Catullus decentred: the poetics of the periphery

by
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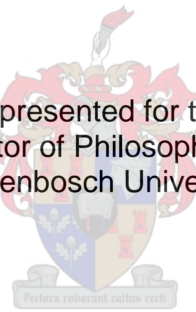

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Catullus is, after Vergil and Horace, the most studied Latin poet. His poems portray a speaking subject whose intense experience of the people and circumstances in his world immediately draws in the reader by suggesting a believable personality experiencing universal emotions. Although the speaker in the poems has often been described as a marginalized figure in terms of his status as a provincial in Rome the problem of his decentredness has not been considered as a recurring motif in the Catullan oeuvre. This study investigates the depiction of the Catullan speaker as a peripheral figure throughout the corpus by analyzing 63 of the 113 poems. Five categories are identified which correspond to the speaker's experience of being side-lined under different circumstances: the peripheral figure in Rome, the rejected lover, the misunderstood or undervalued friend, the ambiguous invective speaker, and the sympathizer with mythological outcasts. Selected poems are grouped together and analyzed in five chapters based on these categories. These five chapters are introduced by a chapter on a number of theories which may contribute to a better understanding of a peripheral literary personality. Chapter 1 discusses the theories of liminality, dialogism, symbolic space and narrative as means to a clearer formulation of the identity of a marginalized figure. In chapter 2 the Catullan speaker's peripheral position in Rome is analyzed in terms of the notion of *urbanitas*, the sophisticated behaviour and aesthetic judgment associated with the city, as well as with reference to his brother's death, the person who symbolizes his closest link to his rural hometown of Verona. Chapter 3 is concerned with the peripheral status of the Catullan speaker as lover in terms of his relationship with the notoriously disloyal Lesbia in particular, but also with reference to his infatuation with the young man Juventius who openly rejects him. In chapter 4 the Catullan speaker features as a misunderstood or undervalued friend. This chapter analyzes poems directed at friends whose lack of the reciprocal faithfulness implied by *amicitia* leaves the speaker with a profound sense of not-belonging. Chapter 5 focuses on the Catullan speaker's use of invective to lash out at enemies or rivals in love. Despite the speaker's apparent delight in harsh verbal abuse, his loud protestations mask a deep-seated vulnerability and a keen awareness of his own precarious position in the situation in hand. Finally chapter 6 looks at the mythological outcasts Attis and Ariadne as representatives of the only way of life available to those individuals who do not conform to society's mould. From the perspective of someone who is neither an insider nor a complete outsider the Catullan speaker presents the reader with a unique perspective on Roman society both in terms of the public world of socio-politics as well as the private world of intimate relationships between individuals. At the same time the unique personality of a decentred speaker is revealed. This is the poetics of the periphery.

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OPSOMMING

Catullus is na Vergilius en Horatius die Latynse digter wat die meeste bestudeer word. Sy gedigte beeld 'n spreker uit wie se diep belewing van die mense en omstandighede in sy wêreld die leser onmiddellik betrek deur 'n geloofwaardige persoonlikheid met universele emosies voor te stel. Alhoewel die spreker in die gedigte al dikwels as 'n gemarginaliseerde figuur beskryf is met betrekking tot sy status as 'n provinsiaal in Rome, is die probleem van sy gedesentreerde posisie nog nie as 'n herhalende motief in Catullus se oeuvre beskou nie. Hierdie tesis ondersoek die uitbeelding van die Catullus-spreker as 'n randfiguur dwarsdeur die korpus deur 63 van die 113 gedigte te ontleed. Vyf kategorieë wat verband hou met die spreker se ervaring, onder verskillende omstandighede, dat hy na die kantlyn uitgeskuif word, word geïdentifiseer: die randfiguur in Rome, die verwerpte minnaar, die vriend wat misverstaan of onderwaardeer word, die dubbelsinnige spreker van skeldtaal en die simpatiseerder met mitiese uitgeworpenes. Uitgesoekte gedigte word saam gegroepeer en in vyf hoofstukke ontleed op grond van hierdie kategorieë. Die vyf hoofstukke word ingelei deur 'n hoofstuk oor verskeie teorieë wat kan bydra tot 'n beter verstaan van 'n literêre randfiguur. Hoofstuk 1 ondersoek die teorieë van liminaliteit, dialogisme, simboliese ruimte en narratief as middele tot 'n duideliker formulering van die gemarginaliseerde se identiteit. In hoofstuk 2 word die spreker se posisie as randfiguur in Rome ontleed met betrekking tot die begrip *urbanitas*, die gesofistikeerde gedrag en estetiese oordeel wat met die stad verbind word, asook met verwysing na die dood van sy broer, die persoon wat sy sterkste band met sy landelike tuisdorp Verona verteenwoordig. Hoofstuk 3 ondersoek die Catullus-spreker as 'n randfiguur in sy liefdesverhoudings, veral met betrekking tot Lesbia, berug vir haar ontrouheid, maar ook met verwysing na sy versotheid op die jong man Juventius. Hoofstuk 4 handel oor die Catullus-spreker as 'n vriend wat misverstaan of onderwaardeer word. Hierdie hoofstuk ontleed gedigte gerig aan vriende wie se gebrek aan die wederkerige getrouheid, soos vervat in die konsep *amicitia*, die spreker met die gevoel laat dat hy nêrens behoort nie. Hoofstuk 5 fokus op die Catullus-spreker se gebruik van skeldtaal om vyande en mededingers vir 'n beminde se liefde by te kom. Ten spyte van die klaarblyklike vreugde wat die spreker put uit 'n felle geskel bedek sy luidrugtige besware 'n diep gewortelde kwesbaarheid en 'n fyn bewustheid van sy eie onsekere posisie in die betrokke situasie. Ten slotte ondersoek hoofstuk 6 die mitologiese uitgeworpenes Attis en Ariadne as verteenwoordigers van die enigste leefwyse wat beskikbaar is vir diegene wat nie in die samelewing se patroon inpas nie. Vanuit die perspektief van iemand wat nie 'n lid van die binnekring is nie, maar ook nie 'n volslae buitestander nie, bied die Catullus-spreker aan die leser 'n unieke blik op die Romeinse samelewing met betrekking tot sowel die openbare wêreld van sosio-politiek as die private wêreld van intieme verhoudings tussen individue.

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Terselfdertyd word die unieke persoonlikheid van ’n gedesentreerde spreker geopenbaar. Dit is die digkuns van die kantlyn.

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INTRODUCTION

Catullus is, after Vergil and Horace, the most studied Latin poet. Ever since the rediscovery of his text in the early fourteenth century, his small oeuvre (113 poems) has been the subject of countless scholarly as well as literary works, and his love poems have inspired numerous translations and adaptations. Yet he remains one of the most enigmatic Roman poets. Apart from a few scanty details (personal references in his poems as well as references in contemporary and later sources), we know absolutely nothing about the real person. Even references to him in ancient sources have proved to be vague and some even unreliable.[1] What we do have is a book of poetry from which we are able to tell a great deal about contemporary society and the way in which the poet saw himself in that society.

One of the few things we do know for certain is that Catullus was born in Verona into an influential family and came to Rome as a young man. Although Catullus' privileged position in Verona offered him access to the Roman élite, inhabitants of Verona and the rest of Transpadane Gaul only acquired full Roman citizenship in 49 BCE. The general consensus amongst scholars is that, by this time, Catullus had either died already, or was living a provincial life in Verona, continuing the family line after his brother's death (Skinner, 2003:xxi; Hurley, 2004:22; Wiseman, 2007:59). The only datable poems in his corpus fall in the period 56-54 BCE (Skinner, 2003:xxi). Catullus thus arrived in Rome as a *domi nobilis* (noble at home), someone who was not yet fully integrated in the socio-political circles of the Roman élite (Gaisser, 2009:7). This made him, in many respects, a peripheral figure in Rome (Fitzgerald, 1995:9-10, 185; Konstan, 2000; Wray, 2001:45).[2]

In recent scholarship Catullus is described in various ways with regard to his peripheral position in Roman society: having "a social handicap" (Fitzgerald, 1995:10); "*amicus inferior*" (Tatum, 1997); "a decentred identity" (Konstan, 2000); the master of a Roman discourse that he "possesses fully by mastery, but never fully owns by membership" (Wray, 2001:45); "*domi nobilis*" (Gaisser, 2009:7), and possessing an "outsider perspective" (Stevens, 2013:9). Most of these studies, however, focus on only one aspect of Catullan marginalization: his

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[1] Apuleius (second century) tells us that "Clodia" is the real name of Catullus' great love "Lesbia", but does not specify which one of the three Clodii sisters is meant. Jerome (fourth century) tells us that Catullus died in 58 BCE but, as evidenced by Catullus' own poems, this date proved to be incorrect (Gaisser, 2009:2).

[2] It is not improbable that Catullus could have been a Roman citizen. If his father had been a magistrate in Verona, he would have obtained citizenship for himself and his closest family members (Konstan, 2007:72). Catullus' stint in Bithynia, where he served under Memmius, seems to support this theory (Skinner, 2003:xxii). However, this would not diminish his peripheral position in Rome. As an "honorary" Roman citizen, hailing from the provinces, he was still not a member of the Roman élite and not on equal footing with those citizens who had been born into old Roman families. It is precisely Catullus' ambivalent position in Roman élite society which makes his poetics of the periphery so striking.

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position as Transpadane poet in the élite circles of Rome. Catullus' ambivalent status in Rome, as both a respected poet and a provincial, is only the first and the most literal aspect of Catullus as a peripheral figure. Throughout his corpus "Catullus" (as he appears in the text) seems to be marginalized in most aspects of his life.[3] In the following study I aim to demonstrate that Catullus' peripheral position goes much further than just being a member of the in-crowd or not. I will identify five categories of "decentred Catullus" and critically analyze groups of poems accordingly: his provincial background, romantic love, friendship, invective, and mythology. Each of these categories corresponds to a particular sense of being side-lined as experienced by the Catullan speaker. Together they reveal a personality who appears to be nowhere at home.

The problem of not-belonging is primarily a problem of identity. After many years of regarding the individual as simply a mini version of his/her society social anthropology and social archaeology have come to realize that the relationship between society and the individual is far more complex. Instead of seeing society as imposing itself on its members these disciplines now recognize that a reciprocal relationship exists between the individual and his/her society: they are constitutive of one another. Likewise the previously unproblematic term "identity" is now seen as a complex concept: identities are changeable and fragmented. We are shaped by the broader social categories such as gender, class, etc. but our relationships with others equally influence our selves as we constantly need to negotiate our identities in relation to an "other". This approach to the individual and society could be applied to Catullus as well by moving away from generalized reconstructions and by focusing solely on the text and the context in which it was written. "Literary texts [are] locations for the contesting and negotiation of societal dynamics" (Tatum, 1997:483). This is not only evident in Catullus, but one of the main characteristics of his poetry. Renewed emphasis on the text itself has become the norm in recent years as scholars move away from the romantic/biographical reading of Catullus (Wiseman, 1985; Janan, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1995; Wray, 2001; Skinner, 2003; Stevens, 2013; et al.).[4] These studies have made us

[3] It is important at this stage to note that Catullus, the main character of the poems, is not to be equated with the historical figure. The focus of this study is on "Catullus" as he appears in the text, both a first and third person speaker in the poems as well as a second person addressee, who is not to be confused with the "real" person we hardly know anything about. The terms "Catullus" and "the Catullan speaker" will be used interchangeably in this study to refer to the Catullus of the text. This Catullus is a complex, multi-voiced speaker who often appears as a fragmented psyche. As will be discussed below, the different aspects of Catullus' peripheral position correspond to different voices in the poems: the lover, the friend, the writer of invective, the mythological outcast, etc.

[4] As mentioned above, hardly anything is known of the living, breathing Catullus. But ever since the publication of Ludwig Schwabe's *Catullroman* (novel on Catullus) in 1862, the impression has been created that we do know quite a lot, at least as far as his love affair with the notorious Lesbia is concerned (Skinner, 2007:3). Schwabe has identified Lesbia as Clodia Metelli, and Catullus' great rival for her love as Caelius Rufus, Cicero's protégé; both historical figures on whom contemporary

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aware that reconstructions are not necessary for, and rather a hindrance to reading the Catullan text: "…we have been too easily satisfied with the illusionary Catullus; to get to grips with the real one, we need to look hard at the evidence, and not take anything on trust" (Wiseman, 1985:1). This "evidence" includes the social and political climate of late Republican Rome, for which we have ample sources, as well as the 113 poems in the Catullan collection.

The poems offer many clues to Catullus' experience of the periphery. In the first poem in the collection he already reveals his provincial background. He dedicates his book of poems to Cornelius Nepos, another provincial, and calls him an *Italian*, not a *Roman* (1.5). In poem 39 Catullus criticizes a certain provincial Egnatius for smiling at inappropriate times, but in the same poem calls himself a Transpadane, thereby revealing his own provincial roots (39.13). This puts him in an ambivalent position in the social circles of the Roman élite. In his love poems he speaks from a similarly decentred position. He is a sensitive soul, too acutely aware and easily overwhelmed by painful experiences. In poem 75 he refers to his mind as destroyed through its devotion to Lesbia (75.2) and in poem 76 he portrays himself as standing on the brink of death (76.18). He is a divided consciousness, first in the most literal sense where Catullus as a first person speaker would argue with Catullus in the second person, or detach himself by referring to Catullus in the third person (e.g. poems 7, 8, 11, 51). And he is divided between the spiritual and the carnal: on the one hand seeking "an eternal pact of sacred friendship" from his beloved Lesbia (poem 70.6) while, on the other hand, he cannot stop desiring her despite the hurt she causes him (e.g., poem 72.8). His betrayal by friends equally leads to extremes of emotion and a profound sense of displacement. When he is betrayed by Rufus, whom he had trusted and who had nevertheless taken the love of his life, he calls him a poison and a plague to their friendship (poem 77.5-6), a "disease" which threatens the very self. Likewise, a friend's silence in a time of need disempowers the poet-speaker and leaves him displaced as a being-in-language (poem 38). When Catullus is dubbed effeminate for writing erotic verses he reacts with threats of extreme masculine violence (poem 16.1-2), but in the same poem undermines his masculine pose. With the same punishment he aims to intimidate a rival in love (poem 21.8, 13), but as good as admits that he has already lost his beloved. Despite the speaker's apparent delight in invective speech his loud protestations mask a deeply felt vulnerability. This vulnerability is also at the centre of Catullus' close identification with

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documents are available, making it possible to add colour to the "story". For many years the so-called Romantic or Modernist school of thought has followed in Schwabe's footsteps, leading to a false sense of "knowing" Catullus as he really was. This notion has been aptly summarized by Fitzgerald (1995:235): "…a poet we have taken rather too much to our hearts". As attractive as the biographical reconstruction of Catullus may be, it remains "essentially hypothetical" (Wiseman, 1985:1).

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marginalized characters from myth. Poems 63 and 64 deal with problems of identity, gender and freedom. Through their various echoes of other poems in the collection Catullus appears not only to empathize with the castrated Attis (poem 63) but also to identify with the female Ariadne abandoned by her lover (poem 64). Both of these characters appear to be condemned to a life on the periphery, not able to return to their former selves nor to move on to a better state of being. Through Attis and Ariadne Catullus seems to suggest that this is the only life available to individuals who do not conform to society's patterns. What this brief summary makes clear is that the peripheral position of the Catullan speaker may be seen as a Leitmotiv throughout his oeuvre, even though he may appear in different guises, as diverse as the poems themselves.

Although in individual poems scholars have made reference to Catullus as a peripheral figure, the topic has never been treated as a recurring theme throughout his entire oeuvre. With this study I intend to show not only that it is possible to read the Catullan collection with specific focus on the speaker as a peripheral figure, but also that reading the poems in this way offers valuable new insight into works which have been analyzed for thousands of years. Following a textual analysis, this study will examine the ways in which "decentred Catullus" emerges from his poetry. Decentred Catullus takes on many forms: the provincial in Rome, the rejected lover, the betrayed friend, the creator of obscene invective, and the mythological outcast. According to these categories poems will be grouped together to reveal how, throughout his oeuvre, the Catullan speaker always seems to linger on the periphery, never quite integrated in his immediate situation. This is what I call "the poetics of the periphery". The centre opposite to which Catullus takes in a peripheral position consists of the reigning social practices and the political climate of late Republican Rome. Through demarcation of the periphery more light is shed on the centre. This tension or interaction between centre and periphery contributes to a better understanding of both; a better understanding of the contemporary social and political climate (as attested to in contemporary as well as modern sources), as well as a better understanding of an individual who did not quite fit the mould.[5] On a more intimate level personal relationships also have a centre and a periphery. When a relationship is not balanced the one party is in the compromised position on the symbolic periphery of that relationship, at the mercy of the one in the centre. This is the case in many of Catullus' relationships, erotic as well as Platonic, where the love and devotion turn out to be very one-sided. Through his interaction with the

[5] "The task of historical criticism is both to make visible the paradigms of privilege specific to the times, and indicate how the place occupied by a particular writer contributes to fortifying or destabilizing the dominant value system" (Konstan, 2000:3).

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"other" Catullus reveals his own peripheral status in the relationship as well as the broader issues which caused the relationship to be imbalanced in the first place.

There are a number of theoretical approaches to literature which may help to explain the Catullan speaker as a peripheral figure in the poems. In his anthropological studies on ritual Victor Turner borrowed the term "liminality" from the French folklorist Arnold van Gennep to explain the complex and ambiguous characteristics of the in-between (*limen*) stage in rites of passage. When applied to literature the liminal zone indicates the symbolic space where marginalized characters, outsiders and individuals of ambivalent status find themselves. These characters are in the paradoxical situation of being neither here nor there, while the liminal zone at the same time offers the potential of belonging on the other side of the symbolic threshold. Because of the Catullan speaker's keen awareness of and constant engagement with an "other" (also his own "other") throughout the collection Mikhail Bakhtin's theorization on the dialogic nature of utterances allows deeper insight into the multiple speaking voices in the poems, as well as a better understanding of the dialogic engagement between individual poems. Finally, defining the Catullan speaker as a consistently peripheral figure under diverse poetic circumstances would not be possible without the text's inherent suggestion of narrative. Poetry is by no means narrative, but the Catullan text generates a discernible narrative quality in order to explain the individual episodes described in the poems (Miller, 1994:55). As a result it is possible to portray a single "lyric consciousness" even if that consciousness speaks with many voices (Miller, 1994:59). Theories on narrative identity as developed by Ricoeur, Carr, et al. inform a description of the Catullan speaker as a consistently decentred consciousness which may nevertheless change according to changing circumstances. An explanation of these theories and their applicability to an interpretation of the Catullan speaker as a liminal figure will be the focus of chapter 1: "Theories of identity".

In the second chapter "Catullus as peripheral figure in Rome" a number of poems will be analysed in terms of the concepts of *urbanitas* (urbanity) versus *rusticitas* (rusticity). In these poems Catullus proudly portrays himself as master of the sophisticated behaviour associated with the city. Taking on the role of "judge of urban sophistication" (*arbiter urbanitatis*) he calls attention to the flaws in those contemporaries who lack the necessary refinement of true urbanites and reveal themselves to be rustic at heart. Sophistication in writing is one of Catullus' main concerns. As a member of a select group of writers (the neoterics) who defied the traditions of epic and drama in favour of shorter, highly learned and highly polished works on everyday topics he derides the verbose and inelegant writings of the traditional style. In his poems on refinement in writing the Catullan speaker takes in

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an “us against them” them stance, contrasting the good writing of himself and his poet-friends with the clumsy outputs of those “others”. Despite the speaker’s apparent position of power in these poems on urban sophistication his own provincial background undermines his authority. In this chapter I will argue that Catullus’ display of his own urbanity, and his critique of contemporaries who clearly lack this sophistication, is a symptom of his peripheral position in Roman élite society. Catullus’ Veronese background is attested to in a number poems (e.g., poems 1, 17, 31, 37). Moreover, in poem 68a he finds himself in Verona after the death of his brother (68a.27) but writes to a friend that Rome is now his home (68a.34-35). However, through the course of the poem the conception of Rome as his home is revealed to be highly ambivalent. While Catullus aspires to be included in the élite circles of Rome and his status as poet gives him quite some standing he remains a Transpadane, a provincial and not a thoroughbred Roman. An acute awareness of his ambiguous position is felt throughout his poems on urban sophistication discussed in this chapter. Poems referring to the death of Catullus’ brother will also be included. Although they may not express the speaker’s feelings on *urbanitas/rusticitas*, they represent Catullus’ closest link with his hometown and so with his provincial background. With the loss of his brother he experiences a profound sense of displacement. Poems discussed in this chapter include 1, 50, 14, 22, 44, 35, 36, 95, 10, 12, 43, 86, 37, 39, 17, 65, 68a and b, and 101.

“Catullus as peripheral lover”, chapter 3, looks at the two romantic relationships which feature prominently in the Catullan corpus: one with the notorious Lesbia and the other with a young man named Juventius. Catullus’ peripheral position in his relationship with Lesbia is immediately evident: she is older, married, and not only unfaithful towards her husband, but also towards Catullus as her lover. Throughout the Lesbia poems the speaker struggles with his feelings of total devotion to someone who appears to be indifferent. In an attempt to define a new kind of love – a love which combines the erotic and the Platonic in a friendship of mutual faithfulness between equals – he employs the vocabulary of Roman homosocial obligation. This would have been a most unfitting and even jarring choice to male Roman ears in a society where women were both legally and socially seen as inferior to men. Using the language of socio-political commitment to describe a romantic love therefore leaves the Catullan speaker vulnerable, open to ridicule, and ultimately without any claim to the fidelity which a friendship between equal males should entail. The imbalance in the relationship between Catullus and Lesbia, which is already suggested at its start, becomes increasingly evident as the affair develops and the speaker shifts from infatuation through disillusion to a position where he both loves and hates her at the same time. Finally he is able to look back on the relationship with a detached soberness and the acceptance that a peripheral position in Lesbia’s life was and always will be his only place. The young Juventius appears not only

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to regard Catullus as a figure of marginal importance in his life, but he even shows revulsion at the speaker's advances and openly chooses other lovers over him. The Catullan identity which emerges from the love poems is most unlucky in love, undervalued, betrayed and rejected by his beloveds and ultimately decentred. The Lesbia poems to be discussed in this chapter are poems 51, 2, 3, 5, 7, 83, 92, 104, 107, 109, 70, 72, 85, 8, 87, 76, 11, 68b; the poems on Juventius are poems 48, 99 and 81.

Chapter 4, titled "Catullus as misunderstood or undervalued", focuses on Catullus' reproach of friends he feels have betrayed him or not taken the friendship seriously enough. Catullus' devotion to his friends was not very different from that to his lovers; therefore his experience of their betrayal or indifference, an experience often bordering on symbolic death, reveals a similarly marginalized personality. As mentioned above, friendship among Roman males was closely associated with the concepts of social obligation and reciprocity. However, in the unstable political climate of late Republican Rome traditional institutions have come under threat. Friendship (*amicitia*), along with the reciprocal values it entailed, was no exception. Yet Catullus still clung to these values, naïvely believing that they were still respected. As a result he found himself constantly disillusioned in many of his friendships and experiencing a profound sense of not-belonging. Stealing a friend's lover is for the Catullan speaker the ultimate betrayal, but even a friend's silence or forgetfulness leaves him feeling displaced. A number of causes lie at the heart of Catullus' disillusionment with friendship. These will be revealed in the course of this chapter with reference to poems 6, 30, 38, 55, 58b, 60, 73, 77, 82 and 102.

In the fifth chapter titled "Catullan invective" Catullus' poems attacking individuals, both well-known and obscure, will be analysed as a symptom of Catullus' peripheral position in Roman society. His use of invective points precisely to those circumstances under which he finds himself to be lacking. By taking in a threatening pose against the intended victim of the invective the Catullan speaker appears to exult in the power of his speech. Yet these loud protestations are revealed to mask his own vulnerability and keen awareness of his peripheral position. When he is not shouting the invective speaker communicates from a deliberately chosen position of weakness. As mentioned above, the only datable poems in the Catullan corpus fall in the period 56-54 BCE, an important time in Roman history: Caesar was rising to power and the Republic was on the decline. In these uncertain times there was no controlling the lust for power of a few individuals who grossly enriched themselves and their right-hand men while exploiting those deemed expendable. In unambiguous terms Catullus portrays his own abuse and that of his close friends at the hands of such individuals, whom he names in these poems. An insatiable lust for power is equated with

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sexually excessive behaviour and the abuse of their underlings by those in power becomes a form of rape. By portraying himself in this way Catullus' experience of being side-lined by a corrupt patronage system also feminizes him and leaves him doubly displaced. Catullus' invective poems are directed at diverse victims for a variety of reasons: rivals in love, contemporary politicians, and other individuals who have slighted him in some way (either by stealing from him or by questioning his masculinity). Poems 15, 21, 23, 16, 25, 40, 28, 47, 69, 71, 91 and 116 will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 6 is titled "Mythological outcasts: Attis and Ariadne". The focus in this chapter is on two figures from myth who are peripheral both in the sense that they are not "mainstream" characters in Greco-Roman mythology and that they are marginalized in their personal situations. Attis (poem 63) travels to Phrygia and castrates himself in a frenzied dedication to the goddess Cybele, but the next day he regrets his actions and mourns his loss. The goddess, however, prevents him from returning home and he is forced to spend the rest of his life as her servant, longing for his homeland and his lost masculinity. Ariadne from Catullus' epyllion (poem 64) betrays her family for her beloved Theseus, but is abandoned by him on the island of Naxos. Standing alone in the waves as she watches her beloved sail away she echoes Catullus' situation with Lesbia: she is both literally and emotionally on the boundary. Catullus' close identification with these figures, the one a woman, the other neither man nor woman, underscores his own experience of liminality and suggests an acceptance on his part that perhaps the life of a liminary is the only life possible for him.

From the perspective of someone who is neither an insider nor entirely marginalized we are offered a unique insight into Roman society, both in terms of broader social institutions as well as relationships between individuals. It is precisely Catullus' ambivalent status that makes his perspective valuable, also regarding himself. As he judges others for their lack of refinement, mourns for his brother, wrestles with his feelings for a beloved, bemoans the unfaithfulness of a friend, lashes out at his enemies and sympathizes with a castrate and an abandoned girl, Catullus reveals his own consciousness in its purest form: this is Catullus decentred.

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CHAPTER ONE

THEORIES OF IDENTITY

> If it is true that fiction is only completed in life and that life can be understood only through the stories that we tell about it, then an *examined* life, in the sense of the word as we have borrowed it from Socrates, is a life *recounted* (Ricoeur, 1991b:31).

The problem of social exclusion is essentially a problem of identity. In broad terms our individual identities are determined by the categories of nationality, class, race, gender and sexuality (Sedgwick, 1990:22). But as Sedgwick (1990:22) observes there are a number of more subtle categories such as our relations with family, friends, enemies, lovers, colleagues and teammates which "prove that even people who share all or most of our positioning along these crude axes may still be different enough from us…to seem like all but a different species." For many years social anthropology and social archaeology, sister disciplines of classical philology, have followed a top-down approach when studying cultures: society was seen to be imposing itself on its members and individuals were simply treated as "micro versions of larger social entities" (Meskell, 1999:20). But the last couple of decades have seen an increasing interest in the individual within these disciplines. The relationship between the individual and society is recognized to be far more complex and variable than has been assumed in the past (Cohen, 1994:6-7). Instead of treating society as the blueprint for the self, society and self are seen as continuously shaping each other (Meskell, 1999:6). Similarly the definition of identity has also become more complex: "What was once called 'identity' in the sense of social, shared sameness is today often discussed with reference to difference" (Sökefeld as quoted in Meskell, 2002:280). As individuals we are therefore partly defined in terms of our similarities to others but we are given identities through our differences.

It is precisely this "otherness" that makes identity difficult to explain. But there are two further factors which add to the complexity of defining identity: mutability and interpretation. A person's identity is not fixed or singular since it may change over time and according to different conditions. How are we then to describe the identity of one and the same Jane as a rebellious teenager and a conservative adult? The answer to this question lies, among others, in the different spaces, real or symbolic, and social settings which explain human behaviour. Like actors we are able to take up different roles according to the reigning circumstances in our lives. These roles, in turn, are subject to interpretation, both by ourselves and by those around us. Charles Taylor (1985:45) calls us "self-interpreting animals". We project a certain identity to the world which we interpret ourselves, but which is likewise interpreted by those people we come into contact with every day. The identity of the individual therefore has a tripartite structure: I am the speaking agent who tells my life

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story; I am the subject in my story, designated by the pronoun "I", and I am also the object of my story as interpreted by myself as well as by others. My life story is therefore a social construct: I need the voices of others, as well as that of my own "other", to complete the picture.

In constructing the identity of a peripheral literary persona there are a number of theories which come into play. In the first place the theory of liminality as developed by anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner offers a designated space for the peripheral character. The literal or figurative threshold helps to explain the liminal persona, just as the perspective of the liminary offers a better understanding of the real or symbolic centre. The symbolic value of space therefore plays an active role in shaping identity, just as space is in turn interpreted by the liminal character. But the liminary is not completely detached: identity, as noted above, is a social construct. The liminal character is not an autonomous agent, but is continuously engaged in dialogue with himself/herself as well as with others. Bakhtin's theorization on dialogue and multi-voicedness (polyphony) provides the "other" with influence equal to that of the author or first-person speaker in the shaping of the peripheral identity. In this way a dynamic image of the self emerges. Lastly, identity construction is not possible without the binding force of narrative which allows for hindsight and foresight, temporal elements that play a vital role in shaping our personalities. In this respect liminality, symbolic space, dialogue and narrative function together in shaping the identity(s) of those on society's periphery.

1.1 LIMINALITY: VAN GENNEP AND TURNER

The theory of liminality which is now widely applied in the social sciences as well as in the field of medicine has its origin in the work of French folklorist Arnold van Gennep. Van Gennep studied various ritual ceremonies in tribal as well as complex industrial societies and came to the conclusion that "the life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another" (Van Gennep, 1960:2-3). These passages go hand in hand with certain procedures, conditions or ceremonies, which he calls "rites of passage". Such rites may include initiation, birth, marriage and funeral rites, as well as those associated with the passage from one occupation to another, or one economic or intellectual group to another (Van Gennep, 1960:1-3).

In his seminal work *The Rites of Passage* (1908, translated into English in 1960) Van Gennep identifies three stages within various ritual ceremonies that are in essence universal despite cultural differences: rites of *separation*, *transition* rites, and rites of *reincorporation*. These stages may also be called *preliminal*, *liminal* and *postliminal* (Van Gennep, 1960:10-

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11; my italics). The three phases do not each carry the same weight in all rites of passage. Often the transitional phase is expanded to form an autonomous state, for instance betrothal where adolescence is seen as the preliminal phase and marriage as the postliminal (Van Gennep, 1960:11). In the conclusion to *The Rites of Passage* Van Gennep stresses three points which would be taken up by his successors: a) a recurring pattern may be detected in a variety of ritual ceremonies, that of the three phases which constitute rites of passage; b) the transitional phase could obtain a form of independence; c) "the passage from one social position to another is identified with *territorial passage*, such as the entrance into a village or a house, the movement from one room to another…" (Van Gennep, 1960: 191-192). It is with this last point that the concept of *limen* (threshold) comes into play. Although Van Gennep's focus is more on the ritual activities of what he calls "semicivilized peoples" (tribal societies) and the rites associated with religious ceremonies in modern society, the universality of rites of passage is clearly seen in such secular rituals as the twenty-first birthday celebration where the young person is given a key as symbol to adult life, or the practice of hazing which takes place in schools, fraternities and sororities. It is this universality of rites of passage which is taken up by Victor Turner in his elaboration on Van Gennep's work and in his detailed analyses of the notion of "liminality".

Victor Turner developed and refined his concept of liminality over many years. I will follow this development through three major works (1969, 1974a, 1992). Taking Van Gennep as his starting point, Turner elaborates on the three stages of rites of passage or what he calls "transition" rites. In the first phase of *separation* the individual (or group) is removed from his/her position or state in society. In the *liminal* phase the "ritual subject" acquires ambiguous characteristics as he/she passes through a stage that has none of the features of the former, nor of the future phase. In the final phase, which Turner calls *reaggregation*, the passage is complete and the ritual subject again finds himself/herself in a state of relative stability and structure (Turner, 1969:94-95; my italics).

Turner's main focus is on the qualities of the threshold or liminal phase and he identifies the following characteristics of "liminal personae" or "threshold people". Their nature is "necessarily ambiguous" since their situation cannot be defined in terms of the normal categories of cultural states: they are "neither here nor here; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969:95). These ambiguous qualities are conveyed through different symbols in various societies: the liminal situation is often compared to death, invisibility, darkness, the wilderness, and so on (Turner, 1969:95).

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The liminal situation offers an intriguing combination of "lowliness and sacredness", "a moment in and out of time" (Turner, 1969:96). Within the liminal phase the liminaries are stripped of their secular ranks or statuses and a feeling of "communitas" develops among them: a "homogeneity and comradeship" without the ties of structure associated with the preliminal and postliminal phases (caste, class, rank, etc.). In this sense communitas appears in phases of "antistructure" as "an essential and generic human bond without which there could be no society" (Turner, 1969:96-97). For society to function both structure and antistructure is needed in succession: diversity and uniformity, inequality and equality, structure and communitas (Turner, 1969: 97).

In the broader culture of myth and literature communitas is symbolized by the structurally inferior or "marginal". Poor and misshapen figures (such as the court jester) seem to represent the morality of communitas in opposition to the domination by the powers that be. Similarly, symbolic figures from folklore such as "holy beggars", third sons and idiots, or the "mysterious stranger" from Westerns, bring figures of high standing down to "the level of common humanity and mortality" by removing their pretensions (Turner, 1969:110). Outlaws and ethnic or cultural outcasts in myth and literature symbolize "universal-human values" (e.g. the Good Samaritan, the Negro slave Jim in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*). In structured, exclusive societies all these marginals or outsiders represent an "open morality" or "sentiment for humanity",[1] a sentiment closely connected with communitas (Turner, 1969:110-111). An important aspect of communitas is its potentiality. This potentiality leads to art and religion rather than to politics and law: prophets and artists, who are inclined to be marginalized, create an open morality, a life-giving force (Turner, 1969: 127-128).

In a later work (1974a) Turner again tackles the concept of liminality, but this time in a much broader sense where he specifically argues for its validity in other social sciences, as well as the benefit of the broader social sciences for anthropology. The potentiality of the liminal zone, its subjunctive status, allows for the liminal persona a possibility, not only outside his/her own social station, but outside all social stations, as well as the opportunity of creating limitless alternative social positions. This may be seen as a potential "danger" and so leads to taboos in tribal societies and laws in industrialized societies aimed at restricting liminal entities. In industrialized societies it is the practitioners of "liminoid" genres such as literature and art that destabilize the norms of social arrangement. They distance

[1] Turner takes these terms from Henry Bergson and David Hume respectively.

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themselves from the models of conduct and reasoning that as children they were trained to adopt (Turner, 1974a:13-15).[2]

Turner (1974a:17) emphasizes the importance of human consciousness in the maintenance of sociocultural systems. Humans as active, conscious participants express the values of a given society and so give meaning to that society. Turner encourages anthropologists to study complex literate societies in greater detail. In such cultures it is the "liminoid" agents who are most articulate in expressing values: writers, artists, philosophers, etc. Turner himself claims to stray "beyond disciplinary frontiers" in an attempt to reach an "authentic anthropology" that studies "a species whose individual members have included Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, as well as Galileo, Newton, and Einstein" (Turner, 1974a:17-18). We therefore see in Turner a gradual move from a focus on tribal societies to what we would call "modern" (most often equated with "Western") societies. By broadening his scope, Turner allows his theory of liminality to be applied to other social sciences such as literature and art, as well as the natural sciences. The strong links Turner identifies between liminality and creativity/potential, alternative social positions, a distancing form societal norms and the role of human consciousness in defining society are of particular importance for the study of Catullan poetics.

Turner continues to broaden his scope in *Blazing the Trail* (1992) where he specifically directs his attention to the industrialized world in his discussion of liminality and communitas. In this context he relates liminality to leisure and play, the betwixt-and-between domain between the structured demands of society. In leisure activities the individual is allowed to transcend the limitations of everyday social structures, such as work and family, and is at liberty to play with ideas, fantasies, words (literature), paint (visual art), and so on (Turner 1992:54). "Leisure is thus potentially capable of releasing creative powers…either to criticize or to prop up dominant social-structural values" (Turner 1992:55). Whereas participants in tribal societies play with the liminal in terms of masks, monsters, parodies, etc. the "genres of industrial leisure", such as theatre, film, literature and art, likewise reorganize cultural elements in accidental and innovative ways. The latter Turner calls "liminoid" as distinguished from the liminal in tribal societies (Turner 1992:55-56).[3]

Turner distinguishes between the liminal and liminoid as follows (1992:56-59, 160):

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[2] Turner makes the distinction between "liminal" and "liminoid" for the first time in detail in 1974 (1974b). There he distinguishes between the liminal in tribal societies and the liminal in industrialized societies by calling the latter "liminoid".

[3] As mentioned above Turner made this distinction in 1974 for the first time (1974b). In that article the distinction between "liminal" and "liminoid" was much more dualistic as a binary opposition between the primitive and the sophisticated, the sacred and the secular. His approach in 1992 is more inclusive.

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Liminal	Liminoid
• Collective (linked to cycles of the seasons, social structure, etc.);	• May be collective, but typically produced by an identified individual;
• Incorporated into social process;	• Takes shape outside social processes on the periphery;
• Forms a unit with other parts of social process;	• Multiple, diverse and experimental;
• Normative and universal;	• Idiosyncratic and unique;
• Shared intellectual and emotional meaning for all members of group;	• Compete with one another according to individual tastes;
• Reversive: inverts reality and social structures;	• Subversive: fundamentally critical of dominant structures and proposes alternatives;
• Participation obligatory.	• Participation voluntary.

Of course this distinction is not always clear cut. The liminoid may become liminal as something that started as an individual's choice becomes embedded in the structural behaviour of a given group (such as a Christian pilgrimage). And, as already mentioned, industrialized societies have many liminal activities such as the initiation rites of certain exclusive groups (clubs, fraternities, etc.) or the inaugural lecture of a newly appointed professor at an academic institution. Likewise there is a liminoid zone in the culture of tribal societies: the visual as well as the verbal artists of tribal societies who produce work for ritual as well as for pleasure occupy this zone (Turner, 1992:58). This links up with Spiegel's article (2011) in which he proposes that the liminal and liminoid should not be seen as binary entities but as two poles on a continuum.

In chapter seven of *Blazing the Trail* titled "Morality and Liminality" Turner turns his attention to artists specifically as masters of the liminal zone. He again identifies the three stages of the ritual process and adds an important description of the liminal stage as a "state of being and of culture almost completely at odds with the ordinary and mundane" (Turner 1992:133). Whereas reaggregation or the postliminal entails a return to structure, the liminal is associated with antistructure. However, this does not mean that the liminal phase is necessarily a chaotic phase but it is organized very differently from the everyday social setup. The liminal represents the subjunctive mood of culture – the "may" or "might" or "would" – while the establishments (industries, banks, etc.) of social structure represent the indicative: "the actual" (Turner, 1992:133-134).

The works of artists are connected to the subjunctive mood of culture since they are the masters of the paraliminal or liminoid. They strive to give meaning to the "moral complexities" and "paradoxes" of human life; their concern is with possibilities and alternatives, not with the mere matters of fact. From the outset they are sceptical of the

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status quo (Turner 1992:134-135). Although there are particular structures in liminality, these are reflections "*upon* the matter-of-fact world rather than…a reflection *of* it" (Turner 1992:136; his italics). In liminal or liminoid circumstances "we take ourselves for our subject matter, distance ourselves from ourselves to know ourselves better…oddly enough, to become close to ourselves – a process never finally resolved since we are…endlessly…evolving [through our minds]"[4] (Turner, 1992:136).

1.1.1 Liminality, outsiderhood and structural inferiority

Before moving on to other theories which may be applied in the study of literary identity, we need to consider Turner's distinction between the often confusing terms of liminality, outsiderhood, marginality and structural inferiority. All of these terms are used to refer to persons not fully integrated in the reigning social setting, but they are applied under varying degrees of exclusion.

"Liminality", as discussed above, refers in the literal sense to the in-between phase in a rite of passage where the ritual subject finds himself/herself in a betwixt-and-between state that has little, if anything, in common with the former as well as the coming state. In this in-between phase the ritual subjects are equals and they form a certain camaraderie called communitas. After the liminal phase the initiand often moves to a symbolically higher status and the pre-liminal social distinctions between the ritual subjects may be restored (Turner, 1974a:232). In literature "liminality" is applied to a state of being where the liminal character finds himself/herself to be excluded from the reigning social structure. This may be voluntary or imposed by circumstances, and the liminary has the potential either to reach a stage of reincorporation in the social centre, or remain on the social periphery.

"Outsiderhood", on the other hand, refers to the voluntary or forced distancing, structurally or situationally, of a person from the reigning social system and its members. This may be temporary or permanent, and could include people such as witchdoctors, priests, gypsies, etc. Outsiderhood is not to be confused with "marginality" where the marginals, either by choice or ascription, are members of more than one distinctive social group. Marginals could include second-generation immigrants, people of mixed races, women in non-traditional roles, etc. Like liminaries they find themselves to be betwixt and between, but unlike liminaries they do not have the guaranteed potential to reach an unambiguous state of being (Turner, 1974a:233).

[4] This unfinalizable notion of the self through active engagement with one's own self is also found in the writings of Bakhtin, as well as in the work of a number of narratologists (see below).

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The people of the lowest social status in any culture are the structural inferiors. They are the lowest-ranking people in the social structure: the poor, the outcasts, the beggars (Turner, 1974a:234).

For this study the terms "liminal" and "peripheral" will be used to refer to someone ("Catullus") who is not fully integrated into the existing social structure or situation, but neither distanced as an outsider or structural inferior: a truly betwixt-and-between character, who has the potential to become fully integrated, but may also remain on the threshold for ever.

1.2 SYMBOLIC SPACE

> …space in literature as in life is never just an empty, neutral extension but rather a place that has been named, demarcated, allocated. It is a place that gets its meaning from human experience and memories and from relations between people (Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:3).

The liminal space, as set out above, may be a physical place but, much more than that, it is a symbolic space, laden with meaning, which plays a vital role in the shaping of identity. In their research on the role of spaciality in identity construction in literature Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe (2004:1) identify three characteristics of space. In the first place our perception of space is one of changeability, which is, secondly, closely connected to the emotional value we attach to specific spaces. Thirdly, people have a need to feel that they belong somewhere. This need arises especially when inner and outer spaces interchange: the house is, for example, a strong symbol of belonging whereas the moon may be a symbol of desolation or displacement. The examination of space and identity in literature uncovers the borders, values, and conceptions of space and place, as well as their connection to identity (Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:15).

The places and spaces in works of literature are more than physical spaces; space, like identity, is a social construct (Lefebvre quoted in Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:15). These literary spaces therefore have a dual function: apart from offering the setting for the action to take place, they are structured around a specific point of view and they may have moral meaning. Consider for example the moral values attached to concepts such as "high" and "low" and the political connotations of "left" and "right" (Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:3). This is what Lotman (1990:171 ff.) calls "symbolic space".[5]

[5] According to Bakhtin, Goethe has a similar notion of space (see below).

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The journey to heaven or hell (ascent and descent) of a character in medieval literature is typically described in terms of geography: "…places have a moral significance and morals have a localized significance. Geography becomes a kind of ethics" (Lotman, 1990: 172). This notion may also be seen in the close link between pilgrimage (movement in space) and the shedding of sins, as well as the connection between climate and goodness: paradise is fertile while hell is barren (Lotman, 1990: 172-173). This either-or conception of space may be overly simplistic but even in the modern world geographical space is "a domain of semiotic modelling" (Lotman, 1990: 176). We attach specific symbolic meanings to the concepts of East and West, for example, and certain areas are constantly the focal point of political or religious conflicts as they symbolize different meanings for different nations or peoples (the idea of national identity). The city is symbolically loaded since it may signify both a symbolic name and a symbolic space: it may be synonymous with the state (of which Rome is the prime example) and it may also be seen as antagonistic to its surrouding areas (Lotman, 1990:191). In his discussion of the concepts of home and anti-home in Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* Lotman (1990:185-186) highlights the human need for belonging. For Bulgakov the home is a place of safety and peacefulness, and everything outside of it is chaotic and destructive. The communal flat, so common in the Russia of the era, symbolizes a false home – chaos disguised as a home (Lotman, 1990:191) – and so functions as a type of in-between space.

Closely connected to Lotman's conception of semiotic space is the notion of the boundary, which shows distinct parallels with the liminal. The internal space of what Lotman calls the "semiosphere"[6] is made up of dynamic, variable elements, yet at the same time shows a striking individuality: "its self-description implies a first person pronoun" (Lotman, 1990:131). The boundary, which is the "outer limit of the first person form", is one of the main devices for constructing the semiotic individual. The boundary demarcates the "our space" from "their space", the harmonious from the hostile ("the other"). This may be typically seen in the practice of any culture of dividing the world in terms our "own internal space" and "their external space" (Lotman, 1990:131). The boundary is the "area of semiotic dynamism"

[6] The semiosphere is the cultural equivalent of the biosphere. Lotman (1990:126-127) uses the example of a museum to explain his concept of the semiosphere. In a museum there are various items on display from different periods. These items often have inscriptions in both decipherable and indecipherable languages, and are described in various modern languages by the exhibitors. Also within this unit one finds visitors, tour guides, staff members, guards, etc. This is an illustration of the semiosphere. Analogous with a biosphere a semiosphere is "the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages" outside of which no language nor any form of communication is possible (Lotman, 1990:123). Within the whole semiotic space changes are constantly taking place as codes (languages) multiply and adapt to governing norms. A language can only function when it is absorbed in and interacts with a semiotic space: this space is the semiosphere. Like the biosphere for biological life, the semiosphere is the "result and the condition for the development of culture" (Lotman, 1990:124-125).

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where the norms governing semiotic practice have the least impact. Whereas at the centre of cultural space the self-descriptive segments of the semiosphere become rigid, the further one moves from the centre the greater the possibility for development becomes. It is for this reason that the peripheral genres of art are seen to be real art, freed from the constraints of the norms that govern the centre. However, peripheral art forms may become central art forms over time as they become increasingly popular or the focus of academic studies (Lotman, 1990:134).[7]

Just as the liminal is a betwixt-and-between, neither-here-nor-there space, the boundary of the semiosphere has an ambivalent function: it separates as well as unites. On the boundary something/someone may belong to two cultures, to both semiospheres separated by the boundary. Therefore, the boundary is multilingual: it allows for translation of an "alien semiotics" into "our language", for a transformation of the "external" into the "internal" (Lotman, 1990:136-137). "It is a filtering membrane which so transforms foreign texts that they become part of the semiosphere's internal semiotics while still retaining their own characteristics" (Lotman, 1990:137). The filtered product therefore has an ambivalent function: it both assists communication but also offers an obstacle by means of its otherness (Lotman, 1990:137).

Lotman is of course more concerned with collective identity than with individual identity,[8] but his notions of boundary and symbolic space nevertheless offer valuable insight into the construction of a peripheral personality. "The boundary of the personality is a semiotic boundary" (Lotman, 1990:138). Apart from the boundary separating the internal from the external, the whole semiosphere is divided by internal boundaries that separate different levels, and the interior of each such sub-semiosphere has its own semiotic "I". This semiotic I may be an individual (individual personality) or a group (collective personality) which share a specific social, religious or political stance (Lotman, 1990:138). Problems occur when there is conflict between the different definitions imposed on an individual by two socio-semiotic systems: the one system may regard the individual as a member, while the individual deems himself/herself to be independent. This may lead to rebellion (Lotman, 1990:138). Whether individually or collectively the boundary filters as well as adapts the external into the internal, separating what is "one's own" from "someone else's" (Lotman, 1990:140). When seen in terms of geography the boundary becomes a literal space. In the stereotypical city the seat of socio-political rule resides in the centre whereas the less

[7] Compare Turner's discussion above of liminoid genres that may become liminal when institutionalized.

[8] "The notion of 'personality' is only identified with a physical individual in certain cultural and semiotic conditions" (Lotman, 1990:138).

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important members of society live on the periphery. On the level of the individual the boundary will be the staircase or entrance, separating home from "non-home" (Lotman, 1990:140). "Normal" space has both geographical and temporal boundaries. Night-time lies outside the boundary: it is the time of robbers and sorcerers, who also occupy the physical outskirts of the community and so live in an anti-space (Lotman, 1990:140).

For Lotman (1990: 133), then, conscious human life (culture) is organized according to a "space-time" structure,[9] which is dependent upon the semiosphere.[10] In turn, space and time together play a role in shaping the subject. Furthermore, the identity of the individual is a semiotic construct assisted by a "boundary", which is the ambiguous zone where one thing ends and another begins. As such the boundary makes it possible to distinguish between "us" and "them"; the one needs the other to be realized. Therefore the boundary, be it the boundary of the individual or group, is a place of endless dialogue. No matter whether "I" or "we" perceive of "the other" as good or bad, we are engaging with a version of our "own inverted image" (Lotman, 1990:142).

1.3 BAKHTIN AND DIALOGIC IDENTITY

Throughout his writings Mikhail Bakhtin maintains that his theories of dialogism and polyphony (multi-voicedness) in discourse cannot be applied to lyric poetry (neither to epic nor drama) as this so-called high genre is strictly monologic, final, and driven by the poet-speaker.[11] Yet Bakhtin himself states that "[t]he dialogical orientation of discourse…is the natural orientation of any living discourse" (1981:279). Consequently various scholars have argued for the possibility of a dialogic lyric (Alexandrov et al., 1993: 353; Miller, 1993:183-199; Batstone, 2002:99-136, et al.). This opens up the opportunity of reading the multi-

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[9] Lotman borrows the term from Vernadsky: "…for living matter on planet Earth we have to do with a new geometry…a special natural phenomenon…namely the appearance of space-time, which geometrically speaking does not coincide with space, and in which time appears not as a fourth dimension, but as the succession of generations" (Vernadsky quoted in Lotman, 1990:133).
(Compare Bakhtin's conception of the chronotope discussed below. Just like Lotman Bakhtin was greatly influenced by Vernadsky's conception of the universe as an interconnected whole [Bakhtin, 1986:156, n.6].)

[10] The substructures of the semiospere, despite their diversity, are arranged in a common set of coordinates: on the temporal axis these coordinates are past, present and future, and on the spatial axis the coordinates are internal space, external space and boundary (Lotman, 1990: 133).

[11] Bakhtin conceives of dialogue not in the narrow sense of discourse among two or more interlocutors, but as the unfinalizable interaction that permeates all forms of human communication. Every text or utterance, even the individual word, constantly interacts with other utterances, and so become double-voiced (Bakhtin, 1981:276, 279; 1984:40). Whereas dialogism is characteristic of every utterance, polyphony (for Bakhtin) is something that is for the first time to be found in the novels of Dostoevsky, and remains relatively rare subsequently (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 232). Polyphony refers to the plurality of autonomous voices/characters in the polyphonic novel of which the author's voice is but one. In the true polyphonic novel there are thus "several author-thinkers", all on equal footing (Bakhtin, 1984:5).

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faceted, ambivalent Catullan character in terms of a Bakhtinian dialogic or multi-voiced identity. In the section below I will set out Bakhtin's conception of the character in the novel, as well as the role of time and space in identity construction, as explained particularly in two of his major works (1984, 1986).

In the writings of Dostoevsky Bakhtin finds the ideal of polyphonic discourse: Dostoevsky creates independent, authoritative characters who may stand *alongside* the author and even challenge him (Bakhtin, 1984:5, 7; his italics). This leads to a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices": true polyphony. The characters in Dostoevsky are therefore not the objects of a single author's consciousness, but they emerge as a "plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with his own world" (Bakhtin, 1984:6). They may be joined in an episode, but they never merge into a single consciousness (Bakhtin, 1984:6).

According to Bakhtin Dostoevsky's hero is not of interest to the author as a version of reality with his/her own peculiarities, but as "a *particular point of view on the world and on oneself*, as the position enabling a person to interpret and evaluate his own self and his surrounding reality" (Bakhtin, 1984:47; his italics).[12] The focus is not on "how the hero appears in the world…but [on] how the world appears to the hero, and how the hero appears to himself" (Bakhtin, 1984:47). Therefore, in order to form a picture of the hero we are not offered a list of his/her physical features or character traits, but rather the result of his/her own introspection. All of reality is offered to the reader from the character's self-conscious perception and the author remains uninvolved (Bakhtin, 1984:48). In this respect self-consciousness becomes the "artistic dominant governing the construction of a character" (Bakhtin, 1984:50). It is, however, important not to confuse this with lonely philosophical (monologic) reflection. Self-consciousness for Bakhtin, as seen in the works of Dostoevsky, is never finalized and remains the on-going product of a dialogic engagement with the self or another. In this respect self-consciousness is never realized through a single person. (See a more detailed discussion below.)

Dostoevsky offers us a new kind of hero by taking in a new position as author; he does not create a character as such but rather reflects what the hero says about himself/herself and the world (Bakhtin, 1984: 53). What is at stake is the "discovery of a new integral view on the person…'the man in man'" or what Bakhtin calls "that internally unfinalizable something in man" that defies definition from outside sources (Bakhtin, 1984:58). In order to create this new type of hero Dostoevsky portrays his characters in moments of crises when they stand

[12] Bakhtin refers to Dostoevsky's hero in the masculine throughout. Although most of his protagonists are male, there are many strong female characters in his works.

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on the threshold of life-changing decisions. His new authorial position is one of dialogue: the hero is an independent, other "I" who is able to respond to the author from an autonomous point of view (Bakhtin, 1984: 53, 63). However, the autonomous hero does not only enter into dialogue with the author, but also with other characters and with himself/herself (true polyphony). This has important implications for the portrayal of the hero's identity.

In his discussion of soliloquy Bakhtin (1984:120) defines this form of discourse as a dialogic discussion with one's self. This leads to the "discovery of the inner man", something that would not be possible through "passive self-observation" but only through engaging with one's self in dialogue. This dialogue with the self destroys the finite image of the person that, according to Bakhtin, is a trait of the genres of lyric, epic and tragedy.[13] Most importantly this dialogic engagement with one's self "breaks down the outer shell of the self's image…that exists for other people" and reveals self-consciousness in its purist form (Bakhtin, 1984:120). The most important instance in real life where pure human consciousness is revealed, is during the medieval carnival, an event where the norms and hierarchies that govern society are temporarily lifted and contact between people from all spheres of society is possible. Many elements of the carnival have been adopted into prose writing in what Bakhtin calls "carnivalesque" literature.

Bakhtin's conception of the carnivalesque shows many similarities to Turner's understanding of the ritual process, especially with regard to the communitas of the liminal stage, and he even describes carnival as a "ritual act" (Bakhtin, 1984:124). In the first place carnival is a time during which the constraints of everyday life, whether legally or socially determined, are suspended and people from all spheres of society come into close contact. This leads to a "new mode of interrelationship between individuals" (Bakhtin, 1984:123). Carnival is further characterized by a meeting between the upper and the lower, the sacred and the profane. Consequently obscenities, blasphemies and base bodily functions are at the order of the day. Yet carnival is not a performance, but a lived experience where everyone actively participates on equal footing in a topsy-turvy world. This explains why carnival had such an important "genre-shaping influence" on literature (Bakhtin, 1984:123-124). By far the most prominent act during carnival is the mock crowning and decrowning of the carnival king. This ritual act symbolizes the essence of "the carnival sense of the world – the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal" (Bakhtin, 1984:124). This ambivalent act points to the relative nature of all forms of authority. In fact, everything about this ritual becomes ambivalent: the crowning necessarily entails decrowning just as death and birth are implicated in each other. Into literary thinking this ritual transferred ambivalence, relativity

[13] As will be illustrated below, the identity of the Catullan speaker is far from finite.

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and change, a "decrowning type of structure" (Bakhtin, 1984:124-126). (Or what Turner would call "antistructure".) The characters in the carnivalesque works of Dostoevsky find themselves in exactly such an ambivalent, liminal position "on the threshold of life and death, falsehood and truth, sanity and insanity" (Bakhtin, 1984:147).

Bakhtin (1984:150-151) lists a number of the most important themes in Dostoevsky, which are simultaneously characteristic of the carnivalesque. (I will only highlight those that are significant for the study of the Catullan speaker.) Firstly, the protagonist in his works is an ambivalent figure, often a ridiculed hero, who is alone aware that he understands the truth. This leads others to regard these persons as fools and they tend to find themselves in a state of loneliness. Consequently they show an indifference to the outside world and experience a sense of nihilism. What is clearly visible in all of these characteristics is a sense of "I" versus "the other", a situation that again underlines Bakhtin's notion that every utterance is dialogic in nature and takes into account the existence of another participant in the discourse.

As far as discourse in Dostoevsky is concerned, his works are dominated by double-voiced discourse, especially "internally dialogized discourse" and "the reflected discourse of another" (Bakhtin, 1984:203). The first type refers to a dialogue with the self where the speaker talks to himself as if he is talking to another person.[14] The second type refers to an acute awareness in the speaker of the possible response of another consciousness to his words. Every utterance is affected by the anticipated words of another; even the hero's self-utterances are permeated with the words of another about him/her (Bakhtin, 1984:209, 213, 228).

Because of this necessary role of "the other" there is no finalizing discourse in Dostoevsky, no final definition of the hero; everything forms part of a never-ending dialogue in which the author is only one of many speakers. The self-consciousness of the hero is fully dialogized: "it is turned outward, intensely addressing itself, another, a third person" (Bakhtin, 1984:251). Only through interaction with another may the true person or the "man in man" be revealed. For Dostoevsky there exists only two camps for the definition of a person: "I" and "the other". The "I" needs dialogic interaction with "the other", be it its own other; without it there can be no consciousness (Bakhtin, 1984:251-253).

Another Bakhtinian concept that has implications for the study of a peripheral character is that of the "chronotope" (a placed-time and timed-place) (Bakhtin 1984:xxvi), since the

[14] In this respect the characters in Dostoevsky may address themselves in the second person (Bakhtin, 1984:237). This is also a significant feature of a number of Catullan poems.

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image of a person in literature is "intrinsically chronotopic" (Bakhtin, 1981:85).[15] In Goethe he finds the ability to see time *in* space and vice versa. As is the case with polyphony and Dostoevsky, Bakhtin uses the works of Goethe to expand on his concept of the chronotope. According to Bakhtin (1986:28), Goethe could not conceive of phenomena as coexisting, "just there" and static. He saw them in terms of development or evolution "and he distributed that which was contiguous in space in various temporal stages, epochs of becoming" (Bakhtin, 1986:28). What is contemporary is in fact multitemporal: both the natural world and human life as they are at present contain stages of the past as well as stages of the future. Goethe had the ability to see "living" remnants of the past in the present and he had an intense dislike for the "estranged past", a past of which the connection with the present is overlooked (Bakhtin, 1986:28, 32). "He wanted to see necessary connections between this past and the living present, to understand the necessary place of this past in the unbroken line of historical development" (Bakhtin, 1986:33). In this way Goethe conceived of time in all its fullness: the past is creative, it effects the present, and together with the present it guides the future (Bakhtin, 1986:34).

But time for Goethe is not isolated; it depends on a clear understanding of locality. Every space has certain characteristics, conditions under which the past has been shaped. This interaction between space and time turns a physical place into a fragment of historical life. For Goethe any locality without human habitation and creativity was inconceivable since space may only be understood from the viewpoint of the creating person, who allows the physical place to become historical (Bakhtin, 1986:34-36). This is what Bakhtin calls the "chronotopic visualization of locality and landscape" in Goethe's works (Bakhtin, 1986:36). Space and time are inseparable: space needs human activity to be conceivable, and historical events reciprocally need to be localized if they are to have meaning. Time and space in Goethe are linked through necessity (a creative and historical necessity), just like past, present and future are linked through necessity (Bakhtin, 1986:38-40).

In summary, necessity and fullness of time are key elements in Goethe's conception of time, and this time has a great productive power that gives form and meaning to everything in this world, from the abstract to the concrete. Conversely time is localized in actual space. Actions in Goethe's works are linked to the specific places where they happen, and there are no "eternal" plots that could take place "anywhere" or "nowhere". Accordingly everything in Goethe's world is a "*time-space*, a true *chronotope"* (Bakhtin, 1986:42; his italics).

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[15] "We will give the name *chronotope*…to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature...the inseparability of space and time" (Bakhtin, 1981:84).

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Just as in Goethe the environment in Dostoevsky depends on the point of view of the character; there is no objective description of the external world. But what distinguishes Dostoevsky from Goethe is his focus on coexistence and interaction. Rather than seeing unfolding events as a sequence, he depicts them in their simultaneity, dramatically juxtaposing and counterposing stages (Bakhtin, 1984:23, 28). This allows him to portray the "internal contradictions and internal stages in the development of a single person" (Bakhtin, 1984:28). The character (or hero) is thus forced to "converse with his own double". From the internal conflict of a single character Dostoevsky creates two characters and so the conflict is dialogized (Bakhtin, 1984:28). In order to achieve polyphony, as "the interaction between two internally unfinalized consciousnesses", the author needs to have a new conception of time and space (Bakhtin, 1984:176). Dostoevsky is liberated from historical or biographical time by focusing on key moments in the lives of his characters: crises, disasters, turning points. The importance of these moments overrides the restrictions of time.[16] He similarly "leaps over space" by focusing on two settings: the threshold, which may be a doorway, staircase or passage, as the point of crisis, and the public square or drawing room "where scandal takes place" (Bakhtin, 1984:149).[17] In this way space assumes symbolic significance as the threshold, staircase or foyer becomes the locus of dramatic change, "where the forbidden line is overstepped" and either death or rebirth occurs (Bakhtin, 1984:169).

Even though Dostoevsky depicts time synchronically and restricts the spaces in his work to liminal areas, whereas Goethe has a diachronic approach to time as well as space, both of these authors acknowledge the formative role played by time and space in the construction of identity.

1.4 NARRATIVE AND IDENTITY

> The 'I' as a character in the plot(s) is interpreted by the 'I' as a subject, but this interpreting 'I' is not a fixed, pre-existing subject in a metaphysical sense. The interpreting 'I' is constituted through the process of narration and interpretation and is constantly changing (Burger, 2004:30).

Kerby (1991:2) argues that language is not a mere instrument of discourse, but also plays a constitutive role in our reality. It is not only the medium by which we understand ourselves, but the self "is constituted in and through language usage, and more particularly through self-narration" (Kerby, 1997:125). The self is therefore not a "pre-linguistic given", in the Cartesian sense, that makes use of language, but the "product of language". This product is

[16] "On the threshold…the only time possible is crisis time, in which a moment is equal to years…" (Bakhtin, 1984:169).

[17] These spaces are similar to Lotman's idea of the physical boundary between home and non-home.

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what Kerby calls the "implied subject" of narration (Kerby, 1997:125). In this respect the self may be best thought of as a character, similar to the characters we come across in various forms of story-telling (Kerby, 1991:1).

There exists, therefore, a reciprocal relation between the character in a story and the narratives which constitute that character. What saves this from becoming a vicious circle is, according to Paul Ricoeur, the "prenarrative quality of experience":[18] experience has a latent narrativity which does not follow from projecting literature onto life, but rather life demanding narrative (Ricoeur, 1991b:29).[19] This has various implications for identity construction. Ricoeur regards the different events in our lives as "(as yet) untold stories" and he offers various examples where we encounter a latent narrativity in experience (Ricoeur, 1984:74). The patient undergoing psychoanalysis offers to the doctor extracts from his/her life and thoughts. The doctor is then to draw from these snippets a narrative that will be credible. Similarily a judge has to "disentangle" a narrative from the actions and often conflicting accounts of events he/she is offered by witnesses and defendants (Ricoeur, 1984:74-75). As these stories emerge, so does the implied subject of each story: "a life story proceeds from untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual stories the subject can take up and hold as constitutive of his personal identity" (Ricoeur, 1984:74). If human beings are entangled in stories it implies that narrative fiction is "an irreducible dimension of *self-understanding*" (Ricoeur, 1991b: 30; his italics).

In the last volume of *Time and Narrative* Paul Ricoeur turns his attention to the interweaving of history and fiction and its impact on narrative identity: a product of this interweaving. To give an answer to the question "who" you tell the life story of someone that has been designated with a proper noun. But on what grounds may we assume the subject of an action to be the same throughout a whole life with its different phases? To answer this question Ricoeur distinguishes between the concepts of *idem* ("the sense of being the same") and *ipse* ("the sense of oneself as self-same") (Ricoeur, 1989:246).[20]

> The difference between *idem* and *ipse* is nothing more than the difference between a substantial or formal identity and a narrative identity. Self-sameness…can escape the dilemma of the Same and the Other to the extent that its identity rests on a temporal structure that conforms to the model of dynamic identity arising from the poetic composition of a narrative text…Unlike the abstract identity of the Same, this

[18] A concept also used by Crites and Kerby (discussed below).

[19] Ricoeur uses Aristotle as his starting point. Aristotle defines narrative as the imitation of action: life only becomes meaningful when it is interpreted, and it is interpreted through narrative (fiction) (Ricoeur, 1991b:29).

[20] He offers a summarized restatement of this argument in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004:81).

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> narrative identity, constitutive of self-constancy, can include change, mutability, within the cohesion of one lifetime. The subject then appears as both reader and writer of its own life… (Ricoeur, 1989:246).

In a later article Ricoeur expands on these terms and their problematic interrelationship when he states that there is a point where they intersect. He identifies four characteristics of *idem*: uniqueness, resemblance, continuity, and permanence over time. In contrast, the characteristics of *ipse* are plurality, difference, and discontinuity (change through time). The divide between self (ipseity) and sameness is related to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*: an identity able to "interrogate itself about its own mode of being" (Ricoeur, 1991a:75). In this sense *Dasein* is related to the self as only *Dasein* may be called uniquely "mine". Sameness on the other hand is related to Heidegger's concept of *Vorhanden/Zuhanden*: things as they are. But there is a point where self and same do in fact intersect – permanence over time – and it is precisely the varied interpretation of this concept that leads to the problematic of personal identity. Ricoeur finds a solution to the problem in narrative, and especially in fictional narrative (Ricoeur, 1991a:74-77).

In a work of fiction the individual character is created in accordance with the plot: identity is seen as the "outcome of narration". It is therefore the plot, which negotiates between permanence and change, that allows for the individual to change: "it furnishes the model of discordant concordance upon which it is possible to construct the narrative identity of a character" (Ricoeur, 1991a:77). In works of fiction situations arise where *ipse* is separated from *idem.* This usually happens in crisis situations and is referred to as the character's "loss of identity";[21] the character and the plot therefore impact upon each other leading to a "loss of identity-as-sameness of the hero" without losing his/her ipseity (Ricoeur, 1991a:78). When literature is applied to real life it is the tension between *ipse* and *idem* that we borrow in order to understand ourselves. Literature provides us with the means by which we may reflect on our own existence: self-knowledge is thus an interpretation mediated by literature (Ricoeur, 1991a:79-80).

In sum, Ricoeur draws the following conclusions regarding the connection between history, fiction and narrative identity: "a) knowledge of the self is an interpretation; b) the interpretation of the self…finds narrative…to be a privileged mediation; c) this mediation borrows from history as much as from fiction making the life story a fictive history or…an historical fiction, comparable to those biographies of great men where both history and fiction are found blended together" (Ricoeur, 1991a:73).

[21] "…the crisis of character is correlative to the crisis in the identity of the plot…" (Ricoeur, 1991c:195).

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Similar to the reciprocal relation Ricoeur sees between character and narrative, Kerby (1991:5) focuses on the role language plays in self-formation and self-understanding. He argues, contra Descartes et al., against a "foundational subject" that has an autonomous existence, and that grasps its own self by means of introspection. Instead he stresses the role of habit and context in the formation of the self; the former supports identity construction and the latter provides meaning to human actions. In this regard the self, as the main focal point in Descartes and other modern philosophers, is decentred and emphasis is placed instead on the circumstances, habits and language of the subject. With its personal pronouns and adverbs of placement (here, there, then, now, etc.) language provides the subject with the principal means for understanding itself (Kerby, 1991:5).

MacIntyre (1981:190-191) sees in modernity too much of a compartmentalization of the individual life into separate segments, such as childhood and old age. In the process the self is disregarded and the life of the individual becomes nothing more than a sequence of unrelated events. For the concept of selfhood to make sense some form of unity is required: the unity found in narrative. This, however, does not mean that identity is fixed and constant. "One's identity may be or become fragmented into many different and discontinuous narratives…one may take oneself to be a different character at different times" (Kerby, 1991:5-6). The individual is therefore not to be separated from the roles he or she plays since a self separated from its roles loses the social settings which make specific behaviour understandable (MacIntyre, 1981:190-191).[22]

According to MacIntyre (1981:192), it is natural to think of oneself in a narrative mode. One only needs to look at human behaviour and selfhood to realize this: behaviour is inextricably linked with intention, and intentions depend on the social settings which explain them. These settings may include institutions, practices or milieux. What is important to remember is that settings have histories. Within the histories of the social settings the history of the individual has to be located: "without the setting and its changes through time, the history of the individual and his [or her] changes through time will be unintelligible" (MacIntyre, 1981:192).[23] For us to understand the intentions of the individual we need to organize his or her intentions causally and temporarily. Both of these modes of organization have to do with setting. In the first place we order the intentions of the individual according to their function in his or her own history, and secondly we order them according to their function in the history of the particular social setting. In this regard narrative history emerges as the best medium for the understanding of human action (MacIntyre, 1981:193-194).

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[22] This links up with Lotman's notion of symbolic space.
[23] This focus on the temporal aspect of social settings shows many similarities with Bakhtin's conception of the chronotope.

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1.4.1 Time and memory

Two factors which play an important role in narrative, and subsequently in the formation of a narrative identity, are time (history) and memory. These concepts as investigated by various scholars will constantly crop up in the discussion below. Though they might use different techniques they all come to the same conclusion: we live in the present, but we have a strong grasp of the past by means of memory, which helps us to make projections regarding the future. This tripartite unity shows close parallels with the beginning-middle-end structure of a story (narrative). The unity of the self "resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as narrative beginning to middle to end" (MacIntyre, 1981:191).[24]

Human beings exist in time. According to Husserl (1964:40ff.), we cannot experience anything present if not against the background of the past and in anticipation of the future. Based on Husserl's analysis of time-experience, Carr (1997:11-12) concludes that events in life are not isolated units put in sequence, but gain significance from what we remember from past experiences and what we foresee in events to come: present events may be seen as either aids or hindrances to our future plans, based on past experience.

Stephen Crites (1997:26)[25] argues for the narrative quality of human experience over time: "however single and swift a movement…there is always [a] before and after." Action is therefore always temporal but it has "a unity of form through time, a form revealed only in the action as a whole" (Crites, 1997:27). He draws on St Augustine's ponderings on memory and time in his *Confessions* (books ten and eleven) to illustrate the narrativity inherent in human experience.

Augustine solves the paradox of the non-existing future becoming the no-longer-existing past by viewing past, present and future not as autonomous metaphysical tools, but as the means of portraying experience in the mind (*anima*), for the mind has the ability "to expect (the future), to pay close attention (to the present) and to remember (the past)".[26] Memory therefore contains temporality in the form of sequence and gives coherence to experience. The capacity of memory to analyse and single out coherent units of experience from this sequence is also closely linked with imagination. Whatever I recall is subject to the workings of the imagination because remembrance by itself is not understanding (Crites, 1997:33-35). Memory alone is never complete and has no style; it is a mere chronicle of the original

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[24] Yet, as MacIntyre stated above, unity does not mean stability, and because the future is open-ended our individual identities remain unfinalized.
[25] This article was first published in 1971 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39 (3).
[26] *…et expectat et adtendit et meminit* (XI.XXVIII) (The Latin text is from Watts (1912). All translations are my own.)

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events: “experience is illuminated only by the more subtle processes of recollection” (Crites, 1997:35).[27] And the main form of recollection is narrating.[28] The story, however, may be told differently at different times as the passing of time allows for insight and changing perspectives (Crites, 1997:36).

Augustine goes further by stating that, although memory entails temporality in terms of sequence, before and after, it does not contain the conceptions of past, present and future, which provide “the tension of experience and therefore demands the tenses of language” (Crites, 1997:37). For Augustine past, present and future are not coexisting, separate entities; it is only the present that exists, but it is also the present that joins these modalities in every experience: “There is the present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things to come…the present of past things is memory, the present of present things is close attention, and the present of things to come is expectation”.[29] These reflections of Augustine allow Crites to draw some conclusions regarding human experience and the present. The present is not simply the meeting point of the past and the future; both memory (past) and anticipation (future) are the “tensed modalities of the present itself” (Crites, 1997:38). “The conscious present is that of a body impacted in a world and moving…in that world”: it is the place where action and experience come together, memory being “the depth of its experience” and anticipation “the trajectory of its action” (Crites, 1997:39). This is where the drama of the story takes place; it is the “moment of crisis” or “*decisive* episode” (Crites, 1997:39; his italics). In this respect past and future create the tension in every experience by being joined in the present as well as being distinguished by it. As to the question how the present deals with this tension, Crites responds that the experience in its entirety has a narrative form. “Narrative alone can contain the full temporality of experience in a unity of form” (Crites, 1997:39). It is, however, important that the story assimilates both past and future without ignoring the certainty of the one and the uncertainty of the other (Crites, 1997:38-39).

This narrative quality of experience leads Crites to reflect on personal identity and how our own sense of self is constituted by narrative. For him our personal identities depend upon “the continuity of experience through time” (Crites, 1997:38) (similar to Ricoeur’s sense of “permanence over time” as discussed above). This continuity is able to bridge the gap

[27] Along similar lines Ricoeur (2004:19), quoting Aristotle, refers to two kinds of remembering: “simple evocation” (*mnēmē*) and “effort to recall” (*anamnēsis*). However, unlike Crites, Ricoeur regards both processes as functions of memory.
[28] “[I]t is through the narrative function that memory is incorporated into the formation of identity” (Ricoeur, 2004:84-85).
[29] *Praesens de praeteritis, praesens de praesentibus, praesens de futuris… praesens de praeteritis, memoria, praesens de praesentibus contuitus, praesens de futuris expectatio* (XI.XX).

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between the "remembered past" and the "projected future": "our sense of ourselves is in every moment to some extent integrated into a single story" (Crites, 1997:38).

Following Crites' arguments for the narrative quality of experience, Carr (1997:13) maintains that the "means-end" structure of events shows a close connection to the "beginning-middle-end" structure of narrative. In a story the narrative connects different episodes to form the plot. Similarly, our actions in life do not form a simple succession, but they gain significance through their time-based interaction. This is not to say that human action is neatly structured or that things turn out as planned, but, as in narrative, we find ourselves in life in the same situation of chance and suspense as do characters in a story (Carr, 1997:12-13).

Within any story there is always three distinct points of view on the events as they unfold: those of the storyteller, the audience, and the characters. Even a first-person narrator records events after they have happened and he/she chooses events based on the different perceptions of the participant and the storyteller. But are we then in our own lives simply to "take things as they come" since we do not have the view point of the storyteller that turns episodes into stories? (Carr, 1997:14-15) Carr's answer is "no" and he bases this response on the very nature of the present: "The present is precisely a point of view or vantage point which opens onto or gives access to future and past" (Carr, 1997:15).[30] Carr relates this statement to the "teleological nature of action": all of our actions, both in the past and the present, "derive their sense from the projected end they serve…" (Carr, 1997:15). We therefore regard events in real life from the perspective of their anticipated completion (Carr, 1997:15). We may not have the advantage of hindsight that the storyteller has, but "we are constantly striving…to occupy the storytellers' position with respect to our own lives" (Carr, 1997:16). This need for telling a story, also reflexively, leads Carr to make two important conclusions: firstly that narrative is an essential part of action and, secondly, that we also tend to assume the perspective of audience, even in terms of our own actions, as well as that of character and of narrator. Stories are "told in being lived and lived in being told" (Carr, 1997:16). The type of narrative activity Carr refers to here is therefore a practical one before it is laid down in history or fiction. In this sense narrative "is constitutive not only of action and experience but also of the self which acts and experiences" (Carr, 1997:17). I am not only the subject of my on-going life story, but I am also the narrator of this story and a member of the audience who hears the story.[31] The problem of self-identity therefore seems to be the problem of reconciling these three positions (Carr, 1997:16-17). In addition there is a strong social element to the individual's life story. We awaken as conscious beings in a

[30] Cf. Augustine's conception of the present above.
[31] A similar tripartite subject is identified by Kerby (below).

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particular culture or society with its own symbolic systems. The different forms of storytelling in a society is such a symbolic system, which facilitates our experience of the world. We assimilate the stories we hear and see and these stories in turn help us to make sense of our own story: our "inner story of experience" is already imbued with culture by the time we awaken as conscious beings (Crites, 1997:40-41).[32] As an individual I take part in events where the experiences are not mine alone but shared by all members of the group. In this regard "the individual is constituted in interpersonal transaction as well as intrapersonal reflection" (Carr, 1997:18).

The same point is made by Gergen and Gergen (1997:176): "Narrative construction can never be an entirely private matter. In the reliance on a symbol system for relating or connecting events, one is engaging in an implicit social act." The focus of their article is "self-narrative", their term for what Carr calls the individual's "life story". A person looks for connections between the different episodes in his/her life in an attempt to understand this life as the sequential unfolding of related events. "One's present identity is thus not a sudden and mysterious event, but a sensible result of a life story" (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:162).

The interpretive nature of narrative should not be understated at this point. Self-narratives are by no means to be taken as objective accounts of an individual's life. Single events do not have ethical or moral value but the way they are interpreted depends on the framework employed by the narrator, characters or audience in trying to make sense of them. Likewise the creators of stories are not isolated individuals but members of a culture with recognized narrative forms. In this regard life and art are interdependent (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:168).[33]

Getting back to the social component of self-narrative Gergen and Gergen (1997:173) argue that the individual must present himself/herself as a continuing identity for successful social engagement.[34] A certain way of assuring people in our relationships that we "are what we seem" is by constructing "stability narratives". However, this does not mean that our personal identities are stable or fixed, but rather that we are able to understand ourselves in this way, and to convey this understanding to those around us. "One does not require a state of 'true self' but potential for communicating that such a state is possessed" (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:173). Accordingly the narrative has to be presented in such a way that the behaviour of the individual is both acceptable and understandable. "…whether a given

[32] Bakhtin sees individual consciousness as a similarly social construct: "Everything that pertains to me enters my consciousness, beginning with my name…through the mouths of others" (Bakhtin, 1986:138).
[33] "Fiction is art somehow made of human events" (Booth in Bakhtin 1984:xv).
[34] Cf. Ricoeur, Kerby, MacIntyre and Crites above.

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narrative can be maintained depends importantly on the individual's ability to negotiate successfully with others concerning the meaning of events in relationship with each other" (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:177).

A second component of the social aspect of narrative has to do with the interactions between the protagonist and those around him/her. As Crites and Carr also argue, the individual is not the sole participant in the events that are joined in his/her narrative: our actions are strongly influenced by the actions of others. Therefore narrative constructions "typically require a supporting cast" (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:178). We are as involved in the narratives of others as they are in ours. This reciprocity not only plays a crucial role if the narrative of the individual is to be maintained (we need others to believe in the roles they play in our lives to support our self-narratives), but it is also protected by the very fact that we incorporate others' narratives into our own and play a supporting role in theirs; the result is a relationship (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:177-179) or what Bakhtin would call "dialogue".[35]

This brings as back to the interpretive nature of narrative identity and by implication its multiplicity. Narrative is not merely descriptive, but also interpretive. As Ricoeur also states, we understand our lives by means of narration (Kerby, 1997:131). As mentioned above Charles Taylor refers to human beings as self-interpreting animals. Many of our experiences of different emotions are "subject-referring" because they are viewed from the perspective of a certain self-understanding (for example humiliation and embarrassment). Even emotions regarding others have to do with this subject-referring nature of experience. When, for instance, we see someone in trouble, we decide to help because a) we have a certain image to uphold, b) we are concerned with what others might think if we do not help, or c) we feel a moral obligation. This obligation is not felt by an animal, a mentally-challenged person or an infant, and therefore has to do with our nature as self-interpreting animals. And so by "subject-referring" Taylor does not mean a simply narcissistic motivation for action, but "reference to the subject as proper addressee" (Taylor, 1985:57-58). This self-interpretation is at the heart of individual identity.

If we interpret ourselves by means of narration, and life may only be understood through narrative, as the quote at the start of this chapter suggests, we occupy the positions both of

[35] One of the key consequences of this reciprocal relationship is the possibility of guilt. "Guilt can be invoked when one party of an interdependent unit accuses another of falling short of his or her history, of failing to live up to the narrative that has been agreed upon as objective" (Gergen & Gergen, 1997:180). Guilt is therefore the result of the failure on the part of the accused to fulfil the role that the preceding narrative demands. This poses a threat both to the accuser's sense of self, as well as the on-going support of the accused. The role of guilt will be discussed in chapter 4 "Catullus as misunderstood or undervalued" where the Catullan speaker reproaches friends for behaving with, what he deems, a disregard for their friendship and so threaten his own sense of self.

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narrator and narrated in respect of our own lives. To illustrate this Richard Wolheim (as quoted by Kerby, 1997:131) draws an analogy between theatre and narrative: there is "an internal dramatist bringing together events into sequence, an internal actor representing these events to oneself, and an internal audience affected by the iconic narrative, be it cognitively, emotionally, or otherwise". This leads Kerby (1997:132) to reflect on the tripartite division of the subject à la Benveniste in his analysis of discourse: there is the *speaking subject* (the agent of the act of speaking), the *subject of speech* (the linguistic entity distinguished by personal pronouns), and the *spoken subject* (the result of the discourse as received/perceived by the listener) (Kerby's italics). When it comes to self-narration the speaking subject is therefore I myself as the agent of language, who creates the subject of the speech, designated by the pronoun "I" and a participant in the narrative. Being also the spoken subject of the narrative, the work thus becomes autobiographical or "personally historical" (Kerby, 1997:132). This brings us back to the view of the self not as a metaphysical entity in the Cartesian sense, but rather as "a being of semiosis" acting within the sphere of self-interpreting discourse.[36] It therefore requires listeners (who may include oneself) in order to be recognized (Kerby, 1997:133). This links up with Taylor's reflections on subject-referring emotions: we experience specific emotions because, as self-interpreting animals, we are able to interpret ourselves from the perspective of the other. "The self, then, comes to itself in and through the other; both the other person that responds to me, and the other that I become in my own self-reflection" (Kerby, 1997:134). Yet we are also highly influenced by the narratives of others, as well as the "ready-made" narratives of the media (literature, TV and film). In this respect the spoken subject may change considerably as it identifies with the new spoken subject, or abandons many of its former characteristics. The spoken subject may therefore be somewhat of a chameleon (Kerby, 1997:134-135).

A practical example of the theorization above may be found in Du Plooy's (2004:39) analysis of Breyten Breytenbach's conceptions of identity and self in the novel *Dog Heart.* She examines the way in which identity is shaped through narrative, as well as the role played by space in this process. Through memory the individual is able to recall spaces from the past as well as to recreate present spaces. The semi-autobiographical narrator in *Dog Heart* (who is the "subject-in-process-of writing"[37]) appears to be nowhere at home. He tells the story of the place of his childhood from the perspective of an insider who has become a liminal figure, but who accepts his own "chameleon-like identity". In this way he presents a "fragmented psyche" as he never communicates from a single position or voice (Du Plooy, 2004:41, 43, 49). Identity in *Dog Heart* therefore becomes the combined product of memory,

[36] Compare Lotman's notion of the self as a semiotic construct.
[37] Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:8.

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of "the paradoxes of belonging and not-belonging", and the telling of stories from different viewpoints (Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:8). The role of narrative here in the construction of identity is emphasized by the contrasting versions of reality as represented by different characters. Narrative by its very nature is selective and, despite the fact that one may share experiences with another, my memories are distinct reflections of *my* experiences as subject (Ricoeur, 2004:85, 96; my italics). In this respect "memory combined with…imagination has the ability to create a new reality": identity results from "a dynamic process of telling stories" (Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe, 2004:8-9).

1.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

What do these theories have in common and how do they contribute collectively to a better understanding of the Catullan identity? The overriding theme in all of the theoretical approaches discussed above is the primacy given to *otherness* and *difference.* The individual is defined, not through likeness, but rather through unlikeness. Subthemes that are closely linked to this notion are the respective roles of society and "the other" in the construction of identity, including the formative roles played by self-reflection, space and time, as well as the continuity made possible by narrative. Not all of these theories will be applicable to every poem under discussion, but either separately or collectively they lead to a better understanding of the Catullan identity as that of someone on the periphery.

Turner's emphasis on liminality and antistructure, a preference for the ambiguous, offers a milieu in which the Catullan identity and its social surroundings reciprocally illuminate each other. As argued above literature is a liminoid genre that is produced by a liminal entity in a betwixt-and-between space on the periphery of the social structure. From this position the liminal entity, through his/her liminoid work, is able to comment on the centre of the social structure just as the centre reciprocally sheds light on the peripheral individual. In Lotman's notion of the semiosphere and its boundary there exists a similarly interactive relation between centre and periphery. Whereas the centre is stable and rigid, the boundary is the area of potential and ambiguity, the "no man's land" between "us" and "them".

The characteristics of liminal personae, as shown by Turner, include ambiguity (they find themselves in-between positions of cultural convention, at odds with the everyday and mundane), the representation of a humanitarianism that seems to be lacking in those of higher status, potentiality (in this subjunctive mood of culture they play with ideas: the "may" and the "would"), a distancing from the governing norms of society that as children they were conditioned into, the making of meaning of life's paradoxes and complexities, scepticism, and self-reflexion. The hero in the works of Dostoevsky, as proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin,

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shows characteristics similar to those of liminal persons: this is an ambivalent figure, often ridiculed by others, and so finds himself/herself to be excluded from the social centre. Alone in possession of "the truth" the hero experiences a marked distance, even an opposition, between himself/herself and the "other". Dostoevsky portrays his characters in liminal situations: they find themselves to be on the threshold between diverse outcomes, such as life or death, sanity or insanity, etc. In this way Dostoevsky's hero, like the liminary, is a betwixt-and-between person, equally at odds with the norms of society, and therefore an enlightening commentator on that society.

For Ricoeur, Taylor and Kerby self-reflexion is self-interpretation: we know ourselves by interpreting ourselves through narrative. For Turner self-reflexion in the liminal situation requires that individuals become their own subject matter by obtaining a more objective stance with regard to themselves, and so gain a better understanding of themselves. In this way liminaries attempt to make sense of the ambiguities and moral challenges of human life. This does not happen in isolation, but in the camaraderie of communitas. Carr makes a similar claim when he states that we try to occupy the position of storyteller in our own lives: we distance ourselves from ourselves in order to know ourselves. For Carr, Crites as well as Gergen and Gergen, this telling of a life story is a social act: our experiences are not ours exclusively, but they are shared by others. We become conscious as social beings in a given society, and we interweave the stories of others with our own.

Bakhtin sees a similar social component in self-reflection, which he regards as dialogic in nature. Introspection is only possible through active dialogic engagement with the self as another, autonomous other. The consequent picture that we form of the hero is the outcome of this introspection: the way the hero views himself/herself and the way the hero sees the world. The identity of the hero is therefore shaped through self-reflective dialogue. This, however, is not to be confused with the sole viewpoint of the first-person speaker, which would offer a very one-dimensional image. Through polyphony one can take into account the multiplicity of equal-ranking voices that comment on the specific character and so form a more holistic image. For Bakhtin the self requires "an other" in order to exist. Along similar lines Kerby claims that our story needs listeners in order to be realized – what Gergen and Gergen call a necessary supporting cast – and Carr identifies our tendency to assume the perspective of audience in terms of our own lives. In a number of poems the Catullan poet enters into dialogue with another "Catullus" as an autonomous, different person. In this multi-voiced interaction between various Catullan speakers as well as other interlocutors an image of Catullus emerges, even though this image may change from poem to poem. A dialogic approach offers a reading of poems 8, 10, 51, 70, 72, 83, inter alia, where the

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"other" voices are given equal weight to that of the speaking subject and in this way a more rounded image of Catullus emerges.

Both Turner and Bakhtin underline the unfinalizability of the individual. For Turner we are endlessly evolving through our minds, and therefore self-reflexion is never concluded. Similarly for Bakhtin no final definition of the hero may be reached as we are engaged in endless dialogue with our own selves as well as with others. Though Ricoeur, Du Plooy, Kerby and MacIntyre do not use this term, their concepts of a "discordant concordance", "fragmented psyche", "chameleon" identity or the playing of roles according to setting stress the same point: identity cannot be pinpointed; it is an on-going, ever-changing process. We change, adapt or defy because our circumstances change. Like actors assuming different roles we may offer different versions of our stories at different times because our identities are not fixed (Crites and Du Plooy). Therefore there exists a reciprocal relationship between individual identity and the location, be it physical or symbolic, of that identity: the one informs us of the other.

The space occupied by the liminal character is not neutral. Though it may literally be on the boundary between two diverse places, it is also loaded with symbolic value. This point is stressed by Turner and Lotman especially, but also by Bakhtin in his analysis of Goethe's conception of locality and its link to human action, and Dostoevsky's focus on in-between spaces (doorways, landings, etc.) and their significance as locations of crises and scandal. For MacIntyre, just as for Goethe, settings have a history, and the individual is inextricably linked to the setting that determines his/her role. Similarly Kerby sees habit and context as formative of the individual. Apart from having a history, space is interpreted from the viewpoint of the speaking subject. This is underlined by Bakhtin, Du Plooy, Viljoen et al.: we attach emotional value to a particular place or setting. Space, just as identity, is therefore a social construct.

A final recurring theme is that of the time. For an individual to be understandable some unity over time is required. This point is made by Ricoeur, MacIntyre, Crites, Kerby and Gergen and Gergen, but all of them allow room for the changeability of character. This changeability is explicable because there exists an interdependence between space and time. At different times, under different circumstances, contrasting modes of behaviour make sense in the given context. The necessary link between space and time, what Bakhtin calls "chronotope", allows the reader insight into the interaction between events. Although the Catullan oeuvre consists of poetry exclusively, the reader is able to draw a plot, be it a nonlinear one, from the "stories" entangled in the poems and in the process "Catullus" emerges in his full, multi-voiced complexity (the provincial in Rome, the lover, the friend, the master of insult, the

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outcast from myth). This is a speaker on the threshold, neither here nor there, betwixt and between.

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CHAPTER TWO

CATULLUS AS PERIPHERAL FIGURE IN ROME: URBANITY, NEW POETRY AND A BROTHER'S DEATH

> The Catullus we meet in the poems is a fiction, although he cannot be entirely fictitious (Gaisser, 2009:68).

2.1 URBANITAS

Although very little is known about the historical Catullus there are some biographical details which are generally accepted. He was born between 84 and 82 BCE in Verona and died in Rome probably thirty years later.[1] His family had considerable social standing in Verona to the extent that Julius Caesar was often a house guest of his father's during his campaigns in Gaul (Suetonius, *Life of Caesar* 73). At some stage Catullus went to Rome where his privileged position in Verona offered him access to the Roman élite. He had a passionate love affair with a married woman named Clodia; he calls her "Lesbia" in his poems (Apuleius, *Apology* 10). Rome became his home (*…Romae vivimus: illa domus, illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas,* 68a.34-35)[2] but he returned to Verona for some time after his beloved brother had died tragically in Troy. Catullus mourns for him in poems 65, 68a, 68b and 101. Inhabitants of Verona and the rest of Transpadane Gaul only acquired full Roman citizenship in 49 BCE. Catullus had therefore come to Rome as a *domi nobilis* (noble at home), who had not yet "arrived" in Rome on a social and political level (Tatum, 1997:485; Gaisser, 2009:7). This ambivalent status or hyphenated identity finds expression in a number of his poems where he either attests to his provincial background and/or criticizes the so-called rustics for their lack of proper Roman sophistication: *urbanitas.* These poems will be the focus of this chapter.[3]

The term *urbanitas* is hard to define since it is never explicitly described in contemporary writing. The comprehensive study of Edwin Ramage (1973) where he traces the use of the concept from its roots in Classical Athens to the first century CE remains the authority. In broad terms *urbanitas* entails the habits, appearance and manner of speaking associated with long-term inhabitants of the city as opposed to those of people living in rural areas. Fitzgerald (1995:89, 113) regards *urbanitas* as indefinable, "a game rather than a substance", which excludes to the same extent that it defines: "urbane style appears as it

[1] This information is taken from the chronologies of Jerome (fourth century CE), although his original dates of 87-57 BCE have been altered according to textual evidence (Gaisser, 2009:2).

[2] I use the Latin text of Thomson (1997) throughout. Deviations are indicated where applicable. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[3] The concept of *urbanitas* is particularly significant in an examination of the Catullan speaker as a peripheral figure since it accentuates his precarious position with relation to the Roman élite.

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condemns the inurbane" (87). Like Lesbia's illusive beauty in poem 43[4] it is defined by means of what it is not.

In his discussion of the concept as used in the Republican era Ramage relies on Cicero mostly but he also singles out Catullus as a writer who was acutely aware that Roman urbanity entailed urban refinement (Ramage, 1973:53). This refinement evades precise definition and Cicero himself states that he cannot pinpoint what exactly *urbanitas* is, he just knows that it exists (*Brutus* 171).[5] Yet there are a number of recurring characteristics associated with the concept which may be traced in Cicero's work: good breeding and manners, learning, "a sense of courtesy, a cleverness, presence, and a charming wit" (Ramage, 1973:56). These characteristics manifest themselves most visibly in a sophisticated sense of humour and polished speech (Ramage, 1973:56). The opposition between Rome and her surroundings, and the Roman's conviction that his lifestyle is superior to that of an Italian or foreigner is felt acutely during this period where attempts at defining Roman urbanity are made for the first time (Ramage, 1973:55).

A recurring problem in Catullan scholarship is that of the poet's self-definition "and the extent to which that definition is grounded in his Italian identity" (Tatum, 1997:487). The tension between city and country, Rome and her provinces, finds expression in a number of Catullus' poems as he negotiates the identity of the Catullan speaker and unmasks wannabe urbanites (e.g., poems 12, 22 and 44). The two sites of Verona and Rome specifically become symbolically laden spaces in his work when his subject matter appears to be more personal (poems 65 and 68a). Gaisser (2009:9) states that no "deep *personal* anxiety about his status" could be inferred from particular poems (her italics). Yet the persona we come across in his poems is acutely aware of "nuances of behavior, status and even accent" (Gaisser, 2009:8). To what extent this individual overlaps with the real person we could never say with any certainty. Our concern is with the Catullus that the real author made available to us in his text. In this chapter Catullus as a peripheral figure in Rome will be discussed both as the bearer of "dual citizenship" and as the judge of real urban sophistication. These two statuses link up closely with the group of poets Catullus associated with, the so-called "new poets", who admired refinement in writing and expressed this by means of a number of catch words, *lepidus, venustus, salsus, bellus* and *facetus*: "the language of social performance" (Krostenko, 2001a:10-12).

[4] To be discussed below.
[5] Et Brutus: Qui est, inquit, iste tandem urbanitatis color? Nescio, inquam; tantum esse quendam scio (Page, Capps, et al. 1962:146).

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2.1.1 Transpadane-Roman: a hyphenated identity

c.1

cui dono lepidum novum libellum
arida modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum 5
omne aevum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli
qualecumque; quod, <o> patrona virgo,
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo. 10

Catullus starts his book of poems with a dedication to the historian Cornelius Nepos.[6] Cornelius is *unus Italorum* (5), thus a provincial who came to Rome, like himself. Two distinct views have dominated the scholarship on Catullus' relationship with Nepos: from one point of view Catullus' dedication is interpreted as ironic since Nepos' historical writings display the exact opposite characteristics to those that a neoteric would admire (Copley, 1951; Elder, 1967; Zetzel, 1982:100; Gibson, 1995: 569-573); from the other point of view Catullus' praise is seen as genuine because Nepos' work displays true neoteric characteristics (Cairns, 1969; Levine, 1969; Wiseman, 1979:170-171). There is, however, a way to reconcile Catullus' sincere dedication to Nepos with a distinct difference in their literary ideals: Catullus' reference to Nepos as *unus Italorum*. Nepos was a Transpadane, just like Catullus (Wiseman, 1987:331), and, like Catullus the *domi nobilis*, a newcomer to the Roman senatorial scene. Clausen (1976:37), not convinced that Catullus could have appreciated Nepos' literary endeavours, ascribes his gratitude to the fact that Nepos was both a fellow writer and a "fellow Transpadane…with important friends in Rome", who had reacted positively to Catullus' *nugae*. Batstone (2007:235 ff.), in his discussion of the poem as programmatic, sees a deliberate evasiveness in Catullus' opinion of Nepos' work, yet does not regard this as openly negative. As addressee Nepos plays a part in the programmatic function of the dedicatory poem: he both represents the ideal reader and suggests the value of the collection. In this reading Catullus may be introducing his readers to the aesthetic values that he shares with Nepos: "intellectual daring and concision", learning and hard work (Batstone, 2007:236). Yet Nepos' work is *laboriosus*, a term that

[6] Whether or not the Catullan corpus as we have it now originally consisted of three volumes, or the author arranged the poems in their current order himself, is not of concern for this study. There are numerous studies on this topic, but no final sollution has been reached. I fully agree with Miller (1994:75) that authorial arrangement becomes less important in a written work, which is intended to be read back and forth (as opposed to an oral work). Catullus' poems are to be read "in terms of one another" in order to be understood fully (Miller, 1994:75). From this viewpoint the need for a consecutive reading is immaterial .

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could denote the farm, and he writes of "kings and heroes", not the subject matter of the neoterics (Batstone, 2007:250). On the other hand, the poem is also simply a dedication to a fellow countryman, who, as an older person, could have helped the young Catullus as a new writer in Rome, whether or not they shared the same literary ideals.[7]

Tatum (1997:485) similarly argues for Nepos as Catullus' "ideal reader", but from the perspective of social dynamics and contemporary politics. His argument is founded upon the Roman concept of *amicitia* and Catullus' unique take on "especially *amicitia* among unequals" from a "distinctly equestrian and Italian perspective" (Tatum, 1997:484).[8] The offering of a literary gift played an important role in supporting friendship. Catullus' dedication to Nepos illustrates such an instance of "poetic gift-giving" as a means of negotiating social/political dynamics (Tatum, 1997:485, Batstone, 2007:241), "a task especially important if one was a noble at home in the provinces…but a newcomer with few connections in Rome" (Batstone, 2007:241). As noted above, Catullus' description of Nepos as *unus Italorum* is significant, but he is also described as being "daring" (*ausus es*). Therefore, they both came to Rome as Transpadane provincials daring to make it on the literary scene of the élite. Historiography in particular was a genre dominated by senators and Nepos' entry into the field is quite noteworthy (Wiseman, 1987: 248-249; Tatum, 1997:485). These parallels between Catullus and Nepos cast the latter quite convincingly in the role of Catullus' *alter ego*: "[a]s he projects his own identity through Nepos…Catullus emerges as Alexandrian in literary sensibilities and Italian in origin" (Tatum, 1997:485). The emphasis placed on their shared Italian origin in the opening poem plays an essential role in the shaping of the Catullan speaker, since the identity of the addressee forms a crucial part of the poet's self-definition (Tatum, 1997:486; Nappa, 2001:147). Nepos therefore functions as a means for both negotiating the social position of the Catullan speaker, as well as for shaping his identity.

Rauk (1997:320) argues for a deliberate irony in Catullus' description of Nepos' work, which is intended not to criticize Nepos, but rather to poke fun at the way Catullus and the other neoterics are perceived by the wider public. Therefore Catullus' humorous depiction of Nepos as the great historian and himself as the humble poet, points to a sincere friendship between the two and an active interest in each other's careers since their "literary values were not circumscribed by the genres they practiced" [sic] (Rauk, 1997:320). What unites Catullus and Nepos is the concept of time as the main criterion for evaluating poetry as well as historiography. This is most clearly seen in the last three lines of the poem where

[7] Cf. Gratwick (2002:307).
[8] This point will be taken up again below.

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Catullus' wish for his own work *plus uno maneat perenne saeclo* ("may it remain undying for more than one lifetime", 10) balances the *omne aevum* ("entire age", 6) of Nepos', and makes it possible for the two authors to stand side by side. By playing with the idea of time and the importance of the concept for an historian Catullus' prayer at the end of the poem turns his lowly gift into something that is particularly suited to Nepos (Rauk 1997:320, 323-324).

In sum Rauk (1997:325) sees the introductory poem as an in-joke between friends "who are amused at the view that the outside world has of them" (Catullus' poems as *nugae* and Nepos' as much more serious and worthy) and he finds a parallel in poem 53 where Catullus plays on the public's view of Calvus and his oratory. Batstone (2007) and Tatum (1997) both read the dedication as genuine, though they differ as to Catullus' actual opinion of Nepos as a writer. What these scholars have in common, though, is that they all argue for some shared sameness between two authors who find themselves in a liminal position in respect of the larger reading public. To me the unifying factor lies in the words *unus Italorum:* their shared background. Both came to Rome as provincials and their shared peripheral status in élite society unites them even though they may have a different approach to genre and style. Catullus and Nepos therefore find themselves scrutinized by the reigning tastes of the élite but they are on the threshold of that very same social circle, "poised to stride into the territory…of the senatorial class" (Tatum, 1997:485). There is a promise of reaggregation, but for now they reside in the liminal zone united by the communitas of their shared background.

2.1.2 New poets in Rome

> The *Catulli Veronensis liber* provides us to a degree unparalleled elsewhere in the literature of classical antiquity with a sketch of friends engaged in the constructive criticism of one another's literary efforts and in frontal attacks on styles alien to that of their own côterie (Sandy, 1978:73).

Catullus' peripheral position in Rome is not limited to his Transpadane background. Also on a literary level Catullus and his like-minded poet-companions met with resistance from traditional Roman culture and came to be collectively referred to as the "new ones" or "new poets" according to Cicero. This group was by no means a formally organized school, but rather a number of poets with similar artistic tastes who found themselves to be on the same side of the fence.

When Catullus came to Rome he met with a number of poets who, like himself, were financially self-sufficient and therefore free to write what and how they pleased (Gaisser, 2009:14). They are commonly referred to as the "new poets" or *neoteroi* based on a quote

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from Cicero (Cic. *Att.* VII 2.1)[9] where he refers to them by this term in a derogatory way (Wiseman, 1974:51; Lyne, 1978: 168; Johnson, 2007:175). Four years later he would call them by a similar name the *poetae novi* (Orator XLVIII.161)[10] and yet another year thereafter the "eulogists of Euphorion" (Tusculan Disputations 3.45)[11] where he scorns them for looking down on Ennius in favour of the stylistic refinement and preference for obscure subject matter of Euphorion (Johnson, 2007:175-176). Catullus is the only one of this group whose work has survived, but other neoteric poets that we know of include M. Furius Bibaculus, C. Licinius Calvus, C. Helvius Cinna, Q. Cornificius, L. Ticida, and P. Terentius Varro Atacinus (Courtney, 1993:189ff.). Many of them are also addressed in Catullus' own poems. Although, as mentioned, the neoterics did not represent a fixed school, it is noteworthy that most of them came from Cisalpine Gaul and personal relationships between a number of them existed (Courtney, 1993:189). These "new ones", inspired by the third-century BCE poets of Alexandria, above all Callimachus, promoted short, learned and delicately polished poems over the long-winded and the verbose. Similarly they wrote on "trivial" topics (*nugas*, poem 1.4) and avoided the grandiose themes of tradition (epic). If the gods are depicted, they are humanized, and instead of portraying the heroic deeds of men they focus on the personal and the individual (Trypanis, 1947:3-4). The new poets combined the Callimachean with the traditionally Roman to introduce new styles and content to the Roman corpus (Gaisser, 2009:14). But within the Roman cultural tradition they were faced with a resistance that Callimachus did not have to cope with: complete devotion to art, "art as an end, as a way of life" was for the traditional Roman inconceivable: life and duty came before art and culture (Johnson, 1982:112).[12] Yet for Catullus and his poet-friends art was exactly this: the medium through which life is shaped and clarified. In a way the words could even become a substitute for life itself (Johnson, 1982:112).

What led to these poets' break with tradition in light of such seemingly hostile reception? The answer to this question lies in the social and political climate in which Catullus and his contemporaries found themselves. Long before Catullus Callimachus felt a need for a new poetics in a changing world where, ironically, the immense expansion of the Greek culture since the heroic age of Homer had brought about a diminution of the Greek psyche. The grandeur of the heroic age, both in terms of subject matter and scope, no longer had the same impact on the writers of Alexandria whereas the mundane and seemingly insignificant stirred them (Johnson, 2007:180). Above all they promoted elegance and developed a kind

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[9] 'flavit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites' (hunc *σπονδειάζοντα* si cui voles *τῶν νεωτέρων* pro tuo vendito) (Schackleton Bailey, 1999: 182).
[10] Ita non erat ea offensio in versibus quam nunc fugiunt poetae novi (Page, Capps, et al. 1962: 438).
[11] O poetam egregium! quamquam ab his cantoribus Euphorionis contemnitur (Page, Capps, et al. 1950: 278).
[12] Cf. Quinn, 1972:215.

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of "poetics of style for style's sake", which may be summarized best in the Greek word λεπτός meaning, inter alia, "pealed", "thin", "delicate", "slight", "refined", "ingenious", etc. (Johnson, 2007:180-181, quoting the 1994 Liddell and Scott *Abridged Greek-English Lexicon*). This reversal of traditional norms brought with it a dismissal of the moral and public principles that underpinned traditional writing (Johnson, 2007:181). This does not mean that the Callimachean poets necessarily despised the epic and the heroic, but rather that they proposed small-scale alternatives (epyllia) with a focus on the unheroic side of heroes, second-rate heroes, or even heroines (Lyne, 1978:181-182; Johnson, 2007:181). The Alexandrians' focus on realism and individualism favoured love as a central theme in their poems (Trypanis, 1947:5); from this their successors discovered a "new sentimentality", a preoccupation with overwhelming infatuations and the incurable power of Eros, which was then introduced to the Romans in the person of Parthenius (Johnson, 2007:183).[13]

In a stable society where duty shapes both public and private identity, poetry on erotic suffering is simply a pastime, but "when the social fabric endures…strain…and individuals feel their lives disordered" these works take on new meaning (Johnson, 2007:183). This is the kind of Rome Catullus and his comrades found themselves in, a city in political turmoil where the top dogs where fighting over the same bone. Catullus writes for a select group of educated readers, his "primary audience [being] a set of friends supportive of one another" (Skinner, 1989:18). Lyne (1978:170) sees in Catullus' poems addressed to fellow poets a literary polemic, "[a]n attitude of Us against Them". In this section poems 50, 14, 22, 44, 35, 36, 95 will be discussed as "in-jokes" between Catullus and his poet-friends, uniting "against the rest" (Lyne, 1978:170).

c.50

Hesterno, Licini, die otiosi
multum lusimus in meis tabellis,
ut convenerat esse delicatos:
scribens versiculos uterque nostrum
ludebat numero modo hoc modo illoc, 5
reddens mutua per iocum atque vinum.
atque illinc abii tuo lepore
incensus, Licini, facetiisque,
ut nec me miserum cibus iuvaret
nec somnus tegeret quiete ocellos, 10
sed toto indomitus furore lecto
versarer, cupiens videre lucem,
ut tecum loquerer, simulque ut essem.

[13] The Greek poet Parthenius was taken as booty probably by the very Cinna who would become one of the neoterics when the former's city of Nicaea fell to Pompey's army in 66-65 BCE. He was freed by Cinna on account of his learning and became the main agent of Callimachean poetics in Rome (Clausen, 1964: 187-188; Wiseman, 1974:47-48; Courtney, 1993:212-213).

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at defessa labore membra postquam
semimortua lectulo iacebant, 15
hoc, iucunde, tibi poema feci,
ex quo perspiceres meum dolorem.
nunc audax cave sis, precesque nostras,
oramus, cave despuas, ocelle,
ne poenas Nemesis reposcat a te. 20
est vemens dea; laedere hanc caveto.

Poem 50 most probably represents the beginning of Catullus' friendship with fellow neoteric C. Licinius Calvus, to whom the poem is also addressed (Quinn, 1973:236; Williams, 1988:73; Thomson, 1997:324). In many respects this poem provides the best illustration of neoteric poetics because we are offered "a glimpse of the *poetae novi* at play" (Fordyce, 1961:215; Thomson, 1997:324), in other words, engaged in what they do best: writing polished little verses (*versiculos*, 4).[14] *Otiosi* in line 1 is key (Segal, 1970: 25): it implies that Catullus and Calvus were at leisure while others were working (Thomson, 1997:325). As mentioned above, Catullus' contemporary society placed life and duty before art and pleasure. *Otium* had at best ambivalent connotations (Skinner, 1981:89; Laidlaw, 1968:42ff.). In the broader Roman society of Catullus' time *otium* may be seen neutrally as a synonym for peace, but at a more individual level it connotes inertia, moral decline and even decadence (Laidlaw, 1968:45, 44, 47). *Otium* in poem 50 may therefore be seen as the opposition to, even a defiance of, public life in favour of promoting the private (Segal, 1970:25). Segal (1970:25) refers to the "non-conformist attitude" (à la Piero Pucci, quoted ad loc.) of Catullus and his poet-friends, who had the luxury of rejecting the traditionally Roman serious business (*negotium*) like law or politics for the pursuit of "deliberately inconsequential activities" (*otium*). This removes Catullus and his poet-friends from their society's moral centre and puts them in a position where as liminaries they close ranks and experience a sense of communitas. This is exactly the case in poem 50 where a seemingly private poem is offered to a wider audience (Scott, 1969:170; Finamore, 1984:12) and becomes both an expression of intense feeling and a declaration of Catullus' poetic stance. Yet the listener or reader is never drawn in entirely. Her position remains ambivalent: on the one hand an outside observer, on the other the speaking subject's most intimate companion.

Catullus starts his poem by describing a joyful afternoon he shared with a poet-friend. The tone is playful (*lusimus*, 2; *ludebat*, 5) and humorous (*per iocum atque vinum*, 6), and the two poets are depicted as like-minded equals (*ut convenerat esse delicatos*, 3; *reddens*

[14] "The extensive employment of neoteric vocabulary…indicates that poem 50 is a brash ironic profession of the unconventional moral and aesthetic creed of the *urbani*" (Skinner, 1981:83). This vocabulary includes words such as *delicatos* (3), *lepore* (7), *facetiisque* (8) and the frequent use of the diminutive (*tabellis*, 2; *versiculos*, 4; *ocellos*, 10, etc.).

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mutua, 6).[15] The audience is allowed to observe (to get a "glimpse"), but not to participate; the first person plural is exclusive: "you, Calvus, and I". Then a dramatic change occurs in line 7, clearly marked by the emphatic *atque* ("and so"). The Catullan speaker is alone, reminiscing on the afternoon, and develops an intense longing for a repeat. He changes from the first person plural to the first person singular, and the tone changes from light-heartedness to mock-seriousness and hyperbole as the speaker describes himself: "tossing and turning all over my bed…untameable in my passion…my limbs, worn out from exhaustion, were lying half-dead on my little bed" (...*toto indomitus furore lecto / versarer... / defessa labore membra... / semimortua lectulo iacebant*, 11-12, 14-15). The unexpectedness of this emotional display is heightened by Catullus' use of erotic language and the imagery of love poetry: "fired" (*incensus,* 8), "miserable" (*miserum*, 9) and the inability to eat or sleep, 9-11). This is a parody of love poetry (Macleod, 1973b:294) but, despite the exaggeration, there is a seriousness underlying the middle section of the poem: the intellectualism experienced by Catullus when two minds really connect, being "fired by (someone's) charm and wit" (*tuo lepore / incensus...facetiisque*, 7-8) has an intensity not very different from sensual pleasure (Quinn, 1959:56; Scott, 1969:172; Segal, 1970:27; Skinner, 1981:84).[16] In this respect it does not seem at all implausible that Catullus should be "in love" with Calvus. Therefore the pain he experiences upon separation from his friend is also best described in erotic terms. Finamore (1984:14) detects a sense of real unhappiness (*me miserum*, 9) and relates poem 50 to poem 51 where Catullus is also *misero…mihi* (5-6); in both poems this unhappiness is caused by separation from a beloved, be it friend or lover. And in both poems *otium* plays a central role.[17] As Catullus struggles with his feelings the audience is drawn into his personal experience, no longer excluded by the camaraderie between two people in their own little world of poetry, but involved in the emotional pain of an individual.[18] He makes us privy to an experience which Calvus would presumably only see later in writing. The distance between Catullus and Calvus narrows the distance between Catullus and his audience. This ambivalent engagement with the audience is exactly what Fitzgerald (1995, passim) calls "Catullan provocation". The more personal the Catullan speaker becomes, the more closely he engages the audience.

On the one hand poem 50 therefore depicts two non-conformist urbanites closing ranks against the Roman world of *negotium* for the insignificance of *otium*. In a society of pretentions where the likes of Asinius Marrucinus (poem 12), Suffenus (poems 14 and 22)

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[15] "…as we had agreed to be risqué"; "…taking turns"

[16] Macleod (1973a:294) argues that the love which Calvus kindles in the Catullan speaker attests to the former's charming writing and also hints at the kind of poetry they both cherished.

[17] Poem 51 is discussed in the next chapter, p.104ff.

[18] Skinner (1981:85) and Fitzgerald (1995:112) see this change in the shift from the inaccessible *versiculi* (4) to the "enduring *poema*" (16).

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and Egnatius (poems 37 and 39) hold sway Catullus finds in Calvus the rarity of real polish and refinement (Scott, 1969:172). This poem is then about the friendship, "its halting beginnings, its pleasures remembered and anticipated" (Williams, 1988:73), between two like-minded intellectuals. At the same time it is a "compelling proclamation about poetry" since the creative outcome of Catullus' emotional suffering is the very poem in hand (*hoc…poema*, 16) (Skinner, 1981:83-84). We are therefore offered more than a mere glimpse of the *poetae novi* at play: we see the actual creative process as Catullus turns an experience into art. For Scott (1969:172) this illustrates exactly the kind of in-joke between two friends which the recipient would value while at the same time grasping the deeper meaning. But the one friend is in the compromised position of possibly being rejected (*precesque nostras…cave despuas*, 18-19).[19] One might therefore perceive a sense of uncertainty in the Catullan speaker in the second half of the poem (Quinn, 1973:236), even a "lack of confidence" (Williams, 1988:73). At the end of the poem he calls upon Nemesis in "mock-solemnity"[20] (20-21) both as guarantor of success (Skinner, 1981:84) as well as a means of masking his sincerity in case of rejection.

Catullus' peripheral status finds dual expression in poem 50. In the first instance he is separated from the norms of his contemporary society by being *otiosus* and spending his time on frivolities. He joins someone with mutual ideals and they have an exclusive party, shutting out the world of the forum as well as the audience. In this private space of their shared otherness they are equals, fellow liminaries experiencing a sense of communitas. When later he is away from Calvus, Catullus experiences a separation of another kind. This time he is on his own and no intellectual exchange with a fellow liminary is possible. The intensity of his longing for Calvus, which could only be expressed in erotic terms, underscores his loneliness but also suggests his uncertainty about the reciprocity of the friendship. His little bed becomes the symbol of his displacement and his sense of "solitary confinement" from which the daylight might offer some escape. In this experience of liminality vis-à-vis his friendship with Calvus he engages the reader by means of "confessing" his deep longing for this friend (Fitzgerald, 1995:112). As a result both the audience and Calvus, upon receiving the poem, would see his pain (*dolor*, 17) by being addressed in the second person. His initial monologue with Calvus therefore turns into a dialogue with the audience as a kind of "superaddressee".[21] It is by means of this multiway dialogic engagement that the identity of the Catullan speaker is revealed: both as a

[19] "Catullus expresses his concern that Calvus will despise his poetic composition" (Sandy, 1978:72).
[20] Quinn's term (1973:240).
[21] Bakhtin defines the superaddressee as the invisible third-party listener implied in every utterance whose perfect understanding of the utterance is presumed by the speaker (Morson & Emerson, 1990:135).

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peripheral figure in contemporary society where *negotium* holds sway, and as a peripheral friend in a new relationship where the roles are still being negotiated.

Catullus' self-doubt in poem 50 turns out to have been unnecessary as Calvus is again addressed in poem 14, this time much more intimately (Quinn, 1972:136, 236). Catullus has grown in confidence in his relationship with Calvus and they are depicted as intimate friends and literary soulmates. This more established relationship appears to give the Catullan speaker the self-assurance to have an acuter critical awareness of "them" as opposed to the "us" who are now in a strong partnership.

c.14

Ni te plus oculis meis amarem,
iucundissime Calve, munere isto
odissem te odio Vatiniano:
nam quid feci ego quidve sum locutus,
cur me tot male perderes poetis? 5
isti di mala multa dent clienti,
qui tantum tibi misit impiorum.
quod si, ut suspicor, hoc novum ac repertum
munus dat tibi Sulla litterator,
non est mi male, sed bene ac beate, 10
quod non dispereunt tui labores.
di magni, horribilem et sacrum libellum!
quem tu scilicet ad tuum Catullum
misti continuo, ut die periret
Saturnalibus optimo dierum! 15
non non hoc tibi, false, sic abibit.
nam, si luxerit, ad librariorum
curram scrinia; Caesios, Aquinos,
Suffenum, omnia colligam venena,
ac te his suppliciis remunerabor. 20
vos hinc interea valete abite
illuc, unde malum pedem attulistis,
saecli incommoda, pessimi poetae.

Like poem 50 this poem is presented as an in-joke between like-minded poet-friends yet aimed at a wider readership.[22] The tone is more intimate and the friendship Catullus seems to have hoped for in poem 50 is now established: *Licini* has become *iucundissime Calve* (2) and Catullus himself is now *tuum Catullum* (13). Where the aim in poem 50 was more ambivalent, Catullus' aim in poem 14 is quite clear: literary criticism presented in a witty anecdote (Buchheit, 1959:312ff. ; Fordyce, 1961:135; Thomson, 1997:244). Calvus is

[22] Just as in poem 50 Catullus' sketching of the context – i.e. the fact that they had spent an afternoon together writing poems; the fact that Calvus had sent him a gift on the Saturnalia – would have been unnecessary if the poem was meant for Calvus alone.

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accused of “regifting”: he passed onto Catullus a *munus*, an anthology of poems, which was given to him by a client named Sulla (6-9). It is clear from the outset that these are the kinds of poems which Catullus and his poet-friends strongly objected to (*munere isto / odissem*, 2-3; *cur me tot male perderes poetis*? 5; *tantum…impiorum*, 7).[23] Again Catullus is writing in the evening and awaiting the next day with a sense of urgency (*si luxerit*, 17; *curram*, 18) but there is no emotional separation between Catullus and Calvus as in poem 50. Calvus has pulled a prank on Catullus and the latter’s urgency in this case is not to be with Calvus, but to reciprocate his joke. Calvus knew how the “gift” would be received and Catullus knows how to respond.[24] In poem 14 we therefore get another glimpse of the *poetae novi* at play, but this time, although they are not physically together, they are spiritually joined by their shared opinion of bad poetry. Once more they have an exclusive “party”, the exclusivity of which is made more apparent by naming those not welcome: *Caesios, Aquinos / Suffenum…*(18-19).

The literary polemic of “us against them” is emphasized by Catullus’ direct address of the “worst poets” (*pessimi poetae*) in the last three lines introduced by the emphatic *vos* (21). Although he is not one of the poisonous poets, Sulla is also being reprimanded for thinking that the anthology he gave to Calvus is “new and sought-after” (*novum ac repertum*, 8).[25] His lack of judgment and taste groups him together with the likes of Caesius, Aquinus and Suffenus. The latter seems to be of particular importance. His name is placed emphatically at the beginning of the line (19) and, unlike Caesius and Aquinus whose names have been made plural, thus denoting a group rather than individuals, Suffenus’ name remains singular. He appears to be singled out for particularly bad writing.

In poem 14 Catullus presents Calvus and himself as being isolated in their knowledge of what good poetry is, like the lonesome heroes of Dostoevskian fiction who alone possess the truth. Sulla clearly has appalling literary taste and the booksellers (*librariorum*, 17) stock “all the poisons” of the bad poets (*omnia…venena*, 19) because these must be the books that sell. This suggests that the reading public at large has no appreciation for good poetry either and underscores the peripheral status of the neoteric “us” constituted by Catullus and Calvus. They, however, seem to revel in this status and in their own sense of superiority. Of Calvus’ opinion we learn only indirectly but from Catullus’ confident rejection of the poets with the “bad feet” (*malum pedem*, 22) we may detect the communitas which exists between

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[23] “I would have hated you because of this gift…”; “…that you would destroy me with so many good-for-nothing poets?”; “…such a bunch of disgraces”.

[24] Cf. Forsyth, 1985:573.

[25] Forsyth (1985:572) compares Sulla to Asinius of poem 12, “condemned…for his awful boorishness”.

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the two poet-friends. From their position as poets on the threshold they comment on the writers at society's centre and in turn their own poetic identities are revealed.

The confidence Catullus gains from the feeling of communitas between him and like-minded men of letters is continued in poem 22. Suffenus is once more at the receiving end of literary criticism but this time in a very controlled, even sympathetic way. At the outset he is the epitome of urbanity, but his wheels come off towards the end of the poem.

c.22

Suffenus iste, Vare, quem probe nosti,
homo est venustus et dicax et urbanus,
idemque longe plurimos facit versus.
puto esse ego illi milia aut decem aut plura
perscripta, nec sic ut fit in palimpsesto 5
relata: cartae regiae, novi libri,
novi umbilici, lora rubra membranae,
derecta plumbo et pumice omnia aequata.
haec cum legas tu, bellus ille et urbanus
Suffenus unus caprimulgus aut fossor 10
rursus videtur: tantum abhorret ac mutat.
hoc quid putemus esse? qui modo scurra
aut si quid hac re scitius videbatur,
idem infaceto est infacetior rure,
simul poemata attigit, neque idem umquam 15
aeque est beatus ac poema cum scribit:
tam gaudet in se tamque se ipse miratur.
nimirum idem omnes fallimur, neque est quisquam
quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum
possis. suus cuique attributus est error; 20
sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est.

The Catullan speaker is addressing Varus, who will also feature in poem 10 (discussed below). Varus' identity is uncertain. He is taken to be either Alfenus Varus, a prominent jurist,[26] or Quintilius Varus, a literary critic and friend of both Vergil and Horace. Both were natives of Cremona, and it is very likely that either could have formed part of Catullus' circle of Transpadane friends, who were mingling with Roman high society (Fordyce, 1961:116; Thomson, 1997:232). Fordyce (1961:146) and Thomson (1997:232) see Varus' exact identity as unimportant since he is merely functioning as an ornament in a typically Hellenistic trick of disguising literary criticism as a letter to a friend. Skinner (2001:66-67), however, sees his identity as significant, making a convincing case for Quintilius Varus as

[26] This would then link up with the addressee "Alfenus" in poem 30 (discussed in chapter 4, p.175ff.).

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someone who shared Catullus' literary principles.[27] In agreement with Skinner I will return to this point below.

Catullus tells Varus about the deceptiveness of appearance when it comes to the poetaster Suffenus, emphatically the first word of the poem. Initially Suffenus is described as the picture of urbanity, displaying all the qualities valued by Catullus and his circle of friends: he is charming, witty and refined (*venustus…dicax…urbanus,* 2) (Watson, 1990:13).[28] Almost as an afterthought Catullus adds lines 3-8, a lengthy and detailed description of Suffenus' enormous literary output – "ten thousand or more (verses) written down" (*milia aut decem aut plura / prescripta*, 4-5) – and the choice material he uses for his writing, all new and expensive (6-8). Before we come to the crux of the poem Suffenus is again described as most sophisticated: *bellus ille et urbanus* (9). Only after this lengthy introduction do we come to the real thrust of the poem: that very urbane-seeming Suffenus – his name once more placed at the beginning of the line – looks like a "goat-milker and a digger" (*caprimulgus aut fossor*, 10), "coarser than the coarse countryside" (*…infaceto est infacetior rure*, 14) when seen in light of his verses. To make things worse, Suffenus thoroughly enjoys writing poetry and he has a high opinion of himself (*tam gaudet in se tamque se ipse miratur*, 17). Catullus ends the poem on a fable-like, moralising note: we all have our flaws, but they tend to be in our blind spots (18-21).[29]

What is really bothering the Catullan speaker? Not so much Suffenus' writing per se as his lack of self-knowledge (Shapiro, 2011:23). The literary criticism in poem 22 appears to be much gentler than in other poems (cf. poems 36, 44 and 95 discussed below). In the first place it is addressed to a third party and so less direct; secondly, by using the first person plural in its moralising conclusion (*fallimur*, 18; *videmus*, 21) the Catullan speaker is including himself as suffering from this self-delusionary aspect of human nature.[30] Yet, paradoxically, his very inclusion of himself among the "flawed" excludes him. The poem itself demonstrates how he succeeds where Suffenus fails: "a combination of witty and urbane material with an authentically Callimachean ironic self-awareness and alertness to artistic shortcomings" (Watson, 1990: 15). This is not only reflected in the content, but also

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[27] Skinner (2001:66-67) bases her argument on Horace's description of Quintilius Varus as the "ideal critic" in his *Ars Poetica* – the principles he espoused bear a close resemblance to those promoted in poem 22 (and so indirectly ascribed to "Varus").

[28] *Bellus* (9) and its derivatives likewise denote the qualities of sophistication associated with the city (Watson, 1990:22; Krostenko, 2001b:51ff.).

[29] He alludes to a fable by Aesop where a person is portrayed as carrying two knapsacks: one on the front containing your neighbour's flaws; one on your back containing your own (Fordyce, 1961:151-152).

[30] Shapiro (2011:27) reads lines 18-21 as an explicitly universalizing message. Nappa (2001:141) proposes a similar reading and views the poem as a whole as a defence of Suffenus: there is a marked distinction between a poet and his poems (cf. poem 16).

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in the meter and language. Catullus uses the limping iambics associated with satirical writing and in this case a particularly apt meter to reflect the clumsy writing of a poetaster (cf. poem 14: *malum pedem*, 22) (Ferguson, 1985:69). Moreover, the particularly high number of elisions in line 4 as well as its unimaginative vocabulary emphasize Suffenus' incompetence (Watson, 1990:14). The seemingly sympathetic conclusion to Catullus' poem only serves to underscore the difference between himself and Varus on the one hand, and Suffenus and the likes of him on the other. The apparent generalization therefore does not unite Catullus with Suffenus, but rather functions to present Suffenus as an exemplar of the many bad poets in circulation (we already met some of them in poem 14). In addressing Varus, Catullus is communicating his critique on Suffenus to a like-minded friend, who shares his standards of refinement (*hoc quid putemus esse?* 12). They are in fact having a conversation from which both the audience and Suffenus are excluded (Krostenko, 2007:225).[31] Once more two members of the literary élite are in their own little world, cut off from the rest by their rare knowledge of true refinement in behaviour and particularly in artistic production. They are exclusive and, as a result, excluded from the all (*omnes*, 18) who constitute the greater part of contempory society.

In poem 44, however, Catullus appears to want to be included. He is once again talking to a third party about someone else's bad writing, one Sestius. Yet in this case he is not addressing a friend or fellow-poet, but his retreat in the countryside to whom he confesses his failed attempt at trying to rub shoulders with the members of Roman high society. He starts his poem with a lengthy introduction on the farm's location (1-5).

c.44

O funde noster seu Sabine seu Tiburs
(nam te esse Tiburtem autumant, quibus non est
cordi Catullum laedere; at quibus cordi est,
quovis Sabinum pignore esse contendunt),
sed seu Sabine sive verius Tiburs, 5
fui libenter in tua suburbana
villa, malamque pectore expuli tussim,
non inmerenti quam mihi meus venter,
dum sumptuosas appeto, dedit, cenas:
nam, Sestianus dum volo esse conviva, 10
orationem in Antium petitorem
plenam veneni et pestilentiae legi.
hic me gravedo frigida et frequens tussis
quassavit usque, dum in tuum sinum fugi,
et me recuravi otioque et urtica. 15
quare refectus maximas tibi grates
ago, meum quod non es ulta peccatum.

[31] "…to be *urbanus* was to belong to an exclusive club, the rules of entry to which were laid down solely by Catullus and his friends" (Watson, 1990:16).

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nec deprecor iam, si nefaria scripta
Sesti recepso, quin gravedinem et tussim
non mi, sed ipsi Sestio ferat frigus, 20
qui tunc vocat me, cum malum librum legi.

This is not the self-assured Catullus from the two preceding poems. His precarious social status is immediately hinted at: the ambiguous location of his farm (*seu Sabine seu Tiburs*, 1) offers a parallel for his own ambiguous position in Sestius' circle (Skinner, 2001:61). As the lengthy discussion of its location reveals his farm is not really in the classy Tibur area, but rather in the more modest Sabine area. His elaboration on the matter only serves to highlight the truth and not to cover it up. However, he keeps up the pretence that the farm is Tiburtine (*sive verius Tiburs*, 5) and those acquaintances who do not want to hurt his feelings support him in this pretence (2-3); those who do, affirm the farm's Sabine location (3-4). He therefore reveals himself to be exposed to the judgment of others (Skinner, 2001:61). George (1991:249) views lines 2-4 as establishing the tone for the poem as a whole: "one of self-bemusement for the vulnerability caused by the poet's desire to belong to the fashionable set".[32] Catullus is therefore eager to appear well-off, yet in the process makes himself vulnerable to being excluded (George, 1991:249, 250) (cf. poem 10 below). Following this "debate" on the farm's location, Catullus thanks it for offering him refuge after catching a bad cold in an attempt to dine well (6-9). This vagueness is only resolved when one comes to the middle of the poem: the Catullan speaker wanted to be Sestius' dinner guest (*Sestianus…volo…conviva*, 10). The fact that he was fishing for an invitation is already prevalent in the word *appeto* (9), denoting an eager desire. Similar to his aspiration for his farm to be in "fashionable Tibur" (Thomson, 1997:314), he aspires to rub shoulders with Sestius' fashionable set (George, 1991:249). But this invitation comes at a price: the expectation that one would read one of Sestius' speeches beforehand, a task which turns out to be most unpleasant.[33]

However, poem 44 is not a piece of self-pity. The Catullan speaker masks his own vulnerability with a joke at the expense of Sestius: his writing is enough to make one catch a cold (13). The joke depends on the pun in the word *frigus* and its derivatives *frigida* (13) and *frigus* (20) (DeAngeli, 1969:355; Sandy, 1978:69; George, 1991:249-250): Sestius' writing leaves one cold (literally according to the Catullan speaker!). *Frigus* was a standard term in literary criticism for affected, bombastic and inappropriate language (Buchheit, 1959:314;

[32] Skinner (2001:61) makes a similar point in calling Catullus a "social climber".
[33] This is most probably Publius Sestius, quaestor in 63 and tribune in 57, who was defended by Cicero on two occassions and worked hard for the latter's recall from exile. Despite the friendship Cicero attests to Sestius' bad style: Fam.7.32.1; Att.7.17.2 (Neudling, 1955: 160; Fordyce, 1961:198; DeAngeli, 1969:355).

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Fordyce, 1961:197; DeAngeli, 1969:355). Furthermore Catullus' use of archaisms (*autumant*, 2; *-que et*, 15; *grates*, 16; *recepso*, 19), typical of Roman religious language, and his mock-solemn address of the farm (*O funde*) hints at a parody on a prayer of thanks (Jones, 1968:380-381). DeAngeli (1969:355) rather sees poem 44 as a parody on Sestius' own "frigid" style with the misplaced *dedit* (9) – the position of *dedit* increases the limp in the meter – and the incongruity of styles: the "high" style of the first five lines juxtaposed with the "unpoetic" medical tone that follows. Whatever the parody hinges on – and in characteristically Catullan style I believe it to be multifaceted – the Catullan speaker cleverly disguises his criticism of Sestius by writing a seemingly personal poem on his own "distress".[34] But, as George (1991:250) points out, the poem ends with Catullus' resentment at being invited only for having read Sestius' speech and not on account of his personality (*qui tunc vocat me, cum malum librum legi*, 21). The conditional nature of the invitation is underscored by *tunc* and *cum*. When compared to Catullus' precarious position in the first five lines we are brought full circle: the Catullan speaker does not form part of Sestius' fashionable set. In his consequent exclusion he is drawn to Rome's literal periphery (*suburbana*, 6) where his wavering between Sabine and Tiburtine as the geographic designation of his estate underscores the symbolic peripherality of that space. It is not in the fashionable Tiburtine area but in the Sabine area where the less important members of society go (cf. Lotman, 1990:140). His address to the inanimate farm emphasizes his isolation and sense of not belonging. Unlike Varus in poem 22 the *fundus* could never respond.[35]

In poem 35 Catullus once more addresses an inanimate object to convey a message on literary matters, this time to a close poet-friend.

c.35

Poetae tenero, meo sodali,
velim Caecilio, papyre, dicas
Veronam veniat, Novi relinquens
Comi moenia Lariumque litus:
nam quasdam volo cogitationes 5

[34] Buchheit (1959:314) sees the literary criticism as "hidden" in the words *plenam veneni et pestilentiae* (12), recalling poem 14 (*omnia venena*, 19), *gravido frigida* (13), *nefaria scripta* (18), *frigus* (20) and *malum librum* (21). Skinner (2001:62), on the other hand, rejects the reading of a malicious literary attack and rather points to a possible friendship between Catullus and Sestius based on the latter's status as *novus homo* – the difference between Catullus and Sestius was therefore not so great. However, when poems 14, 22, 44, 36 and 95 are compared as examples of literary criticism, Skinner's conjecture seems less convincing. (Poems 36 and 95 will be discussed below.)

[35] Hansen (2011:419ff.) argues for quite a different reading of the poem: an invulnerability on the part of the Catullan speaker who, despite being an outsider, rejects his earlier desire to be part of Sestius' set because he chooses good poetry over social status. Although this reading is much more positive than mine, it still underscores Catullus' peripheral status.

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amici accipiat sui meique.
quare, si sapiet, viam vorabit,
quamvis candida milies *puella*
euntem revocet, manusque collo
ambas iniciens roget morari. 10
quae nunc, si mihi vera nuntiantur,
illum deperit impotente amore:
nam quo tempore legit incohatam
Dindymi dominam, ex eo misellae
ignes interiorem edunt medullam. 15
ignosco tibi, Sapphica *puella*
musa doctior: est enim venuste
Magna Caecilio incohata Mater.

The vagueness in this poem has led to diverse interpretations and creative assumptions by Catullan scholars. Catullus is addressing a piece of papyrus and asking it very politely (*velim…dicas*, 2) to tell his friend Caecilius to come to Verona. He gives as the reason for his request his desire to convey to Caecilius "certain thoughts" (*quasdam…cogitationes*, 5) of an unspecified mutual friend (*amici…sui meique*, 6).[36] Furthermore, if Caecilius is wise, he would devour the road to get from Novum Comum to Verona (*si sapiet, viam vorabit*, 7) despite a pretty girl's clinging and pleading with him to stay (8-10). Now the Catullan speaker takes a detour in his message in order to elaborate on the *puella*. If the rumours are true (*si mihi vera nuntiantur,* 11) she fell hopelessly in love with Caecilius ever since she read his work-in-progress "Lady of Dindyma" (12-15). The vagueness of Catullus' communication continues when he subsequently addresses the girl in the crucial ending of the poem (Kutzko, 2006:405). It is exactly this vagueness that makes the message of the poem hard to interpret, since the actual recipient is of course not the papyrus or the girl, but Caecilius (Kutzko, 2006:407).

A great deal has been written on the exact interpretation of *incohata(m)* (13, 18). Is Caecilius' poem still unfinished, but being praised by Catullus as a means of encouragement? (Fordyce, 1961:178; Quinn, 1973:196; Akbar Khan, 1974:489; Fredericksmeyer, 1985:221) Is he about to publish his poem but Catullus feels it needs some polish and tries to say this in a nice way? (Copley, 1953:155; Ferguson, 1985:105; Gaisser, 2009:25) Or has too much emphasis been put on *incohata* exclusively (Onetti & Maurach, 1974:481), and is Catullus rather trying to tell Caecilius that, finished or not, you are better at writing short love poems than at writing *epyllia*? (Hansen, 2007:213, 219) I too agree that too much emphasis has been put on *incohata*, despite its double appearance, in

[36] There is no strong argument for the assumption made by Copley (1953:159), Adler (1981:76) and Solodow (1989:314) that Catullus is talking about himself in *amici…sui meique.* (Cf. Fordyce, 1961:177; Akbar Khan, 1974:479 and Fredricksmeyer, 1985:216 who support a literal interpretation.)

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a poem with so many levels of meaning. My aim is not to offer a new interpretation of all of these themes, but by focusing on the liminal identity of the Catullan speaker in the poem, other aspects are brought to light. One point on which all of the scholars mentioned above agree is that poem 35 is a poem about poetry. Yet this is only one of the poem's themes.

Friendship and poetry are the two prevalent themes in the opening section of the poem (1-6) (Onetti & Maurach, 1974:482).[37] These are introduced in the opening line, which starts with *poetae* and ends with *sodali*, the latter picked up again by *amici* in line 6: Catullus wishes to speak to someone who is both a poet and a friend of his.[38] Furthermore *tenero* (1) qualifies the kind of poet that Caecilius is: delicate in terms of sentiment, refined in terms of technique; not unlike Catullus himself. Catullus is most probably addressing a fellow neoteric (Fredricksmeyer, 1985:215-216).[39] With these themes established *quare* (7) marks a change in the Catullan speaker's train of thought: the focus is now on Caecilius' girlfriend. This introduces the theme of the mistress (Forsyth, 1984:25). Finally, the Catullan speaker changes course once more when he addresses Caecilius' girl directly. This is his way of talking her into his confidence (Hansen, 2007:215). Hopefully this will help him gain access to Caecilius himself.[40] He gives her the highest praise when he calls her *Sapphica puella / musa doctior* (16-17), but who is the Sapphic muse that she supposedly surpasses in learning? Kutzko (2006:405) sees this as a reference to Catullus' own "Sapphic inspiration" Lesbia. The comparison to poem 36, with its prevalent themes of poetry and a *puella* (Lesbia), supports this claim (Skinner, 1981:31; Forsyth, 1984:25).[41] Caecilius is therefore in the lucky position that his *puella* appreciates both him and his poetic output whereas Catullus is constantly having to question Lesbia's appreciation of him. This is most explicitly seen in poem 36 where she threatens to burn his poems. Catullus' observations on Caecilius and the girl turn out to be a commentary on his own peripheral position in Lesbia's estimate (Kutzko, 2006:407-408).

The dialogic nature of the poem further reveals the isolation of the Catullan speaker. There is much talk going on, but no-one seems to be talking to Catullus. He addresses Caecilius by means of the papyrus; a mutual friend has something to share with Caecilius; Caecilius' girl begs him not to leave her (this creates a lively scene in the reader's imagination of a

[37] Akbar Khan (1974:477) sees them as the "two chief categories on which the poem is based".
[38] Cf. Quinn, 1973: 194; Onetti & Maurach, 1974:481.
[39] The theme of Caecilius' poem, Cybele the *Magna Mater*, further supports this view when compared to Catullus' poem 63 on Attis' frenzied worship of the same eastern goddess (see chapter 6); also the appearance of the neoteric catchword *venuste* (17) for describing Caecilius' poem (Krostenko, 2007:219). (Cf. Akbar Khan, 1974:489.)
[40] In poem 42 the Catullan speaker uses a similar "change of strategy" towards the end of the poem when his initial address of the woman has no effect. In that poem he is of course deliberate about his strategy and uses it as a means to mock the woman.
[41] Poem 36 will be discussed next.

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couple's tiff); people are talking about Caecilius and his girl; Catullus addresses the girl directly. Despite all the communicative episodes in the poem the Catullan speaker never seems to be at the receiving end: his role in the communication of others is peripheral. His best position is one of overhearing: another's thoughts and widespread rumours.

In poem 35 Catullus is praising his friend and fellow neoteric. There is no attempt at criticism. But the evident camaraderie between Catullus and Calvus in poem 14, which had begun in poem 50, is absent here. There is a substantial physical distance between Catullus and Caecilius, more than a hundred miles (Fredrickmeyer, 1985:221). Adler (1981:76) sees the details which Catullus adds to Novum Comum (*moenia Lariumque litus*, 4) as a means to emphasize Caecilius' *absence* from him by giving him a very real *presence* in a conceivable landscape. The specific geographical references are important: Catullus is in his hometown of Verona; Caecilius in Novum Comum, presumably also his hometown.[42] These places are laden with symbolical meaning: they suggest a history and consequently an identity. Despite the distance, the mention of Catullus and Caecilius' shared provincial backgrounds, along with their shared literary ideals, aims to support the feeling of fellowship (communitas) created by *sodali*. Yet the reference to the *moenia* (4) of Novum Comum adds the nuance of enclosure (Fredricksmeyer, 1985:216): Caecilius may be inaccessible. Furthermore, with the switch to Caecilius' girlfriend an emotional distance also sets in. The girlfriend turns out to be the biggest barrier between Catullus and Caecilius (Adler, 1981:75); not the walls of Novum Comum or the 100 odd miles between them. As in poem 45 (*Acmen Septimius*) Catullus is describing a happy and harmonious couple (Caecilius is a promising writer and his girl can appreciate his work because she is *docta*) (Onetti & Maurach, 1974:484). What is the incentive for Caecilius to leave? This brings the Catullan speaker to reflect on his own Sapphic inspiration and his less than harmonious relationship with her. In typical Catullan fashion Catullus' commentary on others ultimately reveals more about himself (Kutzko, 2006:408). Caecilius finds himself in the embraces of his girlfriend; Catullus finds himself alone and talking to a piece of paper. The liminal identity of the Catullan speaker in poem 35 is thus revealed on various levels, which correspond with the turns in his speech. He finds himself at a substantial physical distance from his friend and fellow poet. But even before we are given this detail Catullus' very round-about address of his friend through the papyrus page reveals a lack of confidence on his part: the emotional distance is already latent before mention of the girl. When the Catullan speaker turns his attention to the girl she is revealed as a very real barrier between the two friends. Like the walls of Novum Comum that close off the town from the outside world, her arms enclose Caecilius (*manusque collo / ambas*

[42] There is no external evidence for the identity of Caecilius; we can only rely on what we find the poem itself.

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iniciens, 9-10) and make him yet more inaccessible to Catullus. The only thing left for the Catullan speaker to do, is to praise the couple so as not to alienate himself any further. His consideration of their happiness and like-mindedness casts a shadow over his own flawed romantic relationship and ultimately reveals his liminal status, both in respect of his friendship with Caecilius and his love affair with his *docta puella*.

Paper of a totally different kind is the addressee in poem 36 where we meet Catullus' Sapphic Muse up close. Once more a piece of literary criticism of an old-school writer is offered in a round-about way by conveying the judgment to a third party. But the "gentle" criticism of Suffenus, or the parody of poem 44, is replaced by harsh-sounding words with a harsh meaning: *cacata carta*.

c.36

Annales Volusi, cacata carta,
votum solvite pro mea *puella*.
nam sanctae Veneri Cupidinique
vovit, si sibi restitutus essem
desissemque truces vibrare iambos, 5
electissima pessimi poetae
scripta tardipedi deo daturam
infelicibus ustulanda lignis,
et hoc pessima se *puella* vidit
iocose lepide vovere divis. 10
nunc o caeruleo creata ponto,
quae sanctum Idalium Uriosque apertos
quaeque Ancona Cnidumque harundinosam
colis quaeque Amathunta quaeque Golgos
quaeque Dyrrachium Hadriae tabernam, 15
acceptum face redditumque votum,
si non illepidum neque invenustum est.
at vos interea venite in ignem,
pleni ruris et inficetiarum
annales Volusi, cacata carta. 20

What is this poem about?[43] Catullus summons Volusius' *annales,* "shitty sheets", to discharge a vow made by his girl, *mea puella*, (1-2) since she promised the gods of love (*sanctae Veneri Cupidinique*, 3) that, if Catullus were to return to her and to cease writing insulting iambics (4-5), she would offer "the hand-picked poems of the worst poet" (*electissima pessimi poetae*, 6) to Vulcan, "the slow-footed god" (*tardipedi deo*, 7), for burning (6-8). And apparently the girl saw that "these" (*haec*, 9) – presumably Volusius' writings – were indeed the worst. Now there is a change of addressee as the Catullan

[43] Sklenár (1996:57) sees poem 36 as defying categorization: within the first three lines invective, literary polemic and the Lesbia affair have been touched upon.

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speaker addresses Venus, "(the one) brought forth by the dark blue sea" (*o caeruleo creata ponto*, 11), in a mock-solemn tone that was already hinted at in his description of Vulcan (11-15). He prays that she may accept the offering. Finally he ends the poem with echoes of two other literary critical poems (14 and 22) and a repeat of the first line. Buchheit (1959:309ff.) states in no uncertain terms that this poem functions as "Dichterkritik" aimed at the old-school Volusius. Lesbia's vow is simply a means to an end: masking the literary criticism and so making it "gentler" (Buchheit, 1959:326-327). Fordyce (1961:179) similarly sees poem 36 as a stab at Volusius and the old tradition that he represents, veiled as a love-poem. However, this interpretation does not do justice to Lesbia's presence in the poem nor the lengthy address of Venus. On the other hand, this is not purely a love-poem either.[44] As shown in the preceding discussions, Catullus' poems are never straightforward and mono-thematic.

That urbanity in writing goes hand in hand with neoteric principles is made explicit in this poem. Catullus' mock prayer to Venus is a "neoteric *tour de force*" with its Graecisms (*Ancona*, 13; *Hadriae*, 15), learned epithets (*caeruleo creata ponto,* 11; *Cnidumque harundinosam*, 13) and "etymological gloss" (*Uriosque apertos*, 12: a play on οὔριος "windy") (Papanghelis, 1991:374; Krostenko, 2007:219). The adjectives *lepidus, facetus*, and *venustus*, keywords which represent the Catullan ideal in writing, all appear in poem 36 (10, 17, 19) (Krostenko, 2007:219). Furthermore there are reverberations of two other literary critical poems where neoteric principles of refinement are contrasted with literary backwardness. Line 18, *at vos interea venite in ignem*, echoes *vos hinc interea valete abite / illuc* (21-22) from poem 14. *Pleni ruris et inficetiarum* (19) picks up *infaceto est infacetior rure* from poem 22 (14). The writings of Volusius are therefore on the same level as the "poisons" sent back and forth between Catullus and his fellow neoteric Calvus, and equally coarse as the rustic outpourings of Suffenus.[45] *Si non illepidum neque invenustum est* (17) describe both the nature of the joke within the poem, as well as the standards by which Venus will evaluate the poem as a whole. Catullus' use of litotes in this line further demonstrates another neoteric principle: unpretentiousness (Krostenko, 2007:219). Townend (1980:134-135) traces in the opening words of line 19 *pleni ruris* the "offending rhythm" of spondaic followed by trochaic without a pause in between, the use of which Catullus avoided. In this way Catullus demonstrates Volusius' rusticity in writing, a method already employed in poems 14 and 22.[46] This detail seems to have been missed by most critics and was most probably a Catullan subtlety for the notice of a select few (Townend,

[44] Cf. Ferguson, 1985:108.
[45] Volusius' own absurdly high literary output is mentioned in poem 95 (discussed below).
[46] This same technique is used in the very last poem of the collection, 116 (see chapter 5, p.248).

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1980:135). With the repetition of the first line as the last what started out as insult has now become a judgment sustained by the poem itself (Solodow, 1989:316). With all its neoteric qualities and characteristic subtleties poem 36 therefore has the quality of "us" (neoterics) against "them" (writers of the old epic tradition) as found in poems 14 and 22. But there is more.

There seems to be little doubt as to the identification of *mea puella*. Catullus uses the same form of address for his mistress (generally accepted to be Lesbia) in poems 2, 3, 11 and 13, as well as just *puella* in 8 and 37 (Quinn, 1973: 199; Thomson, 1997:297; et al.). Catullus purposefully mistakes Lesbia's *pessimus poeta* to be a reference to Volusius; she is in fact talking about Catullus himself (Solodow, 1989:316; Papanghelis, 1991:374; Krostenko, 2007:221). As Østerud (1978:141) convincingly argues, Lesbia's attention is on Catullus and their relationship; there is no reason to assume that she was thinking of Volusius. Self-parody therefore becomes a strong element in the poem (Sklenár, 1996:58). Catullus is *pessimus poeta* in Lesbia's words; by the same token she is *pessima puella* in his (9): with the introduction of line 10 "the erotic and literary polarities have reversed themselves" (Sklenár, 1996:58).[47] Catullus and Lesbia share both literary and erotic values (Batstone, 2007:245): her vow was made "with sporting wit" *iocose lepide* (10) and after Catullus puts his own spin on the vow it is "not unwitty and uncharming" (*non illepidum neque invenustumst*, 17). (*In)venustus* recalls the goddess of love to whom the vow was made, and whose list of cult sites in the mock-prayer requires learning and familiarity on the part of the reader (Batstone, 2007:245). Venus will judge the vow in terms of *lepos* and *venustas*: wit and artistic but also erotic charm (Krostenko, 2007:222).[48] And so the two main themes of poem 36, poetic quality and love, go hand in hand; the one does not have to exclude the other. These two apparently divergent themes are reconciled in the Catullan speaker in his peripheral position both in terms of his poetics and his relationship with his mistress. In poems 50, 14, and 95 (below) Catullus allies himself with a fellow neoteric in an "us against them" stance. In poem 36, be it in a more roundabout way, Catullus allies himself with Lesbia, "the supreme *docta puella*" (Skinner, 1981:31), or rather depicts her as allied with him, against the likes of Volusius. Yet it was the Catullan speaker who interpreted the *electissima* as the writings of Volusius; Lesbia had Catullus himself in mind. Despite her vow being made *lepide* she is in fact not on the same wavelength as Catullus. The beginning of poem 36 confirms her identification as the *Sapphica musa* of poem 35. Caecilius' *puella*, as we have seen, is much more appreciative of his poetry (*doctior*) than

[47] Cf. Catullus' self-mock in poem 49: *pessimus omnium poeta* (5, 6).

[48] See Krostenko (2001a:40ff.) for a discussion of the different meanings of *venustus*, both as an erotic but also as an art-critical term.

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Lesbia is of Catullus' (Kutzko, 2006:408). In fact, the latter is willing to burn her lover's work. In his criticism of Volusius in poem 36 the Catullan speaker seeks the kind of artistic camaraderie which he found in Calvus, Cinna (below) and even the obscure Varus of poem 22. He claims to have found this in Lesbia, yet the evidence from other poems (35 and 49) belies this stance. The confidence with which he rejected the literary *venena* in poem 14, knowing that Calvus shared his views, is absent in poem 36 and so he repeats the first line in an attempt similar to his technique in poem 8 where he tries to convince himself of the status quo.[49] There is a seriousness underlying the jocose atmosphere and mock-solemnity in poem 36. The Catullan speaker finds himself not only isolated in his artistic views, but also at the receiving end of a mistress' lack of appreciation for his work. When he speaks the final line it is from the precarious position of someone who alone knows the qualities of good writing; even his own girlfriend cannot discern the difference between his charming poetry and the rustic clumsiness of Volusius. From this liminal position his prayer to the goddess of love may therefore be interpreted as more than a display of his own learning and artistic abilities. He may in fact be hoping that Venus will judge the situation and decide in his favour both in a literary and erotic sense.

In poem 95, the natural companion piece of 36, the Catullan speaker once more has a dig at the writings of Volusius (and the like), but this time he finds himself allied with a poet-friend and he can adopt a more authoritative polemical stance.

c.95

Zmyrna mei Cinnae nonam post denique messem
quam coepta est nonamque edita post hiemem,
milia cum interea quingenta Hortensius uno
…
Zmyrna cavas Satrachi penitus mittetur ad undas, 5
Zmyrnam cana diu saecula pervoluent.
at Volusi annales Paduam morientur ad ipsam
et laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas.
parva mei mihi sint cordi monimenta…,
at populus tumido gaudeat Antimacho. 10

Feldherr (2007:101) sees this poem as the "epigram that most explicitly comments on poetic preferences for Alexandrian refinement". Helvius Cinna, as mentioned above, was a fellow neoteric and a close friend of Catullus': *mei Cinnae* (see poem 10 below). His *Zmyrna* was an epyllion like Catullus' poem 64 (Quinn, 1973:431), and he "labored for nine years to be as

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[49] A similar lack of confidence on the part of the Catullan speaker is to be found in poem 16 (discussed in chapter 5, p.218ff.) where there is also a repetition of the first line in the last in an attempt to establish his own masculinity.

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obscure as Euphorion" (Clausen, 1964:188).[50] Finally (*denique*, 1) the *Zmyrna* has been published, "nine harvest-tides and nine winters since it was begun" (…*nonam post...messem / quam coepta est nonamque edita post hiemem*, 1-2). Catullus compares Cinna's meticulous work on the *Zmyrna* with the logorrhoea of Hortensius,[51] who produces a thousand times as much (*milia…quingenta*, 3) in one year only.[52] The sense of excited expectancy on the part of the Catullan speaker expressed in *denique*, heightened by the repetition of *nonam*, reflects Cinna's painstaking working method. Furthermore the reference to the change of seasons implicit in *messem* and *hiemem* emphasize the maturity of Cinna's poem and by implication the lack of polish in Hortensius' poems.

The passing of time in composition is next equated with the longevity of a piece of writing. Time requires a spacial element as the life expectancy of a literary work is reflected in the geography: the long distance that a good poem would travel is compared to the short travels of bad writing (cf. Popa, 2009:10). Cinna's *Zmyrna* will travel as far as the Cyprian river Satrachus (5) and will see the centuries turn grey in their repeated reading of the poem (*cana…saecula pervoluent*, 6). In direct contrast (*at*, 7) the *Annales* of Volusius will have a quick death at the very spot where they were produced – the emphatic *ipsam* (7) would be meaningless if this were not the case (Clausen, 1964:189) – and will be only good for wrapping mackerels (*laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas*, 8).[53] Apart from the contrast between the exotic and the familiar, the Satrachus is a fast-flowing, clear and deep-channelled river (*cavas*, 5) whereas the Po (*Padua*) is known for its mud and debris. Adopting a Callimachean metaphor Catullus has the rivers mirror the respective works which they will receive (Clausen, 1964:189). In this way the two rivers become the symbolic spaces which differentiate between good and bad writing. Time and space together define the literary outputs of Cinna and Volusius; differences in terms of time and space (the duration of composition and the places where they will presumably end up) allow different

[50] In fact, the work was so complex that it soon acquired a commentary (Gaisser, 2009:16).
[51] There has been a great deal of unhappiness among Catullan scholars regarding the reading "Hortensius" in the V. manuscript and the subsequent identification of that person with the famous orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus, whom Catullus addresses very politely at the beginning of poem 65. See Robinson (1915) and Solodow (1989) for good summaries of the main arguments for and against this name. The latter, arguing that Hortensius had neoteric sympathies, accepts the ammendation *Hatriensis in*, referring to the birthplace of Volusius and so removing Hortensius from the poem entirely. I accept the original reading, understanding an intentional threefold comparison between Cinna and poets who do not measure up to his and Catullus' standards: Hortensius, Volusius, Antimachus. Noonan (1986:303) offers evidence for Hortensius' composition of *Annales*, making his inclusion in the poem very apt.
[52] Catullus' poem 64 is our only extant example of a neoteric epyllion. That poem consists of 408 lines.
[53] In his article on poem 95.8 Thomson (1964) reads that line as a culinary reference: fish were wrapped in moist paper before being cooked on the fire. In light of this an insightful parallel emerges between Lesbia's burning of Volusius' *Annales* in poem 36 and the way in which his *carta* will once more be burned in poem 95.

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values to be assigned to them. In the final couplet Catullus expresses a concession which recalls his modest wish at the end of poem 1.[54] In that poem he entrusted his little book to a single friend and hoped that his *patrona virgo* would ensure its longevity. In poem 95 Cinna's *parva monimenta*, small yet timeless literary outputs, are entrusted to Catullus alone, underscored by the juxtaposition in *mei mihi* (9). Knowing the public's lack of taste he keeps them for himself and his own enjoyment.

As Robinson (1915:450) points out the whole of poem 95 is built upon antithesis:[55] the first distich on Cinna's working method is contrasted with the second on that of Hortensius; the third distich contrasts the *Zmyrna*'s predicted fame and longevity with the lack thereof on the part of Volusius' *Annales* in the fourth. In the final distich in the poem line 9 contrasts Catullus' affinity for Cinna's *parva monumenta* with the populace's liking of the "bloated Antimachus" (*tumido…Antimacho*) in line 10.[56] These comparisons reflect Catullus' own learning: apart from connecting the concept of perpetuity in time with an image of space, a practice found in Theognis and Pindar (Popa, 2009:10), the rivers recall Callimachus' equation of bad writing with a muddy river and the reference to Antimachus draws attention to the Hellenistic preferences within contemporary Roman society (Feldherr, 2007:102).[57] Poem 95 is therefore structured around a tripartite comparison which underscores three key elements in Cinna's work: meticulous composition, immortality, miniaturization. Hortensius and Volusius serve as antonyms for the first two elements, while the Greek Antimachus functions as both the antithesis of small-scale refinement, and a generalizing example of the kind of writing which Hortensius and Volusius produced (Robinson, 1915:450). However, there is more to this poem than literary criticism by means of references to Hortensius, Volusius and Antimachus. Feldherr (2007:102) sees in the prestigious person of Hortensius and the account of Roman history, which most probably formed the subject matter of Volusius' *Annales,* examples of Roman accomplishment. Likewise the term *populus* adds a political element to Antimachus' popularity in contemporary Roman society (Feldherr, 2007:102). In this way Catullus and Cinna are rejecting not only a certain style in writing, but also Roman public life. This brings us back to the neoteric embracing of *otium* and separation from *negotium*.

[54] Popa (2009:3ff.) sees parallels between poems 1 and 95 in their promotion of neoteric ideals and Catullus' claim to immortality for himself in the former, and on the part of Cinna in the latter. Feldherr (2007:103) likewise sees the link between learning and permanence of poem 1 in poem 95's connection between recondite Hellenistic learning and permanence through the ages.

[55] Cf. Gaisser, 2009:16.

[56] Antimachus was a popular and prolific poet, condemned by Callimachus for his long-windedness (Quinn, 1973:432; Thomson, 1997:528).

[57] "A polemical poem in the Callimachean style was not meant to be merely a confutation; it was meant to be simultaneously a demonstration of how poetry ought to be written" (Clausen, 1964:189).

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The peripheral status of the Catullan speaker in poem 95 is therefore twofold: in his promotion of Callimachean aesthetics he is alienated from the literary tastes of the people, and in his rejection of Roman public life, as represented by Hortensius, Volusius and Antimachus, he is straying from the societal norm. In the last distich he draws a sharp contrast between the many and the few, the overblown and the subtle, "them" and "I"/"us". This keen awareness of "the other", seen throughout Catullus' poems with an "I"/"us" against "them" theme, underscores the dialogic nature of Catullan poetry (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:151). Both a possible response and critical scrutiny is taken into account. This is precisely what he counters in the final distich of poem 95: Let the public have the verbose Antimachus; as a Callimachean I prefer shorter, refined literary works like those of Cinna (Thomson, 1997:525). The *Zmyrna* is erudite and obscure, aimed at a small, select readership represented by the Catullan speaker. This separates him and those who share his poetic ideals from the broader reading public. Yet there is a sense of authority to his stance at the end of the poem seen in the jussive *gaudeat* (10): he knows better than the *populus*.[58] But in his superior knowledge he finds himself isolated, once again alone aware of what good poetry really is. Whereas he was humbly optimistic at the end of poem 1 his recognition of the public's "bad taste" in poem 95 marks an acceptance of his liminal position both as "new poet" and political nonconformist.

2.1.3 Urban behaviour

The next set of poems to be discussed all feature the Catullan speaker in the position of "judge of urbanity". He scrutinizes the behaviour of those who fail at appearing sophisticated but in the process he reveals his own vulnerable position in contemporary society and ultimately his liminal status.

In poem 10 Catullus is once more *otiosus*. This status of "doing nothing" is emphasized by the fact that he is in the forum, the real and symbolic centre of *negotium*. The juxtaposition of *foro otiosum* (2) further stresses this point. The *otium/negotium* contrast defines the Catullan persona "as someone who is not serious, who does not quite belong on the rolls of 'respectable' Romans" (Nappa, 2001:89). In this poem he is led from the forum by his friend Varus to have a look at the latter's new love, clearly having nothing better to do: "[s]uch an *otiosus* not only leads a life which has its centre far from the forum and is discrepant with its occupations; he also devotes his time to analysing…these 'unforensic' experiences" (Segal, 1970:27). This is exactly the case in poem 10 where Catullus is not only figuratively removed from the societal hub by being *otiosus*, but he is literally taken from the centre (*e*

[58] He takes up a similar position at the end of poem 86 (discussed below).

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foro) to somewhere on the periphery (*huc*, 5) where, ironically, he will experience another level of decentring.

c.10

Varus me meus ad suos amores
visum duxerat e foro otiosum,
scortillum, ut mihi tum repente visum est,
non sane illepidum neque invenustum.
huc ut venimus, incidere nobis 5
sermones varii: in quibus, quid esset
iam Bithynia; quo modo se haberet;
ecquonam mihi profuisset aere.
respondi, id quod erat, nihil neque ipsis
nec praetoribus esse nec cohorti, 10
cur quisquam caput unctius referret,
praesertim quibus esset irrumator
praetor, nec faceret pili cohortem.
'at certe tamen,' inquiunt 'quod illic
natum dicitur esse, comparasti 15
ad lecticam homines.' ego, ut puellae
unum me facerem beatiorem,
'non' inquam 'mihi tam fuit maligne,
ut, provincia quod mala incidisset,
non possem octo homines parare rectos.' 20
at mi nullus erat nec hic neque illic,
fractum qui veteris pedem grabati
in collo sibi collocare posset.
hic illa, ut decuit cinaediorem,
'quaeso' inquit mihi, ‘mi Catulle, paulum 25
istos commoda; nam volo ad Serapim
deferri.' 'mane,' inquii puellae,
'istud quod modo dixeram me habere,
fugit me ratio: meus sodalis—
Cinna est Gaius—is sibi paravit. 30
verum, utrum illius an mei, quid ad me?
utor tam bene quam mihi pararim.
sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis,
per quam non licet esse neglegentem.'

From the outset the poem seems to be about the performance of *urbanitas* (Gaisser, 2009:51), and Catullus styles himself in the position of an *arbiter elegantiae* (“judge of elegance”) (Skinner, 2001:11). His first derogatory opinion of Varus’ girl is that she is a bit of a tart (*scortillum*, 3) though “not uncharming and unattractive” (*non sane illepidum neque invenustum*, 4). He therefore allows her “peripheral claim upon the neoteric virtues of *lepor* and *venustas*” (Skinner, 1989:11). Catullus, Varus and the girl start up a light conversation (*incidere nobis / sermones varii*, 5-6) and the first person plural supports the communal atmosphere (*venimus, nobis*, 5). However, when Varus and the girl start asking tricky

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questions, the Catullan speaker jumps to the first person singular for himself (*mihi*, 8; *respondi*, 9; *ego*, 16; *inquam*, 18; *mi*, 21, etc.) and the third person for them (*inquiunt*, 14; *inquit*, 25). What starts out as small talk among friends turns into an interrogation of the Catullan speaker. As in poem 44 Catullus is eager to appear well-off.[59] Therefore, when his interlocutors inquire after his profit from serving in the province of Bithynia, he dodges the question by stating that he had a bugger for a praetor (*irrumator / praetor*, 12-13) who did not give a damn for his staff (*nec faceret pili cohortem*, 13). Upon receiving such a vague response, they ask him specifically about obtaining litter-bearers (*comparasti / ad lecticam homines*, 15-16), who are supposed to be "abundant" in that area (*quod illic / natum dicitur esse*, 14-15).[60] No longer able to dodge the question, he lies to them about owning "eight sturdy men" (*octo homines…rectos*, 20) and confesses to the reader outright that he lies in order to make a good impression on the girl (*ut puellae / unum me facerem beatiorem*, 16-17).

Similar to poem 50 where the distancing between Catullus and Calvus drew in the audience as Catullus' "companion", the distancing between Catullus and the Varus duo makes the Catullan speaker confess the truth to his audience, and we are made privy to his thoughts. Varus' silence from this point on is conspicuous (McNeill, 2010:78); the girl alone continues the questioning (*inquiunt*, 14 becomes *inquit*, 25). Finally, when she wants to borrow Catullus' litter-bearers, he has to own up to the lie and admit that they in fact belong to his friend Cinna, but that he may use them freely as if they were his own (30-32). Ironically, her request reveals that Catullus is not much different from her: *he* also needs to borrow litter-bearers from someone else. Even before we hear the question that leads to Catullus' reaction he describes her as a slut (*cinaediorem*, 24). Catullus' initially patronizing position therefore turns into one of vulnerability as he paints himself into a corner with his lies. His only defence is insult: he retracts his initial round-about compliment (*non sane illepidum neque invenustum*) and now describes her as the antithesis of urbanity: "But you are most unamusing and tiresome" (*sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis,* 33).[61] His final insult of the girl shows just how far he has fallen from his initial position of "judge of urbanity" (McNeill, 2010:79); his own lack of *urbanitas* is underscored (Gaisser, 2009:54).[62] In the end then Catullus' commentary on Varus' girlfriend turns out to be commentary on his own behaviour

[59] In the Roman social and political system personal fortune defined your status and privileges (Skinner, 1989:12).
[60] The litter-bearers are ambivalent in themselves since litters were traditionally associated with luxury, decadence, effemincay and arrogance, and in Rome normally used by women, the aged and the crippled (Skinner, 1989:13; Nappa, 2001:90; Gaisser, 2009:53).
[61] As mentioned in the introduction *lepos*, *venustas* and *sal* are all marks of urbanity and favoured by the neoterics (Seager, 1974; Krostenko, 2007:212ff.).
[62] Skinner (1989:10) sees poem 10 as deconstructing its own urbanity.

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(Nielsen, 1987:152-153; Kutzko, 2006:408). His first and last opinion of the girl is derogatory: *scortillum* (3) and *insulsa male…molesta* (33), but as his lie is exposed, we are made to question his judgment (Kutzko, 2006:408). He wanted to impress the girl; when that did not work he turned nasty. Instead of changing our opinions of the girl, Catullus' final insult reveals his state of isolation: "Varus and his girlfriend appear happy together, while Catullus is seen to be lying and alone" (Kutzko, 2006:408).

A striking parallel between the Catullan speaker and the girl therefore emerges as the poem progresses: her peripheral allowance into the neoteric smart set functions as a distraction from his own dual peripheral status: his precarious position within the Roman world of *negotium* on the one hand, and, on the other hand, his exclusion from the intimacy between Varus and his girl. The Catullan speaker was fully aware of the harsh competition in Rome's public arena, which posed an even greater challenge to the talented young men from the provinces: Catullus' primary audience. He uses his own ambivalent position of *domi nobilis* "to express the personal dilemmas posed by this profoundly competitive environment" (Skinner, 1989:19). He complains of having been "screwed" by his superior during his time in Bithynia: *irrumator praetor*. The connotations of exploitation, sexual or not, and effeminacy implicit in *irrumare* is picked up by *scortillum* (3) and *cinaediorem* (24).[63] This leads Skinner (1989:19) to detect in poem 10 a "parable about the essential unfairness of the Roman status system". Men like provincial Catullus, who do not form part of the Roman male élite, are exploited, emasculated and ultimately overlooked by the distorted patronage system in the same way that women are disregarded because of their gender.[64] Yet because of the playful nature of the competitive dialogue the male Catullan speaker has the final say and his insult of the girl reaffirms the status quo (Skinner, 1989:19).

This seemingly trivial poem turns out to be multi-layered: it is not only about urbanity but equally about power relations and gender (Nielsen, 1987; Skinner, 1989; Fitzgerald, 1995: 174ff.; Nappa, 2001:89ff.; Skinner, 2001; McNeill, 2010:77ff.). Nappa (2001:93) concludes that the picture of the Catullan speaker which emerges from poem 10 not only portrays him as emasculated, but also "points up his failure in the arena of serious civic life": "he cannot maintain even the pose of success".[65] This interwovenness of themes is reflected in the multi-leveled dialogism of the poem.[66] Varus implicitly asks Catullus to accompany him from the forum. Catullus, Varus and the girl speak to one-another; Varus and the girl ask Catullus some questions; the girl asks Catullus some questions; Catullus answers Varus and the girl;

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[63] See Richlin (1981) for a discussion of the meaning of *irrumare* in Catullus.
[64] This exploitation of non-élite males is a recurring theme in Catullan invective (see chapter 5).
[65] Cf. McNeill, 2010:80.
[66] Skinner (2001:65) relates this to the performative nature of the poem.

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he answers the girl alone; he speaks to himself privately, and by implication draws in the audience as a privileged auditor.[67] The discrepancy between the self-image Catullus wishes to create and the self-knowledge that he reveals to the reader (Nielsen, 1987:154) underscores his chameleon identity. He purposefully offers a fiction to his interlocuters which he deems believable only to learn that his story has not been very convincing. As narrator of his own life story he has failed at persuading his internal audience of a particular link between the episode in Bithynia and the present. This leaves him vulnerable as the subject of speech. However, the external audience, the reader, has been made privy to "the truth". Between the two voices of the speaking subject and that of Varus' girl the multi-voiced identity of Catullus is revealed and a personality emerges. Even Varus' "voice" is heard: he speaks through his silence. As McNeill (2010:69-70) argues, "silence is an integral element in discourse"; when it is consciously exercised it needs to be interpreted. Yet because of its lack of content, silence is by nature ambiguous. McNeill (2010:74) reads silence in a number of poems in the corpus (102, 6, 10) as a defining characteristic of Catullan friendship. Being able to control or read silence effectively is a mark of social authority, whereas the inability to interpret silence points to the recipient's lack of control over his/her social environment (see the discussion of poem 101 below). In this light McNeill (2010:78) sees Catullus' lack of control over Varus' silence in poem 10 as emphasizing the vulnerability of the Catullan speaker in the immediate conversation, as well as in the greater social setting. Though I agree with this reading, I think there is even more to Varus' silence: the real mark of urbanity. Realizing that his friend is struggling, he stops asking uncomfortable questions. The girl, possessing only partial urbanity, does not know how to read the social situation and therefore does not know when to stop. Once more the Catullan speaker is associated with the girl through his similar social failure, but the tongue-in-cheek tone in the poem and Catullus' last say save him from becoming self-pitying.

In poem 10 Catullus' decentring once more functions on two levels. In the first place he is *otiosus* in the forum, not part of the everyday *negotium* that keeps his fellow-citizens busy. The setting of his idleness emphasizes the ambivalent connotations of *otium*: Catullus is portrayed as not quite respectable. In the second place he joins Varus and his girlfriend somewhere outside of the forum where they initially make some small talk. When they start asking Catullus questions about his time in Bithynia which he cannot answer without feeling embarrassed, he is on the back foot. In his struggle to come up with satisfactory answers he reveals his isolation from the couple and his peripheral status in their little world, as well as in the larger world of Roman political and social competition, where he could not manage to profit from his time abroad. Even though the poem may give him the last word his liminal

[67] "The narrator embraces each of one us [readers] as his close confidant" (Skinner, 1989:10).

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position has been properly exposed, both in terms of the contemporary socio-political culture and in terms of his interaction with Varus and his girl.[68]

Whereas the Catullan speaker plays with the theme of his own self-delusion in poem 10, poem 12 focusses on the self-delusion of another who is convinced of his own *urbanitas*, yet behaves in a most inurbane way.

c.12
Marrucine Asini, manu sinistra
non belle uteris: in ioco atque vino
tollis lintea neglegentiorum.
hoc salsum esse putas? fugit te, inepte;
quamvis sordida res et invenusta est. 5
non credis mihi? crede Pollioni
fratri, qui tua furta vel talento
mutari velit: est enim leporum
differtus puer ac facetiarum.
quare aut hendecasyllabos trecentos 10
exspecta, aut mihi linteum remitte,
quod me non movet aestimatione,
verum est mnemosynum mei sodalis.
nam sudaria Saetaba ex Hiberis
miserunt mihi muneri Fabullus 15
et Veranius; haec amem necesse est
ut Veraniolum meum et Fabullum.

This poem is most often treated as a light-hearted, occasional verse that displays Catullus' urbanity and Marrucinus' lack thereof (Fordyce, 1961:128ff.; Quinn, 1973:130ff.; Skinner, 1981:59-60; Fitzgerald, 1995:93ff.). Yet there is a seriousness to the poem which is often overlooked, and which reveals the Catullan speaker to be vulnerable despite his apparent display of confidence (cf. Nappa, 2001:109ff.).

Catullus portrays himself as a socialite who moves in high circles: the Asinii brothers came from an influential family (Nappa, 2001:109-110). The setting is a *convivium* during which Marrucinus snatches the napkins of those who are not paying attention (*neglegentiorum*, 3) and then feels very smug about his pranks (*hoc salsum esse putas?* 4). The Catullan speaker takes it upon himself to point out Marrucinus' lack of urbane behaviour by addressing him as a "tasteless fool" (*inepte*, 4). By contrast he praises the *urbanitas* of his

[68] As seen in the discussion of poem 50 above, embracing *otium* comes at a cost. Segal (1970:29) talks about an uneasiness in Catullus' adoption of *otium* despite his open defiance. This may be seen in poems 50 and 10, and more indirectly in 95, but it reaches a climax in the last stanza of poem 51 where the word is used three times in the exact same spot in consecutive lines (see chapter 3, p.104ff.). Yet, despite his pondering on the destructiveness of *otium*, Catullus does not reject this lifestyle. Instead he shows the outcomes of an intensely personal struggle with *otium*: "contradictory psychological states" and "self-doubt" turned into art (Segal, 1970:30-31).

brother Pollio, “a boy brimming with charm and wit” (*est…leporum / differtus puer ac facetiarum*, 8-9). Here we have Catullus in the position of judge of urban sophistication, underscored by the key words *salsum* (4), *invenusta* (5), *leporum* (8) and *facetiarum* (9). But the poem is not just about urban behaviour; it turns out to be more about friendship and is very personal for the Catullan speaker. Only after the threat to Marrucinus that he would receive insulting verses in the form of “three hundred hendecasyllables” (*hendecasyllabos trecentos*, 10) do we learn that Catullus’ own napkin was stolen (*mihi linteum remitte*, 11); he therefore counts among the *neglegentiorum*. This does not paint a very flattering portrait of the Catullan speaker thus far (Nappa, 2001:109). However, the true reason for Catullus’ ire is not related to monetary value (12). The napkin was a gift from Catullus’ friends Fabullus and Veranius, who were working abroad in Spain (14-15). Thomson (1997:239) draws attention to the verb *miserunt* (15): the fact that Veranius and Fabullus have “sent” not “brought” the gift makes it highly unlikely that they have recently returned. This is further supported by the word *mnemosynum* (13): one would not need a souvenir of someone who is readily available for socialization. Marrucinus’ behaviour at dinner parties is shameful, but the fact that he takes away the one concrete link between Catullus and his close friends is worse. His tasteless behaviour has become personal for the Catullan speaker.[69]

There is a gradual loss of confidence on the part of the Catullan speaker as we progress through the poem (as was also the case in poem 10). As *arbiter urbanitatis* he derides Marrucinus for stealing from careless dinner guests but in line 11 Catullus himself turns out to be one of the *neglegentiores*. This recalls his negligence at the end of poem 10, which allowed Varus’ girl to outsmart him (10.34). The Catullan speaker starts out as the judge of urbanity par excellence, but when we reach the end of the poem he reveals his vulnerability. He is not so much concerned with urbane behaviour as with the loss to his own person. Similarly in poem 10 he started out by judging Varus’ girl, but ended up defenceless and being judged by her instead. Catullus is physically isolated from Veranius and Fabullus because of a vast geographical distance. The napkin (or napkins: *sudaria*, 13), as a small token of their friendship, offers some comfort. They symbolize belonging; their loss symbolizes displacement.[70] Fitzgerald (1995:95) sees in the end of the poem a figurative stealing back of the napkin by the Catullan speaker since the napkin now represents a group of friends from which Marrucinus is excluded: “Catullus has deftly turned the tables on the thief”. Though Marrucinus’ exclusion from the Catullan circle is not to be doubted, this does

[69] Skinner (1981:59) and Fitzgerald (1995:94-95) argue that Catullus’ focus on the sentimental value of the napkin at the end of the poem is a clever way of deflecting a possible accusation of inurbanity for his own part: making a fuss about something as insignificant as a napkin. However, I think the matter is much more personal than that.

[70] Feldherr (2007:94) sees the napkin as a symbol of belonging to the Veranius-Fabullus-Catullus circle of friends and Asinius’ theft as an attempt to gain access to this group.

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not cancel out Catullus' own exclusion from his immediate setting. He is not really part of the Asinii set: even the charming Pollio, despite having the same qualities as Calvus (*lepos, facetia*; cf. 50.7-8), is a mere *puer* (he was born in 76 BCE) (Thomson, 1997:239). He would prefer the company of Fabullus and Veranius but they are not there. In poem 12 Catullus displays the contrast between his own value system and that of his social milieu: individuals like Fabullus and Veranius are more important to him than social circles (Nappa, 2001:116, 120). This is underscored by the chiasmic repetition of their names in the last line, which also emphasizes Catullus' longing for and separation from them. Catullus' peripheral position in this poem results, on the one hand, from mixing with a social circle in which he does not feel completely at home. When the napkin they sent him is stolen he is reminded of a real sense of belonging which he associates with Veranius and Fabullus, who are far away in Spain. His initial position of *arbiter urbanitatis* is all but forgotten as his focus shifts from Marrucinus and the Asinii crowd to his two dear friends. As with his taste in literature he prefers for his friendships the small-scale and the individualistic, Veranius and Fabullus to the whole Asinii circle. It is an intimacy which he alone seems to appreciate as his self-justification in the final couplet suggests.[71] In their absence the napkin which Veranius and Fabullus have sent him necessarily acquire a symbolic meaning: it represents true friendship and Catullus' sense of belonging. When it is lost Catullus is decentred: the napkin's misplacement comes to signify Catullus' displacement.

In poems 43 and 86 Catullus once more sees himself as isolated in his superior knowledge, this time of real physical beauty and that something extra. The two poems will be discussed separately first before some general conclusions will be drawn.

c.43

Salve, nec minimo *puella* naso
nec bello pede nec nigris ocellis
nec longis digitis nec ore sicco
nec sane nimis elegante lingua.
decoctoris amica Formiani, 5
ten provincia narrat esse bellam?
tecum Lesbia nostra comparatur?
o saeclum insipiens et infacetum!

[71] *…haec amem necesse est / ut Veraniolum meum et Fabullum* ("Of course I love these (napkins), just as I love my dear Veranius and Fabullus").

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c.86
Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa,
recta est: haec ego sic singula confiteor,
totum illud "formosa" nego: nam nulla venustas,
nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis.
Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcerrima tota est, 5
tum omnibus una omnis surripuit veneres.

In poem 43 Catullus addresses some *puella*, identified by the verbatim echo in line 5 as the Ameana of poem 41 (cf. 41.4). In this short, seemingly simple epigram, he manages to say a great deal, both about others but more importantly about himself. By means of litotes he lists all the unattractive physical qualities of the girl (1-3) as well as her lack of refined speech (4). In line 5 he takes a dig at her bankrupt boyfriend. Lines 6-8 express his indignation at the province's lack of taste and in the process Lesbia is praised. The *provincia* in line 6 must refer to Catullus' own province of Gallia Cisalpina: "'the province' to its inhabitants" (Fordyce, 1961:196; Thomson, 1997:313). Roman standards of beauty, as implied in *Lesbia nostra* (7), are contrasted with those of the province, and the latter is found to be lacking (*o saeclum insipiens et infacetum!* 8[72]). *Nostra* is of course ambivalent (my? our?) and there is no way to tell from the poem whether Lesbia is still on good terms with Catullus. Whatever the case may be, she still sets the standards of beauty.

Papanghelis (1991:385) sees in *provincia* a "distaste for the countrified". This city-country contrast was already seen in poems 22 and 36 regarding writing. In poem 43 it has become more personal for the Catullan speaker: he is not talking about a general *urbanitas* versus *rusticitas* opposition; he is implying that his own province is backward in comparison to Rome when it comes to judging female beauty. In lines 6-7 the Catullan speaker undermines his own initially authoritative stance, introduced by the sarcastic *salve*. He is not a "pedigree" Roman. He is a Cisalpine Gaul with Roman affiliations who has made Rome his home (cf. 68.34-35), a *domi nobilis*, a hyphenated identity. The ambiguity inherent in *nostra* supports his ambivalent position.[73] It is not possible to tell from the text whether most Romans, or one or two like-minded comrades supported him in his views on beauty. It might even be Catullus' opinion alone. Unable to stand firmly on either side of the city-country fence the Catullan speaker remains somewhere in-between and his ambiguous residency reveals his liminal status. His exclamation at the end of the poem hinges on despair: he stands alone against a whole generation that lacks both taste and wit.

[72] "O what a foolish and dimwitted age!"
[73] Cf. poem 58.1: *Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa*.

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As it turns out the girl is not the real target of the poem (cf. Forsyth, 1977a:446), neither her bankrupt boyfriend (Fordyce, 1961:191). The insult is aimed at the "others", who, unlike Catullus, have no real taste. This is made evident in the very last word of the poem *infacetum*, a neoteric catch word which picks up *elegante* from the middle of the poem. In line 4 the Catullan speaker gives moral significance to Ameana's soppy mouth (*nec ore sicco*, 3) by revealing the crudeness of her speech (*nec sane nimis elegante lingua*) (Rankin, 1976:4). Not only for the noeterics, but in the late Republic as a whole *elegans* was associated with "careful aesthetic choice", but more importantly with élite behaviour in terms of "careful choices of action", both in an intellectual and an ethical sense (Krostenko, 2001b:38-39). By implication Lesbia has all the features that Ameana lacks, and so she possesses *elegantia* over and above a delicate nose, pretty feet, etc. The focus in poem 43 is therefore not, as Dyson (2007:263) argues, entirely on physical characteristics, although Catullus does explore the theme of intellectual beauty in much greater depth in our next poem. As an *arbiter elegantiae* the Catullan speaker judges the stubby-nosed *puella* in terms of physical, but also intellectual standards. However, his initial self-assuredness is undermined when he reveals his own ambivalent status as Transpadane-Roman: he is not the best judge of provincial backwardness. In despair he turns from the girl to address his generation, but he finds himself isolated from them because of their lack of *facetia*.

In poem 86 Lesbia's comparandum is given a name, possibly also a pseudonym: Quintia. This time the Catullan speaker is more gentle in his critique and even sympathetic to the extent that he admits, in the last line, Lesbia has taken all the available beauty for herself (*tum omnibus una omnis surripuit veneres*). Yet there is more reflection on Catullus' criteria for beauty than there was in poem 43.

In poem 86 there is no city-country opposition. Quintia's identity is unknown and her supporters are the generalized "many" (*multis*, 1). But there is a strong opposition between the Catullan speaker and the masses as seen in the juxtapositioning of *multis mihi*: as in poem 95 he again finds himself isolated from the *populus*. The mob finds Quintia attractive. Catullus admits (*confiteor*, 2) that she is fair-skinned, tall and stately (*candida, longa, / recta*, 1-2), yet fiercely denies her the adjective *formosa* (3) for she lacks two key elements: *venustas* and *sal* (both emphatically placed at the end of their respective lines, 3-4). *Venustas*, in the first instance operating in the realm of Venus (Seager, 1974:891), entails not only physical beauty, but becomes for the neoterics the sum total of "beauty, urbanity, wit, propriety" (Wiltshire, 1977:319). *Sal* ("spice") is an ingredient of the broader term *venustas* (Papanghelis, 1991:373): it is "the spark that kindles the display of *venustas"* (Seager, 1974:894). These neoteric catch words therefore immediately place Lesbia in a

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different league since line 5 implies that she possesses both of these qualities which Quintia lacks. In fact, she possesses *all* the qualities that make a woman *formosa* (*quae cum pulcerrima tota est*). Lesbia is made "exclusive by virtue of a different standard"; this exclusiveness is reflected in the word *sal* (Nielsen, 1987:150). The characteristic of having *sal* is attributed to others by the Catullan speaker, but indirectly becomes a characteristic of Catullus himself (Nielsen, 1987:149). Only if you possess *sal* are you able to spot it in another. Lesbia's exclusivity therefore becomes a reflection of Catullus' own exclusion from the masses.[74]

There is a further point to be made regarding *venustas* (and by implication *sal)*. As mentioned, *venustas* entails much more than physical Venus-like beauty. Likewise the term is not only used in reference to life, but also to art (Wiltshire, 1977:323): Caecilius' Magna Mater was *venuste…incohata* (cf. 35.17-18). By juxtaposing Quintia's large physique with the tiny grain of "salt" she lacks (*magno est corpore mica salis*, 4) the Catullan speaker is also making a Callimachean statement on the relationship between "size and spice" (Papanghelis, 1991:379). As Papanghelis (1991:374ff.) argues by looking at its occurrence in poems 22, 35, 36, 50 (all discussed above) the neoterics associated *venustas-venustus* not only with charm in style, but also with shorter, refined poems as opposed to the long-winded. In this way poem 86 becomes a statement on neoteric poetics where Quintia represents the verbose traditionalists, loved by the many, and Lesbia the less-is-more "new ones".

Both poems 43 and 86 reveal something, however cryptic, of Lesbia's beauty. More importantly, they tell us something about the way in which Catullus looks at her and at the world (Rankin, 1976:11), which in turn reveals something about the way he sees himself in that world. As with Dostoevsky's heroes the identity of the Catullan speaker is revealed through his reflection on his environment (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:47). This space is occupied by a majority whose aesthetic tastes are distinctly different from his and so he finds himself on the border. In both poems 43 and 86 the peripheral status of the Catullan speaker functions on various levels. By applying a different, exclusive set of standards for female beauty he finds himself removed from the *provincia* and the *multi* because of their lack of taste. But he is a provincial himself and not on sure footing when criticizing the country folk as someone from the city. He is on the boundary between country and city, neither fully integrated into the latter nor completely detached from the former. This ambiguous status reveals his vulnerable position – he cannot maintain the pose of judge of urban elegance – and poem

[74] Catullus underscores Lesbia's exclusivity in the final word of the poem, where *veneres* once more picks up *venustas* (Wiltshire, 1977:326).

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43 ends with a sense of resigned disbelief. In poem 86 the Catullan speaker is not only alone in his knowledge of absolute beauty. His exclusive set of standards for judging female beauty at the same time reveals his poetic credo. The many find big-bodied Quintia beautiful just as they revel in the puffed-up writings of Antimachus. He prefers Lesbia with her tiny grain of salt just as he treasures the small monuments of his fellow-neoteric Cinna. The aesthetic principles that separate "us" from "them" in literary matters apply equally to physical beauty in poems 43 and 86. This kind of beauty is rare and only a select view have the ability to cherish it.

Lesbia, however, did not lack admirers. Although she is never named her presence is felt in the next two poems under discussion: poems 37 and 39. They are natural companion pieces. In both a man features, identified in 39 as Egnatius, who brushes his teeth with his own urine. Propriety will therefore feature prominently as a yardstick for *urbanitas* in both poems. Yet the motivation behind each poem is different (Krostenko, 2001b:240) and they reveal different aspects of Catullus' peripheral status.

c.37

Salax taberna vosque contubernales,
a pilleatis nona fratribus pila,
solis putatis esse mentulas vobis,
solis licere, quidquid est puellarum,
confutuere et putare ceteros hircos? 5
an, continenter quod sedetis insulsi
centum an ducenti, non putatis ausurum
me una ducentos irrumare sessores?
atqui putate: namque totius vobis
frontem tabernae sopionibus scribam. 10
puella nam mi, quae meo sinu fugit,
amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla,
pro qua mihi sunt magna bella pugnata,
consedit istic. hanc boni beatique
omnes amatis, et quidem, quod indignum est, 15
omnes pusilli et semitarii moechi;
tu praeter omnes, une de capillatis,
cuniculosae Celtiberiae fili,
Egnati, opaca quem bonum facit barba
et dens Hibera defricatus urina. 20

The first two lines offer us a concrete location and set the tone for the poem: "Sleazy tavern and you drinking buddies, nine pillars from the felt-capped brothers" (*Salax taberna vosque contubernales, / a pilleatis nona fratribus pila...*).[75] A contemporary reader would have

[75] Castor and Pollux were generally portrayed as wearing *pillei* (felt caps); the geographical reference here is to their temple on the Palatine (Thomson, 1997:301).

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recognised the exact location. Catullus personifies the tavern[76] and addresses it along with its regulars. In the first of two rhetorical questions he accuses them of arrogance for thinking that they have the exclusive rights to have sex with any girl whomsoever (*solis…/ solis licere…*, 3-4), and for looking down on "the rest" (*ceteros*) – in other words, men not of their crowd – as mere billy goats (*hircos*) (3-5). Next he boasts about his lack of fear to irrumate all of them in one shot despite their overwhelming numbers (6-8). His only real threat comes in lines 9-10 where he reveals his intention of making obscene drawings against them on the tavern walls. Finally, half-way through the poem we discover the reason for his racket: after elaborating on his intense love for her (11-13) he tells us that his beloved (*puella…mi*) hangs around in the *salax taberna* (*consedit istic*, 14).[77] He next lists her lovers: the good, the bad and the ugly (*boni beatique… pusilli et semitarii moechi*, 14, 16), until finally he narrows them down to an individual: the bloke who rinses his mouth with urine, and who is most likely the real target of the poem (*tu praeter omnes* ("you above all"), 17).

From the outset the Catullan speaker appears emasculated. This is implied, quite literally, by the rumoured arrogance of the *contubernales* in thinking that they alone have penises (*solis putatis esse mentulas vobis*, 3). Moreover they are said to claim exclusive rights to have sex with *all* girls. The Catullan speaker, along with the *ceteros* (i.e. those not of their group), is rendered impotent. The vague number of the many that constitute his rivals (*centum an ducenti*, 6) serves to establish a contrast between him as "isolated individual" and the mass of Lesbia's lovers (Johnson, 1999:86). His exaggerated threat to irrumate these hundred plus rivals becomes a vain attempt to regain some of his lost masculinity.[78] Moreover, the scope of the threat highlights its impossibility and so he resorts to a gentle backhand: drawing insulting pictures of the tavern's clientele on the front. Probably only the *boni beatique* would raise their eyebrows at this attempt at intimidation. To make matters worse, his own girl (*puella…mi*, 11) has left him. In fact she has *fled* from his lap: *meo sinu fugit* (11). Her eagerness to get away from him serves as a further marker of his isolated state. Furthermore, the sexual connotations implicit in *sinus* underscore his emasculation: she has not only fled from him, but also from his love-making to making love with the dubious variety of men who frequent the *taberna* (*omnes amatis*, 15).

Throughout the poem Catullus plays with a military theme (Thomson, 1997:300; Johnson, 1999:58ff.; Wray, 2001:84ff.). *Taberna* and its derivative *contubernales* originally meant

[76] Some scholars explore the possibility that Catullus is referring to Lesbia's house (Johnson, 1999:88; Krostenko, 2001b:265).
[77] The *puella* is generally accepted to be Lesbia (see the discussion of *mea puella* in poem 36 above). Furthermore, the almost verbatim repetition of poem 8.5 in line 12 (*amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla*), makes it near certain that this is a reference to his great love (Quinn, 1973:205).
[78] Cf. poem 16, discussed in chapter 5 (p.218ff.).

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"military tent" and "tent-shares" or "fellow-soldiers" respectively. This picks up the theme of "the great wars" (*magna bella*) of line 13 as well as the verb *consedit* (14). In a military context *considere* means to "to take up a position"; in line 14 Catullus uses it in the sense of "setting up shop" as a prostitute (Thomson, 1997:302). The military pun serves to satirise the situation: the mob that constitutes Lesbia's lovers is nothing like the great military men of Rome, she is the *casus belli,* and by "taking up her position" Lesbia commands them all (Johnson, 1999:86-87). The military resonances serve further to underscore Catullus' isolation: the word *contubernales* implies both the sharing and cameraderie of which Catullus has no part, as well as soldierly conduct; this portrays the Catullan speaker as both removed from and "softer" than these men (Nappa, 2001:63). He was a failure as a soldier and as a lover: he has lost the many wars he waged for Lesbia and now she is the "communal consort of the enemy army" (Nappa, 2001:67).[79]

Irrumation was a form of punishment for adultery, which a husband or lover could employ against the perpetrator. The Catullan speaker takes in a Priapic position in lines 6-7 to intimidate Lesbia's lovers (Richlin, 1981:43), but, ironically, he is no different from them. He too committed adultery with her (cf. 68.145-146: *sed furtiva dedit mira munuscula nocte, / ipsius ex ipso dempta viri gremio*) and is equally deserving of punishment. Moreover, this seemingly dominant stance is immediately undermined in the next two lines where he reveals that insulting graffiti will be the sum total of his counterattack. In this way the "pathetic impotence" of the Catullan speaker is revealed and his ultimately anti-Priapic stance (Skinner, 1991:7).

The Catullan speaker portrays Lesbia's numerous lovers in terms that directly oppose the urbane values of his own circle of companions (Johnson, 1999:90). Even though there are some *boni* and *beati,* they are grouped together as *insulsi* (6): totally lacking *sal,* the spark necessary for *venustas* and *lepos* (Nielsen, 1987:148).[80] On a more detailed level, apart from the *boni* and *beati,* her crowd contains *pusilli* (the insignificant) and *semitarii moechi* (backstreet adulterers) (16), and worst of all "one of the hairy ones" (*une de capillatis*, 17). The Catullan speaker narrows down the list to get to the real target. He cleverly postpones

[79] Wray (2001:86), on the other hand, argues for a comic reading of the poem in which the Catullan speaker takes up the "ridiculous stock role of the *miles gloriosus*". This reading excludes any form of social comment or introspection on the part of the Catullan speaker (Wray, 2001:86-87). Although this is a delightful interpretation, there are just too many hints at social commentary and questions of identity to make this poem purely comic. The companion piece, poem 39, supports the latter point of view (see below).

[80] Krostenko (2001b:263ff.) and Nappa (2001:69) see the *contubernales* as a mixed bunch, both *boni beatique* and *pusilli, semitarii moechi,* but conclude that the description of Egnatius as *bonus* (19) calls the whole distinction into question, rendering them all dubious. However, what both scholars fail to mention is that the Catullan speaker already referred to his rivals collectively as dimwitted in line 6 (*insulsi*). From the outset they were depicted as boorish.

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the name of the culprit by first listing two of his "ethnic" qualities, his long hair and his Spanish roots (*Celtiberiae fili*, 18), thereby already portraying him as a foreigner (Johnson, 1999:86), an "other" who does not belong there. The reference to Celtiberia as "bunny-country" (*cuniculosae*, 18) picks up Egnatius' hairyness: he not only looks like a furry bunny, but his habits, as will be revealed, make him less than human.[81] After the anticipated revelation of Egnatius' name, in the emphatic first spot in the next line, Catullus zooms in on a defining physical feature of the man: his dark, dense beard (*opaca…barba*, 19). Short, cropped beards were in vogue with the smart set; thick, full beards were more conservative, associated with the older aristocrats (Quinn, 1973:205).[82] The verb *facit* (19) is crucial: Egnatius is not well-off (*bonum,* 19) himself, but outwardly *made* so by his beard and… Finally Catullus offers the most damning of Egnatius' traits in the last line and clinches his attack: Egnatius brushes his teeth with urine. The dark beard thus sets off his pearly whites and makes him appear *bonus*. Putnam (1968:556) sees in Egnatius' shiny teeth a parallel for the discrepancy between outward polish and inner rusticity which Suffenus in poem 22 so unwittingly embodied. However, in the case of Egnatius even his outward appearance turns out to be dubious as seen in his choice of beard and means of obtaining such a bright smile.

In poem 37 Catullus is both physically and emotionally on the boundary. The tavern functions as a symbol of not-belonging, a social centre on whose periphery he finds himself. Being "an other" he is excluded from the camaraderie of the clientèle within and rendered impotent by their exclusive access to "all the girls". To make matters worse his beloved, having left him, is at the very centre of the action. His threat of scribbling graffiti on the tavern's front gives a physical location to his peripherality while at the same time it underscores his impotence. Having been isolated, emasculated, and rejected his attempt at threats is ultimately disempowering. Yet ever so slightly he regains a bit of his lost esteem. By taking on the role of *arbiter urbanitatis* he is able to insult at least one foe effectively: Egnatius. By singling him out Catullus is able to stand on more equal footing. It is no longer the Catullan individual against Lesbia's unidentified hundreds, but two individuals against each other, both provincials and liminal figures in élite society.[83] As in poem 10, Catullus ends off by playing his trump card, yet we are left with a sense of discontentment. The insult is damning and one cannot imagine a response from Egnatius. He is literally "shut up" as if

[81] The Celtiberian *cuniculus* was apparently a particularly soft bunny. Krostenko (2001b:268) links this up with Egnatius' misplaced claims to *mollitia* as fine attunement to Roman social practices.
[82] It is therefore implied that Egnatius, outsider and provincial, is aspiring to the élite (Johnson, 1999:90), but he just does not get it rigt (Quinn, 1973:205).
[83] Krostenko (2001b:258) argues that the Catullan persona in this poem aims to illustrate that proper behaviour and social graces could be imitated, even by a provincial, and in this way Catullus hinders Egnatius' aspirations to the élite (cf. poem 39 below). Although I agree that Catullus gets the social upper hand over Egnatius, this is the only opponent that he manages to thwart, and only intellectually at that. He still remains isolated himself.

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irrumated.[84] However, Catullus is still alone outside while Egnatius, despite his provincial coarseness, is inside and loving Lesbia.

c.39

Egnatius, quod candidos habet dentes,
renidet usque quaque. si ad rei ventum est
subsellium, cum orator excitat fletum,
renidet ille; si ad pii rogum fili
lugetur, orba cum flet unicum mater, 5
renidet ille; quidquid est, ubicumque est,
quodcumque agit, renidet: hunc habet morbum,
neque elegantem, ut arbitror, neque urbanum.
quare monendum est <te> mihi, bone Egnati.
si urbanus esses aut Sabinus aut Tiburs 10
aut pinguis Umber aut obesus Etruscus
aut Lanuvinus ater atque dentatus
aut Transpadanus, ut meos quoque attingam,
aut quilubet, qui puriter lavit dentes,
tamen renidere usque quaque te nollem: 15
nam risu inepto res ineptior nulla est.
nunc Celtiber <es>; Celtiberia in terra,
quod quisque minxit, hoc sibi solet mane
dentem atque russam defricare gingivam;
ut, quo iste vester expolitior dens est, 20
hoc te amplius bibisse praedicet loti.

The approach in, and reason behind poem 39 seem to differ from 37. Egnatius is named as the very first word of the poem and there is no sense of curious expectation as to the identity of the target. The overriding theme is that of Egnatius' lack of savoir faire as manifested in his inappropriate smiling. Catullus creates the scene by listing a number of situations (a court case and a funeral) where a serious demeanour is required; Egnatius, on the other hand, smiles.[85] The phrase *renidet ille* (4, 6) is in each case postponed to the beginning of the next line, after Catullus' elaboration on the seriousness of the circumstances. The almost surprise appearance of this phrase underscores the inurbanity of Egnatius' behaviour as the build-up of *gravitas* is deflated each time.[86] The Catullan speaker summarizes his introduction in the next lines (6-7): wherever, whenever…Egnatius smiles (*renidet*, 7). Now he identifies the problem: it is like a disease (*morbum*, 7), neither elegant nor urbane (*neque*

[84] Nappa (2001:71, 83) sees in Egnatius' habit of ingesting urine a receptiveness to fellatio. Wray (2001:87) likewise refers to this act as "displaced irrumation".
[85] These situations in particular create a platform for the demonstration of *gravitas* and the maintenance of public image (Nappa, 2001:77).
[86] Krostenko (2001b:240ff.) argues that Catullus takes on the guise of an orator in lines 1-9. This line of argument is based on syntactical peculiarities such as impersonal passives (*ventum est*, 2; *lugetur*, 5) – found nowhere else in Catullus – and the use of *voces propriae*. He therefore concludes that the first half of the poem reflects a *narratio* whereas the last section is in the style of an *argumentatio* addressed to Egnatius.

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elegantem…neque urbanum, 8). These two qualities were crucial to the late Republican smart set as a means of rating the social behaviour of another (Krostenko, 2001b:244). They bracket the emphatic *arbitror* and place the Catullan speaker right in the centre of urban sophistication: he portrays himself as the ideal judge.[87] Now he turns to Egnatius, sarcastically addressing him as *bone Egnati* (9), and offers him advice from a position of superiority in the guise of an older gentleman (Krostenko, 2001b:246ff.).[88] The lengthy introduction on Egnatius' annoying smile is now balanced by another list, this time a geographical one. Catullus starts at the centre of his world and that of any aspiring urbanite such as Egnatius: *the* city Rome (denoted by the adjective *urbanus*). He then moves on further from the *urbs*, listing a number of regions and their characteristics until he gets to *Transpadanus* (13). At the mention of his own province, he interrupts himself and appears to turn to his readers: "…to mention my people too" (*ut meos quoque attingam*, 17). This highlights Transpadana among his list of provinces and one detects a sense of pride. What all of these places, from Rome all to the way to Cisalpine Gaul, have in common is that their inhabitants wash their teeth with pure water (*puriter lavit dentes*, 14). Now do we get to the contrast between "us" (Romans, Sabines, Transpadanes, etc.) and "you, Egnatius", and the first sting of Catullus' insult: you are a Celtiberian (17). At first this offence might seem mild: he is a provincial, like many others, so what? The implications of this offence is only revealed in the next line: in Celtiberia everyone (*quisque*, 18) brushes his/her teeth with their very own urine (*quod…minxit, hoc sibi solet…/ dentem…defricare*, 18-19). As it turns out Catullus uses a similar technique of postponement as in poem 37 to increase the impact of his invective, a game of "calculated revelation and concealment" (Feldherr, 2007:94). Although Egnatius' identity is no mystery as in that poem, his real "crime" is postponed until the very last: not his incessant smiling, but his dental hygiene.

The line that most explicitly defies reading the poem as humorous parody or lampoon is the "biographical" line 13.[89] Krostenko (2001b:254) argues that this line precisely underscores Catullus' point: proper behaviour can be learnt, even by a provincial. Between the voice of the orator and that of the older gentleman the "historical Catullus" seems to make himself heard, thereby displaying his ability to read the social situation and to behave accordingly. Shapiro (2011:30) detects no mocking of Egnatius' foreignness per se as part of the insult and claims that the comprehensiveness of Catullus' list, including both Roman and

[87] "*Arbitrari* is a very unpoetic word but one well-suited to the persona and topic Catullus has developed" (Krostenko, 2001b:246).
[88] Krostenko (2001b:246ff.) bases his argument on archaisms such as *puriter* and *lavit* (14), as well as Catullus' use of the impersonal gerundive with accusative (*monendum est <te> mihi*, 9), which is only found once in Cicero (*De Senectute*) and overall rare except in Varro's *Res Rusticae* where the speaker is an older gentleman.
[89] Cf. Quinn (1973:209), Ferguson (1985:115), Sheets (2007:201).

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Transpadane as "ordinary" people, de-emphasizes place of origin.[90] However, there is an unmistakable divide between "us" and "you Spaniards" as indicated by the emphatic *nunc* (17). The sense here is not temporal, but rather adversarial. Egnatius' origins are precisely important because they reveal him to be non-Italian.[91] On a more subtle level there is also a divide in Catullus' list of Italians in lines 10-14. The first on his list, the Roman, is identified by the adjective *urbanus*, a word that denotes both "sophistication" and "citizen of Rome" (Nappa, 2001:79). This picks up *urbanum* from line 8, underscoring the dual meaning of the term in Catullus' ethnic list. As he continues with his list, the provinces are curiously portrayed in a not entirely flattering manner: the Umbrian is chubby (*pinguis*, 11), the Etruscan is fat (*obesus*, 11) and the Lanuvian is dark and prognathic (*ater atque dentatus*, 12), the latter picked up by *dentem* in line 19. The Transpadane is not described apart from being "Catullus' people". This is the first recorded use of the word *Transpadanus*, the main towns in the area of Cisalpine Gaul having received the *ius Latii* in 89 BCE: "a halfway stage to Roman citizenship" (Fitzgerald, 1995:203). This points to an ambivalence on the part of the Catullan speaker, partly proud of his town's new status, yet fully aware of his own "inurbane connections" (Fitzgerald, 1995:203). No longer part of the barbarians (Fitzgerald, 1995:204), the Transpadani are not *urbani* either. Their peripheral status is also reflected in the geography: Transpadana is the furthest from Rome on Catullus' list of provinces, for that matter, it is on the very borders of Italy (Nappa, 2001:79). The verb *attingam* (13) further highlights the distance between Rome and Catullus' province: a mere touch is possible, as if metaphorically the speaker reaches far into the distance. Even though Catullus acts as *arbiter urbanitatis*, his own claim to being *urbanus* is revealed to be ambiguous. In an attempt to establish a divide between the urbane and Italian on the one hand, and the inurbane and Celtiberian on the other, he has undermined his own claim to "Romanness". In fact, the only thing that these provinces and Rome really have in common is that they use clean water when brushing their teeth. However, this shared habit marks a major divide.

The Catullan speaker has not entirely been disarmed. He knows something personal about Egnatius that at least allows him the final say, even if his own social status has been called into question. There is focus both on the intensity of Egnatius' brushing (*defricare*) as well as the redness of his gums (*russam…gingivam*, 19), which set off his teeth exactly like his beard in poem 37. The conclusion is similar to the one from that poem: the outward polish does not make up for the means by which this is accomplished; in fact Egnatius is everything but polished (Putnam, 1968:557). Furthermore, his name may be Italian (Fordyce,

[90] Cf. Ramage (1973:74), Fitzgerald (1995:203), Nappa (2001:80-81) and Tatum (2007:337) for the opposite view, which is also the one I support.
[91] Cf. Nappa (2001:80)

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1961:184) but he has not adapted to proper Italian habits. He has a lable that has little to do with the content. The theme of self-delusion is once more prevalent (Shapiro, 2011:30). Whereas Suffenus could not see the "sack on his back" Egnatius' flaw is staring him in the face: he constantly (*solet*, 18) drinks his own urine.

Once more Catullus has the trump card enabling him to end off his poem with the last say. Once more his own ambivalent status is revealed before he is able to play it. Being able to read his social circumstances gives him an advantage over Egnatius, but like Egnatius his roots lie far from Rome, in Transpadana, a place not as backward as Celtiberia, but on the boundary nonetheless. The liminality of his province comes to signify the liminality of the Catullan speaker. His identity is inextricably linked with his birth province; something he admits to with his proud reference to the Transpadani as "his people". Despite his mastery of urban behaviour his status is still that of a provincial: like his province, which functions as the boundary between Italian and non-Italian, he finds himself in an in-between space where he belongs both to two cultures as well as to neither.

In poem 17 Catullus' Veronese roots again play a prominent part.

c.17

O Colonia, quae cupis ponte ludere longo,
et salire paratum habes, sed vereris inepta
crura ponticuli axulis stantis in redivivis,
ne supinus eat cavaque in palude recumbat:
sic tibi bonus ex tua pons libidine fiat, 5
in quo vel Salisubsili sacra suscipiantur,
munus hoc mihi maximi da, Colonia, risus.
quendam municipem meum de tuo volo ponte
ire praecipitem in lutum per caputque pedesque,
verum totius ut lacus putidaeque paludis 10
lividissima maximeque est profunda vorago.
insulsissimus est homo, nec sapit pueri instar
bimuli tremula patris dormientis in ulna.
cui cum sit viridissimo nupta flore puella
et puella tenellulo delicatior haedo, 15
adservanda nigerrimis diligentius uvis,
ludere hanc sinit ut lubet, nec pili facit uni,
nec se sublevat ex sua parte; sed velut alnus
in fossa Liguri iacet suppernata securi,
tantundem omnia sentiens quam si nulla sit usquam, 20
talis iste merus stupor nil videt, nihil audit;
ipse qui sit, utrum sit an non sit, id quoque nescit.
nunc eum volo de tuo ponte mittere pronum,
si pote stolidum repente excitare veternum,
et supinum animum in gravi derelinquere caeno, 25
ferream ut soleam tenaci in voragine mula.

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We are not in Rome. Catullus sets the scene right at the beginning of the poem: "Oh Colony" (*O Colonia*). Colonia is personified as someone with aspirations of social advancement. She desires a decent bridge for playful festivities and dancing (*cupis ponte ludere longo / et salire*, 1-2), but is fearful at the current state of her shaky bridge (*vereris inepta / crura*, 2-3). It just might collapse into the marsh (*cavaque in palude recumbat*, 4). In the next section (lines 5-7) the Catullan speaker expresses his support of Colonia's wish, but he adds a condition: he wants to have a good laugh in the process (*maximi da, Colonia, risus,* 7). All this only starts to make sense when Catullus introduces "a certain townsman" of his (*quendam municipem meum*, 7). This man is the actual reason behind the poem and we will soon learn why. Catullus desires to throw him off the bridge and into the murkiest part of the marsh (8-11); the charge: *insulsissimus est homo*, 12. This man does not know how to behave; he is the exact opposite of a member of the Catullan smart set: the ultimate dimwitted inurbane.[92] He has a frisky young wife (*viridissimo nupta flore puella*, 14), but is so lethargic that he allows her to fool around with others (*ludere hanc sinit ut lubet*, 17). Catullus repeats his desire in the last four lines: he wants to throw the fool head first from the bridge in the hope of shaking him out of his sluggishness (*si pote stolidum repente excitare veternum*, 24).

Where is Colonia? It must be somewhere in Transpadana as indicated by the phrase *municipem meum.* Most scholars argue for its identification with Verona (Fordyce, 1961:140; Rankin, 1968:418; Quinn, 1973:145; Fitzgerald, 1995:204; Wray, 2001:135ff.) although some argue, precisely because of this phrase, against Verona in favour of another nearby town (Kroll, 1968:36, Wiseman, 1987:333; 2007:57).[93] I agree with the former reading, although the exact location of the town should not alter the interpretation dramatically. The emphasis is on the status of the place as *country town* and the identity of the townsman is equally vague: *quendam*.[94] From the outset the Catullan speaker highlights the geographical distance from Rome with the address *Colonia* (Kloss, 1998:66). Wearing his mantle of *arbiter urbanitatis* he judges the poor behaviour of the rustic *municeps* and hands out a fitting punishment.

Fitzgerald (1995:204) sees Colonia's wish for a new bridge in the context of the great building projects that were going on throughout Italy as part of the unification process. By using the language of *urbanitas* (*inepta*, 2; *insulsissimus*, 12; *delicatior*, 15), Catullus points to Colonia's urban aspirations, but at the same time underscores its current lack of urbanity

[92] Compare the discussion of *insulsi* in poem 37 above.
[93] Both Kroll and Wiseman see it as unlikely that Catullus would address the personified *colonia* and then talk about "a fellow townsman of mine" if the same place was meant.
[94] Cf. Garrisson, 1989:105 and Thomson, 1997:251.

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(Fitzgerald, 1995:204). The legs (*crura*, 3) of the bridge are described as *inepta* (2): inappropriate. This recalls the unbecoming behaviour of both Marrucinus (12.4) and Egnatius (39.16) discussed above.[95] Furthermore *crura* (denoting the shins or legs) is not a word usually associated with inanimate things (Rudd, 1959:240). Like Colonia the bridge is thus also personified. This allows for distinct parallels between the bridge and the lethargic husband to emerge (Rudd, 1959:238ff.). Colonia's fear of the bridge falling on its back (*supinus eat*, 4) and sinking in the mud (*in palude recumbat*, 4) anticipates Catullus' comparison of the lethargic husband to a baby sleeping in a parent's arms (*dormientis*, 13), his description of the man's inability to be stirred (*nec se sublevat*, 18), as well as the comparison of the husband to a felled tree lying in a ditch (*iacet*, 19) (Rudd, 1959:240). The Catullan speaker hopes that the dunk in the mud would shake the man out of his stupor (*supinum animum*, 25). This verbal echo of *supinus* (4) underscores the parallels between the bridge and the husband.

Likewise the playfulness of Colonia foreshadows the feisty young wife (Rudd, 1959:241): both have a propensity for playing (*ludere*, 1, 17) and the erotic overtones of *cupis* (2) and *libidine* (5) – both denoting desire – look forward to the wife's sexual vibrancy described in lines 14-16. Consequently questions about gender and masculinity emerge as strong themes in this poem. The rickety bridge, just like the husband, lacks "backbone". Its physical instability plays on the implied impotence of the indifferent man. In the final line of the poem he is compared to a mule, the ultimate symbol of impotence and emasculation. Noteworthy is the speaker's choice for the female *mula* (26) instead of *mulus*, rendering the husband effeminate on top of being emasculated (Akbar Khan, 1969:92). Wray (2001:113) argues for this poem as an example of Catullus' performance, or threat, of male aggression against a third party; in this case the lethargic man whom he wants to hurl off a bridge. The identity of the victim would probably have been obvious to a Veronese audience, though not to a Roman one (Wray, 2001:137). This places the Catullan speaker in an ambivalent position: on the one hand he addresses Colonia as someone from the city, playfully mocking the town's urban aspirations as judge of urbanity and pointing out the improper behaviour of one of its inhabitants, but, on the other hand, he has "inside information" on the intimate dealings of some of the town's individuals. Coupled with the reference to the husband as *municeps meum* this reveals the Catullan speaker to be a provincial himself. Colonia's aspirations are not that different from Catullus'. This undermines the confidence of his stance: his footing is not much surer than that of the rickety bridge. And his threat of male aggression has no real substance. *Nec pili facit uni* (17) recalls a similar line from poem 10:

[95] *Ineptus/ineptire* also appear in poems 6, 8, 14b and 25. In each case some form of impropriety is implied.

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nec faceret pili cohortem (13). In that poem he claimed to be at the receiving end of a buggering praetor who "did not give a damn for his cohort" and screwed them in the process. In poem 17 the *puella* is at the non-receiving end of a passive husband "who does not give one damn" for her straying. This places the Catullan speaker on par with the *puella* and reveals his own state of emasculation. Likewise Catullus started out in poem 10 as *arbiter urbanitatis*, yet turned out to be vulnerable to his own set of criteria. In a similar fashion his initial position of authority in poem 17 is weakened by the revelation of his provincial ties. The threat turns out to be as impotent as the sluggish husband and the unstable bridge: it is first presented as a wish (*volo*, 8) and remains only that when repeated at the end of the poem (*volo*, 23).

Is the Catullan speaker overreacting in a situation that has no bearing on him personally?[96] The poem starts out as a good-humoured teasing of Colonia and her urban aspirations. When Catullus reveals its real target his position as *arbiter urbanitatis* is called into question. He is himself provincial and involved enough in the provincial life to know what goes on beneath the surface. This unmasks him as a born provincial with only a peripheral claim to the authoritative stance he initially adopted. His strongly felt objection against the lethargic husband discloses an uncertainty in himself. The man protests too much. Nowhere is there an indication that the frisky young wife turned to Catullus in her hunger for love. The *municeps* suffers from self-inflicted emasculation and does not appear to be bothered by it at all. The Catullan speaker turns out to be equally emasculated: on account of his peripheral status in the city, his sympathies with the girl, and his exclusion from her attentions. This definitely bothers him.

2.2 THE DEATH OF A BROTHER

> Death dislocates not only the deceased but also those who mourn them from their fixed place in the social structure (Feldherr, 2000:211).

On a totally different level, the isolation of the Catullan speaker is revealed very poignantly when he talks about the untimely death of his brother, far from home in the Troad. The problem of displacement features as a prevalent theme in poems 65, 68a, 68b and 101 where his brother's death is directly or indirectly treated. This displacement is not only emotional, but also cultural and geographical: Catullus has a "complex cultural identity" as a Roman poet from a provincial town with a preference for the style and content of the Alexandrians (Fitzgerald, 1995:185). He travels to Troy, Rome's ancestral city, to visit his

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[96] I do not agree with Zarker's (1969:172ff.) reading that the *puella* is Lesbia. In the first place Catullus reveals no strong emotional tie to the girl, and in the second place a woman, many years his senior, would probably not be described as *viridissimo flore*.

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brother's grave and mourns him while secluded at the family estate in Verona (Fitzgerald, 1995:186). Looking at these passages in a chapter with the umbrella theme of *urbanitas* might seem odd. Yet his brother is the closest link to his hometown of Verona, the provincial town of which he is sometimes proud, sometimes ashamed. I will treat the poems consecutively.

c.65

Etsi me assiduo defectum cura dolore
    sevocat a doctis, Hortale, virginibus,
nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus
    mens animi, tantis fluctuat ipsa malis—
namque mei nuper Lethaeo in gurgite fratris 5
    pallidulum manans alluit unda pedem,
Troia Rhoeteo quem subter litore tellus
    ereptum nostris obterit ex oculis.
* * * * * * * *
    numquam ego te, vita frater amabilior, 10
aspiciam posthac? at certe semper amabo,
    semper maesta tua carmina morte canam,
qualia sub densis ramorum concinit umbris
    Daulias, absumpti fata gemens Ityli.—
sed tamen in tantis maeroribus, Hortale, mitto 15
    haec expressa tibi carmina Battiadae,
ne tua dicta vagis nequiquam credita ventis
    effluxisse meo forte putes animo,
ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum
    procurrit casto virginis e gremio, 20
quod miserae oblitae molli sub veste locatum,
    dum adventu matris prosilit, excutitur,
atque illud prono praeceps agitur decursu,
    huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.

From the outset the peripheral status of the Catullan speaker is attested to. In the first instance his lack of creative inspiration is described as separation from the Muses (*a doctis…virginibus*, 2). This phrase emphatically brackets the addressee *Hortale* and offers a visual manifestation of Catullus' isolation from creativity. He experiences an incapacity to write poetry: "…nor is my mind's thinking able to bring forth the sweet offspring of the Muses" (*nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus / mens animi*, 3-4). This starts his poem-cum-cover letter to Hortalus in response to the latter's request (*tua dicta*, 17) for a poem. As Tatum (1997:489) convincingly argues, the poetic identity cannot be separated entirely from the historical Hortensius Hortalus, famous orator and senator, who features in poem 95 (discussed above). There is a distinct separation between "municipal poet" and "distinguished Roman acquaintance" (Tatum, 1997:489), which puts Catullus in the position of an *amicus inferior* (Tatum, 1997:494) but reciprocally lets him share some of the authority

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of his addressee in claiming to write at his request (White, 1993:20; n.38:279).[97] From the outset Catullus is portrayed in a liminal position which would only increase through the poem as other factors are brought into play. Thomson (1997:444) argues for the likelihood that this poem was composed in Verona, like poem 68a, based on the similarities in the address to the deceased brother (65.10-12; 68a.20-26). This would add a physical dimension to the societal distance between Veronese Catullus and Roman Hortalus: symbolic space concretized in geography.

Catullus ascribes his inability to compose original poems to the void left by his brother's death. He depicts his brother as standing on the border of Lethe: "For lately the swelling wave of Lethe's flood has washed over my brother's all too pale foot; (my brother) snatched from our eyes, on whom beneath the Rhoetean shore the Trojan soil tramples" (5-8). First the sea between Italy and Troy and now the river in the Underworld separate Catullus from him (Janan, 1994:128). Water signifies the boundary between them. Furthermore his brother is reduced to the metonymic substitute of his foot (Janan, 1994:130), which "inevitably signifies absence, distance, or displacement" (Stevens, 2013:162). Skinner (2003:5) argues that the gratuitousness of the particular mention of Troy as his brother's place of burial underscores its historical accuracy. She borrows Barthes' term *biographème* for such a personal detail offered in a literary text, which reveals something, however slight, of the author and so sustains the image of a vibrant personality that we identify as "Catullus" (Skinner, 2003:12). In this regard the physical place of Troy becomes the symbolic space of death, a theme which will recur.

As mentioned in the discussion of poem 1 above, and illustrated in a number of poems subsequently, the identity of the addressee contributes to the poet's self-definition in diverse ways. In poem 65 this becomes more complex. The poem has a "double orientation" (Thomson, 1997:444, quoting Edward Fraenkel): Catullus addresses his brother within a dedication to Hortalus.[98] The displacement he experiences as a consequence of his brother's death prevents the Catullan speaker from communicating with him directly (Fitzgerald, 1995:186). The result is a complex, multi-voiced poem in which both addressees shed light on the Catullan speaker as they evoke respective similes that each comprise of a multiplicity of meaning.

[97] In resorting to the language of the *carmen iussum* the poet's stance is revealed as, to some extent, affected (Tatum, 1997:489). This solves the awkwardness of Hortalus' appearance in poem 95 where he is derided for his logorrhoea: in poem 65 he is addressed as a reader and not as another poet (Tatum, 1997:490).

[98] A similar technique is used in poem 68b where Catullus interrupts the Laodamia narrative with the apostrophe to Troy and his dead brother.

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In the first simile Catullus' future laments for his brother (*semper maesta tua carmina morte canam*, 12) are compared with those of the nightingale (formerly human) forever bewailing her dead son: "like the Daulian (bird) bemoaning the fate of her dead Itylus" (*qualia*… / *Daulias, absumpti fata gemens Ityli*, 14). Catullus combines two versions of a similar myth (Skinner, 2003:13): Penelope, speaking to her disguised husband Odysseus, comparing her worries over Telemachus to the anguish of Aëdon who accidentally killed her own son Itylus (*Odyssey* 19.518-523) and the story of Procne, queen of Daulis, who killed her son Itys to avenge the rape of her sister by the king. What both versions of the myth have in common is that in both a woman slays her son, undergoes metamorphoses and becomes a nightingale forever lamenting the loss of her son. Catullus' comparison of himself to the nightingale suggests that by his brother's death he is also turned into something "fundamentally other" with similarly diminished agency (Stevens, 2013:133): the bird's limited means of communication (*concinit*, 13) picks up Catullus' inability to compose original poetry. Therefore his position, even in poetic terms, has become peripheral. The Homeric intertext introduces another thought which needs to be considered in terms of Catullus' own situation: that of divided loyalties (Gaisser, 2009:145). Although, unlike the nightingales, she is not responsible for the death of a beloved family member, Penelope feels torn between her fidelity to her absent husband and her duties towards her son. Likewise Catullus experiences a feeling of divided loyalties, which features prominently in the next simile.

The final simile in the poem poses the greatest challenge to Catullan scholars, and I believe this is where the crux of the poem lies. This is generally taken to refer to the myth of Cydippe and Acontius, which Callimachus recounted in the *Aetia* 65-75 (Daly, 1952; Johnston, 1983:388; King, 1988:385; Hunter, 1993). The direct reference to Callimachus (*carmina Battiadae*, 16) supports this line of argument. In that story Acontius tricked Cydippe into marrying him by sending her an apple inscribed with a pledge that she would marry him. As she read this aloud she accidentally made an unbreakable promise. Despite her rejection of him and betrothal to another, the truth eventually came out and she married Acontius. The girl in Catullus' poem is startled by her mother and the apple that she has kept hidden slips out from under her clothing as she jumps up. She blushes in embarrassment, but curiously she is also sad (*huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor*, 24). King (1988:384-385, n.8) argues that the ambivalence of sorrow and joy in this poem serves as a suitable introduction to the diverse and often conflicting themes of the elegiacs to follow. However, I feel that there is more to the girl's sadness and that she offers not only a parallel for Catullus' possible forgetfulness in responding to Hortalus. If her blush picks up Catullus' embarrassment at his delayed response to Hortalus' request (King, 1988:385), then her sadness picks up Catullus' sadness over the loss of his brother. If the simile is indeed an

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allusion to Callimachus' story of Cydippe and Acontius, close attention should be paid to Catullus' departure from that account. As Kroll (1968:198-199) has pointed out the apple rolling *away* from the girl in Catullus is the exact opposite of the apple rolling *towards* the girl in Callimachus. Likewise, in Callimachus the truth about the pledge is revealed by the oracle – not a chance discovery by the girl's mother – and there is no evidence that Cydippe kept the apple after she had read the inscription (Hunter, 1993:179), nor is it likely that she would have treasured something so deceitful.[99] In Catullus' poem the apple represents something precious which the girl has lost: a token of a love affair of which her family was not aware and probably would not have approved of (Skinner, 2003:17). Gaisser (2009:147) argues that the apple represents both deception of the mother and, when revealed, betrayal of the lover. Likewise Catullus is divided between brother and friend for, in fulfilling his duty to the one, he will be failing the other. His position as *amicus inferior* in respect of Hortalus complicates his predicament: he could hardly deny the request. The dilemma of conflicting duties is solved by offering Hortalus a translation (poem 66), which appears as haphazardly as the girl's blush, a "peculiarly Roman moral act" (Fitzgerald, 1995:195). The friend therefore gets his poem, but because it is not "original" Catullus is not betraying his brother: his agency is still diminished and a translation is all that he is capable of. Yet there is another aspect to the idea of divided loyalties. As Skinner (2003:18) argues "the surface meaning of this…[text] is qualified by embellishing images that remind us of considerations excluded from the main discourse". If blushing is the visual manifestation of an acceptance of familial obligations (Lateiner, 1998:185), the *puella* in Catullus' poem resigns to paternal authority when her secret admirer is discovered (Skinner, 2003:18). She will have to break off the affair and marry whomever her father chooses. Her acceptance leaves her *miser* and this is the emotion with which Catullus can identify.

At first glance the simile of the revealed apple seems to be about forgetfulness (Stevens, 2013:166), but it turns out to be a declaration of preference for romantic love despite societal norms (Skinner, 2003:18-19). This picks up Catullus' characteristic rejection of the status quo as seen in a number of poems discussed above, but likewise hints at a realization that he cannot shy away from a familial duty which comes before personal choice. As the (only?) other male offspring of his father Catullus will have to follow the more traditional path in order to carry on the family line. Just like the *puella* the Catullan speaker finds himself unsettled,

[99] Johnston (1983:389ff.) suggests a completely different interpretation, seeing the apple simile as an allusion to Sappho (L-P 105a) where a virgin is compared to a ripe apple. In light of this she reads the girl's "sadness" as hyperbole of mixed emotions and the apple as representative of the girl's readiness to be married and Catullus' rediscovery of poetic ability. I find that this interpretation does not sit well with the rest of the poem given the mournful mood and Catullus' restating of his inability to compose in poem 68a. Furthermore the girl's sadness picks up Catullus' sadness at the beginning, allowing for a well-rounded composition.

both in terms of his lost brother and his writing: he is "displaced into a more limited role as family member whose duty is dispiritingly clear" (Stevens, 2013:171).

As in poems 64 and 68b (to be discussed in subsequent chapters and below) Catullus is also here identifying with females who feel forlorn and abandoned: the nightingale and the girl. The final image we see, and the one that stays with us, is that of the embarrassed girl's sad face. She comes as a slight surprise and ends the poem quite abruptly. There is no resolve for her situation and no consolation, just as there is no consolation for the Catullan speaker in the acceptance of his brother's death and his consequent duty to his family. Paradoxically the apple symbolizes both liberation and confinement. The apple itself, seen by many as a metaphor for a poem 66,[100] is liberated from its place of hiding. It rolls away from the girl and out of the poem. The girl, in contrast, is confined under her mother's gaze; the literal border of the poem and the metaphorical border of societal norms prevent her from following the apple. Similarly Catullus is juxtaposing his "Alexandrian jeu d'esprit" (poem 66) with this very Roman poem on familial duties and obligation (Fitzgerald, 1995:189). He can "release" the next poem, but not himself. Separated from his brother by the borders of the Underworld, separated from his full artistic skill by a great personal loss, and finally separated from his desires by family duty the Catullan speaker in poem 65 is diminished, emasculated and finally forever frozen on the borders of his poem in the liminal state of mourning.

The theme of artistic incapacity is continued in poem 68a. Often discussed together with poem 65, 68a shows many similarities to the former, but the poles of Verona and Rome play a greater part.[101] Poems 68a will first be discussed on its own and then in conjunction with related passages from 68b, its natural companion piece.[102]

[100] Quinn, 1973:354; Johnston, 1983:391; Hunter, 1993:180; Fitzgerald, 1995:193.

[101] I follow Thomson (1997:171ff.) in his numbering of the poem(s) 68a and 68b, although I do not agree that we definitely have to do with two autonomous poems rather than a cover letter and companion poem as in poems 65 and 66. However, I think many years of scholarship have proved that we are unlikely to solve the issue of unity (see Thomson (1997:472-474) and Theodorakopoulos (2007:315-316) for good summaries of the pro and contra arguments). As discussed above, verbal and thematic echoes throughout the corpus ask for the poems to be read synchronically rather than diachronically. This makes the question of unity of secondary importance.

[102] Poem 68b will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter as an example of Catullus as peripheral lover. Here I will focus on those extracts that are related to his brother's death, although, as will be illustrated, it is hard to extract the one great love from the other. As a result, references to his beloved will be made here as well and his brother will feature again below.

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c.68a

Quod mihi fortuna casuque oppressus acerbo
conscriptum hoc lacrimis mittis epistolium,
naufragum ut eiectum spumantibus aequoris undis
sublevem et a mortis limine restituam,
quem neque sancta Venus molli requiescere somno 5
desertum in lecto caelibe perpetitur,
nec veterum dulci scriptorum carmine Musae
oblectant, cum mens anxia pervigilat:
id gratum est mihi, me quoniam tibi dicis amicum,
muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris. 10
sed tibi ne mea sint ignota incommoda, Manli,
neu me odisse putes hospitis officium,
accipe quis merser fortunae fluctibus ipse,
ne amplius a misero dona beata petas.
tempore quo primum vestis mihi tradita pura est, 15
iucundum cum aetas florida ver ageret,
multa satis lusi: non est dea nescia nostri,
quae dulcem curis miscet amaritiem.
sed totum hoc studium luctu fraterna mihi mors
abstulit. o misero frater adempte mihi, 20
tu mea tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater,
tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus;
omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra
quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
cuius ego interitu tota de mente fugavi 25
haec studia atque omnes delicias animi.
quare, quod scribis Veronae turpe Catullo
esse, quod hic quisquis de meliore nota
frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili,
id, Manli, non est turpe, magis miserum est. 30
ignosces igitur si, quae mihi luctus ademit,
haec tibi non tribuo munera, cum nequeo.
nam, quod scriptorum non magna est copia apud me,
hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus: illa domus,
illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas; 35
huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur.
quod cum ita sit, nolim statuas nos mente maligna
id facere aut animo non satis ingenuo,
quod tibi non utriusque petenti copia posta est:
ultro ego deferrem, copia siqua foret. 40

As in poem 65 a Roman acquaintance has asked Catullus, who is away in Verona, for a poem as well as some other gift related to Venus (*muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris*, 10). Catullus starts his response by paraphrasing from Manlius' letter. Manlius presents himself as being in dire straits: his letter has been written with tears (*conscriptum…lacrimis*, 2), he is like a shipwrecked man on the very brink of death (*naufragum…/…a mortis limine*, 3-4), sleeping in a single man's bed (*in lecto caelibe*, 6), where his anxious mind keeps him awake (*cum mens anxia pervigilat*, 8). His problem is

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clearly a romantic one and the inability of literature to console him is secondary (Sarkissian, 1983:8). The relationship between Catullus and Manlius appears more intimate than the one between Catullus and Hortalus in 65: Manlius has shared very personal details about his love life (1-8) and explicitly calls Catullus his friend (*tibi dicis amicum*, 9). This would account for Manlius' teasing lower down that it is "a disgrace" for Catullus to be in Verona (*quod scribis Veronae turpe Catullo / esse*, 26-27) as well as his boldness in requesting not only a poem but either specifically love poetry, or a poem as well as some form of relief for his loneliness.[103] Why would Catullus repeat at length facts well known to his addressee, in fact copied from the latter's own writing? By repeating Manlius' over exaggerated description of his misfortune, Catullus has created a foil to his own state of real misery. He appropriates Manlius' metaphor of the castaway for himself (Stevens, 2013:138): "I myself am being plunged into the waves of fortune" (*merser fortunae fluctibus ipse*, 13).[104] However, his situation surpasses that of Manlius: while Manlius was thrown about by the waves (*eiectum*, 3), Catullus is going under (*merser*) (Sarkissian, 1983:9). In this poem the sea, like the river Lethe in poem 65, becomes "the very boundary marker between life and death" (Stevens, 2013:137), an idea already implied in Manlius' exaggerated words.[105]

Catullus is not in the position of an *amicus inferior* in this poem, as was the case in poem 65, but he does experience a sense of social uncertainty on another level. He underscores the spatial distance between himself and his addressee by means of the deictic *hinc* (10) (Lowrie, 2006:120): "from this place (where I am but you are not)". This is also picked up by *huc* (36).[106] He quotes Manlius' words that it is a disgrace for him to be in Verona (27). The reason for it being *turpe* is a point of endless debate because it relies on the interpretation of *hic* in *quod <u>hic</u> quisquis de meliore nota / frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili* ("Because

[103] The scholarship on line 10 is overwhelming, ranging from arguments for hendiadys (thus "love poetry" as Manlius' request) (Sarkissian, 1983:46-47, Nisbet, 1995:92, et al.), to arguments in favour of a request for both a poem and a girl, either his own girl restored to him or a share of Catullus' (Wiseman, 1974:95; Tuplin, 1981:115; King, 1988:388; Powell, 1990:206; Simpson, 1994:565, et al.), to arguments for Manlius requesting a poem and an erotic liaison with Catullus himself (Kinsey, 1967:41-42; Forsyth, 1987:180). For a good summary of the various arguments see Skinner (2003:145-146).
It has recently been argued, taking into account poems 50, 12, 86 and 35, that the two types of gifts refer to Catullus' poetic talent and his *venustas* as the two main requirements for an entertaining dinner guest in Catullus' social set (Theodorakopoulos, 2007:318). Lowrie (2006:120) argues for a deliberate blurring between the Muses and Venus, underscored by the elision between *Musarum* and *hinc* (thereby crossing over the caesura), as a reflection of the interwovenness between poetry and life. These arguments closely resemble Skinner's (2003:147-149) neat solution to the problem, which solves the ambiguity of *hic* (28) at the same time. (Discussion follows.)
[104] Cf. Sarkissian (1983:9) and Fear (1992:246).
[105] This conception will be developed in full in poem 101 where Catullus travels across the sea to reach his brother's grave.
[106] Wiseman (1974:102) and Skinner (2003:149) both argue that Catullus and Manlius are probably not as close as Manlius claims, the latter being a kind of fan of the poet and hoping for an intimate friendship.

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here everyone of note warms his frigid limbs in a deserted bed", 28-29). Is this Rome (Manlius' perspective) or Verona (Catullus' perspective)? I do not intend to go into the different arguments in detail, but as Lowrie (2006:122) states, one must choose either Rome or Verona since it cannot be both. Adherents of "Rome" generally argue that Manlius is claiming Catullus' empty bed there has been filled by rivals, and so tries to lure him back to Rome. Those who interpret *hic* as "Verona" view lines 28-29 as a reference to the more conservative sexual *mores* in the province.[107] Recently Skinner (2003:147-148), finding neither of these readings to be satisfactory explanations of *turpe,* has argued for Manlius' reference to deserted beds (lines 6 and 29) as metaphors for the extreme boredom suffered by Catullus' circle of friends in his absence: *hic* must therefore refer to Rome. This also solves the problem of *munera Veneris* by viewing this reference as the playful use of homoerotic language among fellow poets (cf. poem 50 above), which is not to be taken literally. In poem 68a Catullus is therefore acknowledging "the literary game being played" by Manlius, but in his response he declines to take part (Skinner, 2003:149). In no uncertain terms Catullus explains why he cannot fulfil Manlius' request. As in poem 65 his poetic abilities have been diminished by the death of his brother: "I have driven from all my mind these undertakings and all the delights of the soul" (*tota de mente fugavi / haec studia atque omnes delicias animi*, 25-26).[108] Furthermore, he is in Verona where he does not have access to written sources which he might consult in writing his own poems: "To this place only one chest out of the many follows me" (*huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur*, 36). In questioning Catullus' absence from Rome Manlius has revealed a vulnerability in the Catullan speaker which is underscored by the latter's reference to books: in order to remain part of Roman society he now has to rely on writing instead of performance (Theodorakopoulos, 2007:320). The physical distance likewise becomes an emotional distance from his regular circle of friends. Catullus' diminished agency as poet is therefore closely linked with the problem of "home": he is a Transpadane poet with a successful literary career in Rome, which is based to a great extent on his effective appropriation of Greek literary models (Fitzgerald, 1995:202). The tension between belonging and not-beloning, between home and non-home, resurfaces repeatedly throughout poems 68a and 68b. The *domus* becomes a symbolically loaded space.

The recurrent theme of travel and homecoming in the Catullan oeuvre – describing real or imagined journeys of the speaker as well as those of others – reveals an ambivalence in Catullus, both a wanderer and a nostalgic, as well as in his conception of home (Armstrong,

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[107]See Hubbard (1984:41) and Skinner (2003:147-151) for good summaries of the different arguments and a bibliography.
[108] Cf. Quinn (1973:378) for *delicias animi* as "intellectual self-indulgence".

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2013:43).[109] The emotional side of these journeys – joy, grief or anger – are closely linked with Catullus' own social positioning and self-presentation (Armstrong, 2013:43). In poems 68a and 68b this manifests as a conflict between his provincial roots in Verona and Rome as the seat of his poetic career (Fitzgerald, 1995:202). Catullus has returned to his hometown of Verona as a result of his brother's death in the Troad. He therefore corrects Manlius' description of his absence from Rome as *turpe,* calling it rather *miserum* (30), and explicitly states that Rome is now his home. There is something almost defensive in his threefold repetition of this "fact": "Because in Rome I live: *that* is my home; *that* my centre; *there* my age is spent" (*quod Romae vivimus: illa domus, / illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas*, 68a.34-35). Yet in line 22 and in line 94 of 68b he claims that his *domus* (or that of the Valerii Catulli clan as a whole) has been "buried" with his brother: *tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus*. *Domus*, as already suggested above, can have a variety of meanings: "house; home; country, town, etc., of one's residence or birth; family, household, or dependants collectively of the head of a house", etc. (OLD, 2002).

Throughout poems 68a and 68b the word *domus* creates tension as it refers to the household of the Valerii Catulli, to Catullus' residency in Rome and Verona, to the home of Protesilaus and Laodamia *inceptam frustra* (68b.74-75), and to Allius' house which he offered to Catullus and Lesbia[110] for their secret rendezvous (68b.68) (Armstrong, 2013:65). The latter is a physical meeting place for Catullus and Lesbia to share an intimate moment, but becomes a symbol of transgression; the *domus* of Protesilaus and Laodamia represents both the building and the household they would have created if Protesilaus had not died;[111] the *domus* of the Valerian Catullan clan "is the least substantial [of these three] since it refers not to Catullus's ancestral seat but rather to the ideal family unit for which the house stands as synecdoche" (Miller, 2004:53). What of his reputed *domus* in Rome? Armstrong (2013:66-67) contends that Rome has become Catullus' "intellectual and poetic core"; combined with the grief over his brother this leads him to feel ill at ease in Verona. Fitzgerald (1995:283n.30) however sees in *carpitur* an ambivalent attitude towards his Roman "home": "in the passive [the verb] is more likely to convey the erosion of life (*aetas*) than the full enjoyment of it".[112] And as it turns out at the end of poem 68b, the *domus* itself is merely a product of wishful thinking: Catullus does not actually own a house there (Skinner, 2003:144, 168): "May you be happy, you and the love of your life, and the house in which we had so much fun" (*sitis felices et tu simul et tua vita, / et domus <ipsa> in qua*

[109] E.g. poems 4, 9, 10, 11, 31, 44, 46, 63, 64, 84 and 101.
[110] I follow the majority of scholars who accept Lesbia to be the *candida diva* of poem 68b (70).
[111] See chapter 3, p.156ff. for a discussion of these two *domi.*
[112] Tuplin (1981:115) also notes the ambiguous note of "to be alive" inherent in *vivimus*; the Catullan speaker is in survival mode eversince his brother's death.

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lusimus… 155-156).[113] Just as the initial image of his beloved, the *candida diva* arriving at the borrowed house for a night of passion (70), is deconstructed throughout the course of poem 68b, the different references to *domus* become increasingly sinister until finally the house in Rome is also revealed to be not quite positive. The Roman home which Catullus claims to be his real home is in fact a non-home, a false symbol of belonging (Lotman, 1990:191).

At the beginning of poem 68b, after the lengthy description of Allius' aid, the arrival of Lesbia at the *domus* is interrupted by an extended comparison of her (apparently) to the mythological figure of Laodamia, arriving at the house of Protesilaus on their wedding day (73ff.). As mentioned, this *domus* is described as "begun in vain". Protesilaus was the first Greek to die at Troy, having left his new bride shortly after the wedding. Whether *inceptam frustra* refers to the actual unfinished state of the building or the fact that Protesilaus left before the marriage could be consummated is uncertain (Sarkissian, 1983:17). The reference to Troy sparks an outburst in the Catullan speaker, which disrupts the narrative. He turns once more in apostrophe to his brother in a reprise of his feelings described in 68a, but elaborated.

c. 68b.89-100

Troia (nefas!) commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque,
    Troia virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis, 90
quae nunc et nostro letum miserabile fratri
    attulit. ei misero frater adempte mihi,
ei misero fratri iucundum lumen ademptum,
    tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus;
omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra, 95
    quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
quem nunc tam longe non inter nota sepulcra
    nec prope cognatos compositum cineres,
sed Troia obscena, Troia infelice sepultum
    detinet extremo terra aliena solo. 100

This lament contains two important themes for the poem as a whole. The theme of light (*lumen*) is introduced for the first time, and the image of the "buried house" gains new significance now that three other *domi* have also been introduced: Catullus' alleged "real" house in Rome, Allius', and Protesilaus' (Sarkissian, 1983:24). In light of these other houses, the buried house comes to signify more than a mere family tragedy. Catullus adds to the apostrophe of 68a the fact that his brother died far from home and could therefore not be buried near the family. Therefore the bonds between Catullus' brother and his family

[113] Poem 68a is subsequent in time to 68b, although it is presented as a pre-script (Hubbard, 1984:39; Skinner, 2003:167).

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have been broken "peculiarly totally" (Tuplin, 1981:117). During Catullus' time the Roman élite were just starting to claim Trojan ancestry as status symbol; as a *domi nobilis* Catullus might well display antagonism towards this notion: his family does not begin in Troy but ends there (Theodorakopoulos, 2007:324). Troy as the symbolic space of death, its otherness and distance are all underscored by the words *nefas, tam longe, non inter nota sepulta, obscena, infelice sepultum, extremo…solo, terra aliena*. The *domus* of the Valerii Catulli therefore comes to signify "pure displacement" since it has to be visualized in Verona and Troy at the same time: in the former as the actual family home, in the latter as the brother's burial site (Miller, 2004:53). Moreover, if his brother is his "dear light" (*iucundum lumen*, 93) this has implications for his description of Lesbia as *lux mea* in line 132 (*lux mea se nostrum contulit in gremium*) and the very last line of the poem (Sarkissian, 1983:24). As revealed through the course of poem 68b Lesbia is in fact not like the faithful Laodamia to whom she was initially compared.[114] And she is certainly not equal to Catullus' brother whose sweet love, while still alive, nourished all his joys (*omnia...gaudia nostra, / quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor*, 95-96). This makes the final line of the poem sound empty (*lux mea, qua viva vivere dulce mihi est*); it might well have been his brother who was the real light (and sweetness) in his life (Hubbard, 1984:39).

When Catullus returns to the Laodamia narrative he attempts to describe her intense love for Protesilaus by means of two similes: the grandfather overjoyed at finally holding a long-awaited grandchild in his arms (119-124), and the passionate, monogamous dove who cannot get enough of her mate (125-128).[115] The first of these two similes introduces the theme of family line and offspring, which is picked up once more when Catullus returns to his description of Lesbia and admits to her unfaithfulness. He claims to accept this because Lesbia was never his wife to begin with (*nec tamen illa mihi dextra deducta paterna / fragrantem Assyrio venit odore domum*, 143-144). These lines are preceded by a lacuna but also the phrase *ingratum tremuli tolle parentis onus*: "Take away the thankless burden of a parent trembling from old age" (142). If the "reality" of lines 143-146 undermines the simile of the passionate female dove, the missing lines may well serve to undermine the simile of the joyous grandfather: the trembling parent of line 142 could therefore be a reference to Catullus' own father (Skinner, 2003:165).[116] On this reading Catullus is admitting his awareness of familial duties, which would now be his sole obligation as the only surviving son (Skinner, 2003:165). This would pick up his sad acceptance of duty at the end of poem 65, where an apostrophe to his deceased brother also features prominently. Some time may

[114] The details of the ambiguous comparison will be discussed in the next chapter.
[115] These lines are discussed again in chapter 3, p.158.
[116] Skinner (2003:165) bases her argument on "a pattern of strict responsion" where the ten lines of the double similes in 57-66 and 119-128 respectively are reflected in this part of the poem.

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have passed since then and he appears more accepting in poem 68b. Yet he remains vague about his future and we leave the poem with an ambivalent claim that Lesbia is the light and sweetness of his life. Catullus has shown a remarkably "urbane" attitude towards Lesbia's infidelities in poem 68b; this is the exact opposite attitude to that of the provincial door described in poem 67 (Fitzgerald, 1995:207). As an "urban exile in Verona" Catullus accepts the gifts stolen from the lap (*gremium*) of Lesbia's husband, but as seen in poem 65, with the apple rolling from the girl's lap (see also 66.56, 67.30) the *gremium* is itself a site of displacement (Fitzgerald, 1995:207). Catullus receives gifts intended for another. This "second-hand" nature of their love reveals the precariousness of their relationship and ultimately Catullus' status as a peripheral lover, the topic of the next chapter.

Home and non-home, belonging and not-belonging, presence and absence are recurring themes throughout poems 68a and 68b (cf. Lowrie, 2006:116). The Catullan speaker, as narrator of his life story, appears to be nowhere at home. The Verona of his childhood is no longer his spiritual centre and his residence in Rome has been unmasked as a false home. In his state of belonging neither here nor there his brother's death in Troy brings about total displacement, not only for Catullus but also for the whole Valerii Catulli clan. The *domus* as symbol of the family line "dies" there. This leaves the Catullan speaker in the liminal state between a continuance of his former life of illicit love and art, and the acceptance a new life governed by familial duties. Separation from the former is personified in the person of Manlius. The distance between Catullus and him is underscored by repeated references in poem 68a to location, both in terms of place names as well as deictics (*hinc, huc, illic*, etc.): emotional distance is concretized in physical space. Their exchange of letters becomes a means of bridging the gap. However, there is a greater absence in poems 68a and 68b than the one implied by Manlius' letter. Although poem 68a signifies "discursive failure" in terms of Catullus' refusal to compose a poem, it becomes "discursive success" in the fact that it communicates with a designated recipient (Lowrie, 2006:123): there is a dialogue going on. In both poems 68a and 68b the apostrophe to his brother, on the other hand, signifies a "permanent absence that underscores the futility of speech" (Lowrie, 2006:123). Ironically the multi-voicedness of these poems reveals the ultimate dominance of silence. This is the theme of poem 101.

c. 101

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus
    advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
    et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem,
quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum, 5
    heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi.

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nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,
atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale. 10

Mourning in most societies and religions, ancient and modern, is a liminal state. Only once the body of the deceased has been buried, cremated or "sent off" in some other fashion and the necessary rites, ceremonies or practicalities have been taken care of, could the survivors return to their former state of being (cf. Turner's conception of *reaggregation*: a return to normal structure and stability). The liminal state may be emotionally, culturally and/or religiously imposed, and the duration will differ depending on the particular individual, society and/or religion. In typical Roman funerary practices the corpse is still among the living until all the proper rites have been performed; the mourners are likewise in a liminal state as they are forbidden to take part in the normal activities of society and the male family members are required to wear the dark toga of mourning (Feldherr, 2000:211-212). The case in poem 101 is different. Catullus' brother has died far from home and by the time he is able to visit the grave site, the brother has already been cremated. This impacts on the Catullan speaker's own experience of liminality in profound ways.

Despite the elements of conventional funerary rituals, the poem is emotional and personal, an elegy in the strictest sense of the word (Thomson, 1997:536).[117] Catullus acts as representative of the Valerii Catulli clan and has made the journey to Troy in order to perform the proper funerary rites that would mark his brother's transition to the *Di Manes*, and the survivors' potential return to society. The remoteness of the brother's grave is underscored by the repetition of *multas/multa.* The journey there was not an easy one, but the geographical divide between Catullus and his brother has been bridged. As often noted, this line alludes to the opening words of Homer's *Odyssey* where the theme of Odysseus' great homecoming is introduced (Fitzgerald, 1995:187; Wray, 2001:51; Armstrong, 2013:60; Stevens, 2013:174, et al.). In this case the movement from Troy to home is reversed, both literally and metaphorically: Odysseus will be reunited with his beloved Penelope; Catullus' "reunion" with his brother will mark a final separation (Fitzgerald, 1995:187).

[117] The funerary conventions include the threefold repetition of the word *frater*, recalling the ritual of *conclamatio* where the name of the deceased is called out three times, as well as the phrase *ave atque vale*, a formula found on epitaphs (Thomson, 1997:537-538; Feldherr, 2000:210). Furthermore Catullus fulfils both parts of the *inferiae* in this poem: the bestowal of the funerary offerings and the final words spoken to the deceased (Gaisser, 2009:121).

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Now that he is finally standing at this brother's graveside he is able to address him in close proximity, perform the proper funerary rites and dedicate an entire poem to him alone.[118] Quinn (1973:440) argues for a "confident assumption of an understanding between the brothers transcending the inadequacies of the ceremony" as one of the poem's strengths. At least to some extent the distance highlighted in poems 65, 68a and 68b has been overcome. The Catullan speaker has crossed the boundary of the sea which held him back in poems 65, 68a and 68b and which threatened to drown him in 68a (the metaphorical waves of misery). Yet there is an insurmountable border that remains: his controlled speech here is as ineffective as the explosive apostrophes to his brother in those poems addressed to others: in vain (*nequiquam*) he speaks to mute ashes (*mutam…cinerem*). This is Catullus' most in-depth examination of the silence of death, a silence that is both natural and beyond the control of the speaker (Stevens, 2013:172). There is no understanding between the brothers; the exchange between them is strictly one-sided. Similarly to his substitution by a pale foot in poem 65, the brother has been reduced to the metonymic substitute of ashes. Communication is therefore rendered doubly impossible: both by means of the brother's incapacity to respond and his diminished form. This picks up the diminished agency of the Catullan speaker who also "changes shape" in poem 65 (the nightingale), and finds himself unable to compose poems (*nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus / mens animi...*,65.3-4; *haec tibi non tribuo munera, cum nequeo,* 68a.32). The powerlessness of speech in the face of death's absolute silence therefore poses a threat to the poet's very essence: if the traditional forms of expression that are meant to alleviate the pain of that silence fail, what remains of the poet's "being-in-language"? (Stevens, 2013:172-173)

In light of poems 65 and 68a Feldherr (2000:216) argues that *alloquerer* (4) indicates a re-emergence of Catullus as speaker, recovering from his "silence" in those poems: if the poem is a performance piece this is the word that would indicate his recovery of poetic abilities. Skinner (2003:128) however, argues that the intrusion of *nequiquam* already points to the failure of the poem as performance. In fact, the very act of speech turns out to be a failure. The three imperatives *accipe, ave, vale* have a paradoxical function in the poem. On the one hand they create a sense of intimacy between Catullus and his brother which excludes the audience: there is a suggestion of a dialogue. This is the closest he gets to his brother, both physically and emotionally, in all of the three poems on his death. On the other hand, it is the very semblance of intimacy that underscores the total lack thereof. Any command to the deceased is implicitly unsuccessful and "cannot but represent a travesty of the ordinary powers of speech" (Stevens, 2013:176). The dialogue fails. For Catullus speech in this

[118] Some scholars regard the poem as part of the *munera* offered to the deceased brother (Cederstrom, 1981:117; Skinner, 2003:128, et al.).

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context is no longer a matter of personal choice but of one of ritualistic, thankless obligation; in this way the poem itself becomes the "obligatory gift" (*munus*) (Stevens, 2013:176).

On another level, when the poem is read as a private message for the deceased *alloquerer* would indicate that Catullus has entered the realm of the departed (Feldherr, 2000:217). He has in a sense crossed the boundary of the river Lethe. As Janan (1994:127) argues, Catullus often equates "loss of Other with loss of self". For this reason he describes his house as buried with his brother: his own future has been removed by his brother's death and in that respect he has also "died" prematurely. Furthermore, a written poem implies the absence of one of the communicative parties, whether seen from the poet's or reader's perspective – "[t]o read this poem is to address to Catullus the very greeting he addressed to his brother" and to make him the recipient of *ave atque vale* (Fitzgerald, 1995:188).[119] Farewell to the brother becomes farewell to the self.

Despite its portrayal of intense feeling the emotional control in poem 101 is remarkable, with only one deviation following Catullus' acceptance of the futility of speech: "Alas poor brother, undeservedly taken from me" (*heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi*, 6). The line closely echoes 68a.20 and 68b.92, but *indigne* has been added. The adverb may be read two ways: the cruelty of his premature departure for the brother himself, but more so for the Catullan speaker who has to live with the consequences. In the next line Catullus resumes his composure as if he had experienced a short lapse. Dutifully he follows the proper funerary rites (*…haec, prisco quae more parentum / tradita sunt… / accipe…*, 7-9), but strong emotions lie just beneath the surface. The alliteration of *m* creates the mood of mourning (Fordyce, 1961:388; Goold, 1983:263) and *interea* (7) is adversative, not temporal, being contrasted with *ipsum* (5) (Fordyce, 1961:389; Quinn, 1973:441; Thomson, 1997:538). This would signify that the funerary gifts (*haec)* are a poor replacement for the real, living brother. They are drenched with the many tears of a brother (*fraterno multum manantia fletu,* 9), an image that picks up the *multa aequora* from line 1. Water returns as a boundary between the living and the dead as Catullus prepares to take his leave. Having survived his metaphorical drowning and literally crossed the boundary of the sea he is at least able to stand close to his brother in some respect. However, boundaries separate as well as unite (Lotman, 1990:136). His tears signify a permanent separation from his brother. This makes the finality of the last line both poignant and brutal. Because of the enormous distance Catullus would probably never be able to visit the grave again, therefore the "hail and farewell" (*ave atque vale*, 10) is *in perpetuum*. Whereas the first line of the poem

[119] As Feldherr (2000:217) argues, the terms used to refer to same-sex sibling are necessarily reflexive: a brother is a brother to a brother. In this way the repeated use of *frater* and *fraterno* cause the lines between Catullus and this brother to blurr.

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emphasized separation in space, the last line points to separation in time (Feldherr, 2000:215). Time and space together define Catullus' liminality. This is the end of all contact between Catullus and his brother, even the monologic kind. The silence with which the poem ends is insurmountable and final.

Throughout poem 65, 68a and 68b the Catullan speaker experiences the "anxiety of displacement" (Fitzgerald, 1995:210) on an emotional, social and also geographical level. With the death of his brother he has not only lost a loved one and a family line, but his very essence as a poet is threatened as his words are met by the silence of death. Poetry has become an obligation to friends, acquaintances and the deceased; no longer the offspring of the Muses. His brother dies at Troy, the Romans' place of origin; as a consequence Catullus has to leave his new life in Rome and go to his own place of origin, provincial Verona. In the process the Catullan speaker's "complicated cultural affiliations" come to the fore (Fitzgerald, 1995:211) and his liminal position is revealed. He belongs in neither Rome nor Verona and is truly "betwixt and between". When he visits his brother's actual grave site in Troy the omission of any geographical references or adverbs of place has an ambivalent function: it both creates a sense of intimacy between the brothers, but it also highlights the displacement of the Catullan speaker. He has come to a symbolic no-man's land where his future lies buried, but also from where the group of which he has peripheral membership claims their ancestry. And he has come to *has inferias,* a miserable substitute for the person who is no longer there. Through his close identification with his brother, the lack of hope of performing yearly rituals to commemorate him,[120] and the buried household of the Valerii Catulli, the Catullan speaker receives no relief from his liminal state. He travels to Troy for a reunion that would not happen, to perform a ritual that he knows will have no effect on the deceased, and with the acceptance of his brother's passing comes the realization that his family has come to an end (Skinner, 2003:11-12; Nappa, 2007:393). The farewell may be final, but there is no reaggregation on the horizon in this ritual process. The brother's reduction to funeral rites and ashes on Trojan soil becomes the displacement of the Catullan speaker *in perpetuum*.[121]

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[120] Feldherr (2000:213) refers, among others, to the public religious festivals of the *Parentalia* and *Rosalia*, where offerings were made to the dead, as well as to more private ceremonies where families would celebrate the birthday of the deceased or the anniversary of his death.

[121] Stevens (2013:201) points out that there is no mention of Catullus' return journey, signifying his permanent displacement.

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CHAPTER THREE

CATULLUS AS PERIPHERAL LOVER

In the previous chapter we saw that Catullus and his comrades found themselves in a Rome in political turmoil where a handful of powerful individuals were competing for dominance. This is the kind of society where poetry on the individual's erotic suffering take on new significance. Catullus sees around him a breakdown of the traditional Roman institutions which used to ensure the stability of the state. This is most acutely felt in his romantic relationships. In his conservative clinging to a traditional moral code he finds himself increasingly distanced from his contemporary society and disregarded by his lovers. However, he is not traditionalist by any means. While embracing an established moral code in his relationships he defies many of society's norms and so evokes the disapproval of "the stern old men". This is the great paradox of Catullus the lover. He has an adulterous affair but he regards it as marriage. At the same time he expects from his lovers the reciprocal behaviour characteristic of male friendship. From these ambiguities Catullus the lover emerges as a young man on the periphery.

When it comes to erotic love in the Catullan corpus the speaker has two darlings: Lesbia and Juventius. Lesbia overshadows all other characters by far in Catullus' poetry: she is named in 13 poems and implied in at least 15.[1] She appears primarily as the beloved in erotic poems but also makes her presence felt in poems on other themes, as we saw in the previous chapter.[2] Juventius, on the other hand, seems to feature more as the cause of invective aimed at rivals, although there are three genuine love poems addressed to him.[3] In this chapter I will discuss the love poems written for and about Lesbia, as well as the three poems addressed to Juventius. Despite the difference between the two beloveds all of these poems have a particular feature in common: the speaker's realization that he is of marginal importance in the eyes of the one he loves.

3.1 LESBIA

> [Catullus] developed an ideal of love so novel that neither Lesbia nor his friends could understand or respect it (Frank, 1968:236).

The love-affair of ancient erotic poetry has two salient features: it is short-lived and almost exclusively physical (Copley, 1949:23). In his relationship with the great love of his life, the

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[1] She is named in poems 5, 7, 43, 51, 58, 72, 75, 79, 83, 86, 87, 92 and 107. In poems 2, 3, 8, 11, 13, 35, 36, 37, 68, 70, 76, 82, 85, 104 and 109 she is either referred to as *puella (mea), mulier mea, mea diva, lux mea, mea vita*, or suggested by means of thematic and/or verbal echoes. There are other poems, such as 60 or 77, 91, where a convincing case for her involvement could also be made.
[2] Cf. poems 35, 36, 43 and 86 discussed in the previous chapter.
[3] See Poems 48, 81 and 99.

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Catullan speaker found himself to be emotionally and linguistically in a new world. His love for Lesbia had both a physical and, more importantly, an emotional component. But in the everyday world of Roman society there did not exist adequate concepts to encapsulate the feelings that he as a man was experiencing towards a woman whom he regarded as his equal. In order to show the depth, seriousness and sincerity of these feelings for her he resorted to the social and political language of the male realm, where a well-developed vocabulary of mutual commitment existed.[4] Within this code concepts such as *fides, foedus, pietas, officium, gratia* and *benevolentia* (*bene velle*) fell under the umbrella term of *amicitia,* a complex "friendship" based on mutual obligation and responsibility (Ross, 1969:80ff.; Lyne, 1980:24-25). Catullus employed these terms in his love poems in an attempt to describe to Lesbia, but also to himself, the kind of love which he envisioned for them, and which he felt for his own part: a love where the emotional cannot be detached from the physical.[5] Not only did his novel use of these concepts highlight his peripheral status in the "real" world of business and politics, but he was also emotionally and socially in a space outside of the existing framework for a heterosexual affair. Within this "lyric space" (Miller, 1994:130) Catullus produced some of the most original, timeless as well as brutal love poems.

Societal norms and a novel view of the beloved were not the only challenges the Catullan speaker faced. On an individual level the relationship itself pushed the Catullan lover to the periphery. Lesbia did not share his devotion. What was a mere entertaining pastime for her, was a "marriage" in his eyes. The inability of the Catullan speaker to accept the status quo only increased his isolation as the relationship intensified until, finally, he found himself in the position of an insignificant flower growing on the edge of a meadow where it was overlooked and destroyed inadvertently.

My ordering of the "Lesbia" poems in the following discussion is by no means an attempt to argue for their chronology. As stated in the previous chapter, I agree with Miller's synchronic reading of the poems. They are in constant dialogue and shed light on one another as the reader is able to scroll back and forth. Like Dostoevksy Catullus the poet portrays moments of crisis in the "life" of the Catullan speaker, juxtaposing and counterposing dramatic stages (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:28, 149). However, there is a discernible narrative element to Catullan lyric poetry, which is generated by the text itself as a means of explaining the individual

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[4] Lyne (1980:25ff.) argues against the claim that Catullus employed the language of party politics, stating rather that the language of aristocratic obligation happened to be used in the political realm as well; in his view a romantic love poet would have no business with Roman politics. I follow the view of Vinson (1992:163ff.) that Catullus, although he did not participate in politics or *negotium*, was in fact acutely aware and critical of the political instability in the late Republic, and disenchanted with the way in which this spilled over into Roman private life. I will therefore use the term socio-political language to refer to Catullus' use of terms such as *amicitia, foedus*, etc.

[5] Lyne (1980:19) uses the term "whole love".

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episodes depicted in the poems (Miller, 1994:55). This makes the portrayal of a single "lyric consciousness" possible, even if this consciousness is in conflict with itself (Miller, 1994:59).[6] I therefore offer my choice of poems in an order which represents what I believe to be an increasing level of disillusionment on the part of the Catullan lyric ego. This allows for the construction of a "narrative scenario" (Miller, 1994:59). This narrative by no means proposes to be linear; through repetition and reworking, particularly in the epigrams, Catullus is able to articulate the relationship in ever greater detail (Janan, 1994:83): the self-reflection enabled by narrative (Ricoeur, 1991a:73). This is what my ordering aims to reflect.

3.1.1 Infatuation

When Catullus first catches sight of Lesbia he immediately falls in love with her. Because of her married status and his own sense of uncertainty he approaches her with caution, but gradually we see a relationship develop and Catullus growing in confidence. From the outset he experiences a sense of intoxication in her presence, which continues throughout the initial phase of the relationship sometimes bordering on euphoria. In this section we will be looking at those poems which most likely represent the first stage of the relationship: the stage of infatuation, intoxication and insatiable desire.

An explicit expression of the physical effects of Catullus' intoxication is found in what is most likely the first poem to deal with the affair.[7] Catullus makes use of a "female" voice to explore the complex feelings that he is experiencing.

c.51

Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
ille, si fas est, superare divos,
qui sedens adversus identidem te
    spectat et audit

dulce ridentem, misero quod omnis   5
eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi
    <vocis in ore>

lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
flamma demanat, sonitu suopte   10
tintinant aures, gemina teguntur
    lumina nocte.

[6] Cf. Ricoeur, MacIntyre, Crites, Kerby and Gergen and Gergen (chapter 1, "Narrative and identity") who all find in narrative the means of accommodating a single consciousness with all its changes and conflicting behaviours.
[7] Akbar Kahn (1966:453), Quinn (1973:241) and Rankin (1976:7) all follow this line of argument.

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otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est;
otio exsultas nimiumque gestis;
otium et reges prius et beatas 15
perdidit urbes.

A translation of Sappho 31? Most definitely, it seems. Sappho's poem would have been well known to Catullus' contemporary readers and they would have recognised his appropriation of that text. However, there are obvious as well as subtle differences between the Sapphic and the Catullan poems. In Catullus' poem we have a male poet, writing centuries later in a very different environment with different values and priorities. His experience of the debilitating effects of love necessarily has to be different.

When first looking at poem 51 independently of Sappho 31, what is the poem about? We have a male speaker, as indicated by *misero* in line 5, looking at another man (*ille*) who is sitting across from a woman called "Lesbia", the object of the speaker's desire. There is a voyeuristic element to the poem. The couple appear to be in an intimate situation: *adversus* (3) implies that they are facing each other and the man is close enough to study the woman's face repeatedly and to hear her sweet laughter (*identidem te / spectat et audit / dulce ridentem...*, 3-5). No other participants are mentioned and the speaker seems to be spying on them from a safe enough location to go unnoticed. His isolation is underscored by the fact that he elevates "that man" to the status of a god for his ability to sit in the woman's presence and be unaffected (Greene, 1999:3). He appears to be curiously obsessed with the unidentified man as indicated by the threefold repetition in *ille…ille…qui* and the fact that the man's position seems to be the greatest cause of his misery: "(Something) which, in my misery, steals all the senses from me" (*misero quod omnis / eripit sensus mihi*, 5-6).[8] Only in the middle of the poem does the speaker's attention fully shift to his beloved and he addresses her directly.[9] Unlike the man, the Catullan speaker is unable to look at her for long, catching sight of her only briefly (*aspexi*, 7) his senses are debilitated one by one (7-12). In the final stanza there is another shift of focus as the speaker now addresses himself and "looks" at himself as he looked at the man (*videtur*, 1) and briefly looked at the woman (*aspexi*, 7). The theme of incapacity dominates all three instances of "looking", culminating in the self-inflicted incapacity of *otium*. Looking at the man and the woman together robs the Catullan speaker of all his senses (5-6); looking at Lesbia only once renders his senses powerless one by one to a point of blackout (7-12).[10] Finally, the state of doing nothing

[8] Although the exact antecedent of *quod* is uncertain – the man's status, his proximity to Lesbia, or the entire situation? – his involvement is undeniable.
[9] She is of course already present as *te* in line 3, but there she is the object of "that man's" gazing. Now she is regarded in full focus by the speaker.
[10] Cf. Finamore (1984:16) for the final image in the list of incapacitated senses as one of blackout.

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(*otium*) has ruined both kings and cities in the past; seeing himself in a similar state should be a warning to Catullus (13-16).

When poem 51 enters into dialogue with Sappho 31 new meanings emerge.

Sappho 31[11]
φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν
ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὄττις ἐνάντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἆδυ φωνεί-
σας ὐπακούει

καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν 5
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·
ὠς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε', ὤς με φώναι-
σ' οὐδ' ἒν ἔτ' εἴκει,

ἀλλά κὰμ μὲν γλῶσσα̣ <μ'> ἔαγε, λέπτον
δ' αὔτικα χρῷ πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμηκεν, 10
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἒν ὄρημμ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,

κὰδ' δέ ἴδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης 15
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὔτ[α̣.

ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ †καὶ πένητα†

The differences between the two poems are telling. What seemed to be a translation at first, turns out to be an adaptation with a distinctly Roman colour. Greene (1999:2) refers to the different "narrative contexts" of the two poems. Although both poems give an account of a love triangle the cultural differences between Catullus and Sappho, and especially their different genders, greatly influence Catullus' rendering of the poem. A homoerotic love triangle, where the figure of a woman is both subject and object, is turned into a hetero-erotic one where Roman conceptions of manhood are determinative (Greene, 1999:2). Catullus' experience is not Sappho's (Finamore, 1984:15) and his adaptation of her poem becomes a vivid expression of his characteristic conflict between the public, male demands of *negotium* and the appeal of her private, female world (Greene, 2007:133). In assuming a female voice within a distinctly male dominated context the Catullan speaker not only reveals his own vulnerability but he intentionally blurs the lines between male and female, business and pleasure, life and art.

[11] Text from Campbell, 1982:78-80.

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The second line of Catullus' poem does not appear in Sappho. This expansion on the man's implied divinity, to a point where he can even surpass the gods, introduces a sense of hierarchy and competition between the man who is unaffected by Lesbia's presence and the male speaker who loses control at the mere sight of her (Greene, 1999:4).[12] In Sappho's poem the focus is on her own emotional reaction to the sight of her beloved and the main function of "the man" is to provide a context in which she may explore her feelings. Catullus' emphasis on "that man" and his empowering of "the other" in contrast with himself, draws in the outside, male-dominated world of business, power and politics (Greene, 2007:138). In this way the masculine, public world of Rome intrudes into Sappho's feminine, private world of intimate experience to reveal the liminal position of the Catullan speaker. On the one hand he aligns himself with Sappho in his experience of symptoms that echo hers. On the other hand, he is all too aware of his contemporary society and what that society demands of him as an independent male. This ambivalent position emasculates him and he finds in Sappho both a kindred spirit as well as a means for exploring his own peripheral identity as a lover and a poet in a society which values public duty over private pursuits (Greene, 1999:6).

Apart from the second line Catullus also adds *identidem* (3) and *spectat* (4). In Sappho's poem "the man" only listens, in Catullus he *sees* and hears (Akbar Kahn, 1966:450; O'Higgins, 1990:157). This links up with the three instances of "looking" mentioned above. Only here Catullus is not the one looking: it is "that man" and, unlike Catullus, he is not incapacitated by this action. For Akbar Kahn (1966:451-452) the man looking at the woman unaffectedly adds a religious dimension to the poem: looking in the face of a deity was a frightening experience in Roman thought; the ability of a mortal to do so makes him equal to the gods. By implication Lesbia is a *dea* in Catullus' eyes (Akbar Kahn, 1966:453) (cf. *candida diva*, 68.70). This religious framework would explain Catullus' self-justification in the phrase *si fas est* (Akbar Kahn, 1966:453), "a formula protecting the speaker from the sin of irreverent overstatement" (Quinn, 1973:242).[13] In this way Catullus brings another aspect of the outside world into his poem which is absent in Sappho's self-reflexive version.[14]

An equivalent for *misero* (5) does not appear in Sappho. Not only does this word together with the concept of *otium* link poem 51 with poem 50[15] but it is the first indication of Catullus' erotic suffering and another clue to the fact that his poem is after all not a translation of

[12] Ancient Rome was a "contest society" where every man was constantly under scrutiny from his fellows (Clark, 2008:259).
[13] A similar sense of apology is achieved through *identidem* ("again and again"): the man not only looks at Lesbia but he does this repeatedly.
[14] For Greene (1999:4) the phrase *si fas est* recalls the socio-political sphere of Roman men. What both Akbar Kahn and Greene stress is the intrusion of the public demands of Roman society into the personal meditation of Sappho's original.
[15] See the discussion of *otiosi* and *miserum* in that poem in the previous chapter (p.44ff).

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Sappho (Wray, 2001:98). This is immediately followed by another deviation from Sappho: all at once the speaker's senses are snatched away (*...omnis / eripit sensus mihi*, 5-6). *Eripit* is an aggressive verb which implies a lack of agency on the part of the speaker; he is the passive victim.[16] In contrast Sappho's pulse quickens at the sight of her beloved with the man (τό μ' ἦ μὰν / καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν, 5-6).[17] The metaphor of her heart "fluttering in her breast" suggests what we would now refer to as an adrenaline rush. Catullus makes no reference to his heart or any onslaught of sudden energy. He experiences an immediate weakness and incapacitation. Sappho's quickened pulse is followed by a gradual termination of her senses. Catullus follows her quite closely in his description of his tongue, ears and eyes faltering (the third stanza in both poems). Yet in the fourth stanza she sweats and trembles (13-14): there is still some life left in her.[18] Even when she seems to herself to be close to dying (15-16) she is still able to refer to her state of being. This is underscored by the emphatic self-confirmation of ἔμμι (15) and her conscious decision to withstand all (ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον, 17). The latter phrase, often translated as "but all must be endured" would be more correctly rendered by "but all can be endured" (Wills, 1967:90 n.45; O'Higgins, 1990:162; D'Angour, 2013:65). Through analysing its usage in the *Iliad* D'Angour (2013:65) states that the meaning of τολμάω is nearer to "I dare" than to "I endure".[19] Wills (1967:190) and Greene (1999:8) make a similar point, arguing for Sappho's determination expressed in τόλματον: "(all) can be ventured". In sum: "'can' indicates possibility rather than inevitability, and 'dare' indicates an active attitude rather than a passive position" (D'Angour, 2013:65). Sappho is turning towards the future. Catullus, on the other hand, not only experiences an immediate loss of all senses, but his state of misery and the violence implicit in *eripit* creates an image of lifelessness. Although Sappho lists the disintegration of her body parts she still affirms "the persistence of an integral ego" by using verbs in the first person as well as first-person pronouns and substantives (Janan, 1994:74). By contrast Catullus' gradual disintegration in the third strophe is described by third-person verbs in the total absence of pronouns and substantives (Janan, 1994:74): the speaking subject as a person seems to have disappeared and all that remains are disjointed body

[16] The same verb is used twice in poem 77 of Rufus' "snatching away" of all that was good in the speaker's life (*eripuisti*, 4, 5). This poem is discussed in the next chapter (p.193ff.).
[17] Just as with Catullus' *quod* the exact antecedent of τό is uncertain. The issue at stake here is not the antecedent but the different results of the substantive in the two poems.
[18] Some scholars argue that χλωροτέρα ποίας refers to renewal and new life (O'Higgins, 1990:163; Greene, 1999:10). Traditionally this is seen as the standard portrayal of fear, inspired by Homer (Marcovich, 1972:26).
[19] D'Angour (2013:59ff.) argues throughout his paper that Sappho adopts martial imagery from Homer to express the complex emotions involved in erotic love. Edwards (1989:593) makes the same point.

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parts. This culminates in the death metaphor of *gemina teguntur / lumina nocte* ("my eyes are shrouded in twin night", 11-12), the moment before an implied loss of consciousness.[20]

Greene (2007:140), on the other hand, sees Catullus' disintegration as only partial and therefore his experience of desire as "not entirely debilitating": he seems more involved in his "own image-making" than concerned with the effect the beloved has on him.[21] She reads *omnis* (5) and *nihil* (7) as indicative of an "integral identity" whereas Sappho, despite regaining emotional control in the final strophe (as suggested by πὰν), experiences complete erotic disintegration: she has a total out-of-body experience where she is able to regard herself from a distance (τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης / φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὔτᾳ, 15-16) (Greene, 1999:8-9). Greene (1999:15; 2007:141) concludes that the Catullan speaker's experience of desire is inhibited by his gender in the man's world of Roman *negotium*. I would argue that it is precisely the added pressures of his gender and particular society that *increases* the incapacity of the Catullan speaker in comparison with Sappho. Therefore the final stanza is stark and hopeless whereas Sappho's offers a glimmer of hope; she is not giving up (Wills, 1967:190). Moreover, the final stanza in Catullus represents a much more concrete out-of-body experience to the extent that the Catullan speaker can address himself schizophrenically in the second person ("internally dialogized discourse", cf. Bakhtin, 1984:203). Whereas Sappho is able to gather herself together and make a conscious decision in the final stanza of her poem the fragmentation of the Catullan speaker in the *otium* stanza seems irreversible. The speaker's self-address, which acts as a foil to his address of the beloved in line 7 (both absent in Sappho), underscores his distance from her, not only spatially as in Sappho, but also socio-politically. The apparently abrupt shift in tone and address in the fourth stanza, and the departure from Sappho's original is both anticipated and necessitated. It is a statement of "an endangered self" (Segal, 1989:817).

In poem 51 Catullus' "feminine" loss of control is contrasted with the supreme god-like control of "that man" who embodies the *dignitas* expected of élite male citizens (Edwards, 1993:26, 32; Greene, 2007:141). Yet curiously none of the symptoms that follow from Catullus' loss of power would be perceivable to a viewer (Clark, 2008:257). In marked contrast with Sappho Catullus omits all the symptoms that have a visible manifestation: sweat, trembling and pallor (Clark, 2008:260). In the circles of the Roman élite which he

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[20] See Akbar Kahn (1966:459) and Vine (1992:257) for the covering of the eyes with night as a metaphor for dying. Edwards (1989:599) goes a step further and interprets the image of the two lights being covered in night, implied by the hypallage, as a symbol of cosmic annihilation: the two great celestial lights have disappeared. This prepares the reader for Catullus' own "eclipse" (Edwards, 1989:599).

[21] She cites *sonitu suopte / tintinant aures* and *gemina teguntur / lumina nocte* as indicative of the speaker's isolation from the real presence of the lover to support this claim.

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frequented no one would be the wiser as to his inner turmoil and "unmanly" behaviour (Edwards, 1993:26). But even if Catullus is able to display immense control outwardly he loses control emotionally. As readers we are made privy to his most intimate feelings, just as in poem 50.[22] He reveals his vulnerability to the select (neoteric) group of readers among whom his poems circulated and who would understand his sensibilities.[23] To the outside world he does not give away his weakness.

This prepares the reader for the final stanza on *otium* in which he/she is again made privy to Catullus' innermost feelings, this time by means of an internal dialogue. The Catullan speaker addresses Catullus in the second person (*Catulle*, 13) and warns him of the dangers of *otium*, firstly to his own person and secondly to society at large. Both "Catulluses" function as autonomous agents who may engage in dialogue on equal footing. In this way Catullus breaks down the outer shell of his own self image – the one portrayed to the world – and reveals his consciousness in its purist form (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:120). The challenge to the reader lies in the interpretation of this consciousness: is this a liminal personality in defiance of his contemporary society, or one who has come to accept the futility of resisting that society? This tension between the two speakers centres on the concept of *otium*. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, o*tium* was for Catullus and his poet-friends a way of life and of art which in many respects defied Roman public life in favour of the private and the personal (Segal, 1970:25, 31). This opposition may be seen in the anaphora in the last stanza, *otium…otio…otium*, which balances the three-fold repetition of *ille…ille…qui* in the first: the man addressed in the last stanza, who indulges in *otium*, is the exact opposite of the controlled man who opens the poem (Wills, 1967:195). For the neoterics *otium* was not only a state of inactivity in strong opposition to *negotium,* but also an attitude (O'Higgins, 1990:165), yet Catullus seems to denounce *otium* in the final stanza of poem 51 as he moves from the personal to the national implications of the term (Laidlaw, 1968:47). In poem 50 Catullus illustrated with "humorous irony" the cost of *otium* for him on a personal level (Segal, 1970:30): feeling miserable without his poet-friend Calvus. I would argue that the same irony is present in the final stanza of poem 51, especially as he progresses from the personal to the global.[24] For a poet so obsessed with the small-scale and the personal "kings and cities" would hardly matter. The irony is further supported by the outdated connotations of *reges* and the adverb *prius*: those things are in the past and their "protestations" should be regarded with the same indifference as the

[22] Poems 50 and 51 are often treated as natural companion pieces similar to 65 and 66. See Segal (1970), Wray (2001:97).
[23] See Wiseman (1982:38) on the select readership of Catullus' poems as opposed to public performances to the masses.
[24] Williams (1968:252) and Platter (1995:218) share this view.

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gossip of the all too serious old guys (poem 5.2). In seemingly denouncing *otium* the Catullan speaker embraces exactly this "living for oneself, free from the burdens of public responsibility" (Frank, 1968:237). He is not unaware of the pain and the difficulties that result from *otium (dolor,* 50.17, *molestum est*, 51.13) but he has illustrated the art that *otium* can produce in the very poem which claims to denounce it (Segal, 1970:30).[25] However, there is an unresolved tension in the very word itself: in embracing *otium* the Catullan speaker has to acknowledge its antithesis (Platter, 1995:219).[26]

Sappho seems to pull herself together in the final stanza.[27] Having looked at herself, becoming her own object, she is able to regain her lost faculties. Catullus also becomes his own object, not just in perception but also in address and so counterbalances the man who can look at and listen to Lesbia. Yet in Catullus there is no regain of lost senses or firm resolve, only a bleak, impersonal take on the dangers of living a life devoted to art and love. Wray (2001:93) sees in this final stanza a move away from the feminine and amatory to a "most masculine concern for wealth and power". But for the Catullan speaker love and art is a way of life and not a second-rate pursuit that could be compartmentalized. This accounts for his switch to the third person in order to voice an opinion that divides the subject against itself. He opts for the private world of *otium* and art, and so "plays the other" emotionally (Clark, 2008:278), yet he cannot detach himself entirely from his immediate society where the highest premium is put on *negotium*. Therefore, in appearance, he complies with the behavioural code of the male Roman élite, a group to which he aspires on the one hand. Yet, on the other hand, he rejects the very pursuits which define that group. Under cover of a translation the Catullan speaker's peripheral status is subtly yet undeniably revealed. He cannot be entirely Sappho, yet he cannot be entirely Roman either. He remains somewhere in between in an unidentified space that he struggles to define throughout his corpus.[28] The result is a multi-voiced poetic ego that is revealed through its own self-address as well as through the dialogic interaction between individual poems in the collection (Miller, 1993:191). The next two poems under discussion clearly illustrate this aspect of the Catullan corpus as they engage one another in a conversation on Lesbia's pet sparrow.

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[25] See Itzkowitz (1983) for a discussion of the poet's conscious artistry in this poem as well as a convincing argument for the fourth stanza as an integral part of the poem as a whole.

[26] The dependence of the Catullan poetics on the "coexistence of the mutually exclusive worlds of love and politics" (Platter, 1995:219) becomes increasingly explicit in his love poems as his relationship with Lesbia deteriorates.

[27] The corrupt state of this stanza impedes interpretation. However, ἀλλὰ indicates a definite turn in the poem.

[28] The elegiac poets would benefit from Catullus' struggle. They would create in their poems an environment with its own value system from which they may reject those particular values in favour of a life of love; the result is a romanticized version of *otium* and the simple life (Rosivach, 1986:183). In the highly politicized times of late republican Rome Catullus had no such option.

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The dialogic interaction between poems 2 and 3 is unmistakable. I will treat them separately first and then show how they shed light upon each other when read together.

[c.2][29]
Passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,
cui primum digitum dare appetenti
et acris solet incitare morsus,
cum desiderio meo nitenti 5
carum nescioquid lubet iocari,
et solaciolum sui doloris,
credo, ut tum gravis acquiescat ardor;
tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem
et tristis animi levare curas! 10

There is an element of surprise to this poem (Thomson, 1997:201-202). In what appears to be a poem about the speaker's beloved he addresses a third party and an apparently insignificant addressee at that. Yet this is only revealed in the second last line where *tecum* makes it clear that *passer* is in fact vocative (Thomson, 1997:201). In the previous chapter we saw Catullus' technique of addressing third parties, both human and inanimate, in order to convey a message, often not a very pleasant one, to the real recipient (poems 22, 44, 35 and 36). In poem 2 he uses a similar technique, this time not to express literary critique but, closer to poem 35, to mask his lack of confidence and ultimately his extreme isolation. There is a voyeuristic element in the poem similar to that of poem 51. Catullus is watching his girl[30] playing intimately with a pet sparrow. She appears to be totally unaware of him and more so of his intense feelings. He does not approach her, but instead addresses the little bird who could never respond. The displacement of the Catullan speaker becomes, in this poem, also a replacement. "That man" no longer appears to be an obstacle, but Lesbia has another distraction.[31]

The exact nature of the *passer* has generated a wide range of scholarship, mostly centred on either "the sparrow as sparrow" (e.g., Jones, 1998) or the sparrow as a metaphor for a penis (e.g., Hooper, 1985). I believe this "obsession" with one word has led to a narrow

[29] I agree with those editors (most, in fact) who separate poem 2 from poem 2b (*tam gratum est…*). Poem 2 forms a meaningful unit as it stands, with the last two lines balancing the first two (cf. Thomson, 1997:205). *Tecum ludere* (9) echoes *quicum ludere* (2) and offers a rounded conclusion to the poem with the real thrust of the poem, the speaker's feelings, revealed in the final couplet. Poem 2b will therefore not form part of this discussion as I believe this to be a fragment of a separate poem. For an alternate reading see Fitzgerald (1995:42-44), who does not separate the poems and argues for the erotic tension in the poem as a means of enticing the reader, in typically provocative Catullan fashion, only to end the poem with the theme of virginity (Atalanta who is implied in poem 2b).
[30] As stated in my discussion of poem 36 (chapter 2, p.58ff.), I take the (*mea) puella* of Catullus' love poems as a reference to Lesbia. This interpretation is accepted by most scholars.
[31] Both Skinner (1981:39) and Wiseman (1985:138) argue that in the two sparrow poems the relationship between Catullus and Lesbia is still unfulfilled.

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interpretation of the poem either way.[32] I agree with Wiseman (1985:138, 139, n.36), who refutes the phallic interpretation and instead looks at the poem more holistically as an illustration of the relationship (or lack thereof) between Catullus and the girl: "Sparrows were sacred to Aphrodite…and this poem is about love, not birds" (138), nor phalluses for that matter.[33] The sparrow is simply a medium for conveying something about the speaker, the beloved and their relationship (Dyson, 2007:256). Whatever the "real" nature of the sparrow may be in the poetic world of the poem (an actual pet or some other amusement), it serves to illustrate the discrepancy between the speaker's passion for the girl and her assumed passion for him. The fact that Catullus chose such an unlikely candidate for a loveable pet (Fordyce, 1961:88; Hooper, 1985:162) precisely underscores this discrepancy.

The first word to describe the sparrow is *deliciae* (delight, plaything), a word with unmistakable erotic overtones. This image is extended in *ludere, sinu tenere* (2), *appetenti* (3), *acris morsus* (4), *desiderio* (5), *doloris* (7), and *ardor* (8) (Ferguson, 1985:10; Ingleheart, 2003:557). The erotic vocabulary could be seen as supportive of the argument that *passer* equals penis (cf. Jocelyn, 1980:427). However, that would be a very literal interpretation of the scene, which the speaker seems to be observing from a distance. We are offered Catullus' *perception* of Lesbia's game: how the game made him feel as an uninvolved observer. This is Catullus' view of the situation and of himself in that situation, what Taylor (1985:57-58) calls the "subject-referring" nature of our experiences: we experience emotions from the perspective of a certain self-understanding.[34] Catullus' own intense passion heightens his impression of Lesbia's. This fact is underscored by *credo ut* ("as I believe", 8): in fact, he does not know what she feels. This puts a question mark behind *gravis* (8). The Catullan speaker perceives Lesbia's passion as intense, but he is in fact projecting his own feelings of "sad cares" (*tristis…curas*, 10) onto her. The erotic vocabulary in poem 2 is therefore similar to the erotic hyperboles used in poem 50 where a light-hearted literary exercise with Calvus left Catullus feeling like an abandoned lover when he was alone afterwards.[35] We have no idea whether Calvus' experience was even remotely similar.

[32] I do not intend to go into the details of the opposing arguments as this is not relevant to my own interpretation. See Dyson (2007:257) for a good, recent summary of the pro and contra scholarship.

[33] Sparrows are associated with Aphrodite/Venus based on Sappho 1 where the goddess rides in a chariot drawn by sparrows (Brenk, 1980:707; Wiseman, 1985:138; Ingleheart, 2003:556, et al.). Catullus reminds us of this connection in poem 3's opening lines (Jones, 1998:190). A reading of poem 2 with Sappho in mind is further supported by the name Catullus chose for his beloved "Lesbia" (Brenk, 1980:707) as well as his reference to her as *Sapphica puella* (poem 35.16). The sparrow is therefore undoubtedly an erotic symbol, but not, in my mind, a phallus.

[34] Cf. the new kind of hero found in Dostoevsky, who is created not through the author's description but through what he/she says about himself/herself and about the world (Bakhtin, 1984:53)

[35] Note the verbal echoes between the two poems: *deliciae* (2.1) – *delicatos* (50.3); *ludere* (2.2, 8) – *lusimus, ludebat* (50.2, 5); *iocari* (2.6) – *iocum* (50.6); *doloris* (2.7) – *dolorem* (50.17). Janan (1994:58) has also noted the hopping of the sparrow in poem 3 (*modo huc modo illuc*, 9) which picks

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Likewise Catullus' interpretation of Lesbia's game with her pet is open to gross exaggeration. He needs relief from his overwhelming feelings for her. The fact that she is able to play distractedly with a pet does not mean that the pet offers enough comfort to ease a burning passion; in fact, it implies that the girl's passion is no match for the speaker's in the first place. He wishes to be distracted by the bird himself and so be relieved of his cares, as she seems to be, but he knows that it is impossible (he uses *possem* (9), not *possim,* cf. Ferguson, 1985:11). In the final lines the Catullan speaker admits the superficiality of Lesbia's passion and solves the ambiguity of *desiderio meo nitenti*: she is the object of his desire, about her feelings we know nothing.[36]

Catullus' attempt at dialogue in poem 2 is evident: he addresses an animal, incapable of human speech, and describes to him at length a recurring scenario (*solet*, 4) in which the animal and his human mistress feature as sole participants. Offering his take on the scene in highly erotic terms seems to be a means of enticing Lesbia. His desire to play with the sparrow in the final couplet is a round-about appeal to Lesbia to "play" with him instead of the bird. As illustrated in poems 22, 44, 35 and 36 the direct addressee is often not the target recipient, but functions as a filter, either to mask criticism, or to disguise the speaker's sense of uncertainty. It is the girl who seems to be the real focus of the communication and the one whose response he craves, yet he appears unable to address her directly. In fact the message turns out to be a form of self-address even though the speaker does not refer to himself in the second person. The optative in the final couplet reveals a monologue and ultimately the speaker's isolation. He claims that Lesbia finds some distraction from her intense passion in playing with the sparrow. Therefore he wishes to do the same. However, the reader has already been made to question the seriousness of Lesbia's passion. She is the object of his desire; the sparrow is in turn the object of her desire (*deliciae*). There is no sense of reciprocity and no indication that the speaker expects an answer. He addresses a dumb animal who cannot answer in trying to convey a message to a girl who will not answer, neither verbally nor physically. Through this dialogic interaction with an "other", despite the lack of response, the consciousness of the Catullan speaker is revealed. This is a decentred consciousness: he finds himself on the periphery of the little world shared by the girl and her sparrow, able to look in on their game but excluded from participation. In addressing the pet bird he hopes to be invited in, but the final couplet reveals such a prospect to be highly

up the jumping between different metres in poem 50 (*modo hoc modo illoc*, 5). (For poem 50 see chapter 2, p.44ff.).

[36] The text is indeed ambiguous in this regard (Ferguson, 1985:11). Nisbet (1995:77) argues for the translation "shining with longing for me", reading *desiderio* as ablative and not dative. I would conclude that the final couplet supports the translation, found most commonly, of "my shining darling".

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unlikely; the recurring nature of their game (*solet*, 4) anticipates this fact. Catullus is to remain on the symbolic "outside", the space of not-belonging.

The potential for belonging presents itself in poem 3, the logical alternative to poem 2. In poem 2 Catullus begs Lesbia to play with him as she does with her sparrow. Now that she has lost that plaything, does this mean that she will focus her attention on Catullus in its stead? Unfortunately for him this does not seem to be the case. Just as in poem 2 where she did not turn to the Catullan speaker to relieve her *dolor* she does not seem to turn to him for comfort in her sadness. She remains in the distant third person. However, there seems to be slightly more intimacy than in the preceding poem (cf. Skinner, 1981:39).

c.3

Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque
et quantum est hominum venustiorum:
passer mortuus est meae puellae,
passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quem plus illa oculis suis amabat. 5
nam mellitus erat suamque norat
ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem,
nec sese a gremio illius movebat,
sed circumsiliens modo huc modo illuc
ad solam dominam usque pipiabat; 10
qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum
illuc, unde negant redire quemquam.
at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae
Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis:
tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis. 15
o factum male! o miselle passer!
tua[37] nunc opera meae puellae
flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

We are once more in the realm of Venus, this time more explicitly. Catullus calls upon the Venuses and Cupids to mourn the death of the sparrow.[38] These lines suggest a dirge and the poem as a whole follows the typical pattern of a Roman funerary song: the listeners are called upon to mourn, the sad news is passed, the outstanding qualities of the deceased are listed, and, finally, the irreversible journey of the deceased is described (Ferguson, 1985:13;

[37] Thomson has *vestra*, an emendation of the Avantius *antiquior codex* (loc. cit.). He argues for his preference based on a) the active, rather than passive sense of *opera*; therefore the "deeds" should rather be those of the *malae tenebrae* and not those of the dead victim; and b) the fact that *vestra* is a spondee (*tua* is not) and so conforms metrically to the requirements of hendecasyllables (Thomson, 1997:210-211). I prefer the traditional *Veronensis* reading of *tua* and have therefore also removed Thomson's brackets around line 16. As Pomeroy (2003:54-55 n.22) argues, a final address to the shades of the underworld would "miss the opportunity to close the poem in the grand style of a public oration": focus on the sparrow as at the beginning of the poem. Furthermore, a second-person address to the deceased was common in Roman funerary speeches (Pomeroy, 2003:54). A final address to the sparrow also responds to poem 2 dialogically: there the Catullan speaker was addressing the sparrow hoping he could fill an absence caused by the girl (*curae tristes)*; now the death of that very same bird has created an absence for the girl, one the Catullan speaker is hoping to fill.

[38] The gods of love feature again in association with the speaker's girl later in the corpus (poems 13.12 and 86.6).

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Pomeroy, 2003:52, 54). Catullus is restricting the attendance of the mourners to the "aristocrats of the erotic universe" and people of refinement (*quantum est hominum venustiorum*, 2) (Pomeroy, 2003:53). As readers we therefore find ourselves among the Catullan smart set, where *venustas* entails a way of life: wit and artistic but also erotic charm.[39] As Krostenko (2007:222) argues, the *venustiores* are not only "the beautiful people" who would be sympathetic to Catullus' position, but also those with the literary sophistication to appreciate the conventions of more light-hearted love poems.[40]

The admirable qualities of the deceased which Catullus lists elevate the bird almost to the status of a human child.[41] This is supported by lines 6-7: "…and he knew his mistress as well as a girl (knows) her mother" (…*suamque norat / ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem*). Ferguson (1985:15) sees an identification of the Catullan speaker with the bird in *ad solam dominam usque pipiabat* ("He chirped continuously for his mistress alone", 10). It is tempting to see this word as a forerunner of the elegiac *domina*, but the emphasis on status in epitaphs should be the dominant factor here (Ingleheart, 2003:560). However, Catullus does refer to his beloved as *domina* and *era* in poem 68b (*isque domum nobis isque dedit <u>dominae</u>*, 68; *rara verecundae furta feremus <u>erae</u>*, 136).[42] The ultimate, slavish dedication Catullus ascribes to the bird is a reflection of his own total dedication to Lesbia and a means of getting her to see this. His identification with the sparrow, also implied in poem 2 where he wanted to take its place, shows his vulnerable position in his relationship with Lesbia. She holds the power and decides the rules of the game.

The outburst of indignation in lines 13-16 seems to be an attempt on Catullus' part to change the rules of the game. Such outbursts are a common feature of funerary laudations (Quinn, 1973:97). However, *mihi* in line 15 is highly ironic: the sparrow was never Catullus' in the first place (cf. poem 2.9-10). In this way he purposefully involves himself in Lesbia's sorrow and claims her grief for himself (Pomeroy, 2003:55). He even voices her feelings: *o factum male! o miselle passer!* (16). In poem 2 the sparrow's presence caused Lesbia's absence from the Catullan speaker; in poem 3 the sparrow's absence allows him to turn her loss into his gain (Pomeroy, 2003:55). There is once more a surprise in the final lines of the poem (Quinn, 1973:97), similar to that of poem 2. By blaming the sparrow for Lesbia's teary face,

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[39] See the discussion of *venustus* in the previous chapter (passim).

[40] Allusions to the *Carmina Anacreonta* in *Veneres Cupidinesque* (recalling *Érotes* and *Khárites* which commonly appear together in this work; cf. Quinn, 1973:97) as well as the *Anthologia Graeca*, a work containing poems on deceased pets, require a reader who can recognise traces of Hellenistic artistry (Krostenko, 2007:222-223). The imperative *lugete* therefore has a hortatory function: to be called *venustiores* is "to be asked to appreciate the conventions of polymetric poetry" (Krostenko, 2001a:261).

[41] Pomeroy (2003:54) points out the use of the term *deliciae* for pet slaves; this is underscored by the terminology of household service: *suam, ipsam, dominam*.

[42] Discussed below.

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the Catullan speaker communicates his desire to comfort the girl in a round-about way. Just as the optative in the final couplet of poem 2 revealed a dialogic monologue on the part of the Catullan speaker and his consuming passion to be the real motivation for the poem, the shift of address at the end of poem 3 shows the actual focus of the poem: the girl. Moving from the public realm of the funeral laudation and its unidentified fellow-mourners through the more secluded plural shades of the underworld, we come to the private world of a girl and her very personal loss. The shift from the plural to the singular, the abstract to the "actual", reflects the progressive marginalization of the Catullan speaker. At the end of the poem the girl is alone and he cannot grieve with her.

Calling upon a very exclusive crowd of mourners in a "hortatory vocative" (Krostenko, 2001a:261) the Catullan speaker takes up an "us against them" stance at the outset of the poem, similar to that of poem 50. Only the witty and affectionate would be able to grasp both the depth of Lesbia's loss and the "subtle balance between genuine sorrow and mock-heroic diction" (Seager, 1974:892).[43] With the confidence that his readers would appreciate the excessive sentimentality "out of sympathy with…a sympathetic lover" (Krostenko, 2001a:264) he tells of his beloved's sad loss. As in poem 2, she is the real drive behind the poem, yet she remains conspicuously distant. The Catullan speaker addresses his literary fellows, he addresses the shadows of the underworld, he even addresses the dead sparrow, but, as in poem 2, he does not address Lesbia. Yet there is a hint of intimacy in this poem which was absent there. Poem 3 ends with Lesbia. Having focused his attention on a number of possible interlocutors, he finally turns to her in the climax of the poem. In poem 2 he turned to the sparrow in a roundabout form of self-address and remained entirely isolated. The tender description of his girl in the final lines of poem 3 shows that the voyeurism is gone. He is now close enough to see that her eyes are red and swollen. However, she remains in the third person. He is still unable to address her directly and there is no indication of any response from her. Although physically closer she remains emotionally distant in her own world of sorrow. In trying to portray the death of the sparrow as a loss for him too (15) the Catullan speaker hopes to be invited in. The poem begins and ends in mourning: the elision in *Luget(e) o* is picked up by *flendo* in the same position in the final line. In the opening lines Catullus is included among the mourners by means of his artistry. In his indignant address of the underworldlings in lines 13-15 he is still an active member of the proceedings although he is no longer part of a group (he becomes *mihi*, 15). Finally the poem ends with the unattainable girl. Unlike the sophisticated mourners and the beings of the underworld, the Catullan speaker cannot address her. He can only observe her sorrow and, although the distance between them seems less than in poem 2, there is an

[43] Lesbia, being a *docta puella* (see poems 35 and 36), is of course included in this select group.

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unmistakeable distance nonetheless. His final address to the dead bird, who cannot even chirp anymore, underscores an isolation more extreme than at the end of poem 2. The decrease in physical distance between him and the girl makes the emotional distance more painful. Despite the potential for belonging at the start of the poem Catullus is, in the end, still excluded from Lesbia's world. His seemingly confident acts of speech, aimed at the mourners, the underworldlings and the dead bird, mask a vulnerability on the part of the speaker which is, ironically, revealed precisely through speaking (cf. Stevens, 2013:9): his inability to address *Lesbia*. In this way Catullus' decentred self again emerges through what he says, but also through what goes unsaid. Apart from the "people of refinement" none of his addressees could possibly respond. His roundabout attempt to elicit a response from Lesbia fails, and leaves him on the boundary between belonging and not-belonging. He is closer than in poem 2, but still on the outside of Lesbia's world. He will only cross the threshold in the next poem, poem 5, where the distance between lover and beloved is breached and he is able to talk directly to Lesbia about something as intimate as their kisses.

In poem 5 Catullus and Lesbia finally seem to be together and he can hardly contain his joy.

c.5

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
soles occidere et redire possunt;
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, 5
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum;
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus, 10
conturbabimus, illa ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

The hortatives in the first line clearly indicate that Catullus is no longer an uninvolved observer of Lesbia's exclusive world: he is now part of it. This is underscored by the direct address of Lesbia with the intimate *mea* (Fredricksmeyer, 1970:436). Together they form the "us" in this "us against them" stance which the Catullan speaker adopts in the poem. The message is clear: let us enjoy and indulge in our love, irrespective of the gossip (*rumores*, 2) of bystanders, because life is short. The "overly serious old guys" (*senum severiorum*, 2), the bystanders whose gossip Catullus anticipates, represent the "sensible" members of society (Segal, 1968:289). They stand in contrast with "the suave young generation" of Catullus' set (Krostenko, 2001a:243) but at the same time they represent the

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old, traditionalist élite, a group from which provincial Catullus is excluded. Even in these early stages of Lesbia and Catullus' love the real world intrudes into their little world. The Catullan speaker does not seem to be daunted: he dismisses their chitchat as worthless (*unius aestimemus assis*, 3). Moreover, by rejecting them in monetary terms, which imply the practical world of business, the Catullan speaker is also rejecting that entire world in favour of Lesbia's and his enclosed world of love in the present moment (Segal, 1968:290-291).[44] Once more *otium* is getting the upper hand over *negotium* and Catullus is defiantly confident.[45]

Yet, this confidence is conspicuously ambivalent. Even before the intrusion of the Evil Eye at the end of the poem a loss of reciprocity steps in between the two lovers. The Catullan speaker changes from the hortatives and the unity implied by "our (shared) brief light" (*nobis…brevis lux*, 5) to the imperative *da* (7). This separation is underscored by the personal pronoun *mi*: the "us" situation has changed into a "you and I" situation. Catullus does change back into the first person plural at the end of the poem but this time in the future indicative (*fecerimus*, 10; *conturbabimus*, 11) and the consecutive subjunctive of *sciamus* (11). There is a forcefulness to the future tenses that continues the commanding sense of *da*. Catullus offers these future actions as given facts and Lesbia's active involvement in them is assumed. But in fact her contribution is uncertain. The speaker has asked for infinite kisses; there is no indication that he will be getting them. He naïvely presumes that he will and so he already contemplates the consequences. He speaks for both of them, implying that she shares his view, yet there is no real indication that she does. The reciprocity implied by the hortatives in the opening lines is replaced by self-reflective claims on the part of the Catullan speaker. As a result, the superstition which ends the poem represents a fear harboured by Catullus alone.[46]

As Ferguson (1985:23) notes, the malevolent figure at the end of the poem is more sinister than the old men who may simply be refuted and disregarded. They are merely described as old and traditional; the person at the end is malevolent (*malus*). "Against the lover's thoughtless and reckless expenditure of energy stands this shadowy 'some one'…who

[44] *Fecerimus* and *conturbabimus* are both technical terms associated with accounting (Fredricksmeyer, 1970:444; Ferguson, 1985:22).

[45] I will not be discussing Catullus' defiance of the norms of masculine behaviour here (cf. Wray, 2001:147). That will form part of chapter 5.

[46] Levy (1941:224) points to a violence inherent in the word *conturbare:* the forceful scattering in all directions of the pebbles used for counting. The intensity with which Catullus hopes to obliterate the exact numbers of his kisses with Lesbia thus underscores the extent of this fear and so his vulnerability.

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watches…, whose power lies in knowing the precise number" (Segal, 1968:289).[47] There has also been a move from the plural "old guys" to the singular someone (*quis*). With initial *carpe diem* confidence Catullus and Lesbia brace themselves against the many with an "us against them" attitude. As the poem progresses the vulnerable state of their union is revealed. Catullus is asking for kisses, a great many of them. Not only do we not know Lesbia's response, but the urgency of Catullus' asking (*deinde, dein*, etc.) implies a passiveness on her side. When we get to the end of the poem this imbalance in the relationship allows the malevolent someone to intrude much more aggressively. Unlike the old guys who appear to be at a distance, voyeuristically spying on the lovers, the malevolent someone is close enough to know how many times Lesbia and Catullus would potentially kiss. Despite his unknown identity his individuality makes him more specific than the old men and therefore all the more threatening. The poem does not end on the positive note it started with. Granted the last word is *basiorum,* ending the poem with a vision of love and a reciprocal activity. But this does not mean that the ill-wishing someone has been rendered impotent (Ferguson, 1985:23); he is simply being kept at bay, and only for a short while. The Catullan speaker, unlike Lesbia, is very much aware of his presence. It therefore comes as no surprise when an ill-wishing presence returns to Catullus' erotic world, once more in a poem on infinite kisses.

In the other "kiss poem" (poem 7), the natural companion piece of poem 5, the emotional distance between Catullus and Lesbia is more clearly marked. The many "kissings" seem to have taken place and the lovers are contemplating their relationship. From the outset the unity of the first person plural is replaced by a dialogue between "you" and "I". Unlike in poem 5, there are no first person plural verbs; no suggestion of "us against them". Moreover, the detachment between the lovers seems to increase towards the end of the poem.

c.7

Quaeris quot mihi basiationes
tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque.
quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae
lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis
oraclum Iovis inter aestuosi 5
et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum;
aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,
furtivos hominum vident amores;

[47] *Invidere* means both "to envy" and, originally, "to cast the evil eye" (equivalent to *fascinare* in poem 7, see below) (Fordyce, 1961:108; Dickie, 1993:15ff.) The latter interpretation is supported by the description of the envious onlooker as *malus* and the similar theme in poem 7 (Dickie, 1993:15). There was the ancient belief in number magic that possessions which could be counted could be bewitched (Thomson, 1997:221).

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tam te basia multa basiare
vesano satis et super Catullo est, 10
quae nec pernumerare curiosi
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.

Lesbia's reported question at the start of the poem is suggestive of a dialogue. There is a hint of irritation to her question which immediately suggests a vulnerability on the part of the Catullan speaker. The very fact that she asks him how many kisses would satisfy him implies that she is less enthusiastic than he (Adler, 1981:134). At the centre of both poems 5 and 7 lies an unresolved ambiguity: are they the joyous outbursts of shared love, or the speaker's ironic realization that his love is not returned (Grimaldi, 1965:92)? The emotional distance, which was hinted at in poem 5, has now stepped in between the two lovers: *mea Lesbia* has become just *Lesbia*. Her question allows the Catullan speaker a display of Alexandrian *doctrina:* "the romantic use of the proper name", the exploitation of exotic and mysterious places and their products, references to myth and legend (Fordyce, 1961:108). Although the two images of infinity (sand and stars) are stock metaphors, Catullus embroiders them with learnedness and adds an important personal note (Arkins, 1979:631). In the first of the two the references to Cyrene and Battus recall Callimachus who was born in the former and claimed to be descended from the latter (the city's legendary founder) (Thomson, 1997:225). Why this detailed excursion on the particular kind of sand? The subtle allusions to Callimachus brings a personal element into the poem for the Catullan speaker, but one which only the "initiated" would grasp (Arkins, 1979:631): as a neoteric he is paying homage to his poetic mentor. Being a *docta puella* Lesbia has the wit and cultivation to understand these allusions (Lyne, 1980:45): she is counted among those in the Catullan inner circle. In typical Catullan style this poem is multi-layered: into the love poem on the surface the poet has interwoven a literary manifesto. (Cairns, 1973:20). However, this second layer will only be visible to the select few who share and understand Catullus' poetic sensibilities.

The next simile, which is much shorter and more direct, also hides a personal note for the Catullan speaker, this one even more subtle and intimate. The seemingly general description of the many stars looking down on "peoples' stolen loves" (*furtivos hominum…amores,* 8) reveal the true nature of Catullus' relationship with Lesbia: their affair is in fact an adulterous one. There are two other references to adultery in the previous simile, of which the significance may only now be grasped. Cyrene is described as "rich in silphium" (*lasarpiciferis*, 4). *Laserpicium* was used as an antifertility drug (Johnston, 1993:329). The plant thus enabled the promiscuous behaviour of upper-class Romans

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(Dyson, 2007:259). Furthermore, Jupiter is described as *aestuosus* (5), an ambiguous term which could denote the heat of the Lybian desert where the oracle was situated, but also the heat of love: passion (Moorhouse, 1963:418). Jupiter was notorious for his unfaithfulness (cf. poem 68.140: *noscens omnivoli plurima furta Iovis*).[48] The "stolen loves" (*furtivi amores*), highlighted by *aestuosus* and *laserpicium,* therefore leave no doubt as to the illicitness of Catullus' relationship with Lesbia (Dyson, 2007:259). This puts a new perspective on the many kisses (also those of poem 5): Catullus is not entitled to them by any means. As if realizing this he repeats the opening lines of the poem almost verbatim, but this time as a summarized answer to Lesbia's question at the beginning. Except for her role as object (*te*) of *basiare* (9), she is totally absent from the final scene. Even her kisses (*tuae…basiationes*, 1-2) have become kisses imposed on her as a passive recipient. Not only has the beloved become a distant reference, the Catullan lover has also distanced himself from himself to gain greater self-understanding (cf. Turner, 1992:136): he is addressing himself in the third person (*Catullo*, 10).[49] Lesbia is no longer involved in the dialogic situation: Catullus is in dialogue with himself and indirectly with the "curious ones" (*curiosi*) at the end of the poem whose "malevolent tongue" (*mala lingua*) (11-12) he hopes to shut up.[50] By calling himself "mad with love" (*vesano*, 10) he takes in the position of an autonomous, different person with an independent point of view (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:63). In this double-voiced interaction with the self the liminal identity of the Catullan speaker is unmistakably revealed. When the reader now looks back to poem 5 even Catullus' initial confidence, captured in the opening hortatives, appears ironic. Not only through his dialogic engagement with the self, but also through the dialogic engagement between the two poems he emerges as a consciousness keenly aware of space and his own decentredness.

Both poems 5 and 7 sharply distinguish between inside and outside, public space and private space (Wray, 2001:153): "us" and "them". In poem 7 the Catullan speaker is more acutely aware of the outside world than in poem 5. In the latter he was aware of the old guys and the sinister onlooker at the end of the poem; in poem 7 he is much more attuned to actual space. The geographical references and the vastness of the localities – the Lybian desert and the sky – offer a visual depiction of the distance between the *amator vesanus* and the reserved beloved. Moreover, these spaces lie outside the "normal" space of everyday life, beyond the boundaries of the Roman world even (cf. Lotman, 1990:140). As such anti-spaces the borderlessness of these places ironically underscores the symbolic borders between Catullus and Lesbia: they are not married and their loves need to be

[48] This philandering god will appear again in poems 70 and 72 where Lesbia's sincerity is questioned. These poems, as well as the passage from poem 68b, will be discussed below.
[49] As Segal (1968:293) argues, everything in poem 7 is looked at from a distance.
[50] *Mala fascinare lingua* is a reference to bewitchment by means of incantations (Dickie, 1993:15).

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"stolen" (*furtivi*), limited to the cover of night. The reference to the night introduces another sinister note. This is the time of thieves and other peripheral figures: the temporal aspect of the anti-space (Lotman, 1990:140). This precarious state of his erotic world makes the Catullan speaker highly attentive to the world outside. Just as in poem 5, poem 7 ends with an awareness of the possible threats ill-wishing onlookers could pose to his affair. This alertness leads to a superstitious fear: bewitchment by means of an evil spell. The malevolent someone (*quis malus*) who threatens with the evil eye (poem 5) has become a malevolent tongue (*mala lingua*). In both poems 5 and 7 emphasis is put on speaking and looking (poem 5: *rumores*, 2; *invidere*, 13; poem 7: *quaeris*, 1; *tacet*, 7; *vident*, 9; *pernumerare*, 11; *lingua*, 12), but the references to these actions are more extensive in poem 7. Towards the end of the poem the harmless gossip of the old men of poem 5 has become a potentially harmful curse.

In poem 7 an apparent love poem has turned out to be a literary manifesto and a self-reflective comment on illicit love. With the learned allusions to Callimachus the Catullan speaker as poet takes up an "us against them" stance (cf. poem 95). The select few who possess the necessary *doctrina* would spot this and appreciate the poem as more than a simple love poem. They represent the small circle of Catullus poet-friends who, like him, embrace Callimachean principles. On an even more intimate level the various suggestions of adultery point to Catullus' and Lesbia's illicit relationship. Of course they are both aware of the nature of the affair, as would be some of their intimate friends (e.g., Caelius in poem 58, Allius in poem 68b), but this hand-picked group is probably even smaller than the literati with Alexandrian sensibilities: the "us" here have fewer members. What the two similes of the sand and stars ultimately reveal is the inextricability of poetry and love in Catullus' life (cf. poems 50 and 51); in fact, they represent his *way of life*. This way of life is not understood by many: it functions on the periphery. At the end of the poem the Catullan speaker is alone against the curious ones, the many onlookers who do not belong in his urbane world of Callimachean poetics and secret love (Arkins, 1979:635). His dialogic engagement with the self reveals his extreme loneliness. Despite his learnedness and wit he is still mad with love (Arkins, 1979:634): a condition that neither Lesbia, nor his poetic comrades, nor his most intimate friends would understand, and least of all his ill-wishing accusers. Ironically, this threat is not coming from the outside; it comes from within (Segal, 1968:300): from the self-knowledge that the intensity of his love is not reciprocated and that his position in Lesbia's life is peripheral at best.

Despite the growing realization of his peripheral status in Lesbia's world, which the narrativity inherent in poems 51, 2, 3, 5 and 7 reveals, these "episodes" portray the first

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phase of Catullus' relationship with her. The self which emerges from these poems is an infatuated, intoxicated lover, who perceives no hint of blemish in his beloved. His real disillusionment with the great love of his life only comes to the fore when he starts to question Lesbia's words and finds them to be doubtful.

3.1.2 Disillusion in dialogue

The poems discussed in this section are all similarly dialogic in nature. They portray Catullus' conscious effort to gain knowledge, both of himself and of Lesbia, through acts of speech. He either refers to something Lesbia has said, or anticipates a question from her and answers that question in the rest of the poem. In each case he repeats or paraphrases Lesbia's speech in an act of reinterpretation, both of her words and of the way in which her words define their relationship (Janan, 1994:89). The first two poems to be discussed, poems 83 and 92, have the same theme: Lesbia openly insults Catullus. He interprets this in a positive light: the more she "complains" the more she desires him.

c.83

Lesbia mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit;
    haec illi fatuo maxima laetitia est.
mule, nihil sentis? si nostri oblita taceret,
    sana esset; nunc quod gannit et obloquitur,
non solum meminit, sed, quae multo acrior est res, 5
    irata est. hoc est, uritur et loquitur.

c.92

Lesbia mi dicit semper male nec tacet umquam
    de me: Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat.
quo signo? quia sunt totidem mea: deprecor illam
    assidue, verum dispeream nisi amo.

Both poems start with the main characters, "Lesbia and I" (*Lesbia mi),* and the scene is immediately set: she bad-mouths the speaker (*mala plurima dicit*, 83.1; *dicit semper male*, 92.1). In poem 83 another character makes his presence felt: Lesbia's husband (*praesente viro*). Her open insult of Catullus in front of her husband is a great source of joy (*laetitia*, 2) to the man, but through this joy he reveals his foolishness. Catullus poses a rhetorical question to him: "Mule, do you grasp nothing?" (*mule, nihil sentis?* 3). The mule signifies stupidity and lethargic indifference (cf. poem 17.25-26, p.82ff.), underscored by *nihil sentis*.[51] The husband's lack of insight into Lesbia's speech leads him to misinterpret her. Catullus, in contrast, understands exactly what lies behind her words: her insults mask a burning desire

[51] The sterility of the mule is not at issue here; the focus is clearly on the creature's insensibility in comparison with Catullus' keen perception (cf. Fordyce, 1961:372; Thomson, 1997:510).

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for him. "He reads himself into what Lesbia says, into the desire of the Other: if he were gone from her mind she would be silent" (Janan, 1994:84): *si nostri oblita taceret* (3). She would also be rational (*sana esset*, 4), unaffected by the sickness of love (Ferguson, 1985:273). The speaker's interpretation that she is not *sana* puts her on par with the *vesanus Catullus* of poem 7. Her insults therefore become a form of reassurance for the Catullan speaker: as long as she raves he is in her thoughts (Janan, 1994:84). Her anger (*irata est*, 5) thus hides a passion of a different nature: desire (*uritur*, 6). The husband's joy becomes, by implication, Catullus' (Zarker, 1969:172). How could the Catullan speaker interpret raving derogatory speech as a mask of passionate love? The answer lies in poem 92.

Once more Lesbia's repeated insults of him introduce the poem. The link between derogatory speech and love is made more explicitly here with the use of *amare:* "May I perish if Lesbia does not love me" (*Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat,* 2).[52] This time there is no obvious third party, but Catullus once more poses a rhetorical question: "By what token?" (*quo signo?* 3). He feels the need to justify his statement. This introduces the second half of the poem, which both explains and balances the first half. By means of parallels, verbally as well as structurally, he is saying that Lesbia is exactly like him: drawing on his own experience he dictates the interpretation of her words (Skinner, 2003:67). He, who knows that he loves her (*verum dispeream nisi amo*), behaves in the same way (Gaisser, 2009:110): "Because it's exactly the same with me" (*quia sunt totidem mea*, 3). From this he has concluded the statement he made in the first half of the poem, as well as his argument in poem 83. If for him raving speech betrays a burning passion, it must be the same with her. This form of communication, where the inverse of what is said is to be understood, "makes it a *recherché* communicative system similar to that established by Callimachean poetics": it is understandable only to a select few (Janan, 1994:85). The foolish husband is shut out from the communication. Read together poems 83 and 92 therefore make an "us against them" statement, this time with an erotic subtext. Once more love and poetry appear inseparable. Callimachean exclusiveness defines the Catullan speaker in terms of both (Janan, 1994:85). Yet Lesbia's participation in the Catullan polemic is not as certain as it seems initially. In poem 83 Catullus reads himself into Lesbia's words; in poem 92 he projects his own feelings onto her. In each case the speaker offers an interpretation of Lesbia's behaviour, but her own thoughts are never revealed. Lesbia is in the presence of her husband in poem 83, a real threat to Catullus who is somewhere on the periphery.[53] The boldness of his apostrophe to the husband is an attempt to cover up his own self-doubt

[52] This phrase represents something of a colloquial oath (Thomson, 1997:522).
[53] Thomson (1997:511) argues that *oblita* together with *meminit* indicate that Catullus is not physically present.

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(Holoka, 1975:119): the man is with Lesbia; he is not. In fact, the reconstructed conversation between husband and wife puts Catullus in the position of an uninvolved observer. His apparent dialogue with the man, suggested by the rhetorical question, turns out to be a dialogic monologue in which he tries to convince himself of his own opinion.[54] The overemphasis in the last four lines of poem 83 underscores an uncertainty on the part of the speaker (Holoka, 1975:119). The words *hoc est* ("That is…" 6) once more indicates interpretation, a "nervous assertion" (Holoka, 1975:120), for which there is no concrete evidence in the poem. The "evidence" is to come from poem 92, a poem which appears to be more logical and neatly balanced. The speaker has certain feelings and so reacts in a particular way; seeing those same reactions in his beloved must imply that her feelings are similar. Yet, this neat balance betrays an uneasiness on the part of the speaker through subtle deviations. *Assidue* in the final line is positioned more emphatically than *semper* in line 1 – he does more ranting and raving than his beloved – and *amo* (4), unlike its complement *amat* (2), has no object: the speaker has to look into himself to find his love (Ferguson, 1985:293). Moreover, in both complementary phrases it is the Catullan speaker who might perish (*dispeream*), there is no indication that Lesbia would suffer if Catullus did not love her or if she felt no love for him. The apparent balance in the poem reveals an imbalance in the relationship. The confident poet-speaker of line 2 subtly interacts with the weak "confessional lover" of the final line (Fitzgerald, 1995:137-138). The former has seen through the words of another and has therefore triumphed; the latter has revealed that the poem's declaration of love is in fact aimed at "the victim of the epigrammatic point" (Fitzgerald, 1995:138). In both poems 83 and 92 the Catullan speaker takes a "subject-referring" approach, his understanding of himself, to interpret the words of another, but the result is only self-intepretation and not greater knowledge of the "other".[55] All this achieves is an endless mirroring of his own emotions and a revelation of his profound isolation. What he perceived as his and Lesbia's exclusivity was in fact his own exclusion.

If Lesbia's derogatory ranting is supposed to signify her feelings for Catullus, the same cannot be said of the Catullan speaker. In poem 104 he denies outright his ability to speak ill of his beloved. This calls his whole argument in the two previous poems into question.

c.104

Credis me potuisse meae maledicere vitae,
    ambobus mihi quae carior est oculis?
non potui, nec, si possem, tam perdite amarem;
    sed tu cum Tappone omnia monstra facis.

[54] Holoka (1975:119) calls this "therapeutic self-deception".
[55] Cf. Taylor, 1985:57-58.

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In the first half of the poem the Catullan speaker poses a question to an unidentified interlocutor who has accused him of bad-mouthing Lesbia. The tone is defensive. In the second half the speaker answers his own question and points to the habit of his interlocutor and one Tappo to make absurd assumptions. Wiseman (1969:28-29) states that Tappo is "a characteristically Cisalpine cognomen".[56] Catullus is probably addressing two provincials who lack the *urbanitas* to grasp his Callimachean communicative system. In his and Lesbia's exclusive love language insults mask deep-seated passion. Tappo and the other person are like the old guys from poem 5 and the curious onlookers from poem 7: outside observers against whom Catullus and Lesbia take up an "us against them" stance. However, there is an uneasiness in the poem which has nothing to do with Catullus' defensive reaction. Line 3 negates the connection he made in poem 92 between derogatory speech and love *(maledicere* and *amare*): *non potui, nec, si possem, tam perdite amarem.* Not only is he unable to insult someone who means everything to him ("my life", *mea vita*),[57] but, if hypothetically he could, this would mean that he could not at the same time be so madly (literally "destructively") in love with her.[58] Catullus, unlike Lesbia, has never made himself guilty of derogatory speech (cf. poems 83 and 92). The worst he did was to belittle her (*deprecari*, poem 92.3),[59] a word which originally denotes "to beg to be rid of something" (Wiseman, 1985:173).

Catullus' apparent self-confidence in poem 83 and logical self-persuasion in poem 92 have collapsed. If one cannot speak ill of a beloved, Lesbia cannot truly love him. He finds himself isolated once more: the "us against them" from the previous two poems has become an "I against them". He alone understands an exclusive love language where *deprecari,* not *maledicere,* hides a deep-seated love. And he is alone in the face of his two accusers, Tappo having joined the subject of *credis*. With a lack of evidence to use in his defence, he resorts to the world of *urbanitas* of which Tappo and his companion form no part. They do not understand subtleties and make a spectacle (*monstra*, 4) out of everything. At the start of the poem Catullus appears to engage his addressee in a dialogue, but before that person could respond he answers his own question and ends his poem with a description of the addressee's denseness when it comes to matters related to urban sophistication. In this way poem 104 becomes a dialogic monologue which reflects the speech acts of others. The outcome is ambivalent. On the one hand, Catullus trumps his addressee by revealing him, and the likes of him, to be unsophisticated. On the other hand, by showing that his words

[56] Fordyce (1961:393), followed by Forsyth (1976b:22) and Thomson (1997:541), point to the possibility that Tappo could be a stock character from Italian farce. This would add to the insult.
[57] *Mea vita* will appear again in poem 109 below.
[58] Garrison (1989:161) notes that the various forms of *posse* are key to the poem: love renders the lover powerless.
[59] See Thomson (1997:522) for Aulus Gellius' gloss on *deprecor* in this poem.

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have been misunderstood, he has revealed his own wilful misunderstanding of Lesbia's. The result is complete decentring of the Catullan speaker, both in terms of love and of poetics.

After the depths of despair suggested by the disillusion in poem 104, the heights of joy make a surprizing appearance in poem 107. The narrative scenario seems to be the following: at some stage Lesbia left Catullus, but it seems to have been only temporary. Poem 107 arguably marks the most joyous episode of the entire relationship for the Catullan speaker and he can hardly contain himself: Lesbia is back! Her silence, in contrast, is telling.

c.107[60]

Si quicquam cupido optantique optigit umquam
    insperanti, hoc est gratum animo proprie.
quare hoc est gratum nobis quoque, carius auro
    quod te restituis, Lesbia, mi cupido.
restituis cupido atque insperanti, ipsa refers te   5
    nobis. o lucem candidiore nota!
quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis hac quid
    optandum vita dicere quis poterit?

Catullus starts the poem with a generalized statement in the third person: true pleasure comes from the surprise occurrence of something highly desirable, which the recipient has accepted to be completely out of reach. Then he moves on to his particular circumstances which prompted the generalization: Lesbia came back to him unexpectedly (*insperanti*, 5) and of her own accord (*ipsa*, 5). The speaker is in a state of disbelief and he has to verbalize the lucky event repeatedly as if to convince himself. He now speaks to Lesbia directly and makes use of the first and second person: these are the features of a dialogue. Finally, he ends the poem with an exclamation of joy (6) and a rhetorical question which underscores his elation (6-7). He seems to have turned from Lesbia in order to address a broader, unspecified audience. The true blessing mentioned in the beginning has befallen him and he wants the world to know.

However, all is not as hopeful as it seems. By means of verbal echoes irony emerges (Skinner, 2003:132). *Si quicquam cupido optanti* recalls the opening of poem 76 (*si qua recordanti…*) where a similar generalized statement is made applicable to the Catullan speaker in the succeeding lines. The emphatic *cupido* (1, 4, 5) echoes the disillusioned

[60] The textual problems in this poem are notorious. This seems to be the focus of most single studies on the poem (e.g. Dettmer, 1987; Trappes-Lomax, 2001; Butrica, 2002). I use Thomson's text without deviation. Despite discrepancies between different versions of the text the gist is the same: Catullus is overjoyed that Lesbia has returned and he makes his point by means of verbal repetition.

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cupido of poem 70. Finally, the exclamation *o lucem candidiore nota!* (6) "is an explicit cross-reference to the speaker's abandonment of romantic illusion near the end of poem 68b" (Skinner, 2003:132).[61] All of these poems (to be discussed below) reveal a disillusioned Catullan speaker. In poem 76 he is not only disillusioned, but he openly admits defeat. By means of the allusions to poems of disillusionment Catullus' apparent exclamations of joy in poem 107 mask a very real uncertainty on his part. This uncertainty is further suggested by his repetition of the "fact" that Lesbia has returned.

Right in the middle of poem 107, with three lines on either side, Catullus thrice states that Lesbia has come back. Why would he be telling her repeatedly about something which she did herself? Naturally this repetition serves to illustrate his joy and to respond to the statement at the start of poem that true pleasure comes from obtaining the unexpected. However, there is another aspect to Catullus' restatement of the fact that Lesbia has returned. While appearing to engage in dialogue with her, he is in fact verbalizing the event to himself and in the process his own interpretation of the situation is presented. What clearly emerges from this reflection is his position as passive recipient: Lesbia holds the power and determines the nature of their relationship. "[H]is feelings and deserts are decidedly non-factors in Lesbia's unilateral decision to return" (Vinson, 1992:171). A reflexive verb is used in the first and last statement and implicit in the second (*te restituis…restituis…refers te*). On the one hand, this implies that Lesbia's decision was made consciously and that she was therefore eager to come back. On the other hand, it points to a rationality on her part. This objectification, even detachment from herself, is in stark contrast with the speaker's joyous outbursts. In his final address to the audience he appears to seek confirmation from his listeners; he has realized that a future with Lesbia can never be certain and he is focused on the "immediate present" (D'Angour, 2000:616). He ends his poem with two rhetorical questions, avoiding the possibility of response, while being well aware, in the Bakhtinian sense of the word, what a possible response could be. Through his self-reflection by means of addressing another he has revealed his vulnerable position in the affair. The silence of the audience is as significant as that of Lesbia. In her powerful state of detachment she does not share his desire (*cupiditas*) nor his joy (*felicitas*). It is the Catullan speaker alone (*uno*) who is the luckiest person alive (*quis me uno vivit felicior?* 7). The absence of the first person plural is telling. Revealed through its dialogic engagement with other poems in the corpus this poem, very joyous on the surface, masks a fragile relationship in which Catullus is clearly the weaker party.

[61] He admits that Lesbia is not his alone and he contents himself with her "special" days: *quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unis / quem lapide illa dies candidiore notat* (68b.147-148).

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A similar tension between joy and uncertainty is central to the next three poems under discussion. Poems 109, 70, and 72 all start with a positive quote from something Lesbia has said. In all of them the Catullan speaker follows the quote with a revelation of his doubts as to the sincerity of her words. These doubts increase exponentially until finally they turn into complete disillusionment in poem 72. In all of the poems the Catullan speaker re-evaluates traditional Roman attitudes towards love and in the process creates a new language (Konstan, 1972:102-103).

c.109

Iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis: amorem
    hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuumque fore.
di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit,
    atque id sincere dicat et ex animo,
ut liceat nobis tota perducere vita
    aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.

This is the last poem in the collection to mention Lesbia, but clearly not logically the last as poems 70, 72, 75 et al. portray a greater sense of disillusionment on the part of the speaker (Skinner, 2003:133). It forms a natural pair with poem 107 as do poems 70 and 72 below, with each set seeming to portray similar circumstances at successive stages in the relationship (Skinner, 2003:133).[62] Wiseman (1985:136), who argues for a sequential reading of the poems, contends that Catullus the poet deliberately leaves Catullus the lover on an ambivalent note of "sudden happiness" and "sober, unconfident hope" (175). Miller (1994:61), on the other hand, looking at the pairs 69 and 71, 70 and 72, 107 and 109 – with each set divided by an invective piece on a third party – argues that it is impossible to determine priority "as they each become paradigmatic moments in the interpretation of each other". As seen in the interpretations of the poems already discussed, the poems in the Catullan corpus engage with one another dialogically and rereading forms an integral part of interpretation.[63] Therefore, despite temporal discordance the poems yield "a psychologically satisfying experience of *hysteron proteron*" (Skinner, 2003:133).

Poem 109 starts on a positive, neoteric note with a report of Lesbia's words: *iucundum* (Fitzgerald, 1995:117). Lyne (1980:36) argues that this is exactly the kind of fashionable

[62] This close juxtapositioning of different takes on the same event or related events is a common feature of the Catullan corpus (cf. 2 and 3, 5 and 7). The poet offers us his repeated analysis of the same problem from different points of view (Miller, 1994:61).

[63] Rereading, as a means to deal with the "gaps" in the narrative, is inherent in the act of interpreting the Lesbia cycle: it "functionally matches the poet's interrogation of his own erotic history in order to define a self" (Janan, 1994:90).

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word Lesbia would use. Recalling Catullus' use of the word twice in connection with Calvus (poems 14.2, 50.16) it creates an illusion of "us against them" which is extended by means of the recurrence of the first person plural *nostrum…nos…nobis.* This use of the first person plural seems to recall the happy days when the two lovers were united as "we" (cf. poems 5 and 68b.69) (Wiseman, 1985:174). Both Lesbia and Catullus refer to eternity in their respective acts of speech (*perpetuum*, 2; *aeternum*, 6). Lesbia promises the Catullan speaker "eternal love" (*amorem perpetuum*). *Amor*, for the traditional Roman, denotes a temporary insanity, which is totally acceptable among young men because it is a passing infatuation and so does not influence their ultimate responsibility to the republic, the family and their personal dignity (Konstan, 1972:102). A concept such as "everlasting love" then appears to be almost an oxymoron (Konstan, 1972:103). The Catullan speaker already knows that Lesbia's words are not to be taken at face value (cf. poems 83 and 92). And so he turns from her to the "great gods" (*di magni*, 3) and asks that her words be spoken "truthfully, sincerely, and from the heart" (*vere, sincere, ex animo,* 3-4). Catullus' address to the gods is private and internal: Lesbia is excluded from this dialogue. The audience, on the other hand, is drawn in in a way similar to that of poem 50. We are made privy to Catullus' innermost feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty. Moreover, by reading these lines we are in fact uttering the same wish and become his "supporting cast". The speaker cannot reveal his thoughts to Lesbia; stating his doubts outright offers her the opportunity to confirm these doubts. But by making the audience repeat his words he ensures their alliance. There is something undeniably pathetic in the speaker's entreaty to the gods. "If the promise has meaning, multiplying parameters is needless; if not, multiplying them is useless" (Janan, 1994:94). Moreover, there is an ambiguity inherent in *di magni*: "everywhere else in Latin [it] is an exclamation of incredulous astonishment" (Ferguson, 1985:329) (cf. poems 14.13 and 53.5). By means of repetition the Catullan speaker is trying to convince himself of Lesbia's sincerity, in full awareness that his conception of eternal love is totally different from hers, as the final couplet will reveal. As the speaker reflects on his conversation with Lesbia he realizes that her phrasing is too ordinary and clichéd (Copley, 1949:25). He wants more than just *amor* (cf. poem 72 below).

Catullus' search for something more culminates in the final line of the poem with the use of socio-political vocabulary in order to capture the ethical side of his love for Lesbia: "…this eternal pact of sacred friendship" (*aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae*). Konstan (1973:103) finds Catullus' words strained and even far-fetched. He uses traditional terminology in a non-traditional way and the effect is not entirely successful (Copley, 1949:25-26). What he does succeed at is to highlight the stark contrast between the first and final distich: Catullus' words reveal the deficiencies of Lesbia's (Skinner, 2003:133).

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The language of politics and that of love function according to different standards of meaning (Skinner, 2003:133). Poems 83 and 92 centred on the discrepancy between word and meaning in the sphere of love. The vocabulary of socio-politics, in contrast, seems to offer a straightforward correspondence between signifier and signified (Janan, 1994:92). Lesbia talks about an "eternal love"; the value of the first word is negated by the fickleness of the second. Catullus, in contrast, talks about a reciprocal relationship, which is guaranteed by societal conventions. Furthermore, a*micitia* is here elevated by *sancta* and by *foedus* (Lyne, 1980:36). This is no ordinary *amicitia*: it is to be sanctified by the gods and ratified by Roman law.

Despite its strangeness in a poem on erotic love, the final line of poem 109 appears to be straightforward. However, it hides an irony. In contemporary Rome ties of friendship are no longer taken to heart (Skinner, 2003:134).[64] If *amicitia* then denotes unstable concepts the Catullan speaker is struggling with a semantic problem which is equally rife in the socio-political sphere (Janan, 1994:93). The poem therefore portrays his reaction to the sorry state of marital as well as social relationships (Vinson, 1992:168). Underneath all his urbanity he hides a provincial's conservative view of these relationships.[65] Wiseman (1985:175) refers to Catullus' "stubbornly old-fashioned view of the responsibilities of love". His clutching at terms traditionally associated with stability, in order to immortalize something which he realizes is fleeting, is both pathetic and novel, and unexpectedly most memorable.

The poem starts with the promising *iucundum* and the image of a united couple in intimate dialogue. But Quinn (1973:448) already detects an uneasiness in that very first word: finding *iucundum* to be odd on Lesbia's lips in this particular context, he views it rather as Catullus' ironic assessment of the situation. When we reach the second distich we realize that all is not as it seems. The Catullan speaker's apostrophe to the gods borrows a phrase common to exclamations of surprised scepticism. What appeared to be an address to the gods is revealed to be a self-reflective internal dialogue. The speaker is reassessing Lesbia's words and finds them to be unconvincing. In the process he reveals both his own liminal position in Lesbia's life and the precarious state of their relationship. By the time we reach the end of the poem *iucundum* has lost all its promise of pleasantness (Fitzgerald, 1995:116). There never was an us (Catullus and Lesbia) and them (those who do not understand the concept of an everlasting love). Even the gods' presence as interlocutors is called into question. As it turns out, difference lies not only on the level of word and meaning, but also on the level of what Lesbia says and what the Catullan speaker hears (Fitzgerald, 1995:117). He translates

[64] Cf. poems 30, 38, 73, 77, 82, et al. to be discussed in the next chapter.
[65] Cf. Vinson's (1992:170) discussion of the final line of poem 28: "Catullus' outlook is essentially a conservative one, rooted in nostalgia for the mythic past".

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her "endless infatuation" into an "eternal treaty of holy friendship" but through the translation process he comes to realize not only that her words are superficial, but also that his precise choice of translation is as unstable as "eternal love". Both Lesbia and the gods have failed him. Now the very things that define him as a being-in-language, namely words, have failed him too and he is utterly powerless and completely decentred.[66]

The instability of words and its threat to the speaker's very self is again the theme in the next two poems where the divide between word and meaning becomes even greater than in poem 109. In the dialogically connected poems 70 and 72 the speaker not only doubts Lesbia's words, but admits that they are empty.

c.70

Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle
    quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.
dicit; sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,
    in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.

c.72

Dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum,
    Lesbia, nec prae me velle tenere Iovem.
dilexi tum te non tantum ut vulgus amicam,
    sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos.
nunc te cognovi; quare, etsi impensius uror, 5
    multo mi tamen es vilior et levior.
qui potis est, inquis? quod amantem iniuria talis
    cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus.

In both of these neatly balanced poems the Catullan speaker starts off by repeating declarations of love which Lesbia made to him. Jupiter features as a comparandum in each case. Both poems take a sharp turn in the middle and in the second half they contrast the actual status quo with Lesbia's claims. Poem 70 is short, to the point, and more generalized (the lovers' names are left out). In poem 72 the Catullan speaker elaborates on the situation and the poem is double in length. He names both himself and his beloved. The poem is not only more personal, but also indicates some passage of time and so a greater sense of disillusionment on Catullus' part.

In poem 70 we are entirely in the present. Skinner (2003:64) refers to the "continuous present, where Catullus keeps trying to pin down Lesbia's evasive pronouncements while self-consciously admitting his own readiness to be duped". In the first distich the Catullan

[66] As Vinson (1992:166) notes, both in political and sexual relationship in antiquity, it is power, or rather the imbalance of power, that is definitive.

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speaker states Lesbia's claim that she would prefer no-one but him as husband, even if Jupiter himself were to seek her hand (*nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle…*, 1). The girl (*puella*) from poems 2 and 3 has become a woman (*mulier*). This maturation of terms signals a more developed relationship. The days of voyeuristic desire and insatiable kissing are over, and the obstacles of "the other man", sparrow and ill-wishing onlookers seem to be out of the way. The emphasis in the first half of the poem is on *nulli*: Catullus' apparently total lack of competition. But there is a sinister note to Lesbia's statement. With the mention of Jupiter we are back in the realm of adultery and the word *nubere* becomes meaningless.[67] The second distich, and second half of the poem, starts with the emphatic *dicit* (3): "so she says". But this statement is immediately nullified by the very next word: *sed*. The words of a woman to an ardent lover is as insubstantial and fickle as words written in wind and water. After they have been uttered, they disappear instantly as if they had never been there in the first place.[68]

The detachment of the Catullan speaker in this poem adds to its general applicability: all the verbs are in the third person. Yet this detachment is misleading. The words *mea* and *mihi* reveal a very personal involvement on the part of the speaker. To him the words of this particular woman are relevant. The second distich is more general: *mulier mea* becomes *mulier* and *mihi* becomes *amanti.* The impersonal *oportet* marks a distance between the messenger and the message and places the words in the mouth of whoever should read the poem. In this way the reader is drawn in as an independent interlocutor and the poem becomes a dialogue between Catullus, Lesbia and the reader. Significantly, *oportet* does not denote action; it simply points to the recommended course of action. Catullus did not write his beloved's words in wind and water as the independent speaker at the end would have him do (cf. Konstan, 1972:104). In fact, he recorded them in such a way that there would be witnesses (the readers) to Lesbia's statement.[69] This ambiguity created by the two halves of the poem highlights Catullus' individuality against the background of the generalization. Catullus is different, but Lesbia, by implication, must also be different. By removing *mea* from the second distich and making the statement more general the Catullan speaker is clinging to some hope that Lesbia is not like most women. However, the fact that he calls upon witnesses to hold her to her words, which are highly ominous to begin with,

[67] Although the preference for a beloved above Jupiter denotes a proverbial phrase (Thomson, 1997:493), these words become sinister in Lesbia's mouth (cf. poem 72). In poem 68b.135-140 Catullus identifies himself with Juno in her tolerance of Jupiter's many affairs. Furthermore, Jupiter is not available for marriage and probably neither is Lesbia (Skinner, 2003:65).
[68] A modern equivalent would be that of lovers writing declarations of love in wet sand. These words exist only until the next wave comes. They are, however, visible for both parties to see even if just for an instant. This is not the case with wind and water: words written there are invisible.
[69] Konstan (1972:104) sees this as an attempt on Catullus' part to make Lesbia's promises permanent, knowing that a lover's words are by nature fleeting.

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exposes the lover's vulnerability. The universal statement in the final distich retrospectively becomes an admission of Lesbia's fickleness.

Poem 72 opens with a similar statement on Lesbia's part. But the statement is now a recurring event from the past (*dicebas*, 1); she is not saying this any longer. Some time has gone by in the narrative scenario since poem 70 and the Catullan speaker is more disillusioned, but, ironically, also more involved. The situation is much more particular than that of poem 70: Lesbia is not only mentioned explicitly but addressed directly (*Lesbia*, 2; *te*, 3; *te*, 5; *es*, 6), and the speaker uses first and second person verbs. Lover and beloved are in dialogue. Catullus reminds Lesbia of her words in the past (*quondam*, 2) and how he felt towards her then (*tum*, 3). This forms the first half of the poem with the first distich focusing on Lesbia and the second on Catullus. The speaker once more makes use of the language of aristocratic obligation in trying to describe the kind of love he felt for Lesbia. In poem 72 he does not only borrow from the socio-political sphere of *amicitia*, but uses a more personal metaphor of mutual obligation: his love for Lesbia was not like that of the man in the street for his girlfriend, but like that of a father for his sons and sons-in-law (*dilexi tum te non tantum ut vulgus amicam, / sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos*, 3-4). Catullus' comparison is naturally jarring to modern ears and most commentators agree that he has not been entirely successful in conceptualising an idea that was novel at the time (Copley, 1949:29; Lyne, 1980:41; Fitzgerald, 1995:135-136). Yet his is a highly original attempt at formulating an experience that defies definition (Lyne, 1980:40-41). Because of the volatile nature of marriage in late Republican Rome, simply substituting "wife" for "girlfriend" (*uxor* for *amica*) would not have portrayed the kind of permanence Catullus had in mind (Vinson, 1989:50).[70] In order to represent a long-term commitment in which obligation and responsibility were key elements the Catullan speaker had to resort to the example of a father's relationship with his children (Vinson, 1989:50). The love between a father and son denotes the most permanent and unconditional kind of relationship within Catullus' frame of reference.[71] Furthermore, by adding the sons-in-law the Catullan speaker highlights the uniqueness of his love for Lesbia (Greene, 1995:85). The love between a father and son is an almost involuntary love because of the physical bond; by adding the sons-in-law the Catullan speaker reaches out beyond the Roman family to the "politico-familial" bonds which keep Roman society together (Greene, 1995:85-86). This kind of bond did not exist between a man and a woman. By defining his love in this way Catullus is saying that Lesbia is his equal. But Lesbia's love is

[70] Because marriages were to a great extent political tools, arranged to further the social and political interests of the families involved, they were often short-lived and loveless in the unstable political climate of the late Republic (Vinson, 1989:48).
[71] The verb *dilexi* as opposed to *amavi* underscores the elevated, non-erotic side of Catullus' love.

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different: whereas Catullus' love is devoid of carnal desire, hers, in contrast, is described only in terms denoting lust: *nosse* (1) and *tenere* (2) (Davis, 1971:198).

Whereas Catullus could identify with the general in poem 70 in their opinion of *mulier*, he is alone in his manner of loving in poem 72. His kind of loving is different from that of the guy in the street. Lesbia, however, does not understand nor appreciate this. The Catullan speaker finds himself alone not only in his manner of loving, but also in the knowledge that he alone loves in this way: his beloved does not answer his love in equal measure. This realization comes in the second half of the poem, which introduces a stark contrast with what went before. The difference is signalled by the emphatic *nunc* (5), which indicates both a change in time and emotion. Whereas the Catullan speaker took four lines to describe the love between Lesbia and him as it was in the past, he summarizes his present feelings in one unadorned phrase: "now I know you properly". *Cognovi* picks up *nosse* from line 1. This indicates the structural division of the poem (past and present), but also, more importantly, the change in meaning signals Catullus' growing realization of the imbalance in his relationship with Lesbia (Commager, 1965:94). Whereas *nosse* signifies "to know" in the erotic sense (physically), *cognovi* denotes an intellectual activity (Konstan, 1972:106). Lesbia's love for Catullus was purely physical from the start; his love for her was physical and emotional, but the latter has now been destroyed. He elaborates on *cognovi* slightly by offering Lesbia its consequence: "Wherefore, although I burn more ardently, you are nevertheless much cheaper and lighter to me" (*quare, etsi impensius uror, / multo mi tamen es vilior et levior*, 5-6). There is no question of an emotional bond anymore. Expressing the erotic side of love is easy (*impensius uror*) but once more the Catullan speaker is struggling to define the emotional side: value (denoted by *vilior*) and importance (denoted by *levior*) have little to do with romantic love (Copley, 1949:29). The Catullan speaker again resorts to the language of socio-political Rome in his struggle to define a different kind of love. Despite the challenges he is not yet defeated in this poem (he is, after all, still "burning"): he makes his argument logically and calmly in the hope that Lesbia would see its validity and that some of the former happiness might thus be restored (Rankin, 1975:71). And so he anticipates that Lesbia would question his current feelings: "How is this possible? you ask" (*qui potis est, inquis?* 7). This allows him to introduce the crux of the matter and the climax of the poem: "Because such a hurt drives the lover to love more, but to care less" (7-8).

The "answer" to Lesbia's anticipated question professes to be a generalization similar to the final distich of poem 70. The first and second person verbs are replaced by the third person (*cogit*, 8) and the objectified *amantem* (7) replaces the first person *mi* (6). But, as in poem

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70, a rereading reveals the detachment of the Catullan speaker to be deceptive.[72] In the first line Catullus referred to himself in the third person. Now he ends the poem with an unnamed third person but the link is easily made. Although the "hurt" (*iniuria*) remains vague, *talis* signifies a definite connection with the preceding lines. The reader is not to know the nature of the *iniuria* except that it results from *cognovi* (5). Lesbia, however, knows exactly what is meant. So what is the speaker trying to communicate if his audience could never grasp the whole meaning? The answer is twofold. On the one hand the exact nature of the *iniuria* is not relevant for an appreciation of the poem. Its effect (5-6) is enough to convey the depth of the hurt. On the other hand, the poem as a whole reflects Catullus' attempt at "self-information" (Commager, 1965:94). The dialogue between the lovers becomes a dialogic monologue in which the Catullan speaker hopes to arrive at greater self-knowledge (cf. Greene, 1995:87). But this self-knowledge brings little consolation and he remains divided between "burning more ardently" and finding his beloved "cheaper and lighter", between *amare magis* and *bene velle minus*: truly betwixt and between. As the relationship reaches its final phase the Catullan speaker will be pushed to the boundary between love and hate where he will have to choose between the one and the other.

3.1.3 Love and hate

The tension between an erotic and a "whole love" continues in the final phase of Catullus' relationship with Lesbia. It has now reached a point where it threatens the self to such an extent that the Catullan consciousness has become divided. Between the extremes of love and hate he seeks escape from his feelings, but he finds himself incapacitated.

The first sign of a truly divided consciousness comes in poem 75. As in poem 72 the tension between *amare* and *bene velle* lies at the heart of the poem but this time the Catullan speaker is not quoting Lesbia. He is in fact accusing her. Through his accusation he comes to realize that his pain is self-inflicted and his address to her is revealed to be a dialogic monologue. The outcome of this dialogic engagement with the self is the Catullan psyche in its purest form: a mind divided against itself.

c.75

Huc est mens deducta tua mea, Lesbia, culpa
atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,
ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optima fias,
nec desistere amare, omnia si facias.

[72] Janan (1994:90) stresses the importance of rereading both for the poet and the reader: "rereading functionally matches the poet's interrogation of his own erotic history in order to define a self".

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The poem is neatly balanced. The first half describes Lesbia's "fault" (*culpa* recalls *iniuria* from the preceding poem), while the second explains its consequences. Lesbia is mentioned explicitly but, apart from the personal adjective *mea,* the Catullan speaker is entirely absent. His mind instead functions as the independent subject in the poem.

Mea Lesbia in the first line is misleadingly juxtaposed.[73] It recalls the joyous introduction of poem 5 when the two lovers were united against the outside world. But now it is bracketed by *tua culpa,* the very thing which caused *mea* and *Lesbia* to be separated semantically. The line ends on the emphatic *Lesbia culpa*, leaving no doubt as to the party responsible for the speaker's reduced mind *(mens deducta*). Yet the pentameter reveals that the damage done to the speaker's mind is entirely self-inflicted.[74] All Lesbia's *culpa* did was to reduce (*deducere*) Catullus' mind; its devotion (*officium*) caused its own destruction (*se perdere*).[75] The reflexive nature of the action is overemphasized: *se…ipsa…suo* (2). In this line *ipsa suo* is now in the emphatic position; this absolves Lesbia from the blame so blatantly placed in the preceding line. What is the result of all this? A mind divided against itself. The conflict between emotional commitment and physical desire is not resolved in the poem; the speaker seems to accept this resignedly.

With the use of *officium* we are once more in the realm of male-dominated social and political relations. Platter (1995:217) detects a hint of sarcasm in Catullus' use of the word: even performing one's duty in the erotic sphere is to "lay one's self open to the corrupting presence of political institutions". Lesbia's *culpa* and Catullus' *officium* represent polar opposites. His devotion alone cannot sustain the *foedus amicitae* (Skinner, 2003:73) and all that remains is unexceptional *amor.* The destruction of Catullus' mind recalls the destruction of kings and cities in the final *otium*-stanza of poem 51 (*perdidit*, 51.16). *Officium* in the erotic sense entails devotion to *otium*, the very leisure which sustains love and poetry (Platter, 1995:216, 218). That *officium*, just like its political equivalent, is not incorruptible. Now that very devotion has near destroyed the Catullan speaker. He has failed to heed his own warning (Clark, 2008:269).

The displacement of the Catullan speaker in this poem functions on various levels. At the outset he distances himself from his own mind as if this were an autonomous entity to be

[73] I do not here follow Thomson's (1997: ad loc.) parenthesis of *mea Lesbia*, but rather read *mea* as qualifying *mens* (the most widely accepted reading). I do, however, think that there is a strong case to be made for a deliberate ambivalence on the part of the poet. This ambiguity would correspond to the tension of the final couplet between *bene velle* and *amare*.
[74] Catullus plays metrical similarities between the hexameter and pentameter off against one another in order to highlight contrasts (Janan, 1994:81-82; cf. Fitzgerald, 1995:134).
[75] As Lyne (1980:29) points out, Catullus' conceptualization of this relationship with Lesbia was the product of his own imagination, according to standards that he had created.

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observed objectively. He starts with a statement, directed at Lesbia, on her part in his hurt. But as he reflects on this in the rest of the poem he comes to the realization that this hurt is self-inflicted. The strong contradictions in the final couplet reveal that "the world of the poem is Catullus' mind" (Fitzgerald, 1995:133): the apparent address to Lesbia is part of an internal dialogue.[76] By means of this self-reflection the speaker comes to the realization that the problem expressed in the final distich is his, not hers, and that it was brought on by himself.[77] Therefore the solution could only reside in himself. However, the situation has rendered him helpless to such an extent that he has no control over his mind and he steps back metaphorically. He leaves his mind, no less powerless, in a liminal state of indecision (*nec…queat…nec*, 3-4). Within such a self, divided against itself, resolution is impossible and the Catullan speaker remains in the symbolic "neither-here-nor-there" space between dislike and like, between love and hate.

This "neither-here-nor-there" space finds its most unadorned definition in poem 85 where the internal struggle of the Catullan speaker reaches a point of torture. In a dialogic situation, similar to that of the preceding poems, Catullus offers his most striking attempt at self-understanding, yet at the same time he will admit defeat in his relationship with the great love of his life.

c.85

Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

Catullus anticipates a question from Lesbia similar to that of poem 72 (*qui potis est, inquis?*). This is the shortest poem on his affair with her, but also, not surprisingly, his most famous. In these two lines he manages to deliver his most direct and disturbing verdict on the relationship. In terms of Callimachean poetics this would be the epitome of the refined miniature.

Lesbia's "speech" here is more ambiguous than in poems 70 and 72. Catullus is not quoting something she said. He starts with a highly personal statement and because of the contradictory nature of this statement he anticipates a retort from her. But he is less certain that she may respond than in poem 72 (*qui potis est, inquis?* 7): *fortasse* points to a strong sense of doubt on the part of the speaker. What appears to be a dialogue is in fact a self-

[76] "[Lesbia] is present only insofar as her *culpa* works on Catullus' mind" (Fitzgerald, 1995:134-135).
[77] Quinn (1973:406) refers to *ipsa suo* as "an admission in retrospect that he should have known better".

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reflective dialogic monologue.[78] The interlocutor is silent and the Catullan speaker furnishes a question for her to ask (Adler, 1981:4). She is little more than a phantom in the background, an uncertain presence imagined by the speaker. The poem is about Catullus as subject: *odi* and *amo* have no object (Ferguson, 1985:279). Alone with his thoughts, the speaker shuts out everything that is not interior, even his beloved (Skinner, 2003:85). This is underscored by the many first person singular verbs; six in total (cf. Thomson, 1997:514). In the course of this short poem the Catullan speaker manages to distance himself from himself, and so interrogate himself by means of an imagined interlocutor. In this active engagement with the self he becomes his own object. The answer he offers to his questioner is one of total resignation: *nescio*. Whereas he attempted to offer an explanation in poem 72, he has now given up (Gaisser, 2009:35). The speaker is no longer analysing. The poem ends with the very desolate *excrucior*. With *odi, amo, faciam* and *nescio* the Catullan speaker is still the agent of his actions, but through *fieri* up to *excrucior* he changes from subject to impotent object.[79] Not only is he the powerless recipient of the action, but the worst kind of pain is being inflicted on him and he suffers, very much alone. In the act of the "conversation" the Catullan speaker discovers the truth (Adler, 1981:5): that he is both the subject (*odi et amo*) and object (*excrucior*) of his personal feelings. The monologic dialogue has not been entirely successful in defining the self: it has led the speaker to recognize that the division between love and hate resides in the subject alone, in the total absence of the object of desire (Janan, 1994:97). What emerges from this "internally dialogized discourse" (Bakhtin, 1984:203) is a torn self, in conflict with itself. Just as this is not the end of the dialogue, this is not the final definition of the Catullan speaker. Not only will he engage himself in dialogue more directly in the next poem, but that poem will also engage with other poems in the collection and form part of the never-ending conversation through which the Catullan consciousness is revealed.

The most explicit internal dialogue in the whole collection is portrayed in poem 8, where the divided self also finds its clearest expression.

[78] Gaisser (2009:35) argues that the question comes from nowhere: with the identity of the questioner left unknown the Catullan speaker is perhaps addressing himself; perhaps the reader.
[79] Ferguson (1985:279) and Thomson (1997:514) identify the main contrast in the poem not as that between *odi* and *amo* but as the opposition between the active and passive forms of *facio*: *faciam* vs. *fieri*.

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c.8
Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,
et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.
fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla. 5
ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant,
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat,
fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.
nunc iam illa non vult; tu quoque impote<ns noli>,
nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, 10
sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.
vale puella. iam Catullus obdurat,
nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam.
at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.
scelesta, vae te! quae tibi manet vita? 15
quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?
quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?
quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?
at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.

One part of the challenge in this poem lies in its multiple speaking voices: we have the Catullan speaker, Catullus the second-person addressee, and the third-person Catullus (Greene, 1995:78). Greene (1995:78) calls this "a confusion of identity" which results from the fragmenting effects of love on the *ego*. This fragmentation has allowed for diverse readings of the poem: many scholars have viewed the dialogue as the poet's dramatic internal struggle with his own emotions, while others have detected a witty adaptation of the comic *amator* in Catullus' stance as rejected lover.[80] Skinner (1971:298ff.) argues for a fusion of the two perspectives: although the speaker's feelings are intense and sincere he makes use of the *topos* of the comic lover in order to comment ironically upon his own foolishness from a position of detachment.[81] The result is a complex dialogue which reflects the complexities of situation.

The emphatic *miser* in the first line of the poem tells us immediately that we are in the helpless lover's domain (Akbar Khan, 1968:558). In the opening section the Catullan speaker addresses "Catullus" and admonishes him to cease his foolish behaviour (1-2).[82] *Ineptire* is a loaded word in the Catullan corpus. In his role as *arbiter urbanitatis* we have seen Catullus calling Marrucinus *inepte* for his napkin snatching (12.4), defining Egnatius' most inappropriate smiling as the epitome of silliness (*nam risu ineptio res ineptior nullast*, 39.16), and revealing Colonia's rusticity through the state of her rickety bridge (*inepta crura*,

[80] See Skinner (1971) for a good summary of the scholarship on both readings.
[81] This line of argument is also the predominant one in recent scholarship (cf. Fitzgerald, 1995:122; Gaisser, 2009:57).
[82] For a detailed analysis of the poem's structure, see Rowland (1966).

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17.2-3).[83] Now the tables have been turned on himself: "Catullus" is the one behaving inappropriately because he does not want to accept the reality of something that he has in fact observed himself (*quod vides perisse perditum ducas*, 2). The exact nature of this "something" which is over, and which he is admonished to regard accordingly, becomes clear in the next couple of lines: his affair with Lesbia. The speaker substantiates his opening stance by admitting the joys of Catullus' relationship in the past, fairly elaborately, (*quondam…cum…tum*, 3-8),[84] and comparing this to what has changed in the present (*nunc iam*, 9). The abruptness of line 9 disrupts the dream-like quality of lines 3-8 as if the speaker is trying to shake his interlocutor out of his fantasy. This is picked up by five imperatives commanding resoluteness (*noli, sectare, vive, perfer, obdura*, 9-11), which replace the gentle jussives of the opening section (*desinas, ducas*). In the next section the speaker refers to Catullus in the third person. He is now addressing the girl (*vale puella*, 12) and "Catullus" seems to be at a distance. Stepping in on "Catullus'" behalf he bids the beloved farewell, confirms "Catullus'" future absence from her life, and offers a detailed account, in the form of rhetorical questions, of the pain she would suffer as a result of this absence (13-18). Through the series of questions, Lesbia is portrayed as an outcast (Dyson, 1973:130). The questions become increasingly intense, culminating in the highly erotic "Whose lips will you bite?" (*cui labella mordebis?* 18). This makes the switch to the final line seem quite abrupt: "But you, Catullus, be resolute, be firm". We have come full circle: the speaker once more admonishes Catullus, only this time in harsher terms.

In sum: the relationship between Lesbia and Catullus is all but over.[85] He is struggling to accept this; she is not. In fact, she is not interested anymore (*non vult,* 9). His struggle to understand the situation results in self-division (Greene, 1995:78): the Catullan speaker aims to convince himself to take a certain course of action by addressing himself. But his attempt at self-understanding turns out to be a failure as even his strongest arguments are revealed to be flawed. In the first instance the "bright sunshiny days" of the past were not that perfect. Not only was Lesbia in total command of the situation (*cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat*, 4), but she was "always a little cool" towards him (*quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat*, 7) (Conner, 1974:95). She did not refuse the attention lavished on her, but there is no indication that she reciprocated the action. Realizing that he has undermined his own argument the speaker reiterates, almost verbatim, his apparent conviction that those days in the past were indeed special. The insertion of *vere* (8) serves to mask his doubt.

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[83] A similar use of *ineptus* is found in poems 6 and 25 (discussed in chapter 4, pp.171ff., 226ff.) and 14.b.

[84] The reference to the beloved as *puella* (4) underscores the nostalgia for "the good old days" when Catullus was still infatuated.

[85] Akbar Khan (1968:574) notes that it would have been pointless to direct a series of questions at Lesbia if the relationship was entirely over.

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A further claim made in the section on the happiness of the past needs mention. Line 5 introduces the uniqueness of the lover's relationship with Lesbia: "(the girl) loved by me as none will ever be loved"; his love for her was far superior to that of the average man (cf. poem 72) (Skinner, 1971:304; Dyson, 1973:128).[86] This is no longer the detached observation of the speaker. With the use of *nobis* the lines between speaker and addressee are blurred. The girl was not only loved by Catullus as addressee but also by Catullus as speaker. This is the "whole love" which Lyne refers to, a love where both *amare* and *bene velle* are present. By describing the past the speaker seems to be drawn into its fantasy and struggling to keep his distance from himself as addressee. This is temporarily resolved in the next couple of lines, especially with the repeated use of the imperative (10-11). With *vale, puella* (12) the voices of the speaker and the lover seem to have merged once again (Greene, 1995:83), but this is followed immediately by a reference to "Catullus" in the third person. It seems that third-person "Catullus" has not managed to break off with the girl. There is an increased distance between speaker and lover which marks their lack of agreement. This leads the former to up his game. He now turns to insulting the girl (*scelesta*, 15) and informing her of the sorry life that awaits her without Catullus. Once more it is not certain whether the voices of speaker and lover have merged, or whether the latter is simply silent. The series of questions meant to accentuate Lesbia's loss and apparent future loneliness are based on the nature of her relationship with Catullus (Akbar Kahn, 1968:565): he used to visit her; he thought her beautiful; she used to love him (in the erotic sense); he called her his; they kissed, and she used to bite his lips. The mounting tension in these questions therefore relates to the speaker's own increasing awareness of what *he* has lost (Dyson, 1973:129). This culminates in the very personal and highly erotic four final questions where he is now dwelling entirely on his own loss (Thomas, 1984:315),[87] making the seemingly abrupt switch to the final self-address not jarring but expected. He has been talking to himself all along. The temporal sequence of present – past – present – future – present suggests a miniature narrative on Catullus' relationship with Lesbia. As stated in chapter 1, the present can only be experienced against the background of the past and in anticipation of the future (Husserl, 1964:40ff.). The present functions as the place where past and future meet, where the drama unfolds: this is the moment of tension, the decisive moment, informed by memory of the past (lines 3-8) and anticipation of the future (13-8) (Crites, 1997:38-39). From the narrative required for the present to deal with this tension

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[86] Similar phrasing is used in poem 37.12 (see the previous chapter, p.75), 58.1-2 and poem 87.2 (discussed below). See Gaisser (2009:57ff.) for a good summary of this particular verbal echo. In each case the phrase serves to highlight the discrepancy between Catullus' total love and Lesbia's lukewarmness.

[87] Akbar Khan (1968:568) points to the particular impact of *basiabis* since Catullus was probably the one to introduce the words *basium, basiare, basiatio* into Latin and the word had a special meaning for him and his beloved.

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Catullus' sense of self emerges as a continuous identity over time (cf. Crites, 1997:38). Despite his attempt to sketch the past as a time of total bliss he has revealed, through his dialogue with the self, that he was as insignificant to Lesbia in the past as he is now in the present, and as he most probably will be in the future too.

It has now been made clear that poem 8 does not reflect a dialogue between two diverse personae, the one rational poet and the other irrational lover (cf. Quinn, 1959:94; Rowland, 1966:16). This is internally dialogized discourse within the same psyche.[88] Commager (1965:92), who, like Skinner (1971), argues for an integration of the comic and serious reading, sees Catullus as both performing a part and observing that part from a distance. He is distancing himself from himself in order to gain a better understanding of that self (Turner, 1992:136). This allows him to feel some communitas with generations of foolish lovers: "[t]he poem is not so much a record of his own emotions as an attempt to escape them" (Commager, 1965:92). Yet he has admitted that his love for Lesbia was different from that of the common sort. Therefore his feelings of suffering cannot be the same as theirs. His attempt at inclusion fails, just as his self-persuasion is undermined through the course of the poem. As Greene (1995:80) argues "we end up with…a narrator whose identity is defined by the very oppositions that divide him." As the Catullan speaker tries to persuade himself into a certain course of action, he is consistently reminded of his own vulnerability. Therefore his multiple voices are constantly shifting between unison and separation as he fluctuates between nostalgia and determination. Catullus' peripheral status in this poem occurs not only in his rejection by his beloved and his unique manner of loving, but also within himself: the single Catullan psyche (which Miller would call the "lyric consciousness") has its own centre and periphery (Fitzgerald, 1995:19). As he moves between them, he fluctuates between the first, second and third person. In poem 8 this dilemma cannot be resolved as the final self-address reveals; he remains in the liminal phase at a distance from his own self. The great irony of the poem lies in the fact that the Catullan speaker's self-division results from attempts to break off an affair with a woman who, for all practical purposes, seems to have left him already. The break-up which would free him from his complex emotions needs to happen within himself, but having loved Lesbia "as no other girl will ever be loved" makes it hard to be resolute.

This extraordinary nature of Catullus' love, of loving a woman "as no other will ever be loved", is the exclusive theme of poem 87. By means of verbal and/or thematic echoes the poem enters into dialogue with poems 109, 70, 72, 8 and 76 but takes as its sole focus the

[88] Lyne (1980:48) calls this the dramatization of one man's ambivalence.

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one-sidedness of the speaker's love for Lesbia and his complete devotion (*fides*) (Thomson, 1997:517).

c.87
Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam
vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea es.[89]
nulla fides ullo fuit umquam in foedere tanta,
quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est.

The poem is neatly balanced with each distich starting with *nulla* and ending with *mea es(t).* Likewise, *tantum* is picked up by *tanta* in the hexameters, and *quantum* by *quanta* in the pentameters. The speaker is reflecting on his past love – *amatam, amata es, fuit, reperta est* (cf. Thomson, 1997:517; Skinner, 2003:108) – and he seems to be focussing on the "facts" with a sense of detachment. The power of the poem lies in the antithesis: the difference in language between the first and second couplets underscores the otherness of Catullus' love (Lyne, 1980:37).

Like poems 70 and 72 poem 87 starts with some statement introduced by the verb *dicere*. *Nulla…mulier…se dicere* closely echoes *nulli se dicit mulier* of poem 70. But "my woman" from the latter has become an entirely generic "woman". Moreover, "the woman" has not in fact said these words as was the case in poem 70. The speaker is reporting a possible utterance, which turns out to be impossible: "No woman can say…" (*nulla potest mulier dicere…*). He then moves from the unspecified to the specific and Lesbia is addressed in the pentameter. (A similar technique is used in poem 72 where the vocative "Lesbia" is postponed to the second line.) Ironically she is called *mea* and the apparent generality is revealed to be very specific.[90] The uniqueness of the love Catullus used to feel for her recalls similar formulations from other poems: *amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla* (8.5), *amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla* (37.12) and *quam Catullus unam / plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes* (58.2-3).[91] But, whereas these poems all seem to be driven by either hurt, despair or disbelief, the tone in poem 87 is more one of detached acceptance.

Having described his love for Lesbia in all but conventional terms (*amatam, amata es*), Catullus amends his formulation in the second distich by adding a non-physical element: *fides* (Copley, 1949:27). This is the kind of whole love he aimed to describe in poem 72

[89] The Veronese text has *est*, which is the more widely accepted reading (cf. Mynors, 1958; Fordyce, 1961; Quinn, 1973; Garrison, 1989; loc. cit.). I follow Thomson's text since I find *es* more convincing in the light of *tuo* in the final line: "[c]hange of 'person addressed' would drive a wedge between the two couplets" (Thomson, 1997:517).
[90] Similarly nostalgic appellations are found in poems 37 (*mi puella*, 11) and 58 (*Lesbia nostra*, 1) where, far from being his beloved any more, Lesbia has sunk to the levels of a common prostitute.
[91] See footnote 86 above.

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(*pater ut gnatos diligit et generos; bene velle*) and poem 109 (*sanctae foedus amicitiae*), the latter echoed in *foedere* (87.3). *Fides* is what sustains any *foedus* (McGushin, 1967:90): we are once more in the domain of aristocratic obligation as the Catullan speaker struggles to define his all-encompassing love in a language which lacks suitable concepts.[92]

The antithesis between the first and second couplets not only serves to highlight the uniqueness of Catullus' love for Lesbia, but also his own realization that she did not reciprocate this special kind of love. When *amare* is at stake, she is invited to participate in the conversation, but when there is talk of mutual obligation and commitment, she is reduced to the status of a passive recipient. In the first distich we are confronted with an inverted example of the "reflected discourse of another" (Bakhtin,1984:203): the speaker's awareness that another consciousness might respond to his words. Catullus addresses Lesbia and proposes an utterance which she might use, only to realize that she says nothing: no woman can say that she has been so loved; Lesbia can but she is silent. This is still the kind of love (*amare*) which she might understand, yet it seems that even this kind she was not able to appreciate. The speaker realizes this: he is not anticipating the words of another consciousness, but rather another's silence. When the speaker then moves into the realm of social commitment she becomes the object of his love, no longer invited to take part in a conversation where she does not grasp the value of the language used.[93] From the reflected discourse of another the Catullan speaker has turned to internally dialogized discourse. He might still be referring to his beloved, but he is verbalizing the situation for himself in order to gain better understanding of both the circumstances and himself. Fitzgerald (1995:130) points out that *tuo* and *mea* in the final line create an illusion of reciprocity. This illusion serves precisely to emphasize the imbalance in Catullus' relationship with Lesbia: both actions come from him and there is no question of reciprocity. As Thomson (1997:517) notes, the "sting" of the poem lies in the words *ex parte mea* ("for my part"). However, the sting appears to hurt him more than her as the speaker's total isolation is revealed: the nostalgic *mea Lesbia* of the first distich has become *mea parte*. He was the sole contributor to the faithfulness (*fides*) in their relationship. Not only does he realize this, but through Lesbia's silence he also realizes that she never cared. The poem reflects "a relationship that has no world": by using the language of aristocratic obligation to describe an extra-marital affair Catullus robs himself of the context necessary to give meaning to that very language (Fitzgerald, 1995:132). The relationship was displaced from the start; the Catullan speaker even more so.

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[92] See Catullus' struggle with the lack of reciprocated *fides* in the next chapter (passim).

[93] *Tuo* functions in effect as an objective genitive: *in amore tuo* = "in my love for you" (Garrison, 1989:156; cf. Fordyce, 1961:381 and poem 64.253).

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Catullus' use of the language of social obligation culminates in poem 76 where *fides, pietas, foedus, bene dicere* and *bene facere* (variations on *bene velle*) all feature.

c.76
Si qua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas
    est homini, cum se cogitat esse pium,
nec sanctam violasse fidem, nec foedere in ullo
    divum ad fallendos numine abusum homines,
multa parata manent in longa aetate, Catulle,   5
    ex hoc ingrato gaudia amore tibi.
nam quaecumque homines bene cuiquam aut dicere possunt
    aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt.
omnia quae ingratae perierunt credita menti.
    quare cur tete iam amplius excrucies?   10
quin tu animo offirmas atque istinc teque reducis
    et dis invitis desinis esse miser?
difficile est longum subito deponere amorem,
    difficile est, verum hoc qua lubet efficias;
una salus haec est, hoc est tibi pervincendum,   15
    hoc facias, sive id non pote sive pote.
o di, si vestrum est misereri, aut si quibus umquam
    extremam iam ipsa in morte tulistis opem,
me miserum aspicite et, si vitam puriter egi,
    eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi,   20
quae mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus
    expulit ex omni pectore laetitias.
non iam illud quaero, contra ut me diligat illa,
    aut, quod non potis est, esse pudica velit:
ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum.   25
    o di, reddite mi hoc pro pietate mea.

In this poem "Catullus' liminal state has become unbearable" and he desperately seeks both reciprocity from the gods and some form of response from his audience (Fitzgerald, 1995:125). In the form of self-address in the second person, similar to that of poem 8, the speaker aims to reach a greater degree of self-understanding and in the process, hopefully, a final distancing from the love which is still torturing him. From the position of a detached observer he uses logic to convince "Catullus" that his current suffering is both irrational and unnecessary (Greene, 1995:88). This is internally dialogized discourse in its purest form. The dominant moral term is *pietas*, a sense of duty which involves more than the worldly concerns of *officium* because duty to the gods is now included (Skinner, 2003:74). The speaker's main argument is based on the premise that acts of *pietas* from the past should guarantee pleasure in the present.[94] And so, in the first nine lines of the poem he defines "Catullus" as someone who has been faithful to gods and human beings alike in all of his commitments (Janan, 1994:98). Whereas Catullus has been above reproach both in terms

[94] See Powell (1990:199ff.) for a good summary of the philosophical background of this statement. Janan (1994:98ff.) draws a parallel between the recollection of *pietas* in this poem and the lover's conception of virtue, also by means of remembering, in Plato's *Phaedrus.*

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of speech and action (7-8), his beloved, unfortunately, has been the exact opposite (*ingrato amore*, 6; *ingratae menti*, 9).[95] Having stressed the fact that the lover has done all he could, the speaker turns to him with a greater sense of urgency by means of rhetorical questions (*quare…quin*, 10-12): "Why keep torturing yourself? Why not be firm in your mind and withdraw yourself from that place, and cease to be miserable, never mind the gods?" In this double-voiced discourse the two "Catulluses" are functioning as autonomous selves: the speaker shows an acute awareness of "Catullus'" possible response. In anticipation of a retort he states what he believes his addressee would say: "It is difficult to lay down a long love all of a sudden, difficult indeed" (13-14). Fearing that the latter might succumb to the difficulty, the speaker follows up this statement with more gentle admonitions, which, however, show an increasing insistency (14-16). He hopes to leave his addressee no choice: "This you must do, whether possible or not" (*hoc facias, sive id non pote sive pote*, 16). Now the speaker turns to the gods and refers to himself in the first person for the remainder of the poem (17-26). He beseeches them to rid him of this "disease" (the love he still feels for Lesbia) which has taken over his life and allows him no joys (20-22). He has given up on her; his only wish is to be "cured" himself (23-25). In this last section the voice of the "detached logical observer" seems to have merged with that of the tortured lover, who not only acknowledges his own helplessness but also clings pathetically to the promised rewards of *pietas* (Skinner, 2003:75).

The logical speaker's opening argument aimed at rescuing his tortured self, is soon revealed to be dependent upon a false premise: acts of *pietas* in the past have not brought him any pleasure in the present (*desinis esse miser*, 12) (Adler, 1981:36; Powell, 1990:200). In fact, the poem demonstrates that *pietas,* in a private erotic relationship at any rate, carries very little meaning (Skinner, 2003:75). The word is in itself ambiguous in this context. By using *pietas* in conjunction with other terms related to socio-political commitment (*sancta fides*, *foedus,* 3) the speaker aims to convey the extraordinary nature of his love for Lesbia; in the process he employs the terminology of the very cultural system which he openly rejects (cf. poems 5, 7, 10, 51, et al.) (Rubino, 1975:293; Miller, 1994:132; Greene, 1995:88). Moreover, Lesbia's unfaithfulness both towards her husband and in general makes *pietas, fides* and *foedus* meaningless as erotic concepts (Greene, 1995:88). Rubino (1975:293) argues that the speaker is very much aware of the fact that he has not led a pure life (*si vitam puriter egi*, 19) and that his relationship with a married woman made a mockery out of the traditional Roman regard for these principles. This line of argument would, however, undermine Catullus' conception of his erotic world and the uniqueness of his love (cf. poems 70, 72, 75, 87, 109). The very fact that his use of the language of aristocratic obligation in

[95] This is an elaboration on the theme of poem 87: the one-sidedness of Catullus' love for Lesbia.

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describing an erotic liaison often seems to be less than successful (cf. Copley, 1949:24ff.), is because he was attempting to describe by means of an inadequate vocabulary something which, for him, had the highest value. This is not to argue for any kind of naïveté on Catullus' part, but rather for his growing disillusionment with regard to the failure of traditional Roman institutions (Vinson, 1992:168ff.). His own ironic position is not one of hypocrisy but may be seen as the speaker's self-awareness of "the disparity between fantasy and reality" (Vinson, 1992:179). For his part, which has been the focus of his poems of disillusionment throughout (poems 70, 72, 75, 87, 109), he has been faithful and pure within the privacy and intimacy of his relationship with Lesbia. But he could not keep the outside world at bay. With his use of the public terms of socio-political commitment that world necessarily gained a footing into his private world. Amidst the political unrest of late Republican Rome the meaning of these terms (such as *pietas, fides* and *foedus*) have become unstable: this is part of the poem's message (Skinner, 2003:75).

The apparent detachment of the opening speaker is also revealed to be false as feelings of bitterness seep through in *ingrato* and *ingratae* (6, 9): his attempt at self-persuasion is clearly not working (Powell, 1990:202). Whereas Catullus defined his worth and identity independently of Lesbia in lines 1-9 (Janan, 1994:98), from line 10 onwards it is quite clear that this definition is unstable. She represents the symbolic space (*istinc*, 11) of his unhappiness and the love he still feels for her is the decisive factor in his current mental state, even though they are no longer together (*non iam illud quaero, contra me ut diligat illa*, 23). The language he used to describe his identity independently of Lesbia has also been revealed to be vulnerable: the instability of the term calls his whole claim to *pietas* into question and threatens his very being-in-language. When defined in terms of his love for her he turns out to be totally powerless. He cannot break with her and admits to himself the hopelessness of the situation: *sive id non pote sive pote* (16). In a final act of desperation he turns to the gods and pleads for reciprocity (Fitzgerald, 1995:125).

The relationship is over, but Catullus is far from being detached. A poem that starts out as a logical appeal to rationality turns out to be a desperate plea for salvation: its main argument depends on a premise that cannot stand. As Powell (1990:199ff.) argues (contra Quinn, 1973:407; Lyne, 1980:32, et al.), this is not a record of the speaker's self-righteousness, but an ironic take on the inefficacy of the "moral medicine" offered by philosophy. In real life it does not work; the entire poem attests to this. If the Catullan speaker had managed to make a clean break with Lesbia, his isolation from the audience would have dissolved, but as long as he remains attached to her he "consigns him[self] to a different level of reality": he is a poet "on the threshold" (Fitzgerald, 1995:121). This is not only the fate of the Catullan

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speaker vis-à-vis his audience, but also in respect of his position in the world of the poem. He finds himself in an anti-space, on the very brink of death: *iam ipsa in morte*, 18. There is no assurance that the gods would answer his prayer. He has admitted that acts of *pietas* no longer guarantee reciprocity. In fact, *pietas* in its very essence has been impaired. This makes his prayer in the final line not only pathetic, but futile (*pro pietate mea*). The gods will not answer because the prerequisite for reciprocity is at best ambivalent. Therefore the Catullan speaker remains betwixt and between, on the threshold between metaphorical death and highly unlikely salvation. As his internal dialogue has revealed, an attempt at self-definition without Lesbia is meaningless; definition in terms of her threatens to destroy the self. The consciousness which emerges from this dialogue, who turns to the gods as a last resort, is perhaps no longer fragmented but he remains decentred, caught in a perilous anti-space between letting go of a love which only brought him pain and the hold that love still has on him.

The hopelessness of poem 76 brings the Catullan speaker to a re-evaluation of the situation and a final farewell to Lesbia in poem 11. The Sapphic stanzas which launched the affair return only this once to end off the relationship fittingly.

c.11

Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli,
sive in extremos penetrabit Indos,
litus ut longe resonante Eoa
    tunditur unda,
sive in Hyrcanos Arabesve molles, 5
seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos,
sive quae septemgeminus colorat
    aequora Nilus,
sive trans altas gradietur Alpes,
Caesaris visens monimenta magni, 10
Gallicum Rhenum horribile aequor ulti-
    mosque Britannos,
omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas
caelitum, temptare simul parati,
pauca nuntiate meae puellae 15
    non bona dicta.
cum suis vivat valeatque moechis,
quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,
nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium
    ilia rumpens; 20
nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,
qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati
ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
    tactus aratro est.

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The long debated issue of poem 11's thematic unity has been laid to rest, in my opinion, by Forsyth (1991), Skinner (1991:8ff.), and Konstan (2000:11ff.), all of whom draw parallels between the aggression of Roman expansion in the first three stanzas and Lesbia's sexual aggression in the final two.[96] Neither the dating of the poem (before or after Crassus' defeat in Parthia?) nor the circumstances which prompted its writing (did Lesbia perhaps request a reconciliation?) could be deduced with any certainty.[97] For our purposes one question remains: how is the speaker's liminal identity revealed in this "dear Jane letter"?

Starting his poem with a possible itinerary of far-off and exotic places Catullus moves from the ends of the earth to the small and familiar in the final stanza (Janan, 1994:63; Armstrong, 2013:47). The two addressees and potential travel companions have attracted a great deal of attention, primarily because of their extremely abusive depiction in other poems (cf. poems 15, 16, 21, 23, 24 and 26). If Catullus' choice of messengers is ironic (Bright, 1976:109; Heath, 1989:102), where does this leave the apparently sincere rejection of Lesbia in the second half of the poem, and if Furius and Aurelius are indeed regarded as friends (Macleod, 1973b:301; Fredricksmeyer, 1993:90), what are we to make of the other poems addressed to them?[98] Of course the poem has to form a meaningful unit in itself (Fredricksmeyer, 1993:89ff.) but the fact that it engages dialogically with other poems in the collection cannot be ignored. It is clear from the fifth and sixth stanzas that discordant emotions may be juxtaposed in the same poem (Minkova, 2002:255). Therefore an ironic address to Furius and Aurelius need not call into question the brutal rejection of Lesbia in the fifth stanza. As Commager (1965:100) points out, looking back from the last two stanzas the address to Furius and Aurelius may well be fittingly ironic. Does their willingness to attempt all (*omnia…temptare simul parati*, 13-14) include Catullus' great love and so make them members of the "three hundred lovers" (*moechis…trecentos*, 17-18) (cf. Commager, 1965:101)? Forsyth (1991:459) argues that they are the ideal addressees in a poem on sexual aggression, regardless of their current status in the poet's life, because of their association with sexually aggressive behaviour, especially in poems 15, 16 and 21.[99] In addition to these arguments the fact remains that Furius and Aurelius are of course not really the go-betweens for Catullus' message (Thomson, 1997:235).[100] They merely serve as detour to the real addressee who will probably see these words in writing: Lesbia. She is

[96] More detail on their respective arguments will form part of the discussion to follow.
[97] These are also issues which have been prominent in less recent scholarship.
[98] Poems 15, 16, 21 and 23 will be discussed in the fifth chapter on invective; poem 24 is quoted below (footnote 141).
[99] Minkova (2002:263) reads the exaggerated address to Furius and Aurelius as parody. In this way the poem functions as a rejection of Lesbia as well as of these "friends".
[100] Cf. Duclos (1976:77).

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estranged from Catullus (Macleod, 1973b:302).[101] Therefore, the exaggerated claims of Furius' and Aurelius' willingness to travel to the edges of the known world serve as backdrop for the difficulty of "getting through" to her (Fitzgerald, 1995:181). Their "imperial willingness" from the first three stanzas is matched by her insatiable lust in the fifth (Fitzgerald, 1995:181).

In an apparently hopeful and positive mood the Catullan speaker looks towards the future (*penetrabit*, 2) as he presents his ambitious travelogue to Furius and Aurelius. It is noteworthy that he refers to the *people* on the edges of the empire, and not the places (*Indos, Hyrcanos, Arabes, Parthos*); this "seems to hint at more than a simple *populus pro loco* device" (Forsyth, 1991:460). The verb *penetrare*, like its English derivative, carries the connotation of sexual force (Forsyth, 1991:460; Konstan, 2000:13). With the conquered tribes as its objects the verb feminizes them as the passive recipients of sexual assault (Janan, 1994:64; Konstan, 2000:13). In the third stanza Rome herself features at the centre of Catullus' travelogue, not as city but as the feats of Julius Caesar, her most famous citizen (Janan, 1994:63). These natural barriers of a mountain, river and the sea (*Alpes, Gallicum Rhenum, ultimosque Britannos*) acquire, by implication, symbolic value as they become political borders representing the extent of Roman expansion into foreign territory (Armstrong, 2013:49). In her transgression of these natural borders Rome as centre is "both absent and present" (Janan, 1994:64). She is unnamed but she makes herself felt both as the seat of power and as an antagonistic presence to the victims on her boundaries (cf. Lotman, 1990:191). Her lust for conquest is echoed in the acts of another of her citizens, whose carnal greed is equally boundless: Lesbia.

After the build-up through the catalogue of exotic places, line 15 comes as a disappointment (Kinsey, 1965:542). From the vastness of the travelogue the speaker moves to the small and insubstantial: *pauca*. The only travelling Furius and Aurelius need to do will be over a short distance: to deliver a message to Lesbia. She symbolizes Rome herself, the very centre of power and conquest, through her equally insatiable desire (*quos simul complexa tenet trecentos, / nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium / ilia rumpens*, 18-20). The "arms" of Rome which reach towards the ends of the known world, become Lesbia's imprisoning arms, ravaging those in her embrace just like the people on the borders of the empire are violated by their conquerors. *Vivat valeatque* (17) recalls *vivamus atque amemus* from poem 5 (Commager, 1965:102; Duclos, 1976:79): the separation between the lovers is blatant. The Catullan speaker seems to have come full circle: his final poem to

[101] However, I do not agree with Kinsey (1965:539) and Macleod (1973b:302) that Catullus is no longer willing to address her.

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Lesbia responds to his first as *identidem* from poem 51 appears for a second and final time in the same position within its respective stanza (Miller, 1994:62). Only this time *identidem te* is transformed to *identidem omnia* (Commager, 1965:103). The distance between Catullus and Lesbia of poem 51 is replaced in poem 11 with a disillusioned closeness. He is able to observe her close-by, like the man from the earlier poem, and has discovered her to be depraved.

From the overpowering extent of Lesbia's embrace and sexual appetite, the speaker moves on to the simplicity of a plough field in the final stanza (Janan, 1994:64). The imagery is no longer that of the city but that of the country; we are no longer in Rome. In a final "leap over space" Catullus concentrates on the locus of dramatic change, the symbolic threshold where the moment of crisis takes place (Bakhtin, 1984:149). He focuses on an insignificant flower growing not even in the centre of the field, already a liminal space, but on its periphery (Janan, 1994:64). The flower, a symbol of his love for Lesbia, has been "touched by a passing plough" (*...praetereunte.../ tactus aratro est*, 23-24). The action was slight, but enough to make the flower fall (*cecidit*, 22). Its peripheral location adds to the inadvertent nature of the act. The space also has temporal significance: the seemingly bold and hopeful speaker who has his eyes on the future at the start of the poem (*penetrabit, gradietur*) turns out to be not only vulnerable, but caught up in a past where a part of him has died.[102] The flower nicked by the plough presents an image of death but also of defloration (Miller, 1994:66): the one who claimed that he could "penetrate" in the opening section is revealed to be the penetrated.

Williams (1980:46) argues that Catullus purposefully keeps his simile as far as possible from the human sphere. Unlike the simile describing the death of Nisus in *Aeneid* 9.433-37, one most certainly modelled on poem 11, Catullus' flower never becomes anthropomorphic (Williams, 1980:46).[103] Yet this "distancing" paradoxically offers the most vivid look into the speaker's innermost feelings (Williams, 1980:46). The detached third person from the opening lines is gradually replaced by the first person, first in the nostalgic *meae puellae* (15) and then in *meum amorem* (21). The separation between noun and adjective in the latter, occurring on opposite ends of their respective line, underscores the peripheral status of Catullus' love in Lesbia's life which finds its most poignant depiction in the simile of the liminal flower. There is a sense of finality in this image (Kinsey, 1965:544). Just as the

[102] Cf. Duclos (1976:87) who argues that the Catullus of the final section is clearly not a "whole man".

[103] *volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus*
it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit:
purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro 435
languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo
demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur. (Text from Fairclough, 1935:142.)

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plough will not return once it has passed, Lesbia will *not* look back as the speaker claimed she might (*nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem*, 21). She has never been the pursuer (cf. poem 8.9-10). With the final image of this "dear Jane" poem the speaker reveals his knowledge of this truth.[104]

The liminal identity of the Catullan speaker in this poem finds expression through his experience of marginalization from both a real and symbolic centre: Rome as the seat of power (Konstan, 2000:14) and Lesbia as the seat of his love and, by implication, his life. By placing himself on the edge of the field the Catullan speaker identifies with the people who will be violated by Roman conquest (Konstan, 2007:78). When reading the poem from this vantage point it becomes clear that Catullus never intended to undertake a journey with Furius and Aurelius.[105] The long excursion on exotic travel served only to illustrate the monstrous appetite of the Roman imperialist machine, which only Lesbia could match. *This* is the message to Lesbia. Instead of being "despised errand boys" (Garrison, 1989:102) Furius and Aurelius are part of the "not so nice words" (*non bona dicta*, 16): they mirror her destructive indifference in their imperialistic willingness to dare all. Through their association lover and reputed friends "merge into a generalized and indifferent violence on whose periphery [Catullus] locates, very precisely, himself" (Fitzgerald, 1995:181-182). Having no place in the city, the flower grows in the meadow. But just as the people on the edges of the empire are not safe from Roman invasion, so the flower on the edge of the plough field could not escape the plough (Konstan, 2000:14). The two belong to different worlds (Quinn, 1973:129): the one to a world of rural innocence and natural growth, the other to a world of imperialist urbanization and border control.[106] But a short time of exposure to each other was enough to do irreparable damage to the flower. It is unlikely that it would raise its head while the plough, like Lesbia and the Roman imperial machine, goes on undisturbed and indifferent (*praetereunte*).

3.1.4 Reflection: Poem 68b

Through the finality suggested by the image of the flower the Catullan speaker at last appears to have extricated himself from the Lesbia affair. His days of infatuation, disillusionment, love and hate are over. However, as a significant chapter from his past the relationship forms part of his life story, and necessarily part of the self constituted through

[104] Commager (1965:102) reads this as Catullus' realization that his relationship with Lesbia was, for her part, "of only a common or garden variety".
[105] Bright (1976:111) picks up a suggestion of impossibility already in the first stanza, citing Lucretius (II.536-539) on the impenetrability of India, and in the fact that Catullus' proposed tour starts at the furthest possible place instead of following a logical sequence.
[106] Skinner (1991:9) points out that the plough, apart from being a farming tool, was also the implement used in the ritual of demarcating the *pomerium* of a new colony.

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narrating that story. In chapter 1 I argued, with reference to various scholars, that narrative is a favoured medium for self-reflection since the telling of a life story allows for experience in its totality – past, present, future – to form part of a believable whole. In my opinion poem 68b is the most self-reflective poem in the entire Catullan corpus. As he looks back on the particular episode in the poem, a wondrous night he shared with Lesbia, [107] he tells the story of that time in his life and in the process arrives at a greater understanding of himself. Whereas the poems discussed in the preceding sections showed an infatuated Catullan speaker going through a process of increasing disillusionment, the speaker in poem 68b is looking back on past events with an almost surprising sense of sobriety (Macleod, 1974:85).[108] His position is no less liminal, but he seems to have resigned himself to the status quo, at least to some degree.[109]

The "notoriously difficult" poem 68b (Gale, 2012:184) starts with the Catullan speaker thanking his addressee, one Allius.[110] He is immensely grateful towards Allius, to such an extent that he invokes the Muses to spread his words of thanks to many thousands across generations (*non possum reticere, deae, qua me Allius in re / iuverit...dicite multis / milibus et facite haec carta loquatur anus,* 41-46). Wiseman (1985:160) sees a defiance, comparable with that of poem 5 in the face of the "all too serious old guys", in the emphatic opening line: the speaker cannot keep quiet, despite societal conventions. Only after a long excursion on the extent of Allius' aid, which includes a description of Catullus' sorry state before Allius helped him (51-56) and two similes (57-66) describing the great relief brought on by his aid, do we learn what the exact nature of his help was. He made an enclosed field accessible by means of a broad path (*is clausum lato patefecit limite campum*, 67) and so offered Catullus a house in which to enjoy the love he shared with his beloved (*isque domum nobis isque dedit dominae / ad quam communes exerceremus amores*, 68-69).[111] To this house his beloved came as an epiphany (*candida diva*, 70) and as she entered the building she stepped on the threshold and paused in the doorway (*trito fulgentem in limine plantam /*

[107] As mentioned in the previous chapter, I accept the identification of Lesbia with the *candida diva* (70). Most scholars follow this route, although Feeney (1992:43) makes a convincing case for leaving the beloved unnamed.
[108] Janan (1994:136, 181 n.59) sees poem 68b as a recollection of Catullus' very first encounter with Lesbia: this makes the encounter not only stand out from all others in the collection but also explains its detailed engraving in Catullus' memory. This would also account for her portrayal as virgin bride as well as her elevation to the status of goddess. With the benefit of hindsight he is able to break down that image through the course of the poem and so bring together both his first impression of her and his disillusionment.
[109] Because of its length I will not be quoting the poem as a whole, but only those sections which apply to my discussion of Catullus as peripheral lover. References to his brother's death, discussed in the previous chapter, will necessarily occur as they impact upon his relationship with Lesbia.
[110] Rubino (1975:296) and Hubbard (1984:31) likewise comment on the complexity of the poem.
[111] Clauss (1995:243) sees the enclosed field as suggestive of the exclusiveness of the venue: not many may enter.

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innixa arguta constituit solea, 71-72). There she remains poised for 57 lines while the speaker compares her with the mythical Laodamia in an extended simile which generates similes of its own.

Before the comparison with Laodamia, which introduces its own set of ambiguities into the Catullus-Lesbia relationship, there are jarring notes in the lovers' arrival at Allius' house. Apart from providing the physical building, Allius had to make the house accessible by opening up a fenced field (*clausum campum*). This introduces the theme of transgression: Catullus and Lesbia are entering a private space where they do not belong. The *limes* (*lato…limite*) is itself indicative of boundaries and demarcation, denoting a pathway which divides land. When Lesbia then steps on the threshold the transgression is confirmed, both by the deliberate nature of the act (*constituit*, 73) and the ill-omen it brings.[112] The threshold in this poem is literally and symbolically a liminal space. In the literal sense it divides the outside from the inside, the vast from the intimate. In the symbolic sense it signifies transgression and change: the place where "the forbidden line is overstepped" (Bakhtin, 1984:169). In the ritual of Catullus and Lesbia's lovemaking the threshold marks the phase between separation from their former selves and the consummation of their relationship. As such this liminal space also acquires a strong temporal element: it contains a moment of tension, a turning point between two states of being (Bakhtin, 1984:169). Catullus keeps his readers in suspense by freezing this moment of dramatic change and wandering into the world of myth.

The beloved's arrival at the borrowed house calls to the speaker's mind the arrival of Laodamia at the house of her new husband Protesilaus, with whom she is madly in love (*flagrans…amore*, 73). Lesbia's stepping on the threshold introduces the theme of marriage, which is immediately picked up in the Laodamia comparison by *coniugis* (73) (Williams, 1980:54): Lesbia is thereby cast in the role of a bride. Laodamia as the passionate and dutiful wife par excellence who could not bear to live without her husband (Lyne, 1980:57) would seem to be a most positive comparison for Catullus' great love, yet her story involves separation, death, and creative loss (Janan, 1994:121). The ill-omened start to her marriage, coupled with Lesbia's ominous step on the threshold of the lovers' venue, create a sense of foreboding. Laodamia and Protesilaus' house was "begun in vain" (*frustra inceptam*, 75): he died at Troy, as Fate decreed, shortly after the wedding (79-86). The interpretation of this phrase is varied: does it refer to an unfinished building, or a childless union? (cf. Sarkissian, 1983:17; Gale, 2012:187) The ambiguity could well be deliberate: the

[112] Baker (1960:172) points out that *constituit* may denote an act of planting or establishing cities and families. On the ill-omened nature of the act for a new bride, see Sarkissian (1983:17).

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physical building has not been finished, and the union has not produced any offspring (Janan, 1994:121). This leads to creative failure: Protesilaus could not finish his hands' work, and without an heir the family line would end. As in poem 68a the loss of a loved one, sexual and artistic output, and a chance at immortality are connected (Janan, 1994:121).[113] Protesilaus' death in Troy reminds the speaker of the unfair death of Catullus' brother in the same location and introduces what appears to be an uncontrolled outburst (89-100). This is the first sign of the distorting ability of simile (Feeney, 1992:39): Laodamia comes to resemble Catullus much more than she does Lesbia. They both lost loved ones in Troy who were to them the very sweetness of life (*tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor*, 95-96; *vita dulcius atque anima*, 106). In hindsight, even when she is first introduced to us as a comparandum for Lesbia her passion (*flagrans amore*) resembles Catullus', not Lesbia's: *he* was burning and consumed by his love (53ff.) (Macleod, 1974:83). From the whole poem we learn nothing about Lesbia's feelings, only that her devotion to Catullus is everything but that of Laodamia's to Protesilaus (135ff.) (Macleod, 1974:83). This distorting ability of simile leads to a confusion of identities: the simile tells us to compare Laodamia with Lesbia, but striking similarities between Laodamia and Catullus command a match between them instead (Janan, 1994:124). Consequently, Protesilaus must be a match for Lesbia. Not only does this put the Catullan speaker in the position of the passive female and victim,[114] but it has the further implication that loss of lover and loss of brother become near synonyms.[115] In this way "the problem of loss becomes as well a problem of preserving the self" (Janan, 1994:125). As argued in the previous chapter, with the loss of Other comes a loss of self (Janan, 1994:127). Through the blurring of the distinction between brother and lover, this loss becomes twofold and the threat to the Catullan self greater.

Cursed Troy (*Troia (nefas)*, 89) functions as the barrier which separates Catullus from his brother and Laodamia from her husband (Janan, 1994:123) but, through its identification with the illicit love between Paris and Helen and the ensuing war (87ff.), it also establishes a link between adultery and death (Hubbard, 1984:36; Janan, 1994:130).[116] By implication Catullus' own adulterous affair with Lesbia becomes associated with his brother's death (Miller, 2004:54). This introduces the issues of guilt and of responsibility. Laodamia is portrayed as the cause of her own suffering: by neglecting the sacrifice to the gods she

[113] See chapter 2, p.93.
[114] Similar gender role-reversal was already seen in the final stanza of poem 11 where a phallic Lesbia violates her feminized lover (Miller, 2004:46) and will feature again below when Catullus compares himself with Juno.
[115] The parallel between brother and lover suggests that the Catullan speaker experiences both the brother's death and the lover's infidelity as "abandonment and desolation of his affections" (Hubbard, 1984:34).
[116] In the previous chapter we saw Troy function as a symbolic space of death, otherness and separation (see p.96).

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effects her own punishment (…*nondum cum sanguine sacro / hostia caelestis pacificasset eros*, 75-76) (Gale, 2012:204). But she is also portrayed as a victim of Fate (85). This leaves a deliberate ambiguity regarding the questions of guilt and accountability: being both victim and perpetrator, Laodamia remains in a liminal space between innocence and guilt (Gale, 2012:207). Her situation resembles that of Catullus. He is a victim of his brother's death and the consequent ending of the family line, however, through his conscious choice for a relationship which could never result in marriage and legitimate offspring, his inactivity makes him an active agent in the termination of that very household.

After the digression on his brother the speaker turns his attention back to Laodamia and her intense passion for her husband. In a first attempt to find a comparandum for the depth of Laodamia's desire, Catullus compares it to the *barathrum* which Hercules dug out near Pheneus, a challenging comparison at best.[117] The reference to Hercules draws another parallel between Catullus and Laodamia: for both the intensity of their love evokes images of water associated with the divine hero (Tuplin, 1981:134).[118] Finding this comparison inadequate (*sed tuus altus amor barathro fuit altior illo*, 117) the speaker turns to a familial theme of the grandfather's joy at a long-awaited grandson and heir, who would dispel a greedy kinsman (119-124). As others have noted (Macleod, 1974:84; Miller, 2004:57), this simile recalls Catullus' use of familial imagery to express his conception of "whole love" in poem 72. Moreover, this picks up the theme of the *domus* and continuation of the family line, and implicitly hints at the absence of these prospects for both Laodamia's and Catullus' part (Gale, 2012:187-188). The seemingly unsuitability of the simile, of comparing an erotic relationship with a familial one, reveals the speaker's longing for something which cannot be.

Next Catullus introduces the theme of the insatiable female dove which snatches kisses from her mate without end.[119] This would seem to recall Catullus' own request of infinite kisses from Lesbia (poems 5 and 7). There is an ambiguous note to the simile because it involves the "woman with many desires" (*multivola mulier*, 128), an inappropriate comparison for the "one-man" (*univira*) Laodamia (Janan, 1994:137). The speaker seems to be looking ahead at Lesbia. Again the comparisons do not suffice: Laodamia's joy surpassed the grandfather's and her passion that of the dove when she was united with her husband (130). Her love was therefore a whole love, like Catullus', where deep-felt love (*bene velle)* and

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[117] Elder (1951:103), Copley (1957:31), Fordyce (1961:355), Quinn (1972:188) have described this comparison with words such as "outrageous" and "tasteless", "grotesque", "a whimsically precious mythological excursus", "almost impossible to take serious". See Tuplin (1981:120ff.) and especially Vandiver (2000) for a redemption of this simile and a detailed argument for its validity in the poem.

[118] In line 54 Catullus' burning for Lesbia has been described as *lymphaque in Oetaeis Malia Thermopylis*.

[119] Doves were traditional symbols of fidelity in marriage (Quinn, 1973:391).

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passion (*amare)* complemented each other. Having failed in his three attempts at finding a suitable comparison for Laodamia, the speaker finally returns to Lesbia. Although no time has lapsed since her stepping on the threshold, the Laodamia excursion has allowed a bit of reality to step in. Immediately upon returning to Lesbia the speaker admits that she is slightly inferior to Laodamia: "Second to her by no means, or just ever so slightly, was she, my light, who came to my lap" (*aut nihil aut paulum cui tum concedere digna / lux mea se nostrum contulit in gremium,* 131-132). Her bridal status is still hinted at in the description of Cupid flitting about her in the saffron colours of a bridal gown (133-134), but this idealized image, already showing its cracks in *aut nihil aut paulum*, cannot be sustained. The real extent of Lesbia's inferiority to Laodamia is revealed when the speaker states that she is anything but faithful: "Still, although she is not content with just one Catullus…" (*quae tamen etsi uno non est contenta Catullo*, 135). Then he takes a very worldly stance in claiming to endure her few indiscretions (*rara furta*, 136) because Juno had to do the same. By casting himself in the female role of Juno, Lesbia is equated to the "all-desiring" (*omnivolus*) Jupiter.[120] He is once more the passive female and Lesbia the insatiable, aggressive male. Yet, again he undermines a comparison he took pains to make: "But it is not fair that humans should be compared to gods…" (*atqui nec divis homines componier aequum est*, 141).

His next step in the deconstruction of Lesbia as divine bride is to admit that he is in fact one of her "few indiscretions". Unlike Laodamia, Lesbia did not come to Allius' house as bride; she is a married woman who gives to him "in the wondrous night" gifts earmarked for her husband (*sed furtiva dedit mira munuscula nocte, / ipsius ex ipso dempta viri gremio*, 145-146). As in poem 7 above Catullus and Lesbia's relationship is limited to nighttime, located both physically and temporally in an anti-space: the house which is not theirs and therefore symbolizes a false sense of belonging, and the night, which is the time of thieves and peripheral members of society (cf. Lotman, 1990:140). The theme of theft, suggested by the reference to night, is spelled out in the mention of "stolen little gifts" (*furtiva munuscula*).[121] As stated in the previous chapter, the lap itself (*gremium*) becomes a sight of displacement (Fitzgerald, 1995:207): Lesbia comes to Catullus' lap (*se nostrum contulit in gremium*) with gifts stolen from her husband's. Within this confusion of ownership the Catullan speaker's liminal status becomes very real. He refers to himself as "one Catullus" (*uno Catullo*): for Lesbia he is but one of many and his individuality is negated.

Throughout poems 68a and 68b the theme of "house" and "household", encapsulated in the word *domus*, as well as that of marriage and adultery are dominant and inextricably linked

[120] This recalls the *multivola mulier* from the dove simile and confirms the earlier hint at Lesbia's adultery.
[121] The phrasing again recalls poem 7: *furtivos…amores* (8).

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(Gale, 2012:187-188). As argued in the previous chapter the word *domus* becomes increasingly sinister through the course of both poems. Starting from a fairly neutral *domus* provided by Allius, through Laodamia's *domus* which was "begun in vain", the *domus* of the Valerii Catulli which lies buried with the brother in Troy, and back to the first house which, it now appears, was clearly used for adulterous practices, the speaker's displacement has come full circle. The house in Rome he claimed to own (68a.34) belongs to Allius; in Verona he feels ill at ease (68a.30ff.) and the *domus* representing the Valerii Catulli family line lies buried in Troy. Not only is the speaker entirely displaced, but his brother's death also hints at his own premature death in light of the buried Valerii Catulli *domus*.[122] But the recurring reference to *domus* also implies a sense of guilt on the part of the Catullan speaker (Gale, 2012:205). By stating that the whole Catullan household lies buried with the brother in Troy, the speaker is admitting that he is not intending to continue that line himself. There is an attempt at a sense of "generic displacement" in Catullus' reference to Troy as the *commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaque* (89) (Feeney, 1992:44). On the one hand this would seem to give the speaker some form of communitas with others who lost loved ones there. Yet his loss was greater. Through his identification with Laodamia the loss of a brother also becomes that of a lover. This double referent is likewise revealed in the comparison of Laodamia's love for her husband, first in familial and then in erotic terms (Williams, 1980:59). And so, despite being alive, his whole house lies buried with his brother. He foresees no future, no continuation of the family line despite a yearning for the traditional institutions of marriage and family. But, as argued in the previous chapter, *ingratum tremuli tolle parentis onus* ("Take away the thankless burden of a parent trembling from old age", 142) might well be a reference to Catullus' father and the speaker's realization that familial duties are now his sole responsibility. He cannot continue the barren affair with a married woman and he has to let go of the apple.[123] However, realization is not yet resignation. The poem ends on an ambiguously positive note. Lesbia is now the sweetness and light of his life: *lux mea, qua viva vivere dulce mihist* (160).[124] Despite her infidelities, he is content with the here and now (*quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unis / quem lapide illa dies candidiore notat*, 147-148). Lesbia alone makes the present tolerable. What comes after this is not named.

Poem 68b started out with a sense of joyous defiance. Despite societal conventions the Catullan speaker had to tell of Allius' vital role in making his adulterous yet "wondrous night"

[122] This is implied in the comparison with Laodamia as well. Later in the myth, in a section not covered by Catullus, she commits suicide.
[123] (Tuplin, 1981:135) detects here another parallel with Hercules, who gave up the selfish pursuit of pleasure in order to improve the life of humankind. The Catullan speaker is likewise realizing that he ought to let the greater good of his family take priority over his personal interests.
[124] In the lament over his brother in the middle of the poem his affection was not only "the sweet love" that fed all Catullus' joys, but also the latter's *lumen* (68b.93).

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with his beloved possible. He is taking an "us against them" stance similar to that of poems 3, 5, 7, 83 and 92, and already hints at his and Lesbia's transgression through his description of their arrival at the house. He portrays his beloved as a *diva* and a bride. Yet, when she steps on the threshold with all its connotations of transgression, ill omens and turning points she starts to shatter that image. Because of the very nature of the threshold crossing it necessitates change; in this case a change for the worse. The digression on Laodamia postpones Lesbia's deconstruction, but brings with it jarring notes of its own. Her marriage, and therefore her *domus*, was doomed from the start because the proper rites were not performed. In the same way Catullus' "marriage" with Lesbia will be equally ill-fated because of her seemingly conscious misstep. The *domus* of the Valerii Catulli has also come to an end, just like Laodamia's, but not only because of the brother's untimely demise in Troy: also because of the nature of Catullus' affair with a married woman (Fitzgerald, 1995:118). When Lesbia emerges once more, it becomes clear that she is not like the passionate and devoted Laodamia at all. She is a married women who not only betrays her husband but her lovers too. In fact, Laodamia has corresponded with Catullus much more closely than with Lesbia, leading to a blurring of the lines between loss of brother and loss of lover. This distorting ability of simile has revealed a confusion of identity on the part of the speaker. He finds himself in a liminal space between male and female, between brother and lover. On another level the gender-role reversal of the Jupiter-Juno simile allows the speaker to comment on the distortion of Roman marriage ideals in contemporary times (Vinson, 1992:177). For him *amare* and *bene velle* must co-exist; when they split the speaker is divided between *odi* and *amo* (Rubino, 1975:293). In an attempt to define his whole love, he clutches at the mutual obligation and responsibility traditionally associated with *amicitia,* only to reveal that the Roman ideal is lost: all that remains is transgression, "divided subjectivity", and death (Miller, 2004:59). The theme of the *domus* and its progressive deconstruction throughout the poem reveal Catullus' complete displacement, as well as a yearning on his part for the household and the wife he cannot have (Miller, 2004:59). Although he hints at his realization of familial duty now that his brother is gone, he remains vague as to his acceptance of this duty.[125] On the one hand he longs for the traditional Roman institutions, on the other hand, he resists those traditions through his adulterous affair. In an attempt to regain lost joy he claims that his beloved, despite her few indiscretions, is the light of his life, a position formerly occupied by his brother (93). The joyous defiance from the opening lines is gone. This is an acceptance of a second-rate love and "gifts" intended for another. Rather than a resignation to familial duty, this seems to be

[125] Through the brother's death he is reminded of his own mortality and the indefensibility of his current life-style (Hubbard, 1984:36-37).

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a resignation to second-hand love.[126] He fully realizes that his status in Lesbia's life is peripheral at best, but for once he seems to accept this.[127] The mismatch between Laodamia and Lesbia is deliberate. By distorting the simile the Catullan speaker is able to confront his double loss and in the process attempt to gain a fragment of his lost self. This self is revealed through the self-reflection enabled by the poem's inherent narrativity. In telling a part of his life story Catullus reflects on the past and his role in that past, as well as the role of others in his past. With the emotional distance brought by the passing of time and suggested by his complex digression into the world of myth, the speaker is able to see himself and his past from the position of an almost detached narrator. This complex process of self-reflection was necessary for him to arrive at a sober acceptance of the present in which he wants to remain involved. In this way the ironic *lux mea* at the end of the poem becomes a desperate grasp at a stable identity and at life itself. Just as the Catullus from the past was hovering precariously between innocence and guilt, defiance of society and acceptance of traditional duties, the Catullus of the present finds himself in an equally delicate liminal space: between life and death. What allows these "Catulluses" to portray a single consciousness is the binding force of the poem's inherent narrativity.

3.2 JUVENTIUS

Although not the great love of Catullus' life, in comparison with Lesbia, Juventius did evoke a number of love poems as well as invectives against those who vied with the speaker for his affection.[128] The invectives have received regular attention from scholars, especially more recently, but the love poems have been greatly neglected. Yet Juventius was important enough to the Catullan speaker to be the addressee in at least three poems,[129] and to be the cause of great distress in others.[130] And so we may rightly refer to these poems as a cycle (cf. Wiseman, 1969:3ff.; Gaisser, 2009:70 n.31). I discuss here the three poems from that

[126] In a poem of bitter indignation Catullus admits that he has chosen Lesbia above his kin (*…quam Catullus unam / plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes*, 58.2-3). Yet Lesbia ironically "chooses" her own kin (her brother) over Catullus, even in a sexual way (poem 79).

[127] I do not see *lux mea*, contra Wiseman (1985:164), as Catullus' return to the illusions at the beginning of the poem. She has merely become his salvation (Clauss, 1995:248).

[128] Lesbia is without a doubt the overpowering presence in the Catullan corpus, but leaving out the poems with homoerotic content (as Fordyce (1961) did) creates only a partial image of the Catullan lover. His love for the older, married woman and for the blossoming youth show many similarities. In his erotic loving, no matter who the object of desire, Catullus struggles with his own self-definition. When his feelings are not reciprocated (and they never are) he feels the self to be under threat.

[129] In a fourth poem, poem 24, the vocative *Juventi* does not appear but Catullus addresses someone as the "little flower of the Juventii" (*flosculus Iuventiorum*, 1).

[130] I agree with those scholars who regard Juventius, whatever his actual identity may be, as a real object of the speaker's desire (e.g. Richardson, 1963:96ff.; Marshall, 1971:57; Adler, 1981:46) and not as a mere fiction or literary exercise (Hezel cited in Marshall, 1971:57; Quinn, 1972:246) or an exercise in self-parody on the Lesbia-cycle (Rankin, 1970:121). If we accept Catullus' rival for his affections, Furius, to be real (cf. Hawkins, 2011) and "Lesbia" to be the pseudonym of a flesh-and-blood woman, why should we doubt the existence of Juventius?

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cycle which I regard as love poems addressed to Juventius; poems 48, 99 and 81.[131] Attempts have been made to identify him as a *domi nobilis* or young aristocrat, based on the appearance of the Juventii name on Veronese inscriptions, and a reference to the family's nobility in Cicero's *Pro Plancio* (19) (e.g. Merrill, 1893:xxix; Williams, 1968:554; Wiseman, 1985:130; Hammond, 2006:188).[132] The evidence in the poems themselves, however, is too scant either to confirm or refute the authenticity of the name. What is telling, though, is the fact that the speaker would deliberately use a name, whether pseudonym or not, with aristocratic connotations: this immediately puts the relationship in the same sphere of illicit love which characterized the Lesbia affair (Gaisser, 2009:61).[133] Catullus is once again openly defying societal conventions. With this defiance comes not only vulnerability but also isolation and decentring.

In the first Juventius poem to be discussed Catullus appears to be in a state of infatuation not very different from that he experienced in his first encounters with Lesbia. A recurring topic from that initial phase of the Lesbia affair is infinite kisses. In his early infatuation with Juventius he is again absorbed in kisses that cannot be counted, but for now he only dreams about them.

c.48

Mellitos oculos tuos, Iuventi,
si quis me sinat usque basiare,
usque ad milia basiem trecenta;
nec mi umquam videar satur futurus,
non si densior aridis aristis 5
sit nostrae seges osculationis.

The links between this poem and the two Lesbia kiss-poems 5 and 7 are immediately apparent. *Millia trecenta* (3) recalls the hundreds and thousands of kisses from poem 5 and the "obsessive repetition" (Quinn, 1973:233) of *usque basiare* in *usque basiem* (2-3) is reminiscent of a similar impatience in that poem reflected in the repetition of *deinde/dein*. *Satur* (4) recalls *satis* from poem 7 (2, 10) and the "learned polysyllable" *osculationis* (Quinn, 1973:233) responds to *basiationes*, also from poem 7 (1). *Mellitos* echoes the description of Lesbia's sparrow (*mellitus*, 3.6) and is again used for Juventius in poem 99 (*mellite Iuventi*, 1). Finally, as mentioned above, *basium, basiatio* and *basiare* are words which Catullus

[131] The invectives (poems 15, 16, 21, and 23) will be discussed in chapter 5.
[132] Juventius' youth is attested to in a number of ways: the diminutive in *flosculus* in poem 24 implies youth (Hammond, 2006:116), and both poems 15 (5) and 21 (11) refer to a *puer* who is linked to Juventius by means of verbal echoes and similarity in themes within the cycle.
[133] A sexual relationship with a free-born male constituted adultery under Roman law (Hammond, 2006:118).

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most probably introduced into Latin and which had a special significance for him in his love poetry. The words are Celtic in origin and underscore his Transpadane roots (Skinner, 2003:122). Used here twice (*basiare*, 2; *basiem*, 3) and also once in poem 99 (below) this clearly indicates that we are in the multi-faceted world of Catullan erotics.

In one sentence, which constitutes the entire poem, the speaker makes a statement of possibility: if someone should give him the chance, he would kiss Juventius endlessly without ever reaching a point of satisfaction, not even if their kisses surpassed in number a rich harvest of corn. The poem, like poems 5 and 7, belongs to the genre of arithmetic epigrams where the question of calculation is addressed (Cairns, 1973:15). In poem 5 the Catullan speaker asks Lesbia for thousands and hundreds of kisses alternately to a point where they reach an incalculable total. In poem 7 he teases the reader with the possibility of calculation by means of Lesbia's question (*quaeris quot…*, 1) only to reveal that the number is infinite (Cairns, 1973:17). Poem 48 combines the finite (*milia trecenta*) with the infinite (*aridis aristis*, 5) but clearly states that neither would be satisfactory (Cairns, 1973:18). Is this an expression of "sheer delight" on the part of the speaker as he reflects on his boundless desire for the boy (Akbar Khan, 1967:613)? If so, why does he introduce an anonymous third person who could or could not grant him permission to kiss his beloved (*si quis me sinat usque basiare*, 2)? Quinn (1973:233) claims that the use of the third person elevates the proposition to the level of a day-dream. Ferguson (1985:137) likewise sees this distancing by the speaker as a substitute for a real advance: "he is dreaming not acting". Kroll (1968:88) on the other hand, leaves the question open: is the speaker being modest or is he suggesting that there is some interference in the relationship? Reading a real person as a possible threat to the relationship into *quis* is – I agree with Thomson (1997:322) – stretching the poem's field of reference a bit far. However, I do not see the third person as mere ornament or an "elaborately indirect" way of saying "if you yourself should…" (Thomson, 1997:322). I suggest that *quis* represents a very real barrier between the speaker and the object of his desire, although not in the sense of third party competition. It points to Catullus' inability to act knowing that his feelings are not reciprocated.[134] The fact that he needs to call upon a generalized "someone" to allow him to kiss Juventius, implies that Juventius himself does not want to be kissed. In poem 5 Catullus asks Lesbia to kiss him (*da mi basia*); here he asks for permission to kiss Juventius (Adler, 1981:53) and not from the boy himself, but from "someone" else. Although he is addressing Juventius, there is no question of two-way communication taking place. The poem is in fact a dialogic monologue in which the speaker confronts himself under the guise of confronting his

[134] Adler (1981:53) makes a similar point in stating that the threat to Catullus' relationship with Juventius is not a rival, but the "disproportion peculiar to its nature".

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beloved.[135] The self-reflective nature of the poem is confirmed in the middle. *Nec mi umquam videar satur futurus* ("Nor would I ever seem to myself to be satisfied…", 4) shows the speaker distancing himself from himself to arrive at great self-knowledge. The beloved is entirely absent from the scene, excluded from seeing Catullus in this way (Adler, 1981:54). Looking back to the start of the poem the second half reveals that Juventius was in reality never present but as a figment of the speaker's imagination. Gaisser (2009:64) argues that Catullus' other kiss poems, poems 5 and 7, show a greater awareness of the outside world than poem 48, where the speaker is focused on the kisses exclusively. I would suggest that the anonymous third person, like the unknown "malevolent someone" (*quis malus*) at the end of poem 5, the "curious ones" and the "evil tongue" (*curiosi*, *mala lingua*) at the end of poem 7, intrudes into Catullus' erotic world. This is not an untainted expression of erotic enthusiasm: the speaker is fully aware of a very real threat to his relationship. However, this threat does not come in the form of a curious or jealous bystander, but in the form of obstructed communication (Adler, 1981:54): it comes from within. Despite the seeming defiance in poem 48, suggested by Catullus unashamed desire for erotic indulgence, this is not an "us against them" poem: it is an "I against them" poem where Juventius' stance is tellingly vague.

In poem 5 the Catullan speaker asks Lesbia directly for kisses and she seems to respond; in poem 7 he answers her question on how many kisses would satisfy him. The description of the kisses as *basiationes tuae* (7.1-2) clearly indicates that some kissing went on which in turn prompted the question. In poem 48, however, the kisses are nothing more than wishful thinking. All the verbs are in the subjunctive mood: Catullus' desire to kiss Juventius may never be realized (Gaisser, 2009:64). Even if it should, it would be a very one-sided affair: nowhere in the poem is there any indication that Juventius is willing to kiss him in return. Apart from the vocative and the use of *tuos* in the first line, the poem is entirely focused on Catullus and his feelings. Juventius remains a phantom presence throughout the poem, making the use of *nostrae* in the final line not only ironic but also meaningless. There is only the singular: Catullus and his self-reflection. In the world of the poem he is less concerned with possible threats posed by third parties from outside because there is no exclusive world of Catullus and Juventius which could be threatened. In the absence of an "inside" there is no "outside" either. There is only the in-between. This is a space of potential and Catullus may reflect on the possibility of crossing the threshold: of kissing Juventius. However, the indirectness of his supposed request reveals his anticipation of failure.

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[135] Catullus uses a similar technique in many of the Lesbia poems where the apparent address of another turns out to be a method of self-reflection (e.g., poem 72, 75 and 85).

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Failure indeed lies in store for the Catullan speaker when he steals a kiss from Juventius and has to face the painful realization that the boy is revolted by this.

c.99

Surripui tibi, dum ludis, mellite Iuventi,
suaviolum dulci dulcius ambrosia.
verum id non impune tuli: namque amplius horam
suffixum in summa me memini esse cruce,
dum tibi me purgo nec possum fletibus ullis 5
tantillum vestrae demere saevitiae.
nam simul id factum est, multis diluta labella
guttis abstersti mollibus articulis,
ne quicquam nostro contractum ex ore maneret,
tamquam commictae spurca saliva lupae. 10
praeterea infesto miserum me tradere amori
non cessasti omnique excruciare modo,
ut mi ex ambrosia mutatum iam foret illud
suaviolum tristi tristius elleboro.
quam quoniam poenam misero proponis amori, 15
numquam iam posthac basia surripiam.

In the previous poem the speaker was hoping for three thousand kisses; he received none. Now he has stolen one, and has been made to suffer the consequences. He offers his painful reflection on the event to Juventius: the use of the first and second person creates the impression of a dialogue. Unlike in the previous poem, Juventius is an active participant here, be it an undermining one. The speaker seems to have gained some courage and ventured closer to his beloved since the previous poem. *Memini* (4) is an important word (Richardson, 1963:95): nearly the whole poem is a recollection of a past event with the final couplet offering an "afterthought" in the present.

The speaker stole his kiss while Juventius was playing (*dum ludis*, 1). *Ludis* is often taken to mean "tease"; the boy was leading Catullus on (Richardson, 1963:95; Akbar Khan, 1967:614; Quinn, 1973:437). This would make the Catullan speaker the "innocent" party in the whole affair (Richardson, 1963:95). Thomson (1997:533), on the other hand, states that it is impossible for the reader to know the exact meaning of the verb in this context; Juventius alone would have known. But the verb is significant for another reason which is firmly based in the text: it points to a further connection between Juventius and Lesbia. In poem 2 the Catullan speaker observes Lesbia as she plays with her sparrow (*quicum ludere*, 2) (Skinner, 2003:122). In poem 99 he is being similarly voyeuristic: *dum ludis* implies exclusion of the speaker. Whatever the nature of the game, he was not involved but observing from somewhere on the periphery. Therefore he had to sneak up on the boy (*surripui*, 1). The "permission" he longed for in poem 48 has not been granted. This turns his seemingly innocent act into a gross transgression: the punishment seems to fit the crime.

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Juventius reacts very drastically to the stolen kiss. He washes his lips with a great deal of water (*multis…guttis*, 7-8) and rubs them with his fingers (*abstersti mollibus articulis*, 8), almost frantic in his attempt to wipe away all traces of Catullus' saliva "as if it were the infected spit of a pissed-on prostitute" (*tamquam commictae spurca saliva lupae*, 10).[136] During this time the Catullan speaker is desperately trying to obtain his forgiveness through excuses and tears (*dum tibi me purgo nec possum fletibus ullis*, 5) while experiencing a sense of crucifixion (*suffixum in summa…cruce*, 4). This recalls *excrucior* from poem 85. In both cases the speaker is the passive recipient of the action. Although he was the conscious perpetrator (*surripui*) Juventius' reaction renders him powerless. Even worse, the boy's insult emasculates him: not only is he compared with a female prostitute, but with one who engages in the sexually passive act of fellatio (Gaisser, 2009:65).

Through the extended torture by the boy (*amplius horam*, 3) this sweetest of kisses (*dulci dulcius ambrosia*, 2) has left a bitter aftertaste (*tristi tristius helleboro*, 14), the latter sensation seems to be more deeply ingrained in the speaker's memory.[137] Hellebore was used in the treatment of insanity in particular (Richardson, 1963:95; Skinner, 2003:122), a common ailment of the Catullan lover.[138] Therefore Richardson (1963:95), Marshall (1971:58) and Skinner (2003:122) all argue that the reference to the drug implies that the speaker has been cured of his desire for Juventius. This "healing" would account for the prosaic clarity in the final couplet, which stands in stark contrast with the poetic artistry of the preceding lines (Marshall, 1971:58): "Since you lay this penalty on my miserable love / I will never again in future steal kisses". But the speaker is still in a state of misery (*misero amori*, 15), the stock description of the unhappy lover: he has clearly *not* been cured. The final couplet, claiming resolve and self-sufficiency, attempts to hide Catullus' vulnerability. But Juventius never wanted to be kissed in the first place. Not only will the speaker's reputed abstinence not have the desired effect of enticing the boy, but the latter might well be relieved to be left in peace.[139]

Not content to remain on the periphery, the Catullan speaker oversteps the boundary and steals a kiss that was not willingly given. This is an act of transgression which leaves him, ironically, even more distanced from his beloved than before. The "punishment" he receives displaces him and he finds himself in a liminal space of symbolic death (on the cross). There is no hint of Juventius' forgiveness, which would enable reaggregation. The final

[136] My translation choice of "pissed-on" for *commictae* comes from Gaisser (2009:71 n.45), who highlights the link between urinating and ejaculation often found in obscene contexts.
[137] Adler (1981:56) views the poem as an illustration of the destructive effect of memory on desire.
[138] Cf. *vesano Catullo* in poem 7 (10).
[139] Compare the concluding lines of poem 8 (14-18) where the speaker claims that Lesbia will be desolate without him.

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couplet suggests Catullus' acceptance of his liminal state. Through memory (*menini*) he could recall the past and see himself in that past; this allowed him to make a conscious decision for the future (cf. MacIntyre, 1981:191). By narrating this episode of a failed attempt at getting close to Juventius Catullus could arrive at a better understanding of himself and the relationship: he has always been of marginal importance to the boy. The relationship appears to have ended even before it had begun. In the final couplet it seems that Catullus accepts this quite soberly, aided by his memory. However, the next poem will illustrate that, although his decision never again to steal any kisses might be upheld, he is not able to keep his distance from Juventius entirely. As he observes him with another lover he experiences a hurt which turns into bitter resentment, not unlike the bitter hellebore.

In poem 81 Catullus' inability to keep his distance from Juventius results in open disapproval of the young man's choice of new lover. This might not seem like a love poem; there is no declaration of the speaker's love, either present or past, for the beloved and his sole focus appears to be criticism. However, in all three poems under discussion Juventius' name in the vocative appears in the exact same position in the first line, establishing an unmistakable link between these poems. There is more to this poem than meets the eye.

c.81

Nemone in tanto potuit populo esse, Iuventi,
bellus homo, quem tu diligere inciperes,
praeterquam iste tuus moribunda ab sede Pisauri
hospes inaurata palladior statua,
qui tibi nunc cordi est, quem tu praeponere nobis 5
audes, et nescis quod facinus facias?

The whole poem consists of a single question in which the first four lines set the scene and the final distich delivers the punch. Adler (1981:53) calls this a jealousy poem. The speaker is asking Juventius to reconsider his current choice of lover because surely he could find a with-it man (*bellus homo*, 2) with so many options at his disposal (*in tanto populo*, 1). The phrase *tanto populo* indicates that the poem was written in Rome (Thomson, 1997:508): it stands in direct contrast with the lover who is referred to only as *hospes* (4) ("foreigner" or "outsider").[140] What are the issues concerning Juventius' lover? In the first place he is, by implication, not *bellus*. This is an ironic echo from poem 24 where Juventius is in love with a *homo bellus* (Skinner, 2003:102).[141] As discussed in the previous chapter *bellus* is one of

[140] If Catullus is reprimanding Juventius for choosing a non-Roman lover, this would support the interpretation that the boy was himself from a good Roman family (Thomson, 1997:508).
[141] In that poem the speaker also reprimands Juventius for a poor choice of lover and Juventius naïvely replies: "But isn't he a nice man (*homo bellus*)?" I do not discuss poem 24 in detail, but it will feature in chapter 5 where I discuss invectives against Juventius' lovers hinted at in the poem.

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the important neoteric catchwords, denoting charm, but it may also be used ironically to refer to superficial stylishness (Skinner, 2003:101).[142] Juventius is not a good judge of character. This leads the speaker to the more direct criticism of the boy's current lover: his origins and appearance. He is an outsider "from the rotting region of Pisaurum" (*moribunda ab sede Pisauri*, 3) and "paler than a gilded statue" (*inaurata palladior statua*, 4). Thus, apart from his nativity the gilded, not solid gold, appearance of the foreigner hints at his superficial charm (Skinner, 2003:102). Having painted this unattractive picture of the man Catullus reveals the real reason for his discontent: the *hospes* is now dear to the boy (*qui tibi nunc cordi est*, 5) and he prefers him to Catullus (*quem tu praeponere nobis / audes*..., 5-6). The adverb *nunc* seems to imply that formerly *Catullus* was dear to the boy. This reading is supported by the second relative clause stating Juventius' preference for the foreigner over Catullus. Furthermore, there is sense of entitlement in Catullus' use of *audes* ("you dare", 6). But the speaker's position is weak because of his own ambivalent status. On the one hand he is an *arbiter urbanitatis* who can spot false sophistication in others, but, on the other hand, his own roots lie firmly outside of Rome. He reprimands Juventius for choosing a non-Roman lover, while his own provincial background is hinted at with the use of *basium* and its derivatives in the other poems addressed to the youth (48.2-3; 99.16). When it finally turns out that his unhappiness derives from his own rejection by the boy his whole argument falls flat.

At first glance the poem appears to be about urbanity and sophisticated taste.[143] Juventius is criticized for his lack of good judgment: he chooses a backward lover from a near-dead province. However, the self-assurance with which the speaker delivers his insult is undermined in two ways. In the first instance his own provincial background is a problem in the circles of the Roman élite where he does not feel entirely at ease. Secondly, it turns out that Juventius' real offence is highly personal: it is Catullus' love that is offended by the boy's relationship with the foreigner; not his neoteric tastes (Adler, 1981:52). In the final distich the

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c. 24

O qui flosculus es Iuventiorum,
non horum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
aut posthac aliis erunt in annis,
mallem divitias Midae dedisses
isti, cui neque servus est neque arca, 5
quam sic te sineres ab illo amari.
'quid? non est homo bellus?' inquies. est:
sed bello huic neque servus est neque arca.
hoc tu quam lubet abice elevaque:
nec servum tamen ille habet neque arcam.

[142] Compare the discussion of poem 22 where the urbane and stylish Suffenus (also described as *bellus*, 9) is unmasked and revealed to be very boorish at heart (chapter 2, p.50ff).
[143] Skinner (2003:100) argues that Juventius functions as a foil to Lesbia, the ideal, sophisticated reader of the polymetrics.

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actual theme of the poem is revealed: it is a love poem, but the love in the poem, in typically Catullan fashion, is very much one-sided. Catullus has been displaced from Juventius' affections, relegated to a liminal space from where he may observe the boy and his new lover. His only means of getting Juventius' attention is to adopt the role of *arbiter urbanitatis* and point out the rusticity of his rival for the boy's love. However, the weakness of this position becomes immediately apparent as the reader recalls the speaker's own rustic background. In the end he resorts to a pathetic retort typical of the rejected lover: "you are making a mistake". The entire poem consists of a single question: some response is anticipated. Catullus, in full awareness of what the response might be, leaves the situation at that and steps away from the dialogue, rejected, defeated and physically as well as emotionally displaced.

Despite obvious differences between his two loves and the overwhelming number of Lesbia poems in comparison with that of the Juventius cycle, Catullus as lover features as a consistent lyric consciousness throughout his love poetry: a decentred self. His desire for Lesbia as well as Juventius is overpowering and therefore his reaction to their rejection is intense. Both of his beloveds undervalue him, both betray him, both emasculate him and push him to the periphery of their lives. And so the Catullan lover is doomed to remain on the threshold of love where he may reflect on his own feelings over and over, but is never invited to the centre where love is reciprocated.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CATULLUS AS MISUNDERSTOOD OR UNDERVALUED

> Friendship is a religion with Catullus… [governed by] a pervading sense of *pietas* (Peachy, 1972:265).

In his erotic relationships the Catullan speaker loved, hated and hurt intensely. Because of his total devotion to the beloved he expected his feelings to be reciprocated, but, as we have seen in the previous chapter, this was never the case. For his dearest friends his love and commitment were no less intense.[1] In many respects they took the place of the Republic in his life, in the same way Lesbia took that of family (Von Albrecht, 1997:351). Some of them frustrated him with their lack of concern and others proved to be just as fickle as his erotic loves. However, the greatest hurt came from so-called friends who gave him the figurative stab in the back. What *urbanitas* signifies in terms of the speaker's relationship with Roman élite society the concept of *amicitia* denotes in terms of his relationships with individuals: an acute sense of decentring. In this chapter I will be discussing poems addressed to friends who, to a greater or lesser degree, caused the Catullan speaker to feel abandoned, side-lined and betrayed. I discuss Catullus' poems on friendship in their numerical order since, mostly, they represent unconnected episodes and persons. What ultimately links them is the emergence of a continuing liminal consciousness as the speaker interrogates his questionable friends and in the process interrogates himself.

We start with the poem in which Catullus' experience of rejection seems least intense, to the extent that he is able to clothe his hurt in humour.

c. 6

Flavi, delicias tuas Catullo,
ni sint illepidae atque inelegantes,
velles dicere nec tacere posses.
verum nescioquid febriculosi
scorti diligis: hoc pudet fateri. 5
nam te non viduas iacere noctes
nequiquam tacitum cubile clamat
sertis ac Syrio fragrans olivo,
pulvinusque peraeque et hic et ille
attritus, tremulique quassa lecti 10
argutatio inambulatioque.
nam nil stupra valet, nihil, tacere.
cur? non tam latera ecfututa pandas,
ni tu quid facias ineptiarum.
quare, quidquid habes boni malique, 15
dic nobis. volo te ac tuos amores
ad caelum lepido vocare versu.

[1] Cf. poems 9, 12 and 50. McGushin (1967:85) refers to his "unbounded capacity for friendship".

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The dialogic scene is set in the first line: Catullus, referring to himself in the third person, is addressing Flavius on the topic of his beloved (*delicias tuas*). This sets the tone for an "ordinary" conversation; even the girlfriend is a possible interlocutor (Stevens, 2013:21). The scenario is simple: the speaker is keen for Flavius to divulge some details on his latest darling but the latter remains quiet. As argued in chapter 2 (cf. the discussion of poem 10, p.65ff.) the ability to read or control silence points to the social command of the speaker, but the inability to manage silence reveals a social handicap. In this poem Catullus displays his control over the social situation by prescribing the reader's understanding of his relationship with Flavius and by "filling in" the latter's silence with his own interpretation (McNeill, 2010:75-76). He draws the conclusion that Flavius' girlfriend must be inferior (*illepidae atque inelegantes*, 2); otherwise his friend would have told him all about her (*velles dicere nec tacere posses*, 3). In this way he defines their friendship as an intimate one where the two parties do not keep secrets from each other (McNeill, 2010:76; cf. Nielsen, 1984:106). But there is a strong irony here: the speaker ascribes to Flavius a desire to speak while at the same time he underscores the impossibility of that speech (as indicated by the imperfect subjunctives *velles* and *posses*) (Stevens, 2013:24). The Catullan speaker is *not* fully mastering Flavius' silence.

The ability to control silence is only one of the measures of social performance in this poem. The words *illepidae* and *inelegantes* (2), *ineptiarum* (14) and *lepido* (17) all belong to the vocabulary employed in the judging of *urbanitas* (Gaisser, 2009:54, 89).[2] In poem 10 Catullus judges Varus' girlfriend to be not entirely uncharming and unattractive (*non sane illepidum neque invenustum*, 4), although she is a "little tart" (*scortillum,* 2). In poem 43 one of the "girl's" unattractive qualities is her crude speech (*nec sane nimis elegante lingua*). Flavius' girlfriend, being *illepida* and *inelegans* and a tart to boot (*nescioquid febriculosi / scorti*, 4-5)*,* does not meet the criteria of Catullus' circle (Skinner, 1981:49; Krostenko, 2001a:235). Moreover, the two "*scortum* poems" (6 and 10), placed as they are within the Lesbia cycle of poems 2-11, show the respective girlfriends of Flavius and Varus to be foils for Lesbia (Segal, 1968:318; Skinner, 1981:50).[3] So much for the girlfriend, but Flavius himself is guilty of unsophisticated behaviour: "…if you weren't up to some inappropriate business…" (*ni tu quid facias ineptiarum*, 14). This kind of behaviour is associated with a napkin thief (poem 12.4), with another kleptomaniac (poem 25.8), with a man who smiles under the most unfitting circumstances and even drinks his own urine (poem 39.16) and with

[2] See the discussion in the beginning of chapter 2.

[3] It has often been argued that poems 2-11 form a meaningful cycle portraying the whole Lesbia affair in miniature (e.g. Segal, 1968:306; Ferguson, 1985:9ff.; Janan, 1994:38).

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a foolish rural husband who neglects his feisty young wife (poem 17.2).[4] Of the three figures constituting the "cast" in poem 6 – Flavius, his girl and Catullus – Catullus seems to be the only one who complies with the criteria of the urban literary élite: he promises to write a "charming verse" which would exalt the lovers (*volo te ac tuos amores / ad caelum lepido vocare versu*, 16-17). The speaker is styling himself as *arbiter urbanitatis.* However, this position hides an ambiguity as well as a vulnerability. In poem 8 Catullus admonishes himself for his "improper behaviour" (*desinas ineptire*, 2). The situation there also involves a lover. Moreover, his light-hearted, teasing approach to Flavius masks an experience of exclusion.[5] He is desperate for Flavius to talk; in receiving only silence he goes to any length to entice him into responding (cf. Morgan, 1977:338; Nielsen, 1984:107). Not only does he describe Flavius' beloved as unrefined and inferior, but he calls her a feverish slut and styles Flavius himself as a man behaving badly. Is the insult, coupled with the description of their intimate friendship, an attempt to "dramatize Flavius' vulnerable position" (Nielsen, 1984:107)?[6]

Faced with his friend's taciturnity the Catullan speaker turns to inanimate objects which, ironically, seem to "respond".[7] He studies Flavius' bed, the site of the presumed action, and discovers that it is garlanded and perfumed (8), the cushion shows wear and tear (9-10), and the rickety frame squeaks and wobbles when moved (10-11). There is a striking paradox to the personification of the bed in line 7: in devotion to its owner the bed tries to keep his secret, but "shouts" nonetheless (*nequiquam tacitum cubile clamat*).[8] Catullus illustrates that his friend's silence, like the bed's, is futile. To clinch his point, he refers to Flavius' "overfucked flanks" (*latera ecfututa*, 13) as the final piece of evidence of his friend's nightly gymnastics.[9] As Wiseman (1985:141) notes, this obscenity, the first in the collection, must

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[4] In this last poem it is the legs of the rickety bridge which are described as *inepta.* However, it becomes clear through a reading of the whole poem that the husband is to be identified with the rustic bridge. All of the poems mentioned are discussed in chapter 2, except for poem 25, which is discussed in chapter 5 (p.226ff.).
[5] McNeill (2010:77) argues that Catullus chooses to style his hurt as a joke rather than to display his unhappiness directly. Morgan (1977:341), however, reads the whole poem as a joke which Flavius would have been able to appreciate.
[6] Fitzgerald (1995:52) makes a similar point in arguing that Catullus is in full control of the situation and that Flavius is in fact the one who is on the back foot: no matter what he should say now, Catullus has already gained the upper hand over him by filling in his silence.
[7] Nielsen (1984:105) argues that Catullus uses the motif of a mock trial in his "interrogation" of Flavius where the objects in Flavius' room function as witnesses. Uden (2005:640) makes the same point.
[8] Cf. McNeill (2010:76) on the bed's fidelity.
[9] Uden (2005:641) draws attention both to the passivity inherent in *ecfututa* (thus implying the excessive sexual appetite of Flavius' lover) and the fact that Catullus always uses verbs with *fut-* in abusive poems. He therefore argues (by drawing parallels with the Lesbia poems 37, 58 and 72) that the poem is in fact an indirect and sophisticated attack on some high-class woman Flavius happens to be in love with (*diligis*, 5) (Uden, 2005:642). However, *ecfututa* recalls *defututa* from poem 41.1. The Ameana from that poem is identified with the *puella* of poem 43 by means of the verbatim repetition of line 4 in 43.5. The girl with the inelegant tongue of poem 43 is thus also oversexed and very similar to

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have come as a shock to Catullus' contemporary readers. But amidst the jumble of hyperboles and litotes throughout the poem this forms part of Catullus' strategy to draw a "confession" out of Flavius (Nielsen, 1984:107, 109).[10] In poem 10, where a similar threesome play the respective parts, Varus did not only show his girlfriend to Catullus; he was even keen to do so (*Varus me…duxerat*, 1-2). Faced with Flavius' silence, the speaker piles on the tongue-in-cheek insults. Neither of the *scorta* from these two poems needs to be low-class (cf. Morgan, 1977:340). What is not to be disputed, though, is that they are far inferior to Lesbia in Catullus' eyes.[11]

However, all is not as light-hearted as it seems. The "evidence" Catullus' lists for his conclusions about Flavius' love life imply a transgression on the speaker's part. His friend obviously did not want to reveal anything about his relationship; by scrutinizing his most private space the Catullan speaker is intruding into that space and into his friend's personal affairs (McNeill, 2010:76). The bed, as representative of Flavius' sense of belonging, implies the existence of a symbolic boundary between "our space" (Flavius and the girl's) and "their space" (Catullus' and all others) (cf. Lotman, 1990:131). In this way the alleged openness of the friendship between Catullus and Flavius is called into question: there are boundaries to their intimacy (McNeill, 2010:76-77). Moreover, the evidence Catullus offers of Flavius' steamy affair is the product of his own imagination (Stevens, 2013:40). Despite the fact that they do divulge, the "witnesses" to Flavius' nightly escapades are the ones who physically cannot speak. The Catullan speaker is not only giving voice to Flavius (Stevens, 2013:23) but also to his bedding and his limbs. In this way he manipulates Flavius' silence for his own purposes, but, as argued before, silence in any form is ambiguous (McNeill, 2010:70). The particular silence in poem 6 allows the speaker, on the one hand, the freedom to offer his own creative take on the status quo, but, on the other hand, it underscores his distance from the addressee.[12]

What started out with the promise of a conversation is revealed to be a dialogic monologue: only Catullus speaks (Stevens, 2013:22) and the "responses" he receives from his interlocutors are the products of his own creative imagination. To the reader he paints the picture of a very intimate friendship between him and Flavius, so much so that they have no secrets from one another. But Flavius is withholding the identity of his girlfriend and, even

Flavius' girlfriend. Both of them function as foils for the elegant and sophisticated Lesbia, but they are not the main focus in their respective poems (*pace* Uden). In poem 6 Flavius' silence is clearly the main theme.

[10] Stevens (2013:43) argues that the Catullan speaker is displaying his sophisticated handling of speech even when he is saying what is best left unspoken.

[11] As Wiseman (1985:142) notes, the placing of poem 6 with its sexual candour between poems 5 and 7 with their artful, subtle sensuality accentuates the contrast.

[12] As Stevens (2013:34) puts it, what is liberating for the poet is frustrating for the person.

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when provoked, he remains silent. This throws doubt upon Catullus' initial claim of intimacy: perhaps he was misreading the friendship. Next he tries a different tactic to draw Flavius out of his taciturnity by making his friend's bedroom "speak". In order to do so he oversteps the boundaries of privacy which Flavius clearly tried to draw. Once more he is met with silence. Despite his personification of Flavius' shouting bed the answers he receives are all fantasies of his imagination. He is taking in the role of a narrator and supplying Flavius with a story of his own creation. No-one corroborates or denies the events. The only actual hint of sound in the poem, the squeaking of the bedframe (Gaisser, 2009:90), is the result of Catullus' own reconstruction of an assumed past event (Stevens, 2013:32). Finally the speaker tries a quid pro quo approach: if Flavius tells him about his lover, he will immortalise them through a "charming verse". At the end of the poem Catullus fulfils this wish (which is, ironically his own wish to begin with: *volo*). The poem itself is the *versus lepidus* (Skinner, 1983:142; Nielsen, 1984:110; Wiseman, 1985:141 n.40). However, no reciprocity has taken place. Catullus has offered a poem but he is still met with Flavius' silence. Throughout the poem the Catullan speaker has filled the silences with the products of his imagination and in the process he has created a narrative with Flavius as the main character. However, instead of telling us more about Flavius and his girl, the "story" has told us more about the speaker. He is a liminal figure, desperate to cross the threshold between acquaintance and close friend and enter another's intimate space where he may experience a sense of belonging. Having been denied access he resorted to writing a charming verse which might entice his friend to break his silence. But as charming and elegant as this verse may be, it is his own voice only that he hears.

In the next poem under discussion charm and elegance do not come into play. Catullus' cheekiness and sense of humour from poem 6 are gone. The hurt he experiences this time lies deep and he seeks retribution.

c. 30

Alfene immemor atque unanimis false sodalibus,
iam te nil miseret, dure, tui dulcis amiculi?
iam me prodere, iam non dubitas fallere, perfide?
nec facta impia fallacum hominum caelicolis placent.
quae tu neglegis ac me miserum deseris in malis. 5
eheu quid faciant, dic, homines cuive habeant fidem?
certe tute iubebas animam tradere, inique, <me>
inducens in amorem, quasi tuta omnia mi forent.
idem nunc retrahis te ac tua dicta omnia factaque
ventos irrita ferre ac nebulas aerias sinis. 10
si tu oblitus es, at di meminerunt, meminit Fides,
quae te ut paeniteat postmodo facti faciet tui.

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The speaker in the poem has been deeply hurt by an intimate friend and, in trying to make sense of the situation, he poses a number of questions to him. The very first word is the vocative *Alfene*: the scene is set for a dialogue. The exact identity of Alfenus is not certain, but as Thom (1993:52) suggests this "biographical detail" is not necessary for a better understanding of the poem: his role as faithless friend is perfectly clear.[13] Ferguson (1985:94) states that, no matter the addressee, the poem itself is essential to interpreting the Catullan corpus because it introduces moral principles in light of which we read other poems in the collection. These include *amicitia* as *foedus,* and *fides/pietas* as essential to human existence (Ferguson, 1985:94).[14] The overriding motif here is that of faithfulness: *perfide* (3), *fidem* (7) and *Fides* (11) are all placed emphatically at the end of their respective lines. "No value was dearer to Roman sensibilities than *fides*…which was indispensible to all relationships" (Tatum, 2007:341; cf. Brunt, 1965:7). Within an intimate friendship *fides* constitutes the essence of the *pietas* implied in such a relationship (McGushin, 1967:85). When *fides* is compromised the friendship is threatened and the guilty party may be accused of *facta impia* (4).

The narrative scenario is briefly as follows. The Catullan speaker is in a state of misery (*me miserum*, 5). Being a close friend of Alfenus (*tui dulcis amiculi*, 2) he expected some empathy (*iam te nil miseret*, 2), but instead he received desertion and withdrawal (*neglegis…deseris*, 5; *retrahis te*, 9). The intimacy between the two friends is made apparent from the outset: *unanimis* indicates a heartfelt connection based on trust and mutual *benevolentia* (Thom, 1993:54).[15] As Thomson (1997:282) notes, this is not an attack on a former friend who is now seen as an enemy. The speaker would still like to regard Alfenus as a friend but he needs convincing proof that a friendship is still possible (Kroll, 1968:56-57): "Oh, what are people to do, tell me, or in whom may they place their trust?" (*eheu quid faciant, dic, homines cuive habeant fidem?* 6). He has been deeply hurt and he drives home his point with the repeated direct address of the "accused": *false* (1), *dure* (2), *perfide* (3) and *inique* (7).[16] The excessive use of the vocative not only accentuates

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[13] Alfenus has been connected with Alfenus Varus, the *consul suffectus* of 39 BCE who came from Cremona and was thus a fellow provincial of Catullus and a likely candidate for a close friend (Thomson, 1997:282; Wray, 2001:101). He may or may not be the "Varus" addressed in poems 22 and 10 (cf. Quinn, 1973:181). However, as stated in my discussion of poem 22 in chapter 2 (p.50ff), I take "Varus" to be rather the prominent literary critic Quintilius Varus who matches the poetic theme of that poem. I therefore regard Alfenus as an unknown individual.

[14] When read in their numerical order this will be the first poem in the collection to deal with these themes which feature in poems 76, 87 and 109 in particular (these poems were discussed in chapter 3).

[15] This is how Catullus describes the relationship between loving brothers in poem 9.4: *fratresque unanimos*.

[16] Vessey (1971:50) notes that nearly every line introduces a new reproach by means of epithets and verbs which all relate to betrayal.

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Catullus' feelings of betrayal and disillusion, but it also underscores Alfenus' guilt. What did Alfenus in fact *do* which caused his friend such hurt? The answer is an ironic one: he did nothing. His *facta impia* are not deeds after all but precisely the lack thereof: forgetfulness.[17] Throughout the poem there is an emphasis on Alfenus' negligence: *immemor* (1), *neglegis* and *deseris* (5), *irrita* (10) and *oblitus es* (11).[18] His guilt within the realm of *amicitia* is without question. Even worse, he initiated the friendship ("Indeed you were bidding me to trust my soul to you, yes you": *certe tute iubebas animam tradere…me,* 7) in a way that reminds one of a seduction ("leading me into love": *inducens in amorem*, 8) (Adler, 1981:89).[19] And to crown it all he also gave the guarantees required for such an intimate connection: "…as if all would be save for me" (*quasi tuta omnia mi forent,* 8) (Thom, 1993:57). The phrase a*nimam tradere* suggests a total commitment on the part of the speaker: "to commit my life and soul" (Thomson, 1997:283).[20] On the one hand, the Catullan speaker has therefore dutifully fulfilled the conditions of *amicitia* but on the other hand he has been totally disempowered by placing his trust in someone like Alfenus: by implication he has placed his life in his hands.[21] Throughout the poem he portrays himself as Alfenus' passive victim: *me* (3, 5, 7) and *mi* (8) (Vessey, 1971:50). This position of vulnerability is underscored by the insertion of *inique* between *animam tradere* and *me*: a visual depiction of the disintegration of the speaking self as a result of Alfenus' "crime" (Thom, 1993:57). As Vessey (1971:50) argues "the betrayal is an annihilation of his ego". This introduces an important moral paradigm into the Catullan corpus: a violation of *fides/pietas* is a betrayal of life itself (Ferguson, 1985:94).[22]

In the final distich the forgetfulness of humans is put in stark contrast with the mindfulness of the gods as Catullus delivers his punch with a striking chiasmus: *di meminerunt, meminit*

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[17] McGushin (1967:86) highlights the role played by forgetfulness in the violation of *fides*. Cf. Vessey (1971:51).

[18] I do not agree with Quinn (1973:183) who argues that *factum* in the final line must refer to a specific deed and that the knowledge of that deed would enhance our understanding of the poem. All the information we need is contained within the poem itself. From the outset Alfenus is styled as *immemor*; at the end of the poem he is no less forgetful (*oblitus es*) and it is up to the gods to remind him of the mutual *beneficium* implied by *amicitia* (Ross, 1969:88). The speaker's list of his friend's "misconduct" culminates in the friend's withdrawal of himself and the emptiness of his words and deeds (9-10): the *factum* for which he will have to repent is his absence. This is often the case when the Catullan speaker feels betrayed or undervalued by friends because of their silence or inaction (cf. poems 6, 38, 55, 58b, 60, and 102 all discussed in this chapter). Adler (1981:89) makes a similar point by referring to Alfenus' offence as "not an active injury but a kind of inaction or *neglegentia*".

[19] The reference to *amor* intensifies the speaker's feelings of betrayal and also underscores the intimacy of the friendship (Vessey, 1971:55; cf. Quinn, 1973:182) (Cf. *meos amores* from poem 38.6 below). Brunt (1965:3) notes that the word *amicitia* is derived from *amo*.

[20] Cf. Thom (1993:57) who makes the same point.

[21] Adler (1981:89) argues that the scenario recalls the surrender of a woman to a male pursuer who vows never to leave her.

[22] A similar fragmentation of the speaking subject was seen in chapter 3 where he experienced betrayal in his relationship with Lesbia (see especially the discussions of poems 85 and 8, p.139ff.).

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Fides (11). The Catullan speaker is helpless but Fides, now in her guise as *numen*, has the absolute power to punish those who abuse it (Henry, 1950:49). This *fides* is superior to that of the human world, which has proved to be fickle at best (Henry, 1950:49).[23] What appears to be a powerful move on the part of the speaker is in fact an acknowledgement of his impotence (Adler, 1981:93). He is powerless to avenge his experience of betrayal by Alfenus and so he calls in the help of the gods. However, despite its status as a traditional and highly esteemed Roman code of conduct, *pietas*, and by implication *fides*, represents no absolute "rule of life" (Henry, 1950:57). It is based on goodwill and mutual respect. All that Catullus can do is to remind Alfenus of his breach of *fides* and so appeal to his conservative side. But, as we have seen in chapter 3, in the corrupt world of late Republican Rome even the divine Fides holds little sway.

Catullus "has been seduced and abandoned" (Adler, 1981:89). His finds himself in a time where traditional Roman institutions are distorted. When his *fides* is disregarded by friends he experiences the same disenchantement with the status quo as he does when Lesbia betrays him (Wiseman, 1985:122). This kind of "inactive" injury can only hurt someone in a vulnerable (feminized) position (Adler, 1981:89). The verbal echoes between this poem and Ariadne's speech of abandonement in poem 64 underscore the speaker's emasculation and highlights his extreme experience of isolation.[24] Poem 30 started out with the suggestion of a dialogue, but only one side of the argument was presented (Thom, 1993:53). The one-way communication within the friendship is the first sign of its imbalance. This is a dialogic monologue: the entire first half of the poem consists of rhetorical questions, ending with the generalized deliberative question *eheu quid faciant, dic, homines cuive habeant fidem?* (6). The communication between Catullus and Alfenus is blocked: not only had the latter betrayed the speaker's *fides*, but he is also silent. In light of this the poem becomes the conversation in which Catullus struggles with his peripheral position in Alfenus' life: as he questions his friend's conduct he engages with himself in dialogue and so he arrives at a greater understanding of the situation and of himself. *Fides* in the human world is no longer reciprocated; he naïvely believed that it was. Because he is powerless to lay claim to the demands of *fides* he needs the gods to step in.[25] By using his artistic skill to invoke the power of Fides the poem itself launches the retribution (Thom, 1993:59). However, the consolation is meagre. The poem will continue to remind Alfenus of his offence (*quae te ut paeniteat postmodo facti faciet tui*, 12) (Thom, 1993:59), but towards the end the one-way,

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[23] Compare Catullus' demand for reciprocity from the gods in poem 76 when he has failed to be rewarded in the human sphere.

[24] These echoes include *perfide, deserto, neglecto, immemor, miserescere, miseram, irrita venti, fidelis,* etc.. The particular passage (64.132ff.) is discussed in chapter 6.

[25] Cf. poem 76 (chapter 3, p.147ff.).

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yet direct communication becomes indirect discourse. Fides is called in as mediator to carry out the action the speaker is uncapable of. As poet Catullus may be taking his revenge, but as a friend he remains decentred. The violation of his *fides* has threatened his very existence. Having trusted the wrong person, placing his life even in that person's hands, Catullus finds himself disempowered, emasculated and in the liminal space of symbolic death.[26]

Another experience seeming to border on death is the theme in the next poem. Once again a friend's passivity in the light of his suffering causes Catullus deep distress. This time the friend's inaction takes the form of silence. In poem 38, as in poem 6, Catullus is desperate for some form of communication but he is again met with another's silence. However, this time there is no humorous side to the situation. Catullus is deeply hurt and angry.

c. 38

Malest, Cornifici, tuo Catullo
malest, me hercule, et laboriose,
et magis magis in dies et horas.
quem tu, quod minimum facillimumque est,
qua solatus es allocutione? 5
irascor tibi. sic meos amores?
paulum quidlubet allocutionis,
maestius lacrimis Simonideis.

The cause of Catullus' suffering has been the concern of many studies on this poem: his own impending death, his brother's death, or Lesbia's betrayal?[27] I follow Burkard (2006:181 n.3) and argue that the exact nature of the speaker's distress is not essential to my reading of the poem: my focus is on the portrayal of the Catullan speaker's liminal position in this episode.[28] Cornificius has been identified with a fair amount of certainty as the Cornificius whom Ovid groups with Catullus, Calvus and Cinna in his list of daring poets (*Tristia*, 2.427ff.).[29] The addressee in this poem is therefore most probably a fellow neoteric. What is more important for our study, though, is the evidently close relationship between Catullus and Cornificius. The designation "your Catullus" (*tuo Catullo*, 1) is used exclusively in

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[26] Liminality is often compared to death (Turner, 1969:95).
[27] Kowerski (2008:140 n.4) offers a detailed summary of the scholarship on this issue from Baehrens in 1885 to Burkard in 2006.
[28] Burkard's ultimate objective is different from mine, as mentioned below.
[29] This is the very same Quintus Cornificius, friend of Cicero (*ad Fam.* 12.17-30), accomplished statesman and literary critic, whom Jerome referred to as *poeta* under 41 BCE (cf. Neudling, 1955:52ff.; Ferguson, 1985:113; Courtney, 1993:189ff.; Thomson, 1997:303; Kowerski, 2008:143).

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poems addressed to very intimate friends, who may or may not be fellow poets (*tui Catulli*, 13.7; *tuum Catullum*, 14.13).[30] *Meos amores* (6) further underscores this point.[31]

Catullus starts his poem as if responding to an enquiry about his wellbeing. He refers to himself in the third person, a technique which we recognise by now to be indicative of some division within the Catullan psyche. In the first line the speaker addresses Cornificius and informs him of the sorry state of his intimate friend “Catullus”. As if the addressee did not hear him the first time he repeats *malest* (“he is unwell”) in the second line, accentuating this “fact” with the cry of indignation *me hercule.* He also adds some detail: *laboriose*. To make matters worse, the situation is becoming more serious by the minute: *et magis in dies et horas* (3). This description of Catullus’ condition takes up the first three lines of the poem. In the middle of the poem the speaker accuses Cornificius of a lack of interest in his friend. He had to do but very little (*quod minimum facillimumque est*, 4) to comfort him, speaking to him would have sufficed. But the rhetorical question makes it clear that he had said nothing: *quem tu... / qua solatus es allocutione?* (4-5).[32] In line 6, suddenly overwhelmed by feelings of anger and betrayal, the speaker switches to the first person. Adler (1981:24-25, 96) argues that third-person Catullus is the one known to the outside world, a character in Cornificius’ life; with the use of the first person the speaker “reveals himself as only he knows himself”. Now the real message of the poem is made clear: *irascor tibi*. With *sic meos amores* (6) – “(Is) this what my feelings (mean to you)?” – the speaker poses another rhetorical question, perhaps in an attempt to change the status quo, i.e. to get Cornificius to pay some attention to him (Adler, 1981:97), but this question has already been answered unambiguously in the preceding lines. Now the speaker needs to use a different tactic. After this outburst he seems to collect himself once more and he ends the poem with a desperate plea to the addressee: “just say *something*” (*paulum*).

The vocative *Cornifici* creates the impression of a conversation. But the overstatement of Catullus’ malaise makes it clear that Cornificius never enquired about his friend’s wellbeing: the speaker needs to elicit some reaction from him. Moreover, the indirectness of Catullus’ “response”, referring to himself in the third person as if he is not present, emphasises his friend’s lack of interest. The speaker needs to step in and inform Cornificius of the situation regarding “Catullus” because he is not doing so of his own accord. When the first person bursts in with an exclamation of anger, he attempts to set a dialogue in motion. However, the last two lines are curiously devoid of any reference to the speaker or the addressee (or

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[30] We do not know anything about the Fabullus of poem 13 outside of the poems where mention of him is always highly positive and affectionate (see poems 12, 13, 28 and 47) (cf. Neudling, 1955:65). Poem 14, as discussed in chapter 2 (p.48ff.), is addressed to an intimate poet-friend Calvus.
[31] Cf. Copley (1956:128).
[32] Burkard’s interpretation of this line is totally different (see the note below).

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third-person Catullus for that matter). This is clearly elliptical, as is *sic meos amores* from line 6, (Thomson, 1997:304) and the majority of translators come up with a plausible interpretation along the lines of “Just (give me) a few words, sadder than the tears of Simonides”. I do not argue against this reading.[33] But I suggest that the ellipsis also functions as a visual depiction of the Catullan speaker’s peripheral status in his friend’s life. He feels disempowered by his friend’s silence and cannot make an explicit request. And so he lets his request hang in the air. The thrust of the poem lies in the pathetic poignancy of the final distich. This is no longer the over-exaggerating (1-3) or angry Catullus (6), but the composed and poetic Catullus. This one needs to be taken seriously.

Because of Cornificius’ identification as a neoteric poet and the reference to the Alexandrian poet Simonides in the final line, the majority of scholars argue that poem 38 is clearly about poetry and that Catullus’ request (the *allocutio*) is for a poem, comparable to the literary requests asked of him in poems 65 and 68a (cf. Quinn, 1973:208; Adler, 1981:96; Forsyth, 1984:26; Wray, 2001:101ff.; Kowerski, 2008:144). Simonides’ association with dirges leads to the logical conclusion that Catullus’ request is for a *consolatio*; this also makes sense in the light of Catullus’ state of distress (Copley, 1956:127; Adler, 1981:96; Ferguson, 1985:113; Wiseman, 1985:150).[34] Wray (2001:101), on the other hand, reads the use of the “petulantly guilt-induced” language of poem 38 as a tactic to spark a poetic response from the addressee. The speaker even lays down specific rules for the contest: Simonides is to be outstripped (Wray, 2001:101). For Wray (2001:101) poem 38 is therefore an example of “performative outrageousness” which is not to be taken at face value. Baker (1960:37) argues that the poem is necessarily ironic as a means for the Catullan speaker to protect himself from appearing overly emotional. By making use of hyperbole and self-mockery he protects himself from embarrassment and softens the blow aimed at his friend (Baker, 1960:37). If this is a joke it is one that hides a deeply felt hurt. I suggest that the reference to Simonides is an attempt on the speaker’s part to appeal to Cornificius’ literary side, whether he wanted a poem or just some kind words does not matter.[35] Reminding him of his hurt in a self-pitying manner and shouting out his indignation seem to be ineffective. But as

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[33] Burkard (2006:193) does not fill in the ellipsis but reads the last two lines as an elaboration on the nature of the *allocutio* which Cornificius did in fact offer. He ascribes Catullus’ hurt and anger to the don’t-care, “whatever” (x-beliebige) nature of Cornificius’ words of comfort. As a result the Catullan speaker ended up being even sadder than he originally was, sadder than Simonides (Burkard, 2006:188-189). Burkard’s reading is fresh and delightful, but is based on a poetic structure found nowhere else in Catullus. If the final lines serve as little more than an elaboration on the middle section the poem has no real thrust and falls flat at the end in a very unCatullan fashion. Moreover, a similar ellipsis in poem 55.10 (discussed below), denoting a colloquialism, supports the majority reading of <“give me”> (Thomson, 1997:337; cf. Fordyce, 1961:184).

[34] Kowerski (2008:148ff.) makes a case for Catullus’ request as denoting specifically an epyllion.

[35] *Allocutio* need not necessarily refer to a poem; it may simply denote “words of comfort” (cf. Burkard, 2006:188).

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a fellow neoteric their shared literary sensibilities should surely suffice in bringing them closer together, the way they once were.[36] The reference to Simonides functions as a reminder of those times when they could unite as “us” (new poets) against “them” (the “others” who have no appreciation of neoteric sophistication and Alexandrian tastes).[37]

The Catullan speaker formulated a response to an implied question by Cornificius, but in fact the latter never enquired about Catullus’ wellbeing in the first place. Catullus is experiencing a sense of rejection. And so the speaker, in this liminal position, reflects on the situation and on himself in that situation: he distances himself from himself and answers his own question in order to become closer to himself (cf. Turner, 1992:136). Through this double-voiced discourse he comes to realize that his predicament is worsening. This makes his friend’s disinterest all the more disturbing. In a sudden burst of anger he switches to the first person and appear to confront Cornificius head-on. But the questions he poses to his friend, like the one implied at the beginning, are answered by himself: they are rhetorical questions to which he and Cornificius both know the answers (as does the reader). The Catullan speaker is filling in his friend’s silence with his own voice and in the process he confirms his peripheral position in Cornificius’ life. In a last effort to elicit some response from his fellow poet he involves the world of literature: this is a language they both understand. If he cannot appeal to Cornificius’ caring side, he will appeal to his literary side. Despite the reference to tears this switch in tactic reveals a more composed speaker and a message stripped of emotional pressure. This is the speaker at his most vulnerable, alone and without expectation. Whether Cornificius responded we will never know. But Catullus has received a little comfort from the poem itself: at least in Simonides he has found a kindred spirit; a hint of communitas in his liminal state.

A friend’s silence is once more the theme in the set of poems to be discussed next. As in poem 6, the tone in poems 55 and 58b is humorous and light-hearted but, just as in that poem, the speaker’s apparent casualness hides a vulnerability on his part: his liminal position in his friend’s life. Poems 55 and 58b have posed a number of difficulties to scholars, mostly centred on textual corruption and the question of unity.[38] Following the

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[36] A similar change of tactic is seen in poem 42 where the speaker turns from insult to flattery, having found the former to have no effect on the addressee.

[37] Adler (1981:97) notes that Catullus’ request is not for “words sadder than the words of Simonides” but for “words sadder than the tears of Simonides”; this reveals the very personal nature both of Catullus’ request and of his own sadness (Adler, 1981:97).

[38] The textual corruption in 55 is especially problematic in lines 9 and 11; in 58b the order of the lines have been called into question. See *Catullus Online*, edited by Dániel Kiss, for an active repertory of conjectures on the entire Catullan text (http://www.catullusonline.org © Dániel Kiss, 2013). The other problem of whether or not these poems should be separated, as transmitted, or joined appears to be more or less laid to rest. Similarities in theme (the search for Camerius) and in the experimental metre (combining the normal hendecasyllables with decasyllables) found only in these two poems, as

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common practice I too regard poems 55 and 58b as two related, yet separate and independently meaningful poems. However, when reading them as companion pieces, such as poems 2 and 3, a more nuanced understanding of the friendship between Catullus and his addressee is revealed. In both poems the speaker is searching for Camerius, an intimate friend (*amice*, 55.14; 58b.10).[39] In each case he ends up being extremely frustrated. Finally, at the end of poem 58b, he appears to give up entirely. I will first look at the two poems individually and then discuss how they bring out the speaker's liminal position in his friend's life more acutely when they engage dialogically.

c. 55

Oramus, si forte non molestum est,
demonstres ubi sint tuae tenebrae.
te Campo quaesivimus minore,
te in Circo, te in omnibus libellis,
te in templo summi Iovis sacrato. 5
in Magni simul ambulatione
femellas omnes, amice, prendi,
quas vultu vidi tamen sereno.
†avelte† (sic ipse[40] flagitabam):
"Camerium mihi, pessimae puellae!" 10
quaedam inquit, nudum reduc<ta pectus,>
"en hic in roseis latet papillis."
sed te iam ferre Herculi labos est;
tanto te in fastu negas, amice.
dic nobis ubi sis futurus, ede 15
audacter, committe, crede luci.
nunc te lacteolae tenent puellae?
si linguam clauso tenes in ore,
fructus proicies amoris omnes. 20
verbosa gaudet Venus loquella.
vel, si vis, licet obseres palatum,
dum vestri sim particeps amoris.

c. 58b

Non custos si fingar ille Cretum,
non Ladas ego pinnipesve Perseus, 3
non si Pegaseo ferar volatu, 2
non Rhesi niveae citaeque bigae; 4

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well as their apparently unfinished state have led many scholars in the past to attempt to incorporate 58b into 55 (Thomson, 1997:335-336). However, treating them as separate poems has become more or less standard since the end of the nineteenth century (Benediktson, 1986:305; Thomson, 1997:335) with only a few scholars still arguing for their unity (e.g. Akbar Khan, 1967:116ff.; Peachy, 1972:258ff. and Goold, 1983:100ff.).

[39] Camerius' exact identity has not been established (see Wiseman, 1987:217ff. on the likelihood that he was a Transpadane *domi nobilis* like many of Catullus' friends as well as the poet himself). What is clear, though, is that he is regarded as a close friend by the speaker, who is totally devoted to him (cf. poems 6 and 30).

[40] Thomson (1997:337) follows Munro (quoted ad loc.) in substituting *usque* for the transmitted *ipse*, because "*usque* gives easier sense; and the line is surely corrupt enough to justify the substitution". However, I do not see this as a good enough reason for the substitution: *ipse* is perfectly understandable in this context (cf. Foster, 1971:186 below and Barwick, 1928:68). (Only Goold, 1983 (ad loc.), Thomson (1997:337) and Heyworth (1999:99) seem to follow Munro on this point.)

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adde huc plumipedas volatilesque, 5
ventorumque simul require cursum:
quos iunctos, Cameri, mihi dicares,
defessus tamen omnibus medullis
et multis languoribus peresus
essem te mihi, amice, quaeritando. 10

The theme of speech is immediately introduced at the beginning of poem 55: *oramus*. The poem is styled as a conversation between "you", the addressee (indicated by the emphatic reiteration of *te*, the repeated use of the vocative and second-person verbs), and "I", the speaker (indicated by the use of the first person). The speaker wants his friend, identified as Camerius in line 9, to reveal his "shady hang-outs" (*tenebrae*, 2). With mock-solemnity and ironic politeness (Quinn, 1973:251) he requests Camerius to break his silence (*Oramus, si forte non molestum est, / demonstres...*, 1-2).[41] However, it soon turns out that there is no dialogue taking place. Flavius in poem 6 was reticent about his beloved, but still available to the speaker to be confronted with his silence. Camerius is not only not responding; already in line 3 it becomes clear that "[he] has disappeared from circulation altogether" (Quinn, 1973:251). Now the Catullan speaker takes us on a journey through the most popular haunts in Rome as he relives his search for the elusive Camerius.[42] There is a mock-epic quality to his journey (Ferguson, 1985:160), "a carnivalization of the Roman streets": most of the places he lists are fairly sleazy (Newman, 1990:240). The Circus Maximus on non-race days, the temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, and Pompey's portico were all frequented by large, heterogeneous crowds, performing artists of all kinds, and, as stated quite explicitly in the poem, females of easy virtue (*femellas*, 7) (Wiseman, 1980:8ff.; Newman, 1990:25-26).[43] This sets the scene for an erotic theme from which, ironically, the poet is excluded (Newman, 1990:26). Not finding his friend in the expected "hide-outs" he questions the women in Pompey's portico. There is an aggressiveness in his interrogation of the *femellas*: he accosts them (*prendi*, 7). This underscores an increasing sense of hopelessness on the part of the speaker: while he was searching he still believed that he would find his friend somewhere (Barwick, 1928:68). Now he turns to plan B and addresses the women in a *flagitatio* (*flagitabam*, 9) (Foster, 1971:186). There is a sense of entitlement on the part of

[41] Cf. *oramus* in poem 50.19.
[42] See Wiseman (1980:6ff.) for detail on the specific spots.
[43] Evans (2009:123ff.) offers an enlightening discussion on the female sculptures in Pompey's portico. She argues that this may have been one of the great attractions for female visitors to the portico (Evans, 2009:138). The other locations mentioned, the Campus Minor and the *libelli*, are more difficult to place. Wiseman (1980:13ff.) identifies the "lesser campus" as the Campus Martialis, a place not too far from the Circus Maximus, but one which would require a bit of a walk. As to *libelli* he argues for "bookshops" in support of Scaliger's explanation from 1577 (Wiseman, 1980:10; cf. Thomson, 1997:336). According to Horace (*Epist*. I.20.1-2), twenty years later, books could easily be bought in the Forum and the Vicus Tuscus (Wiseman, 1980:10) (see also poem 14.17). These details would add to the boundlessness of Catullus' search.

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the speaker. He calls the girls *pessimae* (10) because, from his perspective, they are keeping from him something which he regards as his own: his friend Camerius (Foster, 1971:186). This insult reveals his isolation, already hinted at by *ipse* (9).[44] Despite his apparent aggressiveness, the women team up and make fun of him. The carnivalization of the setting culminates in the girl who turns her naked breasts to him with the claim that Camerius is hiding there (12). The speaker's parody is turned on himself. Another change of plan is called for (plan C): the girls do not appear to be guilty of keeping Camerius from him (Ferguson, 1985:160).

And so, after this "burlesque highlight" line 13 introduces a shift and a return to the present: *sed* (Syndikus, 1984:272). The speaker now turns to Camerius himself, first in a statement of indignation (13), and then in a set of rhetorical questions. Against the erotic background already established by the venues on Catullus' "journey" and the seductive women, the speaker employs the language of love poetry in his address to his friend.[45] *Fastus* and *negare* ("pride" and "to deny", 14) frequently appear in love poetry to describe one who rejects a suitor and the seeking of the beloved (*quaesivimus,* 2*)* is a common motif (Macleod, 1973b:295). The speaker is losing patience. He points to the conflict between *fastus* and *amicitia* (*amice*) to launch his increasingly urgent entreaty to his friend (Adler, 1981:73): *dic, ede, committe, crede* (15-16). *Committe* is placed in an emphatic position: "if you are my friend, trust me". The speaker's exhortation is succeeded by speculation that the girls after all do know something (17). By means of this rhetorical question he implies that in fact he knows all about Camerius' rendezvous. But this apparent certainty is immediately deflated when, in a similar fashion to poem 50, he brings a divinity into the equation in a final attempt to achieve his goal (plan D): "If you keep your tongue locked up in your mouth, you will squander all the fruits of your love: Venus delights in speech rich in words" (*si linguam clauso tenes in ore / fructus proicies amoris omnes / verbosa gaudet Venus loquella*, 19-21).[46] From the perspective of the Catullan speaker the "fruits" of Camerius' love are the words uttered to him as intimate friend and poet (Adler, 1981:73).[47] His final wish to share in the love between his friend and the friend's beloved (*dum vestri sim particeps amoris*, 22) is a request to turn their love into the material for poetry, similar to his wish at the end of poem 6. But he has already accepted Camerius' silence: "…or, if you want, you may keep your

[44] As Foster (1971:186) notes, *ipse* means "alone" in this context.
[45] We already saw this in poem 50 (chapter 2) where the Catullan speaker portrays his intense longing for an adored, absent friend in mock-erotic terms (cf. Akbar Khan, 1967a:125).
[46] Thomson (1997:336) cites two opposing views on this point: Pausanius in Plato (*Symp.* 182d), who argues that it is better to love openly than secretly, and Propertius, who argues that the lover should hide his joy when he realises that he is being loved (2.25.29-30). Catullus is of course promoting the one that suits his own purpose.
[47] "Kissing without telling is pointless for the outsider poet, hungry for material" (Newman, 1990:195).

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lips sealed" (*vel, si vis, licet obseres palatum*, 21); the best he can hope for is to observe by uncovering Camerius' hide-out. As it turns out the Catullan speaker is not only an outsider among the Roman masses, able to accost the *femellas* and keep a straight face (*quas vultu vidi tamen sereno*, 8) (Newman, 1990:), but also in Camerius' life. He starts and ends his poem with an entreaty to his friend: in each case he is met with silence.

Camerius' silence throughout the poem is accentuated by means of the recurring references to his ability to communicate and the organs used for speech (Stevens, 2013:4): *negas* (14), *dic* (15), *linguam, ore* (18), and *palatum* (21). The speaker entreats his friend to break his silence but this does not happen, and so he must "fill in" the silence with his own poetic voice (Stevens, 2013:4). The initial interest to hear what another person has to say, turns into a self-reflective account of the speaker's experiences (Stevens, 2013:5): Bakhtin's notion of internally dialogized discourse. Once more the silence of a possible interlocutor allows the poet to display his own performance of speech; once more it is indicative of his emotional separation from that person. In poem 55, however, emotional separation also becomes physical separation: the absence of sound is coupled with a physical absence. Camerius is nowhere and Catullus' displacement as friend complete. Within the parodic setting of the poem lies "the paradox of Catullus' seriousness": he takes friendship very seriously; it is, after all, the most profound form of love (*aeternum sanctae foedus amicitiae*) (Peachy, 1972:265).

"Poem 58b is the sequel and conclusion of 55, as 7 is of 5, 3 of 2, or 72 of 70" (Macleod, 1973b:296). The search for Camerius is again the topic (*quaeritando*, 10); Camerius is again the addressee (7), but Catullus never once asks him *where* he is. The focus has shifted from an active, though fruitless search and interrogation of the addressee in poem 55 to the impossibility of undertaking such a search. It is immediately clear that, despite the vocative in line 7, there is no dialogue going in. Camerius is missing in action and there is no way in which he could respond. The Catullan speaker himself clearly realizes this: he is not asking any questions, but making a statement. As in poem 55 Catullus starts his poem with a list, in this case not an itinerary of local haunts but a catalogue of all the quickest characters and creatures from myth. What initially appears to be a celebration of Camerius' speed, which surpasses that of all these beings and even the winds, ends with the speaker's exhaustion and abandoning of the chase (Macleod, 1973b:296).

In a similar technique to that of poem 11 the Catullan speaker opens his poem on a grand scale, this time in a display of learned Hellenism (Comfort, 1935:45), only to disappoint his

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reader.[48] He is not intending to undertake a great journey; he does not need superhuman speed. From poem 55 we know that he is merely searching for his friend in the local surroundings (the streets of Rome). Curiously, the speaker creates the impression that Camerius is offering to help him in "harnessing" all possible swiftness (*quos iunctos, Cameri, mihi dicares*, 7). Not only is this highly ironic (Camerius does not want to be found), but it accentuates Catullus' despair (Macleod, 1973b:296).[49] The futility of such a "favour" is made apparent in the next line when the speaker explains why he would not accept the offer: it would still leave him worn out. *Defessus* (8) is a colloquial word which occurs only in one other poem in the collection (50.14) in a similarly exaggerated and mock-erotic context (Comfort, 1935:47-48). Tiredness is a symptom associated with the frustrated lover (Macleod, 1973b:296); here it is transposed to the frustrated friend. In poem 50, where the beginning of a new friendship is depicted, the speaker still has the energy and hope to compose a poem for his friend despite his worn-out state (50.16).[50] In poem 58b the friendship is already established and the lack of reciprocity is wearing Catullus down. *Mihi* is emphatically placed between *te* and *amice*. As in poem 55 the speaker is drawing on the principles of *amicitia* to remind his friend of what is expected of him: reciprocity. However, the poem ends with *quaeritando*: Camerius is still absent. The search must go on, but it is doubtful that the Catullan speaker would continue.

Both poems 55 and 58b start with extensive lists which serve to highlight the intensity of Catullus' search for Camerius. In poem 55 the list is of actual places: Catullus' longing for his absent friend is concretized in geography. The mock-heroic nature of Catullus' search, first suggested by the diction, is underscored by the place themselves. These sights are symbolically borderline spaces: they are frequented by performing artists and prostitutes, the marginals of society, as well as the masses. Catullus' search is a parody of the streets of Rome which culminates in his "searching" of a prostitute's breasts. The fantastic list at the start of poem 58b picks up poem 55's tone of mock-serious: by means of the carnivalization of his search in each case the Catullan speaker masks his desperation and the underlying seriousness inherent in both poems. Poem 55 ends with an entreaty by the Catullan speaker to share in his friend's love: he seeks a sense of security; the security inherent in true *amicitia*. In this way Camerius comes to signify belonging; his absence non-belonging and displacement. At the end of poem 55 the speaker still sees a glimmer of hope for some form of contact. Through his dialogic engagement with the self he has realized that his role

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[48] Cf. Benediktson, 1986:306.
[49] Macleod argues that Catullus is despairing of a former lover. As I argued above the erotic language need not indicate a love affair; it could simply denote a close friendship highly valued by the speaker.
[50] See chapter 2, p.44ff.

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in Camerius' life is peripheral and that his own experience of the friendship is much more intense. Therefore he has come to accept his friend's silence and his preference for female company. He would be satisfied with the liminal role of sharing in his friend's love life as detached observer and poet. In 58b Catullus is exhausted and disillusioned. He does not anticipate any response from his friend. Moreover, his "rejection" of Camerius' aid indicate a loss of interest. Catullus has been diminished by the imbalance in the friendship and resigned himself to his liminal state. Despite the parodic nature of both poems there is an underlying seriousness: the seriousness of *amicitia* which Camerius does not reciprocate. The "joke" turns out to be on Catullus.

In the next poem the speaker's experience of the liminalilty of rejection is unconcealed although he gives it a universal relevance by concealing the identities of the offender and the offended. The whole poem consists of a single sentence presented as a rhetorical question.

c.60

Num te leaena montibus Libystinis
aut Scylla latrans infima inguinum parte
tam mente dura procreavit ac taetra,
ut supplicis vocem in novissimo casu
contemptam haberes, a nimis fero corde? 5

Part of the difficulty with this poem comes from its lack of context and unidentifiable addressee (Nappa, 2003:58). Moreover, there are no first-person verbs or pronouns, nor references to "Catullus" in the third person to indicate his direct involvement in any way. All we know is that the speaker has been deeply hurt by the indifference of the addressee *(te,* 1) to his obvious suffering. He makes use of an established topos: "hard-hearted people come from bestial, monstrous, or unnatural mothers" (Nappa, 2003:58). The addressee must be the offspring of a lioness or Scylla (1-3) for being so unfeeling (*vocem…contemptam haberes*, 4-5) towards someone else's suffering (*supplicis…in novissimo casu*, 4). There is no indication in the poem as to the gender of *te*, but some scholars recognise Lesbia as the addressee. Weinreich (1959:84ff.) studies examples of the topos of hardheartedness from Homer, Euripides, Catullus himself (64.154-157) as well as Vergil and Ovid to conclude that in the majority of cases it is employed in the reproach of a lover by his or her partner. Therefore, this must also be the case in Catullus' poem 60. Lieberg (1966:117), reviewing the topos in Pseudo-Theocritus 23, a Hellenistic example which would have appealed to Catullus' Alexandrian sensibilities, draws the same conclusion. Wiseman (1985:156-157), on the other hand, argues that the reader will come to the conclusion that *te* must refer to Lesbia by means of allusion and juxtaposition (he sees thematic similarities between poems

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58, 59 and 60). The most convincing argument for giving poem 60 an erotic context must be the verbal and thematic echoes from poem 64. In Ariadne's lament over Theseus' abandonment of her she uses the same topos of hardheartedness, naming both the lioness and Scylla in her more extended list of non-human mothers (poem 64.154-157): *quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena, / quod mare conceptum spumantibus exspuit undis, / quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax...* However, I would argue that poem 60 is not addressed to Lesbia, or another lover for that matter, but to a friend who betrayed him in a time of need. Nappa (2003:59) notes that Ariadne gave up her former life for Theseus and was abandoned in return; in poem 60 no such extreme abandonment is implied, merely the speaker's sense of being neglected in a difficult time. Moreover, as my analyses of poems 73 and 77 below will show, the lines between betrayal by a lover and betrayal by a friend are often blurred in the Catullan corpus.[51] *Sicine* from poem 77.3 recalls the start of Ariadne's reproach of Theseus (64.132), yet we are quite clearly in the realm of friendship in that poem (*amice*, 1; *amicitiae*, 6).[52] Therefore, there is no reason why another echo of Ariadne's speech should not be directed at a friend as well. As Lieberg (1966:116) himself pointed out, among the pre-Catullan examples of the topos of hardheartedness denoting non-human parentage it is only used in a proper erotic context in Pseudo-Theocritus 23.[53] Syndikus (1984:288) likewise refers to Ovid's use of the topos precisely for the description of faithless friends (*Tristia* 1.8.37-40; 3.11.3). But apart from the topos the position of the speaker should also be taken into account: *supplicis…in novissimo casu* (4). In none of the Lesbia poems, even when the speaker is at his most vulnerable, does he present himself to her in such a blatantly pathetic position where he begs her for sympathy or even asks her to return to him (cf. 8, 75, 76.). In poem 107 he is clearly overjoyed that she has returned, however, all he conveys is that he longed but never hoped (*cupido atque insperanti*, 5). Only twice does he appear to be in a suppliant position and in both cases he addresses the gods: once to ask them to ratify Lesbia's words (109.3) and another time at the end of the relationship when he begs them to rid him of the "disease" of his love for her (76.17-20). However, in his poems addressed to faithless friends he often portrays himself in a compromised position where he

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[51] We have seen this already in poem 30 where Catullus describes himself as one who has been "seduced" by a friend (*inducens in amorem*, 8) and employs phrasing which closely echoes Ariadne's reproach of Theseus.

[52] Cf. poem 30.

[53] In the *Iliad* (16.33-35) Patroclus is reproaching Achilles for abandoning the Greeks; in Euripides' *Medea* (1341-1343) Jason is expressing his disbelieve that Medea could harm her own children: he is not referring to their relationship; in Euripides' *Bacchae* (988-991) the choir prophesy the words Pentheus' mother will utter when she does not recognise her own son in his disguise and assumes him to be hostile (Lieberg, 1966:115-116). (Lieberg does not refer to post-Catullan writers.)

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begs either for some form of reciprocity or for an explanation of the perpetrator's actions (cf. poems 30, 38, 73, 77).[54]

The language is "literary and deliberate" (Ferguson, 1985:173). *Leaena*, adopted from the Greek, appears here for the first time in Latin (Wiseman, 1985:157). The description of Scylla is Hellenistic (Thomson, 1997:347) as is, in all probability, the rare adjective *Libystinis* (Fordyce, 1961:234). Even the particular use of *novissimo* (4), denoting "final", is rare until Tacitus' time (Fordyce, 1961:235; Thomson, 1997:347). All this gives the poem a sense of detached learnedness, removed from real experience.[55] However, it is precisely this use of *novissimus*, denoting a specific occasion, as well as *supplicis* which hints at a real event (Ferguson, 1985:173).[56] The urgency inherent in *novissimo* heightens the speaker's feeling of disbelief, a sense of finality similar to the same extreme hopelessness which he experienced in poem 76 (*si quibus umquam / extremam iam ipsa in morte tulistis opem*, 17-18).[57] He once more finds himself on the symbolic brink of death: the temporal *novissimo* also has a spacial element. This is the liminal zone. Unlike in poem 76 he is not begging the gods for his salvation but a fellow human being: he may lash out when his addressee turns a deaf ear. The exact nature of the misfortune cannot be known (cf. Kroll, 1968:106), but the intensity of the speaker's hurt, coupled with the thematic echo of poem 76, does imply Lesbia's presence (cf. Syndikus, 1984:288). As I have argued, she is not the addressee in the poem, but I do suggest that she is the cause of the crisis (*casu*). There is no indication in the poem that the addressee is also responsible for the final crisis (*novissimo casu*), rather than that person was aware of the speaker's misfortune, even called upon for

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[54] Although he gives no verdict on the identity of the addressee, Quinn does relate this poem to others directed at faithless friends: "There is a rush of passionate rhetoric here more characteristic of the high style of epic or epyllion than the wry, bantering irony of Poem 38 (cf. Poem 30), or even the torturing, hard hitting invective of Poem 77" (Quinn, 1973:263).

[55] Nappa (2003:62ff.) argues that the poet employs the conscious literariness of the poem, coupled with the concealed identities of speaker and addressee, to demonstrate that the experience of betrayal is universal and repeatable. This "makes the speaker all betrayed individuals" and the addressee "every hard-hearted individual in every generation" (Nappa, 2003:63).

[56] Nappa (2003:60) takes a very different approach to the poem and argues that *novissimo* could simply mean "most recent", based on the general meaning of *novus*. This would imply that *novissimo casu* is only another misfortune in a string of them. For Nappa (2003:60) this gives both the speaker and the addressee a history – the former one of misfortunes, the latter one of indifference – which in turn creates its own context for the poem. However, if *novissimus casus* is merely a reference to the latest crisis in a long list, it will not only explain the addressee's lack of response but it will also give him an excuse for doing so, making the speaker's argument very weak. (Nappa reads the poem not only as a generic statement on betrayal but also as a fitting conclusion to the book of polymetrics where poem 60 is the "most recent" of the speaker's utterances and also the point where he is "abandoned" by the reader. His interpretation of *novissimus* would work in that context.) I agree with the generally accepted interpretation that *novissimo* is to be translated as "last/final" (Kroll, 1968:106; Quinn, 1973:264; Wiseman, 1985:157; Garrison, 1989:124; Thomson, 1997:347 et al.) Support for this translation comes from Catullus himself: in poem 4 *novissime* (24) is used to describe the final journey of the yacht. Also, as is clear from my argument, I do identify the speaker with the "Catullus" from the text.

[57] Syndikus (1984:288) makes the same link.

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help, but did nothing. *That* is the message of the poem. Speech and silence once more function as a central theme in a poem addressed to a fickle friend, this time signified by *vocem* (4) (Nappa, 2003:60). The speaker has called for help, but he was met with silence. The hurt resulting from the addressee's silence overwhelms him and he in turn falls silent in the final line of the poem (Syndikus, 1984:288-289). Having started out with a cry of disbelief at the addressee's faithlessness he resigns to this fact at the end of the poem: "Oh, you with the all too cruel heart" (*a nimis fero corde*) (Syndikus, 1984:287).

This is an emotional outcry of betrayal made universal by the topos and the lack of personal references or identifiable characters. But even the display of learnedness cannot conceal the thematic echo of other poems in the corpus. The speaker appears to be on the verge of a breakdown – on the symbolic brink of death – decentred and alone. Some crisis pushed him to that edge. In his friendship with the unknown addressee he appears to have been in the liminal position from the start; not important enough to be heard.

An imbalanced friendship is also the theme in the next poem where Catullus again appears to offer an impersonal take on a common scenario. This one has a particularly Roman colour – that of aristocratic obligation – bringing it immediately close to the world of the speaker and his audience.

c.73

Desine de quoquam quicquam bene velle mereri
aut aliquem fieri posse putare pium.
omnia sunt ingrata, nihil fecisse benigne <est>;
immo etiam taedet, <taedet> obestque magis;
ut mihi, quem nemo gravius nec acerbius urget, 5
quam modo qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit.

As with the previous poem, it is probably because of the vagueness of the narrative scenario and the mood of complete hopelessness that poem 73 has received so little attention in Catullan scholarship. Yet its depiction of the speaker as he reflects on a friend's betrayal, a very close friend (*qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit*, 6), offers valuable insight into the Catullan psyche on the one hand, but also into the values of his contemporary society. The poignancy of the poem lies precisely in the apparent detachment of the speaker.

Catullus starts his poem with a general statement in which he offers advice to an implied interlocutor or audience. This is given force by the emphatically placed imperative *desine*: he takes an authoritative stance. The generalization in the first four lines coupled with the use of third-person verbs create an overall picture of the speaker's detached observation, which serves to strengthen his commanding pose: *quoquam quicquam, aliquem,*

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omnia…nihil, taedet…obest. Despite their lack of object the verbs *taedet* and *obest* hint at a personal experience. Moreover, the combination of *immo* and *etiam* suggests not a mere rephrasing of the preceding statement but a more severe version thereof (Garrison, 1989:153).[58] Acts of kindness not only amount to nothing; in fact they exhaust and harm the doer (4). The reader is subtly led to a surprising revelation: *ut mihi* (5). The speaker's authority on the matter comes from personal experience. Both the postponement of the personal nature of the claim and the abruptness of *ut mihi* heighten the speaker's sense of hurt. This is continued in *gravius…acerbius urget* (5): Catullus is being weighed down. By whom? *Nemo* coupled with the two comparatives creates a sense of expectation. The revelation is left for the final line: *qui* (6). The perpetrator remains anonymous and in the distant third person, but by hinting at his words "He who considered me his one and only friend" (*me unum atque unicum amicum habuit*) the man should be able to recognise himself. The seemingly universal "anyone" from the first line (*quoquam*) happens to be someone specific (*qui*).

Curiously, the speaker does not disclose any information regarding his feelings for the perpetrator (cf. poems 30, 55, 58b, and 77, 102 below). All we know is that that person at some stage (*modo*) regarded Catullus as his best friend. However, *amicum* coupled with the language of socio-political commitment, *bene velle* (1), *pium* (2) and *ingrata* (3), (cf. Ross, 1969:86-87) sets the scene. This is the realm of *amicitia* where a moral obligation is placed on each partner to return favours (*beneficia*) and the implicit reciprocity is fundamental to the preservation of friendship (Skinner, 2003:72). What the first half of the poem makes clear is that the speaker has acted in accordance with the moral principles of *amicitia*: he acted kindly (*benignest*, 3) in such a way that he could expect *benevolentia, pietas* and *gratia* from his partner in the friendship. But his good deeds were not answered. As in the Lesbia poems, the lack of reciprocity causes the greatest hurt for the devoted friend.[59]

[58] *Immo* is used again in the next poem under discussion (poem 77) where the speaker aims to correct his preceding statement.

[59] By engaging other poems in the collection, especially the Lesbia poems, where the language of socio-political commitment sets the tone, the sense of betrayal is heightened. *Posse putare pium* recalls *se cogitat esse pium* from poem 76 in the same position and line, just as *omnia sunt ingrata* (3) echoes *omnia quae ingratae…credita menti* (76.9) (and *ingrato amore*, 76.6, to a lesser extent). *Bene velle* (1) follows immediately upon the identical phrase in the last line of the preceding poem 72, and will be echoed once more in poem 75 (4). This is also picked up by the mention of *benefacta* from poem 76 (1, 7-8). Just as his love for dear friends borders on the erotic, the speaker does not distinguish between betrayal by an intimate friend and betrayal by a lover. We have already seen that he regards *amicitia* as the ideal for an erotic relationship. And so when he experiences a violation of the *pietas* that pervades all forms of *amicitia* his sense of betrayal is never far from being erotic. In this respect poem 73 functions as the strongest link between the poems of erotic betrayal and those of betrayal in a friendship.

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A seemingly detached speaker's general word of advice has turned out to be an intensely personal matter: Catullus is speaking from experience. "The one who has experienced betrayal (5-6) is the one who had expected *pietas* (2), and who has concluded from the experience the general principle *omnia sunt ingrata* (3)" (Adler, 1981:13). The advice offered by the speaker in the first half of the poem is in fact directed at himself. This is a dialogic monologue in which the speaker aims to resolve the issue of the violation of *pietas* by a close friend. But the reverse logic of the poem reveals that no such solution is possible: the poem ends with the description of the betrayal; in the middle section the speaker draws the conclusion that good deeds are not reciprocated, and in the beginning he describes his resolve not to expect any favours henceforth (Adler, 1981:13). Having read the whole poem, what remains in the mind of the reader is not the speaker's apparent resolve, but his very real experience of betrayal. The perpetrator once regarded the speaker as his "one and only friend". He has singled Catullus out as someone special, placing him symbolically in a most central position in the friendship. This lead the speaker to experience a real sense of belonging. However, this sense of belonging turns out to have been a false one. *Me unum atque unicum amicum habuit* (6) must be a paraphrase of something that person had said. As in the Lesbia poems (70, 72, 83, 92 and 109) the words of another person has turned out to be unreliable. The speaker was led to believe that he held a place in the centre of his friend's life only to come to the realisation, through his dialogue with himself, that he is in fact very much on the periphery. In this symbolic anti-space the only experience is of not-belonging and disillusionment with the once revered *amicitia*.

A similar theme is found in the next poem under discussion. This time the speaker makes it immediately personal and the impact of a friend's betrayal on him as speaking subject receives its most explicit expression in the entire corpus. The whole poem seems to shout in disbelief that a friend could be so totally indifferent to the bonds of *amicitia*. The speaker is trying to make sense of the situation, but he appears to be unable to come to grips with what has happened.

c. 77

Rufe mihi frustra ac nequiquam credite amice
    (frustra? immo magno cum pretio atque malo),
sicine subrepsti mi atque intestina perurens
    ei misero eripuisti omnia nostra bona?
eripuisti, eheu nostrae crudele venenum   5
    vitae, eheu nostrae pestis amicitiae.

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The name of the addressee is placed emphatically at the start of the poem.[60] If Lesbia is indeed to be identified with Clodia Metelli, as is most often assumed, the "Rufus" in our poem could refer to Marcus Rufus Caelius, who had an affair with Clodia and most likely replaced Catullus as her lover (Arkins, 1983:306ff.). The probability that *omnia nostra bona* (4) is a reference to Lesbia, who is called *omnia bona* in 68b.158 (Kroll, 1968:251), strongly supports such a reading as do the many verbal echoes of other Lesbia poems (*uror*, 72.5, *uritur*, 83.6; *pestis* 76.20) (Miller, 2007:406).[61] But whether we choose to accept these biographical details or not the narrative scenario remains a simple one: the speaker has been betrayed on the most intimate level by someone he believed to be a friend (*credite amice*, 1). Rufus took from him, aggressively (*eripuisti*, 4, 5), all which he held dear (*omnia bona nostra*, 4): his beloved.[62] In the process Rufus has consciously ruined a friendship. The emphasis in the poem is, in my opinion, not on the loss of a lover but on the betrayal of friendship, a bond which the Catullan speaker held to be sacred (poem 109.6) (cf. Adler, 1981:95; Syndikus, 1987:32-33).

The six lines of the poem are neatly balanced between the two participants (1+1+2+2): the first line is an address to Rufus; in the second line the speaker appears to talk to himself as he revises his statement from the first; in the next two lines Rufus is again the addressee as the speaker puts a question to him; finally, in the last two lines Catullus is once more reassessing the situation in his own mind as he provides an answer to his own question. This creates the impression of a dialogue, but one where in reality the speaking subject stands in for both interlocutors.

The balance between question and answer is picked up by the many verbal repetitions: *frustra* (1, 2), *eripuisti* (4, 5), *eheu nostrae* (5, 6), *amice/amicitiae* (1, 6). Not only do these reverberations offer a visual depiction of the speaker's self-reflection and attempt at self-understanding, but they also underscore his sense of disbelief and disillusionment.[63] From the first line it becomes clear that he is struggling to find the right words (Syndikus, 1987:30). *Frustra* is immediately followed by *nequiquam;* although very similar in meaning they are not exact synonyms: the first denotes disappointment whereas the second has a more neutral sense of "to no avail" (Thomson, 1997:504). In the next line the speaker reconsiders his wording by interrogating himself on the choice of *frustra.* Then he immediately answers his own question by means of a correction: "No, rather…" (*immo*). He employs the unemotional terminology from the sphere of finance (*magno cum pretio)* to describe his "bad investment"

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[60] Cf. poems 6, 30 and 82 (the latter is discussed below).
[61] Verbal correspondences between poems 76 and 77 will be listed in detail below.
[62] The reference to himself as *misero* (4), the stock epithet of the abandoned lover, supports the reading that *omnia bona* refers to a beloved.
[63] These repetitions convey a tone of "real offense and pain" (Nappa, 1999:273).

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in a friendship with Rufus (Nappa, 1999:273). However, he adds *atque malo*: the loss on investment in friendship also entails personal harm. This loss cannot be calculated. In the second distich the Catullan speaker questions Rufus on his conduct, as if he still cannot fathom the deed (Syndikus, 1987:31), and in the process describes what his friend has done to him in brutal, intimate detail. Rufus had not only betrayed him, but he had done so calculatingly and stealthily: *sicine subrepsti mi atque intestina perurens* (3) (Nappa, 1999:274). *Sicine* launches a reproach and recalls the start of Ariadne's lament over her conscious betrayal by Theseus (64.132) (Fordyce, 1961:369). Not only has his innermost being been violated by Rufus' deed, but the speaker is also feminized by it.[64]

Catullus has been reduced by Rufus' conduct and he confirms this fact with the repetition of *eripuisti*. This recalls his entreaty to the gods in poem 76, *eripite (*20), which launches the metaphor of a life-threatening disease very similar to what we have in poem 77 (Skinner, 1987:232). *Pestem perniciemque…subrepens imos ut torpor in artus…* (76.20-21) is echoed in our poem by *pestis* (6) and *subrepsti* (3) while *imos in artus* (76.21) has the same emotive meaning as *intestina* (3). In both poems the speaker has been "infested" by a loved one's violation of *pietas*. This "infestation" is equally rife in the public world where metaphors of *morbus* and *pestis* are used to describe both the kind of conduct and the individual threatening to disrupt the established order (Skinner, 2003:78).[65] In this way poems 76 and 77, engage dialogically and, through their use of the public language of social commitment (*fides, foedus, pietas* and *amicitia*), reveal that the "disease" which plagues a private erotic relationship and a personal friendship should be placed in the larger cultural context where behavioural codes in all spheres have been corrupted (Skinner, 1987:232).

We have seen in the previous chapter how these terms of socio-political obligation have been destabilized in the uncertain climate of late Republican Rome. By clinging to a moral ideal which he realizes is no longer taken seriously by his contemporaries, the Catullan speaker reveals his nostalgia for the past where these words still had meaning. The most emphatic repetition in the poem, that of *amice* from the first line which is picked up by *amicitiae* in the same final position in the last line, is an attempt to resurrect the moral weight of these terms and in the process make Rufus reconsider their meaning.

Nostrae in the final line is potentially ambiguous: does it denote "yours and mine" (Rufus and Catullus) or "hers and mine" (Lesbia and Catullus)? Syndikus (1987:32 n.14) argues that

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[64] Cf. poem 30.

[65] Skinner (1987:232; 2003:209 n.38) cites various examples from Cicero and refers to the Catullan corpus as well where, in poem 44, Sestius' speech against Antius is described as *plenam veneni et pestilentiae* (12). See also poem 47 (chapter 5, p.237ff.) where Porcius and Socration are labelled as the disease and hunger of the world.

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pestis amicitiae could only refer to the destruction of Catullus' friendship with Rufus and not his relationship with Lesbia (cf. Thomson, 1997:505 contra Quinn, 1973:412). I agree with this reading: the emphatic echo of *amice* at the start of the poem in *amicitiae* as the very last word underscores Rufus' change from one-time friend into a destroyer of friendship. In this respect Rufus comes to represent "the semantic shift" (Skinner, 2003:77) which this and other terms of social obligation have undergone. "[W]hat has been destroyed in the speaker's mind is not just one private compact but an entire system of social interchange based upon mutual obligation" (Skinner, 2003:78).

What the poem illustrates is the price of putting one's trust in a "friend" given the instability which the term has come to entail. As in the Lesbia poems Catullus' belief in the traditional institutions of social obligation has cost him dear: Rufus does not put the same premium on friendship which he does. He both mourns the loss of tradition (*ei*, 4; *eheu*, 5, 6) and struggles to come to terms with the impact that loss has on him personally. In the process he interrogates himself to reach a greater sense of self-understanding, but also a firmer grasp of the situation. What he discovers through this self-reflection is that neither his former lover nor former friend attaches much importance to the moral codes inherent in *amicitia*. In this way his very existence has come under threat: if the words *amicus* and *amicitia* no longer have stable meanings, then how is he to understand himself as a friend to a friend? This leaves him ill-defined and displaced. Rufus has not only weakened him but he has become the poison that threatens his being-in-language, and by implication his life (*venenum / vitae*, 5-6). He is again on the symbolic brink of death; in the liminal zone. By employing the language of socio-political obligation to describe his complete devotion both to a lover and to a friend, the Catullan speaker has invited that public world into his private world. Together with the slippage this language has undergone comes a *pestis* which threatens the moral stability of the public world and the emotional existence of the individual who still lives by the traditional codes of conduct inherent in this language. Like Dostoevsky's hero Catullus is isolated, alone in his belief in the sanctity of *pietas*, and therefore exposed not only to getting hurt, but also to possible ridicule by the "other" who may regard him as a fool. The emotional condition which results from this borders on nihilism (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:150-151).

The threat to the self when *pietas* is not revered features in the next poem as well. Whether or not the addressee in poem 82 is a close friend is uncertain, but the reciprocal obligation implied by friendship is central to the poem.

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c.82
Quinti, si tibi vis oculos debere Catullum
aut aliud si quid carius est oculis,
eripere ei noli, multo quod carius illi
est oculis, seu quid carius est oculis.

In a similar fashion to poem 77 the name of the addressee introduces the poem: the speaker is drawing Quintius into a conversation.[66] The very first line sets the scene. The characters involved, Quintius and Catullus, bracket the theme of debt (*si tibi vis oculos debere)*: the speaker is proposing a condition under which "Catullus" could be indebted to the addressee. The currency at stake is an unusual one: eyes or something even more precious (*aut aliud si quid carius est oculis*). The value of the eyes as a metaphor for deep-felt affection is a colloquialism which frequently crops up in the Catullan corpus.[67] In poem 3 Lesbia is said to have loved her sparrow "more than her eyes" (*quem plus illa oculis suis amabat*, 5); the speaker himself claims the same degree of love for his friend Calvus (*ni te plus oculis meis amarem*, 14.1).[68] In poem 82 he is vague as to the nature of "that which is much dearer to him than his eyes" (*multo quod carius illi / est oculis,* 3-4) but an echo later in the collection makes it quite clear. In poem 104 we see him using the phrase to refer to Lesbia (*quae carior est oculis*, 2). Therefore, the condition under which he would "owe his eyes" to Quintius would be if the latter did not take from him (*eripere ei noli*, 3) that which to him is much more precious than eyes, in other words: Lesbia.

Eripere (3) is emphatically placed at the start of the line in exactly the same position as the second *eripuisti* of poem 77 (5). Quintius and Rufus appear to be birds of a feather. However, Quinn (1973:416) as well as Ferguson (1985:271) argue that *eripere* could mean "free from" or "eradicate" when comparing it with the use of *eripite* in 76.20. For both of them this meaning better suits the context: Catullus is therefore not addressing a rival but asking a friend not to interfere in the "unhealthy" relationship on his behalf. Forsyth (1975a:33ff.), on the other hand, studies Catullus' use of the verb in the rest of the collection (poems 51.6, 64.150, 64.218, 65.8, 66.25, 68.106) and comes to the conclusion that only in poem 76 *eripere* has the meaning of "to free from"; in all the other examples it means "to steal" or "to take away with force". She goes further by drawing parallels between poems 77 and 82 in terms of the opening vocatives and the technique of verbal repetitions (Forsyth, 1975a:34). I agree with her that these correspondences, as well as the identical placement of *eripere*

[66] This may or may not be the same Veronese Quintius from poem 100 (cf. Neudling, 1955:154; Forsyth, 1980b:220ff.) but there is no evidence apart from the name to support a strong case either way. I will treat him as an unknown individual.
[67] Quinn (1973:416) notes that the eyes denote "life itself".
[68] In poems 31.2 and 50.19 *ocelle* is used is a term of endearment to address Sirmio and Calvus respectively.

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support the reading that Quintius poses a threat to Catullus' affair with Lesbia. Rufus has already gone into action (*eripuisti*); Quintius is still lying in wait. But, unlike the situation with Rufus (*subrepsti*), Catullus is this time aware of a potential rival's stealth and he warns him off beforehand.[69]

In typical Catullan fashion the speaker refers to himself in the third person. But here is no self-address (cf. poems 8, 51, 52, 76.1-16, 79) or switch to the first person towards the end of the poem (cf. poems 6, 11, 38, 76.17-26): third-person Catullus remains intact throughout. The speaker is taking in the position of an authoritative other "I", distancing himself from himself in order to get a better grip on the situation.[70] Quintius' judgment is clearly poor: he cannot fathom the value, in Catullus' eyes, of that which he is trying to take from him (Skinner, 2003:104).[71] In this way, according to Adler (1981:20), the use of the third person serves, on the one hand, to inform his friend not to meddle in affairs where he could do great damage because of his dense ignorance. On the other hand this allows the Catullan speaker, despite his vulnerable position, to protect "the integrity of his own sense of himself by insisting that it is not the version through which his friend knows him" (Adler, 1981:20). But the speaking subject is clearly under threat. He may try to appear as if he is regarding the situation with detached objectivity (Ferguson, 1985:271), but the reiteration of *carius est oculis* underscores his vulnerability and the intensity with which he experiences the threat.

On a more general level the poem is concerned with the judgment of value (Skinner, 2003:104). In the repetition of the phrase *carius est oculis* Quinn (1973:417) observes the speaker's evaluation of his own words: having reflected on this statement he confirms its validity through a final repetition in the last line of the poem. In this way he is assessing the semantic value of a phrase which has become hackneyed (Skinner, 2003:103; cf. Syndikus, 1987:47). Syndikus (1987:47) observes a definite change in tone in the second distich.[72] Having told Quintius in a polite and roundabout way that he could be deeply in his debt, the imperative in line 3 introduces a variation on the stock phrase (Syndikus, 1987:47-48). Broken up by the postponement of *oculis* to the final line the saying is renewed and discovered to be after all suitable to describe the speaker's intense feelings (Syndikus, 1987:48). By twice repeating *carius est oculis* Catullus is not only figuring out the value of

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[69] This does not imply that we can trace any sense of chronology between the two poems. They both represent distinct experiences of betrayal, but they are related through their means of betraying the speaker: laying claim to his beloved.

[70] Adler (1981:20) argues that the Catullan speaker is able to distinguish between Catullus "as seen by others and as known to himself"; in this way he presents to Quintius the Catullus he thinks he knows and can threaten because he does not fully grasp the situation.

[71] Skinner draws a link between this poem and poem 12 where Marrucinus steals Catullus' napkins, not knowing the emotional value they have for the speaker.

[72] Quinn (1973:417) likewise argues that "the second pentameter should be read more deliberately than the first".

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the phrase for himself but he also aims to revive its credibility in the eyes of his addressee. However, we already know that Quintius is a poor judge of value: he cannot fathom the importance something may have for someone else (Skinner, 2003:104). The speaker is aware of this; even his hammering on the question of value may fall on deaf ears.

Even though there is no explicit reference to any friendship between the speaker and addressee, the theme of reciprocity implies at the very least a mutual understanding. But, as Skinner (2003:104) notes, the Catullan speaker will end up as the loser no matter how the deal turns out: if he is to keep his beloved, who is dearer to him than his eyes, he will owe his eyes or something even dearer to Quintius. In this way the poem offers an ironic take on the mutual benefits implicit in *amicitia* (Skinner, 2003:104). In a similar fashion to poem 77 the speaker reconsiders his words. Even though he is addressing Quintius his words reflect internally dialogized discourse, a mental process of evaluating the semantic substance of *oculus* as a metaphor for deep-felt affection, one he often employs. Just like the language of socio-political commitment in the previous poem the vocabulary of *urbanitas* has come under threat (Skinner, 2003:103). Not only does this threaten Catullus' being-in-language, but if the eyes still retain their meaning as a symbol for life itself Quintius' betrayal, like Rufus', is life-threatening. Once more Catullus finds himself alone in the knowledge of "the truth" – the true value of something close to him – and decentred as a result of this knowledge; once more this isolation results in a sense of nihilism.

Nihilism may take many forms, but for a poet-speaker silence is probably the most unbearable sense of nothingness. Our discussion in this chapter started with a fairly playful take on silence. We end with a much more serious, twofold silence: one on the part of the addressee in his neglect of confiding in Catullus; the other on the part of the speaker in his claim to be the epitome of silence.

c.102

Si quicquam tacito commissum est fido ab amico,
cuius sit penitus nota fides animi,
me aeque esse invenies illorum iure sacratum,
Corneli, et factum me esse putum Harpocratem.

This is a poem on "stories and silence among friends" (Stevens, 2013:68). The repetition of *fido/fides* (1-2) coupled with *amico* (1) indicates that we are in the realm of *amicitia*. As mentioned before, silence is a defining characteristic of Catullan friendship.[73] As an alternative to speech, the performance of silence reveals "the relative position of each party

[73] See the discussion of poem 10 in chapter 2 (p.65ff.), as well as that of poem 6 above.

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in the relationship by clarifying…the terms of their discursive interaction" (McNeill, 2010:74-75). In this poem the speaker is addressing Cornelius on the topic of what constitutes a faithful friend. Commentators have been concerned with the identity of the addressee. Could this be the same Cornelius from poem 1 (Fordyce, 1961:390; Syndikus, 1987:111; Thomson, 1997:539)? Or is it the derided Cornelius from poem 67.35-36 (Edwards, 1990:382ff.)? I agree with Quinn (1973:442) that it is simply impossible to tell. Even those scholars who attempt to make a decision between the two Cornelii use words such as "may", "conceivable", "possibly", "almost certainly". The identity of the addressee is far from certain, but the narrative scenario is clear. The Catullan speaker is trying to show his friend Cornelius that, if the ability to keep a secret is the measure of a faithful friend, he is the ideal friend.

Similarly to poem 76 our poem starts with a generally applicable condition which turns out to be personal only once the potential consequence is stated. Speaker and addressee are friends, and the latter is in the position of possibly confiding in the former. Both parties lay claim to *fides* (Fordyce, 1961:390): Cornelius as a trusting friend (*fido…amico*) and Catullus as one known for his trustworthiness (*cuius sit penitus nota fides animi*). This implies the mutual commitment essential to *amicitia*. But the relationship is not as well-balanced as it appears to be. *Me* is emphatically placed at the start of the third line. As in poem 73 the postponed declaration of the speaker's personal involvement serves to emphasize his role in the narrative scenario: in this case it brings to the addressee's attention his unique talent for keeping quiet. McNeill (2010:75) argues that the speaker is placing Cornelius and himself within an exclusive group by stating that he will never reveal his friend's secrets to outsiders. Together with Cornelius he is therefore taking up an "us against them" stance. However, there is no indication in the poem that Cornelius has already entrusted any secrets to him (cf. Ferguson, 1985:315). The conditional *si quicquam* leaves this question open. A similar conditional clause opens poem 76 (*si qua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas / est homini*, 1-2), a condition which we know from the rest of the poem is never met. Catullus is merely claiming to be "one of those" (*illorum*) trustworthy friends who can keep a secret (Gaisser, 2009:97). There is no "us" and "them", merely an "I" and "you", and the group of "quiet ones" to whom the speaker aspires. He is very much excluded from the addressee's inner circle. Through the emphatic placement of *me* he appears to be seeking recognition.

As quoted at the start of the chapter, friendship for Catullus was like a religion. In poem 102 this is most clearly illustrated when he speaks of friendship in religious terms (*iure sacratum*, 3), the way he spoke of his relationship with Lesbia in poem 76.3-4 (Syndikus, 1987:111). Despite the failure of traditional Roman institutions, the Catullan speaker still clings to their

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inherent values. Although he indicates that Cornelius also upholds *fides*, that loyalty does not seem to be directed at him. And so he ends the poem on a note of disillusion with the ironically exaggerated symbol of silence: Harpocrates. If Catullus has not been let in on Cornelius' secret he has nothing to divulge in any case.

Skinner (2003:129) regards the ending as purposefully "deflationary": by means of the echo of Harpocrates from poem 74 the solemnity of *fides* is called into question.[74] However, as McNeill (2010:75 n.17) notes, a voluntary performance of silence, as in poem 102, and that of being silenced by force (poem 74) represent very different states of silence.[75] Stevens (2013:196) claims that the poem's "grammatical hedging", which other scholars have called "doggerel" (Fordyce, 1961:390) and "prosaic" (Thomson, 1997:102), imply irony on the part of the speaker. In this regard the reference of Harpocrates in the final line would not be serious but rather humorous (Stevens, 2013:196). But this humorous depiction of Catullus as Harpocrates implies that "faithful silence" is not something often experienced in real life (Stevens, 2013:196). When Catullus uses the language of socio-political commitment he is serious, even when the other parties involved are not (cf. poems 30, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 87, 109). "There is something poignant in Catullus' use of this solemn language, perhaps because he characterizes himself as virtually the only one adhering to the values it represents" (Gaisser, 2009:97). The language of socio-political commitment can only be effective when it is directed at a community which share the values implied by this language, "but no such community exists in Catullus' poetry" (Gaisser, 2009:97). Therefore the speaker once more finds himself alone in adhering to a semantic code which has become unstable, both in the public world of Roman society and in the private world of interpersonal relationships where he has to negotiate his identity. A seemingly comical, exaggerated take on the ultimate ability for keeping quiet hides not only a societal failure, but the speaker's compromised position within his friendship with Cornelius.

As in poem 6 at the start of this chapter the addressee in poem 102 seems to have a secret. Catullus is desperate for Cornelius to confide in him but, also as in poem 6, he is the only one doing any talking. Finally, when let down by the very system that defines him – language – he resolves not to say another word. For the Catullan speaker as a faithful friend, clinging alone to the values once implicit in *amicitia*, there remains in the end only the

[74] In that poem, where Harpocrates also appears as metaphor for the ultimate secrecy, Gellius has shut up his uncle's sexual moralisation by seducing his wife. The extent to which Gellius has reduced his uncle to silence leads the speaker to believe that the latter would not even utter a word if he himself were getting stuffed by his nephew. The joke of course lies in the fact that, in case of the latter, the uncle would not be able to speak anyway.

[75] Edwards (1990:384) likewise argues that poem 74's connotation of Harpocrates with humiliation and submission is absent in poem 102.

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loneliness resulting from being on the periphery of a friendship, silence and ultimately nothingness.

Catullus' poems addressed to friends who, in his eyes, have betrayed, neglected or disregarded him reveal his unique understanding of friendship in a changing world. Friends ought to share each other's happiness as well as sadness (Brunt, 1965:1). Yet a large number of Catullus' friends not only neglect or disregard him (poems 6, 30, 38, 55, 58b, 60, 102), but some even betray him consciously (poems 73, 77, 82). This attests to the sorry state of friendship in the disrupted world of late Republican Rome where traditional institutions have lost their former significance. These poems addressed to so-called friends who have made the Catullan speaker feel abandoned, side-lined and betrayed at the same time expose the speaker's view of himself. In his attempt to come to terms with a distorted friendship he interrogates himself and so reaches a greater sense of self-understanding. With this introspection comes the realization that the very liminality which threatens his existence as friend is the symbolic space that defines him.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CATULLAN INVECTIVE

"Obscenity, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder" (Winter, 1973:263).

Catullus' poems attacking individuals, both well-known and obscure, are to a large extent symptomatic of his social vulnerability, both in his private dealings with acquaintances and in his contact with Roman politics. His invective is directed at a variety of victims for different reasons: rivals in love, contemporary politicians, and other individuals who have slighted him in some way or allowed him the sheer joy of mocking them because of their despicable behaviour. The only datable poems in the collection fall in the period 56-54 BCE (Skinner, 2003: xxi), a significant time in Roman history and one that is well documented. The First Triumvirate ruled Rome, Caesar invaded Britain and the Republic had started to decline. There is no euphemism in Catullus' depiction of the insatiable greed of Caesar and Pompey, as well as that of their underlings, comrades and sexual partners, all of whom benefit from their campaigns to the detriment of the rest (Konstan, 2007: 74-75). But, as we have seen in Catullus' poems addressed to lovers and friends, the public world of Rome is always lurking on the borders of his private world. What he experiences in that world is symptomatic of the events occurring in the socio-political world of late Republican Rome. In this chapter I will be looking at Catullan invective which arises from a personal experience of being disregarded, but which, nonetheless, may often be related to public events. These poems reveal yet another facet of the speaking subject's liminality: as he lashes out at others he betrays his own uncertain position.

What constitutes Catullan invective? On the one hand Catullus inherited a Greek tradition of "blame poetry" (*psogos*) which came to be known as the genre iambic poetry (*iambos)*, most likely founded by the Alexandrian poet Archilochus (Wray, 2001:168; Tatum, 2007:338). Bowie (2001:26) identifies the following features of iambic poetry (not necessarily all appearing in a single poem): "narrative; speech embedded in narrative; *psogos* (vituperation); self-defence that naturally led to criticism of others; just occasionally reflection or exhortation" and animal fables (common in Archilochus' epodes, though less so in his other *iamboi*). Of these features vituperation was the indispensable one (Bowie, 2001:26). In three poems Catullus refers to his angry writings as iambics (poems 36.5, 40.2 and 54.6). Yet he also refers to them as hendecasyllables (poems 12.10 and 42.1). This makes Catullan invective more difficult to pinpoint.[1] Newman (1990:72) refers to Catullus as a "iambographer" who refined the Roman genre of satire by means of Alexandrian stylistics.

[1] As Skinner (1991:2) notes, Catullus is a special case when it comes to his insults. I will elaborate on this point below.

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"The Romans did not need to borrow a sense of humour": in essence Catullus' poems remain true to the very Romanness of satire while adopting the polish of the Alexandrians (Newman, 1990:72). Genre therefore becomes a very flexible concept in Catullus and he uses a variety of metres for his invective poems (Heyworth, 2001:128, 130). Moreover, an "iambic spirit", what Newman (1990:72) would call "the intrusion of the satirical", appears throughout the Catullan corpus, not only in invective poems and not only in the iambic meter (Heyworth, 2001:139).[2]

The other factor which shaped Catullan invective was the intense scrutiny of others inherent in Roman culture. The Romans were naturally a hypercritical people who strongly believed in the preservation of tradition and adherence to the established social order; consequently "everything in Roman society was subject to intense and sceptical scrutiny" (Tatum, 2007:334). Within this culture of "praise and blame" invective naturally flourished with negative examples often fulfilling a didactic function (Tatum, 2007:334-335). Obscenity flourished too (cf. Newman, 1990:73). Accusations of personal immorality – often sexually charged or highly obscene – were part and parcel of political contests (Tatum, 2007:335). This was representative of the integral function of obscenity in Roman culture in general (Fitzgerald, 1995:61).[3] Not that invective was necessarily obscene, but in a society where sexual dominance was seen as a sign of masculinity and power and submission as effeminate and weak, these sexual categories were never far from the socio-political idiom (Wiseman, 1985:10; Tatum, 2007:334).[4] The invective speaker has a naturally superior, masculine pose and his aim is to humiliate and ultimately to dominate his victim (Nappa, 2001:41). This "Priapic pose" (Richlin, 1983:145) is epitomized in the folkloric garden god Priapus who punished thieves by raping them (Skinner, 1991:2; Nappa, 2001:41). In its most formalized version, the real-life equivalent to Priapus' vulgarity (Skinner, 1991:3), Roman invective takes the form of "courtroom character assassination" of which Cicero was the indisputable master (Richlin, 1983:96ff.). In its crudest form this culturally embedded naming and shaming finds expression in political lampoons where an unpopular politician is verbally abused at a public appearance (Richlin, 1983:86). As a literary endeavour – of

[2] Both Newman and Heyworth cite poem 64 as an example of this invective interweaving; Newman (1990:73) for Catullus' attack on contemporary Roman morality at the end of the poem, and Heyworth (2001:139) for Ariadne's invective against Theseus. I would add poem 11, arguably the most defiant poem in the entire corpus when it comes to generic classification. Lesbia is portrayed as a brutal sexual aggressor, yet the sensitive final strophe reminds one of love poetry.
[3] One needs only to think of the ritualistic display of *phalli* for fertility or apotropaic purposes, the Fescennine verses sung at weddings and the obscene mocking of the victor at triumphal processions (Fitzgerald, 1995:61).
[4] *Irrumare*, for example, has the figurative meaning of "to get the better of someone" (Wiseman, 1985:11). When Catullus refers to Memmius as an *irrumator praetor* (10.12-13) he is not talking about the man's sexual habits but about his exploitation of his staff. Sexual dominance and submission may be indicative of all kinds of moral weaknesses (Nappa, 2001:42).

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which epigrammatic poetry is the most prevalent form – invective becomes an attack by the poet on a normally unidentified individual, aimed at a general readership or audience (Richlin, 1983:105). In Catullus the target often becomes identifiable, either by means of cross-references to other poems in the collection, or through a clever pun.[5] In this respect I would argue that Catullus' personal invectives, although they have a universal appeal and applicability, reveal something particular about the target and, in turn, about the speaking subject. The experience of the threshold between belonging and not belonging is what these poems reveal; something not found in the invectives of Horace or Martial.[6] As Lateiner (1977:25) argues, invective poetry has a therapeutic function for the poet: it serves as a means of release for intense feelings of distaste.

There are many themes in Catullan invective, ranging from light-hearted mockery to highly obscene insults. These include theft (12, 25, 33), rusticity (37, 39, 41, 43, 57, 59, 86), social and literary clumsiness (22, 36, 44, 84, 95, 105), self-importance (22, 49), physical repulsion (69, 71, 97, 98), false friendship (30, 73, 77, 91, 116), political exploitation and imperial gluttony (28, 29, 47, 114, 115) (Tatum, 2007:337). Many of these poems have already been discussed in the chapters dealing with urbanity and betrayal in friendship (chapters 2 and 4). The largest segment of Catullan invective by far, however, concerns sexual transgressions such as playing the female role during physical intimacy, incest and adultery (Tatum, 2007:337). Moreover, many of the themes mentioned above are also linked with sexual depravity or failure (e.g., poems 25, 41, 105, 69, 71, 91, 114, 115). Sexual material, often of the obscene kind, is a fundamental component of Catullus' work (Lateiner, 1977:27; Arkins, 1982:1; Johnson, 1982:108; Richlin, 1983:144). As mentioned above obscenity is not unique to Catullus; it is deeply embedded in Roman cultural practices such as rituals, weddings and victory ceremonies, and in the satiric genre. But, although humour is an essential element in most of these traditions, in the Catullan collection obscene invectives are not always humorous (Fitzgerald, 1995:61). In fact, they often mask a deep-seated sense of vulnerability on the part of the speaker (Skinner, 1991:6): his realization of his own liminal position.

Since the invective poems discussed in this chapter all have a personal slant to a greater or lesser extent, my focus will be on poems aimed at rivals in love (poems 15, 21, 23, 40, 69,

[5] In his political invectives he names the targets outright in most cases (see poems 28, 29, 47, 49, 52, 57, 93 and 113).

[6] I do not argue against Tatum's (2007:338) statement that Catullan invective "comes refracted…by the patterns of invective characteristic of late Republican public discourse…[and] by the literary conventions and traditions of Greek iambic poetry". However, I suggest that Catullus' invective poems, where the attack seems to come from a personal injury – which is mosty the case – do shed light on the speaking subject's liminal identity.

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71, and 91), people in power who have either exploited Catullus' himself or someone close to him (poems 28 and 47) as well as individuals who have done him some wrong (16, 25 and 116). With the exception of poem 40, and to some extent poem 116, all of the poems have either a sexual theme, or a strong sexual element.[7] This was the Roman way of hurling insults.[8]

5.1 FURIUS AND AURELIUS

My discussion will start with the "Furius and Aurelius cycle", a group of invective poems related by means of recurring themes and/or characters.[9] At the centre of the polemic is Juventius, the boy Catullus openly courts but who rebuffs him.[10] Furius and Aurelius both rival Catullus for Juventius' affections and bring upon themselves the full force of his vituperation (poems 15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26 as well as 81 to some extent).[11] We met these two characters in poem 11 where they were asked to deliver Catullus' parting words to Lesbia (chapter 3, p.150ff.). In my discussion of poem 11, I argued that, despite the speaker's seemingly positive address of these two "comrades" (*comites*), they are after all not the greatest of friends.[12] As the poems below will show, they are at the receiving end of some of Catullus' fiercest invective. Here three poems dealing with Furius and Aurelius as erotic rivals will be discussed with due reference to other poems within the cycle. These are poems 15, 21 and 23. The attack in the notorious poem 16 arises from literary criticism rather than erotic rivalry, but it is the most sexually aggressive of all the invectives and will conclude my discussion of the cycle.

c.15

Commendo tibi me ac meos amores,
Aureli. veniam peto pudenter,
ut, si quicquam animo tuo cupisti,
quod castum expeteres et integellum,
conserves puerum mihi pudice, 5
non dico a populo – nihil veremur
istos, qui in platea modo huc modo illuc
in re praetereunt sua occupati –
verum a te metuo tuoque pene
infesto pueris bonis malisque. 10
quem tu qua lubet, ut lubet, moveto

[7] Some scholars do detect a hidden sexual motif in poem 40. I disagree. (See below.)
[8] See Richlin (1983:81ff.) for the prevalence of sexually aggressive humour in Roman society.
[9] Skinner (1981:43) refers to this as the second major cycle of the collection, after the Lesbia cycle.
[10] See poems 48, 81 and 99 discussed in chapter 3 under "Juventius".
[11] Although neither Juventius nor the rival is named in every poem verbal echoes allow us to make logical connections between poems and so identify a plausible cycle where these three characters feature in turn (cf. Richardson, 1963:93).
[12] Skinner (1981:45) describes them as Catullus' "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern", "Siamese twins of depravity".

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quantum vis, ubi erit foris paratum;
hunc unum excipio, ut puto, pudenter.
quod si te mala mens furorque vecors
in tantam impulerit, sceleste, culpam, 15
ut nostrum insidiis caput lacessas,
a tum te miserum malique fati!
quem attractis pedibus patente porta
percurrent raphanique mugilesque.

Poem 15 is framed as an "erotic triangle" between the Catullan speaker, the addressee Aurelius, and the object desired by both: Juventius (Hurley, 2004:49).[13] The use of the first and second person suggests a dialogue. "I entrust" (*commendo*) is suggestive of the Roman institution of *commendatio* where a person is placed in another's care for protection (Macleod, 1973b:298; Fitzgerald, 1995:46). The speaker, very politely, is asking Aurelius "modestly" (*prudenter*, 2) to preserve the boy "with modesty" (*pudice*, 5). In typical Catullan fashion he starts with a fairly neutral statement in order to accentuate the sudden focus, in the middle of the poem, on the addressee as villain. Having created the impression that he trusts not only Aurelius but also his judgment when it comes to someone who is "pure" (*castum*, 4) and "untainted" (*integellum*, 4), the speaker does a complete about-face: in truth, it is Aurelius himself that he is fearful of (*verum a te metuo*, 9). This is highly ironic: is he placing Juventius in the care of the very person he most distrusts? In this way Aurelius is put in stark contrast with the masses (*populo*, 6) who would be expected to pose the greatest danger to an "untainted" youth (cf. Fitzgerald, 1995:46). The threat to Catullus' love is not coming from the outside world where corruption is predictable; it is coming from his inner circle.[14] Having revealed the shocking truth, the speaker now turns to insult and ends off with a threat of his own. Aurelius is portrayed as a lecherous pederast, always on the hunt, who in fact shows no judgment at all when it comes to distinguishing good boys from bad ones (9-12).[15] Therefore, in the event that he should seduce Juventius, a fitting sentence awaits him in the form of the standard punishment for adulterers: rhaphanidosis (Richardson, 1963:101). The Catullan speaker gives his own twist to the tail by adding mullets (*mugiles*) to the usual radishes (Richardson, 1963:101). Nicholson (1995:48) notes that both of these "tools of punishment" have phallic shapes. In this way the threat of rhaphanidosis foreshadows the "Priapic pose" which the Catullan speaker will take up at the

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[13] The combination of *meos amores* with *puerum* (5) makes it quite clear that this is a reference to Juventius. The same combination is found in the next poem under discussion, poem 21 (*meos amores*, 4, and *puer*, 11).
[14] This does not mean that Catullus and Aurelius are friends; only that they frequent the same social circle.
[15] "It is indeed you I fear and your penis, dangerous to good and bad boys alike. Poke it as you please, in any way you please – whenever opportunity presents itself – when you go about."

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end of poem 21.[16] Having started out in a compromised position he is now casting himself in the dominant role within the erotic triangle (Hurley, 2004:51).

The very Roman notion of modesty (*pudor*) is a key element in the poem (Hurley, 2004:50), appearing three times as an adverb (in lines 2 and 5, cited above, and in line 13: *pudenter*). Although this may seem to be irreconcilable with pederasty it was not so much the act itself as the indulgence in it which was condemned (Hurley, 2004:51). Therefore, when in poem 15 Catullus twice requests "prudently" that his beloved be treated "prudently" it is with an unmistakable "ironic bite" (Hurley, 2004:51). Adler (1981:57) argues that throughout the poem Catullus acts on the assumption that Aurelius and he speak the same language, unlike the immature Juventius (as we encounter him in poems 24, 81 and 99). In this respect Aurelius should be able to understand his appeal for "sparing" Juventius as well as the full force of his threat. The repetition of *pudenter/pudice* is an attempt to arouse in the addressee that very Roman sense of modesty (Adler, 1981:57). Were he to behave in a very un-Roman way and give vent to his irrational side (*mala mens…furor*, 14) he would receive due punishment (Hurley, 2004:51). But does the punishment fit the crime? Would Aurelius be committing adultery if he were to have a sexual relationship with Juventius? Certainly not in the real sense of the word. That a pederast's experience of being cheated on should be equated with that of a cuckolded husband would have been not only jarring to Roman ears, but probably also absurd (Hurley, 2004:52). Catullus is not only exposing his vulnerability, but he is exposing himself to ridicule.

Macleod (1973b:298) argues that the entire poem 15 is a parody on a *commendatio*.[17] It is certainly rife with irony. Looking back, the very first word of the poem is already ironic: "I entrust" (*commendo*) suggests that Juventius is somehow Catullus' to give away. This casts the speaking subject in a position of power: he is calling the shots. But in fact he is putting his entire existence in the hands of the addressee: himself (*me*) and his beloved (*meos amores*). From the outset the speaker is in a vulnerable position, which only increases as he reveals Aurelius' true nature (Hurley, 2004:49-50; cf. Fitzgerald, 1995:46).[18] Moreover, as we know from other poems in the collection (e.g., poems 24, 81 and 99), Juventius not only made his own choices when it came to lovers but he openly rejected the Catullan speaker.

[16] The next poem to be discussed, also addressed to Aurelius.

[17] In fact, Macleod (1973b passim) argues that the entire cycle is parodic. Quinn (1973:140) likewise refers to these poems as "light-hearted pasquinades".

[18] Fitzgerald, however, approaches the poem from a different angle by exploring the relationship between poet and audience. In his reading the vulnerability of the poet-speaker has to do with the anxieties of publication and with the "entrusting" of this poem to a readership. At the end of the poem, Fitzgerald argues, the tables are turned and the reader is put in the vulnerable position (Fitzgerald, 1995:47ff.). His conclusion is comparable with Hurley's (mentioned above) where the speaker assumes the position of power in the final couplet.

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Whether literal or figurative (in the sense of confiding in someone) (cf. Quinn, 1973:141; Adler, 1981:56) there is no question of Catullus "entrusting" the boy to Aurelius. The intensity of the speaker's threat suggests that the boy and the rival are already hanging out together.[19] Just as Quintius, who in poem 82 (chapter 4, p.196ff.) could not fathom Lesbia's worth in Catullus' eyes, Aurelius is a poor judge of value: he cannot even tell a decent boy from a bad one. And so there is no way the speaker can expect him to understand his request to refrain from seducing Juventius. What seemed to be a dialogue between speaker and addressee has turned out to be the speaker's reflection on the situation and, by implication, on himself: Aurelius does not speak Catullus' language at all. He has no sense of modesty (*pudica*): his lust, as the speaker himself has admitted, is insatiable. Once more the Catullan speaker is alone in his belief in the traditional Roman institutions and he realizes that his attempt at getting through to someone by an appeal to these institutions would probably fail. Catullus shows a keen awareness of Aurelius as another consciousness and anticipates his reaction. Despite the one-sidedness of the dialogue the words of the Catullan speaker are permeated with the presence of Aurelius as another possible speaker (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:209). This explains the twists and turns in Catullus' speech. At the end of the poem he reverts to the kind of language a depraved individual like Aurelius might understand and presents him with brutal sexual imagery. Catullus takes on the role of aggressor and threatens Aurelius with rhaphanidosis, a sentence suggestive of Priapic punishment. But this seemingly dominant position is no more than an empty threat. There are absolutely no grounds for a charge of adultery against Aurelius: the threat can never realise. Instead of granting him power this attempt at an intimidating pose in fact underscores the Catullan speaker's vulnerability: by casting himself in the role of a cuckolded husband he lays himself open to ridicule. Despite all the overstatement and ironies there is a marked seriousness to the poem. For a mere teasing the speaker protests too much and too often.[20] Through his dialogic self-reflection he has revealed himself to be like the Dostoevskian hero: the only one to possess "the truth", subject to ridicule by others and, as a result, in a state of profound loneliness (Bakhtin, 1984:150-151). He is on the back foot and from this liminal position he lashes out. However, all his attempts to get a grip on the situation seem to be fruitless. Of Juventius' view on the matter we know nothing but Catullus' ironic "entrusting" suggests that the boy hangs out with Aurelius of his own will. Even if Aurelius were to take the speaker's request to heart, it would not guarantee success

[19] Richardson (1963:95) argues that the Juventius love poems chronologically precede the invectives aimed at Aurelius and Furius. Althought this cannot be said with any certainty the speaker does seem to have abandoned all hope of a relationship with the boy in the invectives.
[20] Skinner (1981:23) draws a similar conclusion, arguing that although the Furius and Aurelius cycle depicts stock situations and characters the mood in the poems is "generally too caustic, the caricature of its leading figure too barbed, to think of these invectives as frivolous pasquinades". (See her similar remarks on poem 8, chapter 3, p.141ff.)

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for Catullus in his pursuit of the boy. He is rejected and finds himself on the side-lines from where he may observe and comment, but is powerless to act. His lampoon is potent but it is spoken from the periphery. At the centre it has little impact.

The speaker's appeal to Aurelius in poem 15 has clearly failed. In poem 21 the man is no longer just a potential rival for Juventius' affections but an active one (Adler, 1981:57). These two poems are natural companion pieces. Apart from having the same addressee the speaker's object of desire is again designated by the phrase *meos amores* (4) in poem 21 and the same erotic triangle is involved. But the speaker is more bold in his attack than in poem 15, as emphasized by the opening vocative.[21] This time Aurelius is not only horny in general, as in the previous poem, but Catullus can actually perceive his desire to bugger his beloved (*pedicare cupis meos amores*, 4). Therefore he must raise his game.

c.21

Aureli, pater esuritionum,
non harum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
aut sunt aut aliis erunt in annis,
pedicare cupis meos amores.
nec clam: nam simul es, iocaris una, 5
haerens ad latus omnia experiris.
frustra: nam insidias mihi instruentem
tangam te prior irrumatione.
atque id si faceres satur, tacerem;
nunc ipsum id doleo, quod esurire 10
a te mi puer et sitire discet.
quare desine, dum licet pudico,
ne finem facias, sed irrumatus.

The first line introduces the theme of extreme need, which will also feature in the invectives against Furius, although in a different guise (see below). Aurelius is addressed as "father of famines" (*pater esuritionum*), a mock honorific title (Quinn, 1973:154; Konstan, 1979:214). The next two lines continue in this vein by elaborating on his status. Not only is Aurelius called "father" of starvation, but there is no-one in his league in this regard.[22] Richardson (1963:103) and Macleod (1973b:299) both argue that he is cast as the stock parasite from Roman commedy. In this regard the shock in the poem comes precisely from the fact that a parasite is now Catullus' rival: this is not only a transgression of traditional class-distinctions,

[21] In poem 15 the name of the addressee was delayed until the second line, lending a politeness to the opening statement.
[22] A similarly mocking introduction is used in poem 49.2-3, addressed to Cicero. In poem 24.2-3 (quoted below, footnote 29) this traditionally negative idiom is rendered positive in the address to Juventius to warn him off the unworthy Furius (Newman, 1990:177).

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but it also casts Aurelius as a figure of ridicule (Macleod, 1973b:299).[23] But there is a more figurative meaning of *esuritio* at play as well: that of an insatiable sexual hunger (Konstan, 1979:214; Peek, 2002:91ff.). We have already seen in poem 15 that Aurelius is sexually hyperactive with good and bad boys alike. But this does not make him hyper-masculine. For in the eyes of the male élite an excessive sexual appetite and the inability to control sexual urges are signs of effeminacy (Edwards, 1993:81ff.; Williams, 1999:153). By assigning to him the title of "father of famines" the Catullan speaker reveals the fact that Aurelius is dominated by his own desires; this emasculates him (Peek, 2002:95). Whereas poem 15 started in the guise of a polite request, the Catullan speaker is immediately on the attack in poem 21: "Catullus, who can be indirect when he chooses, knows when directness is best" (Ferguson, 1985:65). This is his first step in raising his game.

The speaker is fully aware of what is going on. Ferguson (1985:65) argues that, unlike the lethargic husband in poem 17 who let his wife fool around as she pleased, Catullus knows how to watch over his boyfriend: at the end of poem 15 he even posed as the wronged husband.[24] It appears as if some time has passed since that poem. Aurelius' threat in poem 21 is more immanent: he is openly (*clam*, 5) hanging around with the speaker's beloved (*simul es*, 5), sticking to his side (*haerens ad latus*, 6) and trying every possible trick (*omnia experiris*, 6) to seduce him. Aurelius' scheming seems to be building up to success and so the Catullan speaker "intercepts" him with the sudden exclamation of *frustra* (7) ("in vain!") (Syndikus, 1984:153). Before he is able to touch the boy Catullus will "touch" him through irrumation: *tangam te prior irrumatione* (8). Peek (2002:96) notes that the poem would have been a very straightforward threat had it ended here. But lines 9-11 introduce a perplexing twist: "Were you to do this (i.e. pedicate my beloved) fully fed, I should keep quiet. What grieves me now is that my boy will learn from you to suffer hunger and thirst." Syndikus (1984:154) argues that Catullus is taking up the position of a haughty aristocrat: Aurelius, being devastatingly poor, is now excluded from the circle Juventius frequents and his attempts at seducing the boy are therefore highly presumptuous. In this way Catullan invective functions as a means of excluding those who do not belong to his circle.[25] But is this really all? Konstan (1979:215) and Peek (2002:97-98) both refer to the metaphorical possibilities of *satur* as indicative of emotional contentment: fulfilment in terms of a healthy desire. This is what Aurelius lacks. Catullus' anxiety in the poem is therefore not so much about Juventius' empty belly as about his corruption by Aurelius: he may learn from the older

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[23] Being a sign of extreme poverty, Aurelius' starvation points to a grading down in the Roman class system (Syndikus, 1984:153).

[24] If the poems in the collection were indeed arranged by the author himself poem 21 follows immediately upon poem 17 (poems 18-20 having been inserted into the MSS and then later rejected) (cf. Thomson, 1997: 112, App.Crit.).

[25] This point will be picked up again in the discussion of poems 69 and 71 below.

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man to be equally insatiable when it comes to physical desires (Konstan, 1979:216; Fitzgerald, 1995:66). It is corruption of the mind that Catullus fears. Konstan (1979:216) argues that a purely physical, insatiable passion on the part of Aurelius, as signified by the words for "desire", "hunger" and "thirst" (*cupis*, 4; *esuritionum/esurire*, 1, 10; *sitire*, 11), is contrasted with the "real love" Catullus feels for Juventius, denoted by *amores* (4).[26] This is what makes Catullus the one who is different.

Quinn (1973:155) notes that *urbanitas* requires of the speaker to appear disinterested in lines 9-11. However, he has already described Aurelius' flirtation with the boy as a plot against himself (*nam insidias mihi instruentem*, 7). Moreover, the condition under which Catullus claims he would keep quiet is unreal (as indicated by the imperfect subjunctive *faceres*, 9). The consequences, on the other hand, are very real: *nunc* coupled with the future indicative *discet* not only point to a guaranteed outcome, but also suggest that the deed is all but done. And so the speaker reaffirms his threat in the final word of the poem: *irrumatus*. Whereas he tried to appeal to his rival's supposed understanding of his feelings for the boy in poem 15, the attack in poem 21 is direct (Adler, 1981:58). Yet there is a final appeal to modesty (*pudico*, 12); this time to Aurelius' own public image. If he would lay off his pursuit of the boy, he could walk away with decency. But we know from the poem itself that Aurelius is not bothered with appearances: his flirtation with the boy has been out in the open from the start (*nec clam*, 5). Moreover, Catullus has already suggested in poem 15 that Aurelius and he do not speak the same language. Through the dialogic engagement between poems 15 and 21 it is made very clear that any appeal to Aurelius' sense of decency will be futile.

In poem 21 the punishment for Aurelius' crimes has intensified along with the increasing nature of the threat: instead of the public raphanidosis from poem 15, where the speaker's Priapic pose is only suggested, the culprit is now threatened with oral rape. In this respect Catullus successfully employs the ambiguous meaning of *esuritio*. The act of *irrumatio* serves as a fitting answer both to Aurelius' hunger and to his sexual gluttony. Although he will get "stuffed" his stomach will remain empty and his sexual appetite will be equally unfulfilled: he will be in the position of the pathic recipient (Peek, 2002:99). Moreover, the introductory lines have explicitly stated his sexual excesses. Therefore Aurelius will go hungry, sexually frustrated and emasculated: the insult is threefold (Peek, 2002:99). But has Aurelius indeed been put in his place? *Irrumatio* was a standard metaphor for silencing someone (Fitzgerald, 1995:65). The last word of the poem therefore threatens to shut Aurelius up, once and for all, after he has already been humiliated. The speaker is leaving

[26] This opposition was seen throughout the Lesbia poems (e.g. 72, 75, 87 and 109).

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no space for protestations on Aurelius' part.[27] Is Catullus getting the last laugh? With the perplexing phrase *id si faceres satur* the speaker has as good as admitted that the battle is lost. The Priapic pose at the end the poem therefore illustrates that the "social virility" of the vituperative speaker is in conflict with the "emotional vulnerability of the *amator*" (Skinner, 1991:6). Through clever poetics Catullus was seen to exclude Aurelius from an élite group by hammering on his state of starvation. However, as we have seen throughout the collection, Catullus is in no position to speak as a haughty aristocrat. His own position as a *domi nobilis* is precarious. Moreover, far from being excluded Aurelius is very close to Juventius, laughing with him and sticking to his side. The words *simul, una* and *haerens* (5-6) require symbolic value as they underscore Juventius and Aurelius' shared sense of belonging, being in their own private space. This is put in contrast with Catullus' not-belonging, being outside of this space. He may be putting Aurelius in his place both socially and verbally, but he is still without Juventius. The fact that Aurelius is able to try his luck with the boy at every given opportunity and constantly clinging to his side makes it quite clear that Juventius is not spending any time with Catullus anymore. He is in the position of an outside observer, powerless to do anything about what he sees and so the real victim in the poem, against whom Aurelius is plotting, turns out to be not the beloved but the speaker (underscored by *mihi* in line 7). The boy is quite clearly acting of his own free will and his "corruption" is not harmful from his own perspective. Once more alone in his conviction of "the truth", and different from "the rest" in his manner of loving, the Catullan speaker takes up a Priapic pose and threatens Aurelius with the kind of punishment a sexual addict might grasp. However, the constrast between the Priapic speaker and the vulnerable lover betrays the ambiguity characteristic of the liminal persona.[28] This vulnerability is underscored by the pathetic *mi puer* in line 11. Catullus has been displaced from Juventius' affections, pushed to the boundaries of the boy's world from where he may only observe. In shutting up Aurelius at the end of the poem the poet may be getting the last laugh, but the lover, rejected and isolated, is not. Between these two positions we find "Catullus", neither here nor there, betwixt and between.

In the next poem to be discussed the vulnerability of the Catullan speaker is very well disguised; in fact, it is only revealed through the poem's dialogic engagement with a companion piece. Although he is not mentioned explicitly in poem 23, Juventius seems to be the cause for the invective once more. This time the poem is aimed at Aurelius' "partner

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[27] Fitzgerald (1995:66) states that "*irrumatio* becomes a figure for the poet's power to assign his own meanings to those who, perforce, are silent while he speaks."

[28] In chapter 1 we defined the liminal persona as "necessarily ambiguous" in nature (cf. Turner, 1969:95).

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in crime" Furius. Again it turns out that Juventius has chosen someone over Catullus, this time a proper pauper it seems.

c.23
Furi, cui neque servus est neque arca
nec cimex neque araneus neque ignis,
verum est et pater et noverca, quorum
dentes vel silicem comesse possunt,
est pulcre tibi cum tuo parente 5
et cum coniuge lignea parentis.
nec mirum: bene nam valetis omnes,
pulcre concoquitis, nihil timetis,
non incendia, non graves ruinas,
non facta impia, non dolos veneni, 10
non casus alios periculorum.
atque corpora sicciora cornu
aut siquid magis aridum est habetis
sole et frigore et esuritione.
quare non tibi sit bene ac beate? 15
a te sudor abest, abest saliva,
mucusque et mala pituita nasi.
hanc ad munditiem adde mundiorem,
quod culus tibi purior salillo est,
nec toto decies cacas in anno; 20
atque id durius est faba et lupillis.
quod tu si manibus teras fricesque,
non umquam digitum inquinare posses
haec tu commoda tam beata, Furi,
noli spernere nec putare parvi, 25
et sestertia quae soles precari
centum desine, nam sat es beatus.

In poem 24, addressed to Juventius, Catullus reprimands the boy for being in love with someone "for whom there is neither a slave nor a moneybox" (*cui neque servus est neque arca*, 5), a phrase twice repeated in that poem.[29] Poem 23 opens with "Furius, (you) for whom there is neither a slave nor a moneybox" (*Furi, cui neque servus est neque arca*) and goes on to describe Furius' extreme poverty. The link is obvious. What is poem 23 about? The speaker takes his time in listing all of Furius' "blessings" to make his point only in the

[29] c. 24
O qui flosculus es Iuventiorum,
non horum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
aut posthac aliis erunt in annis,
mallem divitias Midae dedisses
isti, cui neque servus est neque arca, 5
quam sic te sineres ab illo amari.
'quid? non est homo bellus?' inquies. est:
sed bello huic neque servus est neque arca.
hoc tu quam lubet abice elevaque:
nec servum tamen ille habet neque arcam.

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last two lines of the poem: “Stop begging, as you do, for 100 000 sesterces for you are fortunate enough as it is” (26-27). Furius seems to have asked Catullus for a loan of this amount and the latter goes to great lengths to explain why there is no need to grant this. The opening phrase *neque servus est neque arca* with its threefold repetition in poem 24 suggests that these were the words used by Furius himself to describe his dire financial straits (Ferguson, 1985:73; Thomson, 1997:263; Hawkins, 2011:258, et al.). This adds an extra sting to Catullus’ invective and sets the tone for the final refusal (cf. Fordyce, 1961:152). What Furius does not have (1-2) is quickly contrasted with what he does have. The list of Furius’ blessings is a long one (20 lines).[30] In sum they all boil down to the absence of food and property because of an extreme lack of funds. On the list his father and “woody” stepmother also feature. Furius is said to have a lovely life with them (*est pulcre tibi cum tuo parente / et cum coniuge lignea parentis*, 5-6). The implication is that they are all in the same state of extreme poverty. The “upside” of this is that they enjoy very good health. Having nothing, they have nothing to fear – neither everyday disasters nor threats to their own person (8-11) – and so they have excellent digestion (*pulcre concoquitis*, 8). Moreover, they are totally dried out from exposure and hunger (12-14).[31] Now Catullus focuses on Furius alone and takes the theme of dryness to the extreme: he is free from any kinds of body fluids (16-17) and to top it off his arse is cleaner than a salt-cellar because he does not even shit ten times per year (19-20). When he does defecate the product is harder than stones or beans and would not even dirty your hands if you were to rub it (21-23): this must be the epitome of being blessed. What could be the point of this heap of brutal insults focused on Furius’ dryness (Wray, 2001:74)? The answer is only given in the final lines of the poem where the theme of Furius’ “good life” from the opening lines is picked up again. He is truly blessed and Catullus therefore does not see the need to lend him money. Furius’ dryness has therefore been both metaphor and metonym for his financial fix (Wray, 2001:74) and served as an irresistible build-up to the speaker’s sarcastic refusal of aid and the crux of the poem: “Count your many blessings, Furius, for you are blessed indeed, and cease your begging; you will not get a loan from me.”[32] And so Furius’ request, whether real or not, gave Catullus the opportunity to draw up “a comical list of problems that Furius does not

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[30] For a good explanation of the meaning of the different entries see Richlin (1988:358ff.).

[31] Dryness was a sign of good health (Fordyce, 1961:154; Kroll, 1968:44) but of course Catullus’ use of the metaphor here is highly sarcastic. Furius and his family are dry because they do not own a property that would protect them from the elements and they have nothing to eat.
The reference to hunger (*esuritio*) has led many scholars to link poems 21 and 23 but, as Peek (2002:91) notes, the Catullan speaker vilifies his two rivals in different ways.

[32] Thomson (1997:264) notes that the verb *deprecari* (to pray or beg) is “studiously contemptuous”.

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have" (Garrison, 1989:107). By stating his poverty he has allowed the Catullan speaker to reveal his social inferiority.[33] He has been put in his place properly.

There is more to poem 23 than the poverty of the addressee and his foolhardy request for a loan. Hunger, as in poem 21 (*esuritio*) and elsewhere, represents that which the Catullan speaker despises in others (Richlin, 1988:359; Marsilio & Podlesney, 2006:171).[34] In poem 23 hunger is combined with excretion to produce the most repulsive picture possible of Furius and his family. Ingestion and excretion become representative of the character: you are what you eat (and defecate). By ingesting "anti-foods" – they are able to eat stones (*dentes vel silicem comesse possunt*, 4) – these perverse characters also "excrete perversely" (Richlin, 1988:359): beans and stones. Moreover, the Catullan speaker has us imagining Furius touching his own excrement and rubbing it between his fingers. By drawing the reader into this detailed description of Furius' digestive system and toilet habits Catullus' attack gains force (Richlin, 1988:359).[35] Furius is held up to complete ridicule. But this is not the end.

Only when one has read poem 24 does Catullus' real motivation for denying Furius the loan become clear. If Juventius is a member of the social élite – being the "darling flower of the Juventii, not only of the present lot but of all there were before and all there will be in other years to come" (24.1-3) – and Furius is indeed the penniless pauper he is made out to be in both poems 23 and 24, they are from different social classes and the only way in which Furius will have a chance with the boy would be by improving his social status through a substantial financial boost (O'Bryhim, 2007:134-135).[36] By denying him a loan the speaker hopes to doom the relationship before it can go any further (O'Bryhim, 2007:135).[37]

We should of course not be taking Furius' supposed poverty too seriously (Marsilio & Podlesney, 2006:171 n.12; O'Bryhim, 2007:135).[38] Catullus seems to be casting him in the role of the poor *adulescens* from Roman comedy who, having no money and no rich family

[33] Marsilio & Podlesney (2006: 171ff.) argue that Furius' dryness is symbolic of his literary deficiencies. Their whole argument is based on the assumption that Furius is the poet Furius Bibaculus, an identification which has not been proved beyond a doubt and one for which I find the evidence quite slim.
[34] Piso's poor leadership causes hunger for Catullus' friends Veranius and Fabullus (*famem*, 28.5) and his two "left-hand men" are the itch and hunger of the world (*scabies famesque mundi*, 47.2); Gellius is thin from his indulgence in incest (89.1, 4, 6).
[35] Lateiner (1977:19) states that Catullus is making sure his readers would squirm.
[36] As argued in chapter 3, it is not possible to identify Juventius with any certainty, but poem 81 does suggest that he was from Rome where there was a distinguished family by this name (cf. Thomson, 1997:264).
[37] 100 000 sesterces, as more or less the annual salary of a man in the middle-income section, would give him the necessary standing to pursue Juventius (Garrison, 1989:108; cf. O'Bryhim, 2007:135).
[38] Catullus plays on this again in poem 26 where the theme is Furius' mortgage on his small country house.

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or clever slave to help him obtain the necessary funds to pursue his beloved, turns to a moneylender as a last resort (O'Bryhim, 2007:142).[39] By rejecting his role as moneylender, the speaker deprives Furius of his last resource and so leads the reader to think that the relationship will end just there (O'Bryhim, 2007:142-143). Of course we know that this is not the end of the affair and that Catullus is powerless to stop it (poem 24). Having gone to great lengths to describe Furius' inferiority in repulsive terms, the speaker has not been able to repulse Juventius enough. And so in poem 24 he reminds the boy of Furius' lowliness by recalling his state of having "neither slave nor moneybox". Juventius retorts with the question "But isn't he a nice man?" (*non est homo bellus?* 7), using a favourite neoteric catchword which denotes the charm Catullus so highly prizes. This is a stab at the jealous speaker who has been rejected by the boy. Having been kicked in the gut, Catullus has to admit that the man is indeed *bellus* (8). But, as poems 22 and 81 show, "what is *bellus* to the eye is not [necessarily] so in substance" (Skinner, 2003:102).[40] And so, although he yields to *bellus* he hopes to underscore its ambiguity by reiterating Furius' inferiority, in the same line, with the now recognisable refrain. Finally, after telling Juventius to make with the information what he wills, he states for a last time that Furius "has neither slave nor moneybox".

The dialogic interaction between poems 23 and 24 is unmistakable. Although each poem forms a meaningful unit in itself, it is hardly possible to read the one without the other and the deliberate echoes suggest that the poet intended them to be read this way too. Alone poem 23 ends on a powerful note. Catullus starts his poem by addressing Furius and quoting the man's own summary of his financial predicament. The poem is styled as a dialogue, but a detailed explanation of the answer precedes Furius' request and the speaker's blunt denial. In this way Catullus controls the dialogue in the same way that he controls Furius' potential escape from this current financial situation. He portrays Furius and his family as outsiders to the world of equestrian and upperclass Romans. They occupy a space outside the normal, an anti-space where the extremes of hunger, cold and heat exposure reign. This space is not only hostile, but it becomes likewise a symbol of backwardness as the basic bodily functions of Furius and his clan are described in detail. Moreover, they do not even own the most elementary feature of human cultivation: a dwelling. After the revolting portrayal of Furius and his family and the biting response to his request for a loan it is hard to imagine any kind of comeback from him. Catullus has

[39] Another interpretation maintains that poem 23 is a parody on a typically Stoic sermon (Németh, 1971 (quoted in Hawkins, 2011:256); Garrison, 1989:107). Whichever may be correct, the comic/parodic tone of the poem is clear.

[40] Poem 22 deals with Suffenus' outward charm and lack thereof when writing (chapter 2, p.50ff.). Poem 81 (chapter 3, p.168ff.) is addressed to Juventius and probably alludes to Furius in the phrase *bellus homo* (2).

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outplayed him very successfully. However, when the poem is read in light of poem 24 a vulnerability behind the speaker's dominating façade shines through. He is powerless to stop Furius from pursuing Juventius and, as the desperately repetitive reminder in poem 24 makes clear, his words have no effect on the boy either. We have already seen the latter to be a poor judge of character (poem 81). Despite his attempt to portray Furius as the boy's social inferior, an outsider to Roman élite culture, Juventius is letting the penniless man court him (poem 24.6). To make matters worse, he shows a defiant indifference to Furius' inferiority, answering Catullus' insults with the claim that Furius is a "charming man". He is hitting Catullus where it hurts most: right in the heart of his neoteric sensibilities. Moreover, he seems to respond to Catullus' request elsewhere that he should find a "charming man" to love in the place of the backward lover he had at that stage (poem 81.2).[41] In that poem the real theme turned out to be Catullus' hurt at being rejected by Juventius. What poems 23, 24 and 81 together reveal are the conflicts inherent in the lyric subject struggling to negotiate his own identity in the complex world of his poems which is never too far from the complex world of Roman cultural politics; a world where appearances, very often, are deceiving. In poem 23 the Catullan speaker goes to great lengths to portray Furius as an outsider, but poem 24 reveals him to be the one on the outside instead. The identity which is emerges from this dialogic engagement is one that, despite his keen perception of the centre, nevertheless hovers on the periphery even when he is at his most outspoken.

The theme in poem 16 is not rivalry in love, but the dialogic engagement between this poem and other Furius/Aurelius poems is unmistakable. Although partners in crime in poem 11 and both Catullus' competitors for Juventius' affection, we have seen that Furius and Aurelius are not Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Catullus gets at them in different ways: the one for his excessive, unmanly lust (Aurelius) and the other for his inferior status (Furius). In arguably the most powerful of all Catullus' invectives he attacks them together for a shared crime, but he still distinguishes between their respective depravities. In poem 16 they are critics of Catullan poetry; he will meet them in battle with the full force of his poetics.

c.16
Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo,
Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi,
qui me ex versiculis meis putastis,
quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum.
nam castum esse decet pium poetam 5
ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est;
qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem,
si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici,
et quod pruriat incitare possunt,
non dico pueris, sed his pilosis 10

[41] See the discussion of poem 81 in chapter 3 (p.168ff.).

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qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos.
vos, quod milia multa basiorum
legistis, male me marem putatis?
pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo.

Nappa (2001:46) rightly states that poem 16 is one of the most difficult poems in the Catullan collection. Batstone (1993:154) calls it a riddle which continually shifts between a poetic reality and a literal reality. This would explain the extent of recent scholarship on the poem and the vast difference of opinion between scholars.[42] However, until fairly recently the obscenities in the first and final lines were an embarrassment to scholars and translators alike, who either left the entire poem out, mutilated it beyond intelligibility, or offered such a euphemistic rendering that it was hardly recognisable as Catullus' original. "The history of the poem has been, for the most part, the history of two of its fourteen lines" (Winter, 1973:259).[43] In the last fifty odd years poem 16 has been appreciated as a declaration of poetic ideals and/or a take on the Roman conception of manhood. But, as Nappa (2001:47) notes, the poem comments on these aspects especially in connection with the Catullan persona. Throughout the Catullan corpus the speaker is fashioning his own self-image through his display of urbanity, learnedness and exclusivity but also, especially, through his moments of vulnerability: when he is formulating his unique conception of *amicitia*, put on the spot, rejected in love or misunderstood as speaking subject (Feldherr, 2007:93-95). All this adds to the utter credibility of the Catullan persona (Gaisser, 2009:46). This is the Catullus we can know and who can arouse diverse emotions in his readers. That there is necessarily distinction between persona and poet is one of the key messages of poem 16, but at the end of it the reader is left with an ambivalent speaker who appears to be not only "neither here nor there" in the social setting of the poem, but also inside and outside of the poem itself at the same time.

In the introduction to this chapter I mentioned that Roman society was one where the individual was under constant scrutiny from his peers. This was particularly the case when it came to masculinity.[44] Manhood in ancient Rome was a state achieved through performance and could therefore be lost again just as easily (Manwell, 2007:114). This performance entailed a display of hardness (denoted by the adjective *durus*), morally as well

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[42] Kinsey, 1966; Rankin, 1970; Sandy, 1971a; Macleod, 1973b:300ff.; Winter, 1973; Buchheit, 1976; Skinner, 1993:64ff.; Manwell, 2007:111ff.; Uden, 2007; Fontaine, 2008; et al.

[43] Winter's article offers a good summary (mostly twentieth century) of the poem's English history in this regard.

[44] Edwards (1993:63ff.) refers to minute details which were observed and could be used against an individual in a charge of "unmanliness" (*mollitia*). These include scratching the head with one finger only, wearing exotic clothes and/or fabrics and perfume, walking in an affected way, etc..

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as physically, by maintaining a stoic exterior and being the active (penetrating) partner in all sexual encounters (Manwell, 2007:114). At the opposite end of the scale stood *mollitia* (softness), a quality attributed to women and therefore a sign of unmanliness (Edwards, 1993:63). An accusation of *mollitia* often implies that the accused is behaving like a *cinaedus*, a gender deviant, who may submit to penetration during sexual acts (Manwell, 2007:114).[45] This is apparently the charge laid against Catullus in poem 16 and for which he needs to adopt the hyper-masculine pose, reminiscent of Priapus, which opens the poem.

Poem 16 essentially has two aims: to refute the charge of effeminacy, and to make a clear distinction between the poet and his poetry. The speaker, directly addressing his two accusers Aurelius and Furius, threatens them with anal and oral rape (*pedicabo…irrumabo*, 1) and labels them as a faggot (*pathice*) and a queer (*cinaede*) respectively (2).[46] After this shocking opening the reader expects mention of a grievous transgression on their part. The speaker now offers an explanation for his threat: because his little verses (*versiculi*, 3) are softish (*molliculi*, 4) these two have thought of him as "not modest enough" (*parum pudicum*, 4), in other words as sexually passive (cf. Thomson, 1997:250; Gaisser, 2009:48). Furius and Aurelius use the ambiguous meaning of *molliculi* to their advantage (Gaisser, 2009:48; cf. Pedrick, 1993:186). A poem is *mollis* when it is emotional; a man is *mollis* when he is effeminate: the former is positive, the latter negative (Wiseman, 1987:223). When *molliculi* is then read with *parum pudicum* in line 4 this phrase, denoting moral disapproval, also becomes a hint at Catullus' alleged sexual passivity (Pedrick, 1993:186; Gaisser, 2009:49).[47] He responds in two ways: he will demonstrate his manliness by performing the active sexual role, as threatened in the opening lines, and he highlights the distinction between a poet and his work (Gaisser, 2009:49). This is the speaker's famous statement on the biographical fallacy: the dedicated poet needs to be chaste, his little verses need not (5-6). *Castus* in this context of course has nothing to do with moral uprightness ("chasteness"). Skinner (1993:66) argues that here it denotes the poet's ability to remain in complete control of himself while he is able to arouse his readers. Wiseman (1987:223) and Thomson (1997:250) read this as a reference to "sexually normal", i.e. not passive, behaviour, in contrast with *molliculi/parum pudicum*. I would suggest that both interpretations are at work here. Catullus is playing with words and using a vocabulary associated with traditional

[45] Edwards (1993:68) underscores the fact that a charge of *mollitia* not necessarily implied sexual passivity on the part of the accused; it could denote a whole range of effeminate acts. The main aim of such a charge was to humiliate the accused.
[46] *Cinaedus* is a difficult word to translate. Whereas *pathicus* has a straightforward meaning of a male who is anally penetrated *cinaedus* denotes a broader "gender deviance", anal penetration being merely one of the potential consequences of this syndrome (Williams, 1999:175). See Williams (1999:174ff.) for a detailed discussion of both terms.
[47] The antonym of *pudicus*, *impudicus* (immodest), often denotes a pathic (see below). *Parum pudicum* then seems to hover somewhere on the border.

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Roman values (*castum, decet* and *pium,* 5) to lend a certain seriousness to the poet's work and, by implication, himself (Gaisser, 2009:51). A *pius poeta* is true to his calling, in other words, devoted to the Muses (Thomson, 1997:250).[48] Having now established his dignity as poet, Catullus continues his defence. In fact, poems only have "spice" (*salem*) and charm (*leporem*) if they are softish and not modest enough (7-8), and able to stir the rusty loins of "hairy old men" (*pilosis*) (9-11). Krostenko (2007:225) notes that Catullus is not using the standard defences (i.e. that little verses are a mere pastime, or that only dull minds read literally), but instead maintains that unchaste verses are especially worthwhile and powerful because they can arouse even out-of-practice old men. He is turning the tables on Furius and Aurelius: have they been aroused by his poems? With the emphatic *vos* at the start of the next line the speaker once again turns directly on his two addressees and offers more detail on their mistake. They have read about his "many thousands of kisses" (*milia multa basiorum*) and now think of him as "less than a man" (*male marem*, 13). And so he repeats the opening threat, this time with more gusto. He will show them that he is a real man by means of sexual dominance (*pedicabo et irrumabo*). Furius and Aurelius have asked for it.

Although *irrumare* may be used figuratively in some poems to denote humiliation (i.e. poem 10 mentioned in the introduction to this chapter), the threat of *pedicabo et irrumabo* in poem 16 is to be taken literally (Wiseman, 1987:222). Furius and Aurelius have called Catullus' very manhood into question and more than the figurative meaning of *irrumare* was needed (Thomson, 1997:250). Coupled with *pedicare*, which is only used once in the Catullan corpus and then in the very literal sense,[49] the speaker is able to bring home the seriousness of his threat (Thomson, 1997:250). Even though the threat and the situation may be fictional the nature of the threat is very real (Nappa, 2001:47). In their pursuit of Juventius (poems 15, 21 and 24) Furius and Aurelius were portrayed as active sexual partners; now they are given the proleptic labels of *pathicus* and *cinaedus*, both referring to the passive role (Wiseman, 1987:222). Catullus' punishment of them for their accusations will turn them into *impudici* (sexual passives), just like his threat against Aurelius at the end of poem 21 (Wiseman, 1987:222). By the time the reader comes to the repeat of *irrumabo et pedicabo* in the final line the literal meaning has been more or less confirmed. The Priapic pose which was only potential in the opening line becomes an imminent threat in the final line (Selden, 1992:485).

Wiseman (1987:224) notes that the essential point in the charge of effeminacy is the innocence of kissing. Having read about kissing only and nothing more, Furius and Aurelius

[48] Sandy (1971a:55) similarly notes that the *pius poeta* is to be judged on literary merits alone.
[49] See poem 21.4.

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assume that Catullus is not man enough to do the deed. Yet the "kiss" poems are powerful enough to arouse something in an audience of experienced men, not just innocent young boys. The arousal is caused by the vast number of kisses: "many thousands". This would imply that the audience is inclined to the *impudicitia* (overindulgence) of which Catullus had been accused: by being a *pius poeta* he has successfully transferred the charge from himself to the audience (Nappa, 2001:49).[50] His "innocent" poems on kissing made his readers crave more. *Vos* in line 12 makes it quite clear that Furius and Aurelius count among the members of this audience. Although the "hairy old men" (*pilosi*) at first seem to represent an alternative readership to Furius and Aurelius, it turns out that the only difference between them and the two addressees is the fact that they actually like Catullus' kiss poems (Batstone, 1993:153).

What exactly did Furius and Aurelius read? Some scholars argue that, because of the "homosexual" references in the poem, *milia multa basiorum* must be a reference to poem 48 where the Catullan speaker states his desire to kiss Juventius continually (*si quis me sinat usque basiare, / usque ad milia basiem trecenta*, 2-3) (Sandy, 1971a:51; Thomson, 1997:249). Others make a case for poem 5, based on the many verbal echoes between poems 5 and 16, as well as the belief that Catullus arranged the poems themselves and that therefore poem 5 (and poem 7) would be in the reader's mind when he/she comes to poem 16 (Rankin, 1970:119ff.; Wiseman, 1987:224; Janan, 1994:149 n.5; Fontaine, 2008:63). Nappa (2001:50ff.), agreeing with the latter interpretation, examines the speaking subject in poems 5 and 16 respectively and finds similarities in terms of the speaker's anxiety and reaction to the outside world. In poems 5 and 7 Catullus is concerned about bystanders knowing the exact number of kisses he shares with Lesbia; in poem 16 it is precisely the amount of kisses which leads to the charges of effeminacy and *impudicitia* (Nappa, 2001:53). In retrospect poem 16 thus serves to validate Catullus' worries in the earlier two poems: not only those about ill-wishers but also those concerned with his reputation (the gossip of the older men) (Nappa, 2001:53). The older men have returned; this time not as the "all too serious old guys" (*severiores*) but as the less dignified "hairy old men" (*pilosi*). But, whereas the critics in poems 5 and 7, the old guys, "the curious ones" (*curiosi*) and even the ominous "someone" (*quis malus/mala lingua*), remained anonymous observers Furius and Aurelius are named and addressed in poem 16. They have come very close to the Catullan speaker and their criticism is very personal.

[50] As noted above, in the Roman view overindulgence was just as unmanly as sexual passivity. Catullus is playing with the many aspects of *mollitia*.

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Poem 16 does more than refute a charge of effeminacy. As seen in chapter 2 Catullus employs the language of social performance (denoted by the words *lepidus, venustus, salsus, bellus, facetus* and their derivatives) to define the kind of literature, social behaviour and erotics which he prized (cf. Krostenko, 2001a:277). This allows him to create an exclusive world in which only a select few are able to move with ease, encapsulated in his "us against them" attitude. But a side effect of this exclusivity is a vulnerability to attacks from the outside. The sophistication which Catullus and his set so highly prize may be exclusive precisely because of its Greek influences and therefore regarded with suspicion in Rome where the poet is confronted with the implications of being *delicatus* ("charming" but also "soft" or "delicate" and therefore somewhat borderline as a male) (Fitzgerald, 1995:51).[51] In poem 16 Catullus' aggressive defence of himself and his work exposes the resistance he met with in formulating this novel code of poetics, social behaviour and erotics (Krostenko, 2001a:277). He is showing up the faults in the contemporary way of reading literature. Key to his attack are the neoteric ideals of *sal* and *lepos*. These qualities, aspects of Catullus' literary as well as social world, guarantee the solidarity of the neoteric circle (Buchheit, 1976:337). Furius and Aurelius lack the wit and sophistication of the Catullan literary élite and therefore they read his poems too literally (Marsilio & Podlesney, 2006:175).[52] In light of *sal* and *lepos* the repetition of *molliculi* and *parum pudicum* in line 8 take on a new meaning (Buchheit, 1976:342). Through being aroused by Catullus' kiss poems Furius and Aurelius are setting themselves up for exactly the punishment that awaits them in the final line (Buchheit, 1976:343). But there is an ambivalence in the way they phrase their criticism. *Molliculi* and *versiculis* are both in the diminutive, a stylistic trait loved by the neoterics: Furius and Aurelius seem to be using Catullus' own style to criticize his poems (Pedrick, 1993:186).[53] That they are able to comment on his poems in the first place indicates that they are in a privileged position: they must be mingling with his social set (Pedrick, 1993:183, 185). Furthermore, by writing a poem which is meant to disprove accusations of effeminacy Catullus not only reveals the fact that others see him precisely in this way, but he also perpetuates the very persona which he has set out to counter (Selden, 1992:487; Nappa, 2001:47). To complicate matters even further his hyper-masculine threat is called into question by the literary-critical principle which forms the basis of his argument: do not read too literally (Tatum, 2007:346). Is the threat in the first and last line to be taken

[51] See the description of Catullus and Calvus as *delicatos* (risqué) while writing their little verses in poem 50.3 (chapter 2, p.44ff.). The related noun *deliciae*, while used positively for "pet" in poems 2 and 3, has the connotation of effeminacy through being associated with luxury and triviality (Fitzgerald, 1995:36ff.).
[52] Marsilio & Podlesney (2006:173) also argue that Furius' lack of sweet and saliva in poem 23 hints at his lack of literary *sal*.
[53] Marsilio & Podlesney (2006:175) argue that a part of the hostility between Catullus and Furius (and Aurelius by implication) derives from their criticism of his work.

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seriously at all? Poem 16 presents no univocal reality and for Batstone (1993:154) the only way out of this riddle it to assume that Catullus is being truthful in some parts and in others not. The poem does not in fact make a clear distinction between poet and poetry, because it denies at the same time both the equation and the separation of life and art (Batstone, 1993:154). "We are not who we seem, but we are not merely liars either" (Batstone, 2007:248). Catullus is playing with a mask, but as soon as he takes off the one, he reveals another beneath (Gaisser, 2009:50). In this respect the poet moves in and out of the poem, teasing the reader with insinuations of reality. But the Catullan speaker can never leave the poem: we may repeatedly and from different angles look at that "mask" for whom the world of the poem is very real. This is the speaking subject who has come under attack for alleged effeminacy. His counter-attack is multi-voiced. His strongest defence is to elude definition.

In poem 16 it is ironically Catullus' alleged effeminacy that gives him power over his readers (Krostenko, 2007:227). At the same time, this power is inextricable from his vulnerability. Having entrusted his love poems to the likes of Furius and Aurelius the poet has put himself in a vulnerable position: he is at the mercy of their reading. Now that his poems have been criticized by them he strikes back by calling them bad readers. As we have seen in the way that Furius and Aurelius phrase their criticism they need not necessarily be poor literary critics. What is clear, though, is that they dislike Catullus' poems and make no secret about it (Pedrick, 1993:187). The mistake that the Catullan speaker makes is to care about what they think (Pedrick, 1993:187). In this he reveals his peripheral position in the world of the poem. Despite his defiance of the norms of the social centre he still cares about the opinions of its members. The seeming delight in the loud protestation and aggression at the beginning and end of the poem betrays his vulnerability (cf. Stevens, 2013:9).[54] It fills the silence about his own uncertainty. The tension in the poem between the literal and the figurative, meant to unsettle Furius and Aurelius,[55] and which keeps confounding readers, serves to mask the speaker's precarious position. The riddle need not be as unsolvable as it

[54] Uden (2007:3) notes that Priapus was for urban Romans a symbol of rustic backwardness which entailed sexual gluttony, crudeness and "interpretative incompetence". He argues that Catullus employs Priapus as an "other" against which he may build his more sophisticated persona (Uden, 2007:6). Uden therefore sees the entire poem 16 as a parody, even the literary principle in lines 7-11. He states that "this is a view that Catullus himself cannot possibly have held" (Uden, 2007:21). In this respect Uden solves the riddle of when a literal and when a figurative reading is required: only the figurative is applicable. Although Uden's hypothesis works well in poem 16, I do not perceive the Priapic threats in poems 37 (chapter 2, p.75ff.) and 21, for example, as entirely parodic. Despite the overexaggeration they have a marked seriousness, issuing from the speaker's vulnerability which is made apparent in the lines leading up to the threat in each respective poem. I suggest that this is also the case in poem 16. The only difference is that the threat appears in the opening and closing lines. This hints at a more complex employment of the speaking subject, resulting from a multi-faceted vulnerability on his part.

[55] Furius and Aurelius will forever be threatened with sexual assault or escape the threat depending on a literal or figurative reading of these lines (Batstone, 1993:155).

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seems. Reading the poem as an instance of multi-voicedness, as defined by Bakhtin, the apparent inconsistencies in the Catullan speaker may be accounted for. For Bakhtin the self requires an other or its own other for its existence. The self is constituted through the words and opinions of others but also through the words of its own other (Bakhtin, 1984:251-253). The identity of the individual cannot be pinned down; it is on-going and ever-evolving. We change according to our changing circumstances in the same way that actors assume different roles. We may therefore portray different versions of ourselves as the circumstances require (cf. MacIntyre, 1981:190; Kerby, 1997:134-135). In poem 16 we observe the multi-voiced interaction between various Catullan speakers and the audience. Catullus, in the guise of Priapus, addresses Furius and Aurelius in the opening and closing lines (lines 1-4 and 12-14). In both sections he refers to statements they have made about him; words they have used to define him from their perspective. In the section in between Catullus addresses a broader, unspecified audience which includes Furius and Aurelius by implication but not explicitly. When he addresses his two accusers directly he makes use of the first person, underscored by the emphatic *ego* in the first and final lines. When he speaks to a broader audience in the middle section only the third person is used. The reader draws the logical conclusion that he is the *pius poeta*, but he never says so explicitly. We therefore have an "angry" Catullan speaker who appears to be personally involved with the addressees as well as a detached one, an autonomous "I", who is able to stand at a distance and present his audience with a logical argument. This "other" Catullan speaker offers us a different version of "Catullus" than the one Furius and Aurelius portray (asuming he is indeed talking about himself in the reference to a *pius poeta*). This multi-voiced speaker is not the fragmented psyche of the erotic poems, but a similarly ambiguous speaking subject: a tripartite subject who may be both the speaking subject (the agent of speech), the subject of speech (the "I") as well as the spoken subject (the object of its listeners) (Kerby, 1997:132). Somewhere in the interaction between the offended speaker, the calm observer and the opinions of Furius and Aurelius "Catullus" lurks. Where exactly he does not seem to want his readers to know.

The speaker in poem 16 is not only vulnerable as artist; he is also vulnerable in his love. As mentioned at the start of this section, although individual poems may make sense in isolation reading them in light of other poems in the collection gives them a much more nuanced meaning. Often the speaker's full perception of a given situation may not be uncovered from a single poem (Pedrick, 1993:179; Nappa, 2001:33). This is also the case with poem 16. As Pedrick (1993:183) argues, it is just a little too convenient that Furius and Aurelius, noted rivals in love, also happen to be poor judges of poetry. Poem 16 clearly forms part of a personal vendetta (Manwell, 2007:121). The Furius and Aurelius cycle represent the

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speaker's struggle to come to grips with a situation. Juventius seems to prefer either the one or the other to Catullus. Moreover, they questioned his masculinity as attested to in his poems and so threaten his very being-in-language. With the self under threat he lashes out with all the tools at his disposal. He adopts a Priapic pose to defend his masculinity; he takes up an "us against them" stance to defend his poetics; he employs the language of traditional Roman values to defend his integrity and by implication his love.[56] The riddle in poem 16 is not as much one of poetics as it is one of persona. The multi-faceted nature of the subject's vulnerability, as seen in poem 16 alone as well as through its dialogic engagement with other poems in the Juventius cycle, gives rise to a multi-voiced speaker. This one totally defies definition. His is not merely betwixt and between; he is both everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

5.2 THALLUS AND RAVIDUS

The next two poems under discussion, poems 25 and 40, appear to have very little in common. They are addressed to different individuals with no apparent connection and they describe different scenarios: a case of theft and a love triangle. There is also a difference in tone: the first mocking and the second biting. I have chosen to group them together because both poems describe a personal slight to the Catullan speaker upon which he reacts with the threat of invective. This is the strongest weapon of the poet-speaker, but it betrays his vulnerabilities nevertheless.

c.25

Cinaede Thalle, mollior cuniculi capillo
vel anseris medullula vel imula oricilla
vel pene languido senis situque araneoso,
idemque, Thalle, turbida rapacior procella,
cum †diva mulier† aries ostendit oscitantes,[57] 5
remitte pallium mihi meum, quod involasti,
sudariumque Saetabum catagraphosque Thynos,
inepte, quae palam soles habere tamquam avita.
quae nunc tuis ab unguibus reglutina et remitte,
ne laneum latusculum manusque mollicellas 10
inusta turpiter tibi flagella conscribillent,
et insolenter aestues, velut minuta magno
deprensa navis in mari, vesaniente vento.

[56] The recurring motif of *pudor* and its derivatives in poems 15, 16 and 21 suggests that Juventius is never far from the speaker's mind as he attacks Furius and Aurelius in poem 16 (cf. Hurley, 2004:52ff.). For them Juventius was merely "a high-class bit of tail"; for Catullus he was someone pure and precious who needed to be treasured (Wiseman, 1985:134). As Nappa (2001:33) states, "the offense in poem 16 is not merely against aesthetics but against the very foundations of Roman masculinity and morality".

[57] I print here line 5 with its corruption, and not Thomson's (1997:115) emendation: *cum laeva nummularios offendit oscitantes.*

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Scholars have been so concerned with the corruption in line 5 that poem 25 as a whole has received very little attention.[58] Although not the fiercest of Catullus' invectives the speaker manages to get his message across unambiguously and leave the addressee humiliated. The poem shows many similarities with poem 12 (chapter 2, p.69ff.): someone is being upbraided for stealing from the Catullan speaker; the culprit is accused of inurbane behaviour (*inepte*, 12.4; 25.8) and threatened with nasty writings were he not to return the stolen items. But whereas Marrucinus in poem 12 steals napkins only Thallus also steals a cloak (*pallium*, 6) and some "painted objects from Bythinia" (*catagraphosque Thynos*, 7).[59] This makes Thallus "a greater social menace" (Quinn, 1973:164) and a worthy candidate for Catullan invective. In poem 12 the speaker, playing the role of *arbiter urbanitatis*, contrasts Marrucinus' inurbane behaviour with that of his very urbane brother Pollio but then he ends the poem with an explanation of the sentimental value of the stolen object. The poem turns out to be more concerned with the value of friends such as Fabullus and Veranius than with social sophistication. That the aim in poem 25 is very different is made obvious by the opening vocative: *cinaede*. This is the vocabulary of invective.

Poem 25 opens with a mock-heroic address to Thallus (1-5). However, the elaborate syntax of these lines is immediately undermined by the opening vocative and the imagery (Quinn, 1973:166). The two comparative adjectives *mollior* (1) and *rapacior* (4), each generating extensive adornment, mark the two qualities for which Thallus is derided in the poem. These qualities are conflicting to some extent (Thomson, 1997:266). *Mollior*, as we have seen above, is the stock epithet for the unmanly *cinaedus;* however, here Catullus is playing with softness in the literal sense (Quinn, 1973:166). Thallus is described as softer than the softest coats from the animal world, rabbit's fur and goose down (*cuniculi capillo…anseris medullula*, 1-2), as well as the softest part of the human body: the earlobe (*imula oricilla*, 2). When Catullus gets to the fourth comparandum the figurative meaning of *mollis* is brought into play. Thallus is also softer than an older fellow's limp penis, all covered in cobwebs from disuse (3). This is put in stark contrast with Thallus' other derided quality: this paragon of inactivity is "more ravenous than a raging whirlwind" (*turbida rapacior procella*, 4) when the opportunity presents itself. Despite the corruption of line 5 the meaning is clear enough

[58] The following articles are all concerned with conjectures on the possible reading of line 5: Putnam, 1964; MacKay, 1966; Allen, 1974; Copley, 1976; Papanghelis, 1980; Granarolo, 1981; Eden, 1994, inter alia.
[59] The rarity of the word *catagraphus* makes it near impossible to determine its meaning. Merrill (1893:48) makes a case for tablets made from Bythinian boxwood.

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without resorting to conjectures: "when the goddess…exposes the yawning (ones)."[60] *Oscitantes* recalls the *neglegentiorum* from poem 12.3. The setting is probably similar: a *convivium* (Papanghelis, 1980:410; cf. Thomson, 1997:267), where Thallus snatches others' belongings when they are not paying attention. As in poem 12 Catullus' position is ironic: despite his stance of superiority he counts among the absent-minded. He has lost a number of items through Thallus' theft and now he asks for their return. With *remitte* (6) the speaker finally reveals the purpose of the poem and the reason for his unflattering portrait of the addressee. Thallus' improper behaviour affects him on a very personal level. This is underscored by the emphatic *mihi meum* in the middle of the line. Catullus is claiming the right to have his own possessions returned to him. But there is even more at stake than a loss of property. To make matters worse Thallus flaunts the stolen items as if they were his family heirlooms (8). The speaker's request for the return of his possessions intensifies: "unglue and give back" (*reglutina et remitte*, 9). *Reglutina* corresponds with Thallus' rapacious nature: he will not give up the stolen items easily. The scene is set for the speaker to deliver his punch and the elaborate description of Thallus' softness finally makes sense. If he were to fail in returning Catullus' possessions his fluffy flanks and baby-soft hands would be bescribbled with the nasty marks of burning whips (10-11) and he would be storm-tossed in a way unknown like a tiny boat caught on the high sea when the wind is madly raging (12-13).

Richlin (1983:156) notes that poem 25 shares two distinguishing features with Priapic poetry: it threatens to punish with a beating a thief who has been cast as an effeminate, and it makes the writing of the poem part of the threat by means of the verb *conscribillent*. In poem 12 the Catullan speaker likewise threatened Marrucinus with "300 hendecasyllables" (10) if his stolen napkin were not returned. However, there is a marked difference between the two addressees in poems 12 and 25. Of Thallus' identity we know nothing, but the name is Greek. As cognomen it probably refers to freedmen (Thomson, 1997:266; Syndikus, 1984:167). Whether real or not, the Thallus of the text does not denote a member of the élite. Therefore, unlike with Marrucinus to whose good family name the speaker could appeal, Catullus has no such recourse with Thallus. Moreover, Marrucinus was simply playing a prank, thinking he was being very funny (*hoc salsum esse putas?* 12.4); Catullus could approach him with the criteria of urbanity. Thallus is a kleptomaniac and the speaker needs a very different approach. Therefore he takes up a Priapic pose and casts his target both as unmanly and a rapacious thief. The two charges might seem to clash, but their

[60] I do not find any of the conjectures up to date very satisfactory. Save for Copley (1976), who does admit that his suggestion requires "an exercise of the imagination" (418), all other conjectures involve a great deal of deviation from the MSS.

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connection is revealed at the end of the poem when the speaker delivers his threat. In contrast with poems 15, 16 and 21, where Catullus adopts a more blatant Priapic pose, the threat in poem 25 ends with a sophisticated image of desolation and helplessness which picks up the storm imagery from line 4. The tables have been turned on Thallus. The speaker is now the powerful wind and Thallus the helpless victim (Richlin, 1983:156).[61] He plays with the threefold meaning of *aestuare*: “to burn” (in the erotic sense), “to boil or burn” (literally) or “to be tossed about” (Ferguson, 1985:81). This time Thallus will not be experiencing the burning of erotic desire (which *cinaedus* in the beginning coupled with *insolenter* imply), but that of another kind: physical pain and turmoil. In this respect his “softness” and rapacity are brought together: as seen above, they are both signs of unmanliness in Roman eyes. Yet, in spite of Catullus’ seemingly superior position at the end of the poem, there is a loss which the threat alone cannot expiate.

In poem 12 the real reason for Catullus’ unhappiness was not so much Marrucinus’ inappropriate behaviour as the sentimental value of the stolen napkin. The napkin was a gift which reminded him of the dear friends who had given it to him. Therefore poem 12 did not end with a threat (the threat of hendecasyllables comes in the middle) but with a statement of the speaker’s fondness of his two absent friends: Marrucinus is all but forgotten. Thallus, on the other hand, is addressed twice in poem 25 (1, 4) and remains the focus of the poem throughout. Not only is his thieving of a much more serious nature than Marrucinus’ but he flaunts the stolen items as if they were his inheritance. His freedman status makes his exhibition of another’s heirlooms all the more inappropriate (Fitzgerald, 1995:102) and shocking to the original owner. This is the real reason for Catullus’ distress and serves as transition to the threat. Specifying the stolen napkin as Saetaban Catullus recalls the napkins from poem 12 of which the sentimental value has been firmly established. They symbolize belonging to a group of intimate friends. Likewise, identifying the *catagraphi* as Bithynian lends them an air of exclusivity and exoticism. They may be from Catullus’ time in the province (see poem 46) (cf. Eden, 1994:516). Thallus’ crime is therefore twofold. He has not only taken possession of a number of items dear to the Catullan speaker, but by parading these items as his own possessions he has robbed the speaker of his identity. The latter’s only salvation is to resort to the world of language where Thallus has not been able to threaten him. The sophisticated syntax, rareness of the metre (iambic tetrameter), the diminutives and various figures of speech (Ferguson, 1985:79), despite the subject matter, all attest to this. When it comes to language the speaker is on a different level and Thallus cannot touch him. He will be marked very painfully with the speaker’s words and these lesions will be open for all to see in place of the stolen objects. In the world outside of

[61] Richlin (1983:156) points to Catullus’ reference to himself as *vesanus* in poem 7.10.

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language Thallus is still in possession of items which Catullus equates with heirlooms. These are not only connected to his identity but also to his past and his possible future. Catullus' displacement in the poem is twofold. Having been robbed of his Saetaban napkins he has lost a symbol of his belonging to a group of dear friends. To make matters worse, by pretending that the napkins are his Thallus has, to the outside world at least, replaced Catullus as a member of Veranius and Fabullus' intimate circle of friends. Finally, the napkins as well as the Bithynian items have a strong temporal element: they symbolize a part of the Catullan speaker's history. Without the history these items entail the speaker is completely displaced: he is decentred from his own understanding of himself. Only history makes the present meaningful and the future conceivable (cf. Bakhtin, 1986:33; Crites, 1997:39); without this temporal connection the very concept of identity is threatened.

In poem 40 loss of another kind is at stake, but the reader only realises this when he/she gets to the final distich. The theme of the poem appears to be invective itself. Catullus explicitly refers to his writings as *iambos* (2) – a term appearing only in two other poems (36.5 and 54.6) – and so places himself among the likes of Archilochus.[62] Much more directly than in poem 25 he makes use of poetry, the most powerful tool at his disposal, to intimidate one Ravidus. And in typical Catullan fashion the threat is realised by the very poem which states its possibility.

c.40
Quaenam te mala mens, miselle Ravide,[63]
agit praecipitem in meos iambos?
quis deus tibi non bene advocatus
vecordem parat excitare rixam?
an ut pervenias in ora vulgi? 5
quid vis? qualubet esse notus optas?
eris, quandoquidem meos amores
cum longa voluisti amare poena.

Except for the final couplet, the entire poem consists of rhetorical questions directed at Ravidus. By means of these Catullus is able to paint a portrait of his victim before revealing his transgression in the final line. That some form of hostility exists between speaker and addressee is made clear from the outset, but the details are obscure. Ravidus is called

[62] The poem is in fact closely modelled on one of Archilochus' invectives (see Hendrickson, 1925; Wray, 2001:178ff.).
[63] *Ravide* of the Veronese text does not fit in with the metre and would require elision of the final syllable, something not done in hendecasyllables (Quinn, 1973:212; Thomson, 1997:309). Thomson (1997:124) prints *Raude* instead, a syncopated pronounciation for which Fordyce (1961:190) offers evidence. About the character we know nothing outside of the poem. Fordyce (1961:189) notes that the cognomen Ravidus is found nowhere else.

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miselle (1). Coupled with the phrase *mala mens* ("deranged mind") the diminutive acquires an air of mock pity. Some insanity on Ravidus' part (*quaenam mala mens*) is making him ideal material for Catullan invective (1-2). Or perhaps it was some god invoked by him in a moment of delusion who is causing the "senseless strife" (*vecordem rixam*) (3-4)? On the other hand, if Ravidus is not out of his mind, there must be another reason which led him to incite Catullus' hostility. *An* (5) introduces an alternative: to be on everyone's lips (5)? Is this really about recognition? From line 5 onwards the questions become shorter. As if the speaker is getting some response from his interlocutor his interrogation becomes more intense: he seems to be getting to the heart of the matter. And so, with the abrupt phrase *quid vis* (6) he appears to be saying: "Is this it?" Just to confirm his suspicion, he poses a final question which continues with the theme of public recognition: "Do you wish to be known, no matter by what means?" (6) As if Ravidus has responded in the affirmative Catullus turns from questions to an ominous statement: "You *will* (be known)" (*eris*, 7). Only now is the nature of Ravidus' transgression revealed: he has chosen to love the speaker's beloved (*quandoquidem meos amores /...voluisti amare...*, 7-8). For this reason he will become notorious and experience the consequences for a very long time (*cum longa…poena*, 8).

Poem 40 is styled as a dialogue, but in reality only Catullus is speaking. He arranges his questions in such a way that they suggest an interrogation where the reader is to imagine some reaction on Ravidus' part. In the first set of questions Ravidus' derangement is stated as fact; the speaker is merely deliberating its possible cause (Wray, 2001:179). When he suggests an alternative with *an* in line 5 the quickening succession of questions creates the impression that he is arriving at "the truth". This gives him power over his addressee and allows him to put Ravidus on the spot. The reason, which the speaker now reveals in the final question, for Ravidus' "headlong plunge" into his invective verses is not insanity (although that characteristic has not been negated) but a desire for public recognition. Yet Ravidus, of course, never responds. What appears to be a dialogue is only the speaker's deliberations. Everything said so far may be called into question. The real truth is only revealed in the final line: Ravidus made it into Catullan iambics because he is courting the speaker's beloved. He is an erotic rival who probably does not consider or even care for Catullus' writings. It is Catullus who chooses to make him "known" by writing this very poem. However, the erotic nature of Ravidus' offence does not come as such a great revelation as it initially appears. *Mala mens* from line 1 recalls another erotic rival: in poem 15 this phrase was used for Aurelius (14). Moreover, this phrase is coupled with *vecordem* (*vecors* in poem 15) in the same line. Because of these verbal echoes, and especially the phrase *meos amores* – used twice of Juventius but never of Lesbia (poems 15.1 and 21.4) – some

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scholars argue that the young boy must be the cause of the erotic rivalry and that poem 40 is connected to the Juventius cycle (cf. Richardson, 1963:101ff.; Quinn, 1973:212; Nicholson, 1995:45; Thomson, 1997:308). I would be cautious of this assumption. The plural *amores* is used of both Flavius' girlfriend as well as Varus' (poems 6.16 and 10.1 respectively) and therefore suggests a common term of reference for a beloved. Furthermore, as Garrison (1989:116) states, if the poems are indeed in the order determined by Catullus poem 40 follows immediately upon poem 39 where the speaker ridicules Egnatius, a rival for Lesbia's love (chapter 2, p.79ff.). This again tips the scales in favour of Lesbia as *meos amores*. With the identity of the beloved in poem 40 being far from certain and the addressee unknown I prefer to leave *meos amores* anonymous as the original text would also have it. The speaker's intent is very clear: he is exposing a rival in love by holding him up to ridicule both as a madman and as one who employs pathetically obvious techniques for a bit of fame. Yet "poor old" Ravidus is not as shallow as Catullus makes him out to be. The phrasing in the final line is telling. With *voluisti* the speaker implies that loving his beloved was a conscious choice on the part of the addressee.[64] This heightens Ravidus' transgression from erotic rivalry to an offence with malicious intent. He is a stronger opponent than the soft Thallus who is merely light-fingered. And so, instead of bescribbling his body with the burning lashes of a whip, Ravidus will receive hard-core invective as predicted by the word *iambos* at the start of the poem. The ace up Catullus' sleeve is the fact that this threat has already been materialised by the very poem at hand. Ravidus has already been made notorious and as long as the poem is read his punishment will continue. Those scholars who want to read Juventius into the poem argue for a pun on the final word: *poena/pene* (penis) (e.g., Richardson, 1963:102; Nicholson, 1995:49). This would make the threat in poem 40 Priapic, just like those from poems 15 and 21. But if *pene* is a possibility *poema* must be plausible too.[65] The theme, as stated at the start, is the threat of invective poetry and the poem ends with a fulfilment of this threat. However, even with the threat fulfilled, there is no suggestion that Ravidus intends to back off. Catullus may have the upper hand in language, but he is being side-lined in love. Through his dialogic deliberation the Catullan speaker has assessed the situation with Ravidus as well as himself in that situation. He has come to the conclusion that Ravidus is highly determined to pursue his beloved. Moreover, he makes no mention of the beloved's rejection of his rival's attentions. The dialogue reveals that Catullus himself is the one who has been rejected. Once again the speaker's authoritative position at the start of a poem, underscored in poem 40 by the sarcastic *miselle*, is undermined by a revelation in the final lines (cf. poem 21). The poet's

[64] Newman (1990:191) argues that *voluisti* coupled with *poena* suggests the world of Roman law, *volo* being the legal term for stating consent.
[65] In fact, both *pena* and *poema* appear in MSS (cf. Thomson, 1997:124 App.Crit.).

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seeming control of the “conversation” with Ravidus and his threat at the end of the poem betray the vulnerability of the lover. Catullus the lover is already in a peripheral position as far as his beloved is concerned; stopping Ravidus with invective would not change this. Moreover, Ravidus does not appear to be intimidated at all; in fact, it is hinted that he enjoys the attention resulting from invective (*qualubet esse notus optas?* 6). By offering him precisely what he wants even the poet is made to seem vulnerable. In poem 40 Catullus, both as lover and poet, reveals himself to be on the periphery; this time on the side-lines of Ravidus' relationship with his former beloved. Catullus has as good as lost his beloved; his success in the verbal game is not certain either.

Both poems 25 and 40 have to do with separation through theft of some kind. In the first poem the speaker is robbed of beloved possessions which are closely connected with his identity; in the second he is separated from his beloved by a romantic rival who is on the brink of stealing that person from him. In both poems he responds with a threat of invective aimed at the perpetrator. As a language being this gives him great power over his victim but as a being in the world of the poem he experiences total displacement along with the displaced “items”.

5.3 OPPROBRIA ROMULI REMIQUE

A less personal injury to the speaker is dealt with in the next two poems under discussion, poems 28 and 47. Catullus is not lashing out at rivals in love, literary critics or thieves who have stolen from him. Within the broader socio-political context of late Republican Rome Catullus bemoans the lot of his dear friends Veranius and Fabullus who are not at the receiving end of their governor Piso's favours. This reminds him of his own failed stint in the province of Bythinia where he served under Memmius and a sense of his own disillusion creeps in. But while he is insulting the powers that be he betrays his friends', and his own, peripheral position in the socio-political system as well as their not quite honourable motivation for wanting their superiors' favours. Through their dialogic engagement poems 28 and 47 together shed light on the corrupt state of the patronage system and on those individuals who are both products of, and outsiders to that system. I will discuss them separately first and then draw some conclusions.

c.28

Pisonis comites, cohors inanis,
aptis sarcinulis et expeditis,
Verani optime tuque mi Fabulle,
quid rerum geritis? satisne cum isto
vappa frigoraque et famem tulistis? 5

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ecquidnam in tabulis patet lucelli
expensum, ut mihi, qui meum secutus
praetorem refero datum lucello?
o Memmi, bene me ac diu supinum
tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti. 10
sed, quantum video, pari fuistis
casu: nam nihilo minore verpa
farti estis. pete nobiles amicos!
at vobis mala multa di deaeque
dent, opprobria Romuli Remique. 15

Catullus styles his poem in the form of a letter apparently sent to Veranius and Fabullus while they are abroad doing foreign service under the governor Piso (Quinn, 1973:172; Skinner, 1979:137). The names of the addressees are postponed to the third line. Catullus takes his time to build up a description of their sorry state. He starts with the neutral “staff members of Piso” which immediately turns into “an empty-handed crew” (1). Piso’s name is placed emphatically at the start of the poem, setting the scene for what is to follow. In the next line the speaker elaborates on his friends’ pitiable lot: “Equipped with little bundles and not handicapped by a heavy load”.[66] This wretched state of affairs is next contrasted with the highly admiring and hearty address of his two friends: “My very best Veranius and you, my Fabullus: how are you?” (3-4). After the address Catullus returns to his friends’ situation in two questions. Have they really tolerated cold and hunger with that good-for-nothing (*vappa*, 5)? Do their books show any gain, entered on the debit side, as his do (6-7)? With the first of these questions Catullus once more refers to the tough circumstances of ordinary soldiers, which should not be the same for members of a governor’s staff (Quinn, 1973:173). With the second question he brings himself into the equation. He made no profit during his time on Memmius’ staff;[67] now, strangely, he counts his losses as gains (8). Having drawn the attention to himself he turns to Memmius in an apostrophe: “O Memmius, very leisurely you truly and thoroughly stuffed me with that whole shaft of yours while I was on my back” (9-10). This recalls the speaker’s characterisation of his *praetor* as *irrumator* in poem 10.12. Veranius and Fabullus seem to have suffered a similar fate, with no lesser dick (11-13), which leads Catullus to the sarcastic exclamation: seek noble friends! (*pete nobiles amicos*, 13).[68] The second person singular of *pete* suggests a general rule (Thomson, 1997:496; Tatum, 2007:345) and probably echoes the kind of advice a father would offer to his son (Garrison, 1989:110). The irony of this phrase is highlighted by the curse at the end of the

[66] *Expeditis* (not burdened) is a term used for soldiers in a light marching order (Quinn, 1973:173; Thomson, 1997:276). This would suggest that Veranius and Fabullus were treated like common soldiers instead of like members of a governor’s staff.
[67] See poem 10, chapter 2, p.65ff.
[68] *Amicos* in this context of course denotes political connections (Nappa, 2001:96).

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poem aimed at the "disgraces to Romulus and Remus" (*opprobria Romuli Remique*): those of noble stock who exploit their own people.

Unlike the invectives discussed thus far, poem 28 depicts the Catullan speaker as a "fallible or fallen figure" (Tatum, 2007:345). This is what Richlin (1983:145) calls Catullus "counter-Priapic stance", a pose he adopts to show the brutality of his foes. However, the distinction between perpetrator and perpetrated is not as clear-cut as it seems. In fact, upon a closer reading poem 28 is rife with irony. By casting himself and his friends as the victims of their governors' exploitation the speaker is seeking to draw sympathy from the reader. But that sympathy is immediately undercut by his sense of entitlement to the spoils of the provinces: where the locals are the real victims (Skinner, 1979:138). Even in the explicit description of his sexual violation there is an ambivalence. Offering no explanation as to what he means by the "little profit" (*lucelli*, 6; *lucello*, 8) he made during his time in Bithynia and having admitted that it was not financial, the reader is left to conclude that Catullus is pointing to his oral rape by Memmius (Nappa, 2001:95). And so, by describing Memmius' assault as drawn out and leisurely (*bene me ac diu supinum /...lentus irrumasti*, 9-10) the language of aggression comes to border on that of pleasure "so that the usual distribution of roles is smudged as the poet speaks the aggressor's pleasure" (Fitzgerald, 1995:69). Irrumation, as argued above, is a means of silencing the victim and allowing the poet's definition of that person to stand. When the speaker is himself the victim of irrumation the aggressor's intentions may be escaped (Fitzgerald, 1995:69). The poet is able to speak with different voices, even that of his perpetrator (Fitzgerald, 1995:72). And so, by describing the pleasure which Memmius (and by implication Piso) takes from violating his underlings, although he portrays it in terms of sexual dominance, the speaker suggests the overindulgence which contemporary Romans would dub as *incontinentia* (lack of self-control), in other words, a sign of unmanliness (cf. Edwards, 1993:81). Moreover, forcing *fellatio* onto a free-born male was a crime in ancient Rome. Therefore Catullus' labelling of Memmius as an *irrumator* styles him as one who violates the law (Tatum, 2007:346). In this respect Memmius functions as a "distorted parody" of the ideal of *virtus* (manliness), the very essence of the male élite, and the poem comes to comment on the corrupt state of dealings between the senatorial and equestrian classes (Tatum, 2007:346).

This distorted relationship between the middle class and the élite is already hinted at by *inanis*, a word with multiple meanings emphatically placed at the end of the first line. In the context, upon a first reading, it clearly refers to the impecunious state of Piso's *cohors* (therefore my translation of "empty-handed"). But *inanis* may also mean "hungry" (Skinner, 1979:139). This is picked up by *famem* in line 5 and ironically contradicted by Veranius and

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Fabullus' "stuffing" (*farti estis*, 13) by Piso (cf. Fitzgerald, 1995:69). Coupled with the paradoxical "profitless profit" of lines 6-7 this meaning of *inanis* comments on the perverted patronage system of late Republican Rome where brutal exploitation, through the manipulation of meaning, may be presented as reward (Skinner, 1979:139-140). In light of these paradoxes a third meaning of *inanis* now comes to the fore: "useless" or "worthless" (Quinn, 1973:173; Skinner, 1979:140). Having been disillusioned during their time in the provinces Catullus and his friends have come to realise how insignificant they are in the eyes of their superiors: the Roman system of patronage excludes those coming from outside the noble clique (Skinner, 1979:140). The reference to Romulus and Remus at the end of the poem, hinting at Piso and Memmius' distinguished ancestry (Skinner, 1979:140), underscores this exclusion.[69]

Nappa (2001:103), on the other hand, argues that *opprobria Romuli Remique* may refer to Veranius and Fabullus, being the most recently addressed. But, as mentioned above, the phrase *pete nobiles amicos* is generic and not aimed at Veranius and Fabullus in particular. Furthermore, in poems 3 (*at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae*, 13), 27 (*at vos quo lubet hinc abite, lymphae*, 5) and 36 (*at vos interea venite in ignem*, 19) we see the Catullan speaker turning to different addressees than the ones spoken to in the preceding lines. This abrupt change is underscored by *at* at the beginning of the line in each case. I would suggest that the same technique is used here. *Opprobria Romuli Remique* refers to Piso, Memmius and the like. These disgraced descendents to Romulus and Remus no longer revere the traditional Roman values, of which respectful patronage would form part. They are only concerned with gross self-enrichment and not above exploiting their own underlings.

The exclusion of Veranius and Fabullus from Piso's inner circle, and so from any privileges they may have expected from serving under him, is the dominant theme in poem 47. This time Catullus keeps himself out of it, but in light of poem 28 we know that he is not far beneath the surface. Here Veranius and Fabullus are not the addressees, but they feature in the same line and in equally endearing terms as in poem 28.[70] Their situation, however, seems to have worsened. No longer in Piso's train, they are now fishing for dinner invitations at street junctions.

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[69] Although we know nothing about Veranius and Fabullus it is safe to assume that they come from circumstances very similar to Catullus' (cf. Neudling, 1955:182ff.; Wiseman, 1982:40): they were *domi nobiles* but not nobles in Rome. It is necessary to note that Memmius was not technically a noble either, but he had money and the right connections (Tatum, 2007:345). Piso's identity is uncertain (see the discussion of poem 47 below). The important fact is that these two made it into positions of power, something which could not be done without allies in very high places: this makes them part of the élite.

[70] Line 3 closely echoes the final line of poem 12 where an affectionate diminutive is also used for Veranius: *ut Veraniolum meum et Fabullum*.

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c.47
Porci et Socration, duae sinistrae
Pisonis, scabies famesque mundi,
vos Veraniolo meo et Fabullo
verpus praeposuit Priapus ille?
vos convivia lauta sumptuose 5
de die facitis, mei sodales
quaerunt in triuio vocationes?

The entire poem consists of two rhetorical questions whereby the speaker voices his disbelief that his friends could be so side-lined within the patronage system. He is addressing Porcius and Socration, "Porky and Little Socrates", as Piso's "two left-hand men" (1).[71] By switching the traditional right hand for the left, he alludes to the devious nature of the relationship between Piso and his minions: they are not above doing his dirty work (Quinn, 1973:231; Thomson, 1997:321).[72] Piso's name appears in the same prime position as in poem 28, but it is postponed to the second line: a slight shift in focus seems to have taken place. The speaker elaborates on the "sinister" side of his two addressees by labelling them the "itch and hunger of the world" (2). This highly unflattering description of them is contrasted with the affectionate reference to Veranius and Fabullus in the next line. But this is immediately cut short by an obscene description of Piso himself: "that prick Priapus" (4). Only now do we get to the verb, of which Piso is in fact the subject, and the crux of the situation: he has chosen (*praeposuit*) two scoundrels over Veranius and Fabullus. Now these scoundrels are splurging on lavish banquets during the day (5-6) while Catullus' friends fish for invitations at crossroads.

The first rhetorical question aims to rattle the two addressees by asking them something they cannot contradict (Pedrick, 1993:180-181). The speaker's indignation is underscored by the emphatic *vos* in line 3, which is echoed in the second question in line 5. It is very likely that Porcius and Socration are *redende Namen* (speaking names), in other words names that define the bearers by denoting specific traits which sum up their often one-

[71] Although attempts have been made to identify the two addressees with known individuals, none of these are in any way certain. The most popular theory is that Socration is a pseudonymn for the Greek poet and philosopher Philodemus who had Piso Caesonius, consul in 58 and governor in Macedonia 57-55 BCE, as patron. (Shapiro (2014) offers a detailed summary of the various arguments up to date.) But the whole theory rests on the assumption that the Piso in poem 47 is indeed Piso Caesonius, a hypothesis which is shaky at best (Kroll, 1968:87; Shapiro, 2014:392ff.). The identification of Porcius has received very little attention in comparison and most scholars now agree that he cannot be indentified (see Neudling, 1955:147ff. for the conjectures). I will treat these names as either cleverly chosen pseudonyms or *redende Namen* (see below) and argue that the speaker is not concerned with Porcius and Socration as individuals but with what they represent.
[72] See poem 12 where Marrucinus' left hand is also the one used for his thieving.

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dimensional characters (Shapiro, 2014:397). Whether representing known persons or not, the speaker is concerned with them as stereotypes for the kinds of individuals he despises. Porcius ("Porky"), as we know from Horace (*Satires* 2.8.23-24), suggests a glutton (Dettmer, 1985:577; Shapiro, 2014:396). Socration ("Little Socrates" or even "Wannabee Socrates") denotes "a loquacious and pretentious Greek parasite", the parasitical philosopher being a common personality at a feast during the day (Shapiro, 2014:397). Moreover, they are labelled as disease and hunger, and the minions of an indecent boss. Coupled with the designation *sinistrae* Piso's henchmen are therefore styled as underhanded, insatiable and sexually deviant (Pedrick, 1993:181). Catullus is speaking from a position of moral superiority and he has justified his indignation: Porcius and Socration are despicable and yet they are preferred to friends whom he elsewhere branded as "the very best" (poem 28.3). Through their "hunger" (*fames)* and gluttonous feasting at Piso's table both Porcius and Socration are portrayed as typical comic parasites (Skinner, 1979:141).[73] But, ironically, Catullus' dear Veranius and Fabullus are also cast in these roles because of their scavenging for dinner invitations (Skinner, 1979:141; Dettmer, 1985:578). The speaker's defininition of his two friends turns out to be not entirely flattering (Pedrick, 1993:181). By portraying them in this way Catullus is able to comment on the whole sick business which is the patronage system in late Republican Rome. Not only is the system corrupt, but it has the power to corrupt even the likes of Veranius and Fabullus (Pedrick, 1993:182). Its disease, personified by Porcius and Socration as *scabies*, spreads even to those on the periphery.

Having been overlooked, Veranius and Fabullus seem to have given up on Piso and are now desperately trying their luck elsewhere. Their exclusion, metaphorical in the first rhetorical question, becomes literal in the second. They are standing out on the streets in a space belonging to no-one, an anti-space, while the in-crowd dine among themselves in broad daylight. *De die*, denoting "during normal working hours" (cf. Fordyce, 1961:213), suggests that Porcius and Socration have been enriched through their connection with Piso to such an extent that they no longer need to work (Garrison, 1989:119). Furthermore, daylight is also symbolic of "normal space"; it is the temporal aspect of the centre and of belonging (Lotman, 1990:40). In this way Porcius and Socration's opulence and inclusion in the in-crowd is in direct contrast with Veranius and Fabullus' pathetic desperation and sense of not-belonging. *Trivium* suggests a sense of directionlessness on their part: having been passed over by Piso they do not know where to go next. Even worse, they are like common prostitutes

[73] In poem 21 we saw a similar typecasting of Aurelius as "father of famines".

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hanging around on the streets, hoping to be invited by someone.[74] Catullus is reproaching his friends for degrading themselves but, as poem 28 makes clear, they are in the same boat when it comes to the patronage system. In this respect his commentary on Veranius and Fabullus' deprivation becomes a means for self-reflection and self-criticism (Skinner, 1979:141).

Through the many ironies and unflattering portrayal of himself and his friends in poems 28 and 47 the ambivalence of the Catullan speaker comes to the fore: on the one hand he is not so different from his superiors who crave the spoils of exploitation, but on the other hand he is not enough like them to matter. He is from the middle class, "worthless" in the eyes of the élite and therefore subject to being abused and brushed aside. Catullus' depiction of himself and his friends in these two poems is far from the Roman ideal of manliness, but it may be close to its reality (Nappa, 2001:104). This is a man "who realizes his place in the social scheme of things" (Nappa, 2001:104); a realization which comes with a profound sense of displacement. By means of adopting different voices, even that of his perpetrator, Catullus describes himself in unambiguous terms as Memmius' underling who endures the most humiliating treatment without resistance. While this allows him to cast his superior as a self-indulgent brute it also reveals a social handicap on his own part: he lacks the manliness which would command the respect of his superiors (Skinner, 1979:142). He, like Veranius and Fabullus, has allowed himself to be "prostituted". The dialogic engagement between poems 28 and 47 reveals that the feeling of angry disappointment aimed at his two friends in the final line of poem 47 is just as much aimed at himself. Through this multi-voiced self-reflection he comes to realize that he – like them – is as much a product of the Roman system as an outsider to it (Nappa, 2001:105). And, just like his friends at the crossroads, the Catullan speaker finds himself in a meaningless anti-space, neither here nor there, betwixt and between.

5.4 RUFUS

There are three epigrams in the Catullan collection concerned with one Rufus: poems 69, 71 and 77.[75] In my discussion of poem 77 (chapter 4, p.193ff.) I argued that Rufus may or may not be Marcus Rufus Caelius; we simply cannot say with complete certainty. But what we can tell from that poem is that Rufus, whoever he may be, stole Catullus' beloved (*eripuisti*

[74] A similar description is used of Lesbia in poem 58 where Catullus describes her "servicing" of Remus' descendants at crossroads (*quadriviis*, 4). Skinner (1979:141) notes that Veranius and Fabullus are not hunting for invitations in the *forum* like the standard comic parasites, but at the intersections.

[75] Poem 59 names one Rufulus, but apart from the manuscript problem concerning the name (cf. Thomson, 1997:345) there is no textual evidence to suggest that this poem should be connected to the Rufus cycle.

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omnia nostra bona, 4) which led to the ruin of their friendship. In light of this much more serious accusation the two invectives on Rufus' foul odour, poems 69 and 71, should be read as harsh comments on a physical abomination which hides a moral depravity.[76]

c.69

Noli admirari, quare tibi femina nulla,
    Rufe, velit tenerum supposuisse femur,
non si illam rarae labefactes munere vestis
    aut perluciduli deliciis lapidis.
laedit te quaedam mala fabula, qua tibi fertur   5
    valle sub alarum trux habitare caper.
hunc metuunt omnes, neque mirum: nam mala valde est
    bestia, nec quicum bella puella cubet.
quare aut crudelem nasorum interfice pestem,
    aut admirari desine cur fugiunt.   10

Poem 69 is neatly balanced with *admirari* from the first line echoed in the same position in the final line. Directly addressing Rufus, Catullus styles his poem as a word of advice to an acquaintance with a problem. The scene is set for a dialogue. The first four lines present the nature of the problem. The imperative *noli admirari* implies that his current predicament is a riddle to the addressee and suggests that he has consulted the speaker on this matter. Despite tempting them with gifts such as fine dresses and pure, precious gems no woman cares to share Rufus' bed. In the next four lines Catullus explains to him why: there is an evil rumour going about that a wild goat lives under his armpits (5-6). This creature frightens all and no wonder: it is a very evil beast and not one with whom a pretty girl (*bella puella*) would like to lie down (7-8). In the final couplet the speaker returns to the imperative and offers his advice: either kill the cruel pest (*crudelem pestem*) or cease to wonder why the women flee.[77]

In a highly elaborate way Catullus has delivered his invective punch: Rufus smells foul. Under the pretence of privately offering a word of advice, he has exposed Rufus' appalling affliction to the audience (Pedrick, 1993:176). However, the insult is not terribly harsh and the humorous personification of body odour may even suggest that the speaker is merely teasing. The goat has many connotations in classical literature. It was not only renowned for its malodour and lasciviousness but also a symbol of rusticity (Noonan, 1979:162; Nicholson, 1997:254). Catullus brings all of these meanings into play to present a holistic picture of Rufus' shortcomings. Despite the outward display of urban luxury, in the form of

[76] Cf. Nappa (1999:267) who argues for the three poems to be treated as a cycle.

[77] *Crudelem pestem* is one of the verbal echoes which establishes a link between this poem and poem 77 (*crudele…pestis*, 5-6).

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fancy clothing and expensive jewels, he is boorish through and through. Like Suffenus in poem 22 (chapter 2, p.50ff.) Rufus cannot see his own flaws: his armpits are "the locus of his delusion" (Noonan, 1979:163). But, unlike Suffenus for whom the speaker reserved a bit of sympathy, Rufus is alone in his delusion.[78] The Catullan speaker is able to see this, and everyone else sees it too (*metuunt omnes*, 7).[79] By calling attention to Rufus' extreme lack of self-criticism in this way the speaker takes in his characteristic role as judge of urban sophistication and in the process reveals the social and moral standards he adheres to.[80] *Bella puella* is a key concept in this regard, denoting the sophisticated kind of girl the neoterics prized.[81] This quality was already hinted at by the reference to physically delicate women in line 2 (*tenerum femur)* (Syndikus, 1987:2). Therefore, stating that Rufus cannot get a *bella puella* to share his bed serves to exclude him from the select set of individuals who can (Nappa, 1999:268): the speaker is taking in an "us against them" stance. The pedantic *quare aut…aut* in the closing distich underscores Catullus' position of superiority (Syndikus, 1987:2). With the repetition of *admirari* in the final line, he reminds Rufus that the "riddle" has now been solved: the problem lies with himself.

If we only had poem 69 Catullus would be taking his leave of Rufus with an overwhelming upper hand. But both as the smelly goat and by name Rufus will return.

c.71

Si cui iure bono sacer alarum obstitit hircus,
    aut si quem merito tarda podagra secat,
aemulus iste tuus, qui vestrum exercet amorem,
    mirifice est a te[82] nactus utrumque malum.
nam quotiens futuit, totiens ulciscitur ambos: 5
    illam affligit odore, ipse perit podagra.

Although the addressee is not named in poem 71 the connection to poem 69 is made explicit by the reference in the opening line to a goat under the armpits (*alarum…hircus*). But this time the speaker is not concerned with the goat's lodgings under Rufus' armpits but in fact with those under the armpits of another. Rufus has a rival (*aemulus iste tuus*, 3). And this

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[78] Poem 22 ends with Catullus' moralising statement that all people have their blind spots: we all walk around with proverbial knapsacks on our backs containing our flaws (22.20-21).

[79] Noonan (1979:163) argues that the individuals who are able to detect Rufus' stench are those with refined taste: they are like the connoisseurs of smell from poem 13 who want to become "all nose" (*totum nasum*, 13.14) when confronted with a scent created by the very Venuses and Cupids.

[80] As Nappa (1999:267) notes, while invective serves to point out the deficiencies in others it defines the invective speaker at the same time.

[81] See poem 43 (chapter 2, p.71) where Catullus lists all the negative qualities of a girl who is not *bella*. Lesbia, being contrasted with this girl, is.

[82] Thomson (1997:177) prints the conjecture *apte* instead of *a te* of the Veronese text.

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fellow appears to have contracted Rufus' goatish odour by sleeping with his girlfriend (*qui vestrum exercet amorem*, 3). Moreover, he has even been afflicted with gout (*podagra*, 2). In the end the rival's lovemaking is highly disappointing for both parties because the girl is suffering under the stench and he is experiencing unbearable joint pain (5-6).

It is clear from my interpretation that I take Rufus to be the addressee, accepting the manuscript reading *a te* in line 4. Substituting *apte* for *a te* makes it possible to interpret the addressee as Catullus himself and does away with the "illogical" claim that one could contract body odour and gout from another. Although this reading is supported by a number of scholars (e.g., Thomson, 1997:493; Skinner, 2003:71) others point out that Catullus nearly always uses a vocative for self-address or at least switches to the first person to make it clear that he is talking to himself (Nappa, 1999:270; Kutzko, 2008:445). As Nappa (1999:271) further notes, poem 71 is primarily concerned with insulting the addressee: the rival's main purpose is to strengthen the insult. Catullus would hardly be insulting himself in this way (cf. Quinn, 1973:400). Moreover, if poem 71 were a case of Catullan self-address the picture that emerges of his one-time beloved is a very unflattering one: she is just as boorish as her current lover. This is not the kind of *bella puella* that Catullus' group admired (cf. Ferriss, 2009:380).[83]

The idea of "contracting" body odour and gout from someone does not need to be problematic. As Kutzko (2008:447-448) states, for invectives to be convincing they do not have to convey the truth but they need to have some realistic element to which the audience can relate. We have already seen that the goat was a known symbol for foul smell, randiness and overall boorishness. Gout was not only connected with excessive eating and drinking, but Celsus also relates it to excessive sexual intercourse (Nicholson, 1997:256; Kutzko, 2008:448ff.). These two afflictions are therefore highly compatible in creating a picture of complete overindulgence (Nicholson, 1997:256). The adverb *mirifice* denotes an element of fantasy: the remarkable way in which these conditions rub off is part of the insult (cf. Ferguson, 1985:239). Although they cannot be transmitted physically they are "contracted" like bad habits through mixing with the wrong crowd – the likes of Rufus.[84]

There has been some development since poem 69. Despite his lack of success there Rufus has in fact found someone to sleep with in poem 71. But his success is only partial: she

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[83] Even when he is at his most insulting to Lesbia Catullus describes her as a sexual predator, never as boorish (cf. poems 11 and 58).

[84] Ferriss (2009:382) draws a similar conclusion: "The members of this lower circle perpetually re-infect one another with grotesque lack of manners…" But Ferriss has a different overall interpretation, taking the gout to be a pun on bad poetry and the poem as a whole as Catullan invective against poor literature. However, her reading does not deal with the connections, which the poet appears to have wanted his readers to make, between this poem and poems 69 and 77 (pace Ferriss).

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cheats on him with another. Moreover, she could not possibly be a *puella bella*: she clearly has very poor taste. The insult in poem 71 is double edged: Rufus is not only physically repulsive but his girlfriend cheats on him. Moreover, the rival is no less off-putting than he is. Catullus elaborates on the "us against them" theme from poem 69 by making Rufus a member of a whole group of objectionable individuals (Nappa, 1999:272). Between Rufus, the rival and the girl they form a grotesque threesome which is the polar opposite of the refined threesome of Catullus, Fabullus and the *puella* in poem 13, who can appreciate the most sophisticated of scents (Nappa, 1999:272). Having defined the world of his smart set Catullus is able to portray Rufus as a total misfit in that world. Still, we have not seen the last of him…

As stated in my introduction to this section, poems 69, 71 and 77 form a cycle. In poems 69 and 71 the Catullan speaker takes up his role as *arbiter urbanitatis* and holds up to ridicule his contemporaries who do not meet the neoteric standards of sophistication. In poem 69 he approaches his victim in the guise of a concerned friend who is able to offer advice as a detached observer (Skinner, 2003:71). The poem has the makings of a dialogue but, because of the harsh insults of the addressee, a response from Rufus seems highly unlikely. By exposing his repulsive "ailment" to the audience Catullus has effectively shut him up. Poem 71 continues the theme of Rufus' unrefinement and consequent ridicule. This time the speaker draws in another party and elaborates on the deficiencies of that group in comparison with his own social circle. Rufus and his crowd represent "the other" against whom Catullus can take in an authoritative stance. By distancing himself from this "other" he reveals himself as a sophisticated man and moral superior. Poem 71, just as poem 69, seems to end with Catullus getting the last laugh and silencing the targets of his invective. The real explanation for the attacks in both poems only comes in poem 77 (Nappa, 1999:273). Being able to scroll back and forth in the lyric collection the reader may revisit earlier poems with new insight (cf. Janan, 1994:83). Now the insults in poems 69 and 71 appear to be more than jokes: Rufus' physical flaws are in fact part of his greater moral defect (Nicholson, 1997:253; Nappa, 1999:274). He has ruined an *amicitia*, stealthily and calculatingly (*sicine subrepsti mi atque intestina perurens / ei misero eripuisti omnia nostra bona?* 3-4). In light of poem 77 the description of the "just and deserved" onslaught of malodour and gout (*iure bono, merito,* 1-2) in poem 71 suddenly becomes meaningful: Rufus has betrayed the speaker by taking his beloved (Nappa, 1999:274). Now he himself has a rival and Catullus is able to gloat. But the speaker's joy only lasts as long as the poem. His seemingly superior position in poem 69, which continues in poem 71, is revealed to be highly ambivalent. In poem 77 the tables are turned: he is not only vulnerable in the face of Rufus, but already hurt by him much deeper than his own invectives could ever reach. The "cruel

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pest" which was styled as Rufus' social handicap and topic of ridicule in poem 69 turns out to be a serious moral flaw in poem 77: its consequences are far-reaching. He may not fit in with the Catullan crowd in terms of sophistication, but in the end it is Catullus who is rejected and alone. Having cast Rufus and his crowd as the repulsive "other" in poems 69 and 71, Catullus has turned out to be the one to be side-lined in poem 77. Rufus did after all manage to get a *bella puella* in his bed. Not only this, she was *omnia bona* to the speaker. The loss of her threatened a loss of self for the speaker. In light of this the poet's apparently delightful insults in poems 69 and 71 once again mask the speaker's liminal position as revealed through the dialogic engagement of his multiple lyric voices in their respective poems.

5.5 GELLIUS

"Gellius was lean, pale, and an old friend of Catullus" (Wiseman, 1974:119). These are the distinguishing features of the addressee in an invective cycle of seven poems, by far the most extensive in the Catullan collection (74, 80, 88-90, 91 and 116). Starting off with a "good joke" the poems become increasingly more condemning (Wiseman, 1974:119). Poems 74 and 80 serve to create a picture of Gellius as a totally immoral individual and a sexual glutton. As mentioned in chapter 4, poem 74 sees Gellius shut up his uncle's sexual moralisation by seducing his wife (p.201). This leads the speaker to believe that the uncle would not even speak out if his nephew were to stuff him (*irrumet*, 5), thereby suggesting the uncle's weakness, but more importantly, the limitlessness of Gellius' depravity. In poem 80 Gellius returns, this time not as *irrumator* but as *irrumatus*. However, he is so aggressively eager in the performance of the passive role that his *irrumator* Victor emerges as the physically maimed victim of the act (*clamant Victoris rupta miselli / ilia*, 80.7-8). Although the picture which emerges is one of a wholly depraved individual, these poems are not yet shocking (Forsyth, 1972:176). The extent of Gellius' sexual deviancy is only revealed in the next three poems in the cycle, 88-90, which all share the theme of Gellius' incest with his mother and sister (as well as other relatives). Gellius' lust after whatever is beyond moral limits would not even keep him from fellating himself (*se ipse voret*, 88.8) and his acting on the insatiable desire for his own family members causes him to be thin (*tenuis, macer*, 89.1, 4). Poem 90 takes a more fantastical approach: from Gellius' incest with his mother a Persian magician will be born (since they are said to be born from such unions, 4). Abominable offspring befits an abominable union (cf. Syndikus, 1987:72).[85] As Wiseman

[85] Thomson (1997:519-520) suggests that poem 90 may be read as literary polemic in the vein of poem 36: Gellius' "fat trash" (*pingue omentum*) should be assigned to the altar flames in order to "slim them down" (*liquefaciens*, 6) to Callimachean standards (cf. Skinner, 2003:87). Upon this reading

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(1974:119) notes, "when [Catullus'] language becomes portentous, it is because his own position is threatened". In the last two Gellius poems in the collection a personal insult to the Catullan speaker is revealed and they take on a much more serious tone. This is no longer a detached observer looking down on the epitome of immorality, but someone with a personal vendetta. My discussion will centre on these two poems and how they constitute the Catullan speaker's liminal position. Mention will be made to other poems in the Gellius cycle as necessary.[86]

c.91

Non ideo, Gelli, sperabam te mihi fidum
    in misero hoc nostro, hoc perdito amore fore,
quod te cognossem bene constantemve putarem
    aut posse a turpi mentem inhibere probro;
sed neque quod matrem nec germanam esse videbam   5
    hanc tibi, cuius me magnus edebat amor.
et quamvis tecum multo coniungerer usu,
    non satis id causae credideram esse tibi.
tu satis id duxti: tantum tibi gaudium in omni
    culpa est, in quacumque est aliquid sceleris.   10

The speaker names his addressee in the first line and styles his poem as a casual conversation between old friends. But the underlying tension is quickly revealed. The first line ends with *mihi* emphatically placed between *te* and its adjective *fidum*. In line with the Roman conception of friendship Catullus had expected faithfulness from Gellius because of their lengthy association (*tecum multo coniungerer usu*, 7) (Syndikus, 1987:73). As we saw in chapter 4 faithfulness (*fides)* was an essential component in any friendship. When Catullus feels betrayed by a friend he would appeal to that friend's sense of *pietas* in the hope that this would remind him of what true *amicitia* entails: reciprocal faithfulness. However, *pietas* and its concomitant *fides* is based on goodwill and mutual respect: there are no absolute rules. In spite of their long-standing amicability Gellius had not been faithful to the speaker. The exact nature of his faithlessness is postponed to the middle of the poem. Stating that he had expected faithfulness from Gellius, not because he knew him well, or thought him to be principled or able to refrain from a base infamy (3-4), Catullus offers a seemingly obvious reason for having done so: "I saw that she was neither your mother nor sister" (5). Now the reader knows that Gellius' transgression was the seduction

poem 90 foreshadows the final Gellius poem (116) where Catullus responds to Gellius' literary "darts" aimed at him (see below).

[86] It is generally accepted that Gellius is L. Gellius Publicola, consul of 36 BCE, who had at one stage been accused of seducing his stepmother and plotting to murder his father (see Wiseman, 1974:119ff. for the various arguments in favour of the identification; cf. Neudling, 1955:75ff.). This would give Catullus' accusations of incest some foothold in the truth.

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of the speaker's girlfriend. She is simply referred to as "her" (*hanc,* 6), but the intense description of the speaker's love for her as "miserable and ruinous" (*misero…perdito amore*, 2), "great" and "consuming" (*me magnus edebat amor,* 6) recalls his love for Lesbia.[87] Moreover, it suggests that Gellius was aware of the depth of Catullus' love. As it turns out Catullus was not at all relying on Gellius' sense of *pietas* to keep him from betraying a friend in this way, but on logical reasoning. Having illustrated repeatedly that Gellius has a liking for his own clan the speaker had mistakenly thought that his beloved would not appeal to this sexual deviant. It turns out that he had seriously underestimated Gellius' vileness. Now he has to redefine him.

In the second half of the poem Catullus rethinks Gellius' depravity and in the process admits his own naïveté. He had frequently rubbed shoulders with Gellius but never believed this to be enough to appeal to the latter's taste for inbreeding (7-8). With *tu* emphatically placed at the start of the next line Catullus underlines the contrast between his mistaken assessment of Gellius and the man's true colours: "*You* thought this enough" (*tu satis id duxti*). It appears that it was precisely their long association which fuelled Gellius' act of faithlessness (Thomson, 1997:522). This suggests that for Gellius to derive some "obscene thrill" from seducing Catullus' girlfriend he had to interpret his friendship with him as so intimate that Catullus bordered on being a family relation (Wray, 2001:187-188). In this respect Gellius becomes a distorted parody of the very Roman conception of a friend. Now Catullus may present his revised definition of him. The man derives extensive joy from any kind of transgression; even a whiff of wickedness (*aliquid sceleris*, 10) is enough to entice him (Quinn, 1973:428).

Poem 90 serves as climax to the five poems on Gellius' sexual depravity (74, 80, 88-90) when the reason behind the speaker's hostility is finally revealed: Gellius has seduced his beloved (Forsyth, 1972:177). But the speaker here is not the hurt lover or betrayed friend (Skinner, 2003:88). With apparently calm detachment he states his full awareness of Gellius' lack of principles and shameful urges. Yet, despite his logical reasoning the bitter irony of the poem betrays the speaker's vulnerability. He is once more alone in late Republican Rome's corrupt socio-political world. But this time he is not desperately clinging to the traditional institutions of social obligation. He has been around and come to realise that the likes of Gellius have no regard for these moral codes. Armed with the knowledge of Gellius' corrupt character he thought he could outsmart him, but he has been caught off guard very painfully. He underestimated the extent of Gellius' depravity: the man is not only

[87] Verbal echoes and similar imagery in the Lesbia poems include the many occurrences of *miser* and its derivatives describing the speaker (8.1,10; 51.5; 76.12,19; 77.4); *se officio perdidit ipsa suo*, 75.2; *longum amorem*, 76.13; *mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus*, 76.21; *perdite amarem*, 104.3

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thoroughly perverted but he is devious too, and consequently much more dangerous than he initially thought. The final distich is biting but its impact has been diminished. The ridicule of Gellius, which gives the earlier poems in the cycle their punch, is gone. It is Gellius who has the last laugh (*tantum tibi gaudium in omni / culpast…*, 9-10). The Catullan speaker has lost his great love because of his blindness to the depth of another's deviance: he had seen the facts (*videbam*, 5) but not Gellius' underlying wickedness. Therefore, despite the representation of Gellius as corrupt through and through the image which emerges of the Catullan speaker is one of a naïve, conservative individual and a rejected lover. There is no indication that the beloved left him against her will. Catullus' condemnation of Gellius' acts serves to cover up that fact as well as the suggestion, implicit in the poem, that he is himself in part to blame for losing her. No longer in the superior position of a detached observer looking down on a disgraceful individual he speaks out from personal injury against an erotic rival who has trumped him.[88] This is the weakened voice of a decentred invective speaker: one who has been abandoned by his great love as he misread the social system.

When Gellius makes his final appearance in what is also the final poem in the collection as we have it, Catullus' decentred position works to his advantage as he delivers his last invective blow. Because of the poem's position in the collection attempts have been made to identify links with poem 1 (Van Sickle, 1981; Dettmer, 1994) as well as with poem 65 (Forsyth, 1977b:353; Skinner, 2003:1ff.). For the purpose of my study I will focus on the function of the poem within the Gellius cycle and leave aside speculation on the poem's placement within the collection as a whole. Whether or not it ends the entire Catullan collection or just the epigrams on an appropriate note, it does offer a fitting ending to the Gellius cycle, which is paradoxically also a beginning.

[88] Wray (2001:188) argues that the focus of poem 91 is the betrayal of friendship and not the loss of a beloved. However, Catullus' description of the friendliness between him and Gellius (*tecum multo coniungerer usu*, 7) seems to avoid a suggestion of real intimacy (cf. Quinn, 1973:428). The sardonic tone in poem 91 is also different from the more emotional tone of the poems addressed to faithless friends (see chapter 4).

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c.116
Saepe tibi studiose, animo venante, requirens
carmina uti possem mittere Battiadae,
qui te lenirem nobis, neu conarere
tela infesta <meum> mittere in usque caput,
hunc video mihi nunc frustra sumptum esse laborem, 5
Gelli, nec nostras hinc valuisse preces.
contra nos tela ista tua evitabimus acta[89]
at fixus nostris tu dabis supplicium.

Unlike the other Gellius poems, where he is either addressed or referred to in the first or second line, the name of the addressee is postponed to the third line from the end. This postponement links up with the structure of the poem. The first 6 lines set the scene and the final distich spells out the invective threat (cf. poem 40 above). As Ferguson (1985:345) states, the beginning of the poem is "innocent enough": Catullus has been wanting to send someone "Callimachean poems" (*carmina Battiadae*, 2), in other words, translations of Callimachus.[90] His reason: to soften the addressee to him (*qui te lenirem nobis*, 3) and to deter him from sending a rain of "hostile darts" (*tela infesta*) at his head (3-4). The emphatic *hunc* and the present tense *video* at the beginning of line 5 call attention to the speaker's change of heart: he now sees that his effort (*laborem*) has been wasted. The surprising revelation of the addressee's name at the start of the next line puts a whole new spin on things. He has been trying to placate none other than Gellius. But neither his literary endeavours nor his earnest requests (*preces*) have come to anything (6). Having taken six lines to describe his attempts at reconciliation the final distich comes as a surprise: he will launch a counter-attack. And while he is dodging Gellius' darts, the latter will be pierced by his.

It is now a commonly held view that literary texts offer the intellectual space where the norms governing social interaction may be challenged and negotiated (Tatum, 1997:482). In fact, in no literary form is this better illustrated than in invective poetry. While invective serves on the one hand to highlight the otherness of a misfit or social deviant, it also defines the speaker in his own right either as one who does belong to a certain set or, as in the case of Archilochus' cowardly dumping of his shield on the battlefield (*Fragment* 5), as one who defies society's blueprint (cf. Nappa, 1999:267). In poem 116 the sudden move from an

[89] *Acta* is the most commonly accepted conjecture for the Veronese text's nonsensical *amicta* (*acta* with *mi* as a gloss above) (cf. Thomson, 1997:555). Kitchell (1986) suggests two alternative conjectures, *amitha* and *micta*, while Camps (1973:136) changes the line considerably: *contorto tela ista tua evitamus amictu*. However, none of these appears to have found a great following.
[90] Most scholars intepret *carmina Battiadae* as a reference to translations of Callimachean poems, like poem 66 which is introduced by the same phrase: …*mitto / haec expressa tibi carmina Battiadae* (65.15-16).

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earnest intellectual attempt at reconciliation (*studiose, animo venante, requirens*, 1) to counter-attack, coupled with the surprise revelation of Gellius as addressee, calls for a reconsideration of the seemingly innocent introduction as well as some scrollwork to revisit the other Gellius poems. This is a different voice from the ones we have encountered in the preceding poems: he is surprisingly apologetic (Tatum, 1997:499). However, he will remain so only until the final distich. The first lines define the Catullan speaker as an adherent to Callimachean poetics: the words *laborem* (5), *studiose*[91] and *venante* (1) suggest the intellectual effort, devotion and enquiring mind associated with neoteric learning and polish (Macleod, 1973a:305; cf. Dettmer, 1994:32). This style of *belles-lettres* is put in deliberate contrast with vituperative writing, signified by the characteristic imagery of warfare (*tela*, 4, 7) (Macleod, 1973a:305). In line 4 it is Gellius who hurls the darts; by the end of the poem it is the Catullan speaker. Although he portrayed himself as a follower of Callimachean erudition and refinement, the final distich reveals that he may employ another mode of writing: that of invective (Macleod, 1973a:306).[92] Since the sophisticated poems of Callimachus did not succeed in appeasing Gellius, perhaps the invectives of his own stylus will (Forsyth, 1972:177).

As was the case in poem 65 (see "The death of a brother", chapter 2), poem 116 once more sees the Catullan speaker confronted with "artistic failure" (Skinner, 2003:3). In poem 65, unable to write original poems because of the intense sorrow over his brother's death, the speaker sends his addressee, the noble Hortalus, a translation of Callimachus in response to the latter's request for poetry. In poem 116 he again sends Callimachean translations to an addressee, this time of his own accord and in order to appease that person, but these have no effect. This suggests that poems in the Callimachean style are potentially vulnerable and weak (Batstone, 2007:238), which puts the Catullan speaker's being-in-language under threat and he has to face the question of "adapt or die". By switching to invective he appears to have chosen the former but upon a closer reading the resulting poem is not that simple.

The archaisms and anomalous versification in poem 116 have often been noted (Quinn, 1973:455; Macleod, 1973a:307; Thomson, 1997:55 et al.). These include the old forms of *uti* for *ut* (2) and *qui* for *quibus* (3); the wholly spondaic hexameter line (3) (the only occurrence of this after Ennius); and the elision of the final "s" in *dabis supplicium* (8), a technique which

[91] Thomson (1997:192) prefers the adverb to the adjective *studioso* of the Veronese text. This does not have any significant impact on the meaning of the line, but it does solve the "unlikely concatenation" of adjectives agreeing with *venante* (Thomson, 1997:555).
[92] Callimachus did in fact write a "curse poem" (*Ibis*) but even this poem was extremely complex because of its erudition (Macleod, 1973a:306) and apparently too mild for him to be commonly associated with the invective genre (cf. Ovid *Ibis* 41-64) (Wray, 2001:189ff.)

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the neoterics renounced (Skinner, 2003:21; cf. Kroll, 1968:288-289).[93] These anomalies are most often interpreted as a parody of Gellius' own poor writing, the mocking imitation of a rival's style being a common feature of literary polemic (Macleod, 1973a:307; cf. Dettmer, 1994:32). Moreover, they allow Catullus' discourse to become double-voiced: by adopting Gellius' "voice" the speaker reveals his acute awareness of the addressee as an autonomous "other" and in turn defines himself in contrast with that other (cf. Bakhtin, 1984:203, 251-252). A number of more recent studies detect another clue in the final *dabis supplicium*: this phrase echoes Ennius' rendering of Romulus' last words to Remus before he slays him (*nam mi calido dabis sanguine poenas*, *Ann.* 1.102-103)[94] (Zetzel, 1983:256; Skinner, 2003:21-22). On the one hand Catullus may be introducing Ennius in this way to serve as a foil to Callimachus (Zetzel, 1983:257). But on the other hand the textual echo, coupled with Catullus' apologetic pose in the first six lines, may recall his status as *amicus inferior* (as seen in poem 65) (Tatum, 1997:499-500; Skinner, 2003:22). If the identification of Gellius with L. Gellius Publicola is correct, the man is a noble and Catullus is in a position very similar to that of poem 65. However, poem 116 has a twist in the tail. By playing the part of Romulus in the final line the speaker is "degrading the *nobilis* Gellius to second-class status" (Skinner, 2003:22): that of the twin brother who became "the ultimate outsider" (Tatum, 1997:500). Is the Catullan speaker having the last laugh in his final encounter with Gellius?

In light of poem 116's close correspondences with poem 65, and Catullus' change of style towards the end of the poem, Skinner (2003:28) argues that the final poem in the collection sees the speaker bidding Callimachean poetics farewell. This parting with his "mentor" is related to the social dynamics of late Republican Rome and may be seen in the interplay between poems 65 and 116: the change in addressees from the respectable Hortalus (written to from provincial Verona) to the disgraceful Gellius (with whom the speaker rubs shoulders in the social circles of Rome) suggests that Catullus has come to accept the distorted workings of the Roman socio-political system (Skinner, 2003:28). Moreover, he has come to realize that Callimachean poetry fails to communicate with that system, personified by the abominable Gellius whose deviant escapades are well known to the reader (Skinner, 2003:24). I would suggest that the speaker's status as *amicus inferior* is precisely the reason why he does not simply resign to the status quo. In poem 116 he presents himself as driven to writing in the style of his rival (Macleod, 1973a:307, 309). The two styles he alludes to in the poem suggest that his "hyphenated identity" is alive and well.

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[93] According to Cicero (*Orator* XLVIII.161). See the quote and its translation under "urbanitas", chapter 2.

[94] The Latin text is from Warmington (1935:32).

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Moreover, it allows him to speak in different voices, even those of the opposition. He has not given up on Callimachean poetics, but is displaying the versatility that comes from not-belonging. He is speaking the language that the likes of Gellius would understand, but in the process he is deliberately mocking him. Aware that his readers would know Ennius he delivers his punch through a poet from whom he dissociates himself. This becomes, quite literally, "the reflected discourse of another" (Bakhtin, 1984:203). However, there is an ambivalence at play in the Ennian allusion. These are not Catullus' words and, being not Roman himself, he cannot play the role of Romulus: Gellius is still noble and he an *amicus/inimicus inferior*. Does this suggest that Catullus has failed in his counter-attack? The answer is "no". His darts have already hit the mark in the preceding Gellius poems. Through the endless dialogue between the individual poems in the cycle the naming and shaming of Gellius will continue as the reader scrolls back and forth in the collection. Catullus may step away from the battle, not as victor, but not as the loser either. In this respect, through its dialogic engagement with poem 65, poem 116 serves to reconfirm the Catullan speaker's liminal status. Between Verona and Rome, Callimachaen refinement and harsh invective, provincial innocence and the disillusion of the city, he remains precisely betwixt and between, neither here nor there.

In this chapter Catullan invective has been described as a way to exclude certain individuals by portraying them as revolting, boorish or depraved, and the speaker in turn as superior. This self-assurance is an essential factor in all invective (Skinner, 1991:5). However, despite the superior stance of the speaker in Catullan invective, an unmistakable threat to the self always lurks beneath the surface. On very few occasions does the speaker lash out for the pure pleasure of it. In the poems under discussion above, he always reveals some form of personal involvement either in the particular poem itself, or through dialogic engagement within a cycle of poems. Invective Catullus is either attacking an erotic rival, deriding prominent politicians for mistreating his friends, or lashing out because of some slight to his person: theft or personal insult. But a threat unfulfilled means nothing. Despite his loud protestations he will not get his lovers back, alter the corrupt patronage system or make depraved individuals change their ways. As we have seen from the poems discussed in this chapter the speaker of Catullan invective, in the end, has a lot of bark but, because of his peripheral position, not much bite.

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CHAPTER SIX

MYTHOLOGICAL OUTCASTS: ATTIS AND ARIADNE

Catullus' genius is personality (Putnam, 1982:46).

In the so-called longer poems the use of myth offers the speaker the scope to explore themes from the shorter poems in greater depth. In this final chapter I will be looking at two figures from myth who represent Catullus' most extensive investigation into the problem of liminality: the neither-man-nor-woman Attis (c. 63) and the abandoned girl Ariadne (c. 64), both of whom find themselves on the literal boundary of the shore and the figurative boundaries of the respective societies to which they could never return. Although they are two diverse figures who elicit different reactions from the reader – the one both repels and intrigues, the other evokes sympathy – in the end both Attis and Ariadne find themselves in a state of perpetual liminality not unlike the liminal experience of the Catullan speaker in other poems.[1]

6.1 POEM 63: ATTIS

Poem 63 starts in medias res: Attis is eagerly on his way to the Phrygian woods "across the high seas" (*super alta…maria*, 1) to reach the haunts of the goddess. There, in a fit of frenzy, he castrates himself and starts to dance and sing, encouraging his comrades – whom the reader only becomes aware of now – to join in (4-11). They have followed his lead across the sea (15-16) and also castrated themselves "out of a burning hatred for Venus" (*Veneris nimio odio*, 17). Now Attis inspires them to come with him to the house of Cybele, offering a detailed description of the rites performed at her abode (12-26). After this exhortation the "new initiates", accompanied by the tambourine and cymbals, run singing to their destination where they quickly fall into a deep sleep because of their exertion (27-38). With the light of sunrise also comes clarity of mind and Attis wakes up with the horrible realisation of what he/she has done and lost (39-46).[2] She hurries back to the shore and looks across the sea with tear-filled eyes, addressing her fatherland "in misery" (*miseriter*, 49). A 23 line soliloquy follows in which Attis mourns for all that is familiar and dear to her – her house, country, possessions, friends, parents (*domo / patria, bonis, amicis, genitoribus,* 58-59), the market place and sports facilities (60) – as well as her former state as athletic and desirable young man (64-67). This is put in stark contrast with what she perceives as the lot which awaits her now. Having been the star of the sports fields (*gymnasi flos, decus olei*, 64) and the leader of a group of young men (*duce*, 15) she will now be a servant and a

[1] Because of the length of these two poems I do not print them in full, but I will make use of extensive quotes in my discussion.

[2] After the castration the speaker refers to Attis in the feminine, although not consistently (see below).

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slave (*ministra, famula*, 68) to Cybele. Moreover, instead of the light, openness and culture associated with the gymnasium and palaestra, Attis will now be subjected to the cold and mountainous landscape of Phrygia where wild animals roam the dense vegetation (70-72). As she explicitly states her regret, the words reach the ears of the goddess. Unyoking her tame lions, choosing the wilder one on the left-hand side (*laevumque pecoris hostem*, 77), Cybele sends the beast to frighten Attis back into the woods and back into submission. The poem ends with a direct address of the goddess by the Catullan speaker, requesting her to overlook him when searching for candidates to drive mad (91-93).

Poem 63 is probably for the modern reader the least accessible of all of Catullus' poems. The myth is an obscure one and the protagonist is at best a pathetic fool. In Catullus' Rome the cult of Cybele had been established in 204 BCE and his readers would have been familiar with the main characters in the poem (Bremmer, 2004:557).[3] But, as Bremmer (2004:566) notes, the first reference to Attis in extant Roman literature is in Catullus. Although he wrote in a time where there seems to have been a growing interest in Cybele's cult,[4] Attis was never a key figure in Republican myth or religion (Bremmer, 2004:567). Moreover, in contemporary society the attitude towards Cybele's cult and in particular towards her eunuch priests, the Galli (who were inspired by the mythical Attis to castrate themselves), was at best ambivalent. Valerius Maximus reports with approval that a certain Mamercus Aemilius Lepidus, consul in 77 BCE, gave the verdict that a Gallus could not inherit from a Roman citizen as he was neither man nor woman (Wiseman, 1985:204). In Roman eyes the Gallus' "transgression of the gender binary" negates any claim to social identity (Panoussi, 2003:105). A more positive view may be found in M. Terentius Varro's *Eumenides* where the protagonist dresses like a woman in order to enter the temple of Cybele. There he marvels at the beauty and exotic clothing of the Galli, he is enchanted by their music and at first he is impressed with their morality until he speaks out against their self-castration and has to flee (Wiseman, 1985:204-205; Roller, 1999:308). "The attraction is admitted but the Roman ethos prevails" (Wiseman, 1985:205), such a wilful act of self-injury being seen as madness in Roman eyes (Vermaseren, 1977:96). And so, alarmed by the rowdiness, hypnotic music and self-mutilation, the Roman state kept tight control over the performance of Cybele's rites: they were restricted to her temple on the Palatine except for the Megalensia festival where a procession and games were held in honour of the goddess (Vermaseren, 1977:96). Roman citizens and slaves were both forbidden to

[3] See Bremmer (2004) for a thorough study of the development of the cult and the different versions of the Cybele-Attis myth in extant sources. Vermaseren (1977) offers an older, but still useful account. His study is broader than Bremmer's and includes visual art as well as temples and shrines.
[4] The cult appears in the writings of Varro (see below) as well as in Cicero (Bremmer, 2004:558). In the discussion of poem 35 (chapter 2, p.55ff.) we also saw Catullus' poet friend Caecilius writing (probably) an epyllion on the Mater Magna.

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participate in these rites and to castrate themselves (Bremmer, 2004:567). What these literary accounts and tight regulation by the state reveal is the Roman people's combined sense of repulsion for and fascination with the Eastern cult of Cybele. Catullus' prayer at the end of poem 63 might suggest a similar feeling. However, he makes some significant changes to the myth which, in the end, reveal a much more sympathetic, "Roman" protagonist who allows the Catullan speaker to comment on the complexities of identity in late Republican Rome.

In all of the extant versions of the Attis myth his Eastern origin, whether Phrygian or Lydian, is a given (Harrison, 2004:520), but in Catullus' poem Attis has travelled across the high seas, together with his companions, to reach the Phrygian wood (*Phrygium nemus*, 2). His status as foreigner in Phrygia (and that of his comrades by implication) is confirmed in the second half of the poem when he sadly looks across the sea in the hope of catching a glimpse of his fatherland (55-56), already feeling the absence of the marketplace, the palaestra, the race track and the gymnasium (*abero foro, palaestra, stadio et gyminasiis?* 60) and mourning for the manly glory of those sports grounds which had been his until very recently (64). Attis is clearly describing a Greek city (Harrison, 2004:521). In this respect Catullus' poem introduces an East-West contrast as one of its main features: the youth, having left behind the heart of Greek civilization, ventures into the Phrygian wilderness (Harrison, 2004:522; cf. Rubino, 1974:157).[5] In another change to the myth Catullus has Attis castrate himself of his own free will (Forsyth, 1976a:556).[6] This introduces a new element to the story: Attis' falls victim to his own action (Forsyth, 1976a:556). Yet there is a tension between free will and forced submission throughout the poem. In the final scene of the poem, before the speaker's prayer, Cybele sends one of her lions to frighten Attis back into submission. But in the pre-Catullan versions of the encounter between a Gallus and a lion it is Cybele who saves the Gallus (through his playing of the tambourine, her instrument): the lion either runs away in fright or is "converted" to Cybele's cult and the Gallus is very grateful (Courtney, 1985:90).[7] Shipton (1987:446) lists the main differences between Catullus' version of the story and that of his Hellenistic predecessors: in poem 63 the lion is sent by Cybele herself and the animal remains a threat to the protagonist; the latter is then forced into worshipping the goddess whereas he does so voluntarily out of

[5] Foster (2009:72) argues that this "new twist" to the myth serves to portray Attis' act as self-castration as particularly shameful: contemporary Romans were familiar with Cybele's cult and her eunuch priests but that a civilised Greek or Roman youth could voluntarily commit such self-mutilation was unthinkable.

[6] Forsyth (1976a:555) points out that in other extant versions of the myth Attis is driven to madness by a jealous Cybele and so castrates himself.

[7] This episode concerning an unnamed Gallus and a lion appears in the Greek Anthology (Simonides 6.217, Alcaeus 6.218, Antipater 6.219, and Dioscorides 6.220 in Paton, 1916:410-414). It does not traditionally form part of the Attis myth.

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gratitude in the other versions. In Catullus the story therefore acquires a distinctly negative note. The Attis from poem 63 is not the Attis from myth or ritual (Fordyce, 1961:261; Rubino, 1974:154; Forsyth, 1976a:555; Bremmer, 2004:566). So who is he?

Catullus' Attis is a tragic figure (Forsyth, 1976a:556; Courtney, 1985:90; Thomson, 1997:374 et al.). Harrison (2004:526) traces echoes of Euripides' *Medea* in Attis' second speech in the poem (50ff.) where he regrets what he has done and mourns for his fatherland and all that is dear and familiar: having fled from her native Colchis with Jason, Medea laments the abandonment of her father and city (Eur.*Med.*166-167). Furthermore, both Attis and Medea leave their homelands in a state of "madness": he in a religious frenzy, she with "a crazed heart" (μαινομένᾳ κραδίᾳ, Eur.*Med.*433-435) (Harrison, 2004:526). And, like Attis, Medea represents a clash between East and West: Euripides portrays her as "an Eastern barbarian who is not accepted in the Western culture of Corinth" (Harrison, 2004:526). These parallels lend an unmistakable tragic tone to Catullus' retelling of the Attis myth, which is picked up in Ariadne's lament in poem 64 (discussed below) (Harrison, 2004:525; 527). But Catullus' Attis is an ambiguous character in many respects, not only in terms of gender. While he recalls a figure from tragedy on the one hand, he also resembles a devotee of Bacchus on the other. This resemblance brings yet another element into play.

The similarities between Cybele's cult and that of Dionysus/Bacchus have often been noted, even in ancient times (Bremmer, 2004: 560ff.). In poem 63 Catullus exploits the resemblances between these two cults to emphasize the liminal position of his protagonist. Bacchic rites are primarily associated with the god's female followers, the Maenads, who venture into the mountains for the performance of their ritual (Panoussi, 2003:103, 106). This is precisely the way in which Catullus depicts Cybele's feminized devotees, underscoring the connection by referring to the goddess' home as the place "where the Maenads with their crowns of ivy fiercely toss their heads" (*ubi capita Maenades vi iaciunt hederigerae*, 23) (Bremmer, 2004:560). Both cults make use of the same instruments, the tambourine and cymbals (*tympanum…cymbala,* 29), (Panoussi, 2003:109). Furthermore, Attis' group of fellow-devotees is described as a *thiasus* (27), the standard term for a band of Maenads (Panoussi, 2003:109; Bremmer, 2004:560), and when he summons them to the woods his cry *agite ite ad alta…nemora* (12) recalls that which traditionally urged the Maenads into the mountains (εἰς ὄρος, εἰς ὄρος) (Bremmer, 2004:562). With the connection between the cults of Cybele and Bacchus firmly established Catullus is able to introduce yet another theme into his poem. Panoussi (2003:103, 106) detects in the Bacchic rites the three phases of ritual identified by Van Gennep (see chapter 1), separation, transition, and reintegration: the women leave their homes to go into nature where, intoxicated and entranced by loud music and dancing, they enter into a state of delirium where they are

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temporarily "freed" from their bodies and are able to commune with the god (cf. Cole, 2007:330). When the effects of the wine and ecstasy subside they return to their normal lives (Morgan, 2007:305). Through its liberation of the female Maenadism entails "a temporary negation of male authority", which shows resemblances with marriage rites: by incorporating Maenadism in his poem Catullus therefore also involves the theme of marriage (Panoussi, 2003:109).[8] The young woman about to be married acts out a seeming unwillingness to enter the new phase of her life and her new household by running back to her birth family in wild defiance (Panoussi, 2003:106). This is the transitional phase where the young woman is regarded as an animal that will shortly be tamed by the civilization of marriage and male authority, the final, stable stage of reintegration (Panoussi, 2003:106). Apart from the castration, which renders Attis gender-ambivalent, Catullus employs the similarities between the Bacchic and marriage rites to cast his protagonist not only in the role of a female, but also in that of a virgin bride (Panoussi, 2003:107-108). Attis' act of self-castration and consequent bleeding (8) recalls both the sacrifices of ritual and the young woman's loss of virginity as she enters the marital phase (Panoussi, 2003:110). This is further hinted at by the simile of Attis as heifer, *veluti iuvenca vitans onus indomita iugi* ("like a heifer, unbroken, who avoids the weight of the yoke", 33), which recalls the description of Laodamia in poem 68: *qui tamen indomitam ferre iugum docuit* ("[the love] which taught you, though unbroken, to bear the yoke", 118). Sandy (1971b:192-193) interprets the yoke as a metaphor for the binding commitment of marriage. Glenn (1973:60) suggests a broader application of the yoke image, arguing that the taming of female livestock is a common metaphor in ancient erotic literature and often associated with the image of "taming the virgin". By avoiding the yoke Attis is shunning the experience of sexual love (Glenn, 1973:61).[9] Yet, ironically, he has already been "deflowered" through his own self-castration and in the process submitted himself to a binding commitment of another kind. When in his morning-after lucidity he realises his state of bondage he rebels against Cybele and runs back to the shore, the boundary between his old life and the new, like the young brides who run back to their families before they yield to their new circumstances (Panoussi, 2003:113). But even before Cybele sends her lion to chase him back into the woods, he so much as admits that it is too late: "Shall I now be called a servant-girl of the gods and a lady's maid to Cybele?" (*ego nunc deum ministra et Cybeles famula ferar?* 68). The yoke which Cybele

[8] The theme of marriage is often seen as an overriding theme in the longer poems; poem 63 is no exception although it portrays "marriage" of another kind (cf. Forsyth, 1970; Sandy, 1971b).

[9] Shipton (1986:268ff.) reads the heifer's shunning of the yoke as essentially an enactment of the ritualistic head tossing associated with Cybele's devotees, and regards the inherent metaphor of submission as a side issue. But the recurrence of the yoke at the end of the poem (76, 84) suggests that there is more to the image than mere head tossing (pace Shipton).

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lifts from her lions at the end of the poem (84) symbolises the yoke that will tie him to her forever.

In seeking freedom Catullus' Attis has found perpetual slavery. Fordyce (1961:262) argues that contrasts of this kind are fundamental to the poem as a whole: civilization vs. nature, Western humanism vs. Eastern fanaticism. To this list Rubino (1974:157) adds sea vs. land, freedom vs. slavery, identity vs. loss of identity, male (Attis) vs. female (Cybele). But the most unsettling contrast in the poem is to be found in the protagonist himself: that of male vs. female within the same psyche. Through the figure of Attis the poem draws attention to gender as a determining element in the construction of identity: when gender becomes ambivalent the self is under threat (Janan, 1994:104). In this respect poem 63, like poem 51 (chapter 3), is concerned with the "dissolution of the subject" (Janan, 1994:102). With the forceful repetition of first-person pronouns in his regretful morning-after speech Attis seems desperately to be clutching at a sense of self.[10] But as Janan (1994:105) and Stevens (2013:244ff.) note, even language fails him. Not only is he struggling to define himself as a being-in-language, unable to find words that could describe his new self (*ego Maenas, ego mei pars, ego vir sterilis ero?* 69),[11] but his utterances are ultimately met with the noise of the wilderness. Even though Cybele hears Attis' mournful speech (*geminas deorum ad aures nova nuntia referens*, 75),[12] she replies not with words directed at him but with a command to her lion (Stevens, 2013:246). The only "response" to reach Attis' ear, and the final sound in the world of the poem, is the lion's roar (*fremit*, 86) (Stevens, 2013:246). Having been frightened back into a frenzy (*demens*, 89) Attis' reaction is also the animalistic one of flight (*fugit*, 89). This regression to the uncivilized is underscored by his return to the woods, now for the first time in the poem described as "wild" (*fera*, 89). The return is an unwilling one: "he" (*ille*, 90) is frightened into it, and into the life of a maid servant (*famula*, 90). The final image we see of Attis is that of a gender-ambivalent figure caught between his former male self and the feminized servant he resists to become.

The Attis of Catullus' poem is the ultimate liminary: identityless, sexless, submissive, and ultimately silent (Turner, 1969:102-103).[13] In leaving his fatherland he enters the stage of separation, the first phase of the ritual process (Turner, 1969:94ff.). Next he castrates himself, performing the initiation rites of Cybele's cult. In this liminal phase he experiences

[10] *Ego* appears 15 times in lines 50-73 and its derivatives 6 times (*mei, mihi*); the possessive adjective *mea* appears twice (50, 58).

[11] "Shall I be a Maenad, I a part of me, I a sterile man?"

[12] "[The sound] bringing unexpected news to the twin ears of the gods…" (cf. Quinn, 1973:295 ad loc.)

[13] Even before his castration he was in a precarious position. Skinner (1997:136) notes that in Greek sources adolescence is often portrayed as a liminal period in the life of a male citizen: he is both desirable to adult males but himself a would-be male citizen. This makes him sexually ambiguous (Skinner, 1997:136).

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communitas with his fellow initiates as they sing and dance on their way to the house of the goddess. This is the stage of invisibility, wilderness and "antistructure" where the initiates are ambiguous entities in between their former and new selves (cf. Turner, 1969:95-97): Attis and his companions have literally entered the dark wilderness (*per opaca nemora*, 32) and in their state of ecstasy they are not yet able to grasp what they have become. But the reaggregation, which should be the next and concluding stage in the ritual process, does not take place. Having woken up to the shocking truth of his/her "new" life, Attis is not united with Cybele in a new phase of structure and stability (Turner, 1969:95), but instead finds himself unable to accept this stage and the new identity that goes with it. His response is rebellion and he runs back to the sea, symbolically returning to the phase of separation. But unfortunately there is no turning back to the pre-liminal stage: the mutilation as well as the membership of the group is permanent (Van Gennep, 1960:71-72). This is the devastating realisation that dawns on Attis as he looks across the sea, standing on the literal boundary of the shore.[14] He is cut off from his fatherland, both literally and figuratively. Having scarred his former self, he cannot go back, but he has not been able to embrace the new self either. This is underscored by the many references to his "identity crisis": "I a woman, I a young man, I a lad, I a boy" (*ego mulier, ego adulescens, ego ephebus, ego puer,* 63);[15] "Shall I now be called a servant-girl of the gods and a maid servant to Cybele?" (*ego nunc deum ministra et Cybeles famula ferar?* 68); "Shall I be a Maenad, I a part of me, I a sterile man?" (*ego Maenas, ego mei pars, ego vir sterilis ero?*, 69). This is in stark contrast with his former status as darling of the sportsgrounds (64) and desired sexual object (65-67). What Attis' wavering between past and present in these lines accentuates is the contrast between his current status and marriage as the social institution which signifies the transition into manhood (Nauta, 2004:606-607). He resisted that transition by castrating himself, fleeing from "the yoke", and in the process he failed in his duty to his fatherland.[16] Lucretius describes castration as the appropriate fate for those who show no *gratia* towards their

[14] In poems 65 and 101 (chapter 2, p.85ff.) water is also the boundary between Catullus and his brother: first that of the unbreachable river Lethe in the Underworld, and then that of the sea he had to cross to reach his brother's grave. Even though he could get across the latter, the futility of the "conversation" with his brother underscores the inefficacy of such a journey. The many tears he sheds as his bids his brother a final farewell once more establish water as a permanent divide.

[15] Thomson (1997:383) prints *puber* in place of *mulier*, stating that "the expression is surely strained; it is better to emend, in the interests of consistency in Attis' list". Heyworth (1999:104-105), in a similar vein, refers to *mulier* as "an obvious interpolation by a reader who could not wait for the contrasting account of the present in 68: *ego nunc deum ministra*…" He goes on to suggest *iuvenis*, originally proposed by Schwabe, in which case the line would represent four stages of a man's life in reverse order. I would argue that *mulier* of the Veronese text is specifically suitable to Attis' state of mind and gender confusion (cf. Nauta, 2004:606 n.38). The latter is attested to by the switch between male and female references towards the end of the poem (*hunc*, 78, *qui*, 80, *tenerumque,* 88, *ille,* 89 and finally *famula*, 90). The very fact that he is inconsistent underscores the loss of identity which accompanies a loss of gender.

[16] Tuplin (1981:119) suggests that poem 63 "contains the theme of the wrongness of allowing *furens rabies* to carry one away from one's fatherland, friends, parents, and proper social interests".

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parents, or those who lack *gratia* and *pietas* in general (Nauta, 2004:616).[17] Duty to the fatherland forms an integral part of *pietas* (cf. Putnam, 1982:54). When Attis looks across the sea and bemoans his lot as eunuch his emphatic repetition of the vocative *patria* in the opening lines seems to suggest that he realises his violation of *pietas*: *patria o mei creatrix, patria o mea genetrix*...("O fatherland my creatress, o fatherland my birth mother", 50) and again *patria* (55). But Attis was not punished with castration for forsaking his fatherland: his *wilful* act of self-castration is what caused his failure of patriotic duty.[18] This would have been the perception of the contemporary Roman audience (Nauta, 2004:617). Foster (2009:77-78) argues that Catullus presents the reader with two very divergent images of Attis: on the one hand he functions as a parody of the traditional, manly epic hero (the hero of the verbose sort of writings Catullus and his fellow neoterics despised),[19] and on the other hand he is a "disturbingly realistic Greek or Roman 'Everyman', who awakens from a hellish dream" only to find himself in a dreamscape that is in fact very real. The self-castration of the Attis from myth was not likely to elicit any sympathy from Catullus' contemporary readers, but by making his Attis a youth from the Greco-Roman world the poet-speaker is able to create an unsettling image of one of their own people gone mad (Foster, 2009:82). This Attis, for a Roman audience, is close to home.

In poem 63 Catullus therefore presents the reader with an ironic adaptation of the Attis story where the myth is brought "up to date" with the speaker's own society (Quinn, 1972:250). Attis represents an ordinary young man (Elder, 1947:395) who found himself unable to make the transition from *puer delicatus* to married man which society expected of him (Quinn, 1972:250).[20] Shunning the yoke of marriage he physically and emotionally separated himself from that society by seeking out the Phrygian goddess and performing self-castration, thereby removing any possibility of fulfilling the role of husband. But, although he wilfully turned away from his duties to the fatherland, he fails in severing his connections with

[17] *Gallos attribuunt, quia, numen qui violarint / Matris et ingrati genitoribus inventi sint, / significare volunt indignos esse putandos, / vivam progeniem qui in oras luminis edant* (Lucr. 2.614-617) ("[To Cybele] they assign the Galli, because they wish to show that those who dishonour the divinity of the Mother and have proved themselves ungrateful towards their parents, should be deemed unworthy to contribute living progeny to the shores of the light") and *telaque praeportant, violenti signa furoris, / ingratos animos atque impia pectora volgi / conterrere metu quae possint numine divae* (Lucr. 2.621-623) ("They carry weapons in the front, symbols of their violent fury, so that they may terrorise the ungrateful minds and impious hearts of the masses into fear, aided by the goddess' power") (Latin text: Rouse, 1992:142-144).

[18] Bremmer (2004:564) notes the irony of Attis' choice of words *creatrix* and *genetrix*: they underscore the reality that Attis himself would never be able to have offspring.

[19] See the discussion of poems 36 and 95 (chapter 2) where Catullus rails against the logorrhoea of Volusius and Hortensius. In poem 95 the works of both these poets are put in stark contrast with the highly refined epyllion of the speaker's fellow neoteric Cinna.

[20] Attis' self-mutilation may be seen as an attempt on his part to preserve his status as *puer delicatus* (Skinner, 1997:137).

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the society that shaped him.[21] Through his yearning for their cultural institutions and the admiration he could only gain as a male, he also fails in the role he has chosen for himself in his ecstatic state at the start of the poem: that of eunuch devotee to an Eastern goddess. At the end of the poem he is frightened into obedience by a creature that is equally under her control and we are left with an image of him forced into lifelong submission as a servant girl (*ibi semper omne vitae spatium famula fuit*, 90). Panoussi (2003:114) argues that, by means of the close correspondences between the cult of Cybele, Maenadism and traditional marriage rites, Catullus supplies Attis with "a new, stable gender identity as a virgin bride", but that he fails, even in this new role, to pass into the next phase of marriage and so he must remain "a perpetual [M]aenad, excluded from the social milieu and devoid of a social identity". But he is a Maenad without the communitas of his fellow devotees because he has looked back from the wilderness and he yearns for what he has left behind. Catullus' Attis is isolated from the society that shaped him as a young male, and defying the new structure that forces him to be female. His physical gender-ambivalence is also an emotional one which threatens his very self. Alone in the knowledge of his mistake, Attis become the ultimate outcast: neither man nor woman, neither Greek nor foreigner, neither free citizen nor willing devotee. He/she must remain forever in the in-between space where the one self ends and another begins, but where they can never be reconciled into a stable whole.

Before I speculate on the meaning which Attis' story, as presented here, might have held for the Catullan speaker I will look at another figure from myth who rebelled against her family and society and paid the price, like Attis, of becoming a lifelong liminary.

6.2 POEM 64: ARIADNE

This is a poem of 408 lines on the joyful marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis, which includes a prophetic preview of the famous deeds of Achilles, the son to be born from their union. But it is the digression on an apparently unrelated event in the middle of the poem (lines 52-264) which lingers in the mind of the reader: Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus on the island of Dia (Naxos). Not only does she steal the show through her vivid and sympathetic depiction but her story takes up more than half of the poem.[22]

Fitzgerald (1995:143) argues that poem 64 has suffered under mainly two approaches: an overemphasis on the moralising message at the end of the poem, which leads scholars to

[21] Rubino (1975:293) suggests that in this respect he is not that different from the Catullan speaker of the erotic poems who employs in his love poems the very values of the Roman system he defies (see chapter 3).

[22] Since my focus is on Ariadne as an example of a mythical liminary I will be looking at the so-called story within the story (the ekphrasis on Ariadne alone on the shore) in detail and refer to the rest of the poem, the "frame", only where it is directly relevant to my discussion.

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interpret the poem as an ironic assessment of the Golden Age, in line with the depravity of the contemporary age;[23] and an attempt to detect the Catullus of the love poems in the figure of Ariadne.[24] Recent scholarship, on the other hand, seems to be mostly concerned with intertextual allusions and how they bring "other voices" into the poem.[25] In my opinion this last approach tends to suppress the originality of the poem: what Fitzgerald (1995:143) calls "the sensuality of the poem".[26] I would argue that the only way to do justice to poem 64, as with poem 63, is to look first and foremost at what Catullus explicitly offers his readers, what he omits from the known stories and what he changes.[27] Poem 64 is not a mere exercise in Alexandrian learnedness, or a moral judgment on contemporary times, nor is it a mask for the Catullan speaker from the love poems. It is a highly original poem, precisely because it can engage all of these elements without giving priority to one.

The poem starts with a flashback to the voyage of the Argo, on its way with "the flower of Greek youth" (*Argivae robora pubis*, 4) who mean to carry off the Golden Fleece (5). On this trip Peleus saw the sea nymph Thetis for the first time, rising bare-breasted from the waves with her sisters, and he immediately "burned with love" (*incensus amore*, 19) for her (16-19). At that moment Thetis did not look down on a marriage with a mortal and even Jupiter gave his consent (20-21).[28] Now the speaker turns towards the heroes in direct address, calling them "the ones born in the most desired age of all time" (*o nimis optato saeclorum tempore nati*, 22) and promising to sing their praise often, especially that of Peleus who was lucky enough to be granted the hand of a goddess (22-30). From this apparently joyous outburst Catullus moves forward in time to the wedding itself, using the historical present to lend a sense of immediacy to the scene. As all of Thessaly (*tota Thessalia*, 32-33) flock to the feast, from Cieros, Phthiotic Tempe, Crannon and Larissa (35-36), the lands lie idle, the bullocks grow weak, the vineyards and the trees are unkept, the oxen do not plough and the ploughs themselves start to rust (38-42). The wedding takes place in Pharsalus, specifically in Peleus' own palace (*regia*, 33, 44), which is described in terms of opulence (*quacumque opulenta recessit / regia*…; *auro…argento…ebur*), brightness (*fulgenti splendent…*

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[23] E.g., Curran, 1969; Bramble, 1970; Forsyth, 1975b; Dee (1982) in response, argues for a detached author who does not judge the episodes he depicts. Harmon (1973) suggests that, despite its flaws, the Catullan speaker still regards the Heroic Age as a better alternative to his own.
[24] E.g., Harkins, 1959; Putnam, 1982.
[25] E.g., Thomas, 1982; Zetzel, 1983; Gaisser, 1995; DeBrohun, 1999 & 2007; Clare, 1997.
[26] Goldhill (1994:70) notes that exempla may generate "an excess of signification beyond the controlling lines of the case it is designed to illustrate".
[27] Stevens (2013:214-215) argues that by means of periphrastic expressions (such as *dicuntur* (2), *fertur* (19), *perhibent* (76, 124), *ferunt* (212)) Catullus' speech act as poet surpasses those of his sources; "this in turn imposes on them a relative silence".
[28] Like most commentators, I accept *pater* to be a reference to the father of the gods.
The tricolon of *tum* coupled with Thetis' name in different cases (19-21) emphasises the meeting between human and goddess as a pivotal moment in the history of humankind.

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candet…collucent…splendida) and joy (*tota domus gaudet*) (43-46), before the speaker shifts his focus to the marriage bed, placed in the atrium (47-48). On the bed is a coverlet dyed a reddish-purple with the secretion of the shell-fish (49). This is the outer story or frame which directs the audience to a detailed account of the "story" embroidered on the coverlet.[29]

The ekphrasis is introduced by a sentence which will become increasingly ambiguous through Ariadne's story as well as the remainder of the poem: *haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris / heroum mira virtutes indicat arte* ("This coverlet, richly adorned with the figures of the men of yore, reveals in marvellous art the feats of heroes", 50-51). The word *priscis* suggests that the reader may expect an exposition of the kind of moral virtues which Romans identified with the past (Konstan, 1977:39). Yet from this statement the speaker jumps to Ariadne with an emphatic *namque*: *namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diae, / Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur / indomitos in corde gerens Ariadna furores* ("For there is Ariadne, looking out from the roaring shore of Dia and seeing Theseus sail away with his swift fleet; in her heart she carries an uncontrollable passion", 52-54). She cannot believe her eyes; having woken up from a "deceitful sleep" (*fallaci somno*, 56) she finds herself (*se cernat*) "miserable and deserted on the lonely sand" (*desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena*, 57). *Se cernat* suggests that Ariadne is able to regard herself as object, as if her body has become completely incapacitated. This is picked up by the simile comparing her to the statue of a bacchant (*ut effigies bacchantis*, 61). In this almost lifeless state the only action she is capable of is looking, a fact reinforced by the repetition of *prospicit* (61, 62) and the tautological ablative of instrument *ocellis* (60). Meanwhile the "heedless" Theseus (*immemor*, 58) is "fleeing" (*fugiens*, 58) – his striking of the water with his oars suggesting a sense of urgency on his part – and leaving his "unfulfilled promises" (*irrita promissa*) to Ariadne to the gale (*ventosae procellae*, 59). In her state of incapacity her hair becomes undone and the clothes fall from her body to her feet to be lapped around by the waves (63-68). Her only thought is Theseus, whom the speaker addresses directly before he turns our attention to her inner turmoil: "…on to you, Theseus, with all her heart, with all her soul, with all her lost mind, she was hanging" (*…toto ex te pectore, Theseu, / toto*

[29] In all extant versions the wedding takes place in the pastoral setting of Mount Pelion, sometimes specifically in Chiron's cave. Catullus not only changes the venue to the city of Pharsalus, thereby introducing the idea of urban opulence (Bramble, 1970:35), but he also gives the palace a distinctly Roman feel by describing the wedding couch as a *pulvinar geniale* (47) placed *sedibus in mediis* (48) (Konstan, 1977:6-7). This portrayal recalls the *lectus genialis* which stood in the atrium of a Roman house: a uniquely Roman custom (Fordyce, 1961:284; Thomson, 1997:400). For other Catullan departures from the traditional Peleus-Thetis story as well as the voyage of the Argo see Konstan (1977:3-11) and Bramble (1970, passim).

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animo, tota pendebat perdita mente, 69-70).[30] *A misera* (71) is clearly the speaker's own voice by means of which he leads his readers to pity the maiden "whom Venus drove mad with endless sorrow, sowing prickly cares in her heart" (*…assiduis quam luctibus externavit / spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas*, 71-72) the moment Theseus set foot in her home (73-75). Now the speaker interrupts the story to explain the reason for Theseus' visit in the first place: he came to face the Minotaur, willing to sacrifice his own life so that the Athenian youth may be spared (80-83). Ariadne fell in love with him at first sight (*simul*, 86), "not able to turn her fiery eyes away from him before she had caught fire throughout her body and was wholly burning in her very marrow" (*non prius ex illo flagrantia declinavit / lumina, quam cuncto concepit corpore flammam / funditus atque imis exarsit tota medullis*, 91-93). Catullus is describing to his audience details which the viewers of the coverlet in the poem could never see. His privileged insight into Ariadne's mind is underscored by his address to Cupid: "Oh, you who violently awaken passions with a pitiless heart, holy boy, who mixes the joys of people with cares" (*heu misere exagitans immiti corde furores / sancte puer, curis hominum qui gaudia misces*, 94-95) and the three rhetorical questions describing Ariadne's inner turmoil and fear as Theseus set out to confront the Minotaur: *qualibus…quantos…quanto* (97-100). After an account of Theseus' slaying of the monster and his escape from the labyrinth, the speaker states that he ought to return to his "main song" (*primo carmine*, 116) – i.e. Ariadne on the shore – and not digress any more, but in the process he gives a summary of how she left with Theseus and ended up on Dia where he abandoned her while she was asleep (117-123). Within this passage the reader is once more given privileged detail not available to the wedding guests viewing the coverlet: "(How) she left her father's face, the embrace of her sister and finally that of her mother who, desperately loving her unfortunate daughter, nonetheless was happy for her; above all these she chose the sweet love of Theseus" (*...ut linquens genitoris filia vultum, / ut consanguineae complexum, ut denique matris, / quae misera in gnata deperdita laeta<batur> / omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem,* 117-120).

Finally in line 124 we are back on the shore in the "present" of the story on the coverlet. The incapacitated, statue-like Ariadne from before the digression has realised the full horror of what has happened to her. She shouts in anger from her burning heart; now she climbs up the mountains to get a better view of the sea or runs into the surf, this time mindful of her clothing as she lifts her skirt above her knees (124-129). Now begins her soliloquy in which she first reproaches Theseus for being faithless (*perfide…perfide*, 132-133) after he had taken her from her fatherland (*patriis avectam…ab aris*, 132), for being forgetful (*immemor*,

[30] Gaisser (2009:118) notes that the apostrophe to Theseus, instead of evoking sympathy for him, only increases our sympathy for Ariadne: it underlines the fact that he is the cause of her suffering.

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135), cruel (*crudelis mentis*, 136), and finally for making the empty promises typical of a man on a mission (139-148). Next she reminds him of how she had saved his life, choosing him over her brother (half-brother in reality) (*et potius germanum amittere crevi*, 150): as payment she will be given as prey to wild beasts and birds and her body will never be buried (152-153). Surely he must be the offspring of a lioness or some other inhuman monster to repay her in such a way (154-157)? After this powerful insult, however, comes the most pathetic and poignant section of Ariadne's speech: even if Theseus could not marry her because of his father's traditionalist rules he could still have taken her with him (158-160) "to serve [him] as a slave-girl with pleasing duties, washing [his] white feet with clear water or making [his] bed with a purple coverlet" (*quae tibi iucundo famularer serva labore, / candida permulcens liquidis vestigia lymphis, / purpureave tuum consternens veste cubile*, 161-163). Realising the futility of her words in the absence of any hearer she turns to regret for the first time in her speech, bemoaning the fact that she had ever met Theseus (164-175) and fully aware of the hopelessness of her situation (176-187).

Feeling close to death in her despair she calls on the Eumenides to bring upon Theseus suffering similar to that which he brought upon her (192-201). She will never know this, but Jupiter himself gives the nod (204) and as Theseus sails home in victory he forgets (*oblito dimisit pectore*, 208) to change his sails to white, the sign his father bade him give when returning from Crete so that he would know already from a distance that his son was unharmed (228-237). Therefore, upon seeing the dark-blue sails Aegeus hurls himself headlong from the cliffs (243-244) and Theseus arrives at a house in mourning (246): "he himself received such grief as he had brought the child of Minos because of his forgetful mind" (*qualem Minoidi luctum / obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit*, 247-248). Meanwhile on the coverlet Ariadne, unaware of any of this, is still gazing sadly after the receding ship: "Deeply distressed she was turning over many cares in her mind" (*multiplices animo volvebat saucia curas*, 250). This is the last we see of Ariadne, exactly the same way we saw her the first time: *prospectans cedentem* (52-53; 251) (Thomson, 1997:422). But before leaving the ekphrasis Catullus describes another scene on the coverlet (*at parte ex alia*, 251): Bacchus arrives with his usual train of noisy followers "seeking you, Ariadne, and burning with love for you" (*te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore*, 253). The bacchants are engaged in their traditional procession of raging, head shaking, and displaying all the paraphernalia associated with their rites (254-258); they are beating tambourines and crashing cymbals (261-262), blowing hoarse sounding horns (263), "and the barbarian flute was screeching with a terrible tune" (*barbaraque horribili stridebat tibia cantu*, 264). On this cacophonous note we leave the ekphrasis to return to the outer story of Peleus and Thetis on their wedding day. The poem continues with the departure of the

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mortal guests and the arrival of the gods (267-302), the song of the Parcae in which they predict the highly successful and extremely bloody warrior's future awaiting Achilles (323-381), and finally the "moralising" epilogue in which Catullus bemoans the depravity of the contemporary age (382-408).

At first sight then poem 64 appears to be about "the good old days" of the Heroic Age when humankind upheld traditional virtues and gods mingled freely with humans. Then a happy union between the two "species" was possible. This is the outer story on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, which is also suggested in the inner story with the arrival of Bacchus who is coming to save and marry Ariadne. The "bliss" of such an age is put in stark contrast with the corruption of the speaker's contemporary age, which he bemoans in the moralising conclusion of the poem. Forsyth (1975b:43), however, notes that the "epilogue" of poem 64 is far from being that; in fact it compels us to scroll back and reconsider the poem as a whole.[31] Catullus longs for a time when gods and mortals freely mingled, yet, in his description of Peleus' wedding he explicitly states that the human guests departed before the arrival of the immortal ones (268). This detail is accentuated by the simile which compares their departure to the scattering of waves before the wind (269-277). Moreover, the largest section of the poem concerns "an act of *impietas*": Theseus' abandonment of Ariadne (Forsyth, 1975b:43).[32] With this in mind we should reconsider the phrase which introduces the ekphrasis: *haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris / heroum mira virtutes indicat arte* (50-51).

Konstan (1993:68) observes that, despite the double meaning of the singular *virtus* – denoting both military courage and moral excellence – *virtutes* in the plural form predominantly implies heroic deeds. With the sudden switch from "the feats of heroes" to Ariadne's desolation Catullus appears to be questioning the heroic ideal where success far outweighs its cost (Konstan, 1993:69). The very same man who would have laid down his life for his beloved Athens in order to spare her youths (81-82) is able to forsake the girl who had enabled him to achieve that very goal of freeing his city and her people.[33] Konstan

[31] I have argued throughout, like Janan (1994:90) and Miller (1994:75), that the Catullan oeuvre demands rereading from its readers: not only should poems be read in light of one another but each individual poem requires that the reader revisit preceding lines for a better understanding of the poem as a whole.

[32] The various dissonances between the idealisation of the Heroic Age in the poem's conclusion and negative elements in both the inner and outer narratives have been well documented and need not be repeated here (e.g., Curran, 1969; Forsyth, 1975b; Konstan, 1977). I am concerned with those of the Ariadne episode which particularly impact upon her liminal state.

[33] For the sake of his beloved Athens, we are told, Theseus was willing to lay down his life so that those of the Athenian youths may be spared (81-82). Lower down his father refers to his motivation for this undertaking as his *fervida virtus* (218). This is certainly the kind of *virtus* which entails both

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(1977:45) notes that *immemor* is the only accusation the Catullan speaker makes against Theseus (58).[34] This is a loaded charge in the Catullan oeuvre. In the discussion of poem 30 (chapter 4, p.175ff.) we saw that the betrayal inherent in forgetfulness, which involves the violation of *fides/pietas*, threatens the very existence of the betrayed self. The same disregard for the traditional codes of conduct described by *pietas, fides, gratia* and *benevolentia,* which the Catullan speaker so painfully experienced in his relationships with lovers and friends (e.g., poems 30, 73, 76), also features in Theseus' forgetfulness of Ariadne. The Catullan speaker's verdict on Theseus is picked up by Ariadne in her speech: she twice addresses him as *perfide* (132-133), describes men's words to women in general as untrustworthy (*nulla viri speret sermones esse fideles*, 144) and when she refers to Theseus in her prayer to Jupiter he is called "that faithless one" (*perfidus*, 174). Moreover, she also labels him as *immemor* and guilty of the violation of an oath (*devota domum periuria portas?* 135). These accusations closely echo Catullus' disillusionment in the poems addressed to Lesbia and to those friends whom he felt had betrayed him (cf. Wiseman, 1977:177; Adler, 1981:146-148; Konstan, 1993:70-71).[35] This does not imply that Ariadne's speech is autoallegorical (see below) but Catullus is certainly siding with her. Of Theseus' thoughts or feelings we learn nothing (Konstan, 1993:70) and he remains a fairly two-dimensional character. He is a hero in the conventional sense: he has the *virtutes* that make him such and at the same time a total disregard for an outsider to his greater cause of saving his fellow Athenians (Konstan, 1993:71). Erotic love does not come into the picture.[36] However, Ariadne presents his thoughtlessness as a violation of precisely those virtues traditionally associated with the family and the state, not with erotic love (Konstan, 1977:44, 78): *fides* (as mentioned above), *pietas* (he shows no care for the will of the gods, 134), *gratia* (he disregards the fact that she had saved his life, 149-151) and *benevolentia* (at the very least he should have taken her with him to serve him as a slave, 160-161).[37] In this respect she recalls the Catullus from the love poems who regards love as an "eternal pact of

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moral excellence and heroic courage. Theseus, unlike Achilles (mentioned below), seems to possess *virtus* in both senses of the word.

[34] Cf. Klingner, 1964:179.

[35] See chapter 4 (p.178 note 24) for the verbal echoes between Ariadne's speech and poem 30 as well as poem 60 (p.188ff.). In poem 77 Catullus' rhetorical questioning of Rufus' conduct starts with the same *sicine* which launches Ariadne's speech (77.3, chapter 4, p.193ff.). Other echoes, more thematic than verbal, include Catullus' description of Lesbia's words as something to be written on wind and water (poem 70.3-4, chapter 3, p.133ff.) which corresponds with Ariadne's verdict on Theseus' empty promises (*quae cuncta aereii discerpunt irrita venti*, 142) as well as Catullus' claim to have been nothing but true, faithful and honest in his relationship with Lesbia (...*cum se cogitat esse pium, / nec sanctam violasse fidem, nec foedere nullo / divum ad fallendos numine abusum homines*, poem 76.2-4, chapter 3, p.147ff.).

[36] Harmon (1973:318-319) suggests that Theseus is portrayed as the ideal Roman, idealised in literature, who would put *pater* and *patria* before anything else.

[37] Her reference to servitude (*famularer serva*, 161) recalls Attis' words of despair: *ministra…famula*, (63.68), establishing yet another link between the two. (Connections between Attis and Ariadne will be discussed below.)

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holy friendship" (109.6) and loved Lesbia "as a father loves his sons and sons in law" (72.4). Also, like Catullus, she chose her beloved over her family (120, translated above).[38] This tension between erotic and familial love is tragically acknowledged when Theseus' father commits suicide as a result, according to Catullus only, of his breach of *fides* towards Ariadne.[39]

This bring us back to the words introducing the ekphrasis: …*heroum mira virtutes indicat arte.* If the "feats of heroes" involve a gross violation of traditional *virtus* there is a serious flaw inherent in the heroic code.[40] A similar distrust may be detected in poem 68b where, just before he mentions the death of his brother there, Catullus addresses Troy as "the premature grave of all heroes and heroic feats" (*Troia virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis*, 90). With regard to Achilles at the end of the poem 64 Catullus appears to praise him in terms of traditional (epic), military virtue, however, the "testimony" to his *egregias virtutes* (348) consists solely of its victims (Konstan, 1977:47). Mothers will mourn their dead sons and the river Scamander will be clogged with the corpses of those he had slain (348ff.). Finally the Parcae sing that the last "witness" to his *virtutes* will be "the reward given him in death" (*morti…reddita praeda*, 362): "the snow-white limbs of a felled virgin" (*niveos perculsae virginis artus*, 364). These "witnesses" to Achilles' "great deeds" (*magnae virtutes*, 357) in sum paint a grim picture of the feats of heroes (Knopp, 1976:212). In light of this we need to reconsider Catullus' words at the start of the poem where he refers to the Heroic Age as "the most desired age of all time" (22).

The birth of Achilles, in Catullus' version, results from the launch of the Argo and the consequent meeting between Peleus and Thetis which led to marriage.[41] At the start of the poem he emphasises the fact that the Argo's maiden voyage was also the first sea voyage ever. The Argonauts' "daring" to brave the sea (*ausi sunt*, 6) contains an element of hubris; it suggests an abuse of nature (Bramble, 1970:36-37). This element of violation is continued in the description of the ship's "initiation" of the sea: "That ship first of all initiated the untried Amphitrite with its passage" (*illa rudem cursu prima imbuit Amphitriten,* 11). The image has unmistakable sexual overtones: *rudis* ("untried") is often used to describe a virgin whereas *imbuere* (literally "to moisten", but figuratively "to instruct/initiate") could signify a man's first

[38] In poem 58 Catullus claims to have loved Lesbia more than himself and his kin (*plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes*, 3).
[39] Konstan (1993:66) observes that Catullus appears to be the first writer to portray Aegeus' suicide as the result of Ariadne's wish for retribution.
[40] Cf. Bramble, 1970:38; Harmon, 1973:330; Konstan, 1977:80.
[41] See Fordyce (1961:280-281) and Konstan (1977:3-4) for a summary of Catullus' change of the traditional sequence of events.

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sexual encounter with a woman (Konstan, 1977:15-16).[42] The sexual motif is picked up by Thetis' acceptance of a marriage with Peleus: as nymph she may signify the sea, which is finally conquered by a mortal man (Konstan, 1993:63).[43] In this respect both nature and the female are dominated by the deeds of men, a theme which resonates throughout the poem.[44] As mentioned above, Achilles' *virtutes* will be attested to by the mothers who mourn at the graves of their sons: they untie their unkept hair and beat their drooping breasts (*cum incultum cano solvent a vertice crinem, / putridaque infirmis variabunt pectora palmis,* 350-351). This recalls the image of Ariadne standing in the surf with her hair undone and her breasts exposed as she laments Theseus' departure, her vulnerable nakedness symbolising Theseus' abandonment (Fitzgerald, 1995:165). From the beginning of the poem with the nymphs rising bare-breasted from the sea to gaze at the Argo through Ariadne, the mourning mothers and finally to the white limbs of Polyxena the feats of heroes in poem 64 are registered on the female body (Fitzgerald, 1995:165). All this was started by the first violation of the sea through the launching of the Argo.

Scholars have noted that the description of the Argo's first voyage at the start deceives the reader into believing that poem 64 will be about the expedition of the Argonauts, in particular the story of Jason and Medea (e.g., Gaisser, 1995:581; Clare, 1997:61). This belief is supported by the many allusions in the first lines to Euripides, Apollonius and Ennius' respective portrayals of this tragic love story (Klingner, 1964:156-161; Thomas, 1982; Zetzel, 1983:258ff.). When the poem turns out to be about the marriage between Peleus and Thetis, the reader is somewhat surprised. Yet, despite the unexpected change of theme, allusions to the story of Jason and Medea, as portrayed by Euripides, Apollonius and Ennius, appear throughout the poem.[45] In the Peleus-Thetis story it is their marriage which is related to the marriage of Jason and Medea; in the Theseus-Ariadne story it is Ariadne's desertion by her lover which is related to Medea's desertion by hers (Clare, 1997:80).[46] Some scholars argue that in the case of Peleus and Thetis these allusions introduce a sombre mood into their union, which is reinforced by the unhappy romance depicted on their marriage bed (with its own Medean echoes) (e.g., Curran, 1969:185; Konstan, 1977:69). In the case of the inner story, it has been suggested, traces of Medea reveal an ambivalent

[42] Catullus' choice of Neptune's wife as metaphor for the sea appears to support his interpretation.
[43] We are told that Thetis "did not look down on a marriage to a mortal" (*tum Thetis humanos non despexit hymenaeos*, 20); there is no indication that she was really happy about the prospect. In other versions of the myth she is downright averse to the idea.
[44] This is also the fundamental principle of Ecofeminism (cf. Quartarone, 2006).
[45] These have been have been well documented. See note 25 above as well as Klingner (1964:156-224 passim).
[46] Ariadne echoes Medea particularly in her speech (see Fordyce, 1961:295ff.; Clare, 1997:74ff.).

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heroine: Ariadne is not necessarily to be pitied (e.g., Harmon, 1973:327-328).[47] The allusions certainly make the ekphrasis more difficult to understand (Clare, 1997:81). On the one hand the reader is led to side with Ariadne since only her point of view is presented in the narrative. On the other hand the Medean allusions deny the poem any absolute judgement on right and wrong, justice and injustice (Clare, 2007:81). The tragic tale of Jason and Medea may cast a shadow over both the inner and outer stories of poem 64, but this is not necessarily the case (Clare, 1997:82).[48] Mythical exempla are by their very nature ambiguous – they serve both to show similarity and to reveal dissimilarity (cf. Feeney, 1992:38-39) – even more so when they are not explicitly invoked. I would suggest that the allusions to Medea have a multiple function: they present us with a well-known protagonist from tragedy, thereby making Ariadne's plight undeniably tragic,[49] and they allow judgement on the heroic Theseus to be reserved. Most importantly for my discussion, Medea is the quintessential outsider from Greco-Roman myth: not even the Heroic Age could accommodate her. On a metapoetic level she is both in the poem and not, speaking and silent, neither here nor there.

Medea's allusive presence in poem 64 signifies both the power and the ultimate powerlessness of words which Ariadne experiences. The abandoned girl's shouting to the winds emphasises the human need for the comfort of speech and response (Putnam, 1982:58). Ariadne has experienced both the emptiness of another's words, through Theseus' unfulfilled promises, and the futility of her own words in a setting devoid of human speech (Fitzgerald, 1995:157). The silent response of nature underscores her loneliness. With the arrival of Bacchus and his followers the natural silence is broken, however, it is replaced, not with human speech, but with a "noisy silence" which only confirms her isolation (Stevens, 2013:234). Fitzgerald (1995:155) states that in the end Ariadne is abandoned by the poet as well since he makes no mention of Bacchus' saving of her and her eventual deification.[50] For the informed reader this is merely hinted at by the other part of the coverlet where the god approaches with his boisterous entourage. This scene foreshadows the rest of Ariadne's story which would have been well known to Catullus' contemporary readers. The god marries her and even grants her immortality: another example of a happy union between a mortal and a god which was possible in the Heroic Age. Yet this is not the happy picture Catullus leaves us with.[51] From his point of view, which is also the only one he offers

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[47] Gaisser (1995:604) suggests that her curse reveals the grown-up Medea in her: she is lethal and she can kill at a distance, just like her literary counterpart.
[48] Zetzel (1983:255) notes that not all literary allusions need to have a specific resonance.
[49] This is also the case with the Medean allusions in poem 63 (see above).
[50] Gaisser (1995:607) rightly notes that the ekphrasis ends quite abruptly and even disappointingly.
[51] Putnam (1982:67-68) interprets the arrival of Bacchus as a sign of joy and new life waiting for Ariadne. However, the many parallels with Attis' situation deny such a reading (see below).

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his readers, Ariadne remains forever captured in a state of despair, standing on the shore and gazing after her beloved's receding ship.[52] Wiseman (1977:78) states that parallels between her situation and that of Attis should immediately make the reader uneasy: both Attis and Ariadne stand on the shore and look longingly across the sea against the backdrop of a wilderness they wish to escape. In the case of Attis the goddess Cybele sends her lion to drive him back into the forest and back into a state of madness and submission. In Ariadne's case the god Bacchus arrives with his train of raving devotees. Forsyth (1976a:563) suggests that Bacchus in this episode is like Cybele's lion: he comes to take Ariadne back into "the state of *furor*" she seeks to escape.[53] Whereas she was only *like* a statue of a bacchant when we first saw her, she will now become a real one (Gaisser, 1995:607). The ekphrasis literally and metaphorically ends on a jarring note with "the barbarian flute screeching with a terrible tune".[54] This impression of the bacchants recalls the Galli from the distressing story of Attis which, together with the image of the abandoned Ariadne remain in the reader's mind (Curran, 1969:180).[55] The parallel does not seem to predict a positive future for Ariadne (Wiseman, 1977:179; Forsyth, 1980a:103).

Like Attis in poem 63 Ariadne is a quintessential liminary. She goes through the phase of separation where she leaves her former life behind, literally by departing, and figuratively by committing herself to Theseus. This separation is underscored by the description of her leaving the embrace, first of her sister, and then of her mother (118), the latter recalling a young bride's ritualistic running back to her mother's arms from where the new husband must pull her. The transitional phase is concretised in the island of Dia: itself betwixt and between it serves as a stop-over for the Athenians on their way back home. By leaving Ariadne there Theseus consigns her to a liminal space. The typical characteristics of the liminal phase, those of wilderness and death (Turner, 1969:95), are reflected in the

[52] Forsyth (1980a:101) notes that to the guests looking at the coverlet Ariadne and Bacchus would have been the main figures in the scene, whereas to a reader Ariadne and Theseus dominate.
[53] She was portrayed in this state when she had first woken up and saw Theseus sail away, unable to believe what had just happened (see the translation of line 54 above). Towards the end of the ekphrasis she describes herself in this way as she calls upon the Eumenides to aid her "in [her] helplessness, burning and blinded [as she is] by a raging passion" (*…inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore*, 197). Her ability to see herself in this state in the second instance implies that she wishes for release from this state. I do not agree with Forsyth (1976a:563) that the *furor* Bacchus will drive Ariadne toward is that of "passionate love" shared with him, nor do I accept Wiseman's (1977:179) argument that Bacchus is coming to rape her. The concluding lines of the ekphrasis are ambivalent. We are told that Bacchus burned with love for Ariadne (*tuoque incensus amore*, 253) but we know nothing about her feelings. In fact, in Catullus' depiction she is oblivious to his arrival and still staring after someone whom she fell in love with in the same way (*qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam*, / *fluctibus in flavo saepe hospite suspirantem!* 97-98). The *furor* that awaits Ariadne is, like Attis', a madness of another kind (see below).
[54] Curran (1969:180) observes that Catullus does not show us a "happy ending" but focuses solely on the god's barbarous and freakish entourage (cf. Konstan, 1977:61).
[55] Similarities between Maenads and Galli have been noted above in the discussion of poem 63.

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landscape (*praeterea nullo colitur sola insula tecto,* 184; *nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta, / omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum,* 186-187).[56] Ariadne is aware of her entrapment: "No exit through the sea opens up for me as the waves pound on all sides" (*nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis,* 185). With the arrival of Bacchus there is a suggestion of hope. Yet we have seen that his presence is ambivalent at best. Ariadne finds partial reaggregation by being welcomed into the Bacchic circle, but this is not the society she belongs to. Attis on the other hand is violently forced into the community of Cybele worshippers. Both are to live in a perpetual state of Maenadism with its accompanying *furor*, in full awareness of what went before and what could have been after this stage in the ritual. It is this knowledge which makes them, trapped in the liminal phase and alone aware of another state of being, such pathetic and memorable characters. They are like the heroes of Dostoevsky's novels, alone in their knowledge of the truth, and alienated both in body and mind (Bakhtin, 1984:150).

Panoussi (2003:102) argues that Attis and Ariadne both fail at becoming members of their respective societies by not being able to fulfil the traditional roles of a husband and of a wife.[57] The both defy their communities. Attis resists societal conventions by rendering himself unmarriable. Ariadne leaves her own society in the hope to be welcomed into another.[58] Neither of them finds what they are looking for: instead of freedom Attis finds slavery; instead of love Ariadne finds rejection. Ironically they both have a "marriage" of some kind. Attis is joined for life to Cybele and even "deflowered" like a virgin. Ariadne will be married to Bacchus and welcomed into his thiasos. As a result they become eternal Maenads, permanently excluded from the social scene (Panoussi, 2003:102, 114).

Attis and Ariadne both leave their homelands and cross the sea in pursuit of a passion (like Medea); both wake up from a peaceful sleep to the horror of a new reality; both regret the actions which led to their current state and longingly look across the sea while they mourn for the homes they have left behind. As they grieve for what they have lost and what could

[56] "Moreover, the lonely island harbours no dwelling…There is no way of escape, no hope: everything is mute. Everything is deserted; everything shows death."
[57] Foster (2009:78) argues that in all extant versions of the Attis myth, even in Catullus', the protagonist's disastrous self-castration is the result of this own failure to make the transition from youth into adulthood. As far as Ariadne is concerned the scene of her first sight of and immediate infatuation with Theseus is described in terms which recall wedding songs (64.84-90): she is on her "chaste bed" (*castus lectulus*, 87-88), adorned with fragrant, colourful flowers (*expirans odores*, 87, *myrtos*, 89, *distinctos colores*, 90), "in her mother's soft embrace" (*in molli complexu matris*, 88) (Wiseman, 1969:20-21). Harmon (1973:322) suggests that the loss of Theseus prevents Ariadne from coming into her own. However, he does not relate this to marriage but to her own intense passion for the hero which would now remain unfulfilled. I do not agree that "growing up under Pasiphae's care…Ariadne has come to be very much like her mother for whom sexual passion is all-compelling" (Harmon, 1973:322); there is simply no evidence for this in the poem. But I do agree that Theseus' abandonment leaves her in a state of incompletion: a liminal state.
[58] Her words suggest that Theseus did promise her marriage (64.141).

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have been they are brought close to the reader through the description of their mental processes (Forsyth, 1976a:559). It is this intimacy with the characters which have led a number of scholars to argue that there is a bit of the Catullan persona to be detected in both Attis and Ariadne (Forsyth, 1970:69; cf. Harkins, 1959; Putnam, 1982:64ff.; Stevens, 2013:206ff., etc.). Wiseman (1977:177) remarks that Catullus "deliberately brings himself into the *Attis*" (63.91-93) – where the speaker directly addresses Cybele and asks to be overlooked by her – in the same way in which he brings himself into the Laodamia story in poem 68b (77-78), where he similarly speaks to Nemesis, expressing the wish that he may never undertake anything rashly which would be against the will of the gods.[59] In Catullus' poem 63 the religious aspects of the Attis-Cybele story hardly figure. Instead the speaker is concerned with the emotions of his protagonist, which he analyses "with a degree of personal passion" (Thomson, 1997:374).[60] Like Attis, Catullus was also driven by a mad passion (*vesano Catullo*, 7.10; *vesana flamma*, 100.7) to devote himself to Lesbia, and like Attis he regrets his actions, realising his mistake far too late (Forsyth, 1976a:558). Not only was he also like a slave to his mistress but in pursuing a relationship with her he too turned his back on his familial duties (Wiseman, 1985:181).[61] Cybele who "gelds" her devotees is not that different from Lesbia who "bursts the loins" of her many lovers (*ilia rumpens,* 11.20), and like the flower (*flos*) of Catullus' love, growing in the distant meadow, which was "touched" by the unfeeling Lesbia-as-plough (11.22-24), Attis used to be the *flos* of the gymnasium (63.64) before he fell under Cybele's spell, which robbed him of his manhood (Putnam, 1974:80; Janan, 1994:106). Furthermore, the displacement of the flower on the edge of a field and away from Rome corresponds with the mental displacement of the speaker in the same way in which Attis' separation from his Greek city answers his separation from his former identity (Janan, 1994:106). Through its mythical refiguring poem 63 may therefore present both the emasculating Lesbia from poem 11 as well as the intoxicating Lesbia from poem 51, combined in the figure of Cybele (Janan, 1994:107). "The same sequence of passion, self-destruction, and remorse narrated as mythic event is re-enacted as putative autobiography in the love poems" (Skinner, 1997:133). This may also be seen in poem 64. As Ariadne laments over the loss of her homeland and family, deeply regretting her misplaced trust in Theseus, she echoes the Catullan lover, who was betrayed by Lesbia (Skinner, 1997:131).[62] Moreover, she stands on the shore with the water lapping at her feet. This image recalls the water of the river Lethe lapping his brother's pale foot (65.5-6), as well as Attis' entrapment on the shore. And like Catullus' futile address to his

[59] *nil mihi tam valde placeat, Rhamnusia virgo, / quod temere invitis suscipiatur eris.*
[60] Wiseman (1977:177-178) argues that it is precisely in Catullus' handling of the emotions of his characters in poems 63 and 64 that he is unmatched by any of his predecessors.
[61] 58.3: *plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes*; 79.2: *cum tota gente, Catulle, tua*.
[62] See Adler, 1981:146-148.

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brother's mute ashes (101.4), Ariadne's words to the winds are in vain (64.186): both of them are aware of the inefficacy of speech. From the correspondences between Attis and Catullus, Ariadne and Catullus, as well as between Attis and Ariadne, "a swirling vortex of mutual identifications" comes into being, "all of which take place within the territory delimited by the Catullan poetic ego" (Miller, 1994:111). The mythical figures of Attis and Ariade are therefore not autoallegories of the Catullan speaker, but the correspondences among them suggests a fellowship of the mind: they are fellow liminaries with whom he can experience a sense of communitas.[63]

The mythical figures of Attis and Ariadne allow the poet to explore the vulnerability of gender identity in the turbulent socio-political world of late Republican Rome (Panoussi, 2003:101-102), a vulnerability which the Catullan speaker himself has experienced.[64] By inverting traditional gender patterns in poem 63 as well as in his love poems Catullus is able to convey the "social alienation" threating an independent male in a time when individual autonomy was increasingly limited, and a talented provincial was side-lined by the distorted socio-political system (Skinner, 1997:131, 142). Catullus achieves this by making Attis someone close to home (a young Greek instead of a Phrygian). Similarly, in poem 64 he places the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis in a Roman villa and gives Theseus distinctly Roman qualities. In this way the impression of the feats of heroes on the bodies of women and the violation of the sea come to comment on imperialist greed and its concommitant violation of traditional virtues. The moralising epilogue on mostly sexual depravities underscores the link between sexual and imperial gluttony found throughout the Catullan corpus. In the perpetual, god-induced maenadism of Attis and Ariadne the individual's fear "of the complete annihilation of the self in the face of an elusive yet overpowering state" reaches a climax (Panoussi, 2003:124). They both wake up to a liminal phase which should have been over. For Attis there should have been joy in his new role and union with Cybele; for Ariadne there should have been a voyage to her new home and new life with Theseus. For them the liminal stage has two phases. In the first there was joy and communitas induced by *furor*, in the second disillusion and the realisation that reaggregation is impossible. In the end Attis and Ariadne each experience *furor* of a different kind. This *furor* does not come from within themselves but is enforced by their changed circumstances.

Perhaps the Catullan speaker is suggesting, through Attis and Ariadne, that for those who do not fit society's mould the liminal is the only way of life. What the concluding lines of poem

[63] cf. Forsyth, 1976a:558.
[64] We saw this in poems 11 and 68b (chapter 3, p.150ff.) where the speaker casts himself in the female role to comment on the corrupt state of traditional Roman institutions, as well as on the exploitation of their subjects by Rome's politicians.

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64 describe is Catullus' own experience of displacement: there is no nostalgia for a bygone age or judgment of the here and now; instead there is a longing for an illusion which never was and never will be.

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CONCLUSION

The point of departure for this thesis has been to study a significant selection from the poems of Catullus (63 out of the 113) with the focus on the speaker as a peripheral figure in his poetic world. The objective was not only to demonstrate that such a reading of the Catullan corpus was possible, but also that it contributes to a better understanding of a unique literary personality and the world in which he lived.

The identity of such a literary personality is revealed in various ways. In the first place, as set out in chapter 1, the individual is defined not by being like others but precisely by being unlike others. For this reason society and "the other" play an important role in shaping the self. The "other", however, does not need to be a different person. By means of self-reflection the speaking subject is able to regard himself/herself as object and in the process achieve a greater sense of self-understanding. This engagement with the self occurs in times of crisis when the speaker finds himself/herself to be physically and/or figuratively in an ambiguous space. Being loaded with symbolic value, which denotes belonging and not-belonging, space not only informs the subject who occupies it, but space is in turn interpreted from the viewpoint of that particular subject. The reciprocal elucidation which exists between space and identity explains the changeability of the individual: like actors we take on different roles according to the requirements of our changing circumstances. Identity is therefore not fixed: it is an ever-evolving process. However, some unity over time is required to make the individual comprehensible. This continuity is made possible by the narrativity inherent in self-reflection. Not only do we think of our lives as stories and tend to occupy the role of storyteller in our own lives, taking ourselves as subject matter, but the interdependence of past, present and future in these life stories allows for the creation of a plot from which an individual consciousness emerges in its full complexity.

In this thesis the complex Catullan consciousness as a provincial in Rome, rejected lover, betrayed friend, masterly invective speaker and sympathizer with outcasts from myth has been revealed through his dialogic engagement with the self, through the liminal space, both physical and symbolic, which the speaker occupies as well as through the narrative which emerges as the poems in the collection are read back and forth. The Catullan speaker has emerged as an ambiguous figure. Like Turner's liminaries and Dostoevsky's hero he finds himself excluded from the social centre, at a distance from the reigning and traditional norms, often in the vulnerable position of being ridiculed, and isolated in his possession of "the truth", whether of what constitutes real poetic and physical beauty or of the value of true friendship. By means of self-reflective dialogue the Catullan speaker distances himself from himself and converses with himself as an autonomous other. In the process he reaches a

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greater sense of self-understanding as well as a better understanding of the often paradoxical world of late Republican Rome. The result of his dialogic introspection is a unique view of himself as well as a unique view of his world. This self is a liminal figure, vulnerable and nowhere at home; the world one of distorted values and corrupt individuals where a sensitive provincial who both defies societal norms and embraces the traditional values contained in for instance *amicitia* could never completely fit in. Like Attis and Ariadne the Catullan speaker ultimately finds himself betwixt and between, displaced and assigned to perpetual liminality.

By grouping together poems on a similar aspect of the speaker's liminality I have identified recurring patterns in the Catullan speaker's dealings with the people of his world and, as a result, his poetics of the periphery has been revealed. When the Catullan speaker displays his own urbanity in matters of taste, behaviour and writing criticizing those who clearly lack this sophistication, he adopts an authoritative stance of "us" (the sophisticated urbanites) against "them" (the unsophisticated rustics) in his poems. The group which constitutes "us" is select and small, sometimes consisting of the speaker alone and he often finds himself isolated in his possession of the truth. Moreover, his own provincial background undermines his confident pose and towards the end of each of the poems in this section his position in Roman society is revealed to be peripheral. With the death of his brother he is confronted with the concept of home. Claiming to have made Rome his home while his family duties lie in Verona and his brother lies buried in Troy the Catullan speaker experiences a profound sense of displacement and not-belonging. In this way the Catullan speaker as a peripheral figure in Rome emerges from his poems on urbanity and those on his brother's death.

When the Catullan speaker is in love he experiences a powerful sense of decentredness. Not only are his relationships imbalanced and is he always the one in the vulnerable position, but his own complete devotion and the intensity of his love leaves him fragmented, split between the extremes of love and hate. The fragmented psyche which emerges from these erotic poems engages with itself in dialogue as an independent interlocutor to reach a greater sense of self-understanding and a better grasp of the situation. This is the Catullan speaker as peripheral lover. A similar experience arises from his relationships with friends who disregard or betray him. Naïvely believing that traditional values are still revered in the corrupt world of late Republican Rome he finds himself disillusioned by the lack of reciprocity in intimate friendships, a symptom which has spilled over from the public world of political alliances. As he interrogates his friends on their indifference he portrays himself as misunderstood and undervalued while at the same time he reveals his peripheral position in friendships which he himself has misread. Once again the Catullan speaker finds himself

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alone in his knowledge of the true value of friendship, the realization of which leaves him disillusioned and decentred.

When it comes to lashing out at his enemies or despicable members of society the Catullan speaker delights in his harsh speech. Taking up the powerful pose of the god Priapus in many of his invective poems he threatens his adversaries with the most humiliating forms of sexual punishment. However, his loud exclamations mask a deep-seated anxiety on the speaker's part: the louder he protests the more vulnerable he feels. In each of these poems he has either lost or is about to lose something very precious to him. At the other extreme he openly describes his vulnerability in similarly crude sexual terms when he admits to having been abused by his superior during his stint in one of the Roman provinces. By portraying himself as the victim of a symbolic rape he aims to lash out at those in power who use and discard their underlings without a second thought. In the process he depicts his superiors as imperial gluttons but at the same time confirms his liminal status within the Roman system. This is the ambiguous speaker who emerges from Catullan invective.

Finally the Catullan speaker shows a close affinity with figures from myth who have been relegated to a liminal state of being through a conscious choice to defy societal norms. By pursuing a passion both Attis and Ariadne turn their backs on their respective societies, literally leaving their homes and their families. But, instead of finding the new sense of belonging they were seeking they find themselves to be in an in-between space where they only experience displacement. This in-between space is both literally and figuratively a liminal zone. Attis finds himself in the dark, inhospitable Phrygian woods having left the light and culture of a Greek city centre. Waking up after his night of religious frenzy and self-castration he deeply regrets what he has done and mourns for his former life which is now inaccessible. The new life which he was hoping to find in the service of Cybele is not what he had expected, but in his castrated state there is no alternative, no state beyond the liminal, and he is forever condemned to the life of a liminary. Ariadne is also literally in a liminal space on the island of Naxos where Theseus has abandoned her. Surrounded by sea she cannot go back to the home she has left behind or move on to the new home she was hoping to have with Theseus. Although the arrival of Bacchus implies a future for her and the promise of belonging, the ambivalence surrounding his cult and the barbaric portrayal of his entourage undermine any suggestions of bliss. Like Attis, Ariadne will remain in the liminal zone for the rest of her life. Through echoes of his own situation the mythical outcasts Attis and Ariadne come to signify that the liminal state of being is the only existence for someone, like the Catullan speaker, who does not quite fit in.

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The peripheral figure in Rome, the rejected lover, the undervalued friend, the ambiguous invective speaker and the mythological outcast function as recurring motifs in Catullus' poems. These motifs illustrate Catullus' poetics of the periphery and how it brings the question of identity to the fore. Catullus the individual is never described in the poems, but by presenting his view on the world and his view of himself in that world a complex personality emerges, one who feels nowhere at home. This is the identity which we constantly see him negotiating throughout the corpus when he displays his urbanity, defies tradition, struggles with his complex feelings of love and hate, interrogates his disinterested friends, lashes out at a rival or portrays a mythological outcast in a sympathetic light. As the poems in the Catullan corpus are read and reread a number of "stories" emerge which, through their dialogic engagement, reveal the Catullan consciousness in all its dencentred complexity: this is the poetics of the periphery.

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