

ARIADNE AND THE WHIRLWIND OF FATE:
FIGURES OF CONFUSION IN CATULLUS 64.149–57

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IN THE FINAL LINES OF POEM 64, Catullus laments the shameful confusion of familial and social relationships that has turned away the favor of the gods from mankind (405–8):

omnia fanda nefanda malo permixta furore
justificam nobis mentem avertere deorum.
quare nec tales dignantur visere coetus,
nec se contingi patiuntur lumine claro.

While these words are presented as a commentary on the decline of human morality from the “heroic age” in which the poem’s stories are set, the phrase *omnia fanda nefanda . . . permixta* may also be seen to summarize what is perhaps the defining characteristic of the epyllion as a whole: confusion. For indeed, it has long been noticed that Catullus constructs his complicated, labyrinthine poem from an especially rich combination of multilayered voices, competing and often contradictory points of view, and conflicting chronologies, all woven into an elaborate design worthy of the epic poems it emulates.¹ This paper focuses closely on one passage (149–57) within Ariadne’s lament, in which Ariadne’s words (and the situation that elicits them) serve simultaneously to reflect the poem’s multiple levels of confusion as well as to prefigure and to comment on the unnatural conflation of relationships—not only between characters in the poem, but also between the poem and its predecessors—engendered by that confusion. Specifically, I will suggest that the manipulation by Catullus of the implications of Ariadne’s use of the words *germanus* and *fallax* to describe the Minotaur and Theseus, as well as her metaphorical use of *turbo* to describe the battle within the labyrinth, results in certain striking figures of confusion. When combined with the additional turmoil of “further voices” brought into play through the allusive layering behind Ariadne’s words, these figures themselves contribute to create an uncomfortable conflation of

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1. See esp. J. H. Gaisser, "Threads in the Labyrinth: Competing Views and Voices in Catullus 64," *AJP* 116 (1995): 579–616; also C. Weber, "Two Chronological Contradictions in Catullus 64," *TAPhA* 113 (1983): 263–71; J. C. Bramble, "Structure and Ambiguity in Catullus LXIV," *PCPhS* 16 (1970): 22–41.

relationships both within 64 itself and in the dialogue in which Catullus engages with his primary allusive models.

Let me take a moment to situate our passage within the poem. When we are first introduced to Ariadne at the opening of the narrator's description of the coverlet (52–57), she has just awakened from “deceitful sleep” (*fallaci somno*, 56) and does not yet fully believe what she sees: Theseus is sailing away and she is alone, abandoned on Naxos. She stands still in the water, “like a stony statue of a bacchant” (*saxea ut effigies bacchantis*, 61), her clothes falling from her body and lapped by the waves as she looks forth from the island toward the departing ship of her beloved. This initial description of Ariadne is followed by a series of flashbacks and digressions in which the narrator recalls the events leading to her abandonment (71–120). Finally, in 121–23, we are brought back to Ariadne on Naxos, where Theseus left her, “her eyes bound by sleep” (*devinctam lumina somno*, 122). This is the same “deceitful sleep” from which Ariadne had just awakened in line 56.

But the narrator's flashbacks and digressions have allowed a considerable amount of “time” to pass for Ariadne (and for the reader) since her abandonment. When she is described in 124–31, she is no longer the “Bacchant statue” whose clothing was tossed in the waves. She has since climbed the island's rugged mountains many times; and now when she runs out into the sea, she takes care to lift her garments above the water (129). In addition, she has abandoned her prior stony silence. When she begins her lament, it appears that she now perceives all too clearly the true nature of Theseus' behavior toward her.²

Ariadne's concentration at the beginning of her lament (132–48) is on Theseus' false promises of marriage that formerly (*quondam*, 139) persuaded her to betray her family and leave home, as well as on her recognition now (*nunc*, 143) that he was duplicitous from the very beginning.³ With this, we have arrived at the passage with which we are most closely concerned, lines 149–57:

certe ego te in medio versantem turbine leti	
eripui, et potius germanum amittere crevi,	150
quam tibi fallaci supremo in tempore dessem.	
pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque	
praeda, neque iniacta tumulabor mortua terra.	
quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena?	
quod mare conceptum spumantibus expuit undis,	155
quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae vasta Charybdis,	
talia qui reddis pro dulci praemia vita?	

2. By no means has Ariadne fully recovered, however; she is still described as “raging with madness in her burning heart” (*ardenti corde furentem*) in 124, words that recall vividly the narrator's initial description of her in 54: *indomitos in corde gerens Ariadna furores*.

3. Ariadne's obsession throughout her lament is with Theseus' perfidy and duplicity: see, e.g., *perfide* (132, 133), *perfidus* (174), *periuria* (135, 148), *fallaci* (151), *malus* (175), *celans . . . crudelia consilia* (175–76; see note 10 below). Noteworthy here is the observation by Michael Putnam: “The repetition of *perfide*, with which the indictment opens, is, by standards Catullus sets elsewhere, overwhelming”; see M. C. J. Putnam, “The Art of Catullus 64,” *HSPH* 65 (1961): 175.

These lines themselves can be divided readily into two sections, 149–53 and 154–57. When in 149 Ariadne turns to herself and recalls her own prior actions, there is a peculiar selectivity in her words, as she concentrates solely on her rescue of Theseus from death and then, more precisely, on her “choice” (*crevi*, 150) between his life and that of her brother. The crucial nature of Ariadne’s decision is clear: in 152–53, it appears that her mistaken choice will result in her own death. Later in her lament (177–81), she identifies her brother’s slaughter as the act that has separated her completely and irrevocably from her home and family. The second section of the passage, 154–57, consists of Ariadne’s musings on the monstrous origin of Theseus. We shall return later to Ariadne’s bitter accusations concerning Theseus’ parentage. Let us now, however, look more closely at the specific nature of Ariadne’s choice in 150–51.

Ariadne’s expression of regret for the death of her brother has long been acknowledged as one of the most difficult passages in the poem to interpret satisfactorily. If we consider her words within the wider setting of the Theseus and Ariadne narrative, we see that the emphasis on her brother in 150 is decidedly Ariadne’s own. When the narrator described her departure from Crete in 116–20, mention was made of her separation from her father, sister, and mother, in order to follow her beloved Theseus: no brother. But for Ariadne herself, the decisive choice—indeed, the only one worthy of mention—was that between Theseus and her brother.

Scholarly opinion on these lines has been divided primarily between those who see the reference to Ariadne’s brother in terms of the poem’s allusive fabric and those who argue for a personal involvement on the part of the Catullan lyric voice.⁴ First, concerning allusive design: it is clear that Catullus has constructed his poem, and especially the story of Ariadne and Theseus on the tapestry, using as his primary nexus of allusions the myth of Medea; in particular, the literary versions of the myth found in Euripides’ *Medea*, Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, and Ennius’ *Medea Exul*.⁵ Ariadne’s lament relies very much on the speeches of these earlier *Medeas*.⁶ Many scholars have attributed this unexpected reference by Ariadne to her brother’s death to Catullus’ preoccupation with Medea. Yet it is regularly noted that Ariadne’s words, in their own context, are unsettling.⁷ For her brother—or, strictly speaking, half-brother—was no ordinary sibling, but the Minotaur himself.

4. See J. E. G. Zetzel, “Catullus and the Poetics of Allusion,” *ICS* 8 (1983): 251–86; W. Clausen, “Ariadne’s Leave-Taking: Catullus 64.116–20,” *ICS* 2 (1977): 219–23; F. Klingner, “Catullus’ Peleus-Epos,” in *Studien zur griechischen und römischen Literatur* (Zürich, 1964): 156–224; M. Stoevesandt, “Catull 64 und die *Ilias*. Das Peleus-Thetis Epyllion im Lichte der neueren Homer-Forschung,” *WJA*, n.f., 20 (1994/95): 167–205, for readings concerned with an allusive approach; for involvement of the Catullan lyric voice, see esp. Putnam, “Art of Catullus” (note 3 above), 165–205; also D. F. S. Thomson, “Aspects of Unity in Catullus 64,” *CJ* 57 (1961): 49–57. Ariadne’s concern for her brother’s death is expressed again, in different terms, at 180–81: “an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui / respersum iuvenem fraterna caede secuta?”

5. Literary versions of Medea’s myth inform the poem from the very beginning; see Klingner, “Catullus’ Peleus-Epos” (note 4 above), 156–59; Zetzel, “Poetics of Allusion” (note 4 above), 257–58; R. F. Thomas, “Catullus and the Poetics of Poetic Reference,” *AJP* 103 (1982): 144–64; Gaisser, “Threads in the Labyrinth” (note 1 above), esp. 581.

6. Eur. *Med.* 465–519 esp.; Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 4.355–90; Enn. *Medea Exul* 276–77V = 217–18J.

7. This is noted by each author cited in note 4 above. Clausen, “Ariadne’s Leave-Taking,” 220 states this most directly: “Apollonius had a clear dramatic purpose, Catullus did not; thus he seems inconsistent . . . as if

On the opposite end of the spectrum are those critics who read the expression of sisterly concern on Ariadne's part as reflective of an identification of her voice with the Catullan lyric voice as we know it from his "subjective" poems. It has for some time been noticed that, especially in the speeches of Ariadne and Aegeus, the poet employs words, images, and themes, and indeed expresses concerns—about fidelity and loss, or the importance of the *domus*—quite closely related to those of the Catullan lyric speaker.⁸ The expression of a lover's choice between an unfaithful beloved and the lover's own family, specifically and exclusively represented by a brother, appears to mirror the picture of Catullus' life as we "know" it from his subjective lyrics. Within the narrative of the tapestry in 64, the shared words *sed quid ego* in the voice first of the Catullan narrator, as he introduces Ariadne's desertion and lament (116), and only a little later in the voice of Ariadne herself (164), serve further to encourage this conflation of voices.⁹

Already, then, there is a mixed chorus of "further voices" involved in Ariadne's words; and these additional voices themselves serve simultaneously both to inform and to confound the meaning of her words in their immediate context. What is still missing, however, is a recognition of a voice and situation that we can attribute to Ariadne specifically as her own, "in character," at this moment in her story. Who is Ariadne? How do these words fit her situation in *this* poem?

I believe that an answer to this question can be found in Ariadne's reassessment throughout her lament of Theseus' character and actions. At the height of her realization of Theseus' faithlessness, deception, and cruelty toward her, Ariadne recognizes—unhappily—that she has made the wrong choice between Theseus and her brother. This mistake, which has cut her off from all that was life for her, was the result of her inability to discern the difference between her brother, the monstrous Minotaur, and the falsely attractive but genuinely cruel Theseus, whose nature was kept concealed so that he might execute his own designs successfully.¹⁰ A closer look at her words will show that, in a sense, Ariadne has mixed up her monsters.

he were thinking rather of Medea's brother than of the Minotaur." Klingner, "Catullus Peleus-Epos," 194, however, insists: "Doch darf man nicht meinen, Catull habe nicht gewusst, was er wollte, als er sich des Apsyrtosmotivs aus der Medeasage bediente . . . Es ist die Dialektik der Leidenschaft, die sich zu diesem Äussersten versteigt."

8. See especially M. C. J. Putnam, "Art of Catullus." This Catullan voice includes direct entrances by the Catullan *ego* into the longer poems, e.g., 68.91–100.

9. Klingner, "Catullus Peleus Epos," 195 notes that Ariadne has no immediate audience in Catullus' poem, in contrast to Medea in Euripides, Ennius, or Apollonius, with the result that her situation resembles more closely that of the lyric speaker. Ariadne's lack of audience within the poem means that no one can ask our question initially, either ("But isn't your brother the Minotaur?"), so that Ariadne's statement very much works on the *reader* as implied audience.

10. The "straightforward" monstrosity of the Minotaur over against Theseus' duplicitous concealment of his true (treacherous) nature is emphasized in Ariadne's juxtaposition of the two figures later in her speech, at 173–76: "indomito nec dira ferens stipendia tauro / perfidus in Creta religasset navita funem, / nec malus hic celans dulci crudelia forma / consilia in nostris requiesset sedibus hospes!" Here the Minotaur, as *indomitus taurus* who requires *dira stipendia*, is indeed monstrous; but Theseus, referred to by Ariadne first as *perfidus navita*, then as *malus hospes* who "disguises his cruel designs in a pleasing appearance," is decidedly (at least in Ariadne's view) the more treacherous of the two.

In 150–51, Ariadne emphatically recalls her choice. *Germanum* alone describes her brother, and the verb *amittere* disguises murder as loss.¹¹ In the following line, Theseus' name is replaced by the adjective *fallaci*; and *dessem* balances *amittere*. It is Ariadne's use of *fallaci* for Theseus, I believe, that emphasizes her real concern at this moment, and also encourages the reader to return to *germanum* in the previous line.¹² *Germanus* is a particularly startling word when used by Ariadne to describe her relationship to the Minotaur. Most often an adjective itself, *germanus* is regularly used to describe full siblings, brothers or sisters who share both parents; and it is often applied to twins.¹³ The term, therefore, appears manifestly inappropriate to describe Ariadne's relationship with her monstrous sibling.

More germane to Ariadne's immediate situation, I would argue, is the fact that the adjective *germanus*, by extension from its use for especially close relationships, also carries the meaning "true" or "real".¹⁴ In a sense, then, Ariadne has found words perfectly suited to her peculiar dilemma. More than a decision between her brother and her beloved, Ariadne's fateful choice was the result of her inability to distinguish true (*germanus*) from false (*fallax*), reality from duplicity.¹⁵ The monstrous identity of the Minotaur is downplayed in Ariadne's words because it is the more consequential "monstrous falseness" of Theseus that is at issue for her.

As we see in lines 152–53, in direct exchange for Ariadne's help (*pro quo*, 152), Theseus has left *her* to be torn apart by wild beasts and then left unburied (153), a fate suspiciously similar to that he himself might have suffered: in 79–83, the Minotaur's feast (*dapem*) consisted of *funera nec funera*. In his desertion of Ariadne, therefore, Theseus has proven that his own cruel nature is directly comparable to that of the Minotaur. Ariadne's reference to the Minotaur as "true" brother becomes, then, a mirror of her experience of her would-be beloved as "false."¹⁶

11. These words read more easily as "death" when later echoed in Aegeus' belief that Theseus is "lost to fate" (*amissum . . . fato*) in 245.

12. I thank the anonymous reader who noted in addition that *germanum* and *fallaci* are juxtaposed metrically in these lines, as *germanum* occupies the position just after the 3-strong caesura in 150, and *fallaci* is placed just before the 3-strong caesura in 151.

13. OLD, s.v. 1. There are exceptions to the rule that both parents must be shared, but the emphasis is always on a relationship that is particularly marked by similarity or closeness. See TLL, s.v. 1914.34–1920.23; also E. Norden, "Germani. Ein grammatisch-ethnologisches Problem," *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1918): 95–138, esp. 109–10; R. Maltby, *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (Leeds, 1991), 258.

14. OLD, s.v. 3 for *germanus* meaning "true," "real," "genuine," "pure." Would a Roman reader make the connection between these two meanings? *Germanus* is used to mean "genuine" or "true" as early as Plautus, who uses the word frequently, both literally (for brothers) and in this extended sense (TLL, s.v. 1914.76–1919.75). Cicero also employs the word often in this sense of "real" or "true" (TLL, s.v. 1919.43–79), so one can be sure that the secondary meaning would have been explicit for Catullus' contemporary audience. The word's proximity to, and pairing against, *fallaci* in these lines would nearly assure a recognition of the pun by a literary-minded Roman reader.

Catullus himself elsewhere uses *germanam* only once, to mean "sister" (91.5), but there is no connection between the two instances, nor is there a pun implicit in the other usage.

15. For Ariadne's concentration on Theseus' duplicity in her lament, see note 3 above. Theseus' falseness in 151, and Ariadne's recognition of it, may recall as well her "first awakening" and realization of Theseus' deception in 56, where sleep is similarly characterized as *fallax*; and *fallaci* holds the same position in the hexameter in both 56 and 151.

16. Ariadne's words do, ironically, ring true in the end, in that the Minotaur was in any case more genuinely her brother than was Theseus, as it has proved, a faithful lover.

While we have now arrived at a meaning for *germanum* that fits Ariadne's situation in Catullus' poem, nonetheless we must remain unsure whether this extended meaning is intended by Ariadne herself, "in character," or whether it is to be ascribed instead to the poet's voice and concerns. If the specific opposition "true"-*"false"* is to be credited more directly to Catullus himself (as I think it must be), the juxtaposition of *germanum* and *fallaci* may nevertheless hold a related, though somewhat different, rhetorical force when employed by Ariadne in her own voice. "In character," Ariadne herself, whether consciously or not, has heightened the nature of her own sacrifice by referring to her half-brother not as the monstrous Minotaur but as true brother, thereby making her treatment at the hands of Theseus appear even more pitiable. Her employment of *germanum* over against *fallaci* serves to increase the pathos of her own situation in the eyes of the "jury" she seems to imagine arrayed before her as she delivers her monologue. Even if we view Ariadne's words as innocent of deliberate manipulation on her own part, her angry despair itself seems to have led her to employ a rhetorical antithesis that did not exist in the actual situation she is recalling. The fact that Ariadne may indeed recognize her Minotaur brother as monstrous (and so has not "forgotten" his true nature) is suggested by line 173, in which, as we have seen, she refers to him as *indomito tauro*.

From the reader's (and the poet's) point of view, a recognition of Ariadne's brother as the monstrous Minotaur is necessary if we are to understand that Ariadne's choice (whether she herself fully realizes it or not) was actually between different types of monsters: the "genuine" monster who also happened to have been her brother, and the monstrously duplicitous man who pretended to be her lover but has now abandoned her.

The question of how Ariadne's Minotaur-brother is to be viewed, either through the reader's eyes or through those of Ariadne, is never fully resolved by the poem; and the "further voices" of Medea and Catullus, each with her or his own brother, continue also to inform the picture.¹⁷ If our reading of *germanus* and *fallax* as "true" and "false" is correct, the poet himself may have included a commentary on the situation his poetry has created, as the confused crowd of abandoned women, lovers, brothers, and monsters involved in Ariadne's situation makes it nearly impossible to distinguish what is "real" from what is "fictitious," whether for Ariadne herself or for the reader.

Ariadne's confused inability to distinguish accurately between Theseus and her brother is heightened by the appearance of the image *turbo* in 149. Ariadne uses the word *turbo* metaphorically to represent Theseus' tumultuous encounter with the Minotaur, and by extension the labyrinth itself. She reports with confidence (*certe*) here that it was she who snatched Theseus from this "whirlwind of death" (*turbine leti*, 149).

In fact, Ariadne's use of the word *turbo* recalls vividly (and verbally) Theseus' battle with the Minotaur as it was described in 105-11; however,

17. On the lack of resolution of the poem's different viewpoints, see Gaisser, "Threads in the Labyrinth," 608.

her report of the battle, and her use of *turbo* as metaphor, are not quite consistent with the narrator's depiction of the encounter in the earlier passage. The narrator himself, like Ariadne, described the battle indirectly (that is, figuratively rather than literally), in this case through an elaborate simile:

nam velut in summo quotientem brachia Tauro 105
 quercum aut conigeram sudanti cortice pinum
 indomitus **turbo** contorquens flamine robur,
 eruit (illa procul radicis **exturbata**
 prona cadit, late quaevis cumque obvia frangens),
 sic domito saevum prostravit corpore Theseus 110
 nequiquam vanis iactantem cornua ventis.

This simile, like Ariadne's metaphor, involved the image *turbo*. Within the narrator's simile, however, Theseus himself was compared to the *indomitus turbo* (107) while the Minotaur was *exturbata* (108); and outside the simile, the Minotaur died *domito corpore* (110). We have noted already that later in her speech Ariadne describes the Minotaur as *indomito tauro* (173), an expression close to *indomitus turbo*.¹⁸ And when the narrator first introduced Ariadne, she herself was bearing in her heart *indomitos furores* (54).

Ariadne's use of the word *turbo* recalls and rearranges the uncomfortable relationships between the characters already evident in the earlier simile. Through this shared language, connections are suggested, not only between Theseus and the Minotaur, but also between Ariadne and her brother (and even between Ariadne and Theseus).¹⁹ *Turbo* thus becomes a particularly evocative image in regard to Ariadne's choice in 150, since the confusion of the whirlwind might well be expected to make proper discernment more difficult, especially if the two combatants possess similar traits. In fact, it would seem from Ariadne's use of *turbo* to describe not Theseus but rather the labyrinth, or even her brother, that she "erroneously" applied *turbo* to the wrong combatant in the first place.²⁰

Turbo appears once more in poem 64.²¹ At 314, in the narrator's description of the Fates, *turbo* (*turbine*) meaning "flywheel" helps to spin the thread that determines the length of life (and so the time of death) for mortals (*libratum tereti versabat turbine fusum*, 314). When Ariadne snatches Theseus "from the whirlwind of death" (*turbine leti*) in 149, therefore, it

18. This relationship between *tauro* and *turbo* is perhaps in play in their use in lines 105 and 107 as well. There is perhaps a “confused echo” of the earlier passage in Ariadne’s description of her brother in 173.

19. In addition, the imagery within the narrator's simile itself recalls the death of Medea's brother Apsyrtus, whom Jason killed in Apollonius' *Argonautica* "like the slaughterer at a sacrifice slays a huge, horned bull" (4.468–69); see Gaisser, "Threads in the Labyrinth," 599; also Clausen, "Ariadne's Leave-Taking," p. 220, n. 5.

20. The appearance of *turbo* in Ariadne's lament perhaps contributes to the reader's uncertainty concerning Ariadne's vantage point in regard to the battle itself. Does her own use of *turbo* "place her at the site," thereby implicating her more directly in the battle's outcome? Or does her seeming "misapplication" of the word serve to dissociate her from the action as it occurred? We are offered too little information to decide with certainty.

21. *Turbo* appears only once in Catullus outside 64, in a simile at 68.63–66. In 68, Allius' aid to Catullus in his time of need is compared to the welcome appearance of a gentle breeze to sailors tossed about in a dark storm (*in nigro . . . turbine*, 63), a sign of answered prayers to Castor and Pollux.

would seem that she herself assumes, for a moment, the role of fate.²² This characterization of Ariadne (and so of her choice) is further supported by Aegeus' words in 245, when he mistakenly believes that Theseus has been lost to fate (*amisum fato*), words that recall Ariadne's decision instead "to lose her brother" (*germanum amittere*) in 150.²³

As with her use of *germanum* and *fallaci*, we cannot be sure to what extent Ariadne herself ("in character") is aware of the wider implications of her use of *turbo*. In 149–51, she characterizes her role as quite similar to that of fate when she recalls that she snatched Theseus from death and claims that she herself held the power to decide the fates of both Theseus and her brother. Yet in exchange for her gift of "sweet life" to him (*pro quo*, 152; *pro dulci vita*, 157), Theseus himself has now abandoned her to death.

Was Ariadne, then, an agent of fate, or one of its victims (or both)? According to the narrator, Theseus as *turbo* destroyed the Minotaur, then he guided his own steps from the labyrinth with the aid of the slender thread (*tenui filo*, 113). This thread itself seems in retrospect to have been related to the "light threads" spun by the Fates (*fila*, 312; *levi filo*, 317). If, as the myth usually has it, Ariadne herself provided this thread (a detail of the story not supplied by Catullus), has she, whether knowingly or not, entrusted to Theseus the thread of fate?²⁴ If so, the results have proven unhappy both for her "brother" and for herself.

Because the narrator and Ariadne both use the word *turbo*, but with different meanings, it is difficult to distinguish between Ariadne, the narrator, and the poet himself as the one orchestrating the words of both. As we have seen, *turbo* is used literally only in 314, where it comprises part of the spinning mechanism of the Parcae. When it is used to describe the combatants within the labyrinth, *turbo* is figured, first as simile (by the narrator), then as metaphor (by Ariadne). This twice-figured *turbo* may itself serve as a reminder that the "reality" of the fight could only be experienced by the participants themselves, and that its outcome was ultimately controlled by fate.

The shifting senses of *turbo*, then, whether used figuratively or literally, by the narrator or by Ariadne, reflect the difficulty in discerning relations between characters and situations, and even between "true" and "false," as *turbo* refers alternately to Theseus, or to the Minotaur (and his labyrinth), or even to fate itself, whose temporary agents would seem to include both Theseus and Ariadne.

The confusion figured in *turbo*, and the difficulty in distinguishing characters and relationships, continues to inform Ariadne's words as she shifts her focus back to Theseus in 154–57, this time to cast aspersions upon the

22. There is a similarity in language and placement in the words of 314 (*versabat turbine fusum*) and those in 149 (*versantem turbine leti*).

23. While the connections are not as prominent in 149–57 as elsewhere, Aegeus, through his connections with Theseus, with Ariadne (through shared language), and also with the Catullan lyric voice, may be added to the list of characters whose confused conflation of voices and relationships inform the poem. On this, see esp. Putnam, "Art of Catullus," 165–205.

24. In *Ov. Her.* 10.103–4, Ovid's Ariadne "fills in this detail" when she specifically reminds Theseus that she supplied him with the thread that saved his life.

origins of the man who has proved to be false, indeed monstrous, in his dealings with her:

quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena?
quod mare conceptum spumantibus expuit undis,
quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae vasta Charybdis,
talìa qui reddis pro dulci praemia vita?

In contrast to lines 149–51, Ariadne’s charges here are readily understandable in their immediate context, for it is only natural, in the “reality” of her present situation, that Ariadne should accuse Theseus of having monstrous origins of his own. It is my argument that in this case “confusion” occurs on a metapoetic level, as an additional layering of confused and unnatural relationships is created by the poet himself through his manipulation of the allusive background for Ariadne’s reproachful queries concerning Theseus’ lineage.

In fact, we shall see that Catullus has not only satisfied the demands of “narrative realism” in these lines by presenting a situation in which Ariadne might well question Theseus’ origins based on his behavior toward her, but he has managed at the same time to “signpost” his own allusive activity as poet in an especially clever manner.²⁵ For if we look closely at Ariadne’s scornful questions, we see that it is the identity of Theseus’ mother on which she is especially fixated in these lines. *Quaenam te genuit . . . leaena* opens her indictment, and she restricts herself to female monsters as possible progenitors for Theseus. Especially important in terms of allusion are the lioness and Scylla, which recall directly Euripides *Medea* 1342–43 and 1358–59.²⁶

- Ia. ἔτλη ποθ', ὦν γε πρόσθεν ἤξιουν ἐγὼ 1340
γῆμαι σέ, κῆδος ἐχθρὸν ὀλέθριόν τ' ἐμοί,
λέαιναν, οὐ γυναιῖκα, τῆς Τυρσηνίδος
Σκύλλης ἔχουσαν ἀγριωτέραν φύσιν.
.....
Μη. πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ λέαιναν, εἰ βούλῃ, κάλει
καὶ Σκύλλαν ἣ Τυρσηνὸν ᾤκησεν ἰπέδον·†
τῆς σῆς γὰρ ὡς χρῆ καρδίας ἀνθηψάμην. 1360

Maternity is also the issue in Euripides’ play, though in a different way than in Catullus’ poem. The setting within *Medea* is the terrible confrontation

25. For the notion of “signposting” allusion as a form of reflexive annotation on the part of the poet, see Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 1–5.

26. The additional mothers Ariadne suggests, Syrtis and Charybdis, are natural associates for Scylla (all are causes of shipwreck), and are themselves suited both to the immediate context of Theseus’ abandonment of Ariadne to sail home and to the Jason and Medea story that provides the allusive background for Catullus’ poem.

For a discussion of the appearances in Greek and Roman poetry of the topos of “accusations about one’s parentage,” see esp. Klingner, “Catullus Peleus-Epos,” 217–20, who includes the earliest instance of the topos, *Iliad* 16.33–35 (on which, see further below) as well as post-Catullan instances as manipulated by Virgil and Ovid. To Klingner’s list should be added Ov. *Met.* 7.32–33, in which the young Medea, debating whether or not to aid Jason against her father’s murderous plans, exclaims: “hoc ego si patiar, tum me de tigride natam, / tum ferrum et scopulos gestare in corde fatebor.”

between Jason and Medea just after she has slain their children. And in fact it is Jason's accusation against Medea that is reflected in Ariadne's words. Jason is not concerned with Medea's parents, of course, but rather with her own status as an unnatural, inhuman mother. In 1342–43, Jason claims that Medea has demonstrated that her own nature is that of a lioness, and that she is wilder than a Scylla; and Medea herself claims ownership of these qualities, responding that such a nature was demanded of her by the actions of Jason as well as others.

Lioness similes and metaphors are part of Euripides' characterization of Medea throughout his play. In his final speech of the play, Jason again uses this term for her, referring to her as a "child-murdering lioness" (παῖδο-φόνου τῆσδε λεαίνης, 1407). Earlier, the nurse describes Medea as a lioness protecting her cubs (187–89), a picture eventually proved grotesquely ironic by Medea's actions and recalled in Jason's "return" to the image in his characterization of her after the murder of their children.²⁷

If we return to Ariadne's reproachful accusations concerning Theseus' birth in Catullus' poem, we see that the allusive relationships between characters (and texts) are "confused" in an intriguing manner. On a metapoetic level, Catullus has made especial use of the genealogical nature of allusion itself, in this case in terms of maternity, as it is Ariadne's questioning of Theseus' maternal lineage in Catullus' poem that leads us back most directly to Euripides' *Medea*, and in particular, to a passage in which Medea herself is specifically characterized in terms of her own role as monstrous mother.²⁸ In the allusive relationship between Catullus' characters and those of Euripides, Ariadne temporarily "assumes" Jason's voice, as she accuses Theseus of being, as it were, a son of Euripides' Medea at her most monstrous. Indeed, it is strangely fitting that Theseus' maternal lineage (and through it,

27. *Medea* 187–89: Τρ. καίτοι τοκάδος δέργμα λεαίνης / ἀποταυροῦται δμῳσίν. ὅταν τις / μῦθον προφέρων πέλας ὀρηθῇ.

Ariadne's denigration in the Catullan passage of Theseus' birth from the sea or "under a lonely rock" (*sola sub rupe*, 154) alludes simultaneously to both Homer and Euripides. The Homeric passage is Patroclus' remonstrance against Achilles in *Iliad* 16.33–35, where the suggested parents of Achilles are not Peleus and Thetis but rather the grey sea and steep rocks (see also note 26 above). In the *Medea*, it is once again Medea herself whose nature is likened to these elements. In the nurse's prologue, she characterizes her mistress' reaction to Jason's betrayal, and her subsequent refusal to listen to friendly advice, by comparing her to "a rock and the surging waves" (ὥς δὲ πέτρος ἢ θαλάσσιος / κλύδων ἀκούει νοουθετούμένη φίλον, 28–29); and she is again characterized by the chorus as rock or steel just after she has killed her children (1279–80).

28. Here I believe we have an instance in Catullus that is quite closely related to a practice described in regard to English Augustan poetry by C. Ricks, "Allusion: The Poet as Heir," in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 3, ed. R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade (Canberra, 1976), 209–40. Ricks emphasized that: "We should notice when the subject matter of an allusion is at one with the impulse that underlies the making of allusions at all . . ." (209), and he called attention especially to allusions that reflect their own allusivity by involving passages that have as their subject matter relations of dependence such as paternity or inheritance. Catullus has made a similar trope of maternity in his allusion to Euripides. For a discussion of the poet as successor in Roman epic poetry that takes as its model what Ricks described for English poetry, see P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge, 1993), 98–119.

Ovid's Ariadne, at *Her.* 10.131–32, takes the reader back more directly to the first instance of this conceit of "questioned parentage," at *Iliad* 16.33–35 (see above). Unlike Catullus' Ariadne, Ovid's heroine questions both paternity and maternity for Theseus, and her use of *auctores* in 132 may itself be a "sign-post" from Ovid that he has returned to the "original source" for this accusing question (or even a reminder that there are by this time other *auctores* behind the allusion as well).

his own nature) should be questioned by Ariadne with words that lead back through allusion to the very stepmother who attempted to devise *his* death shortly before he left to slay the Minotaur.

There is, of course, an additional level of confusion (and irony) provided by the intertextual resonances between Ariadne's accusation of Theseus in Catullus' poem and Jason's accusation of Medea in Euripides' tragedy. For a moment, Catullus has disrupted the primary allusive correspondences on which his own depiction of the Theseus-Ariadne story relies, and through which Ariadne is more "naturally" paired with Medea and Theseus with Jason, for Theseus' abandonment of Ariadne (and her subsequent lament) recalls most immediately Jason's abandonment of Medea for a new bride. As a result of Catullus' momentary reshuffling of the pairs through allusion—against our expectation—the allusive characterizations of Ariadne and Theseus temporarily become nearly collapsible through their respective relationships with earlier Medeas (and Jasons). Has Ariadne learned her words and behavior from Medea or from Jason? Has Theseus inherited his actions from his heroic counterpart or from his monstrous stepmother?

In his construction of a multilayered voice for Ariadne in these lines, Catullus has combined Ariadne's "realistic" accusation of Theseus' parentage with a further poetic characterization through allusion. And he has done so in a manner that "creates" additional unnatural relationships, as Ariadne, for a brief time, is identified more closely with Jason than with Medea, and Theseus, when viewed through the allusive lens that allows us to see "behind" Ariadne's words, is shown to be not only a monster, but also "his stepmother's son."²⁹

In sum, throughout Ariadne's words in 149–57, figures of confusion simultaneously reflect and "create" unsettling conflations of relationships between characters within (and even outside) the poem. Ariadne's mistaken choice between *germanus* and *fallax*, monster brother and monstrous beloved, "true" and "false," involves also a commentary on the difficulty in discerning different identities, and even layers of fiction and reality, in the confused crowd of voices and characters involved in her situation. The image *turbo* itself recalls, rearranges, and confuses distinctions between brothers, sisters, lovers, and monsters, and even becomes a figure for the whorl of fate. Throughout the passage, but especially marked in the allusive background

29. One more voice may be added to the chorus behind Ariadne's accusing words: the lyric voice of Catullus' shorter poems. For another commentary on 154–57 is Catullus poem 60, in which the speaker questions the lineage of someone who has deserted him (or her) in the hour of greatest need, a situation remarkably resonant with Ariadne's in 64. On this, see esp. Putnam, "Art of Catullus," 56; also Klingner, "Catullus Peleus-Epos," 218–19. In poem 60, we meet yet again the lioness and Scylla of both Euripides' Medea and Catullus' Ariadne (or Theseus): "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?"

In Catullus 60, the identities of both speaker and addressee are indeterminate. The speaker is literally a voice, the *supplicis vocem* of line 4; and it is the voice, metonymically representative of the suppliant, that experiences the contempt (*vocem . . . contemptam*) of the poem's addressee. The poem's addressee (*te*, line 1) is characterized alternatively as *mens*, in the *mente dura ac taetra* of line 3, then as *cor*, in the *nimis fero corde* of line 5. In his combination of *vox*, *mens*, and *cor*, Catullus in poem 60 has produced an expression of pure emotions, unattached to a specific speaker or situation, in which neither the identities nor the genders of speaker or recipient can be discerned.

for Ariadne's accusations in 154–57, additional relationships are created through the internal confusions of Ariadne's voice. In turn, all of these different combinations themselves mirror the unnatural perversion of relationships throughout the poem, represented most vividly in the poet's words at the end, especially *omnia fanda nefanda malo permixta furore* (405).³⁰

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30. One might suggest an even closer connection between Ariadne's words in 149–57 (and indeed, throughout her lament) and those of the narrator with which the poem concludes. It has often been noted that the specific crimes included in the poet's catalogue of contemporary society's immorality (397–404) recall similar misdeeds, and similarly perverted relationships, that involved the poem's heroes themselves. (On this, see Gaisser, "Threads in the Labyrinth"; Putnam, "Art of Catullus"; Bramble, "Structure and Ambiguity"; also L. Curran, "Catullus 64 and the Heroic Age," *YCS* 21 (1969), 171–92.) "sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando / iustitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt, / perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres, / destitit extinctos gnatus lugere parentes, / optavit genitor primaevi funera nati, / liber ut innuptae poteretur flore novercae, / ignaro mater substernens se impia nato / impia non verita est divos scelerrare penates" (397–404). In fact, in Ariadne's words in 143–48, just before the passage with which we have been concerned, her anger at Theseus' duplicity leads her to a more general condemnation of the perfidious nature of all men. The last two lines of this section of her speech are of particular interest (147–48): "sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libido est, / dicta nihil meminere, nihil periuria curant!" M. Putnam has pointed out that when the narrator begins his description of humanity's decline, his words *cupida de mente* in 308 echo Ariadne's earlier *cupidae mentis* in 147 (see Putnam, "Art of Catullus," 176. Putnam compares the Ariadne-Theseus episode and the narrator's concluding commentary on contemporary society's immorality more extensively on pp. 195–200).

Indeed, whereas Ariadne, in her anger and despair at her own situation, readily extends Theseus' infidelity to include all *men* (143–44), the poem's narrator extends the picture even further, to include all people, as it is the general pervasiveness of greed and injustice in human society that has set into motion the perverse relationships that signify mankind's descent into immorality. In fact, even in 143–44, the poet may have included all people, since Ariadne's words in these lines resonate with the words of the Catullan lyric speaker (at, e.g., poem 70), who, as a man, complains against the pervasive infidelity of all *women*. As Putnam noted on 147 and 308: "The reader cannot but recall the situation of Ariadne in the later line. She is the image which corresponds to the generalizations with which the poem ends" (ibid.). Nowhere is this correspondence more pronounced, I believe, than in Ariadne's words, and the confused and shameful relationships they reflect, at 149–57.