

INTRODUCTION*

Phiroze Vasunia

I first thought about a volume on this topic when I was reading again the *Theory of the Novel* by György Lukács and *Marxism and Form* by Fredric Jameson, for a series of workshops organized by Tim Whitmarsh, on the ‘romance’ tradition between Greece and the East.¹ An excellent book, *The Romance between Greece and the East*, emerged out of those workshops, in 2013, thanks to Whitmarsh’s efforts, and his work is one reason why the present volume does not extend to prose fiction in the ancient world.² On that occasion, I was thinking about the form of the ancient novel – a subject that has been addressed in the last two or three decades, thanks to the inspiration offered by Mikhail Bakhtin’s work – but I also began to consider whether the question of form and especially the relationship between form and politics needed to be examined again, not just in relation to the ancient novel but in relation to texts and genres that flourish in earlier periods. How did the turn to New Historicism in the 1990s change the study of form and the situation of form in political and social contexts? How did the much-vaunted return to philology of the next decade renew attention to questions of form, genre, and structure? What about the relationship between form and the newly invigorated analyses of gender, race, class, and nation? It seemed to me that these were important questions. I was, of course, not alone in thinking so: scholars, in Greek studies and outside, were addressing these issues from the turn of the millennium and have continued to do so into the present.³ But even as

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interest in the subject continues to proliferate, explicit reflection on the politics of form seems only now to be developing in Greek studies, and this seems the right time to pull together a few threads and to explore the issues in a little depth.

Jameson, who has written widely about the politics of form, says that form is more important than content, that form is even more political than content. He has made the point in several places, but he tends to avoid ancient art and texts, and one of his clearest expositions of the formal and the political comes in his lecture on modernism and imperialism, which is reprinted in *The Modernist Papers* and where he describes the effect that imperialism has on such authors as E. M. Forster. Jameson writes that imperialism is one of the prime determinants of modernism, of its innovations in style and language and of the break it marks with earlier literary traditions. Imperialism changed the representation and experience of space for those who lived in metropolitan cultures, and it did so, at least in part, by creating and perpetuating an unequal relationship between those who lived in imperial nations such as England and those who lived in its colonies. Modernism tries to account for the imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by ‘recoordinating the concept of style with some new account of the experience of space, both together now marking the emergence of the modern as such’.⁴ In Jameson’s analysis, Forster’s novel *Howards End* offers a response, on the level of style, to the ‘representational dilemmas of the new imperial world system’ and to the contradictions of imperial modernity.⁵ This is a relatively under-appreciated essay, which complements the more substantial and better-known *Marxism and Form*, but it has potentially significant ramifications for classical scholars interested, say, in the relationship between ancient prose fiction and the contexts of production. If Jameson’s first charge to us is to take seriously the content of the form, his second is to show how the concern with form

and politics runs through some of the most influential critical thinkers of the twentieth century, from Lukács to Walter Benjamin, to Adorno and Sartre, many of whom also engaged with antiquity in their work. A third challenge he lays down is on questions of gender, sexuality, and the body, and here the challenge is largely by omission since he avoids discussing the topic in the early work on Marxism. On all these points, I think there is an opportunity for classical scholars, a chance for them to add a historical dimension to the study of form, and to draw out the implications of this work further.

One of the salutary effects of Jameson's own work has been to widen the reach of formalist enquiry and to broaden the scope of the politics of form. On this point, Jameson's provocation has been taken up by many scholars outside classical studies including by Caroline Levine in her book *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, which appeared in 2015. Levine makes the point that 'attending to the affordances of form opens up a generalizable understanding of political power'.⁶ That word 'generalizable' is important, but I think we might be circumspect in how we proceed on this matter. Forms and the political are situated, contingent, and specific. Different cultures may respond formally in different ways to different political situations, and we need to attend to cultural specificity even if we want to arrive at generalized claims about the nature of form and politics. This is where a focus on Greek culture may be useful – because Greek culture has been deeply analysed in formalistic terms, and because with Greek culture we might perceive the interaction of form and political power in a world, the patterns, orders, distributions and arrangements of which have been intensely studied for generations. But useful, also, because some of the most influential formal systems, whether poetic, artistic or political, have engaged with the ancient Greek in order to arrive at more thorough

formulations of themselves. This is to say that the politics of form in Greek culture should be understood as a wide-ranging and even necessary subject for discussion in our time.

We have to face the fact that ‘form’ is a term of wide semantic range and can be used variously. James Porter writes that ‘the Greek critical lexicon utterly lacks any satisfying equivalents for our words “content” or “form”: *morphe*, *eidos*, and *schema* do not obviously lend themselves to a juxtaposition with “content” in our sense of the term, nor does a Greek equivalent for “content” readily come to mind’.⁷ The modern English term ‘form’ is itself flexible, but neither in ancient Greece nor in the modern world do writers cease to explore the relationship between what we might term ‘form and content’. Simon Goldhill, who is the author of a riveting study on the politics of form in late antiquity, says that form is ‘especially labile as a critical term, a shifting and linking way of perceiving’.⁸ The term itself can be taken to denote several things: minute details within a text or a line or phrase; genre or another category (such as a dialect, metre, or trope) through which a text can be related to other texts; the metaphysical form of which Plato writes and from which a given text or work of art may somehow descend; or the perceived structure that holds together the content of a work of literature. ‘Form’ can be a verb or a noun, or, in some contexts, both. For some readers, the term may have more than one of these meanings. An art historian may arrive at a different understanding of form from a literary scholar and draw differently on Kant and Hegel, or Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Clement Greenberg: or the art historian might not differ so differ from the other, given that some of the best analyses of form, in fact, combine visual culture and textual discussion to an impressive level of sophistication. Perhaps the very elasticity of form, its many meanings, histories, and resonances, makes it so appealing to

writers and critics; perhaps its very flexibility is what makes it so easy to use when we talk about things as busy, deep, and many-sided as art and literature.⁹ Putting forward an account of form as it has been used by art historians, literary scholars, and others may therefore be a demanding task, but luckily the interested reader can turn to many treatments of form as it has been defined by critics, at least in the modern period.

Goldhill gives an important place to Hegel and Victorian intellectuals in writing that ‘the notion of form had become instrumental and normative in the interconnected regimes of literary criticism, religious regulation, social manners and architectural understanding – and even, through the idea of organic form, biological science’.¹⁰ In his book he looks at interactions across genres and also between forms: in our volume, many chapters explore an interesting and productive overlap between genre and form, while others think of form apart from genre and analyse many genres, and indeed many forms, in relation to the political.

The term ‘politics of form’ is construed in broad and flexible ways, elsewhere as in this volume, and for good reason. Some critics take it to mean that form is the reflection of a contemporary social, historical, or political situation and that an explication of form offers some insight into the nature of such a determinate situation. Some say that form presents a political intervention and even, on occasion, an encouragement to rousing political change such as revolution. Other critics read the relationship between formal and political categories in a dialectical fashion and explore how the two shape each other. Some worry that politics and form are inseparable and that commenting on form is always to comment on politics (and vice-versa), while others fret over the introduction of the political into an aesthetic category which, in their view, should be kept unspoiled. And there are writers who worry that writing about *the politics of form* hollows out both terms and reduces each

to its least interesting meaning.¹¹ This is, no doubt, an opportune moment to say that I do not believe that literature always should be read in terms of politics alone; nor do I believe that a ‘political’ reading of a literary work necessarily diminishes its textual richness, aesthetic quality, or cultural density. Far from it: the most accomplished works of literature and art retain their depth, interest, and value precisely because they repeatedly open up to a variety of readings, some of which may well lavish attention on questions of form and ideology.

In ancient Greece, the first sustained reflection on *form* is also the first sustained reflection on *the politics of form*. Reflection on literary form can arguably be found in a range of works from the Homeric epic poems to Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, but it is Plato’s work that is an influential starting-point for discussion of the subject. Since the crucial passages have been extensively studied, only a brief exposition is called for here. In a famous part of Book 3 of the *Republic*, Socrates turns to ‘expression’ (*lexis*) and then argues that one kind of poetry consists of imitation (*mimesis*) in which the characters speak in their voices (examples of this mode include tragedy and comedy), another in which the poet speaks in his own voice (*diegesis*; an example of this mode is the dithyramb), and a third or mixed variant in which the poet speaks in his voice and also uses imitation (Socrates refers to epic poetry as an example of this mode). The Socratic preference is evidently for the unmixed, narrative mode of diegesis. Socrates’ point is that the guardians of his imaginary *polis* ought not to practise imitation, but if they do imitate anything, they should imitate qualities that are appropriate to them and that can be found in ‘the brave, the self-controlled, the righteous’, and so forth (395c). Not long after, Socrates also suggests that the poet who imitates all things in different styles, patterns, and rhythms should be sent on his way and not admitted to the ideal *polis*, whereas that

poet would be granted entry who imitated good men and ‘the patterns (*typois*) for which we legislated at the beginning, when we were trying to educate the soldiers’ (398b). Socrates’ critique throws a sharp light on mimesis and on the form or mode in which the poet tells stories: the attitude he takes to mimesis leads him to the view that some forms of poetry are more acceptable than others in his ideal city.

Socrates returns to form and mimesis in Book 10 of the *Republic*, where he makes a couple of points that bear directly on the politics of form. Now he appears to be against almost all forms of ‘poetry’, regardless of metre. Socrates says that ‘the only poetry admissible in our city is hymns to the gods and encomia to good men’ (607a).¹² To accept other kinds of poetry such as Homer and tragedy into the city is to admit verse that is designed to rouse pleasure in the audience, with the result that ‘pleasure and pain will be enthroned in your city instead of law and the principle which the community accepts as best in any given situation’. Poetry, in this perspective, needs to be useful to the *polis*, and poetry that offers no utility to government or the state has no place in the Socratic city at all. Socrates had earlier, in Book 3, made the point that poetry was to be barred from the city because of the problems associated with mimesis; here we see that poetic forms are banned also since they provide pleasure rather than utility.

To be clear, Socrates is not objecting to poetry that gives pleasure: he says he would restore Homer to his ideal city if someone could defend his place in a ‘well-governed city’ (ἐν πόλει εὐνομουμένη, 607c). What he is looking for is poetry that is useful to the city, and if such poetry also happens to give pleasure to the audience, then so much the better.¹³ He would happily allow poetry back into the city if someone could defend poetry using any form (lyric, or another metre, or in prose) and could show that poetry aimed not just to give pleasure but was ‘useful for government

and human life' (ὠφελίμη πρὸς τὰς πολιτείας καὶ τὸν βίον τὸν ἀνθρώπινόν, 607d). The issue, for Socrates, is that certain forms of poetry give pleasure to people and enchant them through mimesis to undertake actions that are bad for the city and for themselves.¹⁴

One reason for the reformulation of the critique in Book 10 is that, since the discussion of poetry in Book 3, Plato has developed the theory of 'forms' or 'ideas'. The theory of forms is complex, but the point I would like to emphasize in this context is that the Platonic 'form' is metaphysical and it is external to the text or object of which it is a form. A couple of implications follow from this theory. One is that form and content can be treated separately since form has a non-material, metaphysical character; the second is that form is a point of origin or a beginning, without which the material manifestation of the object or text could not come into existence, and on both these points the difference is substantial with Aristotle, who offers us the other great constellation of theories from Greek antiquity on form. As S. J. Wolfson writes, 'For Aristotle, form is immanent, emergent, and coactive with its expressive materials – the several cases from which a general typology may be deduced. Platonic form is authorized by transcendent origin; Aristotelian form is realized in process, development, and achievement.'¹⁵

Both Aristotle and Plato concur that mimesis and tragedy have the capacity to affect and sway an audience, but Aristotle does not hold to the Platonic theory of forms and he frames mimesis in a very different way from Plato: his *Poetics* offers a strong riposte to Socrates' views in the *Republic*. Aristotle thinks of mimesis as innate in human beings and associates it with pleasure. Where Plato is troubled by the ethical, political and social repercussions of art and poetry that involve mimesis, Aristotle makes mimesis a vital part of his analysis of tragedy, of which he is a

defender and enthusiast. His definition in the *Poetics* stipulates that tragedy is ‘a *mimesis* of a high, complete action’ (1449b), and his treatise indicates that for him *mimesis* is closely connected to learning and understanding: ‘poetry is at once more like philosophy and more worth while than history’ (1451b). Moreover, Aristotle also suggests, by the introduction of *catharsis* to his analysis, that tragic poetry has a civic or communal dimension, and it is one that he appears to welcome in the form.

Tragedy ‘in dramatic, not narrative form, effects through pity and fear the *catharsis* of such emotions’ (δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι’ ἀπαγγελίας, δι’ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν): pity, fear, the emotions, and their *catharsis* have a vital role to play in the audience’s response to drama. On this reading, Aristotle implies that the pleasure provided by tragedy ‘is also of benefit to civic communities’ and that the *catharsis* of emotions that is achieved through tragedy has a social function.¹⁶

The influence of Plato and Aristotle on the subject of form can be discerned readily in the Hellenistic period at the level of poetic practice and theory. Callimachus, in the third century BC, responds to Plato indirectly if not directly. The narrator’s remarks in the *Aetia* prologue, in elegiac verse, about the size and scale of a poem, its delicacy and loudness, the slender Muse and fat sheep, and the cicada and the braying ass can all be read as comments on the politics of form.¹⁷ To turn to a less familiar example, consider Callimachus’ use of κακὰ βούβρωστις, a *hapax legomenon* from the *Iliad*, in his *Hymn to Demeter*. Socrates also cites the relevant passage of the *Iliad* in the *Republic* (379d8). Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan Stephens write, ‘Callimachus subsequently includes this by now doubly marked phrase (for Homer and for Plato) in his hymn in such a way that κακὰ βούβρωστις defines not divine whimsy, but retribution for sacrilege, thus imposing moral order

onto Homer's random world.'¹⁸ Callimachus thus reframes the Homeric passage in his own hexameters and, as Acosta-Hughes and Stephens demonstrate, repudiates Socrates' concerns about mimesis and poetry in the ideal state. Callimachus was doubtless exceptionally attuned to formal matters, since 'the taxonomic implications of formal criticism would have been significant for his *Pinakes*', and the dexterity he displays in his verses needs to be read in the context of multicultural Alexandria.¹⁹

The Hellenistic philosophers who write before and after Callimachus show a significant attentiveness to questions of literary form; they reflect an interest in formal criticism (e.g. in word order, syntax, genre, metre, sound, composition) that continues to develop after the fifth century BC and after the dissemination of Aristotle's works.²⁰ In many respects, these thinkers bear out the programme, set down by Shklovsky and Adorno in their different ways, of not taking form for granted, that is, of 'making form difficult', and they subject the formal features of verse and prose to an intense scrutiny.²¹ The philosophers include figures such as Neoptolemus of Parium, now best known for the triad ποίημα-ποίησις-ποιητής and its afterlife in Horace's *Ars poetica*, and Crates of Mallos, who said that a poem should be judged on the basis of its form, especially its sound, and not its content. The philosophers and critics argue and disagree with each other and develop their ideas about form through a subtle and complex idiom. They do not all use the same words for 'form': by the time we get to the Epicurean writer Philodemus, in the Roman era, σύνθεσις ('arrangement') or σύνθεσις τῆς λέξεως may mean 'form', λέξις may mean 'language' but in some instances also 'form', and διάνοια can mean 'thought' – but, again, matters are far more complex than this basic inventory suggests. Philodemus, who draws on and departs from Plato and Aristotle, holds the view that form and content are closely connected and that poetic judgement involves the analysis of both.²² For

Philodemus, language used in a work of literature must be proper (*to prepon*) to the thought or content, so that the content virtually determines the shape of the form – a point that is made regularly by ancient critics.²³ Yet, Philodemus also emphasizes the value of form in poetic judgement and argues that the composer of a poem is responsible ‘for the perfection of its form in the smallest detail and the coherence of every detail with larger effects’.²⁴

Within Greek studies in the last century, scholars have long been interested in questions of form and politics, but it is arguably true to say that there has been a resurgence of interest in the relationship between form and politics in the last couple of decades or so. Some of this work is not explicitly placed under the heading of form or politics by the authors but nonetheless has contributed to our comprehension of the issues. We have only to think of studies of Sophocles’ tragedies and late antique literature by Goldhill, the metrical analyses of Athenian drama by Edith Hall, the political readings of Euripidean plot and structure by Victoria Wohl, and the materialist and post-human investigation of bodies in tragedy by Nancy Worman, to appreciate the extent to which our understanding of Greek drama has grown along these lines.²⁵ In that sense, developments in the study of Greek culture resemble critical developments in other disciplines: witness the renewed interest in form in modern literatures, art history, music, and film studies, for example. What these developments share is an attention to the formal or to the aesthetic and a wariness toward a perceived undervaluing of form in approaches such as New Historicism.²⁶

Why Greek studies, in particular, has been marked by a renewed interest in questions of form is hard to explain. One reason may well be that Classics is, not for

the first time, acting as a derivative discipline and belatedly following new formalisms that were being explored and refined elsewhere. On this account, Greek studies is jumping on to a bandwagon: on this occasion, however, bandwagon-jumping is not an adequate explanation, and I would not place all recent work into the category. Another reason may be a disaffection, in Greek studies as elsewhere, with New Historicism and the perception that it has undervalued issues of form, aesthetics, beauty, the pleasure of the text, and indeed philology. Wohl writes that ‘as New Historicism has hardened into an orthodoxy, both in the field of classics and beyond, many have started to worry that in mining the texts for ideological content, it has cast aside important questions of literary form, giving scant attention to the formal structure and poetic language that differentiate a tragedy from, say, a tribute list’.²⁷ She adds that a consequence of New Historicism has been to turn the literary text from ‘the Keatsian urn of New Criticism, self-sufficient in its eternal beauty, into an ornate but ultimately vacuous container of an ideology that itself is thereby reified as its determinate content’.²⁸ We might broaden out this explanation by substituting for New Historicism a whole range of areas or approaches such as cultural studies, gender studies, race and ethnicity studies, postcolonialism, the critique of ideology, and theory. The return to form could now be construed as a kind of forward action, on the part of those scholars who believe in the autonomy of the work of art, or who think that New Historicism is reductive and insufficient to deal with questions of form and aesthetics, or think that it has eroded students’ engagement with valuable features of a text such as metre and language. Some of the enthusiasm behind new work on the politics of form even would seem to come from scholars who are sympathetic to New Historicism but who at the same time seek to augment the methods and refine the aims of that approach by the incorporation of formal issues into their work.

We can readily see why the newer formalists would be interested in Greek literature, and especially Greek literature in the period that extends from Homer to the Hellenistic poets. Greek tragedy and comedy are areas where New Historicism has been deployed with a particular facility and enthusiasm and where it continues to be prominently practised. Another factor is formal versatility: the range of metres used in the period is breathtaking, in drama but also outside of the dramatic genres, and the deployment of these metres and the dexterity of the versifiers has rightly attracted the attention of scholars interested in formal questions. Other reasons include the formalized rituals and ritual structures that accompany the performance of poetry, the rituals that accompany religious practice and political life, the creation of aesthetic canons in the period, and contemporary philosophical interest in forms, structures and aesthetics. We can also appreciate why scholars have been so moved as to analyse the politics of form and formal phenomena in Greek antiquity: almost all of Greek literature is composed by ‘aristocrats’, almost all is composed by men, much of it is composed during periods of political and military upheaval, and an important strand is composed by Plato, who writes stylishly and influentially about the conjunction of forms, poetry and politics in his work. We might add that the cultural status and renown of ancient Athens have made it central to formulations of modernity, so that thinking about the politics of form in the Greek world is also a way of thinking about modernities and self-definitions in modern ‘Western’ cultures.

We might refer briefly to older explorations of the politics of form within classical studies. Classical scholars are used to thinking about style or word order as inseparable from history, for example, and they habitually suppose that style is connected to social and political matters, i.e. the ‘world of the text’. There is a lasting tradition of such work in Greek studies, and we could summon numerous examples

from across the twentieth century. Consider the subject of metre and rhythm. As early as 1901, Thomas Dwight Goodell wrote *Chapters on Greek Metric* in which he said, ‘Man is not merely a rhythmical animal, as all animals are; he is a rhythmizing animal, as truly as he is a political animal.’²⁹ In the following year, Walter Headlam wrote about Dorian and non-Dorian metres. For him, ‘Wordsworth’s ode to Duty, ‘Stern Daughter of the voice of God,’ or Tennyson’s upon the Death of Wellington could not have been written by a Greek except in Dorian metre; to write of ἀρετὰ or ἀνδρεία in Anacreontic would have been absurd and ludicrous.’³⁰ In his treatment of Greek metre, published after Goodell’s and Headlam’s studies, Paul Maas wrote, ‘Characters of low social standing (except the Phrygian in the *Orestes*) are never given lines in sung metres but are given instead anapaests, like the Nurse in the *Hippolytus*, or hexameters, like the Old Man in the *Trachiniae*.’³¹ Turning to a study written some decades later, we find Peter Rose saying that ‘Pindar’s formal metrical patterns represent one of the most striking factors (perhaps more significant even than the irretrievably lost music and dance patterns) differentiating his language from the everyday language of the ruling class’.³² Even in a treatment such as Kenneth Dover’s *Evolution of Greek Prose Style* (1997), which is not overtly about politics, the reader comes to see how Dover’s careful analysis of prose style has its political dimensions.³³ These examples remind us that classical scholars have scarcely neglected to join politics and literary form in their work. Hall’s recent analysis of the politics of metres in Athenian drama thus exemplifies the new formalism and builds carefully on long-standing reflections on the politics of verse forms.³⁴

‘Could we ever narrativize *without* moralizing?’³⁵ The form assumed by Greek prose can also be analysed in terms of its ethical and political dimensions. Think of the traditions of Greek historical prose writing: we shall turn later to

philosophical prose and Plato. Every reader of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon comes away from their texts with an appreciation and admiration of their handling of narrative complexity and storytelling skills. Following Northrop Frye and others, Hayden White has pointed out how historical narrative imposes on reality a form, and this form is more often than not the form of a story. The narrative has a beginning, a middle, and an end and thus imposes a formal coherence and a meaning on the reality that it represents. This is not to say that historical reality itself exists in a pure or unmediated essence and that it is being somehow distorted by particular historical narratives. But the narrative addresses the desire on the part of the reader for significance, interpretation and closure and is read as a story, a story, that is, which implies a moral and a politics. Moreover, as White writes in his early work, the prose narrative draws its literary force from the type of emplotment deployed in the historical narrative, whether romance, comedy, tragedy, or satire, and it is the emplotment no less than the content that structures the response of the reader and informs the text's political and ideological impact. This appears to hold true for relatively early prose writers such as Herodotus and Thucydides, in whose time the genres of tragedy and comedy are being elaborated, as for those writers who are composing their work after the establishment of these literary genres. In White's analysis, the content of the form makes clear that the cleavage between historical writing and ideology is spurious.

Other commentators have interpreted formal elements such as the plot, language, and structure of Greek drama in terms of politics. In one sense, this is a tradition that goes back to Aristophanes' *Frogs* and to the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides. Closer to our own time, Jean-Pierre Vernant, who is associated by some with historicist approaches to Greek literature, read tragedy in terms of its

relationship to the contemporary political and social situation of Athens. He wrote about the many formal and structural features that make up the genre of tragedy (the language of the protagonists, the songs of the chorus, the mythic setting) and connected these to the world of the democratic city-state. In one analysis, Vernant vigorously chastized Freud for not being alert to the historical specificities of fifth-century Athens in devising his theory of the Oedipus complex; he claimed that Freud's theories were not alert to the evolution and form of tragedy and were built on shaky foundations because they sought to offer general pronouncements on psychological and sexual impulses while ignoring the socio-historical realities of Athens.³⁶ Other scholars such as Goldhill, Hall, Wohl, Mark Griffith, Peter Rose and Froma Zeitlin have explored the relationship between the genre (including its formal features such as plot, choral song, music, language) and Athenian political and social life.³⁷ The influence of these writers is apparent in current scholarship on politics and form, as critics venture into new directions and focus on affect, senses and reception.

Newer work on tragedy raises the importance of affect for our understanding of the genre and relates it to questions of form and politics. It is not just pity and fear that the audience feels but a wide range of emotions, and by exploring what these emotions mean and by asking how the forms of the drama shape them, we might arrive at some understanding of the politics of dramatic form. Wohl, for instance, has suggested that 'the relation between aesthetic and political forms is mediated by affect' in Greek tragedy.³⁸ For her, aesthetic form exerts a real ethical and political impact and it does so through a 'leading of the soul' or *psychagogia*. 'Aesthetic form,' she writes, 'provides a syntax for the imaginary articulation of the audience's real conditions of existence; it "leads the soul" to adopt certain subjective relations to that reality. Ideology is not something that aesthetic form contains, then, but

something it *does*.³⁹ On this analysis, Euripides' *Ion* does not merely represent ideology but compel its audience to feel the work of ideology and hold up the play for examination. By watching the play and responding to its *muthos* in the theatre, the members of the audience experience its impact at an affectual and intellectual level. Wohl's book, like some of the chapters in this volume, shows how form, politics, and affect interact with each other in Greek tragedy and reaffirms that it seldom makes sense to try and read them discretely.

Another way to consider the politics of form is to think not about the internal dynamics of a form but about forms themselves as ideological. As Eagleton puts it, 'aesthetic modes and forms are already in some broad sense of the term ideological'.⁴⁰ Literary forms are contingent, and their comings and goings in literary history are ideological. Why forms flourish at a given historical moment, what ideological pressures they bear, why they change into other forms or fade away, are complex and important questions. Rose traces one sequence of formal development in ancient Greece and writes, 'The formal trajectory from epic formulas to choral lyric, trilogy, single play, philosophical dialogue is similarly not intelligible on the basis of a purely internal Hegelian logic of forms.'⁴¹ Rose associates the flourishing of certain genres with material and political life on the ground: economic developments, aristocratic competition, and class struggle are some of the factors that determine the rise or fall of particular genres. Explanations for the evolution of genres, therefore, can be sought not just in the dialogue between genres but in historical and societal factors – a point, to be sure, that has been evident to numerous scholars, including some of the most influential readers of ancient texts. Nietzsche may have liked to say of the *Birth of Tragedy* that it paid relatively little attention to the politics of form ('it is indifferent to politics . . . it smells offensively Hegelian', he wrote in *Ecce Homo*), but the focus on

Socrates and the fifth-century city in his work underscored the political dimensions of tragedy. The point was also evident to critics writing in the Marxist tradition such as Bakhtin. The latter's arguments for the historical origins of prose fiction take account of social conditions and political factors and suggest that, while the ancient novel had its origins in older forms and in the interaction between genres, the emergence of the new genre is shaped by socio-political contexts. This point is worth emphasizing, with the proviso that the relationship between genre and context be understood as fluid and liable to change: one genre might 'perform cultural work that in another period might be done by a different genre or, more intriguingly, by a different product of the culture, such as a myth or a holiday'.⁴²

On the relationship between genres, the work of Lukács is more resonant than even that of Bakhtin.⁴³ Lukács' early work on epic poetry and the novel explores literary fecundity and continuity within a 'political' framework. One genre emerges from another, because of changes in socio-political conditions, but the newer genre continues to bear ties to the older genre: we might almost say, though Lukács' emphasis is on the dialectic, that epic contains the kernel of the novel within it, and that, despite the break posed by the change in historical circumstances, the epic appears to anticipate the novel. The shape of the new genre varies considerably from the old, but this changed shape does not prevent the new form from showing some resemblance to the old. This resemblance can be discerned even though the contexts of literary production have also changed. As Marx hints in the *Grundrisse*, the conditions for epic poetry may vanish, but the form or the genre of epic still continues to manifest itself subtly in later times. The old genre comes to an end; a new genre arises, with a new politics, and a new socio-historical context in which to take root

and flourish, but both the old and the new somehow live on and make their way in the world.

No Greek account of form is more important than Plato's, as I said earlier, but the word 'form' corresponds awkwardly with the philosopher's sense of the concept, partly because usage (starting from the Latin *forma*, 'shape') shows a long and supple development, with strong religious overtones, from the Renaissance to the present; these features are true of the word 'form' in English as well as its cognates in the modern Romance and Germanic languages.⁴⁴ Even so, Plato wrote dialogues, with the exception of the *Apology* and the largely spurious letters, and why he chose to compose in the dialogue form remains something of an open question. A further issue is the relationship between the politics of the literary forms that Plato crafts and his own theory of forms. The Athenian philosopher uses the Greek words *eidos* (εἶδος) and *idea* (ἰδέα), which are conventionally translated into English as 'form' but raise difficult questions of definition and translation.

The choice of dialogue form has been variously explained, by thinkers from Nietzsche and Bakhtin to contemporary scholars. The end of the *Phaedrus* (especially, 276a–277a) provides some insight into the deployment of the form, as do other parts of Plato's work, even those parts that resemble extended essays rather than dialogues (e.g. the *Timaeus* and *Laws*). Rather than attempt to solve this vexed question in a definitive fashion here, I think we might pay attention to a point to which Longinus makes explicitly in his treatise on the sublime: it was 'above all Plato', Longinus writes, 'who from the great Homeric source drew to himself innumerable tributary streams' and he adds that Plato would not have been so

accomplished a philosopher and author if he had not been zealous in competing with Homer for primacy ‘like a young champion matched against the man whom all admire’.⁴⁵ The philosophical prose work of Plato comes after Homeric epic and is connected to it, but the connection with epic is not loose or casual: it is crucial and defining, as Longinus says, for it is part of Plato’s claim to authority and truth that he can use and manipulate Homer in his writings. A similar point is grasped by Nietzsche in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Just before claiming that Plato’s work serves as a model for the novel, Nietzsche writes, ‘One could say that the Platonic dialogue was the boat on which the older forms of poetry, together with all her children, sought refuge after their shipwreck; crowded together in a narrow space, and anxiously submissive to the one helmsman, Socrates, they now sailed into a new world which never tired of gazing at this fantastic spectacle.’⁴⁶ Nietzsche’s imagery is scarcely innocent, and when he shows Socrates sailing his raft into a new world, he invites a comparison with Odysseus. Nietzsche implies that the philosopher has displaced the Homeric Odysseus and become the captain of a new prose genre, one that accommodates old verse forms and also rules over them.

By looking backward and forward, Plato both engages with Homer and foreshadows the novelists, and that explains in part why the figure of Socrates was interpreted so ambiguously by Lukács and Bakhtin. Lukács and Bakhtin, indeed, remind us that Plato’s work should be situated in its socio-political context as well as in the framework of literary history. Plato’s skill in crafting prose would help him in the so-called ‘battles of prose’, in which prose discourses of philosophy, history, medicine, and oratory were beginning to develop and in which intellectuals vied with each other in their claims to truth and wisdom. Moreover, although the precise relationship between the invention of prose and democracy remains a matter of

contention, it is worth recognizing that prose begins to flourish in Greece roughly in the era that democracy begins to flourish.⁴⁷ For his part, Plato incorporates high and low, verse and non-verse genres, in his prose, and he thus shows in his writings the kind of democratic heteroglossia to which Bakhtin refers. At the same time, Plato's dialogues frequently expose the inadequacies of official Athenian democracy, challenge the political economy of the city-state, and, ultimately, find the city wanting in its condemnation of Socrates. If there is a conflict in Plato's philosophy between democratic form and anti-democratic content, it is often resolved in favour of the latter. We might say, following Bakhtin and Boyarin, that the dialogue form of Plato's work is, in part, a pretence or an illusion designed to hide the monologic thrust of his writings, many of which are anti-democratic in their political stance; but further, as well, that Plato's writings also promote a deeper dialogism (not necessarily in the moments where the form seemingly most reflects spoken dialogue), which is put at the service of the philosophical truths that he is pursuing.⁴⁸

Plato has much to say about the 'form' of beauty in his writings (no other form is mentioned in the *Symposium*, for instance), and he brings us now to the subject of formal beauty. Plato has relatively little to say about the beauty of literature despite his evident interest in beauty and beautiful things and despite the stylistic flair that he displays in long stretches of his compositions. 'Another question matters more than either poetry or beauty does: What leads a mind toward knowledge and the Forms? Things of beauty do so excellently well. Poems mostly don't.'⁴⁹ Plato's approach to beauty and literature arguably imposes a separation between the appreciation of literature and the enjoyment of beauty, but in fact his own Greek is ravishingly beautiful, and his deployment of a wide range of literary genres in his own work is undeniable (the *Symposium*, again, and the *Republic* itself show his versatility on this

front). By his formal and stylistic brilliance, Plato complicates the substance of Socrates' remarks in the *Republic* and challenges his readers to think at the most profound level about the relationship between poetry and the state. It cannot be the case that literary beauty has no value for Plato. Indeed, the dissonance between Plato's formal, literary beauty and the restrictions placed by Socrates' on the poets remains a problem within the study of ancient philosophy.

Plato's influence may be one reason why some modern philosophical and political thinkers have hesitated to comment on literary beauty; another reason may be the perception that Marx had little to say about the aesthetic qualities of art and literature. Hall writes that critics on the Left have been especially deficient in offering aesthetic criticism or analyses of beauty: 'A true Marxist "aesthetic", facing up to beauty, timelessness, transcendence and sublimity, has always been missing . . . The reasons why critics of the Left run away from the concepts of beauty, sublimity and value are that they do not want to endorse a type of language associated with elites, and that "sublimity" and "beauty" have indeed often lain in the contingent, subjective eye of ruling-class beholders.'⁵⁰ There is some truth to this view. As Hall points out, however, 'within the various schools of criticism loosely related to "Marxism" there are several promising ideas available'. Lukács, Benjamin, Jameson and Eagleton are examples of critics in the Marxist tradition who have written extensively about beauty, aesthetics and form. Hall herself makes the case for a dialectical reading of Plato and suggests that 'Plato's best writing at the dawn of western philosophy receives its glittering and apparently timeless allure from two such inbuilt tensions: between dramatic dialogue form, rhythmic prose and intimate, chatty colloquialism and between mythic/mystical imagery and rational inductive method.'⁵¹

We might at this point reflect that an important tradition since at least Kant has regarded the aesthetic as its own domain, as one not dissoluble into something else. We would, then, grant the aesthetic a literary and philosophical capacity rather than see it as contingent, historical, and political, and think of ‘the aesthetic realm’ as ‘the space best suited for a philosophical exploration’ of worldly ideologies or as a space from which rigorous ethical or materialist critiques can emerge.⁵² On this view, the singularity of the aesthetic experience cannot be interpreted only in terms of ideology, ethics, or politics and should be seen as a specific and integral phenomenon in its own right. This philosophy of aesthetics has been explored by a range of thinkers from Kant, in the *Critique of Judgement*, to Lukács, Adorno, Jameson and beyond, many of whom have offered political readings of literature. Within classical studies, Charles Martindale, drawing on Kant, has tried to repudiate ‘the two commonly made objections to aesthetic judgements about artworks (including works of literature), first that they are formalistic (detaching formal features of the work from the discursive and ideological contexts of their use), and secondly that they are really occluded judgements of other kinds’.⁵³ For him, aesthetic readings are no less valid than political readings, so that the relationship between aesthetics and politics remains an open question. From this perspective, the reading of literature raises a whole series of problems and compels us to think once again of the text, the reader, the relationship between form and content, and the various cultural and socio-historical contexts to which all these might be related, but also, and no less crucially, of the aesthetic experience.

There is far more to say about the aesthetic experience than can be accommodated in this introduction, but we might wish to appreciate the role of the reader or the audience in our discussion of the politics of form. Plato, in the *Republic*

but also in such other works as the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, and Aristotle, in the discussion of *catharsis* in the *Poetics*, are among the first in the classical Greek and Latin traditions to analyse the experiential dimensions of art and literature, whether written or performed. Following in their wake, we can say that the experience of literary form needs to be understood as a full-scale sensory process, where the reader or spectator engages with a text's materiality, that is, with the ink, wax, stone, and papyrus; the sound of syllables, words, and music; the syntax, sentence structure, and word order; and the disposition, situation, and location of the text or performance. A dazzling array of forms and an astonishing formal complexity are at work when it comes to the experience of ancient literature: this array and complexity make it virtually impossible for us to discern with any precision what is left in and what is left out at various stages in the transmission of the literary work and make it challenging to understand the transformation generated in the receiver by the work.⁵⁴ In studying the politics of form in Greek literature, we should pay attention not just to the formal qualities within a text but to the fuller spectrum of formal phenomena that affect the reader's reception of the work and that could potentially transform the reader's person as well.

What is the transformation wrought on the self when the experience of literature is thus conceived? What happens to the receiving subject, who feels and engages with the many forms and formal devices, no less than the content, of the literature? We might answer these questions by turning, like so many before us, to poets such as Sappho, who composed poems (e.g. fragments 2 and 31) in which the effect of love can also be understood as an allegory of the multisensory experience of poetry, or to the many other poets who have explored the synaesthetic nature of verse, from Attar in the *Conference of the Birds* (*Manṭiq-ut-Ṭayr*) to the English Romantics

(‘My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains . . .’) to Baudelaire (*Correspondances*) and others into the twentieth century. Or we might turn to Aristotle, who with his account of *catharsis* gives his readers a theory of affective response that is at once ancient and astonishingly modern. We might, in fact, turn to any number of poets and thinkers in order to formulate our response, but I think it will suffice here, in thinking about our subject, to refer the reader to analyses by materialist critics on the topic since their writings on aesthetics explore precisely the fashioning of the political subject in literary situations of the type we have been considering.⁵⁵ As Jameson reminds us, the aesthetic writings of critics such as Lukács show how art that is truly transformative and utopian ‘allows us to glimpse the possibility of a subjectivity without privilege and without hierarchy’.⁵⁶

This way of thinking grants to literature and interpretation the ability to *engage* – to move and transform, to motivate and mould. Form is no less important than content in the consideration of politically engaged art, while, for some thinkers such as Adorno, form is even more important than content when it comes to engaged art.⁵⁷ The form of the artwork reflects the conditions of its production no less than the content, but frequently the political effect of the form is harder to discern and more difficult to comprehend than the impact of the content. The slipperiness of form makes it a powerful means for challenging, questioning, or breaking down the status quo: because it is indirect and therefore less likely to be understood as threatening; because it achieves its impact slowly and in more subtle ways than the content of the artwork; because it offers a new vehicle for revolutionary content; and arguably because it is less likely than the content to be appropriated and domesticated by powerful existing traditions. One could even argue that openly political content gets in the way of the efficacy of literary engagement: content that is heavy-handed about

its objectives appeals to those who already accept the message or meets with denial from those who hold opposing views, whereas formal innovation can be more effective in changing people's political beliefs. The extreme version of this claim would be to say that the political efficacy of the artwork depends on form and that content is irrelevant.

Not all critics insist so vehemently on the primacy of form over content in the realm of political engagement. Even if we were to grant the thesis that everything turned on form and nothing on content, what kind of literature would be ranked among the most engaged? Antiquity seems to offer few if any explicit examples of literary works that engage the world, or transform it, on the basis of form alone, despite the claims made by some Hellenistic philosophers. Optatian is the exception who proves the rule, given the forlorn place he occupies in literary history.⁵⁸ It is also difficult to assess the direction of change that follows from a form: that is, it is difficult to correlate a particular formal phenomenon with a particular kind of worldly impact. Will the disruption of metrical norms turn the subject into a political conservative or a revolutionary? Is the prose of historical realism in itself likely to move the reader to make demands in the name of social justice? Form by itself would have to work hard to orient the political subject in a particular direction, even when form is a vital factor in aesthetic engagement.

We should return at this point to the difficult question of formal change and innovation and to the relationship that formal innovation bears to social reality. The complicating factors are easy to spell out: no innovation comes out of a vacuum, and the boundaries between creation, innovation, development and evolution are not always easy to draw; the criteria for what counts as innovation are notoriously slippery and vague; and it is hard to link formal changes directly to a particular kind

of worldly engagement. Yet, innovation in form is well attested in Greek antiquity.⁵⁹ At the level of genre alone, a roll call of the familiar would include epic poetry, ‘lyric’ poetry, epinician, tragedy, comedy, epitaph and epigram, historiography, oratory and philosophical prose, all of which emerge and evolve before the death of Alexander the Great. Some have explained the emergence of ancient Greek literary forms in political terms or connected the deployment of particular forms to contemporary political developments. To the examples adduced earlier could be added the discussion of Homeric poetry by Richard Janko, or the analyses of epinician verse by Glenn Most, Evelyn Krummen, and Leslie Kurke.⁶⁰ These accounts are fascinating and learned severally, each in their own way: we also need to acknowledge that work on form and politics needs to be developed further and cut across familiar boundaries of genre or metre. Many literary forms change and flourish in the fifth century BC in Athens, within the same communities, but they do not all relate to extrinsic political factors in the same way. Again, there is the issue of gradation: formal variation can be related to political realities or unresolved tensions in society but also need to be explored and studied at the level of detail since different forms within a single work could be related to different political phenomena. The challenge is of investigating examples small and large, within and beyond the familiar boundaries of genre, and of relating form to socio-political reality across the scale.

Form is not only a register, or a resolution, of the historical or ideological contradictions of society. Literature, and literary form, are far too complex and interesting to be explained or understood only in terms of reference to history. This is why many of our most sophisticated interpreters, including those critics who are inclined to read texts from the perspective of historical materialism or dialectical theory, remain sensitive to formalist technique, aesthetic value, poetic practice and

literary language; it is, not incidentally, also why writers such as Lukács, Adorno, Jameson and Eagleton often write in a style that is captivating and consummate – in a prose which, to give Eagleton’s description of Jameson’s writing, ‘carries an intense libidinal charge, a burnished elegance and unruffled poise’.⁶¹ We should think of form as its own thing as well as enmeshed in the world, to see it as both verb and noun, to try to understand what form does and what it knows, and to understand form in the terms of Plato and Aristotle and other thinkers.⁶² We need to think, in other words, of form in its complexity, durability, and versatility and to explore form from many perspectives, including the few explored in this introduction.

This volume aims to light up different ways in which we might think about the politics of form and makes no claim to being comprehensive or overly systematic. It is divided into three sections. In the first section (on poetic works), Ahuvia Kahane explains ‘rupture’ in the linguistic regimes of Homeric figures such as Achilles in terms of formal and thematic complexity; disruptions in language are not ‘misuses’ but the very condition of politics in the *Iliad*. Simon Goldhill reads *Antigone* as a conflict between the extremism of Antigone and Creon, on the one hand, and other characters’ resistance to their demands, on the other; the form of the play questions the delusional heroism and ideological rigidity of the leading characters. Victoria Wohl writes that Euripides, in *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, explores the *muthos* of the plot in such a way as to provide glimpses of alternative ethical possibilities and of a road to an invigorated democratic politics in which agency but also contingency might play hopeful parts. Susan Stephens argues that the poets of Hellenistic Alexandria show literary creativity in inventing, adapting, or renewing genres and that their works can be understood as shaping and responding to the densely complicated politics of their world.

In the second section (chiefly on prose authors), Andrew Benjamin interprets Plato's *Republic* and Walter Benjamin's works to explore the politics of form in relation to a cluster of connected themes such as literary value, the particular and the universal, judgement and knowing, and meaning and presence. Paul Allen Miller argues that the *Seventh Letter* of Plato is aimed at the forming of the philosophical subject and at thinking through a politics of truth and resistance. Nancy Worman suggests that the emphasis on formal unity and purity in the *Poetics* and, to an extent, in the *Rhetoric* leads Aristotle to underplay the value of the gendered body, materiality, and affect and to keep messy democracy at bay, in his discussion of drama. In exploring the politics of obscurantist academic jargon, Edith Hall writes that Aristotle's exoteric writings are more accessible and public-spirited than his esoteric works and that they offer important models for intellectuals in our own day. Rosie Harman analyses form and content in Xenophon's works and shows how seemingly puzzling shifts in style, tone, argument, and theme can be understood in terms of the meaning-making of the text and the construction of ideology.

In the last section, Daniel Orrells examines how eighteenth-century writers argued about the connection between Greek and 'Oriental' forms in art and text and locates these debates within discussions of the relationship between Greece and non-Greek cultures. Ruth Webb writes that ancient (e.g. Theon) and modern critics (e.g. Leo Spitzer) offer contrasting perspectives on ecphrasis (they differ on whether to think of it as formal or formless) but that both groups are nonetheless rooted in political regimes. As these concluding chapters illustrate, early modern and modern explorations of form, in the European tradition, continue to engage with Greek ideas even as they try to arrive at new conceptions of art history, literary criticism and

classicism. Understanding the politics of form remains an urgent task for students of ancient Greek literature.

Notes

¹ In thinking about form and politics for this introduction, I have drawn on the following: Jameson 1971, 1976, 2007 and 2015; Lukács 1971, 1978 and 2010; Eagleton 1975 and 1990; Adorno 1997; Wolfson 1997; Richter 1999; Leighton 2007; Levinson 2007; Mouffe 2013; Levine 2015; Olson and Copland 2016; Kramnick and Nersessian 2017; and special issues of *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly* 61, 1 (2000); the *European Journal of English Studies* 20, 3 (2016); *Critical Inquiry* 44, 1 (2017); and *PMLA* 132, 5 (2017). I have also learned much on the subject from the contributors to this volume.

² Whitmarsh and Thomson 2013. Whitmarsh 2018 offers a stimulating discussion of the form of ancient prose fiction; on which, see also Reardon 1991, Selden 1994 and Grethlein 2017 (for its discussion of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*).

³ Wohl 2015, Hall 2012 and 2018b, Goldhill 2020.

⁴ Jameson 2007: 159.

⁵ Jameson 2007: 164.

⁶ Levine 2015: 7.

⁷ Porter 1995: 99. Porter's chapter is a scintillating exploration of 'form and content' in Philodemus' work.

⁸ Goldhill 2020: xiii. See also the comments on form in the introduction to Rutherford 2012.

⁹ Leighton 2007: 3.

¹⁰ Goldhill 2020: xii.

¹¹ Jarvis 2010: 932.

¹² Translations of Plato and Aristotle in this introduction are adapted from Russell and Winterbottom 1972.

¹³ See Burnyeat 1999: 317–18.

¹⁴ From this perspective, Books 3 and 10 of the *Republic* should be read alongside passages from the *Laws*, esp. *Laws* 655c–656a, 658a–659c, and 700a–701b. For the *Republic*, see the chapters by Andrew Benjamin and Paul Allen Miller, in this volume, and for the *Laws*, the chapter by Susan Stephens.

¹⁵ Wolfson 2012: 497. On the *Poetics*, see the chapter by Nancy Worman in this volume.

¹⁶ Hall 2018a: 39.

¹⁷ Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012, ch. 1, offers an excellent reading of Callimachus' verse in the light of Plato's philosophical work.

¹⁸ Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012: 20.

¹⁹ Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012: 30. For the Alexandrian context, see e.g. Selden 1998 and Stephens 2003.

²⁰ Ford 2002.

²¹ See Porter 1995: 99.

²² In Book 5 of his treatise *On Poems*, Philodemus refers to thirteen earlier attempts at poetic judgement, four of which call for no judgement of content and which he appears to repudiate. See *On Poems* 5, cols. 29–38 (Mangoni), with further details in Asmis 1995: 152–3, who supplies the division into thirteen theories. The Greek text is obscure and admits of other interpretations.

²³ Versions of this view can be found in Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1059; see also Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.7, 1408a10–11, and Quintilian 11.1.3, with Russell 1981: 130–1, and Porter 1995: 124–5.

²⁴ Armstrong 1995: 232. On Philodemus' poetic theory, see further Asmis 1991 and 1992, Pace 2009, and the introduction to Janko 2000.

²⁵ Goldhill 2012 and 2020, Hall 2012, Wohl 2015, Worman 2020.

²⁶ For discussions of form, style, and politics in Greek art, see Neer 2002 and 2010.

²⁷ Wohl 2015: 4.

²⁸ Wohl 2015: 4.

²⁹ Goodell 1901: 64.

³⁰ Headlam 1902: 212.

³¹ Maas 1962: 53.

³² Rose 1992: 173–4.

³³ See e.g. the comparison of Thucydides and Lysias, or the analysis of Xenophon's style in the *Memorabilia* (Dover 1997: 5-10, 154-5).

³⁴ Hall 2006 and 2012.

³⁵ White 1980: 27.

³⁶ Vernant 1981.

³⁷ Goldhill 2012, Griffith 1995, Hall 1997 and 2006, Rose 1992, Wohl 2015 and Zeitlin 1985.

³⁸ Wohl 2015: xi.

³⁹ Wohl 2015: 7.

⁴⁰ Eagleton 2006: xvii.

⁴¹ Rose 1992: 372.

⁴² Dubrow 1990: 269. My thanks to Victoria Moul for the reference.

⁴³ Lukács 1978; Bakhtin 1981.

⁴⁴ Williams 1983, s.v. ‘formalist’.

⁴⁵ Longinus, *On the Sublime* 13.3–4 (trans. W. Rhys Roberts).

⁴⁶ Nietzsche 1999: 69.

⁴⁷ See the discussion in Goldhill 2002. Longinus, *On the Sublime* 44, offers a fascinating discussion of democracy, freedom, literary writing, and artistic accomplishment.

⁴⁸ Bakhtin 1981; Boyarin 2009.

⁴⁹ Pappas 2020.

⁵⁰ Hall 2017b: 26.

⁵¹ Hall 2017b: 26.

⁵² Jameson 2015: 7.

⁵³ Martindale 2005: 4.

⁵⁴ Lukács’ early writings on aesthetics are a guide to problems of composition, materiality, sensory experience, and subjectivity and remain of much interest to readers who wish to tackle these issues with conceptual rigour and sophistication: Lukács 1963a, 1963b, and 1969; with Jameson 2015.

⁵⁵ Lukács 1963a and 1963b; on synaesthesia in ancient literature, see also Butler and Purves 2013, which is the first volume in the series *Senses in Antiquity*, edited by Shane Butler and Mark Bradley.

⁵⁶ Jameson 2015: 27.

⁵⁷ Adorno 1997. On Adorno and form, see the thoughtful analysis of Rush 2009.

⁵⁸ Squire and Wienand 2017; Goldhill 2020: vii–xii.

⁵⁹ And the subject of comment: on the origins of tragedy, see e.g. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448b-1449b, and Horace, *Ars poetica* 274-84.

⁶⁰ Janko 1991: 38; Most 1985; Kurke 1991; Krummen 1990.

⁶¹ Eagleton 1981: 60.

⁶² Leighton 2007: 27–8.