# *Intratextuality*

## Greek and Roman Textual Relations

Edited by

ALISON SHARROCK

AND

HELEN MORALES

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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# Preface

In the process of putting together the parts of this whole, we are struck by the force of John Henderson's observation that texts feel far more provisional to authors than to readers and critics. This book, like any other, has passed through various stages of rehearsal and revision on its way to publication, in which many people have had a hand.

Alison Sharrock would particularly like to thank Helen Morales for agreeing to take on this project part-way through its life, and getting her going when she was lost in the labyrinth. The editors both wish to express thanks to John Henderson for many years of inspiration and for moral and intellectual support in the project. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the wisdom and kindness of several friends who have given advice and talked things through: Tony Boyle, Duncan Kennedy, Sara Lindheim, Victoria Wohl. Tim Sharrock has untangled numerous electronic problems, for which we are both very grateful. We thank Oxford University Press's anonymous readers for acute criticism and useful suggestions. We are especially grateful to Hilary O'Shea and other staff at OUP, for their skill and kindly guidance.

As this book went to press, the classical world was saddened by the early death of Don Fowler, whose eloquent grace and intellectual charm is manifested here in his piece on the night adventure of Nisus and Euryalus. Don's presence can be felt in almost every chapter of this book: a glance at the References will hint at the extent of his *auctoritas*, but those who knew him and his work will see that his true influence is still more pervasive. We are grateful for his support of this project, and we pay tribute to a short life of outstanding richness.

A.S. and H.M.

# I

# Intratextuality: Texts, Parts, and (W)holes in Theory

### ALISON SHARROCK

in the same way a plot, being a *mimesis* of an action, should be a *mimesis* of one action and that a whole one, with the different sections so arranged that the whole is disturbed by the transposition and destroyed by the removal of any one of them; for if it makes no visible difference whether a thing is there or not, that thing is no part of the whole.

(Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a)

Plot is the principle of interconnectedness and intention which we cannot do without in moving through the discrete elements—incidents, episodes, actions—of a narrative.

(Brooks 1984: 5)

The parts do not make up the whole but arise out of the whole as differentiating forms 'open' outward from the centre. If we could, hypothetically, look outward for a moment from the centre, we would see a whole dividing itself into parts which participate in it. Looking inward from our own perspective outside the centre, however, we perceive only the parts which stand between us and the internal unity. In order to return to that unity we must reintegrate the parts by reassimilating them once again to the One. We must conceive of them, that is, as 'imitating' the whole.

(Trimpi 1983: 219)

My starting-point in this introductory paper could be characterized with that wonderful culinary metaphor which the

satirist Persius uses to play at scoffing (at) tragedy.[1] If tragedy is epitomized by the eating of children,[2] and needs a hundred mouths,[3] then 'what great big lumps of solid song are you gulping down, that it should be necessary to rely on a hundred throats?' (Persius, *Satire* 5. 5–6). This book, likewise, is concerned with chunks of text, and in particular with the relationships between them, and how it is that they come to be chunks—for part of the joke in what Persius is saying is that tragedy is meant to be a 'whole', not something you eat in chunks. But breaking off chunks is just what critics sometimes try to do—or have to do, in order to read: and here is the second part of my starting-point. We need to compartmentalize, to take our texts in bite-sized chunks, in order to read at all, but in doing so we also tend (and ought) to resist the compartmentalization: 'tend to', because we all read for unity, in that we look for ways of putting things together; 'ought to', because the rigidity of unified reading (which tends also to be univocal) desensitizes us to the richness of texts. Reading inevitably involves some kind of movement or drive towards some sort of unity, because that is how we make sense of things, as Don Fowler's opening quotation on seeing a situation as a story so eloquently shows; and also some kind of chopping up of the text in order to use it, because otherwise we cannot see the trees for the wood.

There has been in classical scholarship an influential school of thought which tends to devalue texts which do not

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[1] For reading and criticizing an earlier version of this paper I should like to thank John Henderson and Duncan Kennedy. I am particularly grateful to Helen Morales for her criticism, good judgement, and encouragement in the production of this chapter as well as the volume as a whole.

[2] Persius is referring to the story of Thyestes, who was tricked into eating his own children by his brother Atreus, and was thereby horribly polluted. This terrible feud was part of the continuing curse on the house of Pelops, which has teknophagy right at its outset (Tantalus serving up his son Pelops to the gods), and by hinted implication again in the next generation: Atreus' son Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia in order to go to Troy. The story of the house of Atreus is paradigmatic of tragedy.

[3] This is a reference to Virgil's imitation of Homer's claim that ten tongues and mouths are inadequate, without the aid of the Muses, to tell of the catalogue of ships going to Troy (*Il.* 2. 489). Virgil multiplies by ten (*Georg.* 2. 43, perhaps surprisingly, but in a context where he is clearly being epic, with whatever degree of simplicity). Epic and tragedy are often treated together in ancient literary criticism.

fit a Romantic notion of 'unity',[4] while New Critical interest both in ambiguity and in the hermetically sealed wholeness of the individual poem has resonated powerfully with literary critics whose canon contains such well-wrought urns as the Horatian odes. Although the challenge of post-modern fragmentation has to some extent destabilized the neat organicism of classical scholarship, still there is a premium on 'wholeness' and a suspicion of less tidy poems. Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, a didactic poem about how to catch and keep lovers, is such a work. It is not a narrative poem, and is therefore already considered slightly inferior. It is also full of 'purple passages'. Many influential critics, particularly in the middle of the twentieth century, saw the poem as harmfully interrupted by excessive, self-indulgent digressions, often mythological narratives (but not only these), which the critics liked for their own sake, but felt were inappropriate to the text as a whole. I expended a lot of energy at one point attempting to show the 'point' of the digressions.[5] I mention this not to elicit sympathy for my efforts, but because one point with which I am concerned in this introduction is *the way people read*, myself included. While reading may involve a drive from digression towards unity (or the unfulfilled requirement of unity), it is also valuable to read 'unity' towards digression, out along different paths.[6]

This book is unashamedly literary critical, and theoretical. It is driven by a belief that it is only when we pull texts apart, and look at the myriad ways of their putting-together and their points of view, that we can fully engage with the whole range of epistemological, historical, philosophical, aesthetic, and critical exegeses that constitute our response to literary texts and cultural poetics. The crucial relationship of narratology (a separate but related strategy) with cultural and scientific studies more generally was made clear in Nash (1990). That project was concerned with how

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[4] On the history of organicism, see Orr (1991) ch. 1, and particularly on Romantic attitudes, esp. 22.

[5] My Ph.D. thesis, which eventually became Sharrock (1994), is the main evidence of this expenditure.

[6] See the overall thesis of Heath (1989), discussed below, and Morales (Ch. 3 below).

the patterns of story-telling inform all sorts of discourses. We are concerned with how the patterns of texts (understood more broadly than in the 'pure' narratological approach), and of our reading of texts, figure the way we make sense of the world. As Fowler (1997*b*: 13) says: 'One of the most distinctive features of modern thought has been the growing realization that divisions that seem natural may yet be cultural: first in the social sciences, and ultimately even in the hardest of physical sciences.'[7] We believe that intratextuality, with its emphasis on the interaction of detail and big picture, and the renegotiation of apparently natural segmentation, can contribute to the reading of the text of the world as well as of the world of the text.[8] Thinking sensitively about how parts interrelate with wholes can help us to 'read' other cultural constructs as well as literary texts.

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[7] Fowler (1997*b*) is an important intertext with the present volume. Many of the papers of this volume interact directly with what we might term cultural poetics. For example, Martin argues that we need to take an intratextual look at archaic cultural poetics in order to perceive what a 'digression' might look like from an archaic perspective.

[8] See particularly Kennedy (Ch. 8 below) on textual worlds. The term 'intratextuality' was, I wrongly thought, coined by me for a panel on ekphrasis at a Classical Association conference in Exeter in 1994. Since that time, however, I have seen it used in a number of places, including Frangoulidis (1997*a*) and Kolarov (1992). It occurs, very briefly, in Orr (1991) 121, in a long list of terms which might contribute to a study of literary 'repetition' (and again in passing on 135), and is discussed, extensively enough to warrant mention in the index, by Boyle (1993) 90–4. I owe the earliest reference that I know to John Henderson, via Pucci (1998) 18, who quotes Perri (1978) 295. (That instance occurred in a summary of a 1977 Ph.D. on dew in Milton's sonnets.) As Hesk points out, it has not yet entered the general critical vocabulary. It is, however, used quite extensively in Reid (1992), under the heading of 'framing'. See particularly 48–9 for his definition of intratextual framing, which starts from the physical paragraphs of the printed book, and moves through 'abrupt stylistic change' to embedded narrative, which he describes as 'the most heightened form of intratextual framing'. Reid's interests are more narrowly formalist than those of the present project. Grigley's (1995) book on art, text, and theory ends with a chapter entitled 'Intratextuality'. He means something slightly different by the term from the resonance it usually has in this book, but there are points of contact: 'when supplementary traces are engaged, they no longer lie outside the text, are no longer merely beside it, but have become reprepositionalized, as a title might be above or below or beside a text but when read *enters* the text' (157).

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INTRATEXTUALITIES

The various readings of textual relationships offered in this book may not ultimately add up to a grand theory of intratextuality (how parts relate to parts, wholes, and holes)—but there is, perhaps, some self-referential appropriateness in that. Reading intratextually means looking at the text from different directions (backwards as well as forwards[9]), chopping it up in various ways, building it up again, contracting and expanding its boundaries both within the *opus* and outside it. It may be that this is a description of what careful readers do anyway, at least sometimes.[10] Crucial for this project, however, and for my own philosophy of reading, is an explicit awareness of the process of dividing and rejoining in the act of reading. It is perhaps particularly important for classicists to be self-aware about such matters, since our intellectual training, both personally and historically, has been deeply imbued with the commentary. This genre, more than any other, encourages fragmentation and schematization of texts.[11] We have learned to read Latin and Greek texts in lemmata, in chunks.

Intratextuality makes no claims to being fundamentally new, since clearly questions of this nature have been asked since antiquity. Likewise, its close correlate *inter*textuality is a critical tool which has only been codified and popularized among classicists in the last decade or so, and yet it involves critical moves that are probably as old as literature. We might, for example, compare Stephen Hinds's excellent book (1998) with the minor industry in antiquity on the 'thefts' of Virgil (that is, his allusions and references to earlier poets). They have quite a bit in common, if they are read with a sense of history, as they are by Hinds himself, who discusses these points about the 'thefts' of Virgil as intertextual at pages 22–5 and 35–7. I do not mean to imply, with this, that there is

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[9] See particularly Kennedy (Ch. 8 below).

[10] To some extent it is intended to be precisely that, since this paper, at least, aims to be as much descriptive of readerly activity as it is prescriptive.

[11] On the involvement of commentaries in the reception of ancient texts, I have learned much from Skoie (1999).

nothing new about the way textuality is talked about today, or that there has not been a 'revolution in poetic language' which Kristeva's title claims: rather, that ancient critics were responding to a signifying process and were constructing a way of thinking about it which, with the help of a fairly large leap of historical translation, may be seen to be broadly similar to that used today. Moreover, the very rhetoric of intertextuality is not a stable, fixed definition but is itself intertextual, dying and coming to life again in the process of transposition from one signifying system to another.[12] Kristeva's pioneering work on poetic language is—appropriately—itself developed in dialogue with Bakhtin, to whom she attributes the insight that 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another'.[13] If we are to impose critical limits on relational activity of texts (and of theory), internally and externally, it is crucial for our critical, epistemological, and historical exegesis that we also examine those limits. What intertextuality offers to the reading of texts together is a more sophisticated, more explicit, and more suggestive critical vocabulary for ways of thinking about and appreciating external textual relationship, and for seeing what difference it makes. This book on intratextuality seeks to make a similar move—not to invent the idea that parts relate, but to put their relationship more firmly on the critical map, and so to offer, by theory and example, a more explicitly self-conscious 'grammar' of the contribution of internal textual relationship to reading.[14]

It is the hypothesis of intratextuality that a text's meaning grows not only out the readings of its parts and its whole, but also out of readings of the relationships between the parts,

[12] Kristeva has expressed a preference for the term 'transposition' rather than 'intertextuality', because of the way intertextuality has been hijacked for source criticism. See Moi (1986) 111 (from Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*).

[13] See Moi (1986) 37 (from Kristeva's *Word, Dialogue and Novel*). On intratextuality as an aspect of intertextuality, see Barthes (1973 = 1981) 39: 'Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc. pass into the text and are redistributed within it.'

[14] An example. It seems to me that Hardie's excellent discussion of the interaction of intertextuality and the structure of the *Aeneid*, at Hardie (1993) 100, would have benefited from the concept and vocabulary of intratextuality. I would say that he is reading intratextually.

and the reading of those parts as parts, and parts as relationship (interactive or rebarbative): all this both formally (e.g. episodes, digression, frame, narrative line, etc.) and substantively (e.g. in voice, theme, allusion, topos, etc.)—and teleologically. It follows that distinctions, whether between frame and inset, or between direct and ironic language, or between reading strategies of unity and fragmentation, should not be seen in isolation from each other, nor in isolation from such distinctions between one text and another. John Henderson, whose paper on Plato's *Symposium* offers (the *Symposium* as) a paradigm for intratextual reading, refers to Agathon as a 'born soloist' who 'cuts out all the interchange that constitutes the other-directedness of Love' (p. 316): Agathon (and his Eros) is thus a whole on his own, refusing to interact with the other parts: this also is an important element of intratextuality, that sometimes parts *don't* relate to each other in tidy and significant ways, but stick out like sore thumbs. Intratextuality is about how bits need to be read in the light of other bits, but it is also about the bittiness of literature, its uncomfortable squareness-in-round-(w)holeness.[15]

Although the trap of the 'grand theory' is probably an inevitable aspect of the very act of formulation, the theoretical strategy of intratextuality, as we are developing it here, is a self-consciously anti-totalizing concept. It is not surprising that the various contributors' intratextualities take different forms. It would hardly be appropriate, therefore, for me to attempt to impose a totalizing unity on the contributions, yet such a strategy is often required of the genre of publication to which this volume belongs (the collection of essays). Indeed, the choice of this genre for a work on unity and fragmentation is perhaps more fraught with danger, but also opportunity, than the obvious alternative, the monograph, would have been, since the question of whether the parts add up to more than their own sum, and thus to a whole, is always at issue. In the next few paragraphs I shall briefly describe the intratextual strategies of the contributors to this volume, not offering

[15] See particularly Martin and Morales; also, differently, Newlands, and, differently again, Henderson.

summaries of their papers, but mapping out the range of approaches evidenced here—which are by no means the whole story.[16]

The intratextualities offered fall, roughly, into two groups: the first more concerned with 'formal' issues (such as digressions, narrative line, disparate connections), the second more interested in the ironic and political potential of intratextual reading. For the purposes of this volume, I offer this grouping as one possible approach to the papers, although I would also invite the reader to consider other ways in which the collection might have been ordered (alphabetical or chronological order are two obvious ones). Since in practice many readers do not in fact read collections of essays in a linear fashion, the intratextual rearrangement of the volume is still more open to individual negotiation. I would note, also, that like Virgil's *Aeneid* the two halves of this book will not stay neatly separate, and contain overlaps, foreshadowing, and allusions in both directions.

Papers in the first group dwell explicitly on how texts are put together. 'Putting together' in this way always also includes pulling apart. Both Richard Martin and Helen Morales, whose papers would have framed a volume arranged chronologically, draw attention to the self-advertising bumpiness of narrative 'digression', and reclaim the 'contradictions, repetitions, digressions and other anomalies', as Martin puts it, as creative sites of meaning. Martin argues that we are asking the wrong question when we seek to fit Homer into the straitjacket of modern interpretation, whether Analyst or even those more sympathetic artistic-structural approaches, since what counts as 'irrelevant' is culturally determined. Based primarily on a reading of Nestor's account of his youthful cattle-raid, Martin's intratextual strategy highlights the rhetorical power of a textuality not subject to 'the tyranny of Aristotle's *Poetics*'. Morales

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[16] I am acutely aware of the many other texts which could usefully have been studied in this volume. Indeed, I would contend that *any* text could be subjected to intratextual reading. I should particularly like to see intratextuality brought to the fore in discussions of collections (the Augustan poetry book is an obvious example) and of large, unwieldy texts, such as the Roman novel or later epic.

likewise stresses the value of textual material that—by canonical standards—does not fit very well (in tone, content, size, and detail) with other textual elements. She concentrates on the *sententiae* of Greek novels, and shows how their contextualization—often precisely in its jerkiness—releases political as well as narratological meanings.

Narratology, back at least as far as Aristotle, is necessarily concerned with the 'narrative line', down which we find teleology—and resistance to it. Another subgroup of contributors could be called the 'labyrinthine' group, for they address the challenges of narrative linearity and its denial, nuancing the straightforward progressivism of linearity with the complex twists and turns that make reading literary. Elena Theodorakopoulos explicitly takes up the challenge of the labyrinth as a reading strategy for Catullus, 64, in preference to the impulse to unity, although she acknowledges that no reading strategy is free from totalizing tendencies. In this paper, fragmentation and linear indecorum are not just evidence of Hellenistic narrative playfulness, but rather express an unstable, ambivalent authorial voice which refuses any easy putting together of the poem's structure. Here, intratextualities create a deliberate impediment to easy but dishonest linear reading. As in several other contributions, Theodorakopoulos' intratextuality is bound up in intertextuality, as will be discussed further below.

The idea of reading as labyrinthine is well established,[17] but however twisting and turning the line may be, a maze-walker must enter the labyrinth at a particular point (even if there is more than one point of entry) and can, given enough skill, find his/her way to the centre and out again, for the labyrinth is a complex but complete and discrete structure. A number of contributors argue, by contrast, that a text is not only complex, but also actually *not* discrete. Such a move is at work in Don Fowler's reading of the *mise-en-abyme* relationship between the Nisus and Euryalus episode and the *Aeneid* as a whole,[18] in which overlapping structures of beginnings and ends in 'episode' and 'whole' both cause each

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[17] See, for one example among many, Doob (1990).
[18] See also Martin (Ch. 2, 63), for a reading of Nestor's narrative in *Il.* 11 as *mise en abyme* with the whole poem.

to reflect on the other and also call into question the discrete totality of part and whole, and the very possibility of discrete totalities in reading. The interactions of intra- and intertextuality are at issue also in Andrew Laird's contribution, which offers three paradigmatic readings of the way in which the perception of structure is dependent on an ideology of reading practices.

A classic intratextual move is the relating of apparently disparate parts of the text, in order to enhance the reading of each. Such is the move made by Carole Newlands, who is reading a notoriously digressive, intratextually indecorous text (Ovid's *Fasti*). In her reading, the poet is consciously in control of the intratextual relationships in the text.[19] She shows us how to navigate around a disjunctive, fragmented poem, despite the fact that we have learned to read for unity, wholeness, and smoothness. In this reading, the messy bittiness of the text releases a subtle political reading when one passage is read in the light of another. Intratextuality thus ironizes and destabilizes another function of the text (in this case, celebration of Livia), without necessarily undermining the text's status as court poetry. In this paper, as in several others including particularly those by Kennedy, Hesk, and Fox, but also Henderson, Fowler, and Theodorakopoulos, intratextual readings of irony do not involve the replacement of one meaning (the 'surface') with another (the 'ironic undertones'), but rather allow both voices room for expression. Newlands's paper introduces the second group, in which the emphasis moves from formal to thematic textuality.

Intratextuality is offered in this volume as a way, albeit partial, of negotiating one's way around the textual system. Ultimately, if I may dare the term, it has to do with readability. Such is the case made by Duncan Kennedy in his analysis of Lucretius. He argues that we construct the *De*

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[19] Consideration of this paper raises a question which lurks behind much of our project, as indeed of criticism generally, which is the—now quite old—battle over authorial intention. On this, as on other matters, there is a range of positions among the contributors. My own view is that meanings come into being in many ways and at many levels, but that it is almost impossible for critical practice *in practice* to hold rigidly to either of the extreme positions on the spectrum from 'author' to 'reader'.

*Rerum Natura*—and the nature of the universe—by the intratextual and other reading strategies we bring to the text and the universe, the text as universe and universe as text. If we did not make sense of the text (universe) by making its parts fit together—if the *De Rerum Natura* really were a *simulacrum* of the universe according to Lucretian philosophy, and the universe were to exist beyond our language[20]—we would not be able to read it. In this way, the poem (and the universe) offers a paradigm of reading: the atom as part, endowed with meaning only by the process of reading the universe (and the poem). It may seem, here, that intratextuality is susceptible to an oversimple holisticism—'if we can see the whole, we must have found the answer'. But Kennedy's case is that holistic accounts, whatever their value, are just that— other accounts of how things are, other ways of making sense (p. 217). I would stress that intratextuality is not just a matter of finding the whole, but also of problematizing its wholeness. Reading the text as universe (the ultimate whole) is a reading strategy invoked for a particular purpose by particular readers. Such a strategy, however, involves a paradox, which might be called 'design against itself':[21] the only way Lucretius and his reader can make sense of the *rerum natura* is by design, by constructing a text of the universe which is readable and has significance because of the relationship of its parts, but such design, interrelationship, and significance are precisely the kind of anthropomorphic strategies which Lucretius attempts to oppose. An irony thus arises between the materialist dogma and the anthropomorphic vocabulary which it must employ.

For many of the contributors, me included, a crucial aspect of intratextuality is that part-ing exists in reading: that is, the designation of something as a part—whether it is a digression or a political message—is an act of reading. Moreover, intratextuality is a matter both of identification between parts and of fragmentation. These points are forcibly made by Jon Hesk, whose broad understanding of 'parts' leads him to an

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[20] I should note that Kennedy insists that his case—that the universe is constructed by our discourse—is not the same as saying that there is nothing real 'out there'.

[21] The reference is to the title of Krieger (1989).

ironic reading of political messages in Aristophanes which none the less denies absolute authority to any of its parts, including the political message.

It is in Matthew Fox's paper that the intratextual force of irony is most fully developed.[22] His intratextuality is concerned not primarily with form but rather with multiple voices and splits in representation, although the two will not—of course—stay entirely separate, and the formal interactions of prologue and dialogue in his text (*De Republica*) are crucial in the development of the multiplicity of voice. As an antidote to the risk that intratextual considerations might seem narcissistically 'literary' in their self-reflexiveness, in this case the author's 'text' is his life, writings, and political activity, for Cicero's textual authority is bound up in his political authority.

For all these three contributors, then, intratextual irony may undermine the apparent monologic meaning of the text, and the ultimate theory of the universe, the Roman state, and the politics of peace and polis which it purports to embody. But this 'irony', this multiplicity of parts, does not simply replace one monologic meaning with its opposite—it is not that Lucretius' materialist dogma is shown after all to be wrong—but that the various strands or 'voices' in the text cannot avoid each other. When read intratextually, irony becomes difficult and creative.[23]

In Fox's essay the interaction between prologue (which sets itself up as monologic) and dialogue (which presents itself as process rather than dogma) is crucial for the production of Ciceronian irony. In a similar way, John Henderson reads the textural intrasexuality (his phrase) of Plato's *Symposium*—margins, montage, partYing, and planning as well as the 'real thing', which is Plato on Love—as a microcosm of reading Plato and a paradigm for reading.[24] He shows how the haste of so many critics to ignore the 'scene-painting' and

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[22] By this I mean that it is central to his paper, whereas it is more peripheral in the other ironists; another intratextual metaphor asking for deconstruction.

[23] I do not intend to imply that it is only through intratextual reading that one can see the problems in simplistic use of 'irony', but rather that it is one possible way of so doing.

[24] There are clearly links here with the *mise-en-abyme* reading of Fowler.

get at the philosophy ('go read some Plato', in Henderson's phrase) is produced/mirrored by the erotic/philosophical strategy of Plato's party, in which our desire to sit next to Socrates and absorb his wisdom is frustrated (and enhanced, and signalled) by the intratextual complexities that get in the way of the Speeches.[25]

### GRAND THEORIES AND TEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP

From the beginnings of our literary education in primary school, we are encouraged to read and write for unity.[26] It is the same impetus, perhaps, which drives us to look for a Grand Theory of textual relationship, in which we may encompass the whole universe of texts, and so ultimately conquer, control, and explain them. Such a desire for a Grand Theory which will always apply is almost a manifestation of human desire for metaphysical Unity, almost a seeking after the form (in the Platonic sense) of poem, as Young (1981: 407) has argued. This book also is not free from such a teleological desire for total explanation. One classicist who has attempted a grand theory, modestly circumscribed as ancient theorists' own theories of textual unity, is Malcolm Heath.[27] As is appropriate in ancient literary criticism, his theory of unity is bound up with questions of genre and generic appropriateness. Heath's case may be summarized thus (pp. 153–4):

1. At the level of hypothesis, 'the criteria of selection and delimitation differ according to genre'.

2. At the level of text, the parts must relate in such a way that their 'conjoint effect' gives a coherence to the work as a

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[25] With this, we might compare Morales' discussion (Ch. 3, 76–7) of Barthes' discussion of 'skipping bits' which we think are going to be boring.

[26] Our stories must have a beginning, middle, and end—this law is now enshrined in the British National Curriculum, even at Key Stage 1. See Brooks (1984) 3: 'Children quickly become virtual Aristotelians, insisting upon any story-teller's observation of the "rules", upon proper beginnings, middles, and particularly ends.'

[27] I have the highest regard for Heath's (1989) work on unity and poetics. The following discussion should be taken as evidence of that regard, even (especially) where I disagree with him.

whole, which helps it to achieve its 'generically appropriate ends'.

3. Diversity is a constituent of coherence. It might include digression, but any such must be 'smoothly articulated with the surrounding text'.

4. In both form and content, the parts of a text must help it achieve 'the primary or ancillary effects appropriate to a text of that genre'.

Heath's argument is that the ancients were working with a different notion of unity from that which is traditional among modern critics, particularly classical ones who are still much influenced by the realist–rationalist thought of the early modern period and the nineteeth century. The ancients' notion of unity could include digression from the subject-matter of the hypothesis, and also various forms of *poikilia*. On this marvellously (self-referentially) rich word, Heath's argument could be expanded: *poikilia* signifies a nexus of words intimately involved in ancient and modern imagery for texts, such as embroidery, weaving, subtlety, complexity, a shifting multicoloured surface, notions of richness, artistry, even deception, as well as variety. Heath perhaps underplays the negative connotations of the word, which, for all its vital exuberance, often conveys the sense that its referent is not 'simple' and so can't be trusted. Ancient literary critics' use of the word, therefore, expresses a mixture of admiration and uncertainty. It is in that insecure ambivalence that reading comes into being.

Heath, probably with Aristotle, is driven by a very purposive notion of literature: how *ought* texts to be in order to achieve their aims? His theory is extremely useful, but still full of holes. The crucial question, it seems to me, concerns the basis on which these critical assessments are developed. How do we recognize the 'coherence of the whole'? *How* do parts of a text help it achieve its aims? Who says? What counts as being 'smoothly articulated'? What counts as being a 'section'? It is indeed a necessary and crucial part of reading to divide texts into paragraphs, so to speak, so that the whole can be seen through the identification and interaction of its parts. But the decision as to what constitutes a 'part' of a text, and therefore the question of which 'parts' of the text

must be found to relate to which (and to what whole), is itself an interpretative act.[28]

This, perhaps, is what makes the projects of some structuralist narratologists less than satisfying, for there is a tendency to assume that the divisions of a text have some absolute validity as divisions, through which a structure and an interpretation may be read off. Barthes (1975a) is the best critique of traditional structural narratology. He is particularly concerned to undermine the hierarchies of various structures which may be identified in a text. His procedure, which is to investigate a text in minute detail and very small chunks, is enlightening, but I am not convinced that he escapes from the structuration that he exposes. Moriarty (1991: 121) says that Barthes' breaking-up of the text of Balzac into small units and strands of meaning is a reading without fundamental structure, but it seems to me entirely possible that it is just another structure, albeit less rigid and hierarchical than the structuralist tradition.[29] There is no escape from absolutizing of the 'part-ing' involved in reading. However large or small you make the parts, a decision must be made about where to bite, and that decision both conditions and is conditioned by the act of reading.

To consider the question of what constitutes a part, we might take an example from a famously unified text: certainly most people will agree that the Nisus and Euryalus episode is a 'part' of the *Aeneid*, but what kind of a part is it? How does it relate to Lausus, Pallas, Turnus, etc.?[30] To the 'Iliadic' second half of the *Aeneid*? To the *Iliad*? And so on

[28] See Hesk (Ch. 9), Laird (Ch. 6).

[29] Cf. B. Johnson (1978 = 1981) 168: 'In leaving the text as heterogeneous and discontinuous as possible, in attempting to avoid the repressiveness of the attempt to dominate the message and force the text into a single ultimate meaning, Barthes thus works a maximum of disintegrative violence and a minimum of integrative violence. The question to ask is whether this "anti-constructionist" (as opposed to "de-constructionist") fidelity to the fragmented signifier succeeds in laying bare the functional plurality of Balzac's text, or whether in the final analysis a certain systematic level of textual difference is not also lost and flattened by Barthes's refusal to reorder or reconstruct the text.' I would probably say it is *not* so, because it is not possible to make such a refusal.

[30] For Nisus and Euryalus as foreshadowing Turnus and Aeneas, see Hardie (1993) 49–50, and 92, where they prefigure Ascanius' partial success as a warrior, and compare also with Pallas, Lausus, and Marcellus. On this episode and its relationship with its whole, see Fowler (Ch. 4 below).

indefinitely. To say it is a 'part' is an act of interpretation. It is for this reason that I think we need to question Heath's view of unity as something clear and straightforward.[31] My approach drives towards a theory in which all readings of relationship are acts of interpretation, made within the context of other, and learned, acts of interpretation.

There goes that teleology of explanation again. One of the major concerns in Kennedy's contribution to this volume is the way in which science, both modern theoretical physics and Lucretian atomic theory, seeks to construct a Grand Theory of everything, even when its dogmas centre on the denial of overall Plan to the universe. But an Ultimate Answer of this nature is as unattainable (in human terms) as it is desirable: as in life, so in literature. When we examine the finality of our own interpretations of the world, we are likely to find them less Final than we had intended.

SIMPLEX DUMTAXAT ET UNUM

Malcolm Heath makes a distinction between centripetal and centrifugal ways of reading, in which the former stresses, and therefore depends for its aesthetic judgement on, the connections between the textual parts and thus sees everything from the point of view of the centre, whereas the latter is simply not interested in needing those connections, preferring to develop a patchwork of details for which the aesthetic value is absolute rather than relative (that is, it does not depend on their relationship with other parts). He argues that the ancients, particularly but not only Hellenistic writers, tended to judge centrifugally, while the modern critics feel the need to read and judge centripetally.[32] This is a very interesting analysis, not just because it draws attention to the potential for positive valuation of textual strategies that are fragmented (although the argument would be that they are

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[31] I should note that he is concerned with the ancient view of unity, or rather with ancient expressions of views about unity.

[32] Heath (1989) 59–70. I am grateful to Malcolm Heath for an interesting discussion of this issue.

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*not* in fact fragmented in their own terms, only from the 'centripetal' perspective[33]), but also because it accurately assesses the way people read—they tend to read for unity. I would suggest, however, that there is not so straightforward a distinction between the ancient poet and the modern critic as Heath proposes. There can surely be no doubt that ancient poets tempt us to read symbolic or thematic relevance into their details.[34] Exactly how far to take the details—how small to make the divisions of what constitutes a 'part' which needs to relate to something—may be a matter for interpretation[35] (and for teasing play between text and readers), but I would suggest that even the existence of 'parts' which apparently deny all relevance and claim for themselves an absolute aesthetic value does not imply that interaction with other parts is wholly unimportant. Nor, of course, would Heath deny this. He would perhaps take a Horatian stand of 'propriety'— and (in a sense) quite right too. Indeed, it may sometimes be the very fact of their 'detailedness' (the fact that they perform no clear signifying function beyond the absolute aesthetic) which is the *point* of their reading. Here, as elsewhere in this paper, I would like to stress both the ultimate interconnectedness of everything, and the creative potential of fragmentation, or perhaps we should (part-paradoxically) call it 'non-interaction'. I hope that is not too much having it both ways.

As the title of this section suggests, this leads me to one of the most theoretically tricksy of ancient expositions of poetic theory—Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Horace sets up his work as a celebration of unity and simplicity, in which to be *simplex* is to be honest as well as straightforward and simple, as opposed to being duplicitous. Poetry and politics, literary theory and ideology intersect in the powerful rhetoric of appropriateness which holds the whole thing together. The introduction to *Ars Poetica*, in particular, is all about patches,

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[33] Hesk (Ch. 9, 234, n. 8) makes a similar point: since people are expecting disruption, it hardly counts as disruption. See also Tissol (1997) 106, who talks of readers *expecting* Ovid's narrative to be disrupted.

[34] Reading for relevance will be discussed in a later section.

[35] See again my comment on Barthes, p. 15, and n. 29 above.

irrelevance, and unity as a form of moral decorum. Literature ought to behave itself, do what it's supposed to do. Yet Horace knows—and shows—that sections (patching) can be creative; that there are risks in too much decorum; that real decorum is judging how decorous to be. It might be worth remembering the *Ars Poetica*'s intertextual relationship with the extremely indecorous *Poetics* of Aristotle. The phrase *simplex . . . et unum* is a reference to the Aristotelian μιᾶς . . . καὶ ὅλης ('one . . . and whole', *Poetics* 1451a[36]). The opening of the poem is itself an example of this, since it indulges in the very playfulness and oddity that it supposedly censures—and even tells you how to appreciate it. You are meant to laugh, not just at the imagined inept artist who can't make something self-coherent, but also at the clever poet-theorist who constructs these marvellous contortions of language to amuse and teach you.

I don't mean to imply that when Horace castigates the artist who *ponere totum | nesciet* ('won't know how to put together a whole', *Ars Poetica* 34–5) he does not really mean what he seems to mean—i.e. that a work of art won't work if it does not induce a sense of totality in its readers. To the contrary, his discourse on patching and decorum is an articulation in poetic form of the risk involved in what is necessarily a work of patching together building blocks. Since no work is really *simplex et unum*, and we would not be able to read it if it were, Horace is thinking about how the poet produces a work (and the reader reads a work) in which the intratextual activity of the parts makes it a text—makes it readable. If such a text looks remarkably like the life of Augustan-Roman gentlemen, then so much the better.

SOUNDBITES

For whole and part are relative terms; as we stipulate different wholes, we shall have quite different parts, and our analysis will . . . differ for each.

(Olson 1968: 131)

[36] See Brink (1971) 77–85 (esp. 81), 117.

Texts necessarily come in parts; they come apart. It is, as I suggested at the beginning, inherent in the act of reading that we, as readers and as critics, divide texts into bite-sized chunks. A neat, extreme example of this tendency is described by Newlands (p. 173), who comments on how editors, from the late nineteenth century on, have responded to the difficulties of reading the structurally complex *Fasti* by dividing it up on the page into sections, marked off by calendrical indicators of date, festival, and so on. This may help us find our way, but it also breaks up the continuity—albeit disjointed—that the text can offer. Similar editorial impositions are discussed by Morales, who mentions a 1638 edition of *Leucippe and Clitophon* in which the *sententiae* are italicized (p. 76), and by Martin, who shows how the construction of an *apparatus criticus* in a widely available edition of the *Iliad* is ideologically influenced. The extreme case of such helpful but potentially constraining critical direction of the reader comes from the commentary.

We need our texts to contain units: words, sentences, paragraphs, episodes, scenes, exempla, digressions, ekphrases.[37] Although we are naturally (culturally) driven towards 'wholeness' in reading, if texts really were *simplex et unum*, really had the kind of final totality that writers and (more often) readers claim for them, then they would be unreadable. Kennedy argues that if Lucretius' poem really were the complete *simulacrum* of the *rerum natura* that it purports or seeks to be, it could not be confined in textual or semantic boundaries (which would necessarily be less than the sum of things, 'that which is'), and so could not be read. Likewise, Theodorakopoulos analyses the narrative of Catullus, 64 in terms of the physicist's fractal—the complexity of the 'simultaneously available field' of perception on the tapestry and in the poem is so great, and of such a nature, that it risks becoming an incomprehensible 'lake of ink' (p. 118–19). A similar point

[37] Barthes (1973 = 1981) 34: 'Linguistics stops at the sentence and certainly defines the units which compose it (syntagms, monemes, phonemes); but beyond the sentence? What are the structural units of discourse (if we give up the normative divisions of classical rhetoric)? Literary semiotics here needed the notion of text, a discursive unit higher than or interior to the sentence, yet still structurally different from it.' Fair enough, but it seems to me worth while to think about large textual units under similar aspects to the smallest units.

might be made about endlessness. Many texts can be shown
to deny the finality of their endings, but they have to end
somewhere. Even Lucan cannot represent war without end
(except by never stopping), but rather signals endlessness by
various narrative devices that produce a readable text.[38] Only
the Ariadne's thread which is reading can allow us to confine
our perception of the poem to one route at a time—this is the
readability we achieve by our constructions of the order of
parts. All these cases are examples of how it is only when we
break the text down into its parts, build it up again, and im-
pose some sort of order on it that meaning can be generated.

But maybe that's too neat. This volume is informed
also by a positive (rather, a positively negative) value ac-
corded to fragmentation.[39] Such an approach, which involves
pulling texts apart and defamiliarizing our reading practices,
allows us to appreciate the intricate structure of a Euripi-
dean tragedy, for instance, with its denial of linear teleology
and its awkward juxtaposition of disjointed elements. In
the two plays which (obsessively, pathologically) go over the
ground of the *Choephori* (*Electra* and *Orestes*), the principals
lurch from tender affection to violent, insensitive vengeance,
from rational planning to almost whimsical petulance, from
rhetoric to passion, while the plays lurch from tragic inten-
sity to intertextual playfulness to metatheatrical absurdity.
To call the plays episodic and object to their lack of teleo-
logical unity would be one possible reading strategy; a more
favoured one now would probably be to see these inconsis-
tencies and odd incongruities as, we might say, negatively
creative.[40]

It is this positive valuation of fragmentation, also, that
has for some years now encouraged critics to appreciate Hel-
lenistic narrative, with its digressions, 'extraneous' erudite
mythological and geographic patches, its refusal of Homeric

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[38] See Fowler (1997*b*) 16–17; Masters (1992) 5, 259.

[39] See again Orr (1991).

[40] See e.g. Burnett (1971) chs. 8 and 9, on Orestes as a failure; Dunn (1997)
on *Heracles* and its 'persistent evasions of order [which] resist familiar ap-
proaches to closure'. The volume in which that essay appears (Roberts, Dunn,
and Fowler 1997) has some affinities with the present venture.

teleological drive, and the sometimes shocking dispropor-
tion of its parts.[41] It is this kind of response that fuels the
approach of Klingner, quoted by Theodorakopoulos in this
volume (p. 116), for whom 'unity' is necessary and good,
while 'diversity' is naughty but nice. It is this kind of read-
ing strategy, again, that makes Ovid popular in the present
day, with his shocking denials of literary decorum, his out-
rageous non-sequiturs, and so on.[42] Intratextuality may help
us to say positive things about spectacular irrelevancies, just
as intertextuality helped us say positive things about poetic
debt.

But maybe that's still too neat. The idea that fragmenta-
tion might be a principle of organization, or might produce
coherent readings, returns us, by the back door, to design.
Such is the impetus of criticism.

### READING FOR THE WHOLE

My title in this section is an allusion to Peter Brooks's *Read-
ing for the Plot*, which is such a potent exposition of the power
of narrativizing force in reading. Unity, I suggest, is what
we say about a text, not a feature of it. Andrew Laird in this
volume reminds us of this in painfully stark terms, when he
points out that the almost universally 'known' and apparently
'natural' link between the Homeric poems and the *Aeneid* is
itself an act of interpretation (or, as he would put it, 'ideol-
ogy'), and one which has wide ramifications for the reading,
and the structure, of Virgil's poem.

When we read, by the very act of reading we are driven to-
wards some sort of 'unity'. It is a very common critical move
to argue for unities, and to find reasons why apparently diver-
gent passages are really contributing to the whole. Indeed, it
might be the case that the vast majority of reading strategies

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[41] On Hellenistic narrative, see Cameron (1995), esp. ch. 12. It seems to
me that Cameron somewhat overplays his attack on the conventional view that
Hellenistic narrative ran in some way counter to Homeric and other epic nar-
rative, perhaps partly because (it seems to me) he simplifies the terms of the
opposition.

[42] See Newlands (Ch. 7, 201) on discontinuity as a principle of organiza-
tion.

will involve some form of the following two approaches: (*a*) to celebrate (or deprecate) disunity, whether or not by denying the significance of the parts to each other, (*b*) to argue that it must all really be unified.[43] Both are forms of 'unity in diversity'; and both are traps: I am personally more inclined to fall into the second one.

The drive to unity is not just a legacy of romanticism. I was interested to note, at the Classical Association conference in April 1998, the number of papers by younger scholars which argued for kinds of unities, even in their disrupted, fragmented, and unwieldy texts, often from the fringes of the classical canon. The first (hardly 'fringe') was a paper on Aristophanes by Ian Ruffell, in which he argued for an integration of micro- and macro-structure to give a 'unity' to an Aristophanic play, while none the less insisting on an anti-realist, anti-logical ethos. Then Robert Shorrock argued that Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* has a greater coherence and stronger narrative line than scholars have thought, if one reads it as a universalized pattern for the whole of Greek myth. Finally, Gideon Nisbet saw the poems of Christodorus of Thebes as structured by a denial of structure, and as a work that defies articulation, through which the critic (to change the metaphor) offers Ariadne's thread. In order to read the texts, the critics had to impose an order on them which would, however partially, keep them in check. At the same time, they drew creative readings out of the apparently 'anti-natural' structures of their works, by looking at the works intratextually.

The drive to unity is also remarkably hard to resist, even though resisting it is critically important. One strategy, and I think it is that adopted by Heath (1989) and Cameron (1995) is to define 'unity' very narrowly, in which case the scope for resistance is greater. Slightly different is the approach of Orr (1991), whose major concern is with modern novels, and particularly the celebration of non-linear novels. I sense a current in his argument which seems to suggest that we need not and should not try to order the non-linear novel

[43] This, perhaps, is another way of phrasing Heath's distinction between the centripetal and centrifugal ways of reading. See Orr (1991) 27 for discussion of this strategy of recuperating unity, particularly among formalist critics.

at all. But while I have considerable sympathy with his attack on the 'reintegrationist' approach to the non-linear novel (the approach that reads integration into the disrupted text), I suspect he is not quite so immune from the ordering aspects of reading a non-traditional novel as he purports to be: even a strategy which celebrates the non-teleology of this type of narrative is still making sense of it, still exploring its intratextualities. There is a risk that the logical conclusion of Orr's apparent wish to take the non-linear novel on its own terms is simply not to read it at all. This is a feeling which Orr's hymn to cultural semiotics and intertextuality at the end of his book (which I don't dispute) does not entirely dispel.

Let us take an example of how reading a digression moves towards a kind of unity. In the third book of the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid addresses his erotic advice to women. The book is an interesting case of the difficulties for the critic involved in saying what is the primary text and what the 'digression', or 'secondary text'. It is not just that there are several mythological exempla and other set-pieces, but also that the expansion of the 'primary material'—the advice on how to catch and keep a man—sometimes looks secondary (but to what?). At 3. 133–68, the poet gives a catalogue of different hairstyles, and recommends them as appropriate to different types of girl. It is easy to feel that the catalogue is overdone, but it is not a digression or a piece of embroidery. It is part of the hypothesis or 'narrative' (the thing the text presents itself as being about), not just the text (the whole thing, whatever that might be). Since the point of the poem is teaching girls how to make themselves attractive so as to catch and keep lovers, the passage contributes to the overall coherence and aims of the text. Since it is generically appropriate for didactic texts to contain lists of examples, the presentation of the material is in keeping with the generic requirements. But at some level it *is* digressive—and anyway it is not about hairstyles and seducing men: it's about genres, and rhetoric, and *uariatio*, and seducing readers, for the descriptions and the manner of their presentation work well when applied to rhetorical theory.[44] It is an object lesson in itself, since it is a case of *uariatio* which

[44] As Zetzel (1996) says: 'the elements of hair-styling . . . have a long tradition as metaphors for style'. See his n. 17.

talks about *uariatio*, a kind of *metapoikilia*, perhaps. In this sense, the more we see the point (or this point), the less the section contributes to the unified whole—or at least to *that* unified whole (the one in which this is a didactic poem giving advice to girls on how to catch and keep a lover), but the less easily it could be excised without losing the point. Without the variegated expansion, there can be no point about *uariatio*. It is precisely the digressive nature of this passage which fuels its reading. It becomes more fully and interestingly 'part of the whole'—paradoxically—precisely through its immediate irrelevance to straightforward context. In a similar vein, Morales sees the novelists' *sententiae* as gaining a universalizing status (and hence paradoxically a place in the novel) precisely by their apparent detachment from immediate context.

## WITHIN AND WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

> it helps us ever so happily to see the grave distinction between substance and form in a really wrought work of art signally break down. I hold it impossible to say, before *The Awkward Age*, where one of these elements ends and the other begins
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> (Henry James, preface to *The Awkward Age*, p. 22)

A little earlier I referred to the text as 'the whole thing, whatever that might be'. For the passage in question, the first and easiest example of uncertain wholeness is the ancient poetry book—did I mean *Ars Amatoria* 3, or the *Ars Amatoria*? (Or Ovid's amatory poetry, or the Ovidian corpus, or the Classical canon?) Reading encourages us to conceptualize texts as units within boundaries. The physical book, the act of performance, the title, the prologue, the 'sense of ending', even the practice of excerption: all these things contribute towards creating a sense of (a) text. But texts take shape within a nexus of other texts. If we are considering how parts relate intratexually, we need to keep in mind also how they relate intertextually, for the boundaries between one text and another, which to some extent serve to create the text's identity as a

'whole', are no longer so easily identifiable themselves. When I am reading the *Aeneid*, I am also reading Homer:[45] I cannot distinguish categorically (to take easy examples) between Aeneas, Hector, and Achilles, or between the wounding of the stag in *Aen.* 7, the truce-breaking in *Aen.* 12, and the wounding of Menelaus which breaks the truce in *Iliad* 4. Intratextual part, text, intertext, and criticism are all 'one' (to use the metaphor of wholeness)—not a seamless whole all nicely congruent, but rather a dynamic tension or a series of tensions all ultimately linked (and unlinked?) in the act of reading.[46] To return to the Ovidian hairstyles: the passage is intimately connected with poems like Ovid, *Amores* 1. 14, where the mistress has lost her hair from too much dyeing, itself functioning in a nexus with Propertius, 1. 2 and other poems. In these cases, the girl and her hair are tied up with artificiality, artfulness, and rhetoric.[47] If *Am.* 1. 14 is, as Zetzel (1996) argues, a metapoetic expression of poetic baldness which results from the overworking of a genre, then the phoenix-like repetition in the *Ars Amatoria* must itself reflect new ways of doing old things—in the poetic as in the erotic arts.

The tension between rigid boundaries and slippage in the act of reading is at issue in several of the contributions. Theodorakopoulos (p. 119–20) analyses the tension between the very bounded coverlet on which Ariadne is written and the narrative and intertextual boundlessness of Catullus, 64. Ariadne as text must be enclosed on the island and on the coverlet: we need to capture her like this in order to read her, but she, like texts, also flows out of her boundary into the frame, both of Catullus, 64 and of the Catullan corpus.[48]

[45] This will not always be the case. When I first read Virgil, I was not consciously also reading Homer, because I had never heard of him. The ignorant reader is phenomenologically interesting, but not a problem here, I think.

[46] See Moriarty (1991) 139–40, on tying up and blurring the boundaries between Barthes and Balzac, in the former's highly intratextual analysis of the latter's story.

[47] Zetzel (1996) has argued forcibly for *Am.* 1. 14 as an 'answer' to Prop. 1. 2, and as a meditation on the nature of poetic activity within the constraints of an over-full genre.

[48] It is perhaps unfortunate, but also inevitable, that I have used the example of a painted woman to describe the state of textual dissolution. Ariadne as woman and text loses her rigid boundaries and even her selfhood. There can

Such slippage (and indeed this whole book) raises the question of where things begin and end. It may not be easy to find where to start describing a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, but the whole notion of beginning and ending is clearly critically important.[49] Newlands describes beginnings and endings as natural markers of reading. Fowler, likewise, uses interactions of beginnings and endings to foreground the *mise-en-abyme* relationships in the *Aeneid*. Despite their importance, however, he shows that identifying the end of a section may be highly partial. He suggests, moreover, that we should not necessarily allow the ends to dictate the meanings of the middles (especially p. 113).[50] The interaction of intertext and intratext is central (!) to Laird's paper, which exposes the way in which perceived external relationships construct our perception of internal relationships.

As the quotation opening this section shows, however, it is not only for discrete parts like 'episodes' that beginnings and ends are at issue. One of the big intratextual questions, which is too often elided, is how we get at the important stuff. This is the point raised by Henderson, asking where Philosophy begins and ends, both in the *Symposium* and in the Western philosophical tradition. He would resist the tendency to compartmentalize, to put the rhetoric, the playfulness, the montage of the *Symposium* into a different box from the philosophy.[51] Reading Plato just is (is just?) desiring to get close to Socrates.

Textual boundaries are necessary for making sense of texts, but they won't stay put, because texts also exist within

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be no denying the erotic connotations of Ariadne's unravelling, whether as text or as woman, nor of the objectifying tendencies of her captured picture in the coverlet. This is a classic case of womanufacture.

[49] See Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler (1997); Nuttall (1992); Dunn and Cole (1992). These works deal more explicitly with the textual beginnings and ends of works, but they may also set out the groundwork for more complex intra/intertextual beginning and ending. On this subject specifically with regard to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Wheeler (forthcoming) is crucial. See in particular his ch. 1, on repetition and beginnings, and ch. 4, on endings. I am very grateful to Stephen Wheeler for allowing me advance sight of his book.

[50] Kennedy's emphasis on approaching a text from different perspectives is connected with this.

[51] See also Fowler (Ch. 4).

a nexus of other texts, of readings, and of history, and ultimately of the int(e)r(a)textuality of time.[52]

### HOLES IN THE TEXT: THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ULTIMATE IRRELEVANCE

Aristotle, in *Poetics* 1451a30–5, says that anything which could be removed without evident effect is no part of the whole. The implication often taken from this is that such a thing therefore 'should not be there' because it is irrelevant.[53] If it 'makes no difference', then the part is bad. As a result, critics often make judgements about the value of a particular element in a text by imagining they could excise it. I suggest, in this section, that holes in texts are tricks of the realist textual illusion, as well as being metaphors for the activity of reading.[54]

But what does Aristotle's statement mean? Given his propensity to be prescriptive, it is perhaps unlikely that he countenances the possibility that the answer might be 'but there are no such things' as those which could be removed without evident effect. It strikes me as just possible, however, that Aristotle's edict is intended less as a literary critical prescription than as a logical statement: that is, the kind of tautologous equation (where both halves mean the same thing) which logical philosophy sometimes uses to tighten up rational thinking. If 'it' makes no difference to the whole, then 'it' is—quite literally—not part of the whole, by definition. But many critics have slipped from Aristotle's statement into critical moves which base aesthetic judgements on preconceived notions of relevance and appropriateness. There are, for example, those who believe one can remove the mythological exempla from the *Ars Amatoria* without it making

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[52] See Henderson (Ch. 11, 295), Fox (Ch. 10).

[53] Heath (1989) says that this stricture applies to praxis (the action imitated by the tragedy) rather than to the text, because digression might contribute to the generic aims of the text (which is not contrary to unity).

[54] But I did consider leaving out this section.

any difference, or argue defensively that this was not possible in particular cases (and that includes me).[55] But I want to suggest that the criterion of 'potential for excision' for judging literary unity (and therefore, implicitly, value) won't work, because it depends on a spurious 'what if-ism'. To put it baldly: if you were to take a part out of a text, the text would be different. It might not be worse, in fact it might be better, but it would be different. If it makes no difference whether the part is there or not, how do you know whether it *is* there?[56]

One point not always sufficiently examined is: *'for what purposes* is something irrelevant?' Take an easy case: the Daedalus and Icarus episode in *Ars Amatoria* 2 is one of the prime candidates for excision by the knifers, since many critics feel it has precious little to do with its ostensible 'main text'. And yet, it is patently untrue that it would make no difference to the surrounding text whether it was there or not. (For example, it would make it smaller, less disrupted.) It might of course make the text better. If, to follow the fantasy, the part had never been there, of course we should not miss it, but once it has been there it adds nothing to reading to say that it could, or could not, be excised.

A test of this, perhaps, is the way that the same possibility and impossibility would apply to the sorts of texts which everyone admires for their 'unity'. One of the most famous passages in the early part of Virgil's *Aeneid* is the speech of Jupiter to Venus in Book 1, promising *imperium sine fine*, *Roma aeterna*, the rest of the poem, and Roman history. It would be almost sacrilegious to call this a 'part' which could

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[55] G. H. Thompson (1958), Griggs (1971), Murgatroyd (1982) all produced 'selections from the *Ars Amatoria*'. The tradition of 'selections of . . .' is of course a venerable one, but these cases involved a strong undercurrent of desire to trim Ovid of his excess. As I said a long time ago: 'Galinsky's comment (1975: 42) is among the most outspoken, and may stand for a highly influential strand in the tradition of criticism of the *Ars*: 'Other stories, especially that of Daedalus and Icarus (2. 21–98), illustrate that Ovid could still get carried away with telling a story without much regard for proportion and purposeful function.'' See Sharrock (1994) 89.

[56] Cf. Morales (Ch. 3, 76) on the use of excised *sententiae* in Byzantine collections, in which the original intratextual reading of them became impossible, but is replaced by a different reading.

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be 'excised', but it seems to me to be as possible and as impossible for this section to be removed as for the completely 'unmotivated' epiphany of Apollo to the poet in Book 2 of the *Ars Amatoria*, for example.[57] It just won't work. Or let us take a harder example: the Nisus and Euryalus episode, which is the subject of Fowler's discussion of *mise en abyme* in this volume, has been seen by many critics as (if I may) somewhat self-contained, but it is particularly susceptible to recuperative reading as 'relevant' because the *Aeneid* is the quintessence of literary wholeness. I suggest that the idea— or rather the metaphor—that one could (or could not) take things out of texts is the result of the trap of the realist illusion, the sense that the text is a mimesis of a transcendental signified. The text's realist deceit is that there would (or would not) be a hole if you took out part of the whole. As Hesk argues (p. 249), most texts are more imagist and less realist than is generally supposed.

Should a text be untouchable, then? There are problems in this claim: for example, it might be said that I am making an icon of something which happens to be that way by an accident of survival, as well as by the whim of (usually) one man, the author. I am certainly not saying that texts cannot be improved by revision, including paring down. That would be totally foreign both to Hellenistic aesthetic theory and to the exercise I am engaged in at the moment.[58] Rather, I would suggest, there is a difference between the action of the author and that of the critic.[59] 'The author should make frequent use of his eraser' (Horace, *Sat.* 1. 10. 72). Horace has a

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[57] On this episode, and its (non-)relevance to the work, see Sharrock (1994) ch. 4.

[58] At least, I hope I'm improving this text. At the moment I'm making it longer, but I'm deleting bits as well. But you've only got my word for that, and I might have deleted it. I can imagine readers taking the view that this volume has holes in it, which should have been filled with Plautus, Apollonius, Horace, or whomever it might be. Quite so.

[59] The odd case in this is textual criticism, which might sometimes involve bracketing passages in texts. But the position of the textual critic is both a peculiar and an explicit one. He is saying that he thinks the line did not exist in the version of the text which the author published. However cautious we may have to be about the nature of publication in antiquity, I think we can accept the validity of the textual critic's acts without there being any necessary implications for the points under discussion here. On the other hand, see Martin (Ch. 2 below), for discussion of how textual criticism may be ideological and in need of intratextual considerations.

great deal to say about the importance of revision and cutting down (*Ars Poetica* esp. 291 ff., 440). The process of revision and improvement is a communal one, and one which makes the whole business of writing provisional. Henderson makes this point effectively, as part of his theme of 'preparing' and 'practising', 'improvisation' and 'scriptedness' in the *Symposium*: he says that scripts 'feel far more improvisational to writers than to readers/ audiences—and all the rehearsals and drafts in the world don't necessarily change that appreciably' (p. 293).[60] Although as part of an interpretative strategy, then, we might fantasize about what a text would be like if it were different, and we might use such fantasies to help us towards readings of texts, in the end it may be a misleading fantasy, a trick of metaphor, if we move from there into thinking that what we as readers judge to be 'excisable' is thereby crossed out without effect on the text (which was our criterion for excision in the first place).

Ovid, or the biographical tradition, clearly anticipated this argument. As is well known, he once played a game with friends, in which he allowed them to choose the three lines of his work that they would most like to see excised, while he himself chose three which must remain. The two sets— as you would expect—matched exactly. There are various things going on in this story, an important one of which is the Ovidian celebration of the ridiculous and the excessive, but I think we can also see in it a reflection on the impossibility of excision.

Excision may be 'impossible', but sometimes the manuscript tradition does it for us, producing lacunae, literal holes in manuscripts, and fragmentary texts, which raise interesting questions for intratextual analysis, as is noted by Newlands (p. 173–4) and Fox (p. 270). For the modern reader, the fragmentary state of the text of Sappho, for example, is a deeply appropriate, if disturbing, sign—a 'reading'—of the

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[60] Pearson (1997) 62, discussing Henry James's consideration of the interaction between literary process and product, exposes the paradoxical imagery of the 'seed' and 'organic growth' of a novel, which threaten to develop out of control, with the 'quantity of finish' and fixed totality which James seems to proclaim and desire in his work of art.

fractured, silenced voice of the woman in antiquity.[61] It is the fragmentary state of the ancient voice, and particularly the ancient female voice, that Pound used to create his poem *Papyrus*.

> Spring . . .
> Too long . . .
> Gongula . . .

For Pound, the text of Sappho which is his intertext is itself a fragment.[62] The same approach can be fruitful with other works. Petronius is an interesting case, since his manuscript tradition has been a story of loss, deliberate fragmentation, distortion, and reconstruction. Moreover, as has been noted, if the narrative exposition of the original work was in proportion to the extant parts, then it was colossal. Perhaps it never was; perhaps it was always something of a fragment.[63] The interpretative act of reading the fragmentary text of Petronius is very like the act of reconstruction which a positivist reading of the text necessitates. The intratextual framework of stories-within-stories in the *Satyricon* constructs an image of infinite narrative regress; its fragmentary state offers a paradigmatic opportunity for filling up the holes.[64] For example, when we meet Lichas and Tryphaena we are meant to be meeting old enemies, the people we have been avoiding throughout the story so far. The recognition scene completes the circle, and makes us feel inadequate for not fully understanding where the circle started.[65]

There is another sort of hole we must consider. It would be wrong to deprive us of that very useful metaphor for thinking about the relational activity of texts and readers provided

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[61] There are, of course, far more fragmentary texts by men than by women, but also far more that are intact. On this point of fragmentation as silencing see Williamson (1995).

[62] The poem was first published in Pound's *Lustra* (London, 1916).

[63] On the deliberate fragmentation and recuperative reconstruction of Petronius see Connors (1998) 8–11. See also Sandy (1970). On the potential original extent, see Walsh (1996) p. xvi: if it goes up in proportion with what one would expect from the fragments, we have 'to visualise a work as long as all the extant Greek romances combined'.

[64] See Connors (1998) 11.

[65] On textual incongruities of Petronius see Zeitlin (1971) and Schmeling (1991).

by the imagined unsaid.[66] But the gaps that readers fill in are part of the text. We might even say that they are only gaps because a reader makes them so. Henderson's contribution on the *Symposium* is paradigmatic here: he points to how the work itself, in its interplays of accident and design, leaves traces of holes where contributions have been left out, where an apparently random event (Aristophanes' hiccups) creates a sudden hole in the narrative circle, which is then filled by the doctor Eryximachus, who knows all about filling and emptying. But later Alcibiades gatecrashes, and pushes himself into a (non-existent?) hole in the narrative/party (the seating-plan figuring the structure of the narrative).[67] The act of reading at anything above the most simplistic level requires that we plug the gaps like this, however much we may take up the rhetorical strategy of denying any absolute fit between our plugging and the hole.

Texts cannot escape from relevance, because reading of itself confers relevance on textual parts, even if that reading is a celebration of 'irrelevance'. This is similar to a point made by Nash (1990), who suggests that all the attempts at non-referentiality in the avant-garde novel, criticism, and so on, have failed, at one level, because they have found it impossible not to refer to something. In order to make any sort of sense, even a sense trying very hard to be no-sense, we have to put things in some sort of order. It's hard to read without making sense.[68] Here is Seager (1991) 81 on Sterne: 'In *Tristram Shandy*, as in *Don Quijote*, the apparently unconnected

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[66] See e.g. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) 127–30; Iser (1974) and (1978); Reid (1992); Mack (1988) 134 on the non-story of Theseus. A very simple way of seeing this kind of thing is in suggestive sexual ellipses like Ovid's *cetera quis nescit?* ('who does not know the rest?', *Am.* 1. 5. 25). Cf. Johnson's comment (1978 = 1981: 172) on the way in which Barthes marks the castration of the word 'castration' in the text of Balzac with the sign 'taboo on the word castrato': 'He [*sc.* Barthes] fills in the textual gaps with a name. He erects castration into *the* meaning of the text, its ultimate signified.'

[67] To return to the issue raised earlier in this section: could Alcibiades have been left out? Is there really a hole between Agathon and Socrates for him to fill? Of course, Plato could have written it differently, and left out the Alcibiades episode altogether, but it would not then have been the story of Agathon, Socrates, and Alcibiades (theatre, philosophy, and politics) as Henderson would claim it always was (Ch. 11, 319).

[68] Cf. Seager (1991) 56: 'Sterne built so much redundancy into *Tristram Shandy* that his "intention" should not be misunderstood.'

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parts, when seen from the vantage point of the whole text, become an integral part of the whole text.' No amount of irrelevance will be left as such, by the reader. A similar point is made by Brooks (1984: 315), who says that at first people could hardly read the 'new French novel', with its playful subversion of traditional form, but that they learnt to do so 'partly by learning to use the plot elements offered, in playful and fragmentary form, to construct fictions that . . . became fictions of fiction making'.[69] It is impossible, then, to be irrelevant in a literary text, because even 'irrelevance' will in some way be 'read into' the whole by the reader. Unity, therefore, is something which we as readers bring to texts, by seeing them *as* texts. Referentiality can indeed be downplayed and marginalized (by author, or reader, or both), but can always be 'found', if only at the level of self-referentiality—that signs refer to themselves.[70] Does that mean that all texts are unified, but some are more unified than others? Authors, texts, and readers can play about with the notion of unity, since it is an available signifier, even if its significance is more unstable than its totalizing rhetoric might lead us to expect. 'Unity', when it is an activity of readers, is something which might include digression, disruption, disproportion, and even diversity.[71]

### DIRECTIONS: OR HOW (NOT) TO GET LOST BY FOLLOWING YOUR NOSE

Reading strategies necessarily raise questions of unity in part because of the hegemony of narrative, and especially linear narrative. There is a massive preference, in the history of

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[69] Likewise Krieger (1989) 3 commenting on the search for form, for the questions about why an element is where it is, even among the advocates of the margins and the fragment: 'we seem unable to shake this reading habit'. Orr (1991) is generally perhaps more optimistic about 'shaking the habit'. On readerly involvement in narrative generally see Ruthrof (1981).

[70] I am particularly indebted to Duncan Kennedy here.

[71] In this paper, I am using unity in two broad ways: one is the traditional understanding of unity, which is something one can confront, tease, oppose, and deny; the other is my 'unity of reading', which might include those confrontations.

Western criticism and literature, for linearity, which is part of a preference for narrative over non-narrative, for more narrativity over less.[72] This is not the same thing as top-left to bottom-right reading, but it is not unconnected with it (not that such a process is universal). Genette is quite fierce about the impossibility of doing other than reading like this: 'one cannot read a text backwards, letter by letter, or even word by word, or even sentence by sentence, without it ceasing to be a text. Books are a little more constrained than people sometimes say they are by the celebrated *linearity* of the linguistic signifier, which is easier to deny in theory than eliminate in fact' (1980: 34). Brooks writes in similar vein: 'It is my simple conviction, then, that narrative has something to do with time-boundedness, and that plot is the internal logic of the discourse of mortality' (1984: 22).

In classical terms, this hegemony of narrative tends also to cash out as 'epic over everything else'. It has to do with the powerful sense of the utility of literature and its purposefulness—that literature should be teleological in all senses.[73] It also has to do, or contributes to, the hierarchy of genres in antiquity, which places epic and tragedy at the top, didactic, lyric, and elegy next, comedy and satire at the bottom. A work with a big narrative, a teleological narrative, is a great work.[74] Epic is great and wonderful, something to which poets will eventually aspire;[75] it has a big, powerful, teleologically directed narrative. That does not mean it is all about 'the same thing' (if we could ever work out

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[72] Prince (1982) 152: 'Whenever an event carries more information than the sum of its component events, whenever the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and different from it rather than equivalent to it, narrativity will tend to increase.' See, in contrast, Orr (1991) ch. 2. He is perhaps over-harsh with linear critics. After all, chronology is not the only organizing principle of linearity. See also differently Cameron (1995).

[73] The ideas of 'wholeness' and teleology are tied up with each other in our reading of Aristotle: κεῖται δ' ἡμῖν τὴν τραγῳδίαν τελείας καὶ ὅλης πράξεως εἶναι μίμησιν ἐχούσης τι μέγεθος (*Poetics* 1450b7). See Bittner (1992). For an interesting extension of Aristotelian ideas on parts and wholes see Tuozzo (1996).

[74] A very simple example of this is the not-infrequent critical evaluation of the mythological narratives in the *Ars Amatoria*, that their main function is as a trial run for the *Metamorphoses*. See Krokowski (1963) 147.

[75] This is itself an overtly teleological characterization of the 'poetic career'. On the 'poetic career' generally see Lefkowitz (1981). See also Sharrock (1994) 1–2.

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what it might mean for something to be absolutely 'about one thing'),[76] but it does mean that it is all working towards some great end. The quintessential *telos*, for most Latin poets and critics, is in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the goal is not just the 'end' of the story—the death of Turnus—but the founding of Rome by Aeneas, the refounding of the state by Augustus, and even beyond that *Roma aeterna*, the mystical eternal city.[77] Because of the type of poem it is, and the kinds of ways it is read, everything in the *Aeneid* is endowed with an almost religious significance. The sense of forward movement and powerful linearity is almost overwhelming. In this volume, the contributions of Fowler and Theodorakopoulos confront the challenge of linear teleology in epic narrative. Kennedy broadens this into consideration of the whole notion of teleology as an act of reading the universe.

These contributions suggest that we would get a different perspective on unity if we were to think about reading in a non-linear manner, and that that might be useful. Given that I am resting at least something of what I say on the way readers read, it would be absurd of me to suggest that we should just throw out the apparently natural way of reading. Indeed, it would be absurd to suggest that it is not inevitable, at some level, to read linearly. Rather, I am trying to suggest that while the metaphor of forward progression in reading is indeed important, it is not so overpowering as to be a simple absolute given. This matters, perhaps, because it is this metaphor which makes us see ourselves 'side-tracked by digressions', or 'tripped up by obstacles'.[78] We do indeed usually read from beginning to end, but we do not necessarily perceive like that, nor do we in fact always read like that. We read again; we read bits; we might read the end first; sometimes we go back and pick up a word we are half-conscious of having missed. Inflected languages like Latin and Greek, where word-order is creative, are particularly susceptible to

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[76] Heath's theories (1989) about what the ancients might have considered 'relevant' to the unity of a great work are very helpful here.

[77] See Fowler (Ch. 4 below) on the multiplicity of ends for the *Aeneid*.

[78] Seager (1991) 8: 'by tripping over these narrative obstacles and obstructions, by stubbing his toe on Shklovsky's stone, the reader realises that he is reading a literary text, not something which has as its primary function or purpose the goal of literal communication'.

ways of reading which Anglophone readers may perceive as non-linear. In any language, sometimes something later in a sentence will cause the reader to change her perception of something earlier, to reread it even without moving her eyes. Indeed, we read literary texts in the *expectation* that this reappraisal will happen.[79] So we all naturally break the tyranny of the forward movement more than Genette allows. The non-linearity of hypertext may help us to see that perception is not as progressivist as the metaphor suggests.[80]

The perception of visual arts may provide a helpful comparison. The big difference between the presentation of narrative in visual and in verbal art seems to be that in the former the material is presented synchronically, while in the latter it is presented diachronically. This is true, up to a point, but let us consider the metaphors involved: a common metaphor for viewing—the eye on the end of the centric ray—may well correspond with our perception of what we are doing when looking at a painting, but it does not, so I understand from scientific colleagues, correspond with what science suggests our actual eye movements are. The eye darts around in (possibly) random and imperceptible movements, to take in the whole. It might be the same for literature, particularly if we think of reading not only as what we do with our eyes, but also what we do in our perception, as active creators of meaning. Secondly, it seems to me that some texts hint at the possibility of a type of reading which is synchronic, which is not linear or at least not only linear. This kind of approach is at issue in Theodorakopoulos' paper, when she discusses the creative difficulty of reading the simultaneously available field.[81] Ovid, in the *Metamorphoses*, is doing this, I suggest, not only at the level of the narrative thread, but at the level of the metamorphic content. As I have argued elsewhere (1996a), Ovid describes a tree-woman using words which can themselves apply to either 'side' of the metamorphosis. In many cases, it can be quite hard to see the difference between 'before' and 'after'. By doing so

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[79] See also Tissol (1997) on this point, particularly 131–66.
[80] I am grateful to Alan Griffiths for this point.
[81] See also Orr (1991) 38.

he causes the linear narrative of the change to be superimposed by a synchronic image of the change, in-process and in both-sides-complete-all-at-once. This kind of representation undermines the straightforward linear progression of the narrative of metamorphosis just as does the playfulness of the narrative line.

Notoriously, Ovid's narrative line in the *Metamorphoses* is labyrinthine, as has been briefly and brilliantly explicated by Barchiesi (1997a: 181–3). The *Metamorphoses*, with the loops and bumps of its fluid narration, its outrageous transitions, the daring ill-proportion of its parts, and its refusal to tell the reader whether it constitutes a Whole, is an easy target for intratextual analysis.[82] Mack (1988) says that the difference between the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* is the 'detachable' nature of the episodes in the latter. I would suggest, rather, that the difference is that the *Metamorphoses* parts *pose as* being detachable (even if they also all contribute to some odd sort of a totality), whereas the *Aeneid*'s parts present themselves as totalizing (even if they also open themselves to recuperation as fluid). Some critics respond to this extreme narrative deviance by insisting that Ovid was not aiming for 'formal unity'. Galinsky (1975: 97) says: 'Ovid was not really concerned to give a great degree of formal unity to the whole poem'; most of the stories, he thinks, come *post hoc* rather than *propter hoc*, in opposition to the Aristotelian ideal, because of the author's personal preference. Even while arguing for a poem not interested in unity, however, Galinsky feels the need to find links between stories. He is right to do so (and indeed he finds some quite nice ones), but the point here is that linking is a necessary part of (his) reading. The links one finds are dependent on, as well as part of, one's readings of parts, as well as one's reading of the whole. Galinsky (1975: 89) finds what to me looks like a rather contrived link between Pygmalion and Myrrha (as opposites: pious love, perverted love), whereas I see the interconnectedness of the stories as crucial. This

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[82] An interesting parallel to intratextual study of the *Metamorphoses*' poetic form can be seen in the changes of its forms, and in recent work on the disunity of the body: see Segal (1998) 12: 'the *Metamorphoses* [too] depicts the body through its detached parts rather than the whole'.

is because (and why) I read the Pygmalion story not as a pious tale of virtue rewarded, but as a paradigmatic case of womanufacture—the creation of 'Woman' in the male act of artistic creation.[83] The unities we both find in the poem are part of our readings. Again, Galinsky, like most critics, feels the need to discover the overall theme that the entire poem is about. He offers love (p. 97), with good justification (for this is the *MetAMORphoses*), and also Ovid-as-narrator (p. 99), another popular suggestion favoured also, for example, by Mack (1988), Solodow (1988: 36), and Rosati (1994: 9). I think these readings are both helpful and incomplete, but my point here is metacritical—about how people are inclined to read. Even when a critic argues that 'this work has made a choice for disunity', she or he will often read in such a way as to drive towards unity.[84]

This paper, then, has had two aims. On the one hand, I am arguing that 'unity' is inevitable, and exists in reading. On the other hand, I am pointing to other ways of interacting with textual parts which do not need the traditional unity, because they exploit the complexities and tensions that make literature intratextual, and so make us read the whole thing.

POSTSCRIPT

The thing 'done', artistically is a fusion, or it has not *been* done—in which case of course the artist may be, and all deservedly, pelted with any fragment of his botch the critic shall choose to pick up. But his ground once conquered, in this particular field, he knows nothing of fragments and may say in all security: 'Detach one if you

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[83] See Sharrock (1991).

[84] Almost every reader of the *Metamorphoses* has to have a go at finding the principle of unity (or even disunity) in the poem. Solodow (1988) devotes his first chapter (9–36) to the issue of structure, in which the subtitles of sections are telling: 'The Search for Structure', 'Organizations', 'Dis-organizations', 'Story-telling'. Among the most subtle accounts of narrative organization in the poem is Rosati (1994). Most recently, Wheeler (forthcoming) offers an invaluable full-scale intratextual analysis of the poem, opening his account with discussion of this very point, the history of interpretations of the *Metamorphoses* and their relationship with classical notions of unity.

can. You can analyse in *your* way, oh yes—to relate, to report, to explain; but you can't disintegrate my synthesis; you can't resolve the elements of my whole into different responsible agents or find your way at all (for your own fell purpose). My mixture has only to be perfect literally to bewilder you—you are lost in the tangle of the forest. Prove this value, this effect, in the air of the whole result, to be of my subject, and that other value, other effect, to be of my treatment, prove that I haven't so shaken them together as the conjurer I profess to be *must* consummately shake, and I consent but to parade as before a booth at a fair. (Henry James, preface to *The Awkward Age*)

Who wins this belligerent game?[85]

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[85] See Pearson (1997) 65–6 on James's battles over authorial authority and necessarily self-defeating efforts to construct (himself as) the ideal reader of his text. See also Pearson's ch. 4 on authorial performance. The capacity of Jamesian text and criticism to provoke precisely these struggles is superbly analysed by Felman's essay 'Turning the Screw of Interpretation' (1982: 94–207). Her intratextual reading (119–38) of the relationship between frame and story, preface and novel, narrators and readers internal and external, in James's *The Turn of the Screw*, has many points of significance for our project, especially in connection with the critical debate 'outside' the text which also informs the essay.

## Editorial Preface to Part II

Carole Newlands's chapter has taken further an aspect of intratextuality that is perhaps latently present in all the contributions: the way in which intratextual dynamics interact with extratextual culture. In her case, a political reading of Ovid and the Augustan family comes into being through a formal analysis of disparate structural parts together. In the papers that remain, these formal aspects are not forgotten, but are drawn up into wider intra/extratextual issues to do with the individual and the state, the (con)structure of the universe, and the philosophical tradition. The intratextual dynamics examined here are both between prologue and dialogue (Fox and Henderson) or parabasis and play (Hesk), and also between different voices, and the very fact of the difference of voice, and levels of authority (especially Kennedy and Fox). These intratextual dynamics, in which 'meaning' comes into being through multivalent interaction, are here called 'irony'. All these papers are concerned with the necessities and the constraints of *order* in the act of reading. We begin with a leap *in medias res*, with Kennedy's chapter on reading the universe as text, and intratextual order as inevitable for the construction of a comprehensible uni-text.

# 8

## Making a Text of the Universe: Perspectives on Discursive Order in the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius

### DUNCAN KENNEDY

In the early nineteenth century, as physics was moving towards an apogee of determinism, the Marquis de Laplace conjured up the figure of a demon who, knowing the position and velocity of every mass in the universe, could calculate the universe's entire history, past and future.[1] Many who have studied the physical world have harboured dreams of such a final theory (or nightmares, as it may be, in which there is no room for free will; Laplace's figure was a demon). There has been much talk in recent years, brought to wider public attention particularly by the success of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, of physicists perhaps achieving a 'grand unified theory' (otherwise loosely and rather misleadingly nicknamed a 'theory of everything'), as well as a fierce debate over whether such an end is feasible. We might see a pretension of this sort already foreshadowed in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (*DRN*). In a famous passage in Book 1 (936–50), Lucretius compares people who are ignorant of the true workings of the world, and so suffer from irrational fears, to sick children. To encourage them to drink medicine which they may shy away from, doctors smear the rim of the cup with honey to encourage the children to drink it all up and so recover. Similarly, Lucretius says, he smears the cup of his Epicurean philosophy with the sweet honey of the Muses so as to entice the reader into reading the whole poem 'while you are learning to see in what shape is framed the whole nature

[1] Cf. Locke (1992) 153.

BENUCCI. It will be better to postpone the rest of this discussion for another occasion, so that these gentlemen in attendance can offer their contribution.

VARCHI. Yes, let us do that.

TULLIA. Yes indeed, but make sure all of you discuss topics other than my personal merits.

(Tullia d'Aragona 1997: 110)

# Endtext

## HELEN MORALES

To read and to misread is to miss a reading of one's world.

(Prologue to *Dicta Catonis* 1[1])

If I am to know an object, though I need to know its external properties, I must know all its internal properties.

(Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2. 01231)

In his work *How to Write History* Lucian admonishes historians who import too many of poetry's 'embellishments' (τὰ κομμώματα) into their writing (8). Disproportionate use of *muthos* and encomium is as displeasing, he argues, as the sight of a rugged athlete dolled up in a purple dress and make-up (8). He develops the analogy by comparison of such work with Herakles in Lydia, enslaved to Omphale, and wearing women's clothing (10). The effeminized hero, whose clothing hangs off his body and is 'ill-fitting' (μὴ προσιζάνουσα) becomes a hieroglyph of 'the text's incongruity, lack of proportion and loose structure' (τὸ ἀσύμφυλον καὶ ἀνάρμοστον καὶ δυσκόλλητον τοῦ πράγματος, 10–11).[2] Lucian is specifically preoccupied with what is fitting for the genre of history, but the concerns informing his prescription—how parts of a text relate to its whole, when and why parts are deemed indispensable or peripheral, proportionate or disproportionate—are

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[1] *Legere* enim et <u>non</u> intel*legere* <u>neglegere</u> est. Quoted in Boyle (1991) 113.

[2] Lucian, vol. vi, Loeb Classical Library, text and trans. K. Kilburn. This is, of course, part of a broader rhetoric of adornment in Graeco-Roman literature which employs the terminology of bodily cultivation and cosmetic enhancement (*fucus* and *fucatio*) to describe speech and writing. On this see Sharrock, Ch. 1 above, p. 23 on Ovid's descriptions of women' hairstyles; Wiseman (1979) 3–8 and Wyke (1994) 144–5.

questions centrally addressed by the contributors to this volume.

This brief endtext is not a conclusion. Alison Sharrock's introductory chapter discusses intratextuality, its histories and complexities in depth, and I do not want—to return to her opening metaphor from Persius—to regurgitate too many lumps of her fine exegesis here.[3] I do, however, want to sketch some lines of argument which the contributors collectively suggest, and thus to ask, more generally, where the project has got us so far. We offer no grand theory of intratextuality comparable with that of intertextuality (and no grounding in psychoanalysis like Kristeva's original conception of intertextualité). In its weakest formulation, the term intratextuality merely indicates that property whereby one part of a text refers to or relates to another part of the same text, which is not in itself particularly conducive to a better understanding of the text at issue. But its expansiveness should not divest the concept of heuristic value. The stronger formulation of the term understands intratextuality to be a property of texts where the internal design, structure, and partition of the text are particularly paraded, or where the reader shows 'an explicit awareness of the process of dividing and rejoining in the act of reading'.[4] To read intratextually, 'looking at the text from various directions (backwards as well as forwards), chopping it up in various ways, building it up again, contracting and expanding its boundaries both within the *opus* and outside it',[5] necessitates a close reading of the text and defamiliarizes the critical vocabulary of textual division, the better to understand and apply it.

Perhaps one of the easiest conclusions to be drawn from this volume is that one reader's Lydian Herakles is another's Dennis Rodman. Intratextuality, especially features like unity, coherence, and digressivity, are higher order properties of text and depend for their cognition—some could argue 'actualization'—on the literary competence and experience of

[3] I should like to extend especial thanks to Alison Sharrock for inviting me to be her co-editor part way through the project and after the hard work of commissioning was done. I have learned a lot from Alison and thank her for her generosity.

[4] Sharrock, Ch. 1 above, p. 5.     [5] Ibid.

the reader. Andrew Laird starts out his discussion of Virgil and Tacitus from the most extreme 'readerly' position, shared in part by Don Fowler, that the balance of power in determining intratextual relations lies less with the text than with the individual reading subject. Laird later adjusts this position and argues that intratextual meaning is constituted by 'interpretive communities'. He is here in accord with Richard Martin who demonstrates the different ways in which different 'speech communities' dissect Homer, and with Jonathan Hesk's insistence that intratextuality in Aristophanes is determined by 'discursive communities' of readers. Such focus on 'interpretive communities' allies the reading and segmenting of texts with the reading and viewing of the phenomenal world and the processes whereby that world is conceptually divided (what Fowler calls society's 'segmental ontology'[6]). Duncan Kennedy's observations on the relationship between cosmic and narrative order in Lucretius reflect and present as actualized the text-world continuities implicit in our reading processes.

In *How to Write History* Lucian accords encomia and poetry a lowly place in his textual hierarchy by demarcating them as non-essential and troping them as bodily adornments. A major contention of this book has been that readers devalue or privilege different parts of texts and that this can lead to distorting and reductive interpretations of the works concerned. This happens, as Richard Martin discusses, at the very basic and most important stage of interpretation: constructing a text from the manuscript tradition. An editor such as van Thiel who approaches this task with specific, ideologically loaded notions of the intratextual relations of a work produces a highly idiosyncratic edition, something of which the casual reader is often not aware. Editors also shape our understanding of a work's intratextuality with paratextual features such as titles and added subheadings (noted by Laird and Carole Newlands) as well as with typographical division, as I mention in my chapter on the ancient novel. There is scope for more work to be done on how the physical texts of the manuscripts shaped intratextual relations.

[6] Fowler (1997*b*) 13.

For example, as Nick Lowe has discussed, whether or not Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Tale* was written on papyrus rolls or appeared in codex form would make a difference to the original reader's abilities to read intratextually, as a codex allows for much easier rereading of episodes and referring backwards and forwards than papyri would.[7] Several contributors focus upon sections of texts that have typically been undervalued or highlighted and invite re-evaluations of them: Richard Martin's analysis of 'digressions' in Homer, mine of 'digressions' in the ancient novel, Elena Theodorakopoulos' of ekphrasis and 'digression' in Catullus, 64, Dow Fowler's of *mise en abyme* in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Jon Hesk's of the Aristophanic parabasis. John Henderson's chapter comprises a reading of Plato's *Symposium* in which the parts that are usually 'filtered out', devalued as 'frame' and set apart from the 'real philosophy' of the speeches are highlighted and made to work.

Perhaps one of the most important conclusions of our study is this: how we determine intratextual relations has not only aesthetic but political consequences. This has not been highlighted in New Criticism, in which a project like this has its roots, but should not surprise us, given that both social order and literary criticism pivot upon divisions and discriminations, elevations and exclusions. Matthew Fox is concerned with the politics of Cicero's Rome. He argues that in the *De Republica*, 'the relationship of prologue to dialogue ... is one in which textual and political authority are interwoven with formal questions of literary and philosophical design'. This relationship allows Cicero to subordinate a monological historical narrative to a multivalent ironic interpretation. One of the concerns of both Carole Newlands and myself is with how reading episodes that are often deemed 'digressive' can have a radical bearing on how we interpret the gender politics of a work. Newlands argues, through a close reading of the intratextual relationship between descriptions of Ino in Ovid's *Fasti*, that, if read interactively rather than as discrete units, descriptions of female figures can operate to

[7] In a paper on Heliodorus and Hypertext delivered at the 1997 Lawrence seminar in Cambridge.

reflect critically upon the Augustan regime and thus 'the fractured poetics of the *Fasti* reflects ... its fractured politics'. In my analysis of *sententiae* in the Greek novels, I attempt to show how they can be read as part of a discourse of mastery over women and barbarians. Dismissing them as 'digressions', as many critics have done, occludes a significant aspect of the gender and racial dynamics of the narratives.

But anything can be—and is—appropriated politically. Periodization is itself a most political act, and despite the efforts of recent critical work to defamiliarize this practice and to reveal the politics of how we divide time into periods, this book will be seen as part of a *fin de siècle* concern with beginnings and endings, noted by such guardians of the middle mind as the *New Yorker*.[8] Such misreading is a product of a textual distance, entailed by the absence of the close engagement with text which an intratextual reading dictates: hence the focus of this book is not on the theoretical underpinnings of intratextuality nor even on its ideological and political implications but on the detailed understanding of text derived from its practice. Fundamental to each of the preceding essays is one simple question: does approaching a text with a heightened awareness of intratextual concerns produce close readings which further our knowledge and understanding of the works themselves? It is, I hope, fully evident from the essays presented here that it does. The ambitious scope of some new historicist readings has led to the tendency to perform 'snatch and grab' raids on literary texts, to engage in little more than (to use my term from my essay above) 'textual surfing'. The emphasis on close readings of texts is as urgent as it ever was, and the focus upon intratextual relations—upon unity, relevance, digressivity, and discoherence—is and will be productive, even though these are, of course, concerns which have interested scholars since long before Lucian, no doubt since the time that male athletes first discovered the pleasures of transvestism. These concerns will endure as long as the perception of order itself, wherever the cranks and tares of the individual reader, the focus on his and her subjectivity, and the aesthetics of Rodman in latex tend.

[8] 1 January 1996. On the politics of periodization see Hallett (1993) and Golden and Toohey (1996).