god makes his proclamation, including the announcement of a reward of kisses for whoever should find Psyche. Presumably, the wording of this polished announcement is Mercury's own and thus, it suitably characterizes the dei vocalis as an effective and stylish speaker⁷¹. Apuleius' choice of Mercury as Venus' town crier plays on existing links between the two⁷². Grimal (1963 on 6.7.3) sums up the connection efficiently, stating that "Apulée veut dire sans doute plus simplement que la richesse et aussi la persuasion (dont Mercure est le dieu) s'accordent bien avec l'amour". He reappears in the narrative only twice more at 6.23.1 and 6.23.5, where he performs the function of crier at Jupiter's behest and conducts Psyche to heaven. These three appearances, along with his self-designation at 6.8.2 (Mercurium praedicatorem) are the extent of his characterization as a compliant and dutiful individual. His proclamation, however, serves several significant functions in the story. Most

⁷⁰ This statement effectively plays up Venus' wheedling side, in contrast to her raging anger when talking to Ceres and Juno, and Psyche shortly after this exchange. It illustrates that Venus will do whatever is necessary to ensure Psyche's demise and stresses the intensity of her choler.

⁷¹ Note for example, the alliteration and rhyme in the phrase *septem savia suavia* as well as a tetracolon and alliteration again in *metas Murtias Mercurium praedicatorem*. The juxtaposition of *Murtias* and *Mercurium* in this phrase draws attention to the connection which Apuleius exploits between Venus and Mercury. Apuleius is wittily exploiting Mercury's role as the eloquent god of speech (*dei vocalis*, 6.7.1) in his proclamation.

⁷² Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 1.30.8 note that "Peitho was a traditional member of Aphrodite's train....Hermes could naturally be given the same function". They also mention that joint cults of the pair existed and "A late and eccentric tradition makes Hermes the son of Aphrodite and Dionysus (*Orph. h.* 57.3f.). Kenney (1990b on 6.7.3) notes that Venus' address to Mercury as brother presupposes that she is the daughter of Jupiter and Dione. As such, Mercury, the son of Maia and Jupiter, and Venus have the same father. See also Kenney (1990b on 6.7.3) for a connection between lovers and Mercury's "gift of the gab". This connects Mercury with Venus' role as a seductress. See Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 1.10.7 for Mercury as a liar and thief. Grimal (1963 on 6.7.3) notes a link in a passage of Plutarch's preface to "*Cons. sur le mariage*, pref.: les anciens adoraient Hermès à côté d'Aphrodite. *OCD*³ s.v. Aphrodite states that "The title Pandemos, which is hers conspicuously in Athens...indicates her protection of the whole citizen body, but she can also be linked with a particular civic office...and as Epistasie on Thasos....In this context, she is frequently associated with Hermes, Peitho and the Charites." Graves 15.b,1 adds that Eros is Aphrodite's son by Hermes (cf. Cic. *N.D.* iii.23).

importantly, it effects a critical advancement in the plot as his words prompt Psyche to give herself up to Venus at 6.8.4. It also contributes to Venus' characterization, by pointing up the duality of her character (as discussed below). As with Apuleius' characterization of other gods, humour can also be detected in Mercury's brief appearance at 6.8. This customary herald of the gods is now assigned the degrading task of what Kenney (1990b on 6.7.1) terms the "town-crier". Furthermore, the sexually explicit message which he proclaims is comically vulgar and demeaning.

<u>Jupiter</u>

Jupiter's introduction into the narrative at 6.7.1 obliquely characterizes him as the final authority on the gods' actions. On her arrival at his regias arces Venus requests of him the loan of Mercury's proclamation services, and Jupiter nods his caerulum supercilium (6.7.2) in assent. An indication of Jupiter's power is given to the reader in order that his role as the dispenser of justice at 6.23.4-5 not come as a complete surprise. The god's acquiescence both advances the plot by means of the introduction of Mercury, whose proclamation prompts Psyche to cease hesitating and give herself up to Venus, and underlines Venus' power which was highlighted in the ecphrasis immediately preceding this passage. Kenney (1990b on 6.7.2) notes that the phrase nec rennuit lovis caerulum supercilium is "almost a literal rendering of Hom. II. 1.528". This epic imitation lends further dignity to the reader's important first impression of Jupiter as a stately divinity. The designation of regias to Jupiter's arces, and its location in the summus Aether, also enhance this portrait⁷³. The contrast between his lofty image here and his amusing portrayal towards the end of the story renders the humour of 6.22f. more pointed.

⁷³ In order to address Jupiter, Venus must prepare her chariot to reach the *summus Aether* (6.6.4) where Jupiter dwells. When addressing other gods, no special setting is designated. Walsh (1970, p. 210) suggests that Apuleius may be making the Neoplatonist distinction between the abodes of "popular deities, who as 'demons' dwell in the lower air" and that of Jupiter.

Upon his reappearance at 6.22.1 Apuleius presents the reader with a laughable image of Jupiter interacting with Cupid. His appellation at 6.22.1 of magno lovi leads the reader to expect the god to exhibit dignified behaviour as implied at 6.7. Jupiter casts aside his stern majestic image, however, and shows tenderness towards Cupid, cupping the boy's face and kissing him even though, in the next sentence (6.22.3ff.) the same god, in a self-deprecating admission, acknowledges that Cupid has never heeded his authority, has compromised his reputation and character, made him break laws, transformed his serenos vultus into animal forms and generally caused him all sorts of mischief. The humour of this passage is accentuated by the attention which Jupiter first draws to his own immense power (6.22.3, sed istud pectus meum quo leges elementorum et vices siderum disponuntur convulneraris assiduis ictibus...), immediately after stating that Cupid has failed to pay him decreed respect; that respect for him has been decreed is itself another amusing statement which detracts from Jupiter's exalted position (6.22.3, concessu deum decretum...honorem). Jupiter's reference at 6.22.4 to his serenos vultus reveals, as does 6.22.3, that the deity perceives himself to be an important divinity worthy of reverence74. This high opinion of himself promotes the wittiness of the following scene where, in spite of Cupid's defiance, Jupiter chooses to indulge the boy and grant his wish, much as a parent would do. Jupiter's open admission of the disgraces inflicted upon him⁷⁵ adds to the comedy of this sovereign divinity's characterization, which reaches its peak when, after making reference to his own modestia (6.22.5), Jupiter instructs Cupid that he wants a very beautiful girl for himself as repayment for this indulgence. His desire for this reward identifies him as lustful and the fact that he requires

⁷⁴ Jupiter plays this up in front of the other gods at 6.23-24.

⁷⁵ Jupiter's address to Cupid at 6.22.3-5 is a single lengthy sentence. As such, it draws the reader's attention and points up emphatically the disgraces inflicted upon Jupiter by conveying a piling up effect of all the insolent things that Cupid has done.

assistance to obtain a woman detracts from his inherently powerful position as sovereign deity⁷⁶. Furthermore, Jupiter's subjection to human laws at 6.22.4, particularly the *lex Iulia de adulteriis*, is comical and adds to the bathos of the scene. Kenney (1990b on 6.22.5) believes that in this scene, Jupiter has been playing the role of the "heavy father". Contrary to this, I believe that Jupiter comes across as an indulgent parent who demonstrates genuine affection for his "son"⁷⁷, commencing with his loving greeting of Cupid at 6.22.2 and his willingness to forgive the young deity in spite of his dreadful behaviour. This indulgence marks Jupiter as lenient, which is surprising after the god's initial stately image. Furthermore, in keeping with Apuleius' facetious delineations of other Olympian deities, and in order to augment the comedy of the exchange, Jupiter is depicted as lacking authority and control both over himself and Cupid. In terms of functions, the prevailing light-heartedness of the scene alleviates reader anxiety for Cupid and Psyche's fate, and the god's comic self-effacement sets the stage for more humour at 6.23 by showing the reader Jupiter's tender side.

Jupiter next appears in the guise of omnipotent divinity and orders Mercury to summon the gods for him. His authority is again humorously undercut by the threat of a fine which prompts the gods to attend rather than through respect for Jupiter (6.23.1, quo metu statim completo caelesti theatro), and by Apuleius' parody of the Council of the gods, caelesti theatro (see Kenney 1990b on 6.23). Seated pro sede sublimi, the position of authority, procerus Jupiter speaks. The god's words, however, immediately belie his persona. Adopting once again the image of dignified deity as at 6.7, his address to the gods begins on a comically elevated note, dei conscripti Musarum albo (6.23.2). This burlesques "official terminology" (Kenney 1990b on 6.23.2), whereby Roman

⁷⁶ Compare the characterization of both Ceres and Juno who also suffer from a lack of divine potency and appear to be very much like ordinary human beings.

⁷⁷ See Kenney 1990b on 6.22.3 for Cupid's parentage. That Jupiter considers himself to be Cupid's father is suggested by his address to Cupid at 6.22.3, *domine fili*, and his statement at 6.22.5, *quadque inter istas meas manus creveris*.

senators were addressed as patres conscripti, and further detracts from the god's authority. Jupiter's words at 6.23.2 maintain his pretence of retaining control, particularly over Cupid's actions, cuius primae iuventutis caloratos impetus freno quodam coercendos existimavi. Jupiter goes on to add that Cupid has been the object of rumours about his wantonness, and concludes that his luxuria puerilis nuptialibus pedicis alliganda (6.23.3), as though he, and not Cupid himself, has made the final decision concerning Cupid's fate. Cupid's alleged caloratos impetus and bad reputation farcically pick up on Jupiter's numerous love affairs and self-professed difficulties at 6.22. The philandering god of 6.22 humorously attempts to present himself as morally upright in his denouncement of Cupid's behaviour, with which Jupiter has no reason to find fault; Cupid's youthful impulses do not require bridling as he has remained faithful to Psyche alone, unlike his father who has had numerous extra-marital affairs. The formality with which he commences his speech adds to the jocularity of the scene, and his manner of presenting the resolution to Cupid's dilemma is highly comical, particularly since Jupiter has just given in to Cupid's wishes but adopts this facade of all powerful divinity. This address to the gods ends on a more serious note, puellam elegit..., but the comedy of his previous words undercuts the earnestness of this final statement and Jupiter's authoritative position. Jupiter's jocose characterization as self-important and pompous breaks the solemnity of the situation in which the principal characters find themselves and diffuses reader tension created by the hostility of Venus and the repeated failures of Psyche whose fate now hangs in the balance.

Jupiter's next role in the story as the dispenser of justice⁷⁸ is absolutely essential to the plot. He no longer makes disparaging statements or false claims as in the previous paragraph, but

⁷⁸ Scazzoso (p. 176) views Jupiter's prominence at the close of the tale as a means of resolving the difficulties, stating that "Giove appare alla fine delle novelle come un *deus ex machina* a sistemare un po' in fretta e con generale soddisfazione le cose e nella sua figura è forse ancora più evidente che in Venere lo scopo polemico". I agree with his assertion that Jupiter is like a *deus ex machina* here, as at 6.23.4-5, the tone is no longer predominently humorous, but a certain gravity prevails while Jupiter provides a resolution.

promptly provides an effective resolution to a problem which seems insurmountable, and thus requires the intervention of a god as powerful as Jupiter. At 6.23.4-5, Jupiter earnestly addresses Venus and assures her that the marriage between Cupid and Psyche will be equal and legitimate. His ability to bestow immortality on Psyche and bind her in marriage to Cupid⁷⁹ demonstrates sovereignty more readily associated with Jupiter, and is a sharp contrast with his self-characterization at 6.22. This change in Jupiter's role from comic character to sober divinity whose authority is respected by other gods has been partially foreseen by the reader's first glimpse of a dignified Jupiter at 6.7.1-2. This earlier august image lends credibility to Jupiter's present capacity to provide a means of conflict resolution.

The reader's final glimpse of Jupiter is at the wedding feast of Cupid and Psyche, where remaining silent throughout, he reclines with his wife, *sua lunone* (6.24.1). It seems as though Apuleius cannot resist presenting this philanderer in a pose which highlights the irony of Jupiter's previous address to the gods in which he takes issue with Cupid's alleged misconduct and sanctions marriage as a means of restraint. The humour is particularly pronounced in the image of Jupiter's beloved Ganymede serving him wine while he celebrates with Juno. Jupiter's final appearance at the feast, which characterizes him as a two-faced divinity whose actions do not mirror his words, emphasizes the irony of his earlier conduct and stresses Apuleius' apparent irreverence towards the Olympian gods. This final appearance of Jupiter adds to the humour and general happiness of the scene, which concludes the tale on a note concurrent with the old woman's promise to distract Charite *narrationibus lepidis* (4.7).

⁷⁹ See Kenney 1990b on 6.23.4 and 6.23.5 for earlier literary references to love stories ending with legal marriages, and for ambrosia's ability to confer immortality.

Conclusions

The minor characters in the Cupid and Psyche tale are characterized variously. Apuleius never provides his reader with a fully detailed account of a character's personality and only in the case of Psyche's sisters is the reader given even a bit of background information. Full development of the minor characters does not occur because it is superfluous to the plot's development; the reader does not need to know a character's background in order for that individual to perform his function in the narrative. Characterization in the story usually occurs obliquely with the reader being left to infer what a person is like from his or her own words and actions, thoughts and emotions, but there is also occasional self-characterization, characterization by others, and authorial judgement. It is by dexterously manipulating these techniques that Apuleius makes his characters come alive, if only briefly. Often appearing at critical junctures in the story⁸⁰, the minors rarely interact with each other, but are usually presented singly in connection with a principal character⁸¹. Although they all perform specific functions in the narrative, many minors could be omitted without the main framework of the story falling apart. Their inclusion adds colour to the narrative, and because they are often portrayed vividly with individualizing touches, the minor characters come alive for the reader and engage him more actively in the tale.

In addition to simply advancing the action, the minor personages are employed skilfully by the author to perform numerous other functions in the story. With the exclusion of Psyche's sisters, the remainder of these personages are extraordinary: divinities, talking animals and

⁸⁰ For example, Zephyrus appears after Psyche has been left to die on the rock at 4.35.4; Pan pops up from nowhere once Cupid has left Psyche and she is contemplating suicide; Psyche's four helpers are present to prevent Psyche's death, etc.

⁸¹ The only minor characters who interact to a minimal degree with each other are Ceres and Juno. Their appearance together at 5.31 is less of an interaction between the pair, who do not directly speak to each other, but more of a dialogue with Venus.

otherwise inanimate objects. In the bizarre world which Apuleius creates here, even the gods do not behave in a dignified manner characteristic of a divinity. The inclusion of so many and such characters creates an otherworldly tone and atmosphere and their presence enhances the fantasy of the narrative. Minor characters frequently provide welcome relief at points of high tension. This is particularly true of the gods, who are predominantly represented in a comic light. Such a portrayal of traditional deities reveals Apuleius' irreverence towards conventional religion (Grimal 1963, p. 23f.; Scazzoso, p. 174, etc.). Apuleius often draws contrasts between characters to point up antithetical behaviours and traits⁸². He also uses them to mirror the feelings of principal characters (e.g. Venus' handmaids), or to heighten atmosphere by creating characters synonymous with their environments. Minor characters also provide thematic links, foreshadow events, create suspense by misleading the reader, elicit reader responses such as sympathy and distaste, and point up paradoxes and analogies.

The prominence of a minor character is dependent upon his/her function, vividness of portrayal as well as frequency and length of appearance. Therefore, the degree of character development signals an individual's significance to the narrative. Vividness in characterization is achieved by means of repetition and accumulation of points stressing a particular trait. It is possible to see a division in terms of textual prominence among the minors; Psyche's sisters form one group and the remainder of the characters comprise the other. Within the second group, further sub-groups can be defined: divine and non-divine characters, helpers, hinderers or those indifferent to Cupid and Psyche, and characters with multiple or single appearances.

The most prominent characters in the story are Psyche's sisters who fulfil the role of villains. They are both the most conspicuous and the most fully developed of all the minor

⁸² For example, contrasts are drawn between the palace servants along with Zephyrus and Venus' handmaids; a fearful Psyche upon her arrival at the palace and the consoling voices; the calmness of Ceres and Juno and Venus' irascibility; the aid which Psyche receives from non-human helpers and the lack of help from the gods, etc.

characters, and consequently, they are the most memorable. Apuleius renders their characterization vivid by means of a bit of background information, an incorrect first impression of the sisters, repetition and accumulation of points underlining malevolence, contrasts between them and Psyche, psychological insight into what motivates the sisters to behave as they do, and their emotional outbursts. The reader therefore, has a good sense of what Psyche's non-divine opponents are truly like: jealous, greedy and malicious. Their function in the story is the most significant performed by any of the minors. They undermine their sister's happiness in order to instil fear in her and then persuade her to kill her husband. The revelation of Cupid's identity at 5.22, the result of Psyche's sisters' plot, is the pivotal point of the tale.

The second group of minor characters are diverse in nature. Included in this category are: Zephyrus, Psyche's voice servants, Pan, the tern, Ceres, Juno, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus' handmaids Tristities, Consuetudo, and Sollicitudo, and Psyche's four helpers consisting of the ant and company, reed, eagle and tower. These individuals can be grouped further into divine and non-divine entities, but more significantly, Indifferent or Changeable characters (Zephyrus, Pan, Ceres, Juno, Jupiter and Mercury) and Hinderers or Helpers (voices, the tern, Venus' handmaids and Psyche's assistants). From the first grouping, all the gods except Pan appear at more than one point in the narrative. Upon their reappearance, Apuleius presents them in such a way as to allow the reader to see them behaving differently towards various characters, and to see more than one side of their personality. This is particularly true of Zephyrus, Ceres, Juno and Jupiter, whereas the reader sees only a change in function from town crier to herald of the gods in Mercury's later appearances. The characters classified as indifferent or changeable either show no reaction towards Cupid and Psyche's dilemma or vary their reactions (e.g. Jupiter's changing role from Hinderer to Helper). Multiple appearances of these personages allow an opportunity to present a change in character, and permit the reader to gain a certain degree of psychological insight, which makes their characters more vivid. They also enable the humour of the gods' characterization,

particularly as impotent, to be more fully developed. The comedy of such a characterization stresses Apuleius' flippant view of traditional religion. Like the second sub-group, these characters perform critical functions in the narrative, most notably Jupiter's role as the resolver of the conflict upon which the plot turns. They also often provide Apuleius with a means of teasingly misleading the reader with their fickle characters.

The remainder of characters comprise the second sub-group. These personages are both helpers (voices, ants, reed, eagle and tower) and hinderers (tern and Venus' handmaids) to Psyche and Cupid. Except for the voices, these characters only appear once in the narrative. The subsequent appearances of the voice servants do nothing to add to their characterization. Although incisive portrayals are given for several of these characters (e.g. the tern, the ant and company and the regal eagle), the brevity of their presence in the narrative allows for only one dominant trait to be stressed, which is sufficient for them to fulfil their roles as functional cogs in the narrative. This grouping of characters performs a diverse number of functions, which are often as critical to the plot as those effected by the other personages who are more prominent textually. This is most pointed in the roles performed by Psyche's helpers who function to keep the girl alive and the plot moving forward. Apuleius has chosen several of the minor characters carefully; those associated with Venus (i.e. Mercury, her handmaids and the tern) have been selected on account of their earlier connections with the goddess of love, which enhances their characterizations. Correspondences in both character portrayal and function exist between the helpers in this group. Each one possesses the traits of kindness and compassion and performs a critical role of saving Psyche from herself. This contrasts with Psyche's hinderers who exhibit hostility towards the couple, and it also contrasts with the characterization of the indifferent divinities whom the reader would expect to be kindly-disposed to the couple.

Apuleius introduces his characters into the narrative at points where they have the greatest impact in terms of both function and effect on the reader. In the first half of the story

(book 5), the greatest emphasis is placed upon Psyche's evil sisters; however, in the second half there is a greater number of helpers than any other type of character, which suggests to the reader that Psyche will ultimately be successful. Helpers naturally receive the greatest stress after Psyche has fallen victim to her villainous sisters. Prior to this, however, Apuleius strategically places the bodiless voices and Zephyrus at the start of the story in order to enhance the extraordinary fairytale atmosphere and give both Psyche and the reader a false sense of security for the girl. He then repeatedly stresses the role of the villains in book 5 by means of their frequent appearances which build tension in the story and the reader, and intimate that Psyche is doomed to fail. Following the sisters' deaths, a point which elevates reader expectation, the introduction of Pan, a possible helper, temporarily raises hopes for Psyche which are quickly dashed upon the tern's approach. Again, Apuleius plays with the reader by putting favourable words in the mouths of Ceres and Juno at the close of book 5, which then prove to be unsubstantiated. The next two groups of characters (Mercury and the handmaids) reinforce the notion that Psyche cannot succeed. Apuleius' placement of these indifferent and hostile characters following Cupid's abandonment of Psyche stresses the desperation of the girl faced with so much opposition and builds the tension of story. It is when both Psyche and the reader think that nothing could possibly go right that there is a turning point. Following the assignment of Psyche's first task, the author introduces helpers exclusively and gives hope to the reader for the couple's reunion, which is achieved by Jupiter's intervention.

Chapter 4: The Principal Characters

Venus

Apuleius' forceful methods of characterizing Venus create a vivid and memorable character. The reader's first impression of Venus as a jealous, angry and vindictive goddess leaves him not readily disposed to like her. The textually prominent position of the goddess' speech as the first in the narrative immediately signals her significance, permits Apuleius to play up her negative traits, and establishes the goddess early on in the role of hinderer to Psyche. As is typical of his style of characterization, Apuleius does not provide the reader with much information about Venus' background and attributes; the goddess' literary portrayals would be well-known to his readers, and it is from those that the reader could "fill-out" her representation. Instead, we are made privy to Venus' innermost thoughts and fears, as expressed in her emotional outbursts. The goddess' initial tirade provides the reader with her basic character traits. These attributes are frequently reinforced upon her subsequent appearances, thus adding to the coherence of her characterization. Her appearances at critical junctures in the narrative, during which she displays violent emotions and, on occasion, behaviour, signal Venus' importance and serve to move the plot forward. The goddess' character truly comes alive on account of the force of her emotions, which engages the reader instantly and elicits an emotional response.

Much of the focus of modern scholarship concerning Venus in *Cupid and Psyche* has been upon her malevolent and undignified conduct towards Psyche, for the root of which scholars

have often looked to folk-tale¹ and remarked that Venus assumes the role of the witch. Scholars have also given prominent attention to Venus' relationship with Isis in book 11, listing the likenesses discernible between the two. There has also been lengthy examination of what scholars erroneously perceive to be a distinction in Venus' character between the Platonic Venus *Vulgaris* and Venus *Caelestis*. Aside from Singleton's dissertation², an extensive study of Venus' character in *Cupid and Psyche* has not been undertaken. In other analyses of Venus' character this matter has been incorporated into a larger discussion and has not been singled out for extensive examination.

Before looking at Apuleius' sources and methods of characterization for Venus, I shall first consider the notion that Apuleius portrays two distinct Venuses in the *Cupid and Psyche* story. Several scholars³ see in the goddess' character the Platonic division put forth by Pausanias in the *Symposium* (180Dff.) and by Apuleius himself (*Apol.* 12.1-3) into two Venuses - *Caelestis* and

¹ For example, see Walsh 1970, p. 198ff; Schlam 1992, p. 85ff.; Kenney 1990b, p. 17; Wright, p. 277-9.

² Singleton's third chapter entitled "Venus of the *Cupid and Psyche* Story" (pp. 62-94) focuses upon Psyche in the role of Venus, established by comparisons between the two, and Venus' overall role in the tale. He then draws comparisons between Venus' appearances in the story and earlier or later references to the goddess in the *Metamorphoses* to establish types of appearances for the purpose of better understanding Venus in the novel and how she is an aspect of Isis. Much of Singleton's attention is given to drawing parallels and links with the remainder of the novel. He often simply gives a synopsis of the action, rather than analysing its significance in terms of Venus' character.

³ Schlam (1992, p. 97) states that "The diversity of conceptions of Venus in the tale plays, I believe, on the Platonic theme of the contrasting ways of telling stories of the divine. For *caelestis Venus*, an aspect of Isis in the revelation of book 11, is suggested in the Lucretian terms with which Venus in the tale invokes her status.....These phrases in the mouth of an angry harridan are comic. But they evoke no less the thematic contrast between the heavenly and the earthly Venus." Walsh (1970, pp. 183-4) believes that the *Golden Ass* is the story "of how Lucius under the guidance of his Isiac mentor learns to renounce the first Venus for the second [in reference to Apuleius' words in the *Apology*]. Concerning *Cupid and Psyche*, he adds (p. 191) that it is "a two-sided creation...an extension of that Platonist-Isiac message which rings out so clearly from the final adventures of Lucius". The division is discussed and developed in detail at Kenney 1990a and 1990b, p. 18ff. and *passim*.

Vulgaris. On account of this distinction scholars often see a thematic link with Isis in book 11⁴. Kenney (1990a, p. 176ff.), whose arguments I will discuss at length, examines the implications of Apuleius developing and manipulating two Venuses and Cupids in the tale. Contrary to Kenney's opinion, I doubt the validity of this concept. I feel that there is no clear Platonic distinction between the deities in the story, and that scholars who do see two separate characters of Venus are mistakenly attempting to apply the Platonic dichotomy, valid elsewhere in the novel, between sensual love (e.g. Lucius and Fotis, Venus of the mime in book 10) and spiritual love (e.g. devotees of Isis).

In the Symposium (180D-E) Pausanias states that there are two Aphrodites, from which it follows that there are two Loves. The elder is the daughter of Heaven, whom Οὐρανίαν ἐπονομάζομεν, and the younger is the daughter of Zeus and Dione, whom Πάνδήμον καλοῦμεν. The love connected with the elder Aphrodite is noble, exclusively homosexual, and is ὕβρεως ἀμοίρου (181A and C), whereas that connected with the younger Aphrodite concerns itself with love of the body over the soul, and involves heterosexuals as well as mean and silly people (181B). In the Apology (12) Apuleius expands upon the differences between the two Venuses in Platonic terms. Venus Vulgaris enslaves both men and animals with her vi immodica trucique. Venus Caelestis concerns only a few men and the best kind of love (optimati amore), and does not entice men to baseness, but commends virtue and goodness. Apuleius also states that the

⁴ Schlam (1970, p. 485) concludes that "the contrast between the two Venuses is fundamental to the novel and represents Apuleius' adaption of Platonic doctrine". See also Rambaux, p. 186-7, who draws a connection between Venus Caelestis and Isis. He also notes that "à Rome même, deux Vénus s'étaient partagé les fidèles: dès la fin du IIIe siècle av. J. -C., le Sénat avait opposé à la Vénus Erycine passionnée et turbulente une Vénus Verticordia qui avait pour fonction de «détourner» des passions dangereuses; à la fin du Iier siècle av. J. -C., chacune eut son temple, et la «Vénus légitime» fut fêtée le 1er avril par les matrones, la Sicilienne le 23 par les courtisanes". In connection with Isis, Krabbe (p. 96) adds that the Venus of Cupid and Psyche is not the true Venus (i.e. a higher kind of love), and with the appearance of Isis, we move from "reflection and caricature to reality".

followers of this Venus do not love physical beauty except that which may remind *divinos animos* of beauty which is *veram et sinceram*, and formerly seen among the gods.

These two passages form the basis of Kenney's argument that two Venuses and two Cupids are present in the story. Kenney believes (1990b, p. 19) that the Cupid and Psyche story is about a battle between Cupid Caelestis, who is ultimately triumphant over his opponent Venus Vulgaris. Aware of Apuleius' adoption of Platonic philosophy elsewhere in the Metamorphoses and the Apology, Kenney erroneously assumes that the same distinction can be applied to Cupid and Psyche, without stating why on earth Apuleius should have decided to exploit this division. In the Apology, Apuleius does not even mention two Cupids, let alone draw a distinction between them. In spite of this, Kenney states (1990b, p. 20) that in the tale, Apuleius "portrays these dichotomous deities contending for Psyche - a human soul...". For the purposes of his commentary and article Kenney (1990a, p. 177f.) chooses to call them Venus I (Caelestis) and II (Vulgaris), and applies the same nomenclature to Cupid/Amor. He identifies Venus II with the popular-literary persona familiar to Apuleius' readers from the poets, from works of art, and from actual cult. Kenney fails to justify his identifications, and the distinctions which he draws do not conform at all to anything in either the Symposium or the Apology. Furthermore, neither Plato nor Apuleius provide us with an adequately clear idea of what attributes belong to each Eros and Aphrodite and how the two can be distinguished. Kenney, however, distinguishes between Caelestis and Vulgaris on grounds scarcely touched upon in the Symposium or the Apology; when the deities appear in a noble and dignified manner, Kenney classifies them as Caelestis, but when they exhibit nasty, ignoble and undignified traits, they become Vulgaris. Nowhere in the story does Apuleius present the reader with a portrait of a Venus concerned with a higher kind of love involving the soul as put forth by Apuleius in the Apology; the Venus who vehemently pursues

Psyche shows no spiritual concerns⁵. Kenney's contention (1990b, p. 20), therefore, that Amor I and Venus II "motivate and control the action" is in no way supported. On the whole, his argument is entirely subjective, fanciful, often lacks proof, includes contradictory statements and at times demonstrates a genuine absence of logic.

Kenney notes where changes in character are represented or implied (1990a, p. 177), but repeatedly fails to explain the reason for the alleged transformations which occur, he assumes, at 4.29-31 and 6.6f., nor does he support them with philosophical evidence. In order to demonstrate this I shall examine two representative passages. Kenney believes that Venus' introduction at 4.29.5, reminiscent of Virgil's irate Juno, characterizes her as Vulgaris, but with her opening words, en rerum naturae prisca parens, en elementorum origo initialis, en orbis totius alma Venus, "Venus I makes a fleeting appearance" (1990a, p. 179). According to Kenney, in her subsequent summoning of Cupid, she reverts to Vulgaris but in the ecphrasis (4.31.4-7), she is Caelestis. Several problems are immediately evident. First, Kenney himself (1990a, p. 177-8) states that the literary depiction of Venus represents Venus Vulgaris, and yet he cites Lucretian parallels to support what he assumes to be a representation of Venus Caelestis. Furthermore, no other character in Cupid and Psyche undergoes such rapid and dramatic changes in personality as Kenney proposes for Venus. Apuleius is very attentive to characterization elsewhere, and shows skill in creating memorable and realistic individuals by means of stressing and repeating pertinent traits. Nowhere else does the author display such abrupt changes in character within a short scene, and leave the reader with a sense of discontinuous characterization. Moreover, Kenney does not explain why Apuleius should want to portray Venus as Caelestis here and what

⁵ Tatum (1979, p. 50) draws attention to the polarity between the goddess of love, who ultimately unites lovers, and the goddess of fate in the Greek novel. He concludes that Apuleius in book 6 has combined the influence of Venus and Fortuna into "one inferior, 'earthly' affliction that enslaves men and makes their lives little better than those of beasts", and that Fortuna *videns*, combined with a heavenly Venus manifests itself in the power of Isis.

purpose it would serve in the narrative as a whole⁶. This is particularly puzzling since Psyche's salvation does not depend upon her submission to a higher love in the form of Venus; instead it is through Cupid's intervention that she is saved.

Kenney's commentary on 4.31.4-7 contradicts his earlier assertion (1990a, p. 180) that the image which Apuleius wished to convey in the ecphrasis was that of Venus Caelestis, when he states that "The epicizing tone underlines Venus' current Apollonian-Virgilian persona, which contrasts with her Lucretian entrance (4.30n.) and reappearance (6.6, 6.7.3nn.)". Elsewhere Kenney cites Apollonian and Vergilian examples to illustrate Venus behaving in the manner of Vulgaris, and presumably this is what he means to do in the commentary. Therefore, his contradiction makes the persona which Venus is supposed to be assuming unclear. His identification of this Venus as Caelestis seems to be based upon her exhibition of power (1990a, p. 180, the seas calming), and yet there is nothing stated in the Symposium to indicate that Venus Vulgaris is not powerful, and in the Apology (12), Apuleius stresses her power by calling it immodica trucique⁷. It is evident that we need not assume that the Venus portrayed in 4.31.4ff. is Caelestis⁸.

A second example of Kenney's failure to support his contention that two Venuses exist occurs in his treatment of the ecphrasis at 6.6, where he believes (1990a, p. 190) that Venus

⁶ The best explanation which Kenney provides (1990b, p. 20) is that Amor I and Venus II motivate and control the action of the narrative, and that Amor II and Venus I "figure as largely decorative and (in Cupid's case especially) passive foils to their antithetical counterparts. This battle is what the story is really about"...

⁷ Singleton (p. 81) adds that "Here Venus is a divine force who commands respect and devotion". The truth of this assertion does not require that Venus be "Heavenly".

⁸ As I do not believe that Venus has undergone a change in character in the ecphrasis, I do not agree with Kenney's assertion (1990a, p. 187) that "Venus' state progress to the sea was as Venus I. When she leaves it to re-enter the plot it is very much as Venus II."

Caelestis makes a final appearance. Yet, how this ecphrasis signals a change in the nature of Venus is again unclear. If Apuleius wanted to portray a divinity characterized in the Symposium (181C) as ὕβρεως ἀμοίρου, it seems unlikely that he would include birds and language with sexual connotations. In his commentary on 6.6.3, Kenney states that "sparrows were traditionally accounted lecherous", but in his article (1990a, p. 191) he erroneously states that the sparrows' "demotion" [to attendants rather than conveyors] in favour of doves may possibly be a hint that this is Venus I [Caelestis] rather than Venus II [Vulgaris], for doves are a common symbol of conjugal devotion". He undercuts his own argument in the commentary on 6.6.2 stating that "doves were Venus' birds, favoured as lovers' gifts" As such, their value as symbols of Venus Caelestis is diminished. Furthermore, Apuleius seems to emphasize deliberately the wanton nature of the sparrows by describing their actions with lasciviunt (TLL VII,2.982.61-80) and their chattering with gannitu (TLL V,1.1692.37-40), both of which can have erotic associations. This type of imagery is not in keeping with the representation of a noble love.

The prevailing opinion of most scholars about Venus is that she is jealous and angry (e.g. Frangoulidis 1994, p. 67; Tatum 1979, p. 49), cruel (Finkelpearl 1990, p. 345), resentful (Singleton, p. 73) and petty in her dealings with Psyche (Singleton, p. 91). Tatum (1979, p. 49) applies to her the forceful tag of 'shrew'. Several scholars are quick to note, however, that there is also a lighter side to Venus' characterization. She is frequently portrayed behaving in an inappropriate manner for a goddess and in a way which stresses her comic nature (e.g. see Schlam 1992, p. 97 and Grimal 1963, p. 24, Singleton *passim*). These character assessments are, for the most part, sound,

⁹ Why Kenney believes that the sparrows have been "demoted" to the role of attendants is unclear. He seems (1990a, p. 191) to come to this conclusion by comparing this ecphrasis with an ode of Sappho (L-P 1.9-12) in which sparrows draw a chariot. On this evidence alone, he incorrectly concludes that Apuleius has ascribed to the birds a less significant role.

¹⁰ See also Graves no. 11, p. 50, who adds "Doves and sparrows were noted for their lechery..."; *OLD* s.v. *columba* 2a and b for erotic connections; *TLL* s.v. *columba*, III,1732.6-43 and 1732.83-1733.7 and *passer* X,I.606.12-23 and 607.12f.

but they do not explore fully the means by which the author conveys Venus' traits and they frequently pass over telling details which demonstrate Apuleius' ingenuity. Some work has been done concerning literary models upon which Apuleius has drawn to create his Venus (e.g. Kenney, Walsh, Finkelpearl, Singleton, etc.), but again, numerous significant similarities have been overlooked, most notably the correspondences and contrasts with Vergil's Venus. Scholars have also failed to recognize the influence which Venus' overall nature in literature and mythology exerted upon Apuleius, as well as how Apuleius manipulates elements of the goddess' tradition. The following discussion then, aims to provide a fuller examination of Venus' character and the various ways in which Apuleius conveys her traits. It also includes an analysis of the effects of Venus' character on the plot and other characters exclusively within *Cupid and Psyche*.

Apuleius had a rich literary tradition upon which he could draw for Venus' portrayal. The duality of the goddess' character is well documented in both literature and mythology. Frequently a lover herself in mythology¹¹, she is often invoked by lovers in literature to bring about a propitious love affair and is also represented as a beneficent goddess who delights in the pleasures of love¹². Venus' mercilessness and the torments that accompany love are equally well depicted and played up in literature and myth¹³, and it is this side of Venus which Apuleius revels in presenting, almost to the exclusion of Venus' more positive attributes. Like the Apuleian

¹¹ For example, the myths of her passion for Adonis and affairs with Ares, Hermes, Dionysus, Anchises, etc.

¹² Sappho 1 (Lobel-Page) and 112; Tib. 1.2.16 and Murgatroyd 1980 ad loc.; Lucr. DRN 1.2f.

¹³ Examples from mythology include the Muse Kleio (incest), Eos' passions, Pasiphae, Glaucus, Atalanta, Scylla, Tyndareus, Sirens, and the women of Lemnos and Astypalaea (Ov. *Met.* 7.363-4). Literary examples include Sappho 15b 9 (Lobel-Page); *AP* 5.280, 12.50; Hor. *Carm.* 1.19 and Nisbett and Hubbard for the application of *saeva* to Venus; Prop. 1.1.33; Tib. 1.9.20 and Murgatroyd *ad. loc.*; Ov. *Am.* 1.4.66, *Met.* 14.477ff. (Diomede), 10.221-3 (Cerastae), 238-42 (Propoetides) and 304ff. (Cinyras and Myrrha).

Venus, earlier portrayals of the goddess show that she demands to be honoured (E. *Hipp*. 1-8; Ov. *Met*. 10.238-42) and that she will go to great lengths, sometimes even transforming the individuals with whom she is angry (cf. Ov. *Met*. 14.477ff., Venus' revenge on Diomede; 10.221-3, the transformation of the Cerastae to cows; the creation of the Sirens), to exact vengeance upon those who have slighted her. Aggression directed towards Cupid, however, is not paralleled in earlier works and appears to be novel to Apuleius' Venus.

The goddess' role in Cupid and Psyche resembles that which she plays in several of the revenge myths, and most notably those in which her preeminent beauty has been disparaged. Singleton notes (p. 79) that the myth of Cinyras and Myrrha is "a typical example of the revenge of the love goddess", explaining that the king boasted that his daughter was more beautiful than Aphrodite, for which affront the goddess caused Myrrha to fall in love with her father¹⁴. The sole connection with Cupid and Psyche, however, that Singleton makes (p. 79) is between this punishment and Venus' desire (4.31.3) that Psyche become enamoured of the basest man on earth. Likewise, no other scholars have noted that this myth may have influenced Apuleius beyond Singleton's observation. Apuleius may have drawn directly upon this tradition, for in both cases, scorned beauty is a motive for the goddess' anger (4.30.3) and she demonstrates subsequent ferocity towards an innocent victim. Another myth of a similar nature is that concerning the women of Astypalaea, who were punished with the appearance of horns on their heads for exalting their beauty over Aphrodite's (Ov. Met. 7.363-4). The act of falling in love as a punishment is also in evidence in the myths concerning Pasiphae, Scylla, Hippolytus, and the daughters of Tyndareus. The similarities between Venus' conduct in the tale and in these myths, coupled with the clarity with which Apuleius delineates his Venus, suggest that in addition to the

¹⁴ Cf. Prop. 2.28.9, num sibi collatam doluit Venus?

numerous other literary portraits of Venus, the author was also influenced by these sources and exploits them to underline his Venus' malevolence.

The earlier tradition of Venus also shows the goddess in compassionate roles such as that of saviour at sea and assistant to women in childbirth, and highlights her connection with fertility and sexuality. Instead of exploiting these traits directly, Apuleius inverts several of these standard representations. The positive epithet of "laughter-loving" which is commonly attributed to Aphrodite¹⁵ has been inverted by Apuleius to stress her savagery at 6.9.1 (latissimum cachinnum extollit) and 6.13.2 (subridens amarum). Aphrodite's epithet of "guileful" or "crafty"¹⁶ is not developed as a trait in Apuleius' Venus, who does not exhibit cunning, but only anger when executing her plans (4.31.1-3, 6.10.1-3, etc.). In addition, her lack of wiliness is emphasized by the fact that she requires assistance to secure Psyche's demise. The author likewise alters Venus' associations with, and promotion of, fertility and sexual pleasure. A love affair, particularly with Psyche (5.28.7-31), is precisely what the goddess does not want her son to be involved in. Moreover, it is ironic that Venus abhors the notion that Cupid should reproduce and reacts violently to the thoughts of being a grandmother (6.9.4).

The most significant and influential models for Apuleius' Venus originate in Vergil.

Venus' striking ferocity and ruthlessness towards Psyche has caused many scholars¹⁷ to notice

¹⁵ For example, Hom. *Od.* 8.362, *Il.* 3.424; *h. Hom.* to Venus 49; Hes. *Th.* 989; *ridens* at Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.33 and 3.27.67.

¹⁶ Sappho 1.2 (Lobel-Page) δολόπλοκε; Simonides 575.1 δολομήδεος; Bacchylides 16.116 δόλιος; E. Hel. 238.

¹⁷ The extent of other scholars' investigations into the similarities between Vergilian and Apuleian characters is limited. For example, Tatum (1979, p. 49) believes that "Venus pursues her victim, Psyche, with the relentlessness of Juno in the Aeneid". He notes that her opening words are reminiscent of Lucretius' language, but feels that the substance of the speech is a thematic reworking of Juno's first speech at *Aen.* 1.34-49, and adds that "this shrew is no Aeneadum genetrix". Finkelpearl (1990, p. 345) believes that the characterization of Venus as a goddess like Vergil's Juno reinforces links between Psyche and Aeneas, and adds that "we are forced to see the parallels between Psyche's obstacles and labours and those of Aeneas." Schlam (1992, p. 89)

similarities between the characters of Venus and Vergil's Juno, as well as echoes between Venus' opening words at *Met*. 4.30.1 and those of the Lucretian Venus at *DRN* 1.2ff. The question of why Apuleius should have chosen to adopt Vergilian echoes, however, has not been adequately addressed, as most scholars have typically accepted the echoes without justification. Another notable absence from modern scholarship is the notion that Apuleius' borrowings from Vergil extend beyond Juno's portrayal and include allusions to Venus. These echoes, like those of Juno, suggest plot development and enhance Apuleius' portrait of a cruel Venus.

Before investigating the parallels, though, it is necessary first to consider the various reasons for Apuleius' adoption and adaptation of earlier models. Apuleius frequently demonstrates his familiarity with other literary works (cf. the underworld setting) in order to demonstrate his ingenuity in either inverting or exploiting a rich literary tradition. Fond of comedy, the author parodies the more serious Vergilian representation of the gods in order to exploit and enhance the humour of both a character and scene. Often when the reader thinks that a direct parallel with serious implications is being made, Apuleius dupes the reader, characteristically surprising him. On other occasions, the echoes suggest an ominous tone and atmosphere, the intensity of a character's feelings and a possibly negative outcome for the protagonist (Psyche).

That Apuleius is consciously echoing Vergil is suggested by the preponderance of close resemblances between the texts (see below); the similarities, which include verbal affinities, are too abundant as to be mere coincidence. Echoes elsewhere in *Cupid and Psyche* (see chapters 1 and

only says that "Echoes of Lucretius and Vergil were surely intended to be enjoyed", and offers no reason why the reader should enjoy them. Singleton (p. 73) states that "In her anger Venus is similar to Juno of the Aeneid", and provides some similarities between their opening speeches. He alone offers an interpretation of the echoes, stating (p. 73) that "Venus' speech is a parody of epic poetry" and that Apuleius uses Juno's anger as a "model for his conception of god's wrath." Kenney (1990b) notes similarities throughout his commentary, but does not say why Apuleius would be consciously imitating Vergil.

2 passim) demonstrate the author's intimate knowledge of the Aeneid, and it is likely that Vergil's influence on Apuleius extends to characterization. The epic contains very incisive and highly developed character portraits of Juno and Venus, upon which Apuleius could draw and develop his own Venus. Since the Vergilian characters are so memorable, associations can readily be made between them and the Apuleian Venus. As a result, the echoes have wide-reaching impact. This intertextuality, moreover, influences the reader's perception of Apuleius' Venus because he brings ideas about the character to his reading of Cupid and Psyche. Consequently, this allows the author to develop the goddess' character in a shorter textual space.

The discernible likenesses between Venus and Juno include thematic, structural, verbal and tonal similarities. Both goddesses give the first speech early on in their respective works (Met. 4.30.1-3 and Aen. 1.37-49), during which the complaints issued by both are of a similar nature; their godheads have been injured¹⁸, and both express clearly their indignation resulting from a challenge to their authority. In the respective narratives, the goddesses' ferocity and resolve to exact vengeance are highlighted. Prior to Juno's first words, emphasis is placed upon her ire¹⁹. This accentuation lends force to her indignant outburst at 1.37-8 (mene incepto desistere victam / nec posse Italia Teucrorum avertere regem?). Venus' outburst is likewise preceded by details which stress her anger. The authorial statement at 4.29.5, inmodica translatio verae Veneris vehementer incendit animos, et inpatiens indignationis..., serves as a prelude to Venus' outburst at 4.30. Not only does this information highlight Venus' anger, but it also recalls the description of Juno's feelings immediately following her soliloquy (1.50, talia flammato secum dea corde volutans).

¹⁸ Met. 4.30.1-2, quae cum mortali puella partiario maiestatis honore tractor...nimirum communi nominis piamento vicariae venerationis incertum sustinebo et imaginem meam circumferet puella moritura; Aen. 1.8, numine laeso; 1.48-9, Et quisquam numen Iunonis adorat praeterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem?

¹⁹ Aen. 1.4, Iunonis ob iram; 1.11, tantaene animis caelestibus irae?; 1.25f., necdum etiam causae irarum saevique dolores exciderant animo; 1.36-7, cum Iuno aeternum servans sub pectore vulnus / haec secum.

Upon completion of their speeches both goddesses enlist the aid of another lesser deity; Venus calls upon Cupid at 4.30.4 and Juno requests Aeolus' assistance at 1.65ff. Similarities emerge in tone and content between the addresses. Both start with a solemn and earnest appeal²⁰. The goddesses then ask for help in exacting merciless revenge on a person (*Met.* 4.31.3; *Aen.* 1.69-70, incute vim ventis summersasque obrue puppis, / aut age diversos et disice corpora ponto). To ensure the assistance of the two minor divinities, Juno and Venus offer them bribes; Aeolus is promised a very beautiful wife (*Aen.* 1.72-3, quarum quae forma pulcherimma, Deiopea, / conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo) and Cupid's compliance is secured, so Venus thinks, by her kisses (4.31.4). The most significant parallel in terms of the narrative²¹, is that Venus' vow of vengeance against Psyche (*Met.* 4.31.1-3) motivates the plot of the tale as Juno's against the Trojans (*Aen.* 1.65ff.) drives the plot of the *Aeneid*.

Venus' lack of compassion for Psyche is paralleled in Juno's behaviour towards Dido at Aen. 4.90ff., where the goddess exhibits no pity for the queen as she makes plans to ensure Carthage's success. Both goddesses also hinder marriages of the protagonists. In *Cupid and Psyche*, Venus keeps the lovers apart by assigning Psyche four tasks and Juno enlists the aid of Allecto in sowing the seeds of war to delay the marriage of Lavinia and Aeneas (7.314ff.)²².

That Apuleius was looking back to Vergil's portrait of Juno is also suggested by Venus' physical response to her situation, *capite quassanti fremens altius* (4.29.5), which is described in

²⁰ Met. 4.31.1, Per ego te...deprecor; Aen. 1.65-6, Aeole, namque tibi divum pater atque hominum rex / et mulcere dedit fluctus et tollere vento... Austin on 1.65 states that "Iuno addresses Aeolus with formal ceremony. Namque is in the style of prayers, explaining why the functions of the divinity addressed are appropriate."

²¹ As Kenney (1990b on 4.30) notes. Kenney does not, however, mention Juno's words to Aeolus at 65ff, as evidence, but instead cites 7.292-322.

²² Aen. 7.314-5, atque immota manet fatis Lavinia coniunx: / at trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus.

terms similar to those used to depict Juno's demeanour at Aen. 7.292, quassans caput²³, immediately preceding her savage tirade against Aeneas and the Trojans. The lofty manner in which both divinities refer to themselves exhibits a similarity in tone. Although the exact words issuing forth from Apuleius' Venus (4.30.1, rerum naturae prisca parens, en elementorum origo initialis, en orbis totius alma Venus) are reminiscent of the language used to describe Lucretius' Venus²⁴, the self-righteousness which they convey picks up on Juno's sense of self-importance at Aen. 1.46-7 and 7.308²⁵, and reflects clearly the affront felt by the goddess.

Several other piquant twists and inversions of Vergil's Juno are also in evidence. Juno's concern that no one worships her, nor will make supplication to her (Aen. 1.48-9) is picked up and developed by Apuleius, for no one worships his Venus any longer (Met. 4.29.3, sacra deseruntur, templa deformantur, pulvinaria proteruntur, caerimoniae negleguntur...). This elaboration provides the background for the intensity of Venus' anger. At Aen. 7.323ff. Juno summons her agent Allecto to stir up war between the Trojans and Latins. Notably, Allecto torments Amata to the point of madness in order to achieve her goal (Aen. 7.373ff.). Apuleius picks up on the act of summoning a heartless handmaid for the purpose of tormenting someone at 6.9.2, where Venus calls upon Sollicitudo and Tristities to attack Psyche. The allusion to Allecto, a fearful and destructive Fury who resides in the Underworld, at the start of a speech (6.9.2-6) in which Apuleius' Venus reacts with the fury of Juno, heightens further the goddess' wrath and sets a very ominous tone. An inversion, similar in effect and threatening tone, may occur with Juno's

²³ Although as *OLD* s.v. *quasso* 1b and *Ibycus* show *caput* and *quass*- are paired elsewhere, I still believe that the echo is deliberate because of the phrase's placement before speeches in which the goddesses rail against their particular object of hatred.

²⁴ See Kenney 1990b on 4.30.1. Finkelpearl (1990, p. 345) concludes that Venus' and Juno's tones are "equally sarcastic". Any hint of Lucretian dignity, suggested by verbal reminiscences, quickly gives way to Venus' true character in *Cupid and Psyche*.

²⁵ Aen. 1.46-7, quae divum incedo regina Iovisque et soror et coniunx; 7.308, magna Iovis coniunx.

promise to Aeolus of *conubio stabili* (*Aen.* 1.73) with a very beautiful nymph. Venus, on the other hand, cruelly requests that Cupid make Psyche fall headlong in love with the lowest kind of man, damned by Fortune and one for whom no equal in wretchedness can be found throughout the entire world (*Met.* 4.31.3).

More comical twists and inversions are also present in the narrative. At Aen. 1.26-7, the narrator lists Paris' judgement against Juno as one of the reasons for the goddess' anger (manet alta mente repostum / iudicium Paridis spretaeque iniuria formae). Apuleius parodies the genuine insult to Juno by having Venus, for whom Paris' judgement was favourable, arrogantly and humorously question whether his decision was of any benefit to her after all (4.30.3). This, in turn, helps to set the stage for Venus' very undignified characterization. There is, moreover, a particular piquancy to likening Venus in Cupid and Psyche to Vergil's Juno. In the Aeneid, Juno's conduct is tempestuous, whereas Venus, as will be discussed below, is predominantly calm and calculating²⁶. Apuleius presents them in a completely different light; Venus rages about the insults she has had to endure while Juno attempts to calm her (Met. 5.31). Furthermore, the overtly hostile relationship between Juno and Venus in the Aeneid is turned around by Apuleius who presents Juno as fearful of crossing her daughter-in-law, whom she claims to have always loved as a daughter (6.4.4-5). Venus' willing compliance with Jupiter's decree that Cupid and Psyche's marriage will be legitimate (6.23.4) is reminiscent of Juno's acceptance of Jupiter's ruling that she desist from stirring up war between the Trojans and Latins (Aen. 12.806). Juno submits to Jupiter's wishes, though not without expressing her humiliation (Aen. 12.807ff.). After vehement

²⁶ Note, for example, the manner in which Venus pretends to defer to Juno's wishes and flatters the goddess at Aen. 4.107-8, quis talia demens / abnuat aut tecum malit contendere bello? and 4.113-4, tu coniunx, tibi fas animum temptare precando. perge, sequar, even though Venus knows that Juno is not telling the truth, 4.105, sensit enim simulata mente locutam. Venus agrees with Juno's plan to marry Aeneas and Dido and reacts thus, 4.127-8, non adversata petenti adnuit atque dolis risit Cytherea repertis. Her behaviour is clearly not the same as that of Apuleius' Venus.

ranting by Venus throughout *Cupid and Psyche*, in a comic inversion of Juno's reluctant acquiescence, the author presents Venus mutely accepting what Jupiter has decided.

These Vergilian echoes have an impact upon both Venus' characterization and the narrative as a whole. Epic associations often elevate the tone of a passage, as occurs in Psyche's descent to the underworld (see chapter 1), but here they point up the comedy of Venus' outrageous behaviour and complaints. At the same time, the echoes effectively impart a sense of foreboding to the reader, who, recalling the animosity expressed by Juno towards Aeneas, infers that Venus, in spite of being a comical deity, will engage in equally malevolent behaviour. This intertextuality also allows the reader to bring immediately to Venus' character traits associated with Juno such as vindictiveness, perseverance and a sense of destructive power, as a result of which he may be concerned for Psyche's safety²⁷. The associations furthermore suggest that Venus' role in the narrative will be significant and that the goddess will assume the role of hinderer to Psyche, just as Juno attempts to thwart Aeneas' success at every opportunity. Furthermore, the severity of Juno's persecution of Aeneas as well as the extent of his trials suggest to Apuleius' reader that Psyche too will be subject to like tribulations at the hands of Venus.

Throughout Cupid and Psyche, Venus is emphatically and consistently characterized as vindictive and merciless. Yet in contrast to this Venus' Junonian violent temper and explosive outbursts, Venus of the Aeneid achieves her goals in a wholly different manner; she is manipulative, cunning and devises her plans carefully. Apuleius on occasion places his Venus in situations reminiscent of scenes involving Venus in the Aeneid. Although their motives and

²⁷ Kenney (1990b on 4.30) cites Horsfall's (p. 41) assessment of the Vergilian echoes, saying that "The reader who has followed Apuleius attentively thus far may be prompted to anticipate the vast dimensions of Psyche's future suffering".

behaviour are often quite different, sufficient similarities exist between the two characters to suggest that Vergil's Venus also influenced Apuleius' creation of Venus.

Scholars have overlooked the various thematic and structural links which exist between the Venuses. For a start, both Venuses appear near the outset of their respective stories and petition Cupid to assist them (Aen. 1.664ff. and Met. 4.31.1-3). Just as the Apuleian Venus' vow of vengeance (4.31,2-3, cf. Juno's role, as above) is what motivates the action and moves the plot forward, so too does Vergil's Venus secure progression in the narrative when she asks Cupid to ensure that Dido fall in love with Aeneas. Both goddesses, therefore, play narratively significant and dynamic roles. Kenney (1990b on 4.30.4-31.3) acknowledges that the Vergilian scene served as Apuleius' model for the episode, but he fails to elaborate upon the effect of this borrowing and to draw a connection concerning Venus' characterization, in spite of also recognizing that Venus' words at 4.33.1f. recall Venus' at Aen. 1.664-628. In each instance, the appeals to Cupid are emotional and are made to secure the downfall, by means of falling in love, of a woman whom Venus perceives to be standing in her way. Consequently, the Venuses, as the goddesses of Love, assume paradoxical roles by employing love to harm. Vergil's Venus makes an impassioned appeal to Cupid in which she flatters his powers (Aen. 1.664-5, quoted in note 28) and appeals to his sense of familial duty²⁹. Apuleius likewise characterizes Venus as obsequious by her praise of the instruments of Cupid's power (4.31.1, sagittae and flammae) immediately after introducing her plea per... maternae caritatis foedera (Met. 4.31.1). Verbal links in the Venuses' addresses to Cupid further establish the tie between the authors. At Met. 4.31.1, Venus appeals to Cupid with the

²⁸ Aen. 1.664-6: nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia, solus / nate patris summi qui tela Typhoëa temnis, / ad te confugio et supplex tua numina posco. Met. 4.31.1-2: 'per ego te' inquit 'maternae caritatis foedera deprecor, per tuae sagittae dulcia vulnera, per flammae istius mellitas uredines vindictam tuae parenti, sed plenam, tribue et in pulchritudinem contumacem severiter vindica....

²⁹ Aen. 1.664-5, Venus repeats nate at the start of both lines as she addresses him and at 1.667-9, she appeals to Cupid's fraternal bond with Aeneas: frater ut Aeneas pelago tuus omnia circum / litora iactetur odiis Iunonis acerbae, / nota tibi, et nostro doluisti saepe dolore.

oxymoron 'sweet wounds', per tuae sagittae dulcia vulnera; this may be a verbal play upon Venus' description of the sweet kisses (Aen. 1.687, oscula dulcia) which Dido will bestow upon Cupid posing as Ascanius. Venus (Aen. 1.673-4) plans cingere flamma / reginam; again in the appeal to Cupid, Apuleius picks up on the flamma motif with the phrase per flammae istius mellitas uredines (4.31.1) and the use of fraglantissimo (4.31.3). A final verbal link exists between Venus' statement at Aen. 1.675, sed magno Aeneae mecum teneatur amore, and Venus' description of the love she desires for Psyche at Met. 4.31.3, amore fraglantissimo teneatur.

The outcome of the Vergilian Venus' plot, Dido's calamitous love affair with Aeneas, suggests to Apuleius' reader that Psyche too will have to endure equally dire afflictions. The deaths of both characters create another thematic link. Although neither Venus explicitly states that she wishes her victim to die, Dido's suicide (Aen. 4.630ff.) is a direct effect of Venus' plan³⁰. In the Metamorphoses, it too is Venus' initial request that sets the stage for Psyche's numerous suicide attempts and her "pseudo-death" at 6.21.1-2. As Kenney (1990b on 6.23.4) notes, Jupiter's address to Venus at the close of the tale is reminiscent of Jupiter's reassurances to Venus of Aeneas' and her success at the start of the Aeneid (1.254-296)³¹. A final thematic link can be detected in the exchanges between Venus and Juno at Met. 5.31 and Aen. 4.90ff, which will be discussed below.

The similarities between the Venuses are equally pointed in terms of Venus' characterization. In much the same manner in which Apuleius employs echoes of Vergil's Juno to play up Venus' ire and ferocity, he also utilizes reminiscences of Venus' portrait in Vergil to

³⁰ Lyne (p. 26) argues that Dido's death was "an effect, which...was neither planned nor foreseen by Venus". I disagree with his assessment, however, and think, as Austin does (on 664ff.) that Venus' plot is "heartless".

³¹ Kenney draws particular attention to the similarity between Met. 6.23.4, 'nec tu' inquit 'filia, quicquam contristere nec prosapiae tantae tuae statuque de matrimonio mortali metuas and Aen. 1.257-8, 'parce metu, Cytherea, manent immota tuorum / fata tibi.

underline his Venus' callousness towards Psyche. Repeatedly throughout the narrative, Apuleius presents his Venus behaving in a less restrained manner than Vergil's. And yet, because of similarities in circumstances in which the Venuses are placed, I suspect that Apuleius still had the Vergilian Venus in mind, and deliberately exploited these contrasts to point up the foolishness and bathetic behaviour of his Venus' character.

Just as the echoes of Vergil's Juno suggest to the reader of *Cupid and Psyche* traits associated with the goddess, so too do the recollections of Vergil's Venus allow the reader to "fillout" her portrait (cf. Apuleius' use of Vergilian echoes in his underworld scenario, chapter 1). In the aforementioned scenes in which the goddesses call upon their sons, Apuleius picks up on Venus' subtle, but pointed, mercilessness towards Dido in his characterization of Venus and embellishes it with striking and comic touches. Taking the Vergilian Venus' sense of familial duty (*Aen.* 667-9) one step further, Apuleius' Venus comically tries to persuade Cupid to do as she wishes in a very dramatic fashion, (4.31.1) *gemens ac fremens indignatione 'per ego te' inquit 'maternae caritatis foedera deprecor...* '32. The hard-heartedness of Vergil's Venus is most pointedly evidenced in the scene in which she envisions Dido cuddling Ascanius (*Aen.* 1.685-9)³³. Apuleius parallels this, albeit in a more overt manner, in Venus' display of ruthlessness towards Psyche at 4.31.2, ...vindictam tuae parenti, sed plenam, tribue et in pulchritudinem contumacem severiter vindica... and in the description of the sort of man with whom she would like Psyche to fall in love (4.31.3). Apuleius' Venus outdoes Vergil's in her unrelenting ferocity, however, and attempts to bribe her son with kisses of a sexual nature (4.31.4, osculis hiantibus filium diu ac pressule saviata).

³² A verbal reminiscence of Cupid's compliance with the wishes carae genetricis (Aen. 1.689) may also exist in the phrase maternae caritatis (4.31.1).

³³ Venus' heartlessness is played up by contrasting the malevolence of her plan with the description of Dido as *laetissima* (685), and the use of the expression *fallasque veneno* (688) to describe Cupid's actions. Austin on 657-94 rightly refers to this scene as "a psychological attack upon Dido", and adds that the motif of Cupid's intervention in Vergil becomes "painful and even horrible".

While Vergil's Venus remains collected throughout the exchange, Apuleius' Venus is immediately represented as a comic character who expresses Junonian ire, and who lacks the wiliness and self-restraint of her Vergilian counterpart. Conduct more readily associated with humans is repeatedly portrayed in the narrative, and contrasts with Venus' character in the Aeneid exploit this notion. Venus' motive in the Metamorphoses is selfish, her melodramatic behaviour is not becoming for a goddess, nor is it appropriate for her role as a mother. In an encounter between Venus and Juno (Aen. 4.90ff.), Venus remains calm, submissive, and shrewdly achieves her ends by flattery and by allowing Juno to think that she is in control³⁴. Apuleius presents an encounter of an altogether different nature between the goddesses. His meeting highlights Venus' lack of control and over-reaction to her son's disobedience which has her in a rage (5.31; especially 5.31.7, Venus indignata ridicule tractari suas iniurias). Like Venus of the Aeneid, throughout this scene in Cupid and Psyche, Juno calmly tries to assuage Venus' choler and does not overtly disclose to the goddess that she disagrees with her conduct. Upon Psyche's encounter with Juno, Venus' fawning words to Juno at Aen 4.107-8 are inverted in Juno's response to Psyche at Met. 6.4.535 to point up the humour of Juno, the queen of the gods, fearing the ridiculous conduct of this tempestuous Venus.

Further inversions of Vergil's Venus reinforce the poignantly sarcastic characterization of the goddess in *Cupid and Psyche*. In the *Aeneid*, the reader is left with the overall impression of a goddess who is adjuvant, maternally protective and loving. Venus of *Cupid and Psyche*, however,

³⁴ For example, Aen. 4.107-8 (Venus addressing Juno), quis talia demens abnuat aut tecum malit contendere bello?; 4.113-4, tu coniunx, tibi fas animum temptare precando. perge, sequar.

³⁵ Met. 6.4.5, Sed contra voluntatem Veneris nurus meae, quam filiae semper dilexi loco, praestare me pudor non sinit. tunc etiam legibus quae servos alienos profugos invitis dominis vetant suscipi prohibeor.

is impetuous, violently angry and self-absorbed. Venus' tearful appeal to Jupiter at Aen. 1.228ff.36 shows motherly concern for her son's well-being, whereas her selfish appeal at Met. 6.7.1-2 is to secure the aid that she needs to bring about the demise of her son's wife. Even though Vergil's Venus is heartless towards Dido³⁷, she exhibits genuine motherly affection for her son. By comparison, the manner in which Venus of the Metamorphoses chides and belittles Cupid (especially 5.29-30) shows her lack of concern for her son, her childish inability to control her anger and her foolishness in dealing with him. Venus' tirade against Cupid at Met. 5.29-30 may well be an inversion of the mother/son relationship and exchange at Aen. 1.407-1038, where Aeneas criticizes his mother's cruelty and deceitfulness. In a description of Aeneas' beauty at Aen. 1.588ff., Venus is said to have bestowed good looks upon her son³⁹. There may be a play upon this at Met. 5.30.640, where Venus threatens to seek assistance from Sobrietas, whom she will ask to cut off both Cupid's locks and wings to which the goddess herself has bestowed a golden shine and imbued with nectar. Venus' abortive attempts in Cupid and Psyche to persuade individuals to do as she wishes by sexual means (cf. 4.31.4 and 6.8.3, a reward of kisses) become even more comical when contrasted with the Vergilian Venus' ability to manipulate and persuade⁴¹ those around her. Another inversion of these scenes is also evident. Cupid's willing

³⁶ Venus' appeal to Neptune at *Aen*. 5.779ff. is also made in a bid to ensure Aeneas' safety and success.

³⁷ In a particularly nasty touch, even when Juno proposes the plan to marry Aeneas and Dido (4.125-8), Venus shows no pity.

³⁸ Aen. 1.407-10, 'quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis / ludis imaginibus? Cur dextrae iungere dextram / non datur ac veras audire et reddere voces?' / talibus incusat....

 $^{^{39}}$ Aen. 1.589-91, namque ipsa decoram / caesariem nato genetrix lumenque iuventae / pupureum et laetos oculis adflarat honores :

⁴⁰ Met. 5.30.6, ...comas quas istis manibus meis subinde aureo nitore perstrinxi deraserit, pinnas quas in meo gremio nectarei fontis infeci praetonderit.

⁴¹ For example, Aen. 8.393 in an appeal to Vulcan, sensit laeta dolis et formae conscia coniunx.

compliance with his mother's wishes at *Aen.* 1.689ff. (*gressu gaudens incedit Iuli*) predisposes Apuleius' reader to anticipate that Cupid will comply with Venus' request to make Psyche fall in love with the lowest of men. Apuleius, however, characteristically plays with his reader by means of this echo, deceiving him into expecting the worst, but delivering ultimately a much happier situation (6.23-24).

Moving on now from literary models and parallels to Venus as she is characterized in the story, I shall first provide a brief break-down of Venus' appearances and actions to give clarity to the subsequent discussion. An angry Venus first appears at 4.29.5ff., vowing that she will exact vengeance upon the mortal girl who has usurped her due honours. After her appeal to Cupid for help in this matter, she then departs in a dignified fashion in the ecphrasis at 4.31.4-7. The goddess does not reappear until 5.28.6ff and remains on the scene until the end of this book. During this time, Venus learns the identity of Cupid's lover and again rages. She angrily confronts Cupid, complains about her insolent son to Ceres and Juno, and finally departs rapidly in a huff. Upon her reappearance at 6.6 in a second ecphrasis, she flies to Heaven in her spectacular chariot. After a wheedling appeal to Mercury (6.7) to proclaim a reward for Psyche's discovery, Venus exhibits unrelenting cruelty in her savage address to and attack on Psyche who has willingly surrendered (6.9.1). Following this, the goddess assigns Psyche's first task (6.10.3). At 6.11.2ff., Venus shouts at the girl and assigns a more difficult task. At 6.13.2-5, the goddess displays her anger physically before assigning the third task, and prior to telling Psyche to undertake a seemingly impossible descent to the Underworld, Venus smiles deadly smiles (6.16). At 6.23.4, the goddess' presence is implied by Jupiter's address to her, throughout which she remains silent, pronouncing the legitimacy of Cupid and Psyche's marriage. In her final appearance (6.24.3) Venus dances to sweet music at the wedding celebration.

As is evident from the above synopsis, Venus is textually prominent, particularly in books 4 and 5, where she is the first and last character to enter or leave the scene. The substantial

length of her appearances emphasizes her significance; she is present from 4.29.5-4.31.7 and 5.28.3-5.31.7. The goddess is present in several scenes of book 6 (6.6-7, 6.9.2-6.10.2, 6.11.1-2 and 4-6, 6.13.2-5, 6.16.1-5, 6.23.4 and 6.24.3), but the length of these appearances has been reduced as the focus shifts from Venus' pursuit of Psyche to the girl's accomplishment of her labours⁴². Venus' decreased significance to the plot once she has assigned Psyche's final task is underlined by her absence from the substantial latter segment of the book, 6.17.1-6.23.4, and by her fleeting final appearance (6.24.3) in which she is no more prominent than the other gods. Her decrease in prominence and significance in book 6 occurs for several reasons. The goddess is no longer the primary mover of events, as it is Psyche's successful completion of each task that propels the plot forward and engages the reader. Furthermore, after the fourth task, Jupiter intervenes and assumes the role of controlling divinity.

Venus' initial characterization sets the tone for what is to come from the goddess; she is most frequently portrayed in the same light⁴³. Although she exhibits less aggressive behaviour towards others on occasion (e.g. 4.31.1-3, 6.7.3f.), her motives behind such conduct are equally malicious. In most of her appearances, Venus demonstrates implacable vindictiveness, malice, pettiness and cruelty. She is inexorable, of a domineering nature and has a bad temper. Many of these characteristics stem from her immense pride and jealousy. At no point does Venus exhibit contradictory traits to soften her character. Venus, the first protagonist introduced by Apuleius, is also the first complex character encountered by the reader. The goddess appears with ample frequency in the narrative and exhibits a sufficiently wide range of characteristics that the reader

⁴² More textual space is given to Psyche's fulfilment of each task than to Venus' anger at her success and assignment of the next trial.

⁴³ The sole instance in which Venus behaves in a submissive manner is at the end of the story where she willingly accepts Jupiter's decision to marry the couple. Her acceptance of the nuptials is communicated by means of her dancing *formonsa* at the wedding feast (6.24.3). It is worth noting that she remains mute in this scene.

truly gets a sense of what she is like. Her personality has many facets; she can be wheedling and entreating, and remains capable of surprising the reader (e.g. 6.23.4 and 6.24.3)⁴⁴.

In Venus' first appearance, the author immediately and effectively engages the reader by providing him with both emotional insight and physical information about the goddess. The reader is instantly struck with the vehemence of Venus' ire45. Her wrath elicits reader apprehension, which is subsequently underlined by her own choleric words (4.30.1-4.31.3), and the forcefulness of her emotions creates a sense of foreboding. The epic elevation of her tone and careful presentation of her first words46 leave a first impression of a goddess with an elevated self-image and high self-esteem. Venus' opening statement, however, in which she identifies herself as "universal creative principle" (Kenney 1990b on 4.30) is heavily ironical, as her behaviour immediately corroborates47. Instead of a beneficent mother goddess, Venus expresses jealousy, snobbery towards mortals (4.30.1, nomen meum caelo conditum terrenis sordibus profanatur), injured pride (4.30.3, meos honores usurpaverit) and resentment48.

⁴⁴ For the definitions of and distinctions between 'round' and 'flat' (complex and simple) characters, see the beginning of chapter 3. Although the reader is not given any insight as to why Venus has suddenly acquiesced to Jupiter's decree, it is clear that she has undergone some sort of change in temperament.

⁴⁵ 4.29.5, verae Veneris vehementer incendit animos, et inpatiens indignationis capite quassanti fremens altius sic secum disserit. Note also the hissing sound of the latter third of the sentence which aptly reflects Venus' exasperation.

⁴⁶ For the effects of the epic echoes, see below. Venus' first phrase *en rerum naturae prisca* parens contains 10 syllables, the second has 14 and the third phrase contains 10. These phrases serve as elegant and balanced introductory statements.

⁴⁷ The image of Venus conducting herself with a high standard of moral conduct, which is implied by the use of the adjective *prisca* (*prisca parens*, 4.30.1; OLD s.v. *priscus* 3b), is quickly shattered upon her appeal to Cupid and her shockingly inappropriate kissing of her son (4.31.4).

⁴⁸ Schlam (1992, p. 97) sums up Venus' antithetical roles in *Cupid and Psyche*, stating that "she is introduced as a traditional avenging deity but is then mocked as a huffy matron, unwilling to let her son grow up".

The goddess' introductory soliloquy provides the psychological motives for her vehement pursuit of Psyche. Pride prompts Venus to feel that by rights she deserves genuine and exclusive worship (4.30.2, communi nominis piamento vicariae venerationis incertum sustinebo). Apuleius, moreover, makes much of Venus' concern with physical beauty⁴⁹. Vanity causes her not to want even her name associated terrenis sordibus (4.30.1), let alone have a mortal look like her (4.30.2, imaginem meam). This concern with comeliness permits an opportunity to highlight the goddess' arrogance when she acrimoniously questions of what benefit Paris' judgement really was to her if she is to be treated with such disdain (4.30.3, luppiter ob eximiam speciem tantis praetulit deabus). The goddess' language points up the intensity of her perceived affront and effectively characterizes her as ferocious. She ominously vows that the human girl's inlicitae beauty will benefit her in no way (sed non adeo gaudens ista), and concludes her speech on a threatening note with paeniteat.

Venus' subsequent address to Cupid (4.31.1-3) does more than highlight the goddess' malevolence and her determination to exact revenge. Her appeal for aid and the severity of the punishment that she asks Cupid to inflict upon the usurper of her rights suggests Venus' confidence in the bond between herself and Cupid, and in her ability to control her son. The fact that Venus seals the request with kisses, however, indicates a degree of uncertainty on Venus' part about Cupid's compliance if he needs to be coaxed in this way. It does denote, however, Venus' belief in the efficacy of her kisses, and by implication, faith in her authority. Her potency is further played up in the ecphrasis which immediately follows (4.31.4-7). The calming of the sea upon her approach and the many attendant deities accompanying Venus in her progress to Ocean effectively characterize her as a powerful deity and a forceful opponent (see further chapter 2). The repetition of points indicating Venus' anger and power in this first appearance

⁴⁹ Cf. Venus' excuse for Psyche's katabasis at 6.16.5, that she would like to borrow some of Proserpine's beauty.

creates an incisive portrait, stirs a sense of dread in the reader and suggests that such a potent deity will not fail to achieve her goal.

The inclusion of comic traits in Venus' character portrayal detracts from the goddess' divine and dignified air. From the start of the tale, the reader is presented with a character who often does not behave in a numinous manner. Walsh, who notes Venus' comic behaviour throughout the narrative (1970, p. 200ff.), believes that Hellenistic burlesque influenced Venus' characterization, and states that in "her domineering role as mother-in-law [Venus] has been developed with the aid of Alexandrian comic portraiture" (p. 218). Likewise Grimal (1963, p. 24) and Schlam (1992, p. 97) conclude that many of Venus' traits stem from the comic tradition⁵⁰. These scholars, however, do not make clear the ancient evidence to support their assertions⁵¹. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the manner in which Apuleius portrays Venus is deliberately intended to highlight her foolishness and over-reactions to Cupid's disobedience, as well as to lighten the severity of her character.

In addition to the aforementioned literary parodies, Apuleius most emphatically plays up human and comic aspects of Venus' character in his representation of the mother-son relationship between Venus and Cupid and the wide range of emotions that Venus feels. Various

⁵⁰ Schlam (1992, p. 97) states that "The Olympians in the tale, Venus, Jupiter, Hermes, Juno, and Ceres, are presented comically, in a tradition going back at least to the story told by Demodocus in the *Odyssey*". Grimal (1963, p. 24), who believes that Apuleius was "un grand lecteur de Plaute" states that "Apulée n'a donc aucun scrupule à reprendre la tradition littéraire qui se plaît à ridiculiser les dieux et les portraits qu'il en trace sont librement adaptés de la comédie et surtout de la <satura> romaine." He lists the following character traits as those originating in comedy: "une matrone romaine procédurière, toujours prête à valoir son droit, cruelle avec ses servantes, redoutable dans ses rapports aves ses <amies> et ses parentes, qui redoutent de se brouiller avec elle. Tout cet aspect du conte présente une <couleur> typiquement romaine." While it is possible that Grimal's belief that Venus' traits stem from comedy, the absence of specific models and literary evidence weakens his argument.

⁵¹ Walsh (1970, p. 209 n. 3) notes the similarity between 5.29f., where "the comically vindictive Venus is at the centre", and the scene at A.R. 3.90ff. He does not cite this as evidence of Venus as a domineering mother-in-law. In his commentary, Grimal notes verbal echoes of Plautus, and I assume that these citations are his evidence.

scholars have noted that Venus behaves like a human "huffy matron" (Schlam 1992, p. 97) who is unwilling to allow her son to grow up (Kenney 1990b and Singleton passim, etc.), but they have not specified how Apuleius creates this impression. At best, they have occasionally noted points at which Venus' actions are comical. While simultaneously presenting his reader with a malevolent termagant, Apuleius undercuts the seriousness of Venus' complaints by portraying her comically gemens ac fremens indignatione (4.31.1), and appealing to her son for aid in a manner which suggests that she is completely powerless⁵². The goddess' conduct towards her son ranges from needing his assistance and securing it with seductive kisses⁵³ (4.31), to realizing that she cannot control her "good for nothing son" (5.29.4, nugo et corruptor et inamabilis). The exchange in which she chides him at length (5.29) for being a disgrace to the family, poorly reared and badly behaved adds a particularly comical and bathetic touch. In a scene which rivals her first appearance in humour, Venus, speaking again as though she were impotent, rants (5.30.1) that Cupid, whom she perceives and treats as though he were still a child (5.29.3, hoc aetatis puer) has been badly brought up. The familial bond by which Venus earlier appealed to Cupid (per maternae caritatis foedera, 4.31.1), has suddenly been shattered now that injured pride causes Venus, assuming the guise of the feeble female (5.30.1, quasi viduam utique contemnis), to accuse

⁵² Singleton (p. 77) suggests that Venus' employment of Cupid has a psychological motive, explaining that "it would be beneath her dignity to harm Psyche herself and she would lose face if she even acknowledged her rival." This may be correct; however, I also suspect that epic models have influenced Apuleius and that is why he has Venus enlist Cupid's aid. Venus downplays her power when she enlists Mercury's assistance at 6.7.3, frater Arcadi, scis nempe sororem tuam Venerem sine Mercuri praesentia nil umquam fecisse.

⁵³ Kenney (1990b on 4.31.4) erroneously states that "This parting is modelled on that at A.R. 3.149-50". In Apollonius, Eros is portrayed as a small boy who eagerly complies with his mother's request, when the reward of a golden ball is offered. The kisses which Aphrodite confers on Eros are a maternal display of affection whereas those of Apuleius' Venus are clearly of a sexual nature. I would argue rather that Apuleius has provided his reader with a nasty twist on the innocent exchange between Aphrodite and Eros in Apollonius – Cupid is not a child in Apuleius, he does not obey his mother, and she tries to use her powers of seduction to attain her goal.

her son of physical violence (5.30.1, percussisti saepius). Equally perceptive is the manner in which Venus refers to Cupid when addressing Juno and Ceres (5.31.2, non dicendi filii mei facta) and her comic exaggeration of the extent of Cupid's injuries when speaking, with a very maternal air, to Psyche (6.9.2, qui tuo vulnere periclitatur).

Venus' comic portrayal persists throughout the story. Legalisms which the goddess uses in her opening soliloquy and her scolding of Cupid at 5.2954 are melodramatic and incongruous. They signal her sense of self-importance, yet simultaneously characterize the deity, who is issuing threats, as unreasonable and lacking dignity. Another comic aspect of Venus' characterization, previously overlooked by scholars is the attention which Venus draws to her age, and the fact that she is not past her prime, as though she were human. The goddess has a son who himself is old enough to engage in a relationship, and yet, she does not want to acknowledge that she too has grown older. As she hurls insults at Cupid at $5.29.4^{55}$, the fact that she can still conceive is introduced before her disgust at Cupid's misconduct and Mars' infidelities. Venus' concern with her age is effectively played up again in her huffy reaction (5.31.7) to Juno's and Ceres' attempt to placate her anger. Venus' anxiety and egotism truly come to the forefront in her address to Psyche at 6.9.4-6. Rather than showing concern for her pregnant daughter-in-law, Venus' immediate thought upon seeing Psyche is that she herself, much to her dismay, will be called a grandmother, felix vero ego quae in ipso aetatis meae flore vocabor avia et vilis ancillae filius nepos Veneris audiet (6.9.5). The threat that Venus feels because of her age is so formidable that it drives her to behave with remarkably unwarranted ferocity towards Psyche

⁵⁴ Singleton (p. 77) notes the following words as legal language: partiarius, maiestas, iustitia, fides, usurpo, inlicitus and paeniteat. At 5.29.6, Kenney (1990b) notes a legal reference in the expression patris tui and paeniteat is echoed at 5.30.2.

⁵⁵ 5.29.4, sed utique praesumis nugo et corruptor et inamabilis te solum generosum nec me iam per aetatem posse concipere.

(6.9.6), who, Venus concludes, will give birth to a bastard (spurius iste nascetur, si tamen partum omnino perferre te patiemur)⁵⁶.

Venus' environment does not play a major role in characterizing the goddess, but it is noteworthy on several occasions. At 5.29.1, the detail that Venus' bed chamber is golden (aureum thalamum) lends a divine air to the scene. The same effect is achieved by the two ecphraseis (4.31.4-7 and 6.6) in which her spectacular marine retinue and chariot are depicted (see chapter 2). These points also underline Venus' authority, portraying her as a formidable opponent to Psyche. The company which Venus keeps, moreover, amplifies the goddess' wicked nature. At 6.7.3, Venus enlists the aid of the god Mercury, whom she is easily able to win over⁵⁷. Venus' handmaids, Consuetudo, Tristities and Sollicitudo and their ferocious behaviour towards Psyche mirror Venus' overt antagonism towards the girl. That Venus should have these particular personifications as servants accentuates her level of wickedness. Furthermore, the calm and self-restraint of the other gods with whom Venus meets throughout the tale amplify the hostility which she expresses.

An analysis of the language used to describe Venus and her actions suggests that Apuleius has employed carefully selected words to characterize Venus. Of the twenty-eight

analysis of matrimonium iustum on legal, theogonical and philosophical/allegorical levels, makes some observations about Venus' characterization. Like other scholars (see p. 197f.), the focus of his paper is not upon Venus' comic portrayal. Keulen looks extensively at how "legal" the goddess' words are, and at the origins of legal terminology and concepts. He believes that Venus' "pseudo-legal argumentation" [i.e. her use of the terms impares nuptiae and spurius and praeterea to introduce arguments of equal importance] characterizes the goddess in an "amusing, human, even Roman way" (p. 217), and further adds that in Venus' character, Roman conservative mentality is reflected by making a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate offspring, and wanting to keep her family "unstained" (pp. 221-2). Finkelpearl (1998, p. 68) unconvincingly argues that Venus' objection to being a grandmother is reminiscent of Juno's words to Aeolus at Aen. 1.75, et pulchra faciat te prole parentem. The scholar contends that Juno's words are ironically turned against Venus.

⁵⁷ 6.7.3, frater Arcadi, scis nempe sororem tuam Venerem sine Mercuri praesentia nil umquam fecisse...

nouns referring to Venus, the repetition of *dea* five times and *domina* nine times in the story subtly underlines Venus' position of authority. The goddess' displeasure is reinforced by Apuleius' choice of adjectives, participles and adverbs. Sixteen of the forty-five adjectives and participles describing Venus indicate that she is angry or behaving in a threatening manner⁵⁸. The majority of the twenty-one adverbs or adverbial phrases that modify the deity express either the intensity or speed of her actions. Only one indicates a positive trait (6.24.3, *formonsa*) or concern on Venus' part (6.7.2, *sollicite*). Ten of sixty-eight verbs describe her movements to or from a place. The speed with which the goddess moves (e.g. *confestim, repente, properiter, protinus* [3x], etc.) signals her anger and eagerness to take revenge. Adverbs indicating intensity perform the same function (e.g. of Venus' shouting, 4.29.5, *altius*; 5.29.2, *quam maxime*). Another significant grouping of verbs is that seventeen of the sixty-eight applied to Venus describe her speaking. Furthermore, ten of the forty-five adjectives and participles denote the goddess either speaking or making some kind of noise⁵⁹. As is borne out by the tale, Venus truly is a talker who issues commands and verbally abuses others, rather than being an active pursuer of her quarry.

Clarity is achieved in Venus' characterization by means of her consistent portrayal up to the final scene. Emphasis is placed upon her hostile malevolence in her soliloquies, and dialogues, in authorial judgements and in her own actions. The deity's lack of self-restraint, as she fluctuates between a pose of dignified composure and rash outbursts (cf. 6.6f. to 6.9), shows the intensity of her emotions. The inclusion of physical manifestations of her anger, a particularly

⁵⁸ 4.29.5, inpatiens, fremens; 4.31.1, gemens ac fremens; 5.28.6, irata; 5.29.1, quiritans; 5.29.2; boans; 5.31.1; infesta, stomachata; 5.31.7, indignata; 6.2.2, anxia, furens; 6.9.1, [caput] quatiens, ascalpens [aurem dexteram; 6.16.1, saevientis; 6.16.2, comminans. It is also noteworthy that when the goddess is described as smiling (6.13.2, subridens; 6.16.2, renidens) the adverbs amarum and exitiabile are applied.

⁵⁹ 4.29.5, fremens; 4.31.1, gemens ac fremens; 4.31.4, effata; 5.29.1, quiritans; 5.29.2, boans; 5.31.1, effata; 6.7.5, dicens; 6.13.5, dicens; 6.16.2, comminans.

vivifying and threatening aspect of her characterization, reinforces this60. Venus' menacing nature is further played up by the author's sustainment of her initial level of malevolence throughout the story. The extremes to which she goes to assure that both Psyche and Cupid are punished for what she perceives to be their insolence, underline her ferocity. Venus' unrelenting mercilessness is emphasized by the repetition of her wishes in close proximity when she first requests help from Cupid (4.31.2, vindictam tuae parenti, sed plenam tribue et in pulchritudinem contumacem severiter vindica). In a particularly pointed display of her enmity, she describes the kind of love with which she wants Psyche to be consumed (4.31.3, ... amore fraglantissimo... hominis extremi, quem...Fortuna damnavit etc.). Equally biting is the animosity which she expresses toward Psyche, now pregnant with her own grandchild (6.9.4), and the complete lack of compassion shown to the girl who is in obvious pain and who has willingly given herself up by this point in the narrative (6.9.4-6). The assignment of tasks and her rancorous reaction upon Psyche's successful completion of each one (6.11.2, 6.13.3, 6.16.2) truly stress Venus' hateful disposition. Prior to assigning Psyche's first task (6.10.1), Venus is physically abusive and once the girl has successfully completed her assignments, the goddess' anger is fueled further. Disbelieving that Psyche could perform the tasks single-handedly, Venus doles out increasingly difficult ones.

Another individualizing and vivifying touch to Venus' character portrayal is that in the midst of so much pain and suffering on Psyche's part, Venus engages in leisurely, voluptuous pursuits. At 5.28.3, while Psyche searches the earth for Cupid, Venus is relaxing in the Ocean, lavantem natantemque. More pointedly, after assigning Psyche's first task, Venus attends a wedding dinner (6.10.4), and for the fourth task Venus gives the excuse that she needs some of Proserpine's beauty in order to make herself up before attending the theatre (6.16.5). The other

⁶⁰ 4.29.5, capite quassanti fremens altius; 4.31.1, gemens ac fremens indigatione; 5.31.1, vultu tumido; 6.9.1, latissimum cachinnum extollit...caputque quatiens et ascalpens aurem dextram; 6.9.4, rursus sublato risu, 6.13.2, contortis superciliis subridens amarum; 6.16.2, renidens exitiabile.

characters whom Psyche encounters during her trials demonstrate genuine compassion for her plight, whereas Venus is so merciless that she entertains herself while her victim suffers.

Venus' behaviour in her final appearances at 6.23.4 and 6.24.3 comes as a surprise to the reader. Throughout the tale, Venus has played an aggressive, dominant role in exchanges with other characters. In her preceding appearance (6.16), the goddess displayed fierce enmity towards Psyche when she commanded the girl to descend to the Underworld. Suddenly, however, Venus has abandoned her anger and willingly complies with Jupiter's decree. This unexpected change, while underlining Jupiter's authority, prompts the reader to bring to mind the more positive and pleasurable associations with Venus. Her final appearance is not, however, entirely out of character. A link is created with her earlier characterization by means of this scene's representation of Venus' comically bathetic nature and snobbery towards mortals. Before the goddess becomes a jubilant participant in the wedding feast (6.24.3, Venus suavi musicae superingressa formonsa saltavit), she must first be assured that Cupid is not fouling the family name with an illegitimate marriage to someone below his social position (6.23.4).

Venus' most significant function in the narrative of *Cupid and Psyche* is to provide the motivating force for the action. Were Venus never jealously enraged by the attention afforded to Psyche and the ensuing abandonment of her rites, she would not have enlisted Cupid's aid and unwittingly caused him to become enamoured of the girl. Cupid's love for Psyche, in turn, elicits disobedience in the young god⁶¹, which later fuels Venus' anger and advances the plot. In addition to setting the action in motion, Venus is a principal mover of events later in the narrative. After Psyche's abandonment by Cupid (5.28), Venus' rekindled fury renews her desire

⁶¹ Schlam (1992, p. 83) believes that once Cupid appears on the scene, Venus' jealous anger "becomes almost without consequence to the immediate action that unfolds" and that the plot is diverted "from whatever course the first cause [i.e. Venus' anger] may suggest". The effects of Venus' anger are critical to the overall plot and have a direct influence on what follows her departure at 4.31.4. The reader is left to infer that Cupid has fallen in love with Psyche and decided to rescue her.

for revenge on Psyche. This prepares the reader for the goddess' reintroduction to the narrative and for Psyche's surrender to her (6.8.4). The goddess' irate disposition in her exchange with Ceres and Juno, moreover, sets the stage for Psyche's rejection by the pair when the girl requests assistance. Venus keeps the plot moving in a large portion of the sixth book by controlling the actions of other characters in the story and by assigning Psyche's four tasks⁶². For example, she tells Mercury to make a proclamation (6.7) whose immediate result is Psyche's surrender, and she instructs her handmaids *Sollicitudo* and *Tristities* (6.9.3) to torture Psyche. Most significantly, Psyche's collapse upon completing Venus' fourth task prompts Cupid to intervene, thus leading to the story's happy ending.

Venus is also essential to the plot in her role of principal villain/hinderer to Psyche. This role is effectively played up in the goddess' repeated exhibitions of unwavering ire towards Psyche. It is also dexterously highlighted by the assumption of a parallel role by Psyche's sisters 63. While Venus is absent from book 5, the wicked sisters effectuate Psyche's abandonment by Cupid. But upon their deaths (5.27), the goddess makes an immediate and narratively essential 64 return to the story (5.28), whereupon she resumes her role with rekindled fury. While the sisters have caused Psyche to be compelled to leave her spectacular home and lose her husband, Venus' dogged pursuit of the girl exacerbates Psyche's suffering, causing her to continue wandering about and prolonging the lovers' separation. The goddess' display of heartlessness towards Psyche, who has already suffered much at the hands of her wicked family, makes her seem more despicable than Psyche's siblings.

⁶² The tasks are assigned and completed between 6.10 and 6.21.2.

⁶³ For numerous other parallels between Venus and Psyche's sisters see Frangoulidis 1994, pp. 67-72. Penwill (p. 54) likewise sees a parallel between the ferocity and destructiveness of the jealousy and desire for revenge shown by both Venus and Psyche's sisters.

⁶⁴ A villain is required to sustain the action.

The effects of Venus' comical and hostile characterization are many. Most significantly, as with the author's similar depiction of several minor divinities, the goddess' portrayal is indicative of Apuleius' irreverence towards the traditional gods. The introduction of a villain, furthermore, who behaves in a foolishly contemptible way, inclines the reader to feel sympathy for the victim, i.e. Psyche, and involves the reader more readily in her plight. The humorous aspects of Venus' portrayal also help to diffuse high levels of tension created by displays of the goddess' explosive anger in many of the scenes in which she plays a principal role (e.g. 5.29, 6.9-10, etc.). Venus' consistent and intense characterization also impacts upon the other characters whom Venus encounters by pointing up their contrasting personalities.

The effects of contrasting characterization are most notable in the silent passivity of Cupid at 4.31.1-4 and 5.29-30, and the submissive despair that Psyche demonstrates when she finally gives herself up to Venus (6.9ff.). Psyche never directly addresses Venus, but remains silent and compliant while the goddess furiously assigns her one task after the other. The other characters' reticence allows for the focus to remain upon Venus, and in the case of Psyche, underlines the girl's fear and guilelessness. Venus' savagery further accentuates the beneficence of Psyche's non-human assistants in her tasks (see chapter 3). The lack of hostility exhibited by the other Olympians in the tale further brings Venus' viciousness into relief.

Cupid

Cupid's initial characterization draws heavily upon his traditional portrayal as a mischievous boy who inflicts great pains upon both humans and gods alike. And yet, Apuleius engages in reader deception with this first depiction, for upon the god's actual appearance, and in his actions subsequent to Venus' appeal (4.31.1-3), a wholly different character comes to light. Consequently, the negative portrayal of Cupid at 4.30.4-5 does not concur with the reader's first impression of the god. As the story unfolds, it also becomes apparent that many other characters

perceive Cupid in a way discordant with the god's words and actions. The complexity of Cupid's character is matched by the diverse roles that he assumes in the story. It is, however, his role of loving husband which has the greatest impact on the reader, due in great part to its novelty as well as to the precision with which Apuleius portrays it.

Few scholarly works deal exclusively with Cupid's characterization in the tale; yet discussions of varying degrees of incisiveness about the god's conduct and character do appear often in works with another focus. Much of the scholarship which does touch upon Cupid's character has stressed the duality of the god's portrayal and his transformation from a young impulsive deity to a married man (James 1987, p. 121ff.; Kenney 1990a and 1990b *passim*; Walsh 1970, p. 199ff., etc.). On the whole, scholars have not delved sufficiently deeply into the methods of Cupid's characterization, and, as a result, their analyses are superficial. In order to make familiar the widely held opinions of scholars, I shall offer a concise summary of the most recent and prominent works pertaining to this subject.

As in his analysis of Venus' character, Kenney (1990a and b) mistakenly applies the Platonic theory of the existence of two Amors to the *Cupid and Psyche* tale. I shall not reiterate my arguments against his interpretation, but will simply restate that, within the story, I can find no evidence of there being two Cupids (*Caelestis* and *Vulgaris*) who randomly and inexplicably enter and leave the story at will. Like Kenney, Walsh has trouble reconciling what he believes is a transformation in Cupid's character. He states (1970, p. 199), "Initially Cupid has his customary literary role, 'flammis et sagittis armatus'...the wanton child is to become the sober, apprehensive, devoted husband. This schizoid character persists to the final scene...". Walsh does not recognize that Cupid's characterization, as evidenced initially by his actions and later by his words, is not inconsistent or "schizoid". Contrary to Walsh's view (1970, p. 217) that Cupid's personality alternates "uneasily between earnest lover and wanton boy", the god is steadfast in his love for Psyche, and only the other divinities view him as a lecher. Consequently, there are no uneasy

oscillations in his character. Grimal's (1963, introduction) approach, which falls outside the scope of this thesis, is philosophical. He contends that the portrait of Love in love demonstrates that Amor is not on a par with the other gods, but that he is an intermediary daimon. Grimal also completely ignores the wittiness of Cupid's characterization. Schlam and Tatum touch only briefly upon Cupid's character. The former (1992, p. 89) makes note of artistic representations of Eros and Psyche, and concludes that they provide "no evidence of any extended narrative concerning them." Any character analysis attempted by Schlam, has a philosophical or psychological slant⁶⁵, and does not advance scholarship on the subject. Tatum (1979, pp. 54-61) only discusses Cupid as a power or force capable of binding Psyche to the gods, making reference to Apuleius' own words about Cupid's nature; he is a force allowed to be sensed but not seen (Florida, 10).

James' (1987) work on Cupid's character deals with the god's impact on Venus' character and his ability to cause her to act out of character (p. 157). She also discusses Venus' control over her son, who, James believes, is the passive object of the active force of love (i.e. Venus), through his passion for Psyche (p. 146). Cupid does not display passivity, in my view. The god is rather a driving force, albeit in the background, behind Psyche's transportation to the palace and once she is installed there he eagerly visits her. She also contends (p. 155-6) that there is "constant tension" between "Cupid *puer pinnatus* and adjunct of Venus and the image of Eros, primordial principle". Her statement, however, is not supported with adequate evidence. Furthermore, James' work has a decided philosophical slant. I am in disagreement with her opinion (1987, p. 140) that "The falling in love of Love can only be satisfactorily rationalized by a transference of the main characters to the philosophical plane". Although I am not entirely convinced by her arguments

⁶⁵ Schlam (1992, p. 96), in the context of Psyche's exposure on the rock, says of Cupid, for example, "In this context Cupid himself can be understood as a personal *daemon* who comes to the ego with warnings and then departs".

for the above points, her 1988 article is a useful analysis of the god's character, which makes note on several occasions, of the novelty and humour of Apuleius creating Cupid as a character capable of feeling the effects of love. James perceptively states (p. 115): "The Love god himself as Love itself cannot and should not fall in love and his transformation into a personality capable of feeling his own passion is an intentional paradox probably created by Apuleius." She believes that Cupid's change of character is a "considerable metamorphosis which we are not meant to ignore...for therein lies great potential for paradox and humour." Unfortuately, James' article attempts to incorporate a wide range of points, and as a result, I feel that she misses some of the humour.

Rambaux offers a detailed analysis of Cupid's behaviour and attributes to the god a metamorphosis from child to adolescent to adult (p. 188). This contention is poorly and unconvincingly supported. The scholar also draws attention, incorrectly in my opinion, to the notion that Love does not know how to love and that he is, in spite of his good intentions, "un mari égoïste, naïf et faible, écrasant sa femme pour satisfaire son désir sans s'exposer lui-même, d'autant plus abusif avec elle qu'il est plus craintif devant sa mère qu'il n'ose encore affronter ouvertement". Rambaux believes that it is only after their separation that Cupid loves and does not just desire Psyche (p. 192), and that previously he has viewed her as a possession (p. 191). He finds coherence in Cupid's character by seeing this change in the god as a progression, and rightly denies an overwhelming influence of philosophy on the creation of this character. Although many of Rambaux's points are sound, I do not believe that Cupid loves the girl only after they are separated. For do I think that he undergoes a transformation of the sort proposed. There is a definite maturation in Cupid's character, but not of the degree suggested by Rambaux.

⁶⁶ For example, Cupid addresses her with tenderness at 5.1.2 and refers to her as his *cara uxor*. He also shows himself to be very taken with Psyche on several occasions when he gives in to her wishes (e.g. 5.6.5, 5.6.10, and 5.13.6).

Furthermore, his final conclusion (p. 194) that Cupid's character "symbolise le déséquilibre qui existe au départ dans bien des couples" is entirely false.

Finkelpearl's very recent (1998) work *Metamorphosis of Language in Apuleius* touches upon Cupid's characterization in a discussion centring upon an allusion at *Met.* 5.22.5 to a Vergilian passage at *A.* 10.134-38. The passages are descriptions of Cupid's and Ascanius' hair, both of which contain the expression *cervix lactea* (*Met.* 5.22.5, *cervices lacteas*). According to Finkelpearl, the expression is unique to these two spots, and as a result, she concludes that this establishes a "specific connection that goes deeper than the obvious correspondence between heads, gold, and the very different types of arrows that both youths carry..." (p. 70). I am not convinced by her argument, and her subsequent statement that Apuleius is not borrowing from "any available portrait of the god himself but from the description of the boy often confused with him"⁶⁷ (p. 70) undermines her argument even further, as I do believe that Apuleius did draw upon elements from earlier literary portrayals of Cupid when he created his character (see below).

Before discussing how Cupid is characterized, I shall give a synopsis of his appearances in order to provide a framework for the subsequent discussion. The god appears at prominent positions in all three books and the frequency of his appearances at critical narrative junctures attests to his significance. He is the second character to enter the story and the first whom Venus addresses at 4.31.1ff. The goddess asks him for assistance in punishing Psyche, subsequent to which, Cupid departs. The god makes seven appearances in book 5. After Psyche has rested and refreshed herself in the palace, Cupid comes to her (5.4.3), has intercourse, and then leaves.

⁶⁷ The full sentence from which this quote is taken is: "Apuleius seizes on elements of the unstable identity of Cupid and his cousin and furthers them in his portrait of Cupid, borrowing not from any available portrait of the god himself but from the description of the boy often confused with him". I have quoted this at length to point out the weakness of her argument. Finkelpearl offers no elaboration upon what elements of Ascanius' identity are unstable or how Apuleius furthers them. Presumably, the point to the aforementioned "specific connection" established between Cupid and Ascanius is to exploit uncertain elements, but this too remains unclear.

Cupid's second visit to Psyche at the palace (5.5.1-4) is given more textual prominence. During this exchange, Cupid warns his wife against responding to her sisters' cries, but fails to explain why. Following a short absence, the god reappears at 5.6.1-10, and attempts to put an end to Psyche's anguish. In a second warning he urges Psyche not to heed her sisters' advice to try to see what he looks like. Psyche wins him over with entreaties and threats of suicide. His fourth visit (5.11.3-6) brings an even sterner warning in more forceful language that Psyche not be persuaded by her sisters to look upon his face. As an incentive to adhere to his advice, Cupid tells the girl that she will jeopardize the divine status of their child if she learns of his identity. At 5.12.4-6 Cupid again warns Psyche against her pernicious sisters in military language, only to find himself won over once more by the charms of his wife (5.13). After a lengthy narrative absence, Cupid returns at 5.21.5, engages in intercourse and falls asleep. He remains in the scene until his departure from Psyche's embrace at 5.24.5. As in his first exchange with Venus, a silent Cupid reappears at 5.29.2-30.6, during which time Venus chastises her son. Cupid is wholly absent from book 6 until Psyche's pseudo-death scene at 6.21.2-4, whereupon he rescues her and immediately departs. At 6.22, Cupid, to whose words the reader is not privy, pleads his case as suppliant before Jupiter and remains in the scene until the end of the story.

Cupid's appearance early in the narrative signals his character's significance, and the scene with Venus in which the goddess makes known her desire for revenge and his assistance in obtaining it is critical to plot advancement. If Venus had not pointed Psyche out to Cupid at 4.30.5 and expressed her eagerness to harm the girl, Cupid might not have fallen in love with her. The number and the length of scenes involving Cupid in book 5 perform various significant functions, in addition to showing the development of the couple's relationship. Although his first visit to the palace is brief, the god's actions are essential to the plot in order to make Psyche accustomed to intercourse and become pregnant. In his subsequent visits Cupid's repeated warnings serve several functions. His first warning sets the stage for Psyche's siblings' jealous

attempt to bring about her ruin. It also rouses suspicion in the reader's mind first about the nature of a husband who would warn his wife against her family and second, about the personality traits which the sisters must possess to prompt Psyche's husband to issue such a statement. The placement of the god's third and fourth warnings (5.11.3-6 and 5.12.4-6), back to back with no intervening visit from the sisters, stresses his concern and the urgency of his pleas, thus elevating narrative tension and reader anxiety. Furthermore, the positioning of his visits after the sisters' envious ranting at 5.9-10 and lies to their parents (5.11.1-2) heightens the women's maliciousness and the destructiveness of their proposed deception (5.10.9-5.11.2). Simultaneously, however, Cupid's insistence that Psyche not learn who he is creates suspicion about his character and his intentions. Cupid's return to the palace is a functional necessity to get him back into the scene so that Psyche can attempt to decapitate him. His final appearance in the book functions to point up the comedy and bathos of Venus' character (see discussion of Venus' character). Cupid's absence from the greater part of book 6 allows for the development of Psyche's character and the drama of her tasks⁶⁸. Yet, his seemingly indirect influence on the course of events suggests that the god will bring about Psyche's release from Venus' bonds. That the god is essential to the plot is confirmed upon his reappearance at the end of book 6, whereupon he rescues Psyche from certain death, and embarks upon the necessary actions to ensure the story's happy ending. The god's dramatic recovery and reappearance at the close of the book leaves the reader with a striking and memorable final impression of a love-struck, submissive Cupid.

Apuleius' delineation of Cupid demonstrates skill and diversity in his methods of characterization. As in the case of Venus, the author creates a consistently vivid character.

Although he makes no specific allusions to one particular predecessor, Apuleius draws many of

⁶⁸ Cupid's power may be behind the help that Psyche receives in her tasks, see Kenney 1990b on 6.10.5.

Cupid's traits from the god's literary tradition and then cleverly inverts them in books 5 and 6. Cupid's literary tradition abounds in representations of a youthful, winged trouble-maker, armed with a torch, bow and arrows⁶⁹. Epithets attached to the god of love often stress his cruelty. Cupid and/or his weapons are repeatedly described as *saevus*, *ferus*, *acer*, *asper*, etc. in elegiac, lyric and epic poetry⁷⁰. This, however, is not the exclusive tradition which exists for the god. Numerous examples highlight his resplendence, and occasionally he is depicted in more favourable terms⁷¹. For the reader's first impression of the god, Apuleius draws exclusively upon the former tradition and it is not until Cupid approaches Psyche that many of Cupid's standard attributes are turned upside-down to create a portrait of a compassionate, rather than cruel, god of Love.

Several Hellenistic epigrams exploit the paradox of Eros being in love⁷². Although ^{*}Ερως and Ψυχή are paired in several of Meleager's epigrams (5.57, 12.80, 12.132 and 132A [Loeb]), the

⁶⁹ See Kenney (1990b) on 4.30.4 for numerous examples of both literary and visual representations of Cupid and my chapter 2 on 5.22 for Cupid's standard attributes and references. Sappho (130) describes the god in mixed terms, calling him λυσιμέλης, γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὅρπετον. Alcaeus (327) refers to Eros as δεινότατον θέων. Of the Hellenistic poets, Kenney (on 4.30.4) simply says that they "rang endless changes on these conceits". I believe that several poems in the Anthologia Palatina deserve specific mention for the clarity with which Eros is portrayed. Eros is described at V.57-9, 176-80, 266, 268, and 309. In these poems he is depicted as πτηνός 59, δεινός 176, ἄγριος 177.1, 177.3-4 ἔστι δ' ὁ παῖς γλυκύδακρυς, ἀείλαλος, ὠκύς, ἀθαμβής / σιμὰ γελῶν, πτερόεις νῶτα, φαρετροφόρος; ἀπέχθεται 177.7; βροτολοιγὸς πικρός λαμορός 180; λάβρος 268; θρασύς 309. Eros' attributes and behaviour are also highlighted frequently in book 12 of the Anthologia Palatina, most notably at 48, 82 and 83 (all by Meleager).

⁷⁰ For example, Hor. *Carm.* 2.8.14 and Nisbet and Hubbard *ad. loc.*; Tib. 1.6.2-3, 1.10.57-8, 2.6.15 and Murgatroyd on these three, 3.4.65-6, 3.8.6; Prop. 1.3.14, 2.12, Ov. *Am.* 1.2.8, 1.6.34, 3.1.20, *Rem.* 1.530, *Met.* 1.453, 9.543 etc. See also Kenney 1990b on 4.33.1.4.

⁷¹ For his resplendence, Prop. 2.3.24 candidus; Ov. Am. 2.1.38, 2.9.34 and A.A. 1.21-2 purpureus, 2.18.36 and Rem. 1.39 aureus etc. Cupid is also described as pacis Amor deus est, Prop. 3.5.1; tener Amor, Ov. Am. 2.18.4 and 2.18.19. See also my discussion of the ecphrasis at 5.22 in chapter 2.

 $^{^{72}}$ AP 5.179, 9.449, 12.112, 12.113, 12.144; Love bound and suffering what he has inflicted on others, 16.195-199, and 16.251.

epigrams detail the torments which Love has inflicted upon the abstract concept of the Soul and do not present Eros as being in love with the girl Psyche. These poems may have provided part of the literary background⁷³ for the plot of *Cupid and Psyche*, but, as is his wont, Apuleius has adopted a common pairing of Love and the Soul, and has altered the tradition. In Apuleius' tale a clear distinction exists between Psyche as the 'Soul' and Psyche the girl which is not evident in the earlier poetry. In the Hellenistic epigrams (see note 72), the situation of Eros being in love is not highly developed, and when the object of affection is specified⁷⁴, Eros' beloved is male. Other than the concept of Love falling in love, there are no noteworthy similarities between the earlier poems and Cupid's conduct in Apuleius' tale. Not only does Apuleius present the reader with the novel and unique situation of Cupid as Psyche's lover but he also strikingly develops both the psychological and physical effects which love has upon the god. Moreover, the serious tone of Apuleius' tale, which is suggestive of the earnestness of Cupid's love affair, differs greatly from the lightness of the epigrams⁷⁵.

Cupid, who remains unnamed until Psyche sees him at 5.22.2, is characterized at length by the narratrix and the other personages in the story. They provide the reader with the first information about the god's nature and throughout the story, they stress his sexual proclivities

⁷³ There also exist numerous monuments and other visual representations on which Έρως and Ψυχή are paired, dating to the fifth century BC. These representations most frequently show the couple embracing, but also represent Eros and Psyche drawing Aphrodite in a chariot, as well as Eros torturing Psyche. For a discussion of the monuments see Schlam 1976, p. 4ff. In his later book (1992, p. 89), Schlam states that "artistic representations of Eros and Psyche [were] a flourishing tradition in antiquity from the sixth century BC onward." He discusses the artistic representations in detail at p. 89ff.

 $^{^{74}}$ Eros' beloved is specified only at *AP* 5.179, 12.112-3 and 144, 16.251. Elsewhere, there is a question as to who has captivated the god of Love.

 $^{^{75}}$ Schlam (1976, p. 18) states that "The tone of both the epigrams and the monuments is light, and the retribution implied may sometimes be little more than a reflection of the fatalism of the age."

and unruly practices. The drunken old narratrix first offers information about Cupid, outlining his physical traits, attributes and conduct as follows (4.30.4-5):

...puerum suum pinnatum illum et satis temerarium, qui malis suis moribus contempta disciplina publica flammis et sagittis armatus per alienas domos nocte discurrens et omnium matrimonia corrumpens impune committit tanta flagitia et nihil prorsus boni facit. Hunc, quanquam genuina licentia procacem, verbis quoque insuper stimulat...

This critical first impression of Cupid portrays the god as a powerful, destructive, wanton and capricious boy. The narratrix's sharp but scant portrayal, in which only his negative traits are highlighted, establishes Cupid in his role of mischievous boy. With only a modicum of information pertaining to his physical appearance, the reader is left to picture Cupid for himself. Due, however, to the frequency with which Cupid was portrayed as a naughty child in both Greek and Roman literature, the reader, coming to this text with a fairly fixed idea about Cupid's behaviour, would detect nothing out of the ordinary in the narratrix's assessment⁷⁶, and consequently, would be misled easily by this description. Foreshadowing is also present in this description. The old woman's words look forward to Cupid's disobedience of his mother's request, and her ensuing diatribe at 5.29-30 in which Venus rails at length about her son's insolence and general lack of discipline. More significantly, this description of a reckless Cupid (satis temerarium) is picked up on in the god's own admission prior to his leaving Psyche (5.24.4) that he irresponsibly struck himself with his own weapons.

Apuleius plays on the reader's first impression of Cupid as a child. The abundant literary tradition depicting the god thus enables the reader to "fill-out" the image. Although it is impossible to pinpoint Cupid's age from this scene, he is referred to as Venus' puerum (4.30.4), which suggests that he has not yet reached adulthood. The ambiguity of puer, meaning both 'son' and 'boy' (OLD s.v. puer 1 and 2) is part of Apuleius' tease about the identity of Psyche's

⁷⁶ That the description of Cupid, like a thief in the night, per alienas domos nocte discurrens...impune committit tanta flagitia, issues forth from the robbers' housekeeper/cook, may also be a deliberately comical and ironical play on Apuleius' part.

husband?7. Venus' appeal to Cupid per...maternae caritatis foedera (4.31.1) in conjunction with the kissing of her son (4.31.4) suggest that Cupid is a boy. His boyish image is further reinforced by the similarities between Venus' attempt to bribe him at 4.31.1-4 and Aphrodite's bribery of the young Eros at A.R. 3.129-4478, and Venus' request at Verg. Aen. 1.664ff. that Cupid assume Ascanius' form to deceive Dido⁷⁹. The play on Cupid as a child permits the author to stress the goddess' inappropriate conduct both in this exchange and in later encounters, as well as setting the stage for character development within Cupid. Apuleius also plays on the reader's first impression of Cupid as a child to draw attention to this character's uniqueness and his striking actions of having an affair, impregnating and marrying Psyche. In the description of Cupid at 4.30.4-5, however, the author also exploits numerous extant Hellenistic poems⁸⁰ which portray Cupid as a young but potent deity who revels in inflicting pain upon others to suggest plot development (i.e. that Cupid will smite an unsuspecting victim) which ultimately does not materialize. In conjunction with the ambiguity of puer, the reader cannot be certain that Cupid is not the creature described in the oracle at 4.33.

⁷⁷ No indication of his age can be discerned from his designation as filium at 4.31.4.

⁷⁸ Schiesaro (1988, p. 142) does not see an influential similarity between these scenes but rather a difference. He believes that "Il confronto con Apollonio rende ragione di un tratto che è importante nella narrazione di Apuleio: l' indugio sul carattere impudente e briccone del figlio di Venere." He adds that the unruliness of Eros in the *Argonautica* is developed before Aphrodite approaches him in her dialogue with Hera and Athena. His impudence is then underlined by means of the description of the gift with which Aphrodite must bribe him. Schiesaro feels that the thread of Apuleius' narrative is different, as are the moods of these two passages, which he concludes are "giocoso, quasi salottiero" in Apollonius, but more sombre in Apuleius "in cui si agitano....cupe passioni e tremende vendette". For a full discussion of his interpretation see his article.

⁷⁹ In the latter example Cupid is twice called *nate* by Venus (lines 664 and 665). The god's youth is stressed at line 684, where the goddess refers to him as a *puer* who is to assume the guise of another *puer*.

⁸⁰ For example, in Moschus' Έρως Δραπέτης, Eros is described as a παῖς; likewise at AP 5.176, 5.177. He is a νήπιος at AP 12.47, 16.196-197.

Cupid's stereotypical traits, namely his capacity to cause harm and mischievousness, are reiterated in Venus' appeal^{§1}. At 4.31.1-3, Venus describes the results of her son's assaults on people (sagittae dulcia vulnera and flammae istius mellitas uredines) in terms which pick up on the narratrix's description, flammis et sagittis armatus (4.30.4). The goddess' request that her son help her in seeking revenge^{§2} and the repetition of flamma and sagitta underline Cupid's deleterious qualities and form a consistent characterization. A couple of other possible allusions to Cupid's personality traits emerge from this scene. There may be a suggestion of Cupid's lascivious nature at 4.31.4, in the act of Venus' attempting to secure the god's favour with kisses, osculis hiantibus filium diu ac pressule saviata. Venus' use of the adjectives dulcia and mellitas may foreshadow Cupid's gentler nature which manifests itself at 5.5.2ff. Although Kenney (1990b on 4.31.1) notes that dulcia vulnera and mellitas uredines are "an oxymoron of a kind much favoured by Hellenistic epigrammatists" and that "all such expressions are variations on Sappho's description of Eros as a ... 'bittersweet uncontrollable beast' (fr. 130.2 L-P), the two words stand out in this description as the only ones depicting Cupid or his behaviour which are not pejorative, and consequently attention is drawn to them.

Throughout the narrative, several strong, but differing, personality traits emerge in Cupid. This duality highlights the complexity of Apuleius' Cupid and makes his character a figure of both fun and seriousness. In the god's dealings with Psyche he exhibits traits readily

⁸¹ In his discussion of 4.30.4-31.3, Kenney makes what I believe to be a significant oversight, for he fails to make a distinction between the narratrix's perception and Venus' perception of Cupid. In his commentary, he makes reference only to the picture of Cupid as seen through Venus' eyes. The repetition of the narrator's judgement by a character stresses more emphatically Cupid's destructive nature.

⁸² In a bid to see a connection with Platonism as a means of explaining Cupid's disobedience towards Venus, James (1988, pp. 117-8), compares Venus' description of the kind of lover she wishes for Psyche with the description of Eros at *Symp*. 203C, where he is portrayed as needy and living in constant want. Rambaux (pp. 193-4), who overtly denies any connection between Apuleius' Cupid and the son of Poverty and Resource, sees a connection with descriptions of Cupid at *Phaedrus* 251de and 248c.

associated with an adult and appropriate for his serious role of husband. He shows compassion, is giving and concerned for his wife's safety. The novelty of these traits in association with the god of Love heightens their impact on the reader. At the same time, the god's admonitions against knowing his identity add a comical element to his characterization. These warnings may be prompted by his fear of eliciting his mother's wrath, as is made clear later in the narrative⁸³, if his simple-minded wife should let slip his identity. Apuleius' mocking portrayal of Cupid's lack of nerve is most pointed in the god's actions when confronted by his mother. Like a little boy, he is silent, submissive and reluctant to cross her (4.31.1-4, 5.29-30, 6.22.1). Cupid's return to Venus' home after his injury (5.29.1) also suggests a child-like dependence on his mother. The humour of Cupid's submissiveness is played up by the contrast between the personalities of mother and son. Cupid is customarily a harmful deity rather than a love-struck god, and Venus is often portrayed as promoting love affairs, not trying to impede their fruition. Apuleius' comical inversion of the gods' roles shows the two characters behaving in ways unparalleled elsewhere.

Numerous other contrasts are employed by Apuleius to bring Cupid's positive characteristics into relief. The notable difference in the way in which Cupid and Venus are characterized immediately draws attention to the discordance between the god's tenderness and his mother's ferocity. Cupid demonstrates controlled emotion when appealing to Psyche to follow his cautions. He does not shout or use physical violence in a bid to get her to comply, but attempts to entice Psyche into heeding his advice (e.g. 5.11.6). Cupid behaves more like an adult than his mother does. Venus' character is marked by the intensity of her emotional prattlings (e.g. 4.30.1-3, 5.29-30), and the physical manifestation of her violent feelings toward Psyche (6.9f.). There is a further difference between Cupid's function of helper to Psyche and Venus' role of

⁸³ Cupid admits that he has disobeyed Venus at 5.24.3, but his fear of his mother is not overtly expressed until 6.22.1, matris suae repentinam sobrietatem pertimescens. Schlam (1992, p. 96) also believes that Cupid's insistence upon anonymity in the secret palace seems to be the god's way of preventing his mother from knowing that he has not done as she commanded.

hinderer. Likewise within Cupid himself, there is disparity between his customary role of assistant to Venus, which the reader anticipates that he will assume after 4.31.4, and his casting aside of this role. In addition to the comparison with Venus, Psyche's sisters function to point up Cupid's compassion by means of the remarkable degree of malevolence which they show towards their sister. Their lies that Psyche's husband is a man-eating serpent (5.17.2ff.) also serve as a significant contrast with the reality of Cupid's magnificence (5.22). The antithesis between the two representations highlights Cupid's physical beauty, which is complementary to the loving kindness and concern which he has demonstrated towards his wife.

Apuleius' Cupid is far removed from earlier portrayals with which this Cupid contrasts. Cupid's singular nature is emphasized by this contrast and by a dynamic development in his character. There is a notable change from the husband who, in silence, visits his wife for the purpose of intercourse (5.4.3-5), to the spouse who passionately tries to warn her against effecting the ruin of her own happiness and their marriage (see below). A process of maturation in Cupid appears to be the result of his falling in love and caring for someone other than himself. The appeal to Jupiter is made by a character who is more independent and willing to oppose his mother's wishes than the personage met at the start of the tale and in book 5 who remains mute when his mother soliloquizes calmly or angrily. Cupid's personal growth is matched by a change in his roles which accentuates the complexity of his character. Initially the god plays the role of accomplice and son to Venus. He then secretly takes on a role of lover/husband to Psyche and, as a result, hinderer to Venus' plans. Upon his separation from Psyche, however, he seems to revert to the part of Venus' child. The god's last appearances in book 6 show him adopting various roles including rescuer of Psyche, suppliant of Jupiter and finally, happily married husband and father.

Several individualizing and vivifying touches emerge from Cupid's encounters with his wife. His compliance with her demands during each visit points up his overwhelming desire to

gratify Psyche. Cupid's action of wiping away Psyche's tears with his hair (5.13.6) is a particularly telling act which captures the tenderness that he feels for the girl. The god's designation of himself as praeclarus ille sagittarius (5.24.4) and his ironical admission that he made Psyche his wife leviter (OLD s.v. leviter 6 "... thoughtlessly, lightly") suggest that when he struck himself with his weapons, he thought he was immune to the full effects of love. Cupid's feelings of betrayal in this scene, which are sufficiently strong that he feels compelled to leave, are a striking way of revealing how deeply he has been affected by his own actions. Another telling detail of Cupid's condition is the description of the physical impact that separation from Psyche has on him (6.22.1, amore nimio peresus et aegra facie). The contrast between this description and that detailing his awe-inspiring beauty at 5.22 truly points up the intensity of his passion.

Cupid's true feelings for Psyche are conveyed by means of his actions which contrast sharply with his words of warning. Although it is only on the first occasion that Psyche's husband speaks to her and again during his fifth visit⁸⁴ that he immediately addresses her in a manner characteristic of someone in love, Apuleius stresses the husband's love-struck condition by drawing attention to his emotional turmoil⁸⁵. Apuleius subtly achieves this⁸⁶ by pointing up the apparent contradiction between his threatening words and the tenderness of his actions. From 5.6 onwards, a pattern emerges in Cupid's visits which highlights his inner-conflict. He issues a firm warning, then immediately gives in to Psyche's pleas or threats. In spite of knowing that Psyche's sisters will destroy their marriage (5.5.3), Cupid's desire to please his wife, who

^{84 5.5.2,} Psyche dulcissima et cara uxor and 5.12.5, Psyche dulcissima.

⁸⁵ Cf. Apuleius' similar method of characterizing Venus.

⁸⁶ For example, the reader is not given any details about Cupid's physical condition to indicate that he is in love until much later in the narrative. At 6.22.1, Cupid takes on the stereotypical guise of the elegiac lover, amore nimio peresus et aegra facie.

urgently longs to see them, is so great that against his better judgement⁸⁷, he gives in to her wishes (5.6.4-5). The god's eagerness to please his wife even extends to permitting her to give gold and jewellery to her sisters (5.6.5). Cupid's psychological turmoil is further played up in his reluctant acquiescence with Psyche's request that Zephyrus convey her sisters to the palace88. Immediately after his most insistent warning against her sisters (5.12.4-6), Cupid's actions reveal the intensity of his passion for Psyche. Again, his wife wins him over with her tears and Cupid, despite his emphatic monition, is easily persuaded89 to order Zephyrus to bring the sisters to the palace. A vivid portrayal of Cupid's love is maintained even after the couple's separation. At 6.11.3, Cupid is kept under guard at his mother's home to prevent him from seeing Psyche. That the god requires guarding implies that his longing for Psyche is sufficiently intense that he may attempt to see her against his mother's wishes. A lack of concern for his reputation, demonstrated by his silence in the face of falsehoods about his character (6.22.2-3), shows that he is only concerned with marrying Psyche. By making the reader privy to Cupid's intimate thoughts, Apuleius engages his reader more readily in the god's character. Without this method of characterization, the complexity of Cupid's character would be diminished, and as a result, reader sympathy for the couple would be lessened.

The fact that Cupid remains unnamed for approximately one half of the story is unusual and striking in terms of his characterization. His namelessness permits Apuleius to toy with the reader and suggest various identities for the husband. The spectacular palace, extraordinary

⁸⁷ Cupid has given in to Psyche's wishes but continues to warn her, (5.6.6), sed identidem monuit ac saepe terruit.

⁸⁸ 5.6.10, vi ac potestate Venerii susurrus invitus succubuit maritus et cuncta se facturum spopondit.

⁸⁹ 5.13.6, his verbis et amplexibus mollibus decantatus maritus lacrimasque eius suis crinibus detergens se facturum spopondit.

servants, and references to the divine in 5.1^{90} suggest to the reader that the palace owner is an equally exceptional individual. The author hints at various individuals possibly being the owner of the palace. The physical make-up of the structure and the treasury provide several clues to suggest that Cupid may be the proprietor. The columns supporting the ceiling are gold, as are the blocks from which the walls are made (5.1.3, 5.1.6). The floor is bejewelled (5.1.5), and the palace is remarkably effulgent (5.1.6, ...splendore proprio coruscant, ut diem suum sibi domus faciat licet sole nolente). The magnificence of the building reflects that of its owner and picks up on epithets commonly applied to Love. Love is often golden ($\chi \rho \iota \sigma \epsilon \sigma \varsigma$), his wings are depicted as jewelled in Ovid, and throughout Greek and Latin literature there is frequent emphasis upon the god's resplendence⁹¹. Furthermore, the rare use of the verb effero (5.1.4, efferavit) may be an astutely obscure allusion to Love's common epithet of ferus⁹².

Apuleius teases his reader by diverting attention away from the possibility that Cupid may be Psyche's husband by presenting the reader with conflicting portraits of Cupid and the husband and his home. The palace is beautiful, the servants are kind (5.2.3ff.), and this mystery husband exhibits tenderness which would seem to be out of character with the reckless and pernicious god of 4.30-31. The sharp contrariety between the reader's initial perception of Cupid, reinforced by repeated stress upon his injurious nature, and the characterization of Psyche's husband, helps to maintain the mystery surrounding the identity of Psyche's spouse and divert the reader's attention away from the idea that her spouse may be Cupid. The introduction of a

⁹⁰ 5.1.2, domus regia est aedificata non humanis manibus sed divinis artibus; 5.1.3, iam scires ab introitu primo dei cuiuspiam luculentum et amoenum videre te diversorium; 5.1.4, mirus prorsum homo immo semideus vel certe deus, qui magnae artis suptilitate tantum efferavit argentum; 5.1.7, ... ut equidem illud recte videatur ad conversationem humanum magno Iovi fabricatum caeleste palatium.

⁹¹ For the numerous literary references, see chapter 2 on 5.22.

⁹² See chapter 2, note 58 for references.

mystery character effectively builds suspense⁹³, piques reader curiosity and thus draws the reader in.

The oracular pronouncement at 4.33.1-2 provides less overt characterization of Cupid. Reminiscences of the narratrix's introductory description of the god are discernible in the oracle's description of Psyche's future spouse. Several key points of 4.30.4 are echoed at 4.33.1. This non-human being is saevum, ferum vipereumque malum⁹⁴. The creature likewise flies (4.30.4, pinnatum) and weakens everything by means of flame (cf. 4.30.4 and 4.31.1). The narratrix's enumeration of Cupid's wicked disposition, disruption of public order and the implements with which he harms is recalled in the second half of the oracle⁹⁵. Apuleius continues to tease his reader about the "mystery husband's" identity for the recollection hints that Cupid may be her spouse, yet simultaneously reinforces his image as an unconscionable, potent and harmful divinity. Should

⁹³ The palace description suggests various other possibilities for the identity of Psyche's husband. The introduction of Apollo's oracular pronouncement (4.33) insinuates that he may be a potential palace owner and has set up this whole scene. Zephyrus, who gently conveys Psyche into the valley where the palace is located, is also another possibility. Within the ecphrasis, the specific mention of Jupiter (5.1.7) rouses suspicion that he too could own the palace. Winkler (pp. 89-93), who is primarily concerned with narrative techniques employed in the novel as a whole and its structure, believes that Cupid and Psyche is "specifically constructed as a quest for identity and is therefore on the surface rather like a detective story" (p. 89). He calls the story a "genuine and exciting mystery" (p. 90) and asserts that "most of Book 5 is devoted to following two trails of detection (the sisters' and Psyche's)" (p. 89) in a bid to uncover the identity of Psyche's lover. Although I believe that it is an exaggeration to claim that "most of Book 5" is devoted to solving this mystery, Winkler's catalogue of the various hypotheses about Psyche's husband's identity is a useful documentation of how Apuleius shrewdly exploits the mystery through the narrative technique of reidentification. The scholar does not, however, discuss the implications of the mystery in terms of its effect upon characterization, narrative unity, the creation of tension in the narrative and in the reader, and upon reader expectation.

⁹⁴ See Kenney 1990b on 4.33.1.4 for the double meanings of all these words and examples of their application to Eros in predecessors. Cupid's portrayal as the child of Night and Wind also depicts him as winged and hissing like a snake (Graves, 'The Homeric and Orphic Creation Myths', *Orphic Fragments* 60, 61 and 70).

⁹⁵ 4.33.2, quod pinnis volitans super aethera cuncta fatigat / flammaque et ferro singula debilitat, / quod tremit ipse Iovis quo numina terrificantur, / fluminaque horrescunt et Stygiae tenebrae. As Kenney notes (1990b, 4.33.2.7) "oracular ambiguity wears thin" with the inclusion of Jupiter trembling in the presence of this mystery being.

the reader not conclude that the oracle's words depict Cupid, this description of a savage creature still serves as an important contrast with the actual conduct of Psyche's husband. Coupled with Venus' request that Psyche fall in love with the lowest of men, this characterization of a fierce and frightful being is an effective means of raising reader anxiety. It also acts as a ploy to mislead the reader, who, having no idea what to expect for Psyche and fearing the worst, is taken by surprise in book 5, when she is treated well.

The oracle is also a significant means of underlining Cupid's sway. As Schlam notes (1992, p. 84), Apollo's prophetic words "serve the ends of Cupid, with no allowance for his Olympian mother". The oracle is very useful to Cupid as it foreshadows his marriage to Psyche and his subsequent displays of authority over the other gods. Kenney (1990b on 4.32.5) correctly suggests that the last two lines of the oracle "may hint that Apollo has been blackmailed". The oracle's very usefulness to Cupid suggests that the god has exerted some influence on Apollo's words, thus stressing Cupid's power%.

In spite of recognizing that Cupid takes on the role of indulgent husband to Psyche, scholars have failed to draw attention to the fact that Cupid's love for Psyche and his assumption of his husbandly role is not immediately apparent⁹⁷, and that Apuleius again teases his reader with an ambiguous initial portrait of the husband's character. While Psyche's husband does

[%] His influence can be detected, for example, in the placement of Psyche on a mountain peak. This allows Cupid, who does not want his identity or his disregard of his mother's wishes to be noticed by anyone, to have Psyche brought secretly to his palace. It appears that from the outset Cupid is also in collusion with two other powerful forces. Zephyrus ensures Psyche's safe descent to the valley (4.35.4), and once she has taken up residency there, the intervention of divine Providence is recognizable to Psyche (5.3.1). Providence also intervenes in Psyche's third task at 6.15.1.

⁹⁷ For example, in his summary of the mystery surrounding the identity of Psyche's husband, all that Winkler says (p. 91) is that: "The husband is loving, evidently superhuman, and his identity is withheld from her". He does not acknowledge that Psyche is alarmed by the repeated warnings made by her husband.

address her with tenderness, and the girl expresses love for him⁹⁸, the reader's and Psyche's first impression of the mystery husband is not that he is a kind-hearted. His first visits to the frightened girl (5.4.2) consist of his arrival, his engagement in intercourse, and immediate departure without saying a word. At 5.4.5, the reader is informed haec diutino tempore sic agebantur, which suggests that the husband is a lustful character. That his visits only occur at night (5.4.1, 5.5.1, etc.) adds to his mysterious and sinister air⁹⁹. The language employed by Cupid when addressing Psyche underlines his initial sternness and attempts to intimidate Psyche, which, only later, does the reader learn are justified. Each time that Psyche's husband speaks to her, he repeatedly admonishes her against seeing both himself and her sisters, who at this point have not proven themselves to Psyche to be untrustworthy and malevolent. Moreover, his intimidating nature comes across in the forcefulness of his warnings, which increases with each visit¹⁰⁰, and results in frightening the girl¹⁰¹. Instead of comforting Psyche's loneliness and general

⁹⁸ When Cupid does speak to Psyche, he calls her Psyche dulcissima et cara uxor (5.5.2), mea Psyche (5.6.2) and refers to himself as tuus maritus (5.6.2). At 5.6.7, Psyche emphatically expresses love for her husband, amo enim et efflictim te, quicumque es, diligo aeque ut meum spiritum, nec ipsi Cupidini comparo.

⁹⁹ Cupid's visits at night look back to his initial description at 4.30.4 in which his activities are described as taking place *nocte*. Perhaps Apuleius plays up his clandestine nocturnal activities in order to provide another suggestive clue about the identity of Psyche's husband.

¹⁰⁰ At 5.5.2-3, Psyche's husband immediately says to her that exitiabile tibi periculum minatur Fortuna saevior. His final words to the girl are particularly threatening, for he says that if she does not heed his warnings she will bring about summum exitium for herself. At 5.6.6, after warning and threatening her, the husband reminds her of what Psyche could lose, neve se sacrilega curiositate de tanto fortunarum suggestu pessum deiciat nec suum postea contingat amplexum. During his visit at 5.11.3, he begins to use military language to stress the threat, and opens his address with videsne quantum tibi periculum minatur? velitatur Fortuna eminus, ac nisi longe firmiter praecaves mox comminus congredietur. His last warning about her sisters, which is full of military imagery, is particularly frightening (5.12.4ff., en dies ultima et casus extremus! sexus infestus et sanguis inimicus iam sumpsit arma et castra commovit et aciem derexit et classicum personavit...).

¹⁰¹ 5.6.6, sed identidem monuit ac saepe terruit; 5.19.3, me namque magnopere semper a suis terret aspectibus malumque grande de vultus curiositate praeminatur.

distress (5.5.4-6), his words do not acknowledge her sadness at being isolated¹⁰², and the girl's ignorance of her husband's identity is stressed (5.11.3, maritus ille quem nescit rursum suis illis nocturnis sermonibus sic commonet). In addition, the mystery husband threatens that he will leave her should she attempt to know who he is (5.11.4, ut to suadeant meos explorare vultus, quos...non videbis si videris).

The novelty of Cupid's conduct, witnessed in his exchanges with Psyche, is thrown into relief by the repetition of the narratrix's and Venus' erroneous character assessments by other divinities and personages. Even after his departure from Psyche's embraces at 5.24.5, Cupid continues to be described by other divinities as a roguish and licentious deity until the conclusion of the tale. Pan refers to him as an adolescentem delicatum luxuriosumque (5.25.6), and suggests that Psyche should win him over with blandis obsequiis. The informant tern (5.28.4) maliciously claims that Cupid has withdrawn for montano scortatu. Venus, who before learning that her son's lover is Psyche ironically calls Cupid a puerum ingenuum et investem (5.28.7), calls his embraces licentiosis (5.29.3), accuses him of being a corruptor (5.29.4), and claims that she has often offended Sobriety on account of his luxuriam (5.30.3). Ceres and Juno, while defending the god's involvement with Psyche, humorously draw attention to his love affairs and wantonness (5.31.5-6, in eo luxuriem culpabis). Jupiter's address to Cupid at 6.22.3-5 paints the young god as an impetuous naughty child engaged in destructive behaviour. Jupiter mentions that Cupid has shot at him and defiled his heart assiduis ictibus crebrisque terrenae libidinis (6.22.3) in defiance of the laws¹⁰³. In his address to the assembly of the gods, the sovereign deity repeatedly emphasizes Cupid's lustful and

¹⁰² 5.6.2, Haecine mihi pollicebare, Psyche mea? Quid iam de te tuus maritus expecto, quid spero?...Age iam nunc ut voles, et animo tuo damnosa poscenti pareto. tantum memineris meae seriae monitionis, cum coeperis sero paenitere.

¹⁰³ Cf. 4.30.4, contempta disciplina publica ...impune committit tanta flagitia... I suspect that there may a play on Cupid's connection with snakes and flames in Jupiter's statement that Cupid has often transformed him in serpentes, in ignes (6.22.4).

indomitable behaviour with phrases such as primae iuventutis caloratos impetus freno quodam coercendos existimavi; sat est cotidianis eum fabulis ob adulteria cunctasque corruptelas infamatum. Tollenda est omnis occasio et luxuria puerilis nuptialibus pedicis alliganda (6.23.2-3).

The impact of the other characters' accumulated judgements of Cupid is great. In keeping with Apuleius' expressions of distaste for conventional religion throughout the story, the inability of the gods to accurately describe a fellow deity stresses their comic ignorance and detracts from their inherently potent image. In terms of Cupid's characterization, the consistency with which the divinities portray Cupid suggests that, to their knowledge, his conduct has always been as they have described. Their consistent view of Cupid is stressed by the repetition of variants of *luxuria*, "licentiousness", a key characteristic, in each of their speeches (as above). The repetition of this view throughout the story keeps the customary image of Cupid prominent in the reader's mind, thus drawing attention to the novelty of Cupid's gentleness and his state of being in love. The pointed contrast drawn between the reality of the god's conduct and the perception of his comportment emphatically stresses the originality of Apuleius' Cupid.

It is not only the divinities who either react to or are affected by Cupid. Throughout the narrative the substantial number of characters who directly or indirectly respond to the god and the range of their responses are indicative of Cupid's ubiquitous presence and authority. In pointed contrast to the gods' judgements are the responses of several non-divine characters to Cupid. This diversity in reactions reflects the inconstancy of both love and Cupid. The lamp, the river into which Psyche throws herself in a suicide attempt, the assistant ants and Jupiter's eagle, express clear reactions to the god¹⁰⁴. The narrator informs us that the lamp, which Psyche is carrying upon discovering her husband's identity, motivated either by *perfidia pessima*, *invidia*

¹⁰⁴ The reed (6.12-13.1) and the tower (6.17.2ff.) both aid Psyche. Although there are no explicit references to Cupid made in either one of these episodes, the kindness shown by both helpers is likely motivated by their fear of or respect for Cupid, as is the case with the ants and the eagle in tasks one and three respectively.

noxia or quod tale corpus contingere et quasi basiare et ipsa gestiebat (5.23.4), lets drop a spot of hot oil. The latter reason hints at the magnificence of the sight of Cupid and the power which he exerts over individuals. So efficacious is his power that it is capable of eliciting a dramatic response. Each of the subsequent reactions further plays up the god's potency. The ants who assist Psyche in her first task (6.10) are very eager to help the girl whom they know to be Cupid's wife. Both their willingness to aid Psyche and their designation of Cupid as magni dei (6.10.5) demonstrate their reverence for the god. Respect for the god likewise motivates the river and eagle (5.25.2, in honorem dei; 6.15.2, deique numen ...percolens, respectively). A particularly pointed indication of Cupid's prodigious might comes across in the narratorial statement about the river not only being motivated by respect but also by fear (5.25.2, in honorem dei scilicet qui et ipsas aquas urere consuevit metuens sibi). In addition to pointing up, by means of contrast, the comedy of the incorrect divine character assessments, these indications of Cupid's power foreshadow his exceptional ability to rescue Psyche from death (6.21.3), and to influence the sovereign deity (6.22) in order to secure his marriage to Psyche.

The two sides of Cupid's character are emphasized in the adjectives, nouns and verbs used to depict the god. Throughout book 5, the god's greatness, resplendence, beauty and gentleness are repeatedly emphasized¹⁰⁵. Furthermore, no nouns or adjectives are employed to indicate that the relationship between Cupid and Psyche is sexual. Cupid is always called Psyche's *vir* or *maritus*, and it is only after their separation that the narrator calls the god Psyche's *amator* at 5.24.2, as does Cupid himself at 5.24.3. Equally prominent are Cupid's negative traits, including lasciviousness and recklessness, as assessed by the other characters throughout the

¹⁰⁵ For example, dulcis (5.6.9), speciosum (5.8.4), formonsum (5.9.6), lucidus (5.16.2), mitissimam, dulcissimam, formonsum (5.22.2), fulgurante (5.22.4), glabellum, luculentum, magni (5.22.6), praeclarus (5.24.2), maximum (5.25.6), mirum, divinum (5.26.4), etc. Of 83 adjectives or participles describing the unknown or serpent husband, Cupid or his body parts, 29 denote his positive aspects.

story¹⁰⁶. The verbs denoting Cupid's actions indicate that he is an active character in the narrative, frequently depicted as rushing or flying about. He is often characterized as issuing warnings, frightening or hurting someone¹⁰⁷. The repetition of nouns and adjectives which stress Cupid's beastliness and depravity¹⁰⁸ enhance Cupid's twofold portrait. Until the god's identity is revealed, the antithetical descriptions help to support the secret of his identity. Following the revelation scene of 5.22, however, the effect of repeating Cupid's negative traits is to keep his stereotypical characteristics in the reader's mind that they might serve as points of contrast with the god's true nature in the tale.

This portrayal of Cupid in love, assuming the role of compassionate husband, is unparalleled elsewhere. Apuleius' unique characterization is highlighted by means of numerous lively inversions of Cupid's habitual conduct and stock epithets. The inaccuracy of the narratrix's summary of his more usual actions, causing harm at night and breaking up marriages, is immediately evident after the god makes Psyche his wife at 5.4.3, uxorem sibi Psychen fecerat. Traditionally the charmer¹⁰⁹, Cupid finds himself charmed repeatedly by the entreaties of his wife (5.6.4-5 and 5.13.6, his verbis et amplexibus mollibus decantatus). The image of the wounding deity

¹⁰⁶ For example, temerarium, armatus, procacem (4.30.4-5), delicatum, luxuriosum (5.25.6), inamabilis (5.29.1), adulterinus (6.13.3), levis (6.21.4). Of 107 adjectives, participles or adjectival phrases used to describe Cupid throughout the entire story, 23 have a negative connotation. In addition, 13 of 106 nouns refer to Cupid's bestiality.

¹⁰⁷ For example, 4.30.4, committit flagitia, facit nihil boni; 4.33.2, fatigat, debilitat; 5.6.6, monuit, terruit; 5.12.3, admonet; 5.19.3, terret, praeminatur; 5.24.4, percussi; 5.24.5, censebam, remonebam, punivero, se proripuit; 5.29.2, cruciares; 5.30.1, pulsasti, percussisti, contemnis; 6.22.3-4, convulneraris, foedaveris, laeseris. Of 102 verbs applied to Cupid, 30 describe his actions of frightening someone, issuing warnings or rushing about.

¹⁰⁸ Psyche's husband is repeatedly referred to as a beast: colubrum (5.17.3), serpentis (5.18.3), bestia (5.18.3, 5.19.2, 5.21.4, 5.24.4, 5.26.3), ferarum (5.21.4). The unknown husband/serpent is described in threatening terms as saevum, ferum, vipereum, malum (4.33.1), immanem, serpentem, sanguinantem, devoraturum (5.17), saevissimae (5.18.3). Venus refers to him in derogatory terms at 5.28.9, incrementum; 5.30.3, stelionem; 5.30.5, nugonem.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Έρως Δραπέτης line 9, ώς μέλι φωνά.

gives way to Cupid being wounded by means of his own weapons (5.23.4, 5.24.4 and 5.28.1). He is so severely injured that he vulnere lucernae dolens...ingemebat (5.28.1), and requires confinement and restraint lest he aggravate the wound (6.11.3). Flamma, which is repeatedly stressed as one of Cupid's attributes (4.30.4, 4.31.1 and 4.33.2.6) in book 4, becomes the means by which Cupid is injured. In a particularly ironical twist, Cupid finds himself wounded metaphorically by the fire of love, and physically by a drop of hot oil falling on his shoulder (5.23.4, stillam ferventis olei). Following his injury, the physical beauty characteristic of this resplendent divinity (5.22) vanishes and the god of love, looking ill like the lovers whom he has plagued, approaches Jupiter amore nimio peresus et aegra facie (6.22.1). A second inversion occurs in this exchange between Jupiter and Cupid. Customarily the divinity who inflicts torment on others, including the sovereign deity, Cupid, like an elegiac lover seeking respite, now approaches Jupiter as a suppliant in need of assistance to end his own suffering. Cupid is loving and concerned for Psyche's well-being and shows no trace of being a saevus puer (e.g. Ov. Am. 1.1.5). There is also great irony in the final scene (6.23f.). Far from his initial characterization as a home-wrecker, Cupid appears in the role of legally married man, creating what James (1988, p. 119) calls a "picture of domestic Olympian bliss".

Apuleius also exploits many topoi and traditions of love poetry to create a convincing portrait of Cupid in love. The lover, who is traditionally anxiety ridden on account of his beloved, is frequently denied easy and open access to his girl. Often poor, the lover laments at length the negative influence of a female on his girl, who is encouraged to seek a more affluent admirer. Throughout the tale, numerous twists, inversions of, and extensive play upon the standard conduct of a lover are recognizable in Cupid's behaviour. This major aspect of Cupid's characterization has, to my knowledge, been overlooked thus far by scholars. In order to demonstrate clearly the *topoi* upon which Apuleius draws, I shall provide a few citations to earlier poetry for each *topos*. The separation characteristic of the lover's dilemma is comically

inverted in *Cupid and Psyche*. Cupid readily effectuates Psyche's arrival at his palace and visits often, but only at night, the most common time for a lover's visit¹¹⁰. The secrecy of the love affair is exploited by the author. In the case of Cupid and Psyche, however, there is no fear of a husband finding out¹¹¹, but rather that Venus will discover what her son has been up to. The negative influence of a female, present in *Cupid and Psyche* in the persuasive and pernicious words of Psyche's sisters, is a commonplace feature of love poetry. The words of the influential female, often a *lena*, are aimed at deterring the young lady from spending time with a particular fellow, usually because he is not sufficiently wealthy¹¹². Apuleius ironically inverts this notion with the sisters' lie, prompted by their jealousy of Psyche's good fortune (5.9ff., 5.16.4-5). The poverty characteristic of the elegiac lover¹¹³ is likewise inverted in Cupid's character. Psyche's lover/husband is so wealthy that she is astonished at the affluence of his palace and treasure houses (5.2.3), and he, rather than trying to curb his lover's avarice, is able to display immense generosity by permitting his beloved to give away riches to her sisters (5.6.5). That Cupid only visits at night and departs before dawn (e.g. 5.4.3) may be another point drawn from love poetry, where the coming of dawn is sometimes lamented¹¹⁴. In addition, Apuleius provides a clever

¹¹⁰ There are numerous examples of the separation motif in love poetry, including paraclausithyra: AP 5.23, 13, 221 (death better than separation) etc., 12.118 252; Tib. 1.2 and Murgatroyd (1980) ad. loc.; Ov. Am. 1.6 and Barsby and McKeown ad. loc.; Prop. 1.16; etc. The lover, who used to fear the night, now, in love, moves about safely: AP 5.213; Tib. 1.2.25-32 and Murgatroyd 1980 ad. loc.; Prop. 3.16; Ov. Am. 1.6.9ff., etc.

¹¹¹ For the furtivus amor motif, see AP 5.219 where love is ϕ ώρια; Ov. Am. 1.4, especially line 64, quod mihi das furtim, iure coacta dabis and McKeown ad. loc.

 $^{^{112}}$ For a female's negative influence on the girlfriend see: AP 5.127 (mother); Tib. 1.5.47ff., 2.6.53f.; Prop. 4.5; Ov. Am. 1.8.23f.

¹¹³ The lover often laments his penury and pleads the cause of a poor man who will be faithful. For example, AP 5.30ff., 5.240; Tib. 1.5.59ff. and Murgatroyd ad. loc., 2.4.21ff., etc.

¹¹⁴ E.g. AP 5.3; 12.137; Ov. Am. 1.13, etc.

twist upon the common theme of the girl's illness¹¹⁵ and the lover's attendance as a sign of his devotion. The author puts Cupid in the role of injured party (5.23.6, 5.28.1, etc.), and it is Psyche who shows her devotion by attempting to find the god (5.28.1). Apuleius' play upon these various aspects of love poetry reveals his fondness for evoking the imagery and tone of a given genre¹¹⁶. By means of the similarities or contrasts with the earlier work(s), the author enhances both the atmosphere and character types that he is attempting to portray.

Psyche

The last principal character to be examined is the tale's 'heroine', Psyche. Psyche, whose name clearly has been chosen by the author for potential symbolic interpretations, most frequently exhibits a stunning degree of innocence similar to that which characterizes the protagonists of the Greek romances. At times, however, her actions suggest that she is not as guileless as she may first seem, and thus, her conduct sometimes takes the reader by surprise. In spite of this odd surprise, Apuleius' heroine does not live up to our expectations of a protagonist; she is often colourless, weak, not especially likeable, and does not exhibit the same complexity of characteristics found in the other principal personages. Unlike the characters previously examined, Psyche's main narrative role is functional. Consequently, she need not and does not display a comparable range and intensity of traits shown by Venus and Cupid.

Psyche's initial comportment in the story does not immediately signal to the reader that her assumption of the role of female protagonist will ultimately cheat reader expectations. The

¹¹⁵ There are many extant examples of this topos, including Tib. 1.5.9ff., Prop. 2.28; Ov. *Am.* 2.13 and 14 (the abortion poems), where the theme is developed at length. Murgatroyd 1980 on Tib. 1.5.9-10 also cites Tib. 1.3, 4.4, 4.11, Prop. 2.9.25ff.; Ov. *Her.* 20, 21 and *A.A.* 2.315ff.

¹¹⁶ Mantero (1974) makes further connections between *Cupid and Psyche* and love poetry by stressing the similarities between lovers' oaths and the vocabulary employed in the exchanges between Cupid and Psyche, particularly at *Met.* 5.5, 5.6 and 5.12-13.

girl's exhibition of emotional strength at the tale's outset is fitting for a heroine and suggests that Psyche possesses some redeeming traits (see further below). Like Apollonius' Jason, who becomes equally distasteful to most readers as the plot of the *Argonautica* progresses¹¹⁷, Psyche functions to elicit a variety of emotions. The reader's first impression of the girl arouses sympathy, an apt response to a heroine, but our favourable feelings towards her change from touching amusement at her naïveté to exasperation and eventually irritation with her behaviour. From Psyche's first appearance, Apuleius lures his reader into expecting more from the girl, but then, repeatedly frustrates these expectations by portraying her behaving foolishly or being confounded by her dilemmas. As a result, Psyche becomes almost an anti-heroine, whose weakness points up by contrast the strength of the other female characters. Furthermore, the girl's feebleness permits the author to toy with his reader, as appears to be his wont, and create an amusingly unexpected principal female who by virtue of her annoying character becomes something of an authorial joke on the reader.

Apuleius engages in both direct and indirect characterization of Psyche. The former method is kept to a minimum, however, and we learn only that Psyche possesses extraordinary physical beauty, is a princess and the youngest of three daughters (4.28.1ff). The reader then is informed that she hates her beauty, mourns her isolation (4.32.4), remains an unwed virgin (4.32.3), and that she is fearful (paventem ac trepidantem, 4.35.4) as she waits on the rock. As elsewhere, Apuleius shows a preference for indirect characterization and with only the above brief outline to work with, the reader must deduce the majority of Psyche's traits from her words and actions. Ample opportunity is given for the reader to learn her traits for the girl is textually prominent throughout the greater part of the story, and is not present only when her absence is narratively essential at the end of books 5 and 6. Her first departure from the foreground permits

¹¹⁷ See Hunter (1993, pp. xxviiif.) for a discussion concerning Jason's character and why he is portrayed as an inconsistent and implausible hero.

the introduction of Venus' display of furious abhorrence upon discovering that the identity of Cupid's lover is her rival Psyche. More significantly, however, her absence at this juncture allows the stage to be set for the assignment of Venus' four tasks. Psyche's diminished prominence at the story's close is essential for Jupiter's resolution of the seemingly insurmountable conflict between mother and son.

As is the case with the majority of characters in this tale, scholarly discussions dealing specifically with Psyche's characterization are minimal. Examinations of varying incisiveness concerning her significance to the tale do appear in a large percentage of the abundant scholarship produced this century. Yet again, the scholarly works fail to address the impact which Psyche's character has upon the reader and why Apuleius has created such a personage. Psyche's character has been studied from various angles, including psychological analyses, attempts at identifying folk-tale influences upon her character and the entire tale, as well as traditional philological approaches, from which similarities between Psyche and other literary and mythological female protagonists have been posited. The most frequently offered interpretation, however, is philosophical, specifically Neo-Platonist, in which Psyche, as the soul, is part of an elaborately contrived allegory. Symbolic meanings are then assigned to several characters, the relationship between Cupid and Psyche, and the trials to which Psyche is subjected. The work which has been done concerning the folk- or fairy-tale origins of Cupid and Psyche attempts to parallel Psyche's character and circumstances with other tales, and classify them accordingly. Though this research can be useful as a means of proposing influences upon Apuleius' story, it falls outside the parameters of my research and will not be discussed here118. The psychological examinations of Psyche's personal development throughout the tale, in which Freudian and Jungian principles are applied to her actions, offer little insight to her character. In

¹¹⁸ For research on the folk-tale and fairy-tale origins of Apuleius' work, see Bettelheim, Fehling, Hoevels, Mette pp. 231-2, Thompson and Wright.

my opinion, they are simply an exercise in applying (or perhaps, more aptly, misapplying) modern theories which are of questionable validity¹¹⁹. Although the philosophical interpretations are more sound and plausible on account of Apuleius' training and interest in Platonic philosophy, I shall not be examining the implications of such explanations of the tale¹²⁰, as they do not have a direct bearing upon her character development¹²¹.

In the introductory essay to his commentary on *Cupid and Psyche*, Purser (p. lxi), in a dismissive manner, pointedly sums up Psyche's character stating that the girl is:

simply the usual princess of fairy-tales, only perhaps more graceful and simple – of surpassing beauty, of no little royal courage (cp. 4.34, 35), but at the same time endowed naturally with the charming and affectionate trustfulness and clingingness of youth, though too prone to curiosity (6.21 rursum perieras, misella, simili curiositate), and easily led astray by her sisters...

The above mentioned traits are those often exhibited by the characters of the romances, and several similarities immediately become evident between these personages and Psyche¹²², not only in the situations which they encounter, but also in their characteristics. Walsh (1970, p. 218)

¹¹⁹ For psychological interpretations of the tale, see Neumann, Schlam 1992, p. 96 and von Franz. As an example of the fruitlessness of the psychological studies in terms of furthering knowledge about Psyche's character, Schlam (as cited above) concludes that when Psyche sees Cupid it is a violation of a sight taboo, in Jungian terms, which represents a woman's drive for autonomy. Gollnick's book gives an overview of both Freudian and Jungian interpretations of the myth, and attempts to correlate the findings of both schools. His first chapter offers a concise summary of the various psychological interpretations to date.

¹²⁰ See, for example, De Filippo; Dowden; Kenney 1990b, p. 16ff.; Walsh 1970, p. 220ff.; etc. For an argument against the customary Platonic interpretation in which a divine Eros and Psyche are united at the tale's close, see Penwill, p. 53ff.

¹²¹ The Neo-Platonist explanations are significant in terms of the lack of depth of Psyche's character. If Psyche is to be construed exclusively as part of an allegory, then her lack of colour is understandable.

¹²² It is likely that only Xenophon (between AD 100 and 150) and Chariton (between the 1st cent. BC and no later than the mid-2nd cent. AD) precede Apuleius' writing of the Metamorphoses. Achilles Tatius (between 150 and late 2nd cent. AD) could possibly have exerted an influence on Apuleius' work, depending upon the precise dates for both authors. I accept the proposed dates from the Oxford Classical Dictionary³ for these authors.

concludes that "Psyche in her naïvety and curiosity, in her timidity and piety has been drawn by an Apuleius inspired by the heroines of the Greek love-romance". Like the female partners of the novels' youthful lovers, Psyche is a young princess of remarkable beauty, her pulchritude, comparable to the perfection of a statue (cf. Heliod. 2.33.3), draws the attention and admiration of others and the girl is venerated as though she were a divinity. The consequence, however, of such remarkable comeliness characteristic of a deity, and the ensuing worship, is that Psyche becomes the victim of divine jealousy and must endure a funereal wedding¹²³. Unlike the Greek romantic heroines whose separation from their lovers is brought about and sustained by human agents, the introduction of divinities as active characters is novel. The elicitation of Venus' wrath and the direct intervention of deities, in the roles of hinderers, helpers and most strikingly as lover to a mortal, are new twists on the romances where, although divine influence may be in evidence, direct divine interference is not. A heightened level of reader sympathy for the mortal Psyche struggling against the power of gods is the effect of Apuleius' embellishment of the romances' basic plot. Apuleius' evocation of the heroines of Greek romance reinforces the reader's initial perception of Psyche as a naïve girl, who lacks malice and has done nothing untoward to bring misfortune upon herself. Furthermore, the blissful conclusion of the romances suggests that, in spite of her present problems, the plot of Apuleius' story will unfold in a favourable manner for Psyche.

¹²³ For a full listing of literary parallels, I would direct the reader to the commentaries of Purser, Grimal (1963) and Kenney (1990b), as well as to James 1987, p. 141 and Rohde p. 162 n. 1, who suggests that Callimachus' *Acontius and Cydippe Aet*. frr. 67-75 may be the original model for the romances. For the heroine's beauty and people's reactions to it, see Chariton 1.1.2ff. At 1.14.1, the beauty of the heroine Callirhoe is compared with that of Aphrodite. See also Sandy (1994, p. 1528 n. 41) for other examples of mortals being compared with deities. At Xenophon 1.1-2, the beauty of both lovers is breathtaking, and likewise both are compared with the magnificence of divinities (Eros and Artemis). Kenney (1990b on 4.33.4) notes that the funereal wedding was "a favourite topic of Hellenistic epigram". He lists numerous examples from the *Anthologia Palatina* in addition to several from the romances, including Xenophon 1.6.2 and 3.7.2. To Kenney's list, Purser adds E. *Heracl.* 579f. and Ov. *Ep.* 21.172, and Hoevels (p. 46 n. 101) adds Manil. 5.548.

Grimal suggests (1963, p. 14-15) that Psyche's exposure on the rock, prompted by Venus' jealousy and as decreed in Apollo's oracle (4.33ff.), bears a resemblance to the myths of Andromeda and Hesione. The former myth demonstrates the closest parallel, as Andromeda's exposure is the result of a divinity's jealousy at her excessive beauty (and the arrogant boasting of Andromeda's mother). The notion of parental wrongdoing is also present in the myth of Hesione who, on account of her father's perjury, was exposed on a rock to appease a sea monster. Although Psyche does not outwardly blame her parents for her lamentable fate, she does draw attention to her parents' inadvertent hybris¹²⁴.

Several other similarities between Andromeda and Psyche, which have been overlooked by scholars, are also worth noting. As a result of divine commands, both women are placed upon rocks to be carried off by monsters, but instead, they are rescued by their future husbands. In addition, both males are captivated by their first glimpse of the women's beauty and fall in love with them¹²⁵. There may also be a reminiscence of Perseus' description of Andromeda as a marmoreum ...opus in Apuleius' description of the admiration which Psyche receives as being

^{124 4.34.5,} cum gentes et populi celebrarent nos divinis honoribus, cum novam me Venerem ore consono nuncuparent, tunc dolere, tunc flere, tunc me iam quasi peremptam lugere debuistis. Although Psyche is encouraging her parents not to grieve for her and her purpose is not to stress her parents' wrong-doing, her words do address the fact that they should not have allowed their daughter to be worshipped as a goddess. Schiesaro (1988, p. 147) moreover suggests that Iphigenia's address (E. IA 1433ff.) to Clytaemnestra may have provided the overall inspiration for Psyche's words of comfort to her parents. Herrmann (1952, p. 17) believes that Psyche's placement on the rock and her "plaintes touchantes" are less like Iphigenia's sacrifice or Antigone's death and resemble more closely Polyxena's funereal wedding at Sen. Tro. 1148-50. See also Schiesaro (1988, p. 146) for additional links between Psyche and Iphigenia, Andromeda and Io. Ruch (p. 175), whose article ascribing a cardinal virtue to each of Psyche's tasks is otherwise bizarre and far-reaching, sees a similarity between Iphigenia and Psyche due to "un rapprochement avec l'attitude d'Iphigénie", notably her docility which proves to be her safeguard.

¹²⁵ Ov. Met. 4.676-7, et stupet [Perseus] eximiae correptus imagine formae / paene suas quatere est oblitus in aere pennas. Cupid is described as being aroused further by his mother's words when she shows him Psyche (4.30.5), and he himself confirms his love for her upon his departure from the palace at 5.24.3-5.

similar to that given to simulacrum fabre politum (4.32.2). The frequency with which beautiful females are compared with statues¹²⁶, however, decreases the possibility that this echo is deliberate. Although it is impossible to know if these resemblances are intentional on Apuleius' part, the reader's recollection of them brings certain points to mind. The rescues of Andromeda and Hesione by Perseus and Heracles respectively suggest that Psyche too will be saved after great danger. That the young girl must undergo a degree of suffering equal to that experienced by these mythological heroines is suggested and elicits sympathy in the reader for Psyche, who, like her counterparts, has not brought this punishment upon herself willingly.

In addition to the noted similarities between Greek romance, mythology and Psyche's character, Schiesaro (1988, p. 144f.) draws attention to parallels between Dido and Psyche¹²⁷, after acknowledging Vergil's debt to Apollonius. He correctly notes that both protagonists are sentenced to suffer on account of a love imposed by a divinity¹²⁸, and detects a similarity between Psyche's address to her parents at 4.34.3-6 and Dido's monologue at Aen. 4.596-7, nunc te facta impia tangunt? / Tum decuit, cum sceptra dabas. This scholar also notes that Aeneas' abandonment

¹²⁶ See Kenney (1990b on 4.32.2) for references to this "stock compliment".

¹²⁷ Several parallels can also be detected between Aeneas and Psyche, particularly with regard to their descent to the underworld. For example, both are relentlessly pursued by a goddess, both must take something to Proserpine (Aen. 6.141), both exhibit bravery while they make their descent, and as Finkelpearl notes (1990, p. 341), Psyche, like Aeneas, must perform labours before her katabasis. Harrison (1998, p. 67) states that "Psyche is clearly playing the role of Aeneas" and rather than a similarity, he sees an inversion of Aeneas' delivery of the Golden Bough to Proserpina in Psyche's order to obtain beauty from the queen of the underworld. He further believes that Psyche is compared to Aeneas, whose katabasis is a test of his heroism (p. 70-1), in order that the reader will look back upon her trials, and see them as testing her for her deification, "matching the function of Aeneas' character". Because the similarities between Psyche and Aeneas are predominantly situational and the tone is markedly different, I do not feel that Apuleius intended his reader to compare their characters and I do not agree with Harrison's interpretation of the function of their descents. The evocation of Vergil's underworld is more significant for its bearing upon setting (see chapter 1), yet the introduction of this clever blend of Dido and Aeneas in Psyche is piquant.

¹²⁸ Curiously, he fails to add that the goddess imposing the sentence is the same in both cases.

of Dido (4.333-361) resembles Cupid's of Psyche, and Dido's suicide is paralleled in Psyche's attempts¹²⁹. Due to the number of parallels elsewhere between Vergil's and Apuleius' works (e.g. see chapters 1 and 3), the possibility that Apuleius is echoing Vergil is great. In addition to acquiring an elevation of tone, Schiesaro conjectures (p. 145) that Apuleius wanted his work to be similar to one of such great notoriety¹³⁰. Harrison (1998, p. 62f.) adds several new similarities which are reinforced by verbal links. Both Psyche and Dido are in irrational states of mind because of doubts about relationships with sons of Venus. He notes that Psyche's solitude at 5.21, relicta sola, is reminiscent of Dido's nightmare of abandonment at Aen. 4.466-7, semperque relinqui / sola sibi and that Psyche's torment by Furies, infestis Furiis agitata, echoes a simile at Aen. 4.473, ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae, in which Dido is compared to Orestes. Furthermore, the scholar adds that the use of fluctuat to depict Psyche's wavering emotions "is clearly taken from Aeneid 4, 532 magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu". Harrison concludes (p. 63), like Schiesaro, that the epic comparison provides an elevation, this time for Psyche's character, and that the text "shows its own learning by the clever re-working of a well-known literary episode".

To these Aenean echoes others should, I believe, be added. Psyche's elaborate prayers for assistance to Ceres and Juno in connection with her love (6.2-4), recall Dido's sacrifices to the same goddesses in order to win their favour in her love-match with Aeneas (4.58-9). The utter helplessness which both Dido and Psyche feel following the loss of their lovers is captured in emotional monologues (Aen. 4.534ff. and Met. 6.5.2ff.) in which both women wonder what their

¹²⁹ I believe that there may also be another thematic parallel between this Dido episode and Psyche in the use of Mercury as messenger. Mercury tells Aeneas that he must leave Carthage (4. 223ff.), which brings about Dido's suicide and Mercury proclaims (*Met.* 6.8) a reward for Psyche's capture which also results in Psyche giving herself up and attempting to take her life several times.

¹³⁰ Schiesaro (1988, p. 145) states "Più in generale, all'interno della novella – che si presenta come inserto metanarrativo nella trama della *Metamorfosi*- è comprensibile che Apuleio voglia esemplare la sua narrazione su riconoscibili modelli di vasta notorietà."

next course of action should be. A more direct parallel exists in the wish of both women to have a child in which they may see the countenance of their lovers¹³¹. A final similarity is that neither Dido nor Psyche is legally married to their respective partners. If Apuleius is deliberately echoing Vergil in his creation of Psyche's character, I do not believe that the parallels are intended to elicit reader sympathy for the girl. Although there may be thematic similarities between the texts, I find it difficult to equate the repeated exhibitions of simplicity on a credulous girl's part with a lamentable error in judgement made by a competent ruler. Therefore, I do not think that Apuleius is attempting to portray Psyche as on a par with Dido, and the contrasts which can be drawn underscore Psyche's foolishness and a tone of mock-solemnity. The genuine pathos of Dido's deception by Aeneas, the unknowing agent for the plan of Juno and Venus, and her misinterpretation of the permanence of their relationship is stressed by a contrast with Psyche's predicament. In the girl's case, much of what she must endure, most notably the loss of her lover, is brought upon herself as a result of her own credulity. Furthermore, unlike the noble and tragic Dido, she is the active agent of her own demise.

To move from influences upon the creation of Psyche's character to analysis of it, I shall first look at the reader's immediate impression of Psyche as an ingenuous girl. The author's focus upon her innocence sets the stage for what is to come from Psyche without suggesting that her simplicity is so profound that ultimately it will be detrimental to her. Psyche's naiveté is immediately underscored by a contrast with Venus' malicious determination to seek revenge (4.30-31), Venus' jealous designation of Psyche's beauty as *contumacem* (4.31.2) and Psyche's own feelings of distaste for her beauty and the resultant isolation which she must endure¹³². Apuleius

¹³¹ Aen. 4.327-9, saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset / ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi parvulus aula / luderet Aeneas, qui te ore referret. Met. 5.13.3, in hoc saltem parvulo cognoscam faciem tuam.

¹³² 4.32.4, sed Psyche virgo vidua domi residens deflet desertam suam solitudinem aegra corporis, animi saucia, et quamvis gentibus totis complacitam odit in se suam formonsitatem.

includes nothing in this scene to suggest that Psyche has encouraged the worship that she is receiving. Rather than a forceful impression of the girl's simplicity, the reader is instead struck by Psyche's beauty (4.28.2)¹³³, her acceptance of her destiny, and the genuine and dutiful concern which she shows for her distraught parents. As a result, the author playfully misleads the reader concerning the heroine's qualities by withholding traces of her profound guilelessness, and thus, as with several other characters (e.g. Cupid, Psyche's sisters), the reader does not have a wholly reliable first impression of the heroine.

Most scholars (e.g. Kenney and Grimal) neglect to examine Psyche's character in book 4 in isolation from the following narrative, and as a result, their judgements of Psyche's character are clouded by her later displays of simplicity, immaturity, and curiosity which are not present at the outset. Consequently, Psyche's display of inner fortitude and altruism in the address to her parents (4.34.3-6) strikes them as out of character and difficult to reconcile. For example, Kenney (1990b on 4.34.3-6) contends that "Psyche's speech, highly implausible in terms of consistent characterization...is that of a tragic heroine such as Iphigenia or Macaria or Polyxena...doomed to be sacrificed for the people". Grimal (1963 on 4.34.3) adds "Transformation¹³⁴ peu probable: Psyché emploie des expressions outrancières, qu'il ne faut pas chercher à adoucir". Upon completion of this speech, full of pathos, Psyche bravely proceeds to the mountain peak ingressuque iam valido (4.35.1). Her display of bravery in the face of disaster elicits pity in the reader, and helps to create the deceptive first impression of the girl, which is far removed from the gullible, guileless palace dweller who is encountered next. Her demeanour in this scene forms a part of Apuleius' game of thwarting reader expectations of the heroine.

¹³³ Psyche's outstanding beauty is in fact the first point concerning the girl which is brought to the reader's attention. 4.28.2, at vero puellae iunioris tam praecipua tam praeclara pulchritudo nec exprimi ac ne sufficienter quidem laudari sermonis humani peniuria poterat.

¹³⁴ How can this be a transformation when the reader has not seen Psyche behaving in any other way?

Psyche often exhibits a trusting and loving nature¹³⁵, characteristic of a child. Any appeal, however, which this innocence has at first quickly loses its charm after the author repeatedly adds unflattering touches to her character by presenting the girl in situations which accentuate her simple-mindedness. For example, upon learning of her pregnancy, she is in a complete state of wonder¹³⁶. Psyche's simplicity is played up in her frequent requests to see her sisters in spite of Cupid's forceful warnings. The young girl is so witless in the exchanges with her sisters that after expressing concern that she will let slip information about her husband's identity (5.8.5), she is not able to remember the first lie that she told her sisters (5.15.4). At 6.21.1, her foolishness is again underlined when she disobeys a very emphatic warning¹³⁷ from the tower not to open the box of beauty. This scene also accentuates Psyche's weakness on account of her inability to save herself simply by following instructions. Perhaps the most striking instance of the girl's gullibility is that after embracing her husband on numerous occasions, she believes her sisters' lie that he is

¹³⁵ For example, at 5.3, Psyche does as she is told to by the incorporeal voices. The girl does not detect that her sisters are jealous of her good fortune when they encourage her to kill her serpent husband at 5.17.2ff.

^{136 5.12.2, ...}et sarcinae nesciae rudimento miratur de brevi puntunculo tantum incrementulum locupletis uteri. Cf. this behaviour with her deportment at her own funereal wedding.

Psyche's silliness: sed inter omnia hoc observandum praecipue tibi censeo... It is on account of the different outcomes of Aeneas' and Psyche's descents, prompted by Psyche's inability to obey the tower's stern words of advice, that Harrison (1998, p. 69) detects a connection with Orpheus' descent to the underworld in Vergil's fourth Georgic (467ff.). He believes that there may be an imitation "at least partly" of Orpheus' fatal mistake of looking back upon Eurydice, in spite of being warned against this by Proserpina, which resulted in his wife's return to the underworld. The scholar reinforces his parallel with a verbal echo: Orpheus dementia cepit amantem (G. 4.488) and Psyche (6.20.5), mentem capitur temeraria curiositate. Both mortals fail to achieve their goals because of their weakness. Yet the contrast between Orpheus' "understandable and moving longing to see his dead bride" and Psyche's vain desire to have a bit of beauty for herself, I believe, points up the girl's shallowness. Harrison rightly (p. 70) concludes that the difference in tone points up the difference between the comic and entertaining attributes of the novel, whose lighter nature does not allow for a tragic conclusion, and the "high emotion" of Orpheus' story.

a snake (5.18.4)¹³⁸. The direct results of Psyche's simplicity are stressed in her multiple and tiresome suicide attempts whose ineffectiveness only adds to the girl's pathetic weakness. Throughout her trials in book 6, Psyche also displays a striking lack of initiative for a heroine, when she is stupefied time and again by the requests which Venus makes of her and can only turn to suicide as a means of ending her hardship. Furthermore, the sheer number of helpers, without whom Psyche would fail, underlines her helplessness and lack of initiative. In the story's concluding scene, Psyche's silent compliance leaves the reader with a memorable final impression of a character who is not endowed with the qualities necessary to be a true heroine.

Curiosity¹³⁹ is also one of Psyche's key traits which adds to her level of immaturity. Much like Psyche's naïveté, the girl's curiosity, itself not always a hindrance to a character, quickly becomes injurious to Psyche. This trait is highlighted in her innocent actions at 5.2.1 as she approaches the treasure houses and at 6.1.2 when she spots a hill-top temple and decides to approach it. Cupid stresses the negative aspect of Psyche's curiosity early in the tale in his second warning to Psyche at 5.6.6 when he refers to curiosity as sacrilega¹⁴⁰. The girl's rash handling of her husband's weapons at 5.23.1 forcefully plays up her curiosity. Psyche is described as insatiabili animo...satis et curiosa.... The resultant pricking of her finger and falling in love with Amor (5.23.2-3) makes the god's departure at 5.23.6 even more painful for Psyche, thus underlining the deleterious nature of her inquisitiveness. The most pointed example of Psyche's

¹³⁸ Finkelpearl (1998, p. 100), in a discussion of Psyche's naïveté, makes an interesting analogy between the sisters and persuasive rhetoricians, and calls Psyche "the essence of the gullible audience deceived by the words of the clever or persuasive rhetorician...".

¹³⁹ Mette's article, entitled 'Curiositas', addresses Psyche's curiosity in an attempt to find folk-tale parallels.

¹⁴⁰ James (1987, p. 129-30), feels that "Psyche is remarkably incurious and submissive in her new surroundings." I am in agreement with James' belief, particularly in light of Psyche's admission to her sisters at 5.19.1-4, that rather than curiosity, it is Psyche's "impressionable nature, as well as her lack of knowledge" which compel the girl to see Cupid.

inability to control her curiosity, and the instance in which her inquisitiveness has a deadly outcome, occurs at 6.21.1, when she is unable to restrain herself from opening the box which Venus has requested that Psyche return filled with beauty by Proserpina.

Apuleius sustains the image of Psyche's artlessness by means of several telling details. Her physical response¹⁴¹ to her sisters' frightening lie is dramatic, as is her reaction to seeing Cupid at 5.22.3¹⁴². Of 178 adjectives and participles applied to Psyche, 57 describe her state of being wretched and/or fearful. Surprisingly only 4 directly refer to her simplicity (*simplex* or a variant) and only once is the adjective *innocens* applied to her¹⁴³. The use of numerous diminutives, however, and clustering of adjectives (e.g. 5.18.4-5) effectively build-up Psyche's childlike nature¹⁴⁴. Furthermore, frequent expressions of Psyche's pitiable state¹⁴⁵ throughout the tale draw her condition to the reader's attention. Instead of arousing pity for Psyche, this overemphasis upon Psyche's pitiful state of being ultimately impacts negatively upon the reader and

¹⁴¹ 5.18.5, ...et in profundum calamitatis sese praecipitavit tremensque et exsangui colore lurida tertiata verba semihianti voce substrepens...

^{142 5.22.3,} at vero Psyche tanto aspectu deterrita et impos animi marcido pallore defecta tremensque desedit in imos poplites et ferrum quaerit abscondere, sed in suo pectore... Sandy (1994, p. 1527), arguing against a possible parallel between Psyche's reaction to Cupid and the "quasi technical diagnoses of the symptoms of love in Achilles Tatius 1.4.4 and Heliodorus 3.7-8", as cited by Walsh (1970, p. 206 n. 3) completely dismisses the forcefulness of Psyche's reaction to Cupid: "All that takes place in the passage in Apuleius is that Psyche is stunned by the sight of Cupid's good looks". In down-playing Psyche's response, Sandy does not acknowledge Apuleius' perceptiveness in character creation.

¹⁴³ Forms of *simplex* occur only three times at 5.18.4, 5.19.5, and 6.15.3. The superlative *simplicissima* is employed at 5.24.3 and *innocentis* at 6.15.1. At 5.11.5, Cupid refers to Psyche's simple-mindedness (*pro genuina simplicitate*), and her actions are described as being carried out *simplicitate nimia* at 5.15.4.

¹⁴⁴ For example, misella is often applied to Psyche (see next note), 5.14.4, parvula; 5.18.5, tenella; 6.16.3, pupula.

¹⁴⁵ For example, 4.30.2 moritura; 4.32.5 infortunatissimae; 4.33.4 miserrima; 4.34.1 misellam; 5.5.5 misella; 5.6.4 morituram; 5.7.2 miseram; 5.16.3 pessimam; 5.18.4 misella; 5.23.6 infelicissimae; 5.24.1 miseranda; 5.26.3 misellam; 6.2.1 miseranda; 6.8.6 nequissima; 6.9.3 misellam; 6.11.2 nequissima;

results in mounting exasperation with the girl. Another method by which Apuleius pointedly portrays Psyche's fear and indecisiveness is the striking placement of verbs side by side, *festinat differt, audet trepidat, diffidit irascitur...* to underline her reluctance to carry out her decision at 5.21.3-4.

Psyche performs several functions in the narrative. In addition to being vital to the story, she plays an important role of contrasting character to her malevolent sisters (see chapter 3) and Venus (see above). The stark contrast between Psyche and the others immediately throws both their wickedness and Psyche's naïveté into relief146. These contrasts point up the girl's simplicity for the most part, and even when she is paired in a scene with a beneficent character (e.g. the ant), their differing behaviours stress Psyche's pathetic state of being and completely detract from her position as heroine. Yet her innocence and credulity are vital to the narrative, for without them there would be no intrigue or plot advancement if she were able to resist the other characters' attempts to undermine her happiness. Psyche's lack of colour as a character strengthens the forceful impression that the reader has of the other females in the story. The contrast between their incisive characterizations and the absence thereof in Psyche is another method by which Apuleius cheats reader expectations of the heroine. One would anticipate that the heroine would have a memorable overall personality, or at least, several well-developed traits. Apuleius' "heroine" is overshadowed by the other dynamic females in the tale. So, while Psyche does not interfere with the impact of the other females on the reader, the overshadowing results in a definite diminishment in the impact of her own character.

Psyche's character changes throughout the course of the story depending upon her varying circumstances, which I believe reflects Apuleius' need for Psyche to function occasionally

^{6.17.3} misella; 6.21.3 misella. I have included moritura, nequissima and pessima because they too denote her state of wretchedness and add to the overall impression of Psyche's pitifulness.

¹⁴⁶ For example compare Venus' raging ferocity at 6.9 to Psyche's silent submissiveness.

as a mere narrative device; an unusual function for a protagonist. The undermining of the heroine's initial strength by her arrival at the palace and the ensuing sense of abandonment (5.4.2, 5.5.5-6, etc.) is necessary to create a credible scenario in which the girl can accept marriage with an unknown husband and be hoodwinked by her sisters. Psyche's unexpected display of treacherous cunning and desire for revenge on her sisters is sparked by Cupid's departure. That Psyche is capable of wanting to take revenge on her sisters, for whom she repeatedly exhibited love and in whom she placed great trust (see above on the sisters), is a new facet to her character. Although she shows herself capable of elaborate deception in these scenes (5.26.2-5.27), it is unlikely that Apuleius intends for the reader to infer that Psyche has experienced a permanent character metamorphosis. It is more feasible that her unprecedented exhibition of vindictiveness towards her family fulfills the purpose of eliminating the sisters from the narrative in order to pave the way for the girl's wanderings and tribulations. Once Psyche has taken revenge, she reverts to her previous role of injured innocent in her quest for Cupid¹⁴⁷, before eventually giving up hope entirely (6.5) and submitting herself to whatever may happen. Her compliance with Venus' requests, rather than strengthening her character portrayal, is functionally essential in order that more tasks can be demanded of her.

Psyche's role in her sisters' deaths is not the only instance in which she shows herself capable of manipulating another person. At 5.6.9-10 and 5.13, Psyche appears to be fully cognizant of her powers of persuasion and ability to charm her husband¹⁴⁸. The application of suasoria to her kisses suggests that they are not innocent, particularly as Psyche is trying to

¹⁴⁷ She eagerly searches for her husband at 5.28.1, interim, dum Psyche quaesitioni Cupidinis intenta populos circumibat and 6.1.1, Interea Psyche variis iactabatur discursibus, dies noctesque mariti vestigationibus intenta.

^{148 5.6.9-10,} et imprimens oscula suasoria et ingerens verba mulcentia et inserens membra cogentia haec etiam blanditiis astruit: 'mi mellite, mi marite, tuae Psychae dulcis anima.' vi ac postestate Venerii susurrus invitus succubuit maritus... At 5.13.6, Cupid is described as his verbis et amplexibus mollibus decantatus maritus...

convince Cupid to do what she wants against his better judgement. The same is true of her actions at 5.13. Kenney (1990a, p. 182) compares Psyche's conduct to that of Venus *Vulgaris*, and notes that in the scene, reminiscent of Venus' temptation of Vulcan (*Aen.* 8.387-406) "such sensuality as there is, is all on Psyche's side, as she uses her charms to persuade her husband...". At 5.6.4, she manipulates Cupid in a particularly cruel and selfish manner by threatening to commit suicide. The inclusion of scenes in which Psyche manipulates Cupid to her own detriment stresses her determination to obtain what she desires, and thus portrays her in a selfish and unflattering light.

Apuleius includes several other unflattering touches throughout the tale. In spite of her fascination with the spectacular palace and all its wealth, Psyche is terribly upset at being there (5.5.5). Her behaviour, notably calling the palace a prison and saying that she is utterly ruined, is extreme and suggests that she is childish and a bit spoilt¹⁴⁹. Her ability to fabricate a lie on the spot about her husband's identity at 5.8.4 also detracts from Psyche's improbable virtuousness at this juncture in the narrative. The same is true of her fabrication of a new lie to tell her sisters, which she does without hesitation at 5.15.4.

Psyche assumes numerous roles throughout the story. She is the tale's "heroine", the victim of Venus, Cupid and her sisters, as well as a young innocent *puella* who inadvertently takes on the role of Cupid's lover and ultimately assumes the role of wife and mother by the story's end. As the victim of Cupid and Venus, Psyche displays remarkable passivity. This trait is again noteworthy in her acceptance of her circumstances throughout the story and the ease with which her sisters manipulate her. The repeated presentation of Psyche in the role of victim underlines the girl's weakness.

¹⁴⁹ 5.5.4-5, sed eo simul cum nocte dilapso diem totum lacrimis ac plangoribus misella consumit, se nunc maxime prorsus perisse iterans, quae beati carceris custodia septa et humanae conversationis colloquio viduata nec sororibus quidem suis de maerentibus opem salutarem ferre ac ne videre eas quidem omnino posset.

Various effects are achieved by the repeated stress upon Psyche's irritating qualities. Her incredible gullibility and inability to act in a logical fashion tries the patience of many modern day readers, who tend not to admire or respond positively to such a weak character. Consequently, reader sympathy may be diminished, as the initially inoffensive trait of simplicity becomes bothersome and almost blameworthy. Grimal (1963, p. 23) succinctly captures the essence of the effect of Psyche's comportment when he says that: "La conduite de Psyché nous étonne: un seul instant de réflexion suffirait à lui révéler cette vérité qui lui semble inaccessible". At the same time, it is essential that Apuleius not completely turn his reader off Psyche. If this should happen, the story would lose much of its charm and appeal and the inclusion of such a lengthy tale in the larger narrative of the Metamorphoses would be pointless and could detract from the novel's success. Psyche's simplicity and childish innocence¹⁵⁰ are played up with sufficient frequency that the reader does not feel complete aversion for her. Instead, these traits permit Apuleius to elicit in the reader an affection, albeit a rather condescending one, for Psyche whose character is both amusing and irritating. Reader response to Psyche may be suggested by a pointer in Cupid's reaction upon finding her overcome by Stygian sleep (6.21.3-4). Cupid immediately rescues Psyche from death, and expresses pity for her¹⁵¹ while he draws attention to her behaviour as another example of her ruinous curiosity. His affection for the girl is sufficiently strong, however, that he takes it upon himself to help her further. This combination of pity and willingness to forgive Psyche is likewise evoked in the reader, who still hopes for a happy ending to this story.

¹⁵⁰ Psyche is innocent of actively seeking worship and the love of a divinity at the outset of the story, and thus does not initially bring the problems with which she must cope upon herself.

¹⁵¹ 6.21.4, rursum perieras, misella, simili curiositate...cetera egomet videro.

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