HIC AND ABSENCE IN CATULLUS 68

MICHÈLE LOWRIE

THE CATULLAN QUESTION is how to resolve the relationship between the sense of lived experience the poetry conveys and the similarly strong impression created of literary artificiality.[1] Presence and distance inhabit the poetry in equal measures. This aspect of Catullus is not only a phenomenon to be interpreted by the reader, but something on which the text itself can be shown to reflect. Catullus' references to writing and speech are a locus for this reflection, given the basic differences between the modes of communication: writing presupposes the absence of the person being addressed, at least during the process of writing, while speech presupposes a present interlocutor. The utterance of lyric poetry broadly construed partakes of both.[2] Although some of Catullus' poems entail utterance as if to present addressees (*Phaselus ille, quem videtis, hospites*, "That boat, which you see, guests," 4.1), and others present themselves as epistles where the addressee is absent (*Poetae tenero, meo sodali, / velim Caecilio, papyre, dicas / Veronam veniat*, "Papyrus, I would like you to tell my friend Caecilius, a tender poet, that he should come to Verona," 35.1–3), most dwell in an area somewhere in between, so that the poem addresses people who are not nominally present as if they were.[3] Poem 68 offers a particularly good opportunity to see how the poetry represents itself: the first part is decidedly epistolary, while the second entails speech addressed to an addressee who is not necessarily imagined as present. Furthermore, the poem reflects self-consciously on the status of texts as physical or metaphysical artifacts and shows a complex

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1. Hubbard 1984, 29–31; Selden (1992, 463) states the paradox neatly as a "coupling of immense referential pressure with a medium so palpably self-conscious and opaque." For the life/poetry distinction as a thematic element, see Sarkissian 1983, 12, 39.

2. Our modern category "lyric" encompasses also the ancient genres of elegy, iambic, and epigram. For subtle discussion of what constitutes lyric, see Miller 1994; Wray 2001, 9–26. In this context I mean relatively short poems in which a first person communicates meditative thoughts, often to a represented addressee.

3. Heinze (1972, 189) notoriously refers to the purported speech acts of Horatian lyric as fiction, but Jonathan Culler (in a forthcoming book on lyric poetry) suggests rather that there is a proper poetic utterance that is neither communication as in ordinary language, nor entirely made up. I thank him for sharing his chapters on Greek and Roman lyric with me in advance of publication. Edmunds (2001, 93) adheres to this formulation: "the reader does not have to imagine the addressee as present; it is enough if the addressee is present in the conception of the speaker." One could transfer the deixis terminology and speak of an addressee *ad oculos* and an addressee *ad phantasma* (see n. 17 below).

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interaction between speech and writing. At issue are the degree of materiality or abstraction in communicative language, the extent to which social relations can succeed, and the role of poetry as communication, commemoration, and social exchange.

In the polymetrics, the realistic depiction of writing and writing implements contributes to the poetry's immediacy.[4] An unnoticed aspect of Poem 68 is that each of the poem's three major sections begins with a reference to a text's material status, and each of these is accompanied by a deictic (*hoc . . . epistolium*, "this letter," 2; *haec carta*, "this paper," 46; *hoc . . . confectum carmine munus*, "this gift made of poetry," 149). Whether we take 68 as one poem or more,[5] the ancient reader, scrolling through the book roll, would encounter these references in order. I will argue that the three references offer a treatment of textuality that progresses from the most material and immediate to the most abstract and literary, and that this treatment corresponds to the extent to which social relations are depicted within the respective section of the poem as successful or not. The most material representation of a text goes along with the most negative assessment of love and friendship, while the most abstract and immortalizing accompanies a depiction of felicitous social relations.[6] Both textual and social representations turn on presence and either absence or deferral.[7]

Presence—understood either as mere physical presence or some form of completion—and absence are themes running throughout the poem: the physical presence of pieces of paper containing writing; communication by letter or by direct or indirect speech; the love of one's girlfriend; the death

4. Wiseman (1982, 38) surveys the language of writing and notes that there is nothing about reading aloud in Catullus.

5. The bibliography on this question is enormous. Kinsey 1967 summarizes the problems. The best general treatment of the unity of the poem is Syndikus 1990, 250–56. Fordyce 1961, 342–44, Tuplin 1981, 113–14, and Hubbard 1984, p. 45, n. 13, provide good summaries of the difficulties in taking the addressees in A and B as the same person; Woodman 1983 and Fear 1992 argue for two poems, A (1–40) and B (41–160); Wiseman's account (1974, 77–103) of the manuscript tradition arguing that there are separate names and hence addressees in 68A and B would be convincing except for Syndikus' point (1990, 251–52) about the unreliability of the Veronensis. Goold 1983 prints three poems, A (1–40), B (41–148), and C (149–60). Editors routinely put a space between these three sections, even if they are unwilling to commit to there being two poems: see Kroll 1989, Fordyce 1961, and Thomson 1978. Goold (1983, 257, following Nisbet 1995, p. 92, n. 36) suggests that Allius is a disguise for Ma(n/l)lius as a shield from implication in adultery. Denis Feeney points out to me that there is a similar lack of metrical equivalence (Allius being subject to elision, Ma(n/l)lius not) between Mamurra and Mentula, an equivalence generally accepted, and in Ravidus for Aurelius at Poem 40, if Goold 1983 is correct. This point makes the names' identity immaterial, and redirects the question toward the interpretive problem. Casali's 1996 argument that the addressees of the two poems are the same because Ovid cites *lecto caelibe* from 68.6 at *Her.* 13.107, where Laodamia is the heroine, proves only that Ovid read 68A and B as strongly interrelated, about which there is no doubt. See Fowler 2000a for a similar argument from intertextuality with Propertius. I use Goold's letters for the different sections without prejudice as to whether they are self-standing poems, since my argument has little bearing on the issue, and I am agnostic about whether the addressees of 68A and B are the same.

6. Hubbard (1984, 32) invokes Heidegger for the struggle he finds embodied in this poem between "the closure of material facticity and the opening onto the plane of historical awareness." This progression is at stake in the poem's reference to texts.

7. Fitzgerald (1995, 203) speaks of Poems 65–68 as a group "in which anxieties about the origins and destinations of poetic speech are intertwined with concerns about cultural affiliations." I emphasize rather Catullus' social identity, but our approaches are compatible.

of the brother; the ability to perform social interactions, such as gift giving;[8] description of a thing or emotion by analogy rather than directly; the eternal presence of a text that commemorates a friend. The apostrophe to the brother, which sits in the center of each of the first two sections,[9] occupies a place at the intersection of presence and deferral: an address uttered in full knowledge of the impossibility of its receipt.[10] While apostrophe remains static from one section to the next, Catullus traces a dynamic development in notions of presence over the poem through the deictic *hic*.[11]

Deictics are indexical, so that their meaning shifts according to the context of their utterance.[12] "This" (demonstrative *hic*) and "here" (adverbial *hic*) have no intrinsic reference, but take their meaning from the place occupied by the speaker.[13] Accordingly, we might think that knowledge of the context would determine the meaning of any particular deictic.[14] All we would need is to determine the location of the speaker to understand what "here" means. Such is the case in the poem quoted above, where *phaselus ille* ("that boat," 4.1) is imagined as within pointing distance. But even in ordinary language, "here" can indicate both physical and discursive locations: "here" can refer to where the speaker is in the argument; "these men" may mean not the ones standing before the speaker in actuality, but people just mentioned.[15] This

8. I include performative discourse under the category of the performance of social interactions. Selden (1992, 482) identifies the performative at issue (though disavowed) in 68A as consolation, and that achieved in 68B as commemoration.

9. Mention of the brother's death tends toward the center of poems. In 65, *tua morte* ("with your death") comes in line 12 out of 24; the apostrophe in 101 comes in the central distich; in 68A at lines 19–20 (out of 40); in 68B (from 41–148) at 92–96, 52 lines in from either end (if we take the whole sentence together). Hubbard (1984, 38–39) examines the concentric organization of 68A and B, and provides bibliography. Citroni (1995, 87) covers the contested structure of 68A.

10. On the difference between address, which expects receipt, and apostrophe, which does not, see Lowrie 1997, 20–26; Culler 1981, 135–54.

11. Broader issues of deixis that could be pursued in this poem are the consistent slippage between second and third persons, and temporal deixis.

12. For a brief general linguistic introduction to the topic, see the introduction to Klein and Jungbluth 2002. See also Felson 1999, 2–3: "Deictic words are indexical signs, since they point to (or index) a referent outside the text or outside the utterance of the speaker. Usually, they refer to what is external to the text; but in represented speech they point to the speech context *outside* the embedded structure but still *within* the text. Deictics, which lack a stable referential meaning, can only be deciphered once interpreters know the place and time of utterance and the identity of the speaker" (her emphasis). These pages contain a wealth of bibliography on the subject. Benveniste (1966, 254) insists on the uniqueness of the utterance: "C'est pourtant un fait à la fois original et fondamental que ces formes 'pronominales' ne renvoient pas à la 'réalité' ni à des positions 'objectives' dans l'espace ou dans le temps, mais à l'énonciation, chaque fois unique, qui les contient, et réfléchissent ainsi leur propre emploi."

13. Klein and Jungbluth (2002, 7) call attention to the fact that deictics, which they see as primarily covering the range of words in the *ich, jetzt, hier* range, are often treated together with demonstratives, which more properly have a pointing function. Although they recognize the similarities, they note that the *ich, jetzt, hier* words point only metaphorically. See also Hottenroth 2002, 12.

14. E.g., Klein and Jungbluth 2002, 5; Hottenroth's opening sentence (2002) emphasizes context for spoken language: "Die Interpretation aller sprachlichen Ausdrücke ist bekanntlich in hohem Masse kontext-abhängig, d.h. abhängig von der Situation, in der sie geäussert werden, vom sprachlichen Kontext, vom Hintergrundwissen der Kommunkationsteilnehmer." She goes on to analyze deviations from deixis *ad oculos*. I thank her for sharing this paper with me in advance of publication.

15. For the distinction between pointing outside and inside the text, see, e.g., Kahane 1994, 48–49. Felson (1999, p. 2, n. 5) traces the discussion of "discourse indexicals" to antiquity, when they were called *anaphora*. She cites Dionysius Thrax as the "first extant grammarian to use the word ἀναφορικῶς to mean 'standing in

sort of deictic is indexed to a metaphorical space. This ability to point either outside language or within it makes deixis a perfect vehicle for exploring the differences between material and more abstract kinds of presence.[16] Furthermore, in writing, the space occupied by the text persists despite the absence of the author.[17] For instance, when Catullus says *haec carta* ("this paper," 46), the deictic situation shifts at least partially over to the reader's world from the poet's:[18] the paper on which we read Poem 68 is not the same as that on which it was originally written, yet "this paper" still makes sense as analogous if not identical to the original paper. *Haec carta*, moreover, easily transforms by metonymy from a reference to the paper to the poem written thereon. The textual entity loses its physicality to become something that can be present in the same way to Catullus and his contemporaries, and to us. In this case, *hic* has a meaning which persists across time and space, despite the shift from the speaker to the reader, quite unlike deictics which point outside the discourse, which remain fixed according to the context of their original utterance. For example, in 68A *huc* ("to this place," 36), meaning from Rome to Verona, persists in that meaning always and will not accommodate a new context, so that the "here" element of *huc* does not relate to the later reader, who will rather continually refer it to the poet.[19]

The relation of *hic* to presence—whether that of the singular moment, repeated action such as reading, or the eternal—and the consequences of this relation for textuality, form a consistent preoccupation in Catullus 68, whether it be one poem or more.

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relation' to what preceded (D. T. 636.12)." Campbell (2001, 93) defines the technical terms: in deixis, the "exophoric function" refers to "various parameters of the shared situation," while the "endophoric function" refers to "the unfolding text" shared between a speaker and a processor (whether listener or reader).

16. Felson 2004a, 253: "Deictics bridge the tangible world of reality and the abstract world of fantasy." Her introduction to this volume is a clear exposition of the linguistics of deixis and the importance of deixis as a device that spans a text's original performance (if there was one), reperformance, and its emergence as literature. Although the volume focuses on Greek lyric, where we assume original performance, many of the issues are similar for Catullus. Although Poem 68 nowhere represents itself as performed, the epistolary opening of 68A is self-conscious about its communicative function in a way analogous to the way performance poetry flags its occasionality. By contrast, 68B is less self-conscious about the speech situation between poet and addressee, though it is more aware of its literary status.

17. Foucault (1969, 802–3) differentiates the fictionality of literary deixis from that of everyday life. Klein and Jungbluth (2002, 7) and Felson (2004a, 254) isolate three main categories, which go back to Bühler 1934: "deixis *ad oculos*," "anaphoric deixis" (which refers to the discourse), and "deixis *am Phantasma*" (which is fictional). In text-based literarature, the latter two categories will be more at issue than the first, though Felson's 2004 project (2004b; see 2004a) is to ascertain how the different types map the relation of performance to literarity in Greek lyric.

18. For the difference between "coding time" and "reception time," see Hottenroth 2002, 11; D'Alessio 2004, 269. The latter examines a phenomenon different from but analogous to that in Catullus, namely, the setting of the temporal deictic *origo* before the time of a choral lyric ode's performance: "This feature is to be explained as an effect of the separation between the time of composition (coding time) and the time of performance (receiving time)" (271). He argues that it is natural in mediated communication for there to be a range of possibilities for the deictic *origo*, which can be located at different points in an ode at either coding or reception time.

19. Calame (1995, 7–8) warns as follows: "The relative autonomy of the utterance does not mean, however, that there is no overlap between the enunciative, or discursive, world it creates and the empirical world in which it is produced and operates. There is a positive aspect to the enunciative approach in that it exposes the trap of the principle of immanence, the trap of assuming that the text of the utterance is structurally closed." Catullus in Poem 68 is exploring the relation between the discursive and the empirical world.

Hoc Epistolium

Poem 68 opens with reference to an ostensibly physical letter sent by the addressee to Catullus: *Quod mihi fortuna casuque oppressus acerbo / conscriptum hoc lacrimis mittis epistolium* ("As for the fact that you send me this letter, written with tears, when oppressed by fortune and harsh circumstance . . . ," 1–2).[20] The deictic endows the letter with materiality: it is marked with tears and has been sent by a historical person addressed by his proper name (11, 30),[21] and also received.[22] Although the description is not sufficiently detailed to warrant an image of Catullus composing his response with the letter at his side, *hoc* places the letter within Catullus' vicinity, whether that means he has the object nearby, or has its contents in the forefront of his thought. This is the first reference to a written artifact in Catullus 68, and it corresponds to a moment of impasse. His friend makes a request for poetic consolation that Catullus, in this section of the poem, turns down. Communication is conceived of as taking place across the separation implied by the exchange of epistles.[23] Every aspect of life in 68A entails similar separation on the part of both Catullus and his friend. Each experiences alienation from love, from poetry, and furthermore Catullus' brother is dead. Catullus himself is in Verona, away from his life at Rome and consequently from his books. All of these separations amount to a block both social and metapoetic.

The deictic "this" in association with a textual artifact conceived in its physical reality as a letter helps articulate this block. "This," which points to the space of the speaker, implicitly contrasts with "that" in some other

20. Skinner (2003, 41) takes the addressee's letter as a fiction. The fact that many interpreters (see her n. 29) understand the letter as a reality demonstrates the representational power that deixis combined with realistic description can achieve. Whether the letter is imagined as fictional or real is immaterial to my interpretation. What matters is poetry's ability to convey a sense of reality whether or not it corresponds to anything outside the text. Skinner (2003, 145) further explores the clues Catullus' representation of the addressee's letter contains that it is directed to a third-party reader. Wray's comments (2001, 105) about how one poetic letter calls forth another are relevant here: there is a displacement from ordinary to literary communication such that the historical value of the exchange is moot.

21. Although there is no agreement on the actual proper name (see n. 5 above), a consensus seems to be emerging to call him Mallius, e.g., Hubbard 1984, Janan 1994, Skinner 2003. There is an assumption that Catullus refers to a historical person by his actual name. Felson (2004, 264) contrasts the fluidity of deixis with "rigid designators" such as proper names and includes bibliography for this terminology, which goes back to S. Kripke.

22. It could be that the letter was written while the composer was crying without an implication of traces of tears being left, but the passage belongs in the history of tear-stained compositions (Prop. 4.3.3–4, Ov. *Her.* 3.3, Ov. *Tr.* 1.1.14). Fordyce (1961, ad loc.) takes it that the writing material is tears, instead of ink. G. D. Williams (1992) traces the development of the topos equating the physical description of a book roll with its style. While he begins with Catullus 1, he does not take this passage into account—perhaps because the letter is not a book roll. Poem 68, however, provides a precedent for Ovid's thematics of poetic incapacity and his negative characterization of his exilic poetry.

23. Catullus does not specify whether the letter he received was poetic or not, but the epistle he writes back certainly is. Although *epistolium* does not necessarily imply verse, for convenience I will use the English "epistle" for a letter in verse, while "letter" will remain unspecified with respect to prose or verse. Skinner (2003, 41) notes the rarity of *epistolium*, and characterizes it as conveying "the notion of a short, perhaps, playful dispatch (Fear 250)." She suggests that the metaphors of the poem's first eight lines "gesture toward a kind of verse repudiated in the ensuing *recusatio*." For exchanges of verse, Poem 50 is less relevant than the traces of a real exchange between Catullus 96 and Calvus frags. 15 and 16 Blänsdorf: see Citroni 1995, p. 66, n. 16.

space. In this section of the poem, such a physical conception of poetic space thwarts full communication, despite the many analogies that link speaker to addressee. Each remains in his own space, and their communication consists entirely of negativity and takes place over a temporal and spatial divide. But one problematic passage in 68A suggests that there are alternatives to this kind of spatial division and to the kind of relation—inability to answer requests—that obtains between speaker and addressee, and that the impasse in this section needs to be surmounted. The second section of the poem will then mark an advance in the conception of poetic space.

Catullus sets up an analogy between life and poetry with the repetition of "Venus" and "Muses" in lines 1–10. *Venus* (5, before the caesura) does not allow the friend to sleep since he lies abandoned in a bachelor bed; the *Musae* (7, final position) of the ancient writers fail to please him in his anxiety; therefore he asks Catullus to help him in both areas by seeking from him *munera . . . et Musarum . . . et Veneris* (10). *Musarum*, which falls before the caesura, spills over into the second half of the line through elision, so that the neat chiastic correspondence whereby each word switches place in the line is blurred. It is indicative of the poem's self-consciousness that the blurring should occur with "Muses"; poetry is and is not distinct from life as represented by Venus. But Catullus does not collapse Venus and the Muses into a single category. The controversy over the exact meaning of *muneraque et Musarum . . . et Veneris* replays the Catullan question: are poetry and life kept apart, or taken together?[24] Well, both. The relation of life (love, death) to poetry is important for the possibility of communication in 68A because this section's own status as a response to the friend's request implicates the text itself in its own thematics: the subject matter is the ability of a response, and this topic is addressed within a response. These thematics establish a further analogy, as is often noted, between poet and addressee,[25] since the rest of the poem consists of a refusal due to the poet's own situation with regard to love and poetry. Despite such thematic parallels, however, the poet keeps himself spatially apart from his addressee through the use of deictics. The requested gift of poetry and love should ostensibly come *hinc*, literally "from this place," though the implication is "from me":[26] *id gratum est mihi, me quoniam tibi dicis amicum, / muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris*

24. Sarkissian 1983, pp. 46–47, n. 15. Nisbet (1995, 92) takes the phrase as hendiadys for love poetry, but *et . . . et* ("both . . . and") is strangely emphatic for hendiadys. Syndikus (1990, p. 244, n. 28) lists supporters of Baehrens' view that the phrase specifies one gift with two aspects: a poem whose theme should be love. For exposition of the problem and bibliography, see Tuplin 1981, 114; Fear 1992, 248. Skinner (2003, 145–53) takes the erotic language as a metaphor for the addressee's affection for the poet, as in Poem 51. The poet does not share the emotional bond, and therefore turns down the addressee's request to return to Rome. Fowler (2000a, 238) suggests that Catullus, as an experienced lover, would be able to sort things out with his friends, hence his absence is a disgrace. Hubbard's point (1984, 39–40) that "our hesitation between the literal and the figural" here recapitulates the problematics of the poem, and indeed the Catullan question, is well taken.

25. See Tuplin 1981, 115 ("Catullus is showing Mallius that his own situation was exactly like Mallius'—only very much worse"); Hubbard 1984, 40; Fitzgerald 1995, 207; Skinner 2003, 42.

26. Fordyce 1961, ad loc.: "hinc: i.e. from me." At 76.11, *istinc* seems to mean "from where you are" (Fordyce 1961, ad loc.), rather than *ab ista*, as Kroll (1989, ad loc.) suggests. Since the poet is addressing himself, a gap opens between where the poet is (the second person) and his mind, which tells him where he wants to be.

("this is pleasing to me, since you say I am your friend and you seek gifts both of the Muses and of Venus from me," 9–10). The personal pronouns *me* and *tibi* set poet and addressee into a relation of at least tentative friendship iconically expressed through their separation by one word. By contrast, *hinc* appears oddly spatial and reminds us of their physical distance, which in turn figures the social impasse the poet begins to explain in the next line when he begs off providing the desired gifts.

Deictics further create a sense of geographic separation not only between poet and addressee, but between different spaces in the poet's own life: he is in Verona, but his usual life is at Rome (33–36).

nam, quod scriptorum non magna est copia apud me,
  hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus: illa domus,
illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas;
  huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur.

For this is how it happens that there is no great store of writings [or: writers] at my house, because I live at Rome: that is my house, that is my home, there my life is lived; one book-box from many follows me to this place.

The emphatic distance between "that"—three times!—and "to this place" presupposes that places stay put and that we can refer to them relative to our position in them, which can move. But a textual problem with the equivalent *hic* at line 28 gives rise to an indexical conundrum: we cannot tell whether "here" is in the poet's voice, or is his quotation from his addressee's letter (27–29):

quare, quod scribis Veronae turpe Catullo
  esse, quod hic quisquis de meliore nota
frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili . . .

For this reason, the fact that you write that it is foul for Catullus at Verona, because here anyone of better repute warms his cold limbs on an abandoned bed . . .

The locative *Veronae* remains stable no matter whose point of view is represented. The dispute revolves around whether *hic* means, from the poet's point of view, "here at Verona," or, from his addressee's, "here at Rome," and whether *tepefactet* (subjunctive) refers to the addressee's words in implied indirect discourse, or is *tepefactat* (indicative) in Catullus' own words. The two dominant lines of interpretation are as follows: (1) that the person of better social standing (Catullus) is sleeping alone on a cold bed here in Verona, and (2) that the person of better social standing (Lesbia) is warming her limbs with someone else since her bed was abandoned here in Rome.[27] I happen

27. See the general treatment at Fordyce 1961, 346–47. Fear (1992, 254) limits the part in quotation to *Veronae turpe, Catulle, / esse* (27–28), takes Catullus in the vocative, and makes *hic* Verona and *tepefactat* indicative. I find Woodman's alternative (1983, 101) too compressed: *deserto cubili* ("deserted bed") is concessive, therefore anyone of note in Verona could have casual sex even though his bed was deserted, presumably by his main girlfriend. Syndikus (1990, p. 246, n. 45) gives good reasons for taking *hic* as Verona, the entire statement in Catullus' voice, and for its meaning that Catullus sleeps alone. Skinner (2003, 150) argues in a different vein that the addressee is using amatory language playfully to convey his affection for the poet, and consequently he charges Catullus with having forsaken his crowd at Rome: "here [at Rome] all the leading members of society feel the lack of your presence."

to favor the first interpretation, but what is important for understanding the literary use of deictics in this poem is that suddenly, despite the clear boundaries established between "here" and "there" elsewhere in 68A, we have a moment of doubt, and that this moment of doubt comes about explicitly through mention of writing and the passage to indirect discourse.[28] The writing in question is the addressee's letter or epistle, and the destabilization of the indexical certainty of the deictic here emphasizes the iterability of writing and its dissociation from its originating context. Without modern punctuation, the ancient text harbors an ambiguity, which is what in all likelihood gave rise to the textual corruption. Once we reach *tepefactat/et*, the mood of the verb would make clear who is being represented as speaking, but there would always be a skeptical reader to suggest the opposite mood, no matter how secure the text. Furthermore, if it is possible to locate oneself imaginatively near an absent addressee through deictics, it is not clear that *hic* would necessarily have to represent the actual location of the speaker. Catullus' friend could have been in Rome and sympathetically used *hic* to mean Verona.[29] How would you represent that in implied indirect discourse? The deictic is intimately bound up in the issue of literary and social presence that is this poem's central concern, and it affords no secure possibility of determining the place referred to.[30]

Our hesitation over whether *hic* is Rome or Verona, from the poet's or the addressee's perspective, still keeps the two places separate: we must decide on one or the other location, and no fusion is possible.[31] We have a need to fix the referent. A similar hesitation attaches to the phrase *hoc epistolium* itself, obviously again in the context of writing. When we first read it, we naturally attach "this letter" to the letter we are reading, that is, the poem at hand. Then we realize that this is incompatible with *mittis* and postulate

28. Hottenroth (2002, 11) considers various kinds of displacements in deictics, including the quotation of direct speech. A comparison of quoted and indirect discourse would be illuminating. As Hubbard (1984, 41) remarks of *hic* here, "the very same words may have entirely different meanings when first uttered and when quoted."

29. One of the anonymous referees calls my attention to the parallel at Propertius 1.11, where the poet sends Cynthia a letter at Baiae plaintively wondering if she is thinking at all of him. He, writing from elsewhere, presumbly Rome, refers to Baiae as *in hac . . . parte* (18); that is, he imaginatively places himself in the vicinity of Cynthia. I think it is not at all coincidental that this deictic occurs right before his mention of writing her the letter: *ignosces igitur, si quid tibi triste libelli / attulerint nostri* ("you will forgive me, therefore, if my letter has brought you any sadness," 1.11.19–20). Camps (ad loc.) notes parallels for *hic* being used of what is "remote in space from the speaker" but "present in his thought," including 3.23.3–7. When Propertius complains of the loss of his writing tablets, he first refers to them as *has*, then as *illae*, and *illas* (3.23.3, 5, 7), then returns to them as *his* (19). They are imagined as if present, then their absence is acknowledged, then they again are imagined vividly. The deictics cross the space from "here" to "there" that tablets carrying a message would traverse, then back again. This passage also emphasizes the ability of writing to communicate in the author's absence, underscored through repetition: *illae iam sine me norant placare puellas, / et quaedam sine me verba diserta loqui* ("They knew how to appease girls now without me, and to speak certain eloquent things without me," 3.23.5–6). Propertius toys with the irony that even the means of communicating in absence is absent, and this leads us to wonder what he is writing on when he ends the poem by telling a slave to affix *haec* ("these words," 23) to a public column—or is the poem not represented as written at all, but an utterance the slave will have to write down himself?

30. Fear (1992, 255) makes of *hic* a pivotal point between *hinc* (10) and *huc* (36) that defines Catullus' "spatial and emotional position."

31. Hubbard (1984, 41) calls the options "two equally plausible, but diametrically opposed statements."

another letter. Such moments of indecision point up how little different are the situations of poet and addressee. Wherever *hic* (28) happens to be, Catullus, like his friend (*desertum in lecto caelibe*, "deserted in a bachelor bed," 6), sleeps apart from his beloved. Similarly, each cannot achieve access, whether spiritual or physical, to poetry: *scriptorum*, "of the writers/writings," occurs of both (7, 33). The tight verbal parallels and the organization of the poem around the *munera . . . et Musarum . . . et Veneris* (10) belie the apparent *recusatio* ("refusal").[32] Despite its refusal, the poem itself gives the gift of poetry about love, as a gesture of friendship it alleges the poet cannot give.[33] What it certainly admits of giving is the response of an epistle to a letter.

Section 68A sets the discursive failure of the refusal against the discursive success of the communication of the refusal. The person addressed, whether in the epistle or through apostrophe, is absent. The apostrophe posits a situation of greater absence than the letter, because death has made for a permanent absence that underscores the futility of speech. Catullus' repetition of the second person nominative pronoun makes this instance of the apostrophe especially bleak: *o misero frater adempte mihi, / tu mea tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater* ("O brother torn from me, miserable, you, you, dying broke my pleasures, brother," 20–21). The stark juxtaposition of indexical pronouns and possessive adjectives (*mihi, / tu mea tu*) underscores the gap between the poet's desire and an I/thou relation in complete check: not even receipt of the utterance by the other is possible, much less a response.

There are two ways, however, in which some possibility of social connection, however muted, glimmers through. The first is through negation, since the denial of the request comes with a recognition that the request is justified and honors the request with a response, and the second, through a contrary to fact: the poet would give the addressee what he asks for if he could.[34] Section 68A ends with the poet's expression of goodwill: *ultro ego deferrem, copia siqua foret* ("I would bring it of my own accord, if there were any supply [of what you requested]," 40). The poet is not so incapacitated that he cannot recognize his obligation and politely defer it.

In this section of the poem, there is an insistence on referential stability. The letter is an object that travels between places in fixed locations, and the addressee is a specific person with a proper name. The loss of the brother is an absolute that incapacitates the poet. Love and poetry are presented as

32. For the *recusatio*, see Tuplin (1981, 116), who remarks that instead of serving a poetic ideology, Catullus uses the form to express a personal one; see also Citroni 1995, 87–88. Skinner 2003, 40: "Like its counterpart 65, 68a is formally a *recusatio* grappling with a conflict between artistic obligation and creative inadequacy"; she also explores (167–72) Catullus' refusal, which has to do with "whether art is conceivable in the face of suffering and death" (169), in light of the poetics of Augustan *recusationes*, for which genre is a more salient concern, and which operate on the principle of denying "in order to affirm" (171).

33. Hubbard 1984, 42: "But 68A cannot be an absolute denial of poetry, since it is a poem itself. . . . it is almost a generic feature for refusals [in Latin poetry] in some sense to grant the very thing they presume to deny."

34. Tuplin 1981, 116: "Had things been otherwise, of course, Catullus would have met the obligations of friendship of his own accord." Hubbard (1984) has a subtle appreciation for how far negation can in fact carry a positive message.

a zero-sum game in which there is all or nothing. The very fact of the poem, however, belies this absolutist stance, and there are inklings of a different way of looking at the world.

HAEC CARTA

A shift in the indexical certainty of the deictic in the literary self-reference of 68B marks a more general advance in this section. Instead of the irrevocable split that manifests itself in various guises in 68A, the repeated mechanism of the poem's middle section is the simile. This figure, like all figures, theoretically maintains two independent entities in mutual relation, that is, it bridges a distinction it simultaneously maintains. This act of bridging difference corresponds to a new metapoetic conception of the possibility of communication in 68B. While the vocabulary of writing—epistolary exchange as well as poetry (2, 7, 27, 33)—dominates 68A, 68B conjoins writing and speech. Speaking here enables communication to posterity, and this possibility is accompanied by a deictic whose indexical function has become less keyed to its coding time. The poem's later readership reenacts the poem's speech, so that the deictic referring to the text bridges the space between the poet and his reader (41–50):

non possum reticere, deae, qua me Allius in re
  iuverit aut quantis iuverit officiis,
ne fugiens saeclis obliviscentibus aetas
  illius hoc caeca nocte tegat studium:
sed dicam vobis, vos porro dicite multis
  milibus et facite haec carta loquatur anus.
. . . . . .
  notescatque magis mortuus atque magis,
nec tenuem texens sublimis aranea telam
  in deserto Alli nomine opus faciat.

I cannot keep silent, goddesses, in what matter Allius helped me or with what great services he helped me, lest time fleeing over the forgetting centuries cover this endeavor of that man with blind night: but I will tell it to you, and you then tell many thousands and make this paper speak when an old woman.[35] . . . and let him grow more and more known when dead, and do not let the spider on high, weaving her slender web, do her work on Allius' deserted name.

Catullus' address to the Muses (*deae*, 41) accompanies a more positive attitude to both poetry and the possibility of the exchange of social obligations or favors. Catullus explicitly engages in the rhetoric of commemoration: he links his expression of gratitude in return for Allius' services with the wish that the Muses intervene so that this expression will immortalize Allius' name.[36] The services are soon identified as providing a house where Catullus

35. The commentators take *anus* as adjectival (Kroll 1989; Fordyce 1961, ad loc.), but it is hard to convey in English the personification entailed both by the paper's speech and by the image of an old woman without translating *anus* as if nominal.

36. The reversal from 68A is often noted. Most (1981) consistently sees reversal as disrupting parallels between 68A and B, but contrast is a kind of parallelism.

could meet with his beloved, so that the gifts of the Muses and of Venus that were so problematic in 68A return. Catullus is now able to give a gift of poetry in exchange for a gift that enabled him to meet his love. Allius helped Catullus with love (*officiis*, 42), just as the addressee of 68A had requested help from Catullus for a love problem (*officium*, 12), but where the help in 68A looks more like a request for poetic consolation, the help in 68B actually brings lovers together. The deictics "this" and "that" are juxtaposed (*illius hoc*, 44); unlike the juxtaposition of pronouns (*mihi, / tu mea tu*, 20–21) discussed above, they imply not separation but a coming together, since "this endeavor" belongs to "that man" without a strong anaphoric distinction.[37] The representation of social obligations met, both in Allius' giving aid and in Catullus' composition of a poem in thanks, accords with the different stylistic level of this section. Whereas in 68A the epistolary nature of the communication does not entail the Muses, who as poetry remain inaccessible to the poet, in 68B the presence of the Muses accompanies a greater elevation in the stylistic register.[38] The similes and mythological analogies contribute to the higher style, but an important feature of this new mode is also the conception of poetry's immortalizing function, and here another deictic comes into play.

The first two couplets of 68B establish an apparently straightforward relation between the poet's speaking (or denial of an ability to keep silent) and the dedicatee's immortality (or the negation of the inevitability of time's reducing him to oblivion). Negation here inclines more to the positive than does that in 68A. Rather than *recusatio* or a contrary to fact, we have litotes.[39] The following three couplets give greater specificity to the mechanisms of immortality.[40] The Muses are the intermediary between the poet and his poetry's ability to immortalize:[41] they are the ones who will perpetuate speech by repeating the poet's utterance to "this paper," which in turn will speak when it grows old. When Catullus says *haec carta* ("this paper"), we experience a moment of hesitation in some ways similar to our hesitation about whether *hic* ("here," 28) is one place or another, Verona or Rome. Here, however, the hesitation does not revolve around having to make a choice between options, but rather depends on the awareness that *haec*, because it modifies

37. Wölfflin (1902, 239–46) starts with the ordinary presumption that *hic* marks a space closer to the speaker and *ille* one further away, but shows that the contrast between the two is problematic. See also Hottenroth's comparison (2002, 37–53) of the Italian demonstratives *questo* and *quello*.

38. See Syndikus 1990, 249, and Citroni 1995, 79–81, on stylistic differences between 68A and B. Hubbard (1984, pp. 42–43, with nn. 16 and 27) contrasts the logical and metonymic structure of 68A, which is conveyed through causal conjunctions, with the "metaphorical texture of 68B, where ideas are connected by similarity or opposition," whether by simile or analogy.

39. Hubbard (1984, 32) emphasizes the dialectical struggle involved in litotes here, such that "by denying silence, the speaker admits the possibility of silence." Janan (1994, 119) underscores the imperfect nature of the vision of immortality offered here.

40. It is unlikely that the lacuna's original contents would interfere with the thematics of immortalization.

41. Contrary to the usual situation, e.g., at Callim. *Hymn to Artemis* 186, where the poet is the intermediary between the Muses and his audience or readership. Tuplin 1981, 116: "an unusual alteration of the normal theme by which the poet asks the Muses to tell him certain things so that *he* can broadcast them" (his emphasis). Hubbard (1984, 32) takes the Muses as the "force of dissemination (= writing)" and engages in a semiotic analysis of their intermediary function between poet and his readership.

carta, a word having to do with the physical mechanisms of poetic transmission, pertains equally to the paper Catullus was looking at two millennia ago and the paper on which we read the poem now, even though we know that the pieces of paper are different and that the word "this" cannot logically pertain to both. From Catullus' perspective, the paper is not yet old. It is only so prospectively, that is, in his anticipation of our point of view. When we read the poem, we experience what Catullus describes: the Muses making an old piece of paper speak. But the paper that we read the poem on is not literally old, or, even if we read a Renaissance edition, it is not as old as the paper on which the poem was originally written. In order to resolve the discrepancy, we must mentally undo the literal physicality of *haec carta* and take it as metonymy for the poem as a group of words, which are more readily understood as speaking over the centuries and have become old. But the physical image persists, especially when we continue and find the (negated) spider weaving her web on Allius' hypothetically deserted name. To resolve this image literally, we have to take recourse to imagining Allius' name on an inscription,[42] covered with spiderwebs, but there remains a dissonance between two notions of what a name is: an intangible word, or an object inscribed on some physical material. In each case, the textual artifact, whether this poem or Allius' name inscribed elsewhere, differs in its relation to pure physicality from *hoc epistolium* (2), where the letter's status as an object is more to the fore. The letter in 68A conveys the speech of another (*me quoniam tibi dicis amicum*, "since you say that I am your friend," 9), but does not speak itself, as does the personified "old-lady paper."

The irony is that the poet's gift of thanks cannot commemorate the addressee's actual name, that is, if we take Allius as a pseudonym covering the addressee's "real" name in 68A.[43] Even if there are two different addressees in 68A and B, Fowler's comment is apt: "Catullus in poem 68 askes the Muses to let his papyrus sheet speak even when old in order that the spider might not weave his web over the deserted name of Allius, but time has encrusted that name with more problems than Catullus could have dreamed of."[44] The social act of thanksgiving is suspended between success and failure: it is given, but cannot go through either because Catullus commemorates the wrong name or because the controversy over the name has made it impossible to recover fully. The alias, with its pun on *alius* ("other"), calls attention to the crux. Is he the same, or other? And if he is the same, does the well-noted elision between *me* and *Allius* (41) reproduce the

42. Kroll 1989, ad loc.

43. Hubbard 1984, 33: "What is immortalized is not the man Mallius, nor even the name *Mallius*, but the figured name *Allius*. . . . The signifier lives on even despite the absence of its maker and his ordinary significations." See also Skinner 2003, 157–58.

44. Fowler 2000b, 200. The vagaries of Catullus' transmission are such that the miraculous survival of the single Veronensis manuscript has become part of his reception history. Wray (2001, 5) quotes an epigram by Benvenuto Campensani, written in the first decade of the fourteenth century, shortly after Catullus' rediscovery. The last couplet emphasizes the miracle of his survival by transforming the Catullan language of writing's materiality into Christian terms: *quo licet ingenio vestrum celebrate Catullum, / cuius sub modio clause papirus erat* ("With all the wit you may celebrate your Catullus, whose papirus [papyrus/light] had been hidden under a bushel," Wray's translation, with analysis on pp. 6–8).

purportedly real name?[45] Certainly the elision between *deserto* and *Alli* (50) would obscure the name when spoken, even if it reveals the name in line 41. It is only in the written text that we see the name standing on its own, and then we are brought back to our doubts about its referentiality.

The impasse of 68A has yielded to deferral, which is a step in the direction of integration. The Muses reanimate a written text with a voice, but still stand between the poet and the power to immortalize. The addressee's name remains problematic. Ambiguity over the deictic *hic* has moved from a situation where a decision must be made between two incompatibles, to an overlap between indexical options that, while not quite logically commensurable, nevertheless do not require an interpretive choice. Similarly, the word *munus* returns in this section as the *munuscula* (145) given by Catullus' beloved: though stolen from the embrace of her husband, these gifts still manage to be given, however compromised. Although a more extensive exploration of poetic mediation and deferral lies outside the scope of this paper, the extraordinary number of similes in 68B and the complexity of their interrelation certainly run on similar lines to the metapoetic statements about the Muses and *haec carta*: they are an integrating feature that enable the poet to talk about love—an advance over 68A—without describing it directly.[46] Denis Feeney has analyzed 68B in terms of the "limits of analogy." He shows the poem's awareness of the difficulty of simile's representational capacity by such devices as confusion over tenor and vehicle, over inconsistent correspondence, and through overabundant, partial, or disproportional comparison. He concludes:[47]

> The similes of the poem, in calling attention to their capacity to defer reference, provide the ground for questioning the referential power of the poet's description, in which the event itself remains resolutely undescribed.

I would add that what Catullus cannot achieve referentially, he does indirectly through mediation. No, this is not ideal in love, friendship, or referentiality, but it advances significantly over the analogies between poet and addressee in 68A, which lead only to refusal and impasse.

The differences between the two apostrophes to Catullus' dead brother in the first two parts of the poem reveal larger patterns governing these sections.[48] In 68B, the personal apostrophe irrupts into a mythic framework. The metonymic transition from the Argive preparation to retrieve Helen to Catullus' brother's death hinges on the entirely contingent fact of geographic identity. This transition both integrates the personal with a larger cultural mechanism for understanding, namely, myth, and makes us feel the rift between the two spheres. We do not expect such a break in the middle of a mythological excursus tied to the poet's relation to a beloved. Nothing in this section of the poem has prepared us for the return of the brother from 68A,

45. Skinner (2003, 157) is confident that the elision reveals that "'Allius' is Mallius."
46. Macleod 1983, 88; Williams 1980, 61.
47. Feeney 1992, 37–43 (quotation from 43).
48. A good comparison of the two apostrophes is in Syndikus 1990, 280–82.

where we were not even informed about the location of his death. Mention of Troy in 68A would have offered a cue to the link between the myth and the brother. An apostrophe to the beloved might be easier to take, but the shift from one fraught emotional arena to another adds to the surprise of the break in the discourse. Still, such a rift brings us further toward productive poetic methods of coping with life's disasters than does the refusal that the death of Catullus' brother motivates in 68A.

The verbatim repetition of 20–24 at 92–96 differs essentially in one line, *tu mea tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater* ("you, you, dying broke my pleasures, brother," 21), which is replaced by *ei misero fratri iucundum lumen ademptum* ("oh pleasing light taken from a miserable brother," 93).[49] The strong emphasis on the second person singular nominative pronoun "you" is replaced by the repetition of "Troy" framing the brother passage. Some of the emotional power of exclamation passes from the lost loved one to a troubled locus in myth. There is an ambiguity in line 93 that matches the nature of the ambiguity of *haec carta*. The phrase could mean either, "oh pleasing light [= life] taken from my miserable brother," or "oh pleasing light [= inspiration = the brother] taken from a miserable brother [Catullus]." Either makes logical sense, and the two complement one another. Both can be true, and true at the same time. You do not need to decide which to exclude, as in the ambiguity of whether *hic* (28) means Rome or Verona. As with *haec carta*, we manage to see two perspectives at once. Furthermore, even though the light was removed, the expression of the pleasure it afforded is more positive than *fregisti commoda* in 68A.

Hoc Confectum Carmine Munus

Finally, in the poem's concluding section, Catullus gives his addressee a gift, such as he can, without the help of the Muses, without deferral—here it is. Well, where? (149–52):

> hoc tibi, quod potui, confectum carmine munus
> pro multis, Alli, redditur officiis,
> ne vestrum scabra tangat rubigine nomen
> haec atque illa dies atque alia atque alia.
>
> This gift, made of poetry, such as I could, is given duly to you, Allius, for many services, in order that this day (today) and that one (tomorrow) and another and another not touch your name with mangy rust.

Does "this" in "this gift made of poetry" correspond to 68B, to 68A plus B, to 68B plus C, to all three sections together? One thing is certain, 68B is included, but it is unclear whether the reversal of the position regarding the poet's gift-giving abilities from 68A to 68B forms part of the gift, and also whether or not 68C refers to itself. "This," for a locus of self-reference, is surprisingly hard to pin down. But what emerges as absolutely clear is that the text is not conceived of here as a physical object. The singularity of *hoc*

49. The other verbal difference is the shift from *o* (20) to *ei* (92).

epistolium and the copying implied by *haec carta* have given way to poetry as social exchange—something given in return for Allius' services—and as a verbal artifact that exists outside the realm of physicality.

The definition of poetry as greater than time's ravaging effects anticipates Horace's well-known treatment of the same idea in *Odes* 3.30. Like Catullus, Horace uses and negates a conception of text as written object: mangy rust can eat at a name only if it is written (1–5):[50]

> exegi monumentum aere perennius
> regalique situ pyramidum altius,
> quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
> possit diruere aut innumerabilis
> annorum series et fuga temporum
>
> I have erected a monument more lasting [literally: through the years] than bronze and higher than the royal site [or: decay] of the pyramids, which eating rain, the raging North wind, could not ruin, nor the innumerable series of years or the flight of time.

Horace's monument locates itself in immortality precisely by its immunity to physical decay. It, like Catullus' gift, will last longer than bronze tablets, or bronze letters, because it is not confined by the material that transmits the words. The two threats to immortality in both poets are materiality and time: Horace's rain and wind match Catullus' rust; his "innumerable series of years" and "flight of time" convey more abstractly Catullus' individual enumeration of days, *haec atque illa dies atque alia atque alia* ("this day and that one and another and another"). The demonstrative adjectives modifying "day" are unmarked, that is, they lack an external deictic function and do not point to any particular day, but suggest rather the infinite succession of one day to another. This lack of specificity stands in opposition to the *hoc* of the gift. It will remain itself over time, and in the same relation to the text it points to, so that "this" will always make sense. Even in the next line, the gift remains "this": *huc addent divi quam plurima, quae . . .* ("to this the gods will add as many gifts as . . . ," 153–54). The persistence of "this" is not because of some external copy. The pointing function of the deictic is internal to the text. Furthermore, the days blend into one another. *Haec* stands on its own, but *atque illa* elide, and there follows a remarkable series of elisions joining four words in *atque alia atque alia*. When we receive the poem, we understand that our "today" would correspond to one of the "other" days for the poet, but that the progression from *haec* to *illa* to *alia* makes a chain linking us, albeit over a long expanse of time, to the poet.[51] "This gift" will remain itself because its textual identity remains the same despite the new context that its iteration will continually provide.

The deictic pointing to the text itself in *hoc munus* reverses, in a final gesture, the conception of *haec munera* ("these gifts") from 68A, where

50. Kroll 1989, ad loc.: "der Name Allius steht mit metallenen Buchstaben auf einer Inschrift, und diese sollen vor Rost geschützt werden." Fowler (2000b, 199–200) treats lines 49–50 (spiderwebs) and 151–52 (rust) alike in the context of the motif of the decay of monuments.

51. Benveniste (1966, 253) puts the temporal deictics (*maintenant, aujourd'hui, hier, demain, dans trois jours*) in the same class as the pronominal deictics (*je, tu*) and the spatial (*ici*).

Catullus turns down his addressee's request: *haec tibi non tribuo munera, cum nequeo* ("I do not grant you these gifts, since I am unable," 32). In the first conception, "these gifts" are external to the poetry itself and the poet does not overtly recognize that he fulfills the request even while negating it. Although 68A answers in every way the request given, this section of the poem does not point to itself as doing so. Section 68C offers poetic self-sufficiency in lieu of the separation and impasse represented by the epistolary situation of 68A.

This new conception of poetry as successful social exchange accords with the brighter outlook on life represented in 68C. Emphasis falls on blessing and life: both couples are back together; a request for blessing from the gods goes hand in hand with the poet's new (and hard-won) ability to give poetic gifts; the brother, with the discursively impossible apostrophe, has fallen out of the picture;[52] Catullus refers to Allius' beloved as *tua vita* ("your life," 155) and makes an analogy once again to his own situation, where he refers to his beloved as *lux mea, qua viva vivere dulce mihi est* ("my light, with whom, alive, living is sweet for me," 160). The impasse of 68A and the deferral of 68B have been overcome. For good reason, this section appears bland. It has attracted scholarly attention only to the extent that it contradicts the situations depicted earlier in the poem and, unlike either 68A or 68B, could not stand alone.

There is, however, a remaining question. In line 150, should we read *Alli*, Scaliger's emendation, or stick with the Veronensis' *aliis*? If we take the paradosis, we would have to supply the name from lines 41 and 50. The rust would not touch it, but it would go strangely absent. The purely literary text would require that the name be preserved not within itself, but through reference. If we take the emendation, this would be the only place the name would stand whole, as both instances of the name in 68B are elided. I much prefer the second solution, since this section of the poem consistently presents a happy picture, and the need to supply the name would entail doubts about the possibility of preserving it. But even if we accept the emendation, we still must recognize that Allius may not be the addressee's name at all. The resolution 68C offers is a huge advance over 68A and B, but it is still tempered.

In light of 68C's interconnectedness with the previous two sections, it is worth considering what kind of discourse it belongs to. Section 68A is distinctly epistolary, and 68B entails enacted address, but 68C gives the impression of a return to an epistle, but without any clear markers of the genre.[53] The style of 68C is plain,[54] but there is nothing such as *quod scribis* ("the fact that you write," 27) to indicate that the poet is writing back. Rather, the return to the plain style of 68A marks a difference. Here the performative force of the language is gift giving and blessing (*sitis felices*, "be happy," 155).

52. Kinsey's restoration of the brother at 155 is unconvincing (1967, 45).

53. Syndikus (1990, 295) refers to this section as an epistle because he assimilates it to 68A and generalizes the framing sections as the poem's generic identity (250).

54. Williams 1968, 230.

We absolutely cannot tell whether such language represents itself as being sent in a letter or enacted in speech. Literature now stands on its own, in an area where writing and speech cannot be extricated from one another.

The progress from *hoc epistolium*, to *haec carta*, to *hoc . . . confectum carmine munus* traces an increasing sense of the literary artifact's independence from material constraints over the course of Catullus 68. Those both for and against the unity of this poem or poems recognize the rich thematic nexus of these hundred and sixty lines. Analysis of the deictics and how they define different possibilities for conceiving the texts—their social function, their transmission, and the kinds of discourse they embody—helps clarify this development. The terms of literary self-reference correspond to each section's dominant mode of representation.[55] As the poem progresses, a more literal conception of space and the physical reality of literary artifacts yields to a more metaphorical, less localized understanding that frees the poet and his poetry from the frustrations of separation in the physical, social, erotic, and literary realms. Even if 68A and B (including C) are not parts of the same poem, they must still be read together since they succeed each other in the progress of the book roll. We should, however, remember that no matter what solution is offered in 68C, rereading always brings us back to the intense distress of 68A. The incapacity of 68A and the integration finally achieved in 68C sit against one another in a contradiction that cannot be revised or erased,[56] although at each rereading we will again follow the path from impasse to fulfillment.

New York University

55. Selden (1992, 482) identifies the performative force of 68A as consolation and of 68B as commemoration. The extent to which these performatives are represented as successful is tied to the medium of discourse (epistle, enacted utterance).

56. Hubbard (1984, 44) celebrates the poem's "dizzying spiral of contradiction and self-negation" in a deconstructive vein; Skinner (2003, 58–59) uses Iser's reader-response theory to fold the negation and blanks that result from paradox and contradiction into a process of ultimate sense-making and literary communication.

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