

## PARODY AND PERSONALITIES IN CATULLUS<sup>1</sup>

(CATULLUS 50, 55, 58 b, 24, 15, 21, 23, 16, 11, 89)

THE reader of Catullus' fiftieth poem can hardly fail to be struck by the poet's use of erotic language to his friend Calvus.<sup>2</sup> Sleeplessness and lack of appetite are symptoms of love, and the threat of Nemesis is commonly used against a haughty beloved;<sup>3</sup> *miserum* (line 9),<sup>4</sup> *incensus* (line 8), and *indomitus furore* (line 11)<sup>5</sup> are words to describe a lover, and *ocelle* (line 19), as Kroll observes, is naturally addressed to a beloved. Even *ut tecum loquerer simulque ut essem* (line 13)<sup>6</sup> suggests a lover's yearning, if we recall how Plato in erotic contexts stresses the desire to have company and conversation with the beloved (*Symp.* 211 d 6-8; *Phdr.* 255 b 2). It is strange then that Kroll should comment on *preces* in line 18 that their content is not clear. For once the whole is characterized as a declaration of love,<sup>7</sup> it becomes superfluous to ask what precisely Catullus' prayers are for; it is enough to say they are the prayers of a lover.<sup>8</sup> What Catullus has done corresponds to what Ovid describes himself as doing in *Am.* 2. 2. 3:<sup>9</sup>

Hesterna vidi spatiantem luce puellam  
illa quae Danaï porticus agmen habet.  
protinus, ut placuit, misi scriptoque rogavi . . .

The poem, then, represents not so much the overheatedly affectionate language of a fashionable coterie as a parody of love-poetry. The opening lines prepare the reader for this erotic development. The two friends have agreed to be *delicati*,<sup>10</sup> and *lusimus*, as Kroll's note indicates, can have erotic overtones: it is in this spirit that their verses are written and that Catullus now, by a fresh exercise of the imagination, stops being simply the 'wanton' poet and becomes the lover. This love, in its turn, is inspired by and testifies to the wit and the charm of Calvus' writing; it also gives an idea of what kind of poetry the two friends are cultivating.<sup>11</sup>

Here it is the interplay of real persons and conventional situations which makes possible the description of this poem as 'parody'; it is also a feature

<sup>1</sup> I am greatly indebted to Mr. Francis Cairns and Prof. R. G. M. Nisbet for their detailed comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I also owe some valuable parallel material to Prof. Nisbet.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kinsey, *Latomus*, xxv (1966), 106.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kroll on lines 9 and 19, Quinn on lines 10-13. For lovers' Nemesis, add *A.P.* 12. 141. 6 (Meleager), 229 (Strato); Tib. 1. 8. 72; for sleeplessness, Pease on Virg. *Aen.* 4. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kroll ad loc. and Hor. *Od.* 3. 12. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. Cat. 64. 19, 253; 68. 129; Plaut. *Trin.* 751.

<sup>6</sup> See further Cat. 21. 5 and Kroll ad loc.

<sup>7</sup> *Dolorem* (line 17) is equivalent to *amore*: see Shackleton Bailey on Prop.

1. 10. 13 (*Propertiana* [Cambridge, 1956], p. 30). Here it has, as Kroll observes, the particular connotation of 'yearning'.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Prop. 1. 1. 16; [Tib.] 3. 4. 76; Ov. *Am.* 1. 6. 61, 2. 2. 66; *A.A.* 1. 710, 715. What the substance of the prayers might be is indicated by Cat. 32, Prop. 2. 23. 15 f., or Ov. *Am.* 1. 11. 7 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. further Aristaen. *Ep.* 2. 2. For the sense of *rogare*, see Kroll on Cat. 8. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Fordyce comments helpfully on this word. Note also that love-poetry may be described as *deliciae* (e.g. Ov. *Tr.* 2. 349; 5. 1. 15).

<sup>11</sup> Pucci, *Maia*, xiii (1961), 249-56 heavily stresses the 'programmatic' aspect of the poem.

of several other poems which this paper will now consider, beginning with poem 55.

The textual problem in the last line of this poem needs to be resolved for a true understanding of the whole. The manuscripts read *vestri sis*, which is plainly nonsense; but a second choice is supplied to the editor by the variant *nostri* in *G* and *R*.<sup>1</sup> Kroll objects to *nostri sis* that Catullus would then be asking more than is reasonable from a prospective friend;<sup>2</sup> but again this objection presupposes that there is no room for fiction in our author. The fiction is here again that the poet is a lover<sup>3</sup> begging that his passion be requited. Catullus, then, is saying to Camerius with an amusing and self-revealing *non sequitur*:<sup>4</sup> 'Tell me who you are in love with; there is no joy in love if you don't talk about it. Or if you like, keep quiet—as long as it's *my* love you're sharing.' Returning through the poem, the reader finds that clues to how it would end have already been planted. *Fastus*<sup>5</sup> and *negare*<sup>6</sup> both belong to the *sermo amatorius* where they denote the attitude and the action of one who rejects a lover; and *nunc*, in this context, implies that Camerius has reached the stage of life when a youth is still an attraction to men and beginning to be one to girls.<sup>7</sup> The situation is similar to that of Prop. 1. 20: as the nymphs snatched Hercules' Hylas, so women may snatch Gallus', and as Hercules searched frenziedly for his beloved, so Gallus is in danger of searching for his. Indeed, the whole motif of 'searching'<sup>8</sup> is rooted in love poetry. The earliest example is in Anacreon (*P.M.G.* 360 Page):<sup>9</sup>

ὦ παῖ, παρθένιον βλέπων  
δίζημαι σε, σὺ δ' οὐ κλύεις,  
οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅτι τῆς ἐμῆς  
ψυχῆς ἡνιοχέυεις.

It reappears, modified so that the 'fugitive' is not the beloved but the poet's own soul, in Callimachus *Epig.* 41 Pf. and the imitation by Q. Lutatius Catulus (frg. 1, p. 43 Morel). The corresponding motif of the beloved's 'flight' is also a familiar one.<sup>10</sup> Here these themes are treated with more than a touch of comedy. The search becomes a literal hunt through the streets of Rome, a miniature *flagitatio* (lines 9–12)<sup>11</sup> with a jocular outcome is thrown in for good measure, and the tone, so far from being plaintive or furious, is now

<sup>1</sup> The *sim* of the Pésaro codex must be an emendation. This manuscript has been studied by M. Zicàri in *Studia Olivieriana*, i (1953), 5–23; note *ibid.*, p. 22: 'Con tali affinità e tali caratteri l'Olivieriano non può contribuire alcunchè di nuovo alla costituzione del testo catulliano.'

<sup>2</sup> But in his supplementary notes he accepts, 'not without misgivings', *nostri sis*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Barwick, *Hermes*, lxiii (1928), 71.

<sup>4</sup> Contrast, moreover, Prop. 2. 25. 29 f.; [Tib.] 4. 13. 7 f.; Ov. *A.A.* 2. 601 ff. Catullus, as editors have observed, is reversing a *locus communis* for rhetorical purposes.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Tib. 1. 8. 69, 75; Prop. 1. 18. 5, 3. 25. 15; Ov. *A.A.* 1. 715.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Tib. 1. 4. 15; Prop. 2. 14. 20, 3. 21. 7; Ov. *Am.* 2. 19. 20, *A.A.* 1. 345.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Eur. *Supp.* 899 f.; Aristaen. *Ep.* 1. 10. 9–17 Mazal; Hor. *Od.* 1. 4. 19 f. and Nisbet-Hubbard ad loc. The emendation *num* should therefore be resisted.

<sup>8</sup> *Quaerere* and the like, can have a distinct erotic sense: see Cat. 8. 13; Prop. 2. 22. 49; Hor. *Od.* 1. 33. 13 and Nisbet-Hubbard ad loc.

<sup>9</sup> If these verses are taken to represent a poetic motif, the elaborately realistic interpretation proposed by M. L. West in *C.Q.* n.s. xx (1970), pp. 209 f. becomes unnecessary. See also Theoc. 1. 82–5.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. Theoc. 14. 35 ff.; Hor. *Od.* 1. 8 and Nisbet-Hubbard on that poem; Prop. 2. 30. 1 ff. and Cairns, *C.Q.* n.s. xxi (1971), 204 f.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Foster, *C.Q.* n.s. xxi (1971), 186 f.

sarcastically polite (line 1), now simply irritated (13–14), now slyly insinuating (18–22).

Poem 58 b is the sequel and conclusion of 55, as 7 is of 5, 3 of 2, or 72 of 70: here Catullus despairs of the search he was involved in there. This should discourage us both from fusing the two together and from writing off 58 b whether as a 'doublet'<sup>1</sup> or as 'a roughly versified draft of phrases which Catullus meant to work up into a poem' (Fordyce, p. 232). The textual problems of the opening disappear with Muretus's easy transposition of lines 2 and 3 (the homoeoarchon will have facilitated such a dislocation);<sup>2</sup> and *bigae* as a genitive singular is adequately defended by Fordyce. The other objections<sup>3</sup> are little more than pedantic. It seems true at first blush that *non si* etc. would naturally lead up to an apodosis meaning '... would I be able to catch up with you'; but this is simply to say that Catullus has indulged in a *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*. The poem begins with the apparent intention of praising Camerius' swiftness<sup>4</sup> which beggars all mythical comparisons; it ends as an admission of breakdown or a flat refusal to continue the chase, even were Camerius himself to offer him help.<sup>5</sup> The poem then turns out to be a farewell to love;<sup>6</sup> and Catullus' 'tiredness' is that of the frustrated or disillusioned lover.<sup>7</sup> And so the curious idea of Camerius' offering help serves to emphasize Catullus' despair of his former love. This is further emphasized by what looks like the reversal of a commonplace to be found in Prop. 2. 30. 1–6:<sup>8</sup>

Quo fugis a demens? nulla est fuga: tu licet usque  
ad Tanain fugias, usque sequetur Amor.  
non si Pegaseo vectaris in aere dorso,  
nec tibi si Persei moverit ala pedes;  
vel si te sectae rapiant talaribus aerae,  
nil tibi Mercurii proderit alta via.

There not even with all the mythical aids to speed would Cynthia escape Amor;<sup>9</sup> here not even with all such aids could Catullus go on pursuing his love. But once again the conventional motif is translated into physical terms

<sup>1</sup> With Barwick, art. cit., pp. 76–8.

<sup>2</sup> For an attempt to explain the lines in the transmitted order, see Barwick, art. cit., pp. 73 f.

<sup>3</sup> These are assembled in Fordyce's introduction to the poem (p. 232). As for his minor objections: the phrasing of line 4 is an elegantly compressed rendering of *Iliad* 10. 437 and the redundant *mihi* in line 10 is like *sibi* in Cinna frg. 18, p. 86 Morel. These features need by no means indicate 'hasty writing'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1202 ff.; Virg. *Aen.* 7. 806 ff.; and *ποδὸς ὥκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς*.

<sup>5</sup> Lines 8–10 are the apodosis to two protheses, both to lines 1–4 and to *dicares*, which also has a concessive force, in line 7. In other words they stand *ἀπὸ κοινοῦ*. If the connection with lines 1–4 is thereby loosened, that is no great matter, particularly since those lines are meant to be something of a red

herring. Their tone, however, does prepare us for what is to come; cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 1413<sup>a</sup>30: εἰσὶ δ' αἱ ὑπερβολαὶ μεираκιδέεις· σφοδρότητα γὰρ δηλοῦσιν. διὸ ὀργιζόμενοι λέγουσι μάλιστα· “οὐδ' εἴ μοι τόσα δόξῃ ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε” κτλ. (*Iliad* 9. 385, 388–90).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hor. *Od.* 1. 5 and Nisbet–Hubbard's introduction to the poem; also e.g. Prop. 3. 24 and 25.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Prop. 3. 24. 17; Tib. 1. 2. 1–4; Aristaen. *Ep.* 2. 1. 22, 16. 11 (a courtesan writing to a lover who prefers another to her): καὶ ὅταν πολλὰ διδοὺς μάτην ἱκετεύων τὴν σὴν ἀποκάμῃς, ἐμὲ λοιπὸν τὴν ἐξ ἀπορίας ἐπιζητεῖς. This last passage clearly indicates how the lover's 'tiring' is the converse of his 'seeking'.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *A.P.* 5. 301. 1–4 (Paulus Silentiarius).

<sup>9</sup> On the meaning of these lines, see Cairns, art. and loc. cit.

(it is as if Catullus were literally tired from running), once again the poem carries a sting in its tail; and the note of burlesque is heightened by the poem's pompous style.<sup>1</sup>

But Catullus is best known as an exponent of the *Musa puerilis* from the Juventius poems. There can be no question of Juventius being a pseudonym,<sup>2</sup> for a Roman gentile name could hardly serve that purpose; and what we have said so far makes it unnecessary to reach for the compromise solution that he is a freedman *concupinus*.<sup>3</sup> It will be more helpful to say with Williams (*Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* [Oxford, 1968], p. 556):<sup>4</sup> 'The best way to view the poems to Juventius is to regard Greek homosexual poetry as one framework which was available to a Roman for treating a personal relationship, real or imagined. In that way a relationship was given expression in a poetic framework, but its actual historical reality cannot now be extrapolated from the framework.' We know also from Pliny (*Ep.* 7. 4) that Cicero could write a love-poem to Tiro which has some analogies with Cat. 99; and the Greek epigrammatist Maccius confesses a passion for one Cornelius (*A.P.* 5. 117, 9. 411). In short, there is no need to explain away Juventius. So what follows will seek to examine more closely some of the 'frameworks' Catullus uses and how he uses them, in relation first to Juventius and then to Furius and Aurelius.

Poem 24 has received a brief but illuminating treatment from M. Zicari.<sup>5</sup> What is most striking about it, as he observes, is that 'al povero poeta che comunemente nella *Musa puerilis* ammoniva l'amico a non lasciarsi sedurre dal danaro e ad apprezzare i doni dello spirito, si è sostituito l'uomo di mondo, che crede già di sapere come andrà a finire quando, passata la caldara, il ragazzo vedrà la miseria dietro le presunzioni di eleganza di Furio'. Catullus then strikingly avoids casting himself as the poor lover, to adopt an attitude of superior worldly wisdom. But this attitude can be defined more closely; for the advice he gives corresponds precisely to that of a bawd, just as Juventius' protest (*qui? non est homo bellus?*) corresponds to that of a more tender-minded courtesan. Compare Lucian, *Dial. Mer.* 6. 4:

#### KOPINNA

Εἰπέ μοι, ὦ μήτηρ, οἱ μισθούμενοι πάντες τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν οἷος ὁ Εὐκριτος,  
μεθ' οὗ χθὲς ἐκάθευδον;

#### KPΩBYΛH

Οὐ πάντες, ἀλλ' ἔνιοι μὲν ἀμείνους, οἱ δὲ καὶ ἤδη ἀνδρώδεις, οἱ δὲ καὶ οὐ πάνν  
μορφῆς εὐφυῶς ἔχοντες.

#### KOPINNA

Καὶ τοιούτοις συγκαθεύδειν δεήσει;

#### KPΩBYΛH

Μάλιστα, ὦ θύγατερ· οὔτοι μὲν τοι καὶ πλείονα διδόασιν· οἱ καλοὶ δὲ αὐτὸ  
μόνον καλοὶ θέλουσιν εἶναι. καὶ σοὶ δὲ μελέτω αἶψά τοι πλείονος . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Comfort, *A. J. P.* lvi (1935), 45-9.

<sup>2</sup> Pace Ferrero, *Interpretazione di Catullo* (Turin, 1955), p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> With M. Zicari, *Studia Olivieriana*, iii (1955), 58, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> For the arguments leading to this conclusion, see pp. 549 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Studia Olivieriana*, iii (1955), 58 f. He documents the τόπος of the poor lover by reference to Puelma Piwonka, *Lucilius und Kallimachos* (Frankfurt am Main, 1949), pp. 248 ff. and *A.P.* 12. 42, 44, 212. Note also Philostratus, *Epp.* 7 and 23.

or *ibid.* 7. 2, where the whore's mother has complained to her daughter that she is cultivating a poor lover,<sup>1</sup> and the daughter retorts: Ἀλλὰ καλὸς καὶ ἀγένειος,<sup>2</sup> καὶ φησὶν ἔρᾶν καὶ δακρύνει καὶ Δεινομάχης καὶ Λάχης υἱὸς ἔστι τοῦ Ἀρεοπαγίτου. . . *Sic* (line 6) then naturally means 'without payment', rather than having, as Kroll suggests, a demonstrative force; the hyperbole *malem divitias Midas dedisses* (line 4) does not literally mean that Juventius has a lot of money to give, but emphasizes his crime against economy; and the laudatory apostrophe in lines 1-3 implies that, were he not so silly, he could command any price he wished. It is also an amusing touch that noble birth here does not belong to poor lover, as in Lucian, *Dial. Mer.* 7. 2, but to Juventius whose part is that of the male prostitute. So the wit of the poem lies in its outrageous infringement of the conventions of poetic love; and it is directed as much against the poet himself, who takes the ugly role of the bawd, as against Furius or Juventius, for his jealousy appears as no more than money-grubbing.

Similarly outrageous is poem 15. This piece takes the form of a kind of *commendatio* which entrusts one person to another's safe-keeping;<sup>3</sup> but it is a monstrous travesty of such a request. For no more unsuitable person for Catullus to entrust his boy-friend to could be imagined: he is wilfully putting the lamb in the jaws of the wolf. As is proper in soliciting such favours, Catullus is anxious to avoid any appearance of presumption or impudence; but it turns out that he is asking with such delicacy for what anyone but a quite incontinent homosexual would naturally guarantee. This further allows a neat pun on *pudentem* or *pudenter* (lines 2 and 13) and *pudice* (line 5), for *pudor*, *verecundia*, etc. are words which are, naturally enough, common in any context where requests are being made,<sup>4</sup> and so also in the *litterae commendatoriae*.<sup>5</sup> It is only to be expected, though again grotesque in a poem of this form, that it should conclude with threats and imprecations;<sup>6</sup> for the whole situation is an absurdity. And in view of that absurdity neither can the insults against Aurelius be taken seriously; it is also a ridiculous way of expressing Catullus' devotion to the boy that the punishment mentioned at the end is proper to an adulterer. In short, this poem is a 'send-up' of a *commendatio*, much as poem 13 is of an invitation:<sup>7</sup> we are dealing once again with parody and with a comic presentation of the lover's feelings.

In poem 21 Aurelius takes on a different role, that of the parasite. The situation of the whole poem is analogous to Cat. 77 or Prop. 2. 34a, where friends of the poet have tried to seduce his beloved: Aurelius is Catullus' rival.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. further Plaut. *As.* 504 ff.; Prop. 4. 5. 49 ff.; Ov. *Am.* 1. 8. 67 f.; Tib. 1. 5. 47 f.

<sup>2</sup> For this detail, cf., in reverse, Tib. 1. 8. 31 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. particularly, Cic. *Ad fam.* 13. 50. 2, quoted by Kroll on line 5: 'hoc mihi da et largire, ut M'. Curium, "sartum et tecum", ut aiunt, ab omnique incommodo, detrimento, molestia sincerum integrumque conserves.' Further, Ov. *Tr.* 3. 14. 15; Hor. *Od.* 1. 3. 5-8; *T.L.L.* iii. 1840. 46 ff., s.v. *incommodo*; L.S.J. s.v. παρακαταθήκη 2.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Cic. *Ad fam.* 2. 6. 1, 5. 12. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Cic. *Ad fam.* 13. 2; Hor. *Ep.* 1. 9. 12.

<sup>6</sup> The style of lines 14-19 is ridiculously grandiloquent; note the reduplications *mala mens furorque vecors* (14) and *miserum malique fati* (17), the alliteration in 18-19 and the *-que/-que* in 19, on which see Ed. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Florence, 1960), pp. 199-201 = *Plautinisches in Plautus* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 209-11.

<sup>7</sup> Here Catullus, so far from offering a simple dinner (cf. Hor. *Od.* 1. 20 and Nisbet-Hubbard, p. 245) offers none at all; and the perfume which is all he can supply shows him to be licentious as well as penniless.

But that he is also the parasite is clear from the allusions to his appetite;<sup>1</sup> and only if he is professionally hungry is there any danger of the boy's learning from him. Further, lines 1-3 are related to a well-known kind of joke which gives a vulgar character the semblance of noble parentage,<sup>2</sup> though Catullus goes one up by making Aurelius no less than the *auctor gentis*. The particularly comic feature of this poem, then, is that the parasite becomes the rival,<sup>3</sup> a shocking offence against the class-distinctions which obtain in ancient poetry, as in ancient life. Or one might equally say that the rival, by being presented as a parasite, becomes simply a figure of fun. By casting Aurelius in both these parts at once,<sup>4</sup> by his own pose of superiority and by the cheerfully obscene threats<sup>5</sup> he concludes with, Catullus precludes any too serious reaction to the poem.

Poem 23 takes the form of a *μακαρισμός*,<sup>6</sup> as *est pulchre tibi* (line 5), *tam bene et beate* (line 15), *commoda tam beata* (line 24), and the concluding *nam satis beatus*<sup>7</sup> indicate; but the bulk of the poem is, paradoxically, based on the praises of poverty characteristic of popular philosophy. Lines 1-4 refer to a commonplace in such contexts, that *φίλοι* are a more than adequate compensation for lack of money: e.g. Menander, *Kitharistes* frg. 2 Koerte:<sup>8</sup>

τὸ κουφότατόν σε τῶν κακῶν πάντων δάκνει,  
πενία. τί γὰρ τοῦτ' ἐστίν; ἥς γένοιτ' ἂν εἰς  
φίλος βοηθήσας ἰατρὸς ῥαδίως.

or *Dyskolos* 811 f.:

πολλῷ δὲ κρεῖττόν ἐστιν ἐμφανῆς φίλος  
ἢ πλούτος ἀφανῆς ὃν σὺ κατορύξας ἔχεις.

But in this case the *φίλοι* are little use, since they are as hungry as Furius himself; and instead of a mother, Furius has a step-mother.<sup>9</sup> (If Catullus

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Alciphron, *Ep. Parasit.*, *passim*; Plautus, *Most.* 888, *Stichus* 155 ff., etc. The point of mocking someone's hunger is commonly to stigmatize him as a parasite (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 855 ff., *Vesp.* 1265 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ar. *Av.* 1451 f.; [Theoc.] 27. 42 ff.; Plaut. *Persa* 53 ff.; Hor. *Od.* 1. 16. 1 and Nisbet-Hubbard ad loc.

<sup>3</sup> Parasites have some contact with love in Alciphron, *Ep. Parasit.* 28 and 31. In 28 the writer hopes to ransom and marry his young master's girl, but only after the young man has himself married an heiress and only because she has co-operated with him in schemes of his; in 31 the writer has fallen in love with a girl he saw in a procession, but the whole letter brings out the impropriety of this infatuation, and particularly the words *οὕτως ἐξεκαύθην εἰς ἔρωτα ὥστε με ἐπιλαθόμενον ὅς εἰμι προσδραμόντα ἐθέλειν κύσαι τὸ στόμα*.

<sup>4</sup> To call someone a parasite may be simply friendly banter: see Theoc. 7. 24: *ἢ μετὰ δαῖτ' ἀκλήτος ἐπέγειαι*; (That this is parasitic behaviour emerges from Alciphron, *Ep. Parasit.* 30: *ὥχόμεν κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς ἀκλήτος εἰς Πασίωνος*.) And when Catullus says of Veranius and Fabullus *quaerunt in trivio vocationes* (47. 7), he is pathetically

and comically exaggerating their plight; they are no less his friends.

<sup>5</sup> For sex as a punishment, see Cat. 16. 1, 37. 8, 56. 7; Ar. *Ach.* 271 ff.; Theoc. 5. 116 f.; and the *Priapea* constantly: e.g. 6, 11, 13, 22, 74. There is usually a note of fantastic comedy in the idea; it is only real in a rustic context.

<sup>6</sup> On this mode of expression see Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Od.* 1. 13. 17, L. E. Rossi, *Maia* n.s. xxiii (1971), 19-21, and the literature cited there. Particularly relevant in relation to Catullus 23 is the type of *μακαρισμός* which has a fixed place in the latter parts of Aristophanic comedies (*Ach.* 836 ff., 1008 ff.; *Vesp.* 1450 ff.; *Pax* 715 ff., 856 ff., etc.), since these are commonly concerned with the pleasures of the table. Catullus' poem is the exact reverse.

<sup>7</sup> The reading of the manuscripts is defended by Ed. Fraenkel, *Mus. Helv.* xxiii (1966), 114-17.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Arist. *E.N.* 1155<sup>a</sup>11 f.; Dio Chrys. 3. 100, Cic. *Lael.* 26; Liban. *Or.* 8. 5 ff. this *τόπος* also underlies Cat. 89 (see appendix).

<sup>9</sup> *Ligneæ* (line 6) is a parody of the idealized toughness of the rustic wife; cf. Hor. *Epod.* 2. 41 f. It has the same implications as *ισχνός* in Ar. *Plut.* 561, since, as Kroll

speaks of parents and not friends here, that is because he himself, as the end of the poem reveals, has no intention of doing the part of a helpful friend.) With lines 7–8 compare Epictetus 3. 26. 5, where it is said that rich men die ‘bursting with indigestion and drunkenness’ (*διαρραγέντας ὑπ’ ἀπεψίας καὶ μέθης*), while poor men live to a ripe old age;<sup>1</sup> with line 9, the moral indignation *ruinae* arouse in Seneca (*Ep.* 90. 43) or Juvenal (*Sat.* 3. 7 f., 190 ff.); with line 10, the poor man’s safety from poisoning, praised by the same authors (*Juv. Sat.* 10. 25 and Mayor ad loc.); and with lines 8–11 in general, Hor. *Sat.* 1. 1. 76 (arguing against avarice):

an vigilare metu exanimem, noctesque diesque  
formidare malos fures, incendia, servos  
ne te compilent fugientes, hoc iuvat? horum  
semper ego optarim pauperrimus esse bonorum.

In lines 12–22 the discussion turns more medical,<sup>2</sup> though here too there are links with the diatribe, as is shown by a comparison with Musonius Rufus 18a (p. 112. 27 Lutz):

(We should eat) . . . τροφήν . . . τὴν κουφοτάτην καὶ καθαρωτάτην. οὕτως δ’ ἂν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν ὑπάρχειν καθαρὰν τε καὶ ξηράν, ὅποια οὐσα ἀρίστη καὶ σοφωτάτη εἶναι ἂν, καθάπερ Ἡρακλείῳ δοκεῖ λέγοντι οὕτως: “ἀνγὴ ξηρὴ ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη.”

This parody also allows a pun on *munditiem* in line 18; the word means ‘cleanliness’, but may also imply a manifestation of good taste or daintiness,<sup>3</sup> which in this context is of course pleasantly absurd. So the point of the poem lies in its constructing an elaborate fabric of parody and then, in the last two lines, neatly dismantling it; there is no room for bitterness against Furius.<sup>4</sup>

In poem 16 Furius and Aurelius appear together as Catullus’ critics. But their criticism is perhaps the funniest feature of a richly humorous poem. It is built round two puns: first on the word *mollis*, which is the typical epithet both of love-poetry<sup>5</sup> and of catamites;<sup>6</sup> second on the words *parum pudicus*, which may mean generally ‘lascivious’ or specifically ‘homosexual’ (*pathicus*).<sup>7</sup> At first blush then, Furius and Aurelius are saying no more than what the ancient love-poet continually says of himself, that he and his verses are wanton;<sup>8</sup> but by means of the play on words, Catullus makes this grow into an accusation of effeminacy and so also of impotence. Thus the sodomitic punishment, which at first may seem ridiculously exaggerated, turns out to fit the crime very neatly; and Catullus’ apologia becomes a demonstration of his own potency

observes, it means ‘lean’; but here it is also an insult (cf. p. 303, n. 1 below).

<sup>1</sup> Also Hor. *Sat.* 2. 2. 70 ff.; Ar. *Plut.* 559 ff.; Musonius Rufus 18b, p. 118. 35 ff. Lutz.

<sup>2</sup> For the virtues of ‘dryness’, see Kroll on line 12. Catullus may be parodying the species of medical theoreticians called *λογικοί* or *διαλεκτικοί ἰατροί*: cf. Dio Chrys. 33. 6; Philo, *Quod det.* 43 and Festugière, *Hermétisme et mystique païenne* (Paris, 1967), p. 156, n. 57.

<sup>3</sup> See Nisbet–Hubbard on Hor. *Od.* 1. 5. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Poem 26, if *vestra* is the right reading in line 1, is plainly good-humoured enough, as is

its close relative Furius Bibaculus frg. 2 (p. 81 Morel).

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Prop. 1. 7. 19, 2. 1. 2, 34. 42; Ov. *Tr.* 2. 307, 349.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Cat. 25. 1; see further Kinsey, *Latomus*, xxv (1966), 103.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *T.L.L.* vii (1) 711. 37, s.v. *impudicus*.

<sup>8</sup> For the ‘lasciviousness’ of love-poetry, see e.g. Ov. *Am.* 2. 1. 2; *A.A.* 3. 331; *Tr.* 2. 313, 345, 427. The love-poet’s character is that of his verses: cf. e.g. Prop. 2. 34. 55–60 and Woodman, *Latomus*, xxv (1966), 222–4. And this is the image of himself Catullus presents in poem 5, the piece which is supposed to give rise to Furius’ and Aurelius’ criticisms.

and that of his verses, which can excite<sup>1</sup> not only the young, the natural public for an erotic poet,<sup>2</sup> but also older men. This characterization of his verses is a comically blunt way of describing the erotic poet's function as an instructor in love;<sup>3</sup> and out of it emerges another paradoxical play on words, the 'soft' verses getting the better of 'stiff' or 'hard' loins.<sup>4</sup> Set in these surroundings lines 5-6 are designedly incongruous. Catullus begins by a lofty presentation of himself as the acolyte of the Muses;<sup>5</sup> but this—in itself already plainly inappropriate—swiftly gives way to an upsurge of wit and feigned anger, whose aim, as was said, is to vindicate not his chastity, but his own and his verses' sexual powers. Thus Catullus begins his defence by detaching himself from his persona as a love-poet, but ends up representing it again in a peculiarly coarse and comical way; so he appears not simply as the *tenerorum lusor amorum*, but also as a writer of ribald wit and invective,<sup>6</sup> something of an Archilochus in fact.<sup>7</sup> It is this ῥήθος which finally emerges from these verses and which corresponds, indeed, to the Catullus we know; and the poem is meant, as any poem is, to display the poet's characteristic qualities. It would therefore be mistaken to take seriously either Furius' and Aurelius' criticism or Catullus' apparent profession of a pure life,<sup>8</sup> for these are simply the basis for the jokes which make the substance of the poem.

It remains to consider poem 11. It now seems clear that the other pieces concerning Furius and Aurelius give no encouragement to considering them enemies of Catullus and the first four stanzas of the poem ironical.<sup>9</sup> It is then necessary, however, to indicate more positively what place they take here. Catullus imagines himself on the point of going away; Furius and Aurelius are the faithful friends who will accompany him anywhere, and as such they stand in contrast to the faithless woman who remains behind to shatter the loins of fresh lovers. They are, in other words, what Gellius has signally failed to be in poem 91. The grandiose account of Catullus' hypothetical travels is designed in part to emphasize their fidelity; but it has another function which saves it from being simply a tasteless hyperbole. For the journey is that of a desperate and embittered man who will go to any lengths to flee what he has lost. To this compare what may well be another passage inspired by this one of Catullus,<sup>10</sup> Virgil, *Ecl.* 1. 64:

at nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,  
pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniemus Oaxen  
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.

<sup>1</sup> They are potent *par excellence* because they induce potency in others; cf. Plato, *Ep.* 7 (344 a 1): οὐδ' ἂν ὁ Ἀλύκευς ἰδεῖν ποιήσκειν τοὺς τοιοῦτους.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Prop. 3. 2. 10, 3. 3. 20; Ov. *Am.* 3. 1. 27, *A.A.* 2. 745. Catullus' *pueri* correspond in this homosexual context to Propertius' and Ovid's *puellae*. Curiously parallel to Catullus' claim is Philostratus, *Ep.* 68.

<sup>3</sup> On 'erotic teaching', see Wheeler, *C.P.* v (1910), 28-40 and 440-50, vi (1911), 56-77.

<sup>4</sup> Propertius is fond of puns on *mollis* and *durus*, though of a less brutal kind: e.g. 1. 7, 2. 34. 41 ff. Catullus likewise plays on the word *tener* in 35. 1, which denotes both the young or immature (cf. Sen. *Ep.* 50. 6)

and the erotic poet (cf. Ov. *A.A.* 3. 333) or his verses (cf. Hor. *A.P.* 246).

<sup>5</sup> For this idea, see Kroll ad loc. and in his *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1924), pp. 30 ff.; West on Hes. *Theog.* 100.

<sup>6</sup> Though the assertion that his verses have *salem et leporem* is a claim to some refinement: cf. 1. 1, 6. 17; Hor. *A.P.* 273, and Brink ad loc.

<sup>7</sup> For actual imitation of Archilochus in Catullus, see Kroll on 40. 1, 56. 2.

<sup>8</sup> So also Kinsey, art. cit., p. 105, n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> So notably Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin, 1924), ii. 307.

<sup>10</sup> See Fordyce's note on line 1 for echoes in Horace and Propertius.



The journey as an escape from an unhappy love is also a familiar motif.<sup>1</sup> So Catullus entrusts his message to Furius and Aurelius, not only because they are faithful friends, but also to stress the woman's estrangement from him and his rejection of her; he will no longer even address her directly.<sup>2</sup> Furius and Aurelius then are simply what they are called, *comites Catulli*; and no cheap irony disturbs the venomous anger and the sorrowful regret which infuse the poem.<sup>3</sup>

A few general remarks are now possible and necessary. It has been assumed here that these poems are fictions, and that sometimes they embody a form of humour whose appreciation partly depends on recognizing the gap between fiction and reality. This opinion rests, in the last analysis, on an intuition of the tone of the pieces; and poem 81, it might be objected, has a more serious note,<sup>4</sup> while others which have here been interpreted as humorous could be taken in a similar way. On the whole it has been possible, independently of any beliefs about the reality or unreality of the poems and by reference purely to literary conventions, to suggest that there is humour in the form of parody; but this paper does not pretend to resolve questions which individual taste and judgement must determine. It is meant rather to furnish considerations the reader may find relevant in making his assessments. Since, however, the writer cannot avoid, nor should wish to avoid, offering such assessments himself, it should be explained what the assumption that the situations of Catullus' poems are fictional implies.

That assumption has two senses. First, a more narrow one, that, as was said, there are places where Catullus puts a real person in a fictional role. It has been admitted that this alone does not necessarily indicate that a poem is comical in intent; nor can we be sure that Catullus meant the fiction to be felt as such. But there is another sense in which it is applicable to many poems and more useful to the reader. People in Catullus, as in much other poetry, are shaped by the poet's imagination; his imagination is in its turn fed by a tradition. Like actors in a play, they have a part which is determined by what the poem is meant to express; and we are unlikely to appreciate adequately what it expresses without a notion of the forms or conventions the poet uses. Those forms and conventions, so far from fettering the poet, are his medium; for by using or reworking them he is able to give precision and concreteness to what he has to say. Likewise, the interpreter, if he manages to identify them, has the possibility of controlling and refining his reactions to the poems. So assuming poems to be fictional is ultimately no more than to say that a poet has some choice in what he writes and some power to shape it, that his writing does not merely mirror a historical reality or a personal feeling, but also tries

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Theoc. 14. 55; Prop. 2. 5. 9-14, 3. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kinsey, *Latomus* xxiv (1965), 539.

<sup>3</sup> A reference should be made here to the article of L. Richardson, Jr., in *C.P.* lviii (1963), 93-106, which deals with the Furius, Aurelius, and Juventius poems. This contains some valuable remarks, notably on poem 99 (pp. 95 f.), but the author's approach to the question as a whole is too different from that of this paper for polemic to be profitable. Here I may simply express

some scepticism about his arrangement of the poems in a quasi-biographical sequence.

<sup>4</sup> See on this piece the excellent article of M. Zicari in *Studia Olivieriana*, iii (1955), 57-69. He in fact concludes (and I am inclined to agree): 'Tuttavia . . . della *mésalliance* di Giovenzio col pesarese è suggerito soltanto l'aspetto ridicolo. Essa resta un delitto mondano, suscitatore non di gelosia, ma di uno scandalo tanto meno da prendere sul serio, quanto più pateticamente espresso' (pp. 68 f.).

to express something human, whether funny or serious; it is not to say, which would be false, that a serious poem must be describing a real situation and a funny poem an invented one. Therefore, at least one task of the interpreter is to use the identification of poetic forms and conventions to approach the poems' significance; and that is what these few pages have tried to do.

## APPENDIX

The obscene meaning of poem 89 is obvious and requires no comment; what may be worth spending a word on is the *double entendre* by which it is conveyed. Underlying the whole is the commonplace, briefly discussed above on p. 296, that the poor man can rely on his *φίλοι* to help him. *Tenuis* can mean 'poor' (e.g. in Cic. *Off.* 2. 70), while *macer* can carry the same connotation (see *T.L.L.* viii. 6. 19-28); and thinness<sup>1</sup> and poverty are naturally related phenomena. Conversely, *bonus* is used of 'men of substance' (*O.L.D.* s.v. *bonus* 6), as of 'obliging' behaviour (*ibid.* 4); and *valens* is used here as *validus* may be (e.g. in Tac. *H.* 1. 57), with the same implication of wealth. *Venustus* is common enough of mental qualities: here it implies kindness or warm-heartedness, rather like ἀστεῖος in Plato, *Phaedo* 116 d 5. Further, *tangere* can have a characteristic connotation of laying hands on money, as in Plaut. *Aul.* 740:<sup>2</sup>

cur id ausu's facere ut id quod non tuom esset tangeres?

So the surface meaning of the poem may be paraphrased as follows: 'Gellius is thin (i.e. poor). Why not? Why should he stop being poor<sup>3</sup> when he's got such a wealthy (and obliging) mother and uncle, such a rich and nice sister and so many relatives to help him out? Even if he only made use of what . . .'—and now the obscene meaning becomes unmistakably clear with *fas tangere non est*, which is the exact opposite of what the drift of the argument is apparently leading to. And at this point the sexual meanings of *bonus* ('compliant', e.g. in Hor. *Od.* 4. 1. 3), *valens*, and *venusta* become evident. Here too, then, Catullus' ribaldry can claim for itself *salem et leporem*; and here too his wit takes the characteristic form of parody.

Christ Church, Oxford

C. W. MACLEOD

<sup>1</sup> For jokes on leanness, see Brecht, *Philol. Supp.* xxii, Heft 2 (1931), pp. 91-3.

<sup>2</sup> Also, *ibid.* 640, 744, 754 f. In this scene there is the same *double entendre* as in Catullus'

poem.

<sup>3</sup> For *cur* + subj. in 'deprecating censure', see Lewis and Short, s.v. *cur* II B, 1, c; cf. *T.L.L.* iv. 1440. 11-34, s.v. *cur*.