

convincing terminological choices, such as the ‘have-one’s-cake-and-eat-it-too principle’ (pp. 222, 233, 245 ‘a procedure that I have referred to as the have-one’s-cake-and-eat-it-too principle’).

The best part of the book is the one devoted to the criterion of ‘poetic simultaneity’, that is, the procedure according to which the poet pretends to compose his poem ‘as we watch’ (p. 13; on the topic, especially as regards Ovid’s *Fasti*, V. had already published an article in *TAPA* 127 [1997], 287–313). V. analyses this convention in great detail: she interprets it as a way of preserving the (originary) oral character of poetic composition (pp. 16–20). One could add that this fiction of orality might also be explained as a consequence of the recitative performance: the poet imagines himself in the act of reciting his own text (also through a possible *alter ego*, that is, the public or private performer).

I limit myself to one final comment: *pace* V. pp. 103–4, the interpretation according to which the end of *De rerum natura*, with its violation of the burial rites and its brawls around the pyres, is meant to make the reader reflect on the decomposition of matter and on the disintegration of family bounds, in a complex cycle of death and resurrection which involves also the poem’s text, is probably right (see A. Schiesaro, *PCPS* 40 [1994], 81–107). This interpretation of the end of *De rerum natura* is confirmed by the contrast with the first and most important epic closure, that of the *Iliad* (Book 24, esp. 782–804), where the rituals surrounding Hector’s corpse give a moment’s peace to both armies (even if it is a tense peace: see esp. 800), bringing the family of Priam and the Trojans together again, and so producing a momentary settling of tensions. The comparison between the end of *De rerum natura* and that of the *Iliad* could be easily expanded, and it is a further confirmation of the idea that Lucretius’ poem is substantially complete, at least as regards its ending (see, from a slightly different perspective, D. P. Fowler, *MD* 22 [1989], 85; also Statius’ *Thebaid* closes with the re-establishment of ‘normal’ rituals of mourning: cf. 12, esp. 797–809).

The book is accurately produced; misprints are very rare: see, for example, p. 67 n. 79 ‘communicativa’ (read ‘comunicativa’); p. 93 ‘does the poem gives’.

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RETHINKING REALITY

D. F. KENNEDY: *Rethinking Reality. Lucretius and the Textualization of Nature*. Pp. viii +145. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002. Cased, \$44.50/£32. ISBN: 0-472-11288-0.

This is a book on the nature of things. That sentence itself operates on various levels of reality and of representation: Lucretius’ poem is *On the Nature of Things* and is a work that seeks both to discover reality (the nature of things) and to reveal and represent that reality for the reader. But since the underlying nature of things (the world of the atoms) is actually intelligible not by the senses but only by the intellect, the finished representation of reality then must become the reader’s view of the nature of things, and this results in a somewhat dizzying elision of the distinction between the poem and the reality it describes. Lucretius enjoys the poetic motif of figuring himself, and indeed his addressees and readers, as creating the world as they go along, warning us not to imagine reality in a certain way in case everything falls to bits. Lucretius is a constructivist singing the world into being, and also one who kindly allows us to lend a hand in the process. On the other hand, Lucretius must be

a scientific realist—he must insist that the invisible world of the atoms really does exist, and that all we ever do is to ‘discover’ it—or else his whole philosophical system will crumble and the world will be plunged back into the darkness whence Epicurus rescued it.

For a poet of atomism and one who thinks of atoms behaving just like letters on the page (atoms create matter by simple interchange of position in atomic compounds just as letters create different words), and who also has an atomistic theory of language (there is a direct physical link between words and things at the atomic level), writing about the atomic world cannot help but be a creative exercise that dissolves the distinction between reality and representation: between words and things. Further, the poet/creator motif is singularly inappropriate for a philosopher who sets out to convince us that the atoms are perfectly capable of creating the world themselves without any intelligent design to guide them.

The last two may be peculiarly Lucretius’ own problems, but all the above approaches make him particularly good to use, as Kennedy does, as a starting point for an examination of the arguments in modern science about the relationship between reality and representation. In ‘Rethinking Reality’, the first of the two essays that make up his book, K. identifies two broadly distinct camps: scientific realists consider that reality and its constituents (atoms, electrons, quarks etc.) pre-exist their discovery, and that scientists simply uncover and reveal what is already there. Constructivists consider, on the contrary, that science is a creative process in which representation of reality actually constructs it: a theoretical entity, such as an atom, will be set up, given a name, ‘atom’, that describes how it ought to behave, and then it is this entity that is finally ‘discovered’. When it has been discovered it is considered to have always existed just waiting to be found. As K. argues, it is the historical positioning of the ‘discoverer’ at the end of the process that makes what is essentially a process of construction look finally like a process of discovering what was already there. The scientist assumes an ahistorical ‘God’s eye view’ of reality. When the historical process of discovery is itself examined, the constructivist nature of science becomes clearly apparent: although each claimed their atoms to be absolutely real, Epicurus’ atoms are very different sorts of things from the atoms of Dalton, which in turn are different from those of Niels Bohr. For realists, then, the language used to describe reality is an epiphenomenon of that reality, while for constructionists the universe is an epiphenomenon of texts. For each position there are assumed to be different levels at which reality operates: texts may have a secondary sort of reality, while the universe is primary, or texts may have a primary reality, making the universe itself, somewhat disturbingly, a reflection of how we talk about it.

In the second essay, ‘Is Man the Measure of All Things?’, K. develops the themes discussed in the first, taking as his starting point Protagoras’ notorious saying. Here we enter the territory of reductionism: of the reduction of matter to atoms, of nature to genes, and even of the entire universe to a grand ‘theory of everything’. K. shows that even here, or especially here, we never can escape from language: whatever words we use to describe the world, they will always be metaphors, and especially biological metaphors. Thus, we have ‘nature’ itself; Dawkins’ genes behave ‘selfishly’; Lucretius’ atoms are ‘seeds of things’ (a term that draws together both microscopic and macroscopic levels of reality), and against the grain of his argument, atoms are granted their own volition. The recursive loop is complete, and constructivism and realism collapse in on one another.

K. has produced an extremely stimulating and thought-provoking book from which

I am still learning new things after several readings. However, although he writes elegantly and lucidly, he makes few concessions for the hard of thinking (like me).

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CATULLAN CONCATENATIONS

P. CLAES: *Concatenatio Catulliana: A New Reading of the Carmina*. (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 9.) Pp. 165. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2002. Cased, €50. ISBN: 90-5063-288-2.

Linear readings of Roman poetry books are—happily—gaining statistically on the type of approach that uses hypothetical poem dates to reconstruct the story of the *liber's* composition, and C., who follows this trend, has produced a valuable contribution to our interpretation of such *libri*. In Catullus' case, the poem-by-poem strategy unearths powerful evidence to support the theory that this author set out the collected poems himself. C.'s findings are not quite as 'brand-new' as he maintains (p. 5). He was actually able to pick up where a number of studies devoted to thematic and lexical concatenation within various groups of *carmina* have left off, and has also drawn on linear readings of Augustan poetry books (e.g. M. S. Santirocco, *Unity and Design in Horace's Odes* [Chapel Hill, 1986]). T. P. Wiseman, moreover, has shown more than once that Catullus very probably divided his poems into three books, these corresponding to c. 1–60, 61–4, and 65–116 in modern editions. However, C. not only now underpins this theory with numerous new observations—the implicit metapoetical content of the poems that frame each of the three divisions, and the previously unnoticed associations linking these texts (pp. 14–17), for example—but also illustrates his specific concern, that is, the interpretation of Catullus' collection in terms of thematic and formal coherence, with an unprecedented wealth of material. C. argues most persuasively in the section (by far his longest) where he reads all of the *carmina* in succession as links in a 'chain' (pp. 57–111). His lists recording repetition of words, synonyms, antonyms, and etymological cognates tell us, by contrast, little; indeed, his fifteen-page 'Inventory of Lexical Concatenation' (pp. 35–49)—starting '1/2 *Cuilcui, donol[dare], solebas/solet . . .*' as it means to go on—could kill what incipient sympathy for the overall method conservative Catullus students may develop.

C.'s forte in the hunt for lexical and thematic links between *carmina* is evident: the obscene innuendo. Recent work on Roman sexualities will see itself corroborated as C. demonstrates that not merely pairs, but whole series of poems are interwoven with ambiguous expressions which signal that the texts—between the lines, at least—somehow have to do with the erotic *lusus* typical of Catullus. The 'oral motif', for instance, links *carmina* 39, 40, 42–5, 47–51, 53–5, and 57–60 in such a way that, probably even when they came to the famous poem addressing Cicero *disertissimus* (49), ancient readers could not but think of the motif *os impurum* (p. 75). The puns C. discovers in this area will greatly stimulate modern readings, given that the existing commentaries, including Thomson (Toronto, 1997), usually dodge the issue. In the allusions-to-contemporaries department, however, he tends to go overboard. C. himself stresses at the outset that Catullus' poems 'should not be interpreted as biographical documents' (p. 18), and yet later, discussing, for example, c. 46 and its links to c. 45, he writes: 'The juxtaposition suggests that the poet left Italy because he was disappointed in love' (p. 78). Reeks of the old 'Catullus Romance', doesn't it? The