

PSYCHE, AENEAS, AND AN ASS,
APULEIUS *METAMORPHOSES* 6.10–6.21

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When Apuleius undertook in the Second Century A.D. to write about a descent to the Underworld, he was, depending on one's views on literary indebtedness, at either a great advantage or disadvantage.¹ There was no way to avoid Vergil's memorable description in *Aeneid* 6, so that from the perspective of a critic like Harold Bloom, Apuleius was destined for a great struggle for originality. Yet at the same time, the existence of a prior literary tradition gave him a background against which to build, react, diverge, or coincide, and gave his descriptions a certain authority—not to mention an epic flavor.² Literary allusion has recently been the subject of many studies, and every critic seems to have a somewhat different idea of what it is all about—partly because the topic is so broad, encompassing not only different authors, but also different types of indebtedness.³ There is also a difference in approach, with some critics discussing specific instances of allusion and categorizing them, while others write more generally

¹ I would like to thank Richard Tarrant, whose assiduous supervision of my dissertation (of which this is a much-revised portion) was invaluable, James Zetzel, who made helpful comments on an earlier version of this article, and the anonymous referee, whose bibliographic suggestions were especially useful. The following works are referred to frequently and will be cited by author's last name only: F. Gatscha, *Quaestionum Apuleianarum Capita Tria* (Vienna 1898); Pierre Grimal, *Apulei Metamorphoseis IV*, 28–VI, 24 (*Le Conte d'Amour et Psyché*) (Paris 1963); Pierre Médan, *La Latinité d'Apulée dans les Métamorphoses* (Paris 1925); Louis Purser, *Apuleius, The Story of Cupid and Psyche* (London 1910); P. G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge 1970); J. R. G. Wright, "Folk-tale and Literary Technique in Cupid and Psyche," *CQ* NS 21 (1971) 273–84. These are the principle repositories of Apuleian allusions. All but the last two merely list without analysis. Walsh discusses Apuleius in comparison with Petronius, and Wright is interested in the intersection of folklore and literature. Articles and books on allusion in other authors cited frequently include Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation*, Charles Segal, trans. (Ithaca, NY 1986), Richard Thomas, "Vergil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference," *HSCP* 90 (1986) 171–98. This article gives a useful range of types of allusion and suggests a much-needed terminology. The text of Apuleius used is that of D. S. Robertson, Budé (Paris 1971).

² This, of course, is the way one has to look at Latin literature which is so deliberately imitative. Seneca's assertion that "condicio optima est ultimi" (*Epist.* 79.6) supports the notion that Latin writers did not see their position as a burden, though they did apparently feel the need to emulate and improve on their models (cf. the discussion of Gerald Sandy in "Apuleius, Infidus Interpres," a paper delivered at the International Conference on the Ancient Novel, 1989).

³ For example, many recent studies of allusion in Apuleius focus on his debt to Greek sources (*Onos*, *Odyssey*, Euripides' *Hippolytus*—to use the talks delivered at ICAN as a representative sample), and therefore do not address the question of verbal echoes at all.

and abstractly: "la parole e come acqua di rivo..." (Pasquali) or "tradition can be defined simply as poetic 'language'" (Conte). All these approaches are necessary and conflict often because critics are discussing different texts and attitudes toward art. As Conte points out, Bloom's theories of struggle apply best to his own topic, the Romantics, and reference as scholarship, for example, applies best to Alexandrians.

Allusion is elusive and subjective, not only in the sense that two readers often disagree on whether any allusion (or "echo" or "reference"...) is being made, but also in the sense that the effect is usually not clearly obvious. The question of intentionality is another area where critics tend to disagree, and again it seems more reasonable to consider some allusions very deliberate and others as a function of the author's memory and the tradition that language contains. In either case, a focus on the texts and their relationship to each other is preferable (as Conte stresses) to guessing the author's state of mind while composing. Yet in my discussion I find it necessary to assume that Apuleius was deliberate in his allusions and often wanted to achieve a certain effect—or, in other words, that he was an artist in control of his creation to the extent that artists are—which means, of course, that much that is unconscious and embedded in the literary language also comes into play.⁴

Because I am treating Apuleius' process as more or less deliberate, I prefer to use the word "allusion." There are, however, as many terms as there are critics. A cursory collection would include the following: echo, allusion, quotation, parallel, reference, imitation, borrowing, memory, intertextuality, reminiscence—not to mention Bloom's "clinamen," etc. Critics tend to choose and define their own terms; Conte prefers "intertextuality," a term which emphasizes the relation between texts rather than the author or his intent.⁵ John Hollander, in discussing "echo" makes the distinction, "In contrast with literary allusion, echo is a metaphor of, and for, alluding, and does not depend on conscious intention."⁶ Richard Thomas, choosing the term "reference" partly to express the idea of conscious intent, explains, "Virgil is not so much 'playing' with his models, but constantly intends that his reader be 'sent back' to them...the word 'allusion' has implications far too frivolous to suit this process."⁷ The case of Apuleius, however, differs somewhat from either Milton or Vergil, partly in that Apuleius is a more comic writer, and it seems reasonable to talk about Apuleius "playing" with his models even while he is being serious. Allusion, to me, involves more of an interplay or dialogue between model and imitator than "reference" which sounds, superficially, like a simpler process.

When Apuleius uses Vergil to construct his underworld, he takes no single approach to Vergil's prior text, but in this one episode displays almost as many types of allusion as have been defined. Sometimes casual and straightforward, sometimes extremely subtle, even scholarly, the late-silver prose-writing

⁴ We have at least the testimony of the Elder Seneca that Ovid wanted his borrowings from Vergil to be recognized (*Suas.* 3.7).

⁵ See Conte 27.

⁶ *The Figure of Echo, A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1981) 64.

⁷ Thomas, 172n. 8.

Apuleius is sometimes as Alexandrian as an Augustan poet. Throughout this one episode, Vergil is his background, and while Apuleius plays off him in various ways in succession, I believe that there is an overall effect achieved by the accumulation of echoes that is different from the sum of the parts, since it is not possible to find any single tone or consistent relationship to Vergil among these diverse allusions.

Apuleius' *katabasis* occurs in the story of Cupid and Psyche and is one of four labors imposed by a jealous Venus on the beautiful Psyche. First she is forced to separate different kinds of grains into distinct piles, a task accomplished by friendly ants (6.10). Then she must gather wool from a flock of ferocious golden sheep—here she is aided by a reed (6.11.4–6.13.2). Her third labor involves collecting Stygian water from a spring high on a slippery cliff, a labor accomplished by an eagle (6.13.3–6.15.6). Finally, she is to bring back from the realms below some of Proserpina's beauty in a pyxis, and is saved from suicide by the tower from which she is about to jump (6.16–21). This fourth labor, the voyage to the underworld and its indebtedness to *Aeneid* 6 will most concern us here, though some of the earlier labors do involve echoes of *Aeneid* 6, especially of Aeneas' preliminary task of procuring the golden bough.

Apuleius intentionally places the descent to the underworld in Book 6 like his predecessor. While Vergil's *nekuia* was centrally placed in imitation of that in the *Odyssey*, Lucan had more specifically located his consultation of the omniscient dead in the sixth book of his epic (also like Vergil, he puts the beginning of a major battle in Book 7 and a review of past history in Book 2).⁸ The device of imitating an earlier poet in the same position in one's own work, and thereby announcing the imitation, was a well-established convention by Apuleius' time. For example, Vergil, Propertius, and Statius all allude to the beginning of the third book of Callimachus' *Victoria Berenices* at the beginnings of their third books.⁹ Propertius also may have intended his placement of the word *sacerdos* as the last word of 3.1.3 to be a polemical reference to Horace's use of it in the very same spot.¹⁰ Apuleius, then, is participating in this convention by placing his many allusions to *Aeneid* 6 in *Metamorphoses* 6.

Some of Apuleius' allusions to Vergil seem to consist merely of a pseudo-quotation of the model, with no more ambitious end than to recall the earlier

⁸ See M. von Albrecht, "Der Dichter Lucan und die epische Tradition," in *Lucaïn*, Entretiens Fondation Hardt XV (Geneva 1970) 282. See also M. P. O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan* (Oxford 1967) 66–8, who mentions the intentional central placement of the *nekuia* and the deliberate contrast with Vergil (and Homer). The inquirer is unworthy, the guide more so, the account of Rome's glorious future (A. 6.756–853) has become a parade of demagogues and a prediction of doom. D. C. Feeney, however, points out the ways in which Lucan "recognized Vergil's equivocations, and seized upon them as his point of departure." ("History and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld," *PCPS* 212 [1986] 1–24; quotation from 17.)

⁹ Richard Thomas, "Callimachus, the *Victoria Berenices*, and Roman Poetry," *CQ* 33 (1983) 92–113 (esp. 95–105). Also see Thomas, "Art of Reference" 181, where reference by position is grouped under "technical reference."

¹⁰ W. Nethercut in *AJP* 91 (1970) 386, and S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace* (Bloomington and London 1962) 16.

author.¹¹ Apuleius may be partly invoking the "auctoritas" of Vergil, as the one who "knows" what the underworld is really like.¹² This is usually the least interesting type of allusion, because, as Conte says, "[The new text] simply inserts the only [sic—old?] text statically within itself. Thus no interpenetration occurs between the two texts."¹³ It is possible in some cases that these are unconscious allusions, brought on by the heavily Vergilian context, but I prefer to think of these allusions as reinforcements of the large-scale imitation, and signals that other more subtle and complex allusions are present. Because, ultimately, I believe that these allusions aim to connect Psyche—and, via Psyche, Lucius—with Aeneas, it is important that Apuleius establish a thick groundwork of Vergilian reminiscences.

When Psyche is told by the vatic tower to carry for Cerberus "offas polentae mulso concretas" (6.18.3), this seems to recall the sops thrown to that dog by Vergil's Sibyl: "melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam / obicit" (A. 6.420–421), though Apuleius has considerably demystified Vergil's poetic *melle soporatam*.¹⁴ Similarly, Charon, referred to as *squalido seni* (6.18.7) in a shorthand allusion to Vergil's four-line portrait (A. 6.298–301), transports the dead "ad ripam ulteriorem sutili cumba" (6.18.5).¹⁵ This recalls two different places in *Aeneid* 6: a description of the unburied dead, "tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore" (A. 6.314) and, more aptly for this context, Charon's boat so unsuitable for heavy Aeneas: "gemuit sub pondere cumba / sutilis" (A. 6.413–14).¹⁶ While Apuleius has created a Vergilian pastiche in this latter case, it does not appear that he is doing anything much more complex than simply recalling *Aeneid* 6. If anything, he has rather detracted from the resonance of the phrases—there is no longer a pathetic sense that the *ripa ulterior* is distant and unattainable, and the *cumba sutilis* does not groan under Psyche's or a spirit's lesser weight. Caterina Lazzarini discusses several Apuleian reminiscences which involve a substitution of more referential vocabulary for the poetic, and a diminution of figurative language. That is, in some sense, the situation here.¹⁷ While Apuleius uses poetic language often enough and certainly gives words new shades of meaning, he seems to prefer to clarify or interpret his poetic sources rather than adopt their poeticisms.¹⁸

¹¹ They are examples of what R. Thomas terms "casual reference...where an atmosphere but little more is evoked" (Thomas, "Art of Reference" 175).

¹² See Conte 58–59.

¹³ Conte 60.

¹⁴ Purser 110, Grimal 126, Wright 280, Walsh 56–57. On *soporatam* in *Aeneid* 6, see R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Sextus* (Oxford 1977) 152.

¹⁵ Grimal 127, Wright 281.

¹⁶ See Wright 280. That *cumba sutilis* is an allusion to A. 6.413–14 is noticed by Gatscha 146, Purser 111, Medan 263, Grimal 127.

¹⁷ "Il Modello Virgiliano nel Lessico delle *Metamorfosi* di Apuleio," *Studi Classici e Orientali* (Pisa 1985) 131–160, esp. 153–54.

¹⁸ Though Apuleius is not known for his love of consistency, he sometimes revises what is barely comprehensible or vague in his models. So, while Seneca's Phaedra mysteriously suffers from *lassae genae* (*Phdr.* 364), Apuleius' *noverca* exhibits the more normal symptom of love-sickness, *lassa genua* (10.2.6).

Several other echoes are introduced simply for the sake of recalling Vergil though not necessarily *Aeneid* 6.¹⁹ At 6.18 the tower, whose very breaking into speech, *prorumpit in vocem*, seems to echo a Vergilian formula, *rumpit vocem*,²⁰ explains the geography of the entrance to the underworld (which it locates at Taenarus, one of Lucius' ancestral towns of origin):

inibi spiraculum Ditis, et per portas hiantes monstratur iter invium, cui te limine transmeato simul commiseris, iam canale directo perges ad ipsam Orci regiam. (6.18.2)

This sounds partly like the dwelling place of Allecto at *Aeneid* 7.568: "hic specus horrendum et saevi spiracula Ditis / monstrantur."²¹ It is clear from his use of the phrase elsewhere that Apuleius intends to quote Vergil (or poets in general): at *De Mundo* 17, he appends *ut poetae volunt* to the phrase *Ditis spiracula*, thus conveniently giving evidence of his imitation.²²

It is likely that Apuleius also intended the phrase *iter invium* in the geographical description above to recall the *via invia* of *Aeneid* 3.383, the sort of oxymoron to which Apuleius would be attracted.²³ While *Aeneid* 6 does offer the phrase *regna invia vivis* (154), clearly *via invia* is closer to the Apuleian phrase, *iter invium*, for, as Purser remarks, "in both places *invium* implies not absolute impassableness, but that the way is difficult and trackless, a 'pathless

¹⁹ While I see the use of Vergilian language from outside Apuleius' *katabasis* as a way of strengthening the Vergilian tone without significantly distracting the reader from the specific Vergilian context being recalled, Lazzarini sees Apuleius' language more as a construction from diverse models. Emphasizing the generic quality of many scenes, in conjunction with the borrowing and variation of language from various spheres and sources, she downplays most specific allusions (Lazzarini, see above, note 17). While Apuleius undoubtedly creates a seamless patchwork, borrowing from many sources at once, the descent of Psyche does seem to be pointedly referring back to Aeneas' descent, in language as well as theme.

²⁰ Grimal 124. See Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.129; 3.246; 11.377. The *in* of Apuleius' phrase could reflect the growing use of prepositions in later Latin, and thus a feature of current language, but may also be a matter of a search for liveliness and immediacy as well as personal preference. See Louis Callebat, *Sermo Cotidianus dans les Métamorphoses d'Apulée* (Caen 1968) 227–29.

²¹ Gatscha 146; Purser, 109; Medan 263; Grimal 125; Wright 280. Note that Apuleius dispenses with the poetic plural of *spiracula Ditis*.

²² "Sive illa, ut poetae volunt, Ditis spiracula dicenda sunt, seu mortiferos anhelitus eos credi prior ratio est...." Here, because of the explanatory phrase, Apuleius permits himself the poetic plural. The authorship of the *De Mundo* is still a matter of debate, but the 1973 Budé editor, Jean Beaujeu, believes it is genuine. In a twenty-page survey of scholarship and approaches, he finds that the arguments against Apuleian authorship are unconvincing and inconclusive and that the attribution to a fourth century Platonist creates more problems than it solves. (See Jean Beaujeu, *Apulée, opusculs philosophiques et fragments* [Paris 1973] ix–xxix.) Apuleius also adapts for a generally Vergilian flavor the phrase *illi obstipuerunt silentes* (A. 11.120) to express Psyche's bewilderment at the immensity of the task of separating all the grain that Venus has poured out: "immanitate praecepti consternata silens obstupescit," 6.10.4 (Gatscha 146.) Again, there seems to be little point in the allusion beyond giving the scene a more elevated tone.

²³ Purser 109.

road.”²⁴ Moreover, the passage in *Aeneid* 3 also refers to Aeneas’ impending descent. Conceivably, Apuleius may have had both Vergilian passages in mind, having been led from the use of *invia* in *Aeneid* 6 to a use of the word in a combination more congenial to his style.²⁵ Apuleius often works this way—passing by a chain of connections from a quotation in the area he has been imitating to a similar one elsewhere in the same author which is more appropriate (cf. below on *lenis crepitans*).

It is possible that Apuleius is also making an oblique reference to Ovid, who borrowed and refashioned the phrase *via invia* in his rendition of Aeneas’ descent at *Metamorphoses* 14.113: “*invia virtuti nulla est via*.” Here, as in Apuleius, Vergil’s phrase from A. 3.383 is transplanted into the context of an underworld scene that relies on the *Aeneid*. It is not likely that Apuleius is borrowing only from Ovid here, given the surrounding Vergilian context. Probably Ovid helped to suggest the transplantation of the phrase. In any case, it is not unusual for Apuleius to allude to two literary predecessors simultaneously, one of whom imitated the other, as a way of pointing out the borrowing and of setting himself in the long tradition of literary imitation.²⁶

One place where Apuleius at first seems to be perversely depriving a Vergilian echo of its point is at 6.14.1 where the clause, “at illa studiose gradum celerans,” describes Psyche rushing up a mountain to the Stygian streams. Vergil had written of Dido’s old nurse, Barce, “illa gradum studio celerabat (?) anili” (A. 4.641), the point being, of course, that she moved only as fast as an aged woman can, *anili* adding a paradoxical touch.²⁷ Apuleius’ omission of that crucial word leaves Psyche actually hurrying—certainly not Vergil’s meaning. But Apuleius seems to have been attracted to the *context* of Vergil’s line; the nurse is unknowingly hurrying to help Dido commit suicide,

²⁴ Purser 109.

²⁵ If Vergil introduced the word *invia* to poetry (see R. G. Austin on *Aeneid* 6 [note 14 above], 86), it was perhaps for this reason more striking and deserving of imitation.

²⁶ One of the more prominent examples is Apuleius’ simultaneous imitation of Seneca’s *Phaedra* and Vergil’s Dido-episode in his story of the *Phaedra*-like step-mother at *Met.* 10.1–12. Elaine Fantham has pointed out how much the language and emotions of Seneca’s heroines owe to Dido (“Vergil’s Dido and Seneca’s Tragic Heroines,” *G&R* 22 [1975] 1–10). Apuleius’ double borrowing is his way of making the same point.

²⁷ Gatscha 146; Purser 102; Grimal 118. There is a question of whether Vergil wrote *celerabat* or *celebrabat*, on which see the commentaries of A. S. Pease (Cambridge, Mass. 1935) 500–501; and R. G. Austin (Oxford 1955) 185, both of whom support *celerabat*. Apuleius’ imitation would at first glance offer further support for this reading, but it is possible that his text or memory was faulty (as in the case of his inaccurate rendering of a line of Pacuvius in *Florida* 10.1 where he gives *candentem fervido* rather than *micantem candido*, influenced partly by *fervido* in the next line). R. A. B. Mynors in his *Aeneid* apparatus (Oxford 1969) mentions the Apuleian parallel, but prints *celebrabat*. To complicate matters further, Apuleius’ best ms. (F) seems to read *cele*rans*, there being a gap where a b might have been.

just as Psyche here hopes to end her miserable life by jumping from the mountain that she is climbing.²⁸

Other allusions to *Aeneid* 6 offer a slightly more complex relationship to their source, involving, among other types of allusion, correction, parody, significant *variatio*, and literary criticism of the original. The region of the underworld guarded by Cerberus is called by Apuleius *vacuam Ditis domum* (6.19.3), a clear and straightforward echo of Vergil's *domos Ditis vacuas* (A. 6.269).²⁹ Yet here Apuleius may be adopting Vergil's phrase to reinforce the sense of futility of the three-headed dog's barking threats:

tonantibus oblatrans faucibus mortuos, quibus iam nil mali potest
facere, frustra territando ante ipsum limen et atra atria Proserpinae
semper excubans servat vacuam Ditis domum. (6.19.3)

Vergil's phrase forms the climax to Apuleius' description of the dog who, though huge and monstrous, terrifies in vain and guards an empty house. While Vergil's "*domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna*" (A. 6.269) expresses the insubstantiality of all in the underworld, Apuleius adds a touch of the absurd in the notion that such realms are being guarded.

Apuleius may also derive from Vergil this idea of the ineffectuality of Cerberus' barking. At A. 6.400–401, the Sibyl sarcastically brushes away Charon's allegations that she and Aeneas might have come to steal Cerberus (or Persephone) with the biting words: "*licet ingens inanitor antro / aeternum latrans exsanguis terreat umbras.*" These words correspond conceptually with Apuleius' portrait of the huge dog, "*tonantibus oblatrans faucibus mortuos.*"³⁰ So when Apuleius adapts the Vergilian phrase *vacuam Ditis domum* to reinforce the sense of futility in Cerberus' barking, he intensifies and comically overdoes an idea already in *Aeneid* 6 by incorporating a Vergilian phrase from another location.

It is possible that the picture of Cerberus as a whole owes something to *Aeneid* 6, though it is difficult to determine whether the similarities are simply generic—dogs do bark, Cerberus was big and had three heads, etc.³¹ That both Cerberi are described as *immanis* (A. 6.418; *Met.* 6.19.3), that Vergil's is *recubans* (A. 6.418) and Apuleius' *excubans* (6.19.3) is not remarkable.³² Yet it was seen above that Apuleius depends on Vergil to develop his own telescoped portrait of the big noisy dog that does not scare anything.

In another passage, this time from Psyche's third labor, a combination of two lines from *Aeneid* 6 may act as a clarification or "correction" of the

²⁸ Especially in isolated allusions, Apuleius' effect depends heavily on our intimate knowledge of the context within which the original quotation occurred, and the ingenious way that context meshes with Apuleius'.

²⁹ Purser 113; Grimal 129; Wright 281. Apuleius again dispenses with the poetic plural.

³⁰ Medan 263 cites the parallel.

³¹ Wright 281 mentions Apuleius' similarities to A. 6.417–18.

³² Perhaps Apuleius is here again stressing Cerberus' role as watchdog by changing *recubans* to *excubans*, but Tibullus 1.3.72 also uses *excubare* of Cerberus, so it would be hard to claim that this has to be a Vergilian echo.

Vergilian context.³³ Venus describes the complicated configuration of mountains and streams to which Psyche must proceed to gather water, and she asks:

videsne...verticem, de quo fontis atri fuscae defluunt undae...[et]
Stygias inrigant paludes et rauca Cocyti fluenta nutriunt? (6.13.4)

The end of this sentence partly alludes to A. 6.323, "*Cocyti stagna alta vides Stygiamque paludem*," where, in addition to the obvious verbal parallel, there is a similar pairing of the Cocytus and the Styx.³⁴ The Sibyl's declarative *vides* has become an impatient question in Venus' mouth: (*videsne?*). Yet, instead of referring to the *stagna* of the Cocytus, Apuleius transports another neighboring line to the scene, A. 6.327: "*nec ripas datur horrendas et rauca fluenta / transportare...*" Thus while Vergil makes both rivers sluggish (*Cocyti stagna*, *Stygiam paludem*) and then, a few lines later, somewhat inconsistently refers to the *rauca fluenta* that must be crossed, Apuleius, bringing together the two descriptions, tidily makes the Styx a quiet pool and the Cocytus a raging river.³⁵ In creating the clear-cut contrast he was not necessarily correcting Vergil in any polemical way, but making sense of the river system by combining descriptions from two different locations.³⁶

There remains the question of what relationship such "correction" implies between the corrector and the source. Thomas says of correction, "This type [of reference] more than any other demonstrates the scholarly aspect of the poet and reveals the polemical attitudes that lie close beneath the surface of much of the best poetry of Rome."³⁷ This situation in Apuleius is precisely parallel to Vergil's correction of the order in which Homer made the Giants pile Pelion, Ossa, and Olympus, as discussed by Thomas. Here Vergil's alteration is based not on an appeal to another authority (as are many "corrections"), but on logical reasoning as to where Olympus should have been placed. Yet the effect that Apuleius' rearrangement has on the reader (or this reader, anyway) is to

³³ Thomas (185) defines "correction" in this way: "The poet provides unmistakable indications of his source, then proceeds to offer detail which contradicts or alters that source."

³⁴ Vergil's *Stygiam paludem* becomes *Stygias paludes* in Apuleius. (Ovid, *Met.* 1.737, however, has *Stygias paludes*.) It is strange that he here reverses his usual practice (above) and makes plural what was singular. Wright (281) sees this perverse reversal as evidence of continued imitation.

³⁵ Both Norden and Austin (*ad loc.* 295) point out Vergil's inconsistency in creating a system of waterways, though neither points out the apparent inconsistency in lines 323 and 327. Perhaps the *rauca fluenta* refer to the effect of the *turbidus gurgis* of line 296, but Apuleius' "correction" makes it clear that *he* saw a problem here.

³⁶ It should be noted that Apuleius does not use the word *fluentum* in the *Metamorphoses* except in Book 6, another sign of Vergilian imitation. The word does, however, appear several times in his other works. See Oldfather, Canter, Perry, *Index Apuleianus*, APA Monographs III (Middletown, Ct. 1934) 165. Another possible allusion, though not close verbally, to this section of *Aeneid* 6 and the infernal rivers occurs when the eagle warns Psyche away from the waters, stressing their power. "*Quodque vos deieratis per numina deorum deos per Stygis maiestatem solere*" (6.15.4) may recall Vergil's comment on Cocytus and Styx: "*di cuius iurare timent et fallere numen*" (A. 6.324).

³⁷ Thomas 185.

encourage a re-reading and reconsideration of Vergil's self-contradiction—doubtless there must be some point behind it. It would be perverse to see Apuleius, who has been so much criticized for his own internal contradictions and who makes his heroine climb an extremely tall mountain to gather infernal streams, as engaging in any serious sort of polemic over consistency. In addition, if he is showing off his scholarship, it is in a much more subtle manner than in the *Apology*. Rather, his conspicuous clarity does in a literary way what Austin or Norden have done in their commentaries; that is, through his careful reading, he makes us read Vergil more closely, showing us another way Vergil could have arranged his rivers, but did not. As above (on *melle soporatum* and *cumba subtilis*), Apuleius has prosaized the mysterious and poetic in Vergil. He has adapted Vergil to his own style in a way which does not allow Vergil's peculiarities to compete with his own. In correcting such inconsistencies, he has also shown that his own (though of a different sort) are intentional rather than oversights.

Humor, irony, and parody are other possible effects of literary allusion. A simple and obvious example of Apuleius' adoption of a Vergilian phrase for purely humorous purposes occurs when an ant rallies its species to Psyche's aid:

'miseremini terrae omniparentis agiles alumnae, miseremini et Amoris uxori puellae lepidae periclitanti prompta velocitate succurrite.' (6.10.6)

The eloquent ant not only speaks in an elevated manner, pathetically repeating *miseremini*, but also alludes to Vergil's description of Tityos:

nec non et Tityon, terrae omniparentis alumnum
cemere erat, per tota novem cui iugera corpus
porrigitur... (A. 6.595–97)

Both the ants and Tityos may be *terrae omniparentis alumni*, having homes and origins in the ground, yet clearly there is a certain irony in the smallest creatures being described by an epithet originally belonging to this nine-acre monster, in these agile, hurrying insects being compared with the stationary Tityos.³⁸ If Servius is right that a phrase from Vergil's ant-simile at *Aeneid* 4.404, "it nigrum campis agmen," was used by Ennius of elephants, Apuleius is here being quite Vergilian in his adaptation of Vergilian material.

A stranger example of Apuleian humor is found when a reed that advises Psyche how to collect the wool of the ferocious golden sheep is indirectly compared to the Sibyl as well as to the golden bough. Like Aeneas, Psyche must perform various labors before she goes to the underworld, and while these labors are not strictly related to her descent as plucking the golden bough is necessary for his, there is a structural similarity which is reinforced by the following

³⁸ Ironic and incongruous re-application of a line or phrase, even parodying the original, is one of the more obvious ways to adapt one's source, particularly if it is well-known. Elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* we find the outrageous, "quo usque tandem cantherium patiemur istum?" (3.27.5; cf. Cicero *Cat.* 1.1.1 and/or Sallust *Cat.* 20.9); or, "heu medicorum ignarae mentes!" (10.2.7; cf. A. 4.65). Such humor need not imply a mockery of its source.

verbal echo. When the heroine is (characteristically) about to give up and drown herself, the reed is (literally) inspired:

sed inde de fluvio musicae suavis nutricula leni crepitu dulcis aurae
divinitus inspirata sic vaticinatur harundo viridis. (6.12.1)

The phrase *leni crepitu* recalls two places in the *Aeneid*. At 3.70 the wind Auster is referred to as *lenis crepitans*, a use which seems to influence this description of a "sweet breeze."³⁹ Yet even more relevant to the present context is Vergil's similar line in Book 6, describing the wind in the golden bough:

talis erat species auri frondentis opaca
ilice, sic leni crepitabat brattea vento. (A. 6.208–9)⁴⁰

It is appropriate that a bough and a reed, two growing things (described with the words *virere* and *viridis* respectively), should be compared, and it is certainly no accident that the golden bough should be evoked in the context of the golden sheep. Apuleius also appears to be punning in his use of *aurae*; in Vergil, a word for gold follows *leni crepitabat*, and one might then look for a word for "gold" following *leni crepitu* in Apuleius. In fact, a word very close in sound to *aurum*, *aura*, does appear. (The reader also has prominently in mind the gold wool of the sheep.) Wordplay on *aura* and *aurum* appears to be common in Latin and even appears in *Aeneid* 6 a few lines before this passage, at A. 6.204: "discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit."⁴¹ Apuleius seems to be making a very private reference to the Vergilian play on words and, in a sense, recreating it himself by alluding to and echoing the context of the golden bough and using the word *aura* within it. Apuleius uses *aura* rather than *ventus* (which Vergil uses) in order to create an intertextual pun.⁴²

As Apuleius' sentence continues, however, the reed, in the phrase "divinitus inspirata sic vaticinatur," sounds more like the Sibyl (referred to as *vates* at A. 6.211) than the bough. In its capacity as prophet and adviser for the hero in pursuit of gold, the reed certainly functions as Psyche's version of the Sibyl. Though there are no very striking verbal parallels, a reference to the bough is bound to remind us of Vergil's prophetess. Thus the humble reed becomes, through a complex set of maneuvers, an ingenious and absurd conflation of the

³⁹ Grimal 115. Apuleius intensifies the friendliness of this wind already implicit in *lenis* by his addition of *dulcis* (*aurae*).

⁴⁰ The verbal parallel is here not strictly as close to Apuleius as that at 3.70, but the proximity of *leni* with *crepitabat* gives a similar sound. *Th.LL* 5¹1617.75f. offers no other examples of *lenis crepitus* or of *lenis* with *crepito*.

⁴¹ See also Horace, *Od.* 1.5.9 and 11 (*aurea* and *aurae* end these two lines). At A. 6.204, there is question about the meaning of *aura*, but the jingle is clear. See Austin (above, note 14) 100, on A. 6.204. See also C. J. Fordyce on A. 7.491, where he discusses this sort of word-play with reference to A. 6.204 (*P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Libri VII–VIII* [Oxford 1977] 150).

⁴² F. Ahl's *Metaformations* (Ithaca, NY 1985) makes clear how widespread word-play of this sort was among Latin poets, and how it was used to establish etymological connections between similar words. Ahl mentions this Vergilian passage on page 304 without much comment. Apuleius' allusive pun is not of the etymological sort because it refers for its play to a work outside itself to which it is establishing a connection.

golden bough and the Cumaean Sibyl. What at first appeared merely a delightful little offshoot of folktale—like the ants and tower that likewise come to Psyche's aid—turns out to have its literary connections as well. Throughout this episode Apuleius constantly intermingles folk-tale and epic with frequently comic results stemming from the close juxtaposition of such unlike elements.

For all the connections to Vergil here, Apuleius creates simultaneously perhaps even deeper resonances with Ovid. Referring to the *harundines* that reveal the secret of Midas' ears, Ovid says:

leni nam motus ab austro
obruta verba refert dominique coarguit aures.
(Ovid, *Met.* 11.192–3)

Here Ovid plays with *auster* and *aures*, having exhausted the pun *auras/aures* at the ends of lines 184 and 186. The context here is wonderfully apt: talking reeds (as in Apuleius), the gold of Midas, and ass's ears.⁴³ Ovid does not seem to have Vergil's Golden Bough in mind here, but Apuleius' *leni crepitu dulcis aurae* does appear to allude to Ovid's *leni nam motus ab austro* as well as Vergil's *leni crepitabat brattea vento*. Unlike Apuleius' simultaneous use of Ovid and Vergil in his phrase *iter invium* (above) where the double allusion pointed out the chain of borrowings in the creation of new Underworlds, this two-fold allusion seems to compose a relatively unstructured heap of developing resonances. On the one hand the Vergilian connection brings to mind the Sibyl, prophecy, the golden bough; on the other hand, the Ovidian echo is both more specific in juxtaposing another talking reed (or reeds) and yet brings up the much broader context of gold, metamorphosis, and human asses (Midas/Lucius). Elsewhere, Apuleius uses this type of broad-based allusion; most obviously, he introduces allusions to Io's metamorphosis even when the immediate context does not involve cows or shape-changes, apparently for the sake of the relationship between the Io story and the Lucius story.⁴⁴ In a novel that involves so many inserted stories, literary allusions that relate to the frame narrative may act as a sort of adhesive.

One of the more mysterious examples of Apuleius' allusion to *Aeneid* 6 is his apparent modelling of an anonymous old dead man on Vergil's Palinurus. Psyche is warned by the tower that as she travels on her way in the underworld, she will meet various people who will ask her aid, but that she must refuse them. She will first meet a lame ass with a lame driver, and later on some women weaving, but as she crosses the river, she will meet this strange man:

⁴³ J. J. Winkler, in *Auctor & Actor* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985) 300–305, discusses the title *Asinus Aureus* and the possible connections with, or even origins in, the Midas tale which involves the three themes of gold, asses, and transformation. What the word *aureus* signifies in the title—the ruddy color of Isis' ass-enemy, Seth, a good tale, an oxymoron in juxtaposition with *asinus*?—is mysterious, but in the present passage, gold grows on the sheep.

⁴⁴ Apuleius seems to echo Ovid's Io story at several points in his *Metamorphoses* 7.25 where an innocent man is accused of killing a boy who was actually eaten by a bear.

nec setius tibi pigrum fluentum transmeanti quidam supernatans
senex mortuus putris adtollens manus orabit ut eum intra navigium
trahas, nec tu tamen inlicita adflectare pietate. (6.18.8)

Although there is not necessarily any reason to attribute these obstacles to a literary source rather than folk-tale (though the lame ass looks suspicious and will be discussed below), the floating old man does bear a resemblance to Aeneas' pilot as he appears in the underworld.⁴⁵ He, too, begs Aeneas (*oro*, A. 6.364, *orabit*, above) as he is about to cross the infernal river to offer him a hand and pull him across. "Da dextram misero et tecum me tolle per undas," 370, is picked up in Apuleius' "putris adtollens manus," though the owner of the hand is transferred. The language of the Sibyl's rebuke to Palinurus, "desine fata deum flecti sperare precando" (376), also seems to have influenced both verbally and conceptually the tower's advice, "nec tu tamen inlicita adflectare pietate." Finally, the mention of *pietas* in the context of an echo of the *Aeneid* cannot help but evoke thoughts of the man most famous for his *pietas*.⁴⁶ Psyche in many ways is the image of Aeneas in this episode, and here she even (indirectly) receives his epithet. The purpose of the echoes, then, is not so much to identify the old man consciously with Palinurus (as there seems to be no conceivable reason why Psyche should meet the epic figure) as to emphasize the literary origins of much of the episode in order to contribute further to the connections between Psyche and Aeneas.⁴⁷

In fact, if one were to ask what overall function the large network of allusions to *Aeneid* 6 serves in this scene apart from the individual effects already discussed, the answer would have to be, in part, that Apuleius wants us to see Psyche as a version of Aeneas, as a hero in an epic making the obligatory trip to the underworld. The constant echoes of *Aeneid* 6 make us feel that she is visiting the same places, seeing and doing the same things. While Apuleius distorts and transforms many of Vergil's formulas, he has here also left many untouched, and there remains a sense of indebtedness rather than parody.⁴⁸ And if Psyche's descent and accompanying labors have something of the folk-tale and fairy tale about them, Psyche must be taken seriously as one version—perhaps a Milesian tale and folk version—of the epic hero daring the ultimate.

⁴⁵ Wright 281, suggests the resemblance. On the folk-tale elements, see his article and J. O. Swahn, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche* (Lund 1955).

⁴⁶ Cf. among the numerous examples, the use of the epithet in the vicinity of the talk with Palinurus, *pietate insignis* at A. 6.403 and again *tantae pietatis imago* two lines later.

⁴⁷ To this allusion in particular one might apply Charles Segal's general statement about the effects of literary allusion (from his introduction to Conte):

allusion calls attention to the autonomy of the literary system, to the art world created as something apart from the "real" or the experiential world....By its very nature allusion calls attention to the fictive frame as fiction and thereby also calls attention to the art and artifice of literary representation. (Conte/Segal 10).

⁴⁸ Perhaps the best support for the claim that the relationship is not one of parody is that Psyche's adventures do not seem essentially comic.

To some extent, the characterization of Venus as a goddess very much like the Vergilian Juno also reinforces the connections between Aeneas and Psyche. Both are pursued relentlessly by a goddess, and while Aeneas' antagonist is Juno and Psyche's Venus, we have to keep reminding ourselves that this Venus is not Juno, contrary to what the language and characterization are telling us. Earlier in the tale, at 4.30–31, Venus gives a long speech which is unavoidably reminiscent of Juno's at the beginning of the *Aeneid*. In an equally sarcastic tone, she complains that her altars have been neglected and—a nice twist—that the judgment of Paris did her no good since Psyche's beauty is preferred. Then, like Juno, she calls in a subordinate god to take revenge.⁴⁹ There is also a reminder of this close association in the heart of Psyche's trials, just as Venus is about to send the girl into the underworld. The words, "nec tamen nutum deae saevientis vel tunc expiare potuit" (6.16.1) recall in their own contorted way the narrative of the *Aeneid* just before Latinus gives up the reins of state: "saevae nutu Iunonis eunt res" (A. 7.592).⁵⁰ So again, cruel Venus is connected with cruel Juno and we are forced to see the parallels between Psyche's obstacles and labors and those of Aeneas.

Further, in light of the much-noted parallelism of Psyche's story with Lucius', it seems that we are to see her as making the descent in his place, perhaps symbolically for him. Psyche's adventures mirror those of Lucius; both fall through *curiositas*, wander painfully pursued by Fortuna, and are finally brought to a higher state through divine intervention.⁵¹ There could be no serious descent to the underworld by an ass, but structurally an Odyssean novel of travel and travail requires one. While Lucius does make his own mysterious descent at 11.23, it occurs too late, and is a reward rather than a test.⁵² The text requires a central *katabasis*, and it is Psyche, as Lucius' temporary surrogate, who must do it.

Yet there is even more evidence to reinforce the analogy, for, strangely, Lucius—or rather some alter-Lucius—does seem to be in the underworld at the moment Psyche descends. As mentioned above, one of the people she meets and must not help is a lame ass-driver:

iamque confecta bona parte mortiferae viae continaberis claudum
asinum lignorum gerulum cum agasone simili, qui te rogabit, decidentis
sarcinae fusticulos aliquos porrigas ei, sed tu nulla voce
depremta tacita praeterito. (6.18.4)

Surely it is worth paying special attention to any ass one meets in the novel, and here the order of presentation emphasizes the ass rather than the "similar

⁴⁹ See James Tatum, *Apuleius and the Golden Ass* (Ithaca, NY 1979) 49–50, who points out the connection with Juno while others see only the reminiscences of Lucretius in the speech which begins, "en rerum naturae prisca parens" (4.30.1).

⁵⁰ S. J. Harrison notes several other parallels with Juno in *Aeneid* 7, in a paper, "Apuleius and the Epic," delivered at ICAN 1989.

⁵¹ On the parallels, see Tatum (above note 49) 56–62; Carl Schlam, "The Curiosity of the Golden Ass," *CJ* 64 (1968) 120–25; James Tatum, "The Tales in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 511–15. More recently, see R. W. Hooper, "Structural Unity in the Golden Ass," *Latomus* 44 (1985) 398–401.

⁵² I refer to the famous "accessi confinium mortis...."

master." At *Met.* 4.4–5, the other ass carrying stolen goods for the robbers acted as Lucius' alter ego in anticipating his thoughts and refusing to continue, and consequently suffering what would have been Lucius' fate. So, here, the ass resembles Lucius, and may be seen as acting for him. We have already seen that Lucius is *claudus* (3.27.6): *debilem claudumque reddam*; 4.4.2: *iam claudus et titubans*. Moreover, only Lucius and one of his masters (the miller) are called *claudus* in all of Apuleius.⁵³ The ass as "lignorum gerulum" is reminiscent of Lucius in the service of the evil boy who makes him carry wood down from the mountain. This boy, like the ass-driver in the underworld, was called *agaso* at 7.18.2 and 7.25.6, and these are the only other uses of the word in Apuleius.⁵⁴

It is also intriguing that the priest of Book 11, Asinius Marcellus (whose name is so appropriate, as Lucius points out at 11.27.7), is also lame, though the word *claudus* is not used. His lameness is the very mark by which Lucius is to recognize him:

Is ut agnitionem mihi scilicet certo aliquo sui signo subministraret, sinistri pedis talo paululum reflexo cunctabundo clementer incedeabat vestigio. (11.27.5)

It is, then, in essence a lame "ass" who will show Lucius the final mysteries. The lameness has now almost become graceful (*clementer*). Perhaps we are seeing how the lame ass in all its forms has, after all, been a vehicle of enlightenment.⁵⁵

It is surely, by now, unnecessary to justify an interpretation based partly on a re-reading of the novel (i.e., when reading the Psyche episode, one has not yet encountered the boy in Book 7). Though the experience of a first reading differs significantly from subsequent readings, the *Metamorphoses* was written with the expectation of readers revising their opinions.⁵⁶ Here, I think, we have heard enough about Lucius' lameness so that, even on a first reading, this limping ass in the underworld should look significant. Yet it is not at all illegitimate to reconsider him with the benefit of fuller knowledge and a concordance. For this ass is clearly built upon Lucius' adventures, as the coincidence of vocabulary and detail makes clear, rather than mythology or folk-tale; the very divergence from the figure of the ass of Ocnus—the rope-eating ass one usually encounters

⁵³ See *Index Apuleianus*, sub *claudus*. It appears at 3.27.6; 4.4.2; 6.26.1 of Lucius, and at 9.27.1 of his master. *Claudicare* is used of Lucius at 6.30.4.

⁵⁴ See *Index Apuleianus*. There is perhaps also a hint of an internal echo of "fusticulos aliquos porrigas ei" in "cum deberet egregius agaso manum porrigere..." (7.18.2).

⁵⁵ An opposite and ironic reading is, of course, possible. F. Ahl (see above, note 42) 151–52, sees in the name Asinius Marcellus a "subversive implication that Lucius could now be making an ass of himself in a rather different way."

⁵⁶ For the necessity of rereading the *Metamorphoses* to correct our first assumptions about the narrative, see J. J. Winkler, "Auctor and Actor; Apuleius and his Metamorphosis," *Pacific Coast Philology* 14 (1979) 85–86, and of course, the book of the same name (above, note 43). For a discussion of the ways Vergil makes the reader suspend judgment and reread, see Gordon Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid* (New Haven 1983) Chapter 3: "Retrospective Judgment Enforced," 40–50.

in the underworld—suggests that Apuleius designed this animal and rider for his own story.⁵⁷

I do not for a moment intend to say that we should interpret the presence of this oddly familiar pair to mean that Lucius literally was in the underworld as an obstacle to Psyche's mission. Yet a surrogate ass and rider are there to suggest Lucius' spiritual and symbolic descent, perhaps hinting obscurely at his future enlightened knowledge of that realm, but perhaps simply to make Lucius doubly part of the present epic voyage.

In conclusion, then, Apuleius' echoes of Vergil, while individually serving separate functions and achieving different effects, together bring us a folk-tale that is epic, a Psyche who is an Aeneas. Lucius, too, is indirectly elevated to epic stature, both through Psyche and through a mysterious ass in the underworld. Such literary allusion is far from arbitrary or ornamental. Rather, Apuleius' creative imitation helps traverse the distance between Aeneas and an ass.

⁵⁷ Purser 110 and Grimal 126, both reject Ocnus as a source.