UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Desire and Self-Construction in Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1: Reading Tibullus with Lacan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

by

Nicole Elizabeth Taynton

Committee in charge:

Professor Sara Lindheim, Chair

Professor Francis Dunn

Professor Dorota Dutsch

Professor Jon Snyder

June 2018

The dissertation of Nicole Elizabeth Taynton is approved.

____

Francis Dunn

____

Dorota Dutsch

____

Jon Snyder

____

Sara Lindheim, Committee Chair

June 2018

Desire and Self-Construction in Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1:

Reading Tibullus with Lacan

Copyright © 2018

by

Nicole Elizabeth Taynton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to my husband, Clark, whose love and encouragement was my greatest source of support in the process of earning my degree.

Thank you to Dr. Douglas Penney, my undergraduate advisor at Wheaton College (IL), whose mentorship inspired me to pursue academic research at the graduate level.

Thank you to Dr. Mark Thorne, my first Latin professor, who introduced me to the world of ancient Rome and the age of Augustus.

Thank you to my brother and sister, Jessica and Jacob, who were always there when I needed them most.

Thank you to my father, Phil, whose belief in me and my abilities helped me to keep moving forward.

Thank you to my fellow graduate students at UCSB, who found ways to support me in this process regardless of the pressures of their own graduate work.

Thank you especially to my office mates, Aerynn Dighton and Julio Vega, whose patience and encouragement went far beyond what I could have asked of them.

Thank you to my many professors in my time at UCSB, all of whom have left a mark on my thinking and my work.

Thank you especially to my committee members, Francis Dunn, Dorota Dutsch, and Jon Snyder, who held me to the highest standard and pushed me to improve my work at every step of the way.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank the three women without whom this project would never have been possible:

Thank you to my mother, Cynthia, who instilled in me the love of learning and who always encouraged me never to give up on my goal of earning my Ph.D.

Thank you to my grandmother, Jane Buehrer, whose legacy of promoting education, especially for the women in her family, has inspired her children and grandchildren earn a total of eight graduate degrees (and counting).

Finally, thank you to my advisor, Sara Lindheim, who has gone above and beyond again and again to help me grow as a scholar, a teacher, and a person. It was a privilege to work so closely with you as you were writing your forthcoming book and to develop our individual projects side by side. When we began this process, I wanted to become more like you, but you pushed me instead to become a better version of myself. It seems fitting that I cannot put into words just how grateful I am for everything that you have done for me.

VITA OF NICOLE ELIZABETH TAYNTON
June 2018

EDUCATION

2018 Ph.D in Classics, University of California, Santa Barbara
2014 M.A. in Classics, University of California, Santa Barbara
2012 B.A. in Ancient Languages and Philosophy, Wheaton College (IL)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2018 "Roman Elegy Remixed: Gender and Genre in Catalepton 4," SCS Annual Meeting

2018 "'Who's That Girl': (Mis)Recognizing Marathus in Tibullus 1.8," CAMWS Annual Meeting

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UC Santa Barbara

Teaching Associate, (Instructor of Record) for "Gender, Sexuality, and Self-Construction: Roman Elegy and Contemporary Pop Music" (Winter 2018)
Teaching Associate, (Instructor of Record) for "Greek Literature in Translation" (Summer 2016)
Teaching Associate, (Instructor of Record) for "Latin 1" (Fall 2015)
Teaching Assistant, Section Instructor for "Greek Mythology" (Fall 2013, Winter 2014, Spring 2014, Winter 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2017, Spring 2018)

Wheaton College

Teaching Assistant, "Intermediate Greek" (Fall 2010, Fall 2011)
Teaching Assistant, "Elementary Greek II" (Spring 2011, Spring 2012)
Teaching Assistant, "Elementary Hebrew" (Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012)

HONORS AND AWARDS

2012-2017 Chancellor's Fellow, Chancellor's Office, UC Santa Barbara
2017 Dean's Prize Teaching Fellowship, UC Santa Barbara
2014 Keith Aldrich Memorial Award, Department of Classics, UC Santa Barbara
2012 Senior Scholarship Award, Wheaton College (IL)
2012 Gerald F. and Jane E. Hawthorne Endowed Scholarship in Greek Studies, Wheaton College (IL)
2010 C. Hassell Bullock Award for Outstanding First-Year Hebrew Students, Wheaton College (IL)

ABSTRACT

Desire and Self-Construction in Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1:

Reading Tibullus with Lacan

by

Nicole Elizabeth Taynton

In this dissertation, I propose that a Lacanian psychoanalytic approach to the speaking subject of the lover-poet in Tibullus’ *Elegies* can deepen our understanding of Tibullus’ poetry, particularly with respect to his fantasy of the countryside and his relationships with Delia and Marathus. I suggest that Lacanian psychoanalytic theory provides us with a framework through which we can articulate the complex and multi-layered process of self-reflection and self-construction in Tibullus’ *Elegies* Book 1.

In chapter 1, I look closely at the lover-poet’s country fantasy in poems 1.1, 1.10, and 2.1. In his fantasy of rustic happiness, we see the lover-poet’s longing for a sense of wholeness and sufficiency, which he repeatedly describes as “having enough.” Yet in each iteration of his dream, Amor disrupts the lover-poet’s ideal, bringing with it the threat of dissatisfaction, excess, and even violence. I propose that the theory of Amor which we find in the lover-poet’s country fantasy invites a Lacanian interpretation of Tibullus’ poems.

Chapter 2 suggests that the structure of desire in the lover-poet’s country fantasy parallels the structure of desire in his relationship with Delia. The lover-poet’s relationship with Delia thus fits into a broader investigation of the desiring subject in *Elegies* Book 1. Lacan’s concept of *objet a* provides a way to account for the ambiguity of what the lover-poet *really* wants in both of these fantasies and why he never seems to be able to attain it.

Chapter 3 expands my exploration of the lover-poet's relationship with Delia to include his representation of Delia herself. First, I explain the sense of absence and uncertainty that surrounds the lover-poet's representation of Delia's desire in poem 1.2, putting forth Lacan's account of Woman's desire as a way to interpret these ambiguities. Second, I show how Lacan's framework provides a way to understand the lover-poet's excessive idealization of Delia in poem 1.3 as a series of fantasies around *objet a.*

In chapter 4, I shift my focus to the lover-poet's self-portrayal in his relationship with Delia. The Tibullan lover-poet casts himself in a series of enigmatic positions, such as the *ianitor* (1.1) and the poor attendant (1.5), where he is trapped by restrictions which simultaneously enable and prevent his access to the object of his desire. The lover-poet only ever envisions having a sense of fulfillment from his relationship to Delia when he imagines himself dying or already dead. I suggest that the lover-poet's self-positioning in each of these scenes reflects the plight of the subject in Lacanian theory.

Finally, in chapter 5, I consider the lover-poet's representation of his relationship with the boy, Marathus, in poem 1.8. The lover-poet's representation of the boy first as a *puella*-figure and then as an *amator* reveals the crisis of categories that emerges when he tries to articulate the boy's place in his poetic world. I offer Lacan's concept of Imaginary object relations to explain why the lover-poet represents Marathus in such a paradoxical manner and why he reacts as he does to his encounter with the boy in poem 1.8.

To conclude the dissertation, I present some ways that reading Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1 through a Lacanian lens enriches our understanding of Tibullus' poetry and its relationship to the work of the other elegists.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ... 1

1. Tibullus' Fantasy of the Countryside ... 12

2. A Parallel Fantasy: "To Be With" Delia ... 87

3. Constructing Delia ... 115

4. The Fate of the Subject: The Tibullan Lover-Poet ... 149

5. A Crisis of Self-Construction: (Mis)Recognizing Marathus ... 189

Conclusion ... 229

Bibliography ... 238

Introduction

In recent decades, the work of several scholars has entirely reshaped our approach to Roman elegy. These scholars have considerably expanded our understanding of the roles of the *puellae* in elegy,[1] and they have also begun to incorporate the roles of patrons and friends into a broader understanding of elegiac poetry.[2] But in the midst of all of this productivity, scholars have devoted far fewer articles and book chapters to the poetry of Tibullus than to the poetry of Propertius and Ovid.[3] This tendency to leave Tibullus on the sidelines suggests that recent approaches have not always been as useful for explaining Tibullus' relationships with his beloveds (two *puellae* and a *puer*) or his patron, Messalla. It invites further work on these figures and on Tibullus' poetry in general.

This dissertation is influenced by the growing trend to "read Tibullus first" when we consider elegy as a genre.[4] While acknowledging that such a method will be based on logical priority rather than literal priority (most of us actually did read Propertius or Ovid first) and that no text can ever be read in true isolation (to suggest that we can read Tibullus without the influence of our knowledge of the other elegists would be foolish), we can "read Tibullus first" by exploring what he is doing in his poetry before we connect it with what the other elegists are doing.

---

[1] See for example Greene (1998), Wyke (2002), James (2003) and Keith (2008).

[2] See for example Johnson (1990), Oliensis (1997), Sharrock (2000) and Bowditch (2011).

[3] There are, of course, exceptions to this trend, which I will discuss later in this introduction.

[4] Miller (2012) 53-55, 67.

We often characterize elegy as a genre in terms of Propertius' and Ovid's poetry, so that Tibullus seems to be an exception to many of the supposed norms of the genre.[5] For example, Propertius and Ovid center their poetry on one beloved, as opposed to Tibullus' three. They focus on relationships with *puellae,* while Tibullus includes a relationship with a *puer*. They tend to focus the events of their poems on the city, as opposed to Tibullus' emphasis on the countryside. But portraying Tibullus's elegies as unusual departs from the way that his poetry was received in antiquity. [6] Tibullus was one of the earliest elegists[7] and one of the most widely appreciated among the educated men of his time. The ancient evidence for the reception of Tibullus' poems suggests that understanding the dynamics of Tibullus' poetry and its representation of the elite, male subject in Rome at this time may give us important insights into his original audience and the socio-cultural context out of which it arose. The places where Tibullan elegy fails to fit nicely with our constructions of the genre of elegy may be places where we are overlooking how Tibullus is creating a distinctive elegiac project, with its own commentary on the experience of aristocratic, Roman men during the rise of the Augustan principate.

[5] Gibson (2008) 159-173 provides one such example of attempting to define the genre of elegy while constantly having to make exception for Tibullus' poetry.

[6] See Quintillian *Institutio* 10.1.93 and the anonymous *Vita Tibulli*.

[7] Most scholars agree that Tibullus Book 1 was published in 27 or 26 BCE. Scholars who take this interpretation consider Messalla's triumph over Aquitania on September 25, 27 BCE according to the Fasti Triumphales Captitolini (and described in Tib. 1.7.3-8) to be the *terminus post quem* of Book 1. See Murgatroyd (1980) 11f, Lyne (1998) 521f., and Maltby (2002) 40. Knox (2005) offers a slightly earlier date, in late 29 BCE, but Nikoloutsos (2011) 45 n.2 argues persuasively against this suggestion.

Review of the Literature

Before presenting my own project, I want to explore the work that scholars have previously done on Roman elegy and explain how my dissertation interacts with their research. I will focus especially on the importance that each scholar's work has for the interpretation of Tibullus' poetry and the contributions that they make to our understanding of the *Elegies*.

Recent studies of elegy have broadened our understanding of the genre in general in ways that are often directly applicable to Tibullus' poetry. For example, Maria Wyke dramatically shifted the study of Propertius and Ovid's poetry with her compelling arguments for interpreting the elegiac *puella* as a metaphor for elegiac poetry itself.[8] Scholars like Konstantinos Nikoloutsos have in turn brought many of her insights to bear on the erotic relationships in Tibullus' poems, especially Tibullus' relationship with Marathus.[9] Ellen Greene's work on domination and violence in elegy is also widely applicable in Tibullus' descriptions of erotic relationships, which frequently feature disturbing threats of aggression reminiscent of those in Propertius or Ovid's poems (cf. 1.5, 1.6, 1.10).[10] Sharon James' work on the relationship between New Comedy and elegy makes clear the ways that the role of the elegiac *puella* in all of the elegists' works reflects the language and behaviors of the courtesans of New Comedy.[11] Alison Keith and Lowell Bowditch have brought out

---

[8] Wyke (2002).

[9] Nikoloutsos (2007) and (2011).

[10] Greene (1998).

[11] James (2003).

the importance of exchange and luxury in Propertius' poems,[12] which can also illuminate the discourse on wealth and excess that Tibullus juxtaposes with his ideal of country simplicity (cf. 1.1, 1.10, and 2.1). Each of these studies of elegy in general has something unique to offer to our approach to Tibullus in particular, and I draw on each of them for my own readings.

Recent studies focusing on Tibullus' poetry have shed new light on several of the distinctive aspects of his work. Lowell Bowditch's intricate reading of Tibullus 1.7 shows us the complex ways that Tibullus uses elegiac poetry to explore the Roman encounter with the other in terms of gender, religion, and culture through his use of the figure of Osiris.[13] Megan Drinkwater and Konstantinos Nikoloutsos remind us about the importance of incorporating the *puer* as a beloved into our understanding of Tibullus' corpus with their work on the Marathus poems.[14] Ruth Caston discusses Tibullus in her study of jealousy as a driving force of elegy, furthering our understanding of the emotional dynamics of the poems, and Hunter Gardner includes Tibullus' poems in her account of gendering time in elegy, adding another dimension to the role that gender plays in shaping the elegiac world.[15] Each of these studies points to the many possibilities available for interpreting Tibullus' corpus.

Although most of the book-length studies on Tibullus are now over twenty or thirty years old, they lay a helpful groundwork for further interpretations of Tibullus' poetry. Francis Cairns presents a detailed study of Tibullus' debt to Hellenistic poetry, carefully

[12] Keith (2008) and Bowditch (2006).

[13] Bowditch (2011).

[14] Drinkwater (2012) and (2013) and Nikoloutsos (2007) and (2011).

[15] Caston (2012) and Gardner (2013).

unpacking the nuances of Tibullus' Hellenistic style.[16] Robert Ball elaborates further on textual and stylistic questions.[17] Brenda Fineberg takes a theoretical approach to Tibullus' poems, using psychoanalytic theory to articulate the complexities of Tibullus' poetic style and its relationship to the poems' meaning.[18] Her work on anaphora in Tibullus is especially important for my arguments in chapter 1 of this dissertation. David Bright explores the implications of reading Tibullus' many relationships as *exempla,* which each shed light on the others.[19] His compelling links between many of the characters and events in Tibullus' poems serve as a starting point for several of my own arguments.

Parshia Lee-Stecum has written the most recent book devoted especially to Tibullus' poems.[20] He uses the concept of power as a unifying principle to integrate his reading of Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1. Lee-Stecum argues that focusing on individual relationships in Tibullus' poetry, or even on erotic relationships in general, runs the risk of neglecting significant aspects of his work. He suggests that emphasizing power dynamics provides a productive alternative. He proposes that "…the prominence of themes and spheres other than *amor* throughout the elegies suggest[s] that the focus of the collection may lie in the operation of these power structures and processes generally rather than simply in *amor, rura,* or any other single sphere or theme."[21] Although we differ in our approach to integrating the

---

[16] Cairns (1979).

[17] Ball (1983).

[18] Fineberg (1991).

[19] Bright (1978).

[20] Lee-Stecum (1998).

[21] Lee-Stecum (1998) 266.

many strands of Tibullus' thought, Lee-Stecum shows us the importance of finding a structuring principle that allows us to read Book 1 as a whole.

Throughout his book, Lee-Stecum interprets the varied relationships of Tibullus' corpus (with Messalla, Delia, Marathus, the gods, etc.) in terms of power relations. Unfortunately, the difficulty of reducing all of these relationships to analogous sets of power dynamics eventually leads to some troubling incoherence. For example, Lee-Stecum sees analogous power relationships between masters and slaves, lovers and beloveds, and authors and readers in Tibullus' poetry, without acknowledging the equivocation that allows the term "power" to link them to each other.[22] In order to create a comprehensive reading of Book 1, Lee-Stecum sometimes stretches the concept of power to a point which undermines its usefulness as a unifying principle for reading Book 1. This breakdown in meaning, however, sheds light on the multi-layered complexity of Tibullus' text. Lee-Stecum's work shows us just how strained signifiers become when we read Tibullus' poetry, both the signifiers that make up the text itself and the signifiers that readers use to try to make sense of the text. By considering the difficulties that Lee-Stecum encounters, we can reframe the questions we ask of Tibullus' text. From such a perspective, it seems especially productive to ask whether we can find a way to allow these multiplicities to coexist without falling into incoherence.

Reading Elegy with Lacan

There is one major approach to elegiac poetry that I have left aside until now, precisely because it uses a different strategy to account for the many layers of meaning in first-person Latin poetry. Several scholars have turned to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory as

a way to structure their interpretations of these poems. By using this approach, these scholars have taken the unifying force off of any particular signifier or set of signifiers and have shifted it onto the subject who speaks the poems. For example, in her work on Catullus and Propertius, Micaela Janan often observes that sometimes the only sense of unity in a poet's collection comes from the sense of a speaking subject who stands behind each of his poems.[23] Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, with its emphasis on the concept of an inherently split subject and on the importance of language in shaping subjectivity, provides a theory of subjectivity that can articulate the relationship between the text's many disparate meanings and the speaking self that appears in first-person Latin poetry. Janan, along with scholars such as Fineberg and Miller, have shown how the concepts of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory can accommodate the contradictory and paradoxical aspects of these poems and still provide a framework through which we can make meaning.[24]

Paul Allen Miller provides the most recent example of using psychoanalytic theory to interpret Tibullus' poetry, and his work is especially influential for my own reading of Tibullus. In his lengthy chapter, "The Tibullan Dream Text," Miller explains several instances where a psychoanalytic framework is especially effective for parsing the many layers of meaning in Tibullus' poems.[25] For example, he spends considerable time unpacking the lover-poet's shifting and seemingly inconsistent accounts of wealth, poverty,

---

[22] Lee-Stecum (1998) 286-309.

[23] Janan (1994) ix-xi and (2001) 3-4.

[24] Fineberg (1991) and Miller (2004).

[25] This chapter was initially published as an article by the same name, Miller (1999), and then later revised and republished in Miller (2004). For a critique of Miller's approach, see Wray (2003). For a response to Wray's critique, see Miller (2004) 109 n.19 and Oliensis (2009).

military service, and farming throughout his poems, using Freud's idea of the dream text to hold the many disparate pieces together.[26] Miller also explains the complex role of Messalla in Tibullus' poetry with respect to the role of the Name-of-the-Father, the Law, and the Symbolic register in Lacanian theory.[27] Although his arguments make up just one chapter of his book on Roman elegy, they suggest the powerful interpretive potential of a Lacanian approach to Tibullus' poems.

Reading Tibullus with Lacan

In this dissertation I show how a Lacanian psychoanalytic approach to the speaking subject of the lover-poet in Tibullus can deepen our understanding of Tibullus' poetry, specifically with respect to his fantasy of the countryside and his relationships with Delia and Marathus. While Miller fits his discussion of Tibullus into a broader argument about the development of the genre of elegy in the Augustan period, I want to focus solely on Tibullus, unpacking the dynamics of his poetry and the ways in which the lover-poet constructs his sense of self. Miller begins the process of exploring the Tibullan lover-poet's self-representation with a Lacanian approach, but he does not develop a comprehensive reading of the lover-poet's relationships with such prominent figures as Delia and Marathus. Many questions raised by Miller's study become central concerns in the chapters that follow.

Like Miller, I suggest that the Tibullan lover-poet represents himself as a subject who is repeatedly reconstructing his sense of self through his poems. In their poetry, the elegists play with the possibilities of Roman social and cultural categories, constructing images of themselves and their girlfriends that often conflict with traditional Roman expectations for

[26] Miller (2004) 98-117.

[27] Miller (2004) 117-128. cf. Ch. 4 pgs. 154-158.

aristocratic men. Effeminate *amatores*, emasculating *puellae*, and slaves of love are commonplace in a genre where the elegists rewrite the Roman world in terms that tease out the tensions and contradictions that crop up in their processes of self-(re)construction. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory provides us with a framework within which to understand how complex and multi-layered the process of self-reflection and self-construction becomes in elegiac poetry. [28] I use a Lacanian psychoanalytic framework to weave Tibullus' poems together and to incorporate his fantasies about the countryside and his beloveds into a more comprehensive understanding of the Tibullan lover-poet and his poetic world.

In chapter 1, I explore the lover-poet's country fantasy as it appears in poems 1.1, 1.10, and 2.1. By beginning with the frame within which the Tibullan lover-poet casts the events of Book 1, we can create a structure within which to understand his account of his relationships with the main characters of the poems. Unpacking the lover-poet's country fantasy reveals the lover-poet's longing for a sense of wholeness and sufficiency, which he repeatedly describes as "having enough." Yet Amor disrupts the lover-poet's ideal in each iteration of his rustic dream, bringing the threat of dissatisfaction, excess, and even violence. Tibullus' country fantasy presents a theory of Amor that points us toward a Lacanian interpretation of Tibullus' poems. It suggests that the subject's experience of desire is the guiding concern of Tibullus' poetic project.

Chapter 2 connects the lover-poet's ideal of happiness in the countryside with his dream of being with his girlfriend, Delia. By showing how these two fantasies run parallel to one another, I fit the lover-poet's relationship with Delia into his investigation of the desiring subject more generally. I explain how the combination of these two fantasies

[28] Miller (2004) 29-30 and Janan (2001) 9, 164-167.

culminates in the lover-poet's ideal of rustic bliss with Delia in poem 1.5. Finally, I introduce Lacan's concept of *objet a* as a way of accounting for the uncertainty and inconsistency that plagues the lover-poet as he attempts to articulate what he *really* wants in both his country fantasy and his relationship with Delia.

Chapter 3 expands my exploration of the lover-poet's relationship with Delia to include the representation of Delia herself, exploring the absence and ambiguity that surrounds the lover-poet's (lack of) representation of his beloved in his poems. I suggest that his portrayal of Delia invites us to bring in Lacan's work on Woman's desire to explain her absence. A Lacanian reading also allows us to explain the lover-poet's excessive idealization of Delia in poem 1.3 as a series of fantasies around *objet a.*

In chapter 4, I shift my focus to the lover-poet's self-portrayal with respect to Delia. I suggest that the Tibullan lover-poet casts himself in a series of enigmatic positions, where he repeatedly imagines himself trapped within a set of restrictions in order to gain any access, however limited, to the object of his desire. The only times he imagines having a sense of fulfillment from his relationship to Delia, he is dying or already dead. The lover-poet sets up his position as one that constrasts directly with Messalla, who stands immune to the limitations that entrap the subject. To further elucidate these narratives, I show how the lover-poet's position in these scenes reflects the plight of the subject in Lacanian theory.

Finally in chapter 5, I explore the lover-poet's representation of his relationship with the beloved boy, Marathus, in poem 1.8. I suggest that the lover-poet's choice to represent the boy first as a *puella*-figure and then as an *amator* reveals the crisis of categories that thwarts his attempts to explain the boy's place in his poetic world. In addition, I show how the boy's complex gender and status identity reflects the predicament in which the lover-poet finds himself with respect to his own paradoxical self-construction as an effeminate man and

a slave of love. Using Lacan's concept of Imaginary object relations, I explain why the lover-poet represents Marathus in this paradoxical manner and offer an explanation of the lover-poet's reactions to the boy's behavior in poem 1.8.

To conclude the dissertation, I suggest some ways that reading Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1 through a Lacanian lens enriches our understanding of Tibullus' poetry itself and its relationship to the work of the other elegists. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory provides a framework through which we can integrate the many disparate aspects of Tibullus' poetry. By using this approach to read Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1 as a whole, we can situate Tibullus' project within the broader context of the genre of Roman love elegy.

Chapter 1

Tibullus' Fantasy of the Countryside

Propertius, Ovid, and Tibullus each begin their elegiac collections in a distinctive way. Propertius highlights his emphasis on his *puella* with his famous opening words, *Cynthia prima*… (1.1.1). Ovid points to his interest in genre with a literary joke about his "failed" attempt to write an epic poem (*Arma gravi numero*... 1.1.1-2). Tibullus, in contrast, begins his first book of poems with a lengthy reflection on the virtues of a farmer's life. Characters such as Delia and Messalla, who play prominent roles in many other poems in Book 1, do not even appear until more than halfway through the poem. This emphasis on the lover-poet's country fantasy suggests its importance for framing Tibullus' corpus as a whole. I want to begin by unpacking the lover-poet's fantasy of happiness in the countryside, tracing it from poem 1.1 to poem 1.10, and then revisiting it again in poem 2.1. In doing so, we will catch our first glimpses of Amor and the role that desire plays in Tibullus' poetic world. By exploring the lover-poet's country fantasy and its relationship to Amor first, we can build a framework within which to situate the lover-poet's relationships with his beloveds and his patron in the chapters that follow.

All scholars of Tibullus recognize the importance of his country fantasy, even if some focus on it more than others.[1] I find the country fantasy central to understanding Tibullus' poetry, so I devote this first chapter to my reading of it. I argue that the importance

[1] For arguments that focus on the importance of the country fantasy in Tibullus, see Littlewood (1970) 668-669, Gaisser (1983), and Boyd (1984).

of Tibullus' fantasy of the countryside makes his poetry a particularly incisive exploration of human desire, precisely because it decenters the characters of his elegies and allows the dynamics of desire to come to the forefront. Through his fantasy of the countryside the Tibullan lover-poet sets up his view of the role of desire in the life of the subject, and the many ways that desire can disrupt the subject's sense of happiness and security. I trace the core elements of his rustic fantasy, such as *paupertas*, *felicitas,* and *securitas*—poverty, happiness, and freedom from anxiety—and show how they develop over the course of the poems. I also explain how Amor, the personification of desire, disrupts each iteration of the lover-poet's fantasy. Finally, I argue that the lover-poet links this country fantasy and the disruptive forces of Amor to the nature of elegiac poetry itself. The lover-poet's country fantasy lays a foundation for our understanding of the lover-poet's account of desire and provides a context within which to understand his relationships with the characters that we meet throughout the elegies.

In this chapter, I show how Tibullus' theory of Amor, far broader than any particular *amator*-beloved relationship, invites a Lacanian psychoanalytic reading of his poetry. Tibullus, like Lacan, is interested in the role of desire as it manifests itself in every aspect of life. The lover-poet's country fantasies portray the lover-poet as a subject in constant pursuit of an ever-elusive sense of wholeness, regardless of his particular circumstances. Tibullus' poetry is a repeated reflection on the role of desire in human experience, whether the object of that desire is profit or prestige, a woman or a boy, a sense of happiness or a sense of peace. For this reason, I incorporate Lacanian psychanalytic theory into my analysis of the text. Lacanian theory provides a theory of subjectivity based on just such an elusive yet insatiable kind of desire and provides a framework within which to understand the complex and often paradoxical dynamics of the lover-poet's fantasies of happiness in the countryside.

What is "Enough"?: Poem 1.1

As I mentioned above, the first poem of Tibullus' collection already brings the lover-poet's country fantasy to the forefront.[2] But instead of launching immediately into his visions of rustic happiness, the lover-poet initially opens the elegy with the contrasting image of a greedy soldier, saying:

> Divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro
>   et teneat culti iugera multa soli,
> quem labor assiduus vicino terreat hoste,
>   Martia cui somnos classica pulsa fugent: (1.1.1-4)
>
> Let another heap up wealth made of tawny gold for himself
>   and let him hold many acres of cultivated land,
> the one whom incessant toil terrifies with the enemy nearby,
>   the one for whom Mars' trumpets, when they are sounded, cause sleep to flee.

These opening lines set up an opposition between the lover-poet and "another man," who is defined by his acquisition of wealth and his participation in the army.[3] The figure of the *alius* appears in many guises throughout the poems, but in this case he allows the lover-poet to contrast the life of the soldier with the life of the farmer[4] and provides a transition to the

[2] Because this poem is so distinctive and programmatic for Tibullus' corpus, more has been written about it than any other poem in the collection. As a result, I frequently draw on arguments made by others in my own reading of this poem, especially Lee-Stecum (1998) 27-71 and Miller (1999). I draw on arguments previously made by others amidst my own points about this poem, not only because of the way they have informed my reading of poem 1.1, but especially because of the foundation they lay for the broader arguments I have to make about poems 1.10 and 2.1. The strands of thought that I introduce in this section will return in new ways in my discussions of poems 1.10 and 2.1, as the lover-poet's fantasy of the countryside unfolds throughout the corpus.

[3] A rejection of the pursuit of wealth through military service also appears in Virg. *Georg*. 2.505-7 cf. Murgatroyd (1980) 49 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.1-2. Kennedy (1993) 13-15 suggests that the life of the *alius* is far closer to the "real" life of the lover-poet than he would have us believe, and Putnam (1973) 50 and (2005) 125 goes so far as to suggest that the *alius* may be the lover-poet himself.

[4] For more on this contrast in Tibullus, see esp. Gaisser (1983) and Miller (1999). Gaisser (1983) 62-63 argues for both the material and moral distinction between *militia* and

lover-poet's fantasy of happiness in the countryside. Unlike the hard-working and high-earning *alius*, the lover-poet dreams of a life of laziness by his own hearth, planting vineyards and orchards with his own hands as a humble farmer:[5]

> me mea paupertas vita traducat inerti
> dum meus assiduo luceat igne focus.
> ipse seram teneras maturo tempore vites
> rusticus et facili grandia poma manu,
> nec Spes destituat, sed frugum semper acervos
> praebeat et pleno pinguia musta lacu: (1.1.5-10)
>
> May my poverty lead me in a lazy life,
> provided that my hearth shines with a continual fire.
> May I myself, as a farmer, plant tender vines at the right time,
> and large fruit trees with an easy hand.
> May Hope not fail, but may she always provide piles of produce
> and rich must in a full vat.

Although the lover-poet initially sets up a contrast between his fantasy world and the *alius'* pursuit of wealth, the *paupertas* that the lover-poet describes does not seem quite as humble or poor as his opening implies.[6] It seems that the *paupertas* of the lover-poet is not

---

rura in this passage, while Miller (1999) 191-198 articulates the breakdown of this proposed distinction throughout poem 1.1 and Book 1 as a whole.

[5] For other ancient Greek and Roman examples of the theme of rejecting riches in favor of an idealized life of poverty, see Murgatroyd (1980) 49 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.1-2. Lee (1990) xviii emphasizes the realistic aspects of the Tibullus' countryside, which has many similarities to his home region of Pedana in Latium east of Rome.

[6] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.5-6 comments that *paupertas* "means not 'want' or 'poverty' but 'modest means." Putnam (2005) 126 agrees that "[the lover-poet's] vaunted *paupertas*, by no means implies destitution." For the convention of the poet's *paupertas* in Hellenistic and Augustan verse more generally, cf. Hor. *Od.* 2.18.1-14; Prop. 1.8, 1.14, 3.2.11-16, 3.5.1-6; Ov. *Am.* 1.3.9-10, 1.8, 1.10, 2.17.27-28, 3.8, *Ars* 3.531ff. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.1-2 argues that Tibullus could not have been poor himself, citing Horace's words to "Albius" in *Epistle* 1.4.7, *di tibi divitias dederunt*. The *Vita* refers to Tibullus as an *eques Romanus,* with the social and economic opportunities that that rank implies. For this reason, Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.1.5 jokes that Tibullus' poverty was relative, since an *eques Romanus* who calls himself poor is not exactly on the bread line." Putnam (1973) 1 notes that Gallus, Propertius, and Ovid were also *equites*, see Taylor (1968) 469-86, esp. 479-80.

defined by lack so much as by sufficiency. Although he contrasts his *paupertas* with the excess of the *alius*, experiences of deprivation are conspicuously absent from his life of so-called poverty. His rustic fantasy includes a hearth constantly burning (6),[7] tender vines and tall fruit trees (7-8), piles of produce (9), and vats of wine (10).[8] He makes no mention of experiencing hunger or thirst. The lover-poet even has enough flowers and fruit to make offerings to the many rural gods he worships without depriving himself (11-22). His vision of the countryside centers around a sense of sufficiency and even abundance.

Before I continue I should clarify several terms which I use in describing Tibullus' rustic fantasy which often overlap in English. In my arguments here, I use the term "lack" when the lover-poet seems to be without something and the word "loss" when he seems no longer to have something in the present which he had in the past. I include the word "sufficiency" when the lover-poet emphasizes his sense of having enough but does not imply that he has more than he needs. When the lover-poet suggests that he has more than what is sufficient, I use the word "abundance." In this chapter the word "abundance" refers almost exclusively to the overflowing fertility of the countryside, which the lover-poet explicitly contrasts with "wealth" (*divitiae,* 1). For the lover-poet, "wealth" (*divitiae* 1, *dites* 78) denotes excess, or having too much. Although the lover-poet's descriptions of rural abundance suggest that he has more than what he needs, he consistently differentiates that

[7] The fire is associated with rustic *paupertas* at Virg. *Ecl.* 7.49-52, Ov. *Fasti* 4.510, and Pers. 1.72. To be without a fire was a sign of total poverty, see Cat. 23.2 and Mart. 11.32.

[8] The descriptions of stored-up abundance in lines 7-10 are characteristic of descriptions of prosperous farmers. cf. Horace's story of the wise ant at *Sat.* 1.1.33-5, as well as Virg. *Georg.* 2.4-6, Prop. 3.17.17, and *Anth. Lat.* 117.20. Putnam (2005) 135 suggests that the rustic dream of poem 1.1 is a combination of aspects of the legendary reigns of Saturn and Jupiter, where *labor* (a hallmark of the Age of Jove) is a necessary requirement for survival, but productivity (a hallmark of the Age of Saturn) always follows as its reward.

abundance from the wealth he criticizes. Throughout this chapter I will show how the lover-poet rejects "wealth" as excessive and associates abundance and sufficiency (*satis*, 43) with his idyllic country world.

Tibullus is not the only ancient Roman writer to represent *paupertas* as a state of sufficiency rather than scarcity.[9] Livy describes *paupertas* as a traditional Roman virtue in contrast to the *avaritia* and *luxuria* of his own time, so that *paupertas* emerges as a positive quality rather than a curse of circumstance.[10] Seneca the Younger argues specifically that *paupertas* is not defined as "lacking much" but as "having little."[11] Martial even makes a joke out of a man who tries to claim that he is *pauper* when he has nothing at all.[12] Pomponius Porphyio, in his commentary on Horace *Epistles*, defines *paupertas* in a similar way, saying, *paupertas etiam honestae parsimoniae nomen est, et usurpatur in fortuna mediocri*: "*paupertas* is the name given to honorable frugality, and is used of average circumstances."[13] The evidence of these sources leads Maltby to claim that *paupertas* often refers to "modest means rather than poverty" and Nisbet and Hubbard to admit that *paupertas* "often suggests a modest competence rather than total indigence."[14] These

---

[9] I have chosen here to focus on the practical meanings of *paupertas,* rather than its moral connotations, because Tibullus himself most frequently describes the rustic life in terms of the possessions that he has on his farm. For the moral connotations of *paupertas*, see Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.5-6, Lee-Stecum (1998) 27-38, and Miller (1999) 191-198.

[10] See Liv. *Praef.* 11 and Cato's speech at Liv. 34.4.2-13.

[11] See Sen. *Epist.* 87.39-40: *ego non video quid aliud sit paupertas quam parvi possessio.*

[12] See Mart. 11.32.8: *non est paupertas, Nestor, habere nihil*.

[13] Pomponius Porphyrio *ad loc.* Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.199.

[14] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.5. cf. Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) *ad loc.* Hor. *Od.* 1.12.43.

descriptions correspond to the image of *paupertas* presented by the lover-poet in Tibullus. For the Tibullan lover-poet, the dream of a life of *paupertas* is a vision of a life between excess and lack, an image of sufficiency and abundance, a fantasy of a world where the lover-poet has precisely enough.[15]

The lover-poet's fantasy of abundance in the countryside is inseparable from the ongoing presence of the country gods who provide that prosperity.[16] Several scholars emphasize how the lover-poet constantly points to *Spes* and to the rural gods as the source of his ideal *paupertas*, and how the presence of the gods themselves is a crucial part of his fantasy life.[17] Although he mentions a variety of rural gods on his family estate, the first goddess he mentions is *Spes*, "Hope."[18] "May Hope not fail," he pleads, explicitly describing Hope as the one who "provides the piles of produce" and "rich must" (9-10). He expresses his belief that Hope can provide the abundance he seeks and that Hope can make his fantasy of sufficiency possible.[19]

---

[15] Putnam (2005) 127 suggests something quite similar when he calls the fantasy of the lover-poet inside by the fire in 1.1.47-48 "an existence poised between luxury and want." This emphasis on a mean between having too much and having too little is reminiscent of Horace's reflections at *Sat*. 1.1.106-7 and *Epod.* 1.31-4 and 2.

[16] For the countryside as the home of piety, cf. Virg. *Georg.* 2.471-3.

[17] Lee-Stecum (1998) 35-36 and Boyd (1984) 274. Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.11-44 uses this link between *paupertas* and religious practice as evidence of a contrast between the morality of Tibullus' way of life and the immorality (greed) of the soldier's military pursuits.

[18] Hope is explicitly referred to as *deam* later in Tibullus at 2.6.27. The Romans worshipped *Spes* in the *Forum holitorium,* the vegetable market at the Campus Martius, see Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.9-10 and Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.1.9-10. Other gods on the lover-poet's estate include the Lares, Ceres, Priapus, and probably Silvanus.

[19] Although I am emphasizing the positive aspect of the lover-poet's hopefulness in these lines, Lee-Stecum (1998) 36 rightly points out that the mention of Hope and the use of the subjunctive mood is "doubly indefinite," allowing the reader to doubt the lover-poet's confidence that his wishes will be realized from the beginning.

As the poem progresses, however, the memory of a time of even greater prosperity interrupts the lover-poet's rustic daydreams. In lines 19-20, the lover-poet admits that the fantasy world that he has been imagining is only a shadow of the estate his family enjoyed before:[20]

> vos quoque, felicis quondam, nunc pauperis agri
> custodes, fertis munera vestra, Lares;
> tunc vitula innumeros lustrabat caesa iuvencos,
> nunc agna exigui est hostia parva soli: (1.1.19-22)
>
> You also, guardians of a once prosperous, now modest farm,
> accept your gifts, Lares;
> At that time a slaughtered calf consecrated countless cattle,
> now a small lamb is the sacrifice for a narrow plot of soil.

He suggests that the *paupertas* of his current fantasy pales in comparison to the prosperity that his family experienced in the past.[21] The lover-poet starkly contrasts "then" and "now," the *innumeros iuvencos* of the former estate with the *exiguus solus* of the current farm (21-22).

[20] Scholars have debated whether or not these lines refer to Octavian's land confiscations after Phillipi in 41-40 BCE, since both Horace and Propertius make the confiscations the subject of several poems. Although the Tibullan lover-poet here echoes the language of the character Meliboeus whose land was confiscated in Virg. *Ecl.* 1.74, there is no conclusive evidence that he is referring either to the confiscations of 41-40 BCE or to the later confiscations of 36 or 31 BCE. See esp. Maltby (2002) 40 and *ad loc.* 1.1.19, as well as Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.1.19-20 and Murgatroyd (1980) 7. Ullman (1912) esp. 160-61 suggests that Tibullus may have been the victim of a spendthrift father, identifying the "Albius" who collected extravagant bronzes in Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.28 as Tibullus' father, but there is no other evidence for that reading.

[21] Lee-Stecum (1998) 37 wonders whether this couplet is evidence that the lover-poet's offerings to the gods now fail to lead to the prosperity he has prayed for in the past, adding even more doubt to the lover-poet's rustic dream. Of course, these lines could also be read as a joke about the choice of elegy over epic, with the enormous farm representing the grandiose genre of epic and the minimalism of the present farm representing elegy. cf. Cairns (1979) 19-21.

The description of the "once prosperous" farm paints this greater prosperity in especially favorable terms, even as he hints that this former estate possesses the very excess wealth that he condemned in the case of the *alius* (1-4). He describes the past estate as *felix*, which elsewhere denotes the ideal sense of happiness that the lover-poet seeks in his fantasies.[22] He avoids the term *dives*, which would link the estate with the soldier's riches in the opening lines of the poem (1-4). Although the *iuvencos* are called *innumeros*, the sense of limitlessness bounty fits more with the fantasy of the Golden Age than the negative notion of excessive wealth.[23] This positive reading is reinforced by the description of the cattle as consecrated to the gods (21). In spite of the lover-poet's optimistic description, however, the obviously large quantity of the estate's possessions hints that the farm's holdings are strikingly similar to those of an excessively wealthy estate. In light of the lover-poet's earlier criticism of wealth, this similarity undermines the lover-poet's idealization of the past, hinting that that it may not have been the perfect paradise he implies. Alternatively, this similarity also hints that great wealth is not as distasteful to the lover-poet as he initially claimed. Regardless of these possible undertones, for the moment the lover-poet insists on a notably positive account of his family's past prosperity.

These lines (19-22) include the first hint that the lover-poet's fantasies are multi-layered, containing many distinct but interrelated visions of wished-for happiness, which each have their own complications. The dream of a leisurely country life is just one of several layers in the lover-poet's dream world. In the case of poem 1.1, the lover-poet dreams not only of a present life defined by sufficiency. He also imagines a world of far

[22] See Tib. 1.5.18-19, 2.1.80, 2.3.29, 2.5.82

[23] See Tib. 1.3.35-46 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.41-42 and 45-46.

greater abundance that was lost in the past, even if that idealized past may only be an illusion.[24] But the mention of this additional layer of fantasy passes quickly, as the lover-poet presses on with his fantasy of happiness on his family's current estate.

The lover-poet returns to the idea of being content with little,[25] but with a new tinge of doubt that his fantasy of simple rustic prosperity will satisfy him:

> iam modo, iam possim contentus vivere parvo
> nec semper longae deditus esse viae (1.1.25-26)
>
> Only now, now, may I be content to live with little
> and not always be dedicated to a long journey

His return to the subjunctive mood emphasizes the tenuous quality of his hope for a sense of fulfillment.[26] Several commentators note that the repetition of *iam* in line 25 is particularly emotional and persistent,[27] reinforcing the reader's inclination to interpret these lines as a more insistent repetition of the lover-poet's original fantasy. Now that the lover-poet has admitted that the "little" about which he has been dreaming is actually "less" than what he has lost, his wishes for happiness have also shifted from wishes for prosperity to wishes for a

---

[24] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.1.19-20 "Tibullus…is desperately attempting to recreate a dream, to shore up in his imagination the ruins of the past."

[25] The wish to be content with little is a recurring theme in Latin literature, including Cic. *Off.* 1.68, Cic. *Tusc.* 5.89, Lucr. 5.1118-19, Hor. *Od.* 1.31.17-18 and 2.16.13-16, *Sat.* 2.2.1, 110, and 2.6.59-76, and *CLE* 402.1 and 1238.17.

[26] Many scholars have written at length about the use of the subjunctive in Tibullus, see esp. Bright (1978) 130, Kennedy (1993) 13-15, Lee-Stecum (1998) 34-49, Miller (1999) 199-201, and Lee (2008) 196-222.

[27] Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.25 comment on the repetition of *iam* in this couplet. See especially Fineberg (1991) 47-93 on the role of anaphora throughout Tibullus' *Elegies*. Fineberg (1991) 48 suggests that there is "a relationship between the frequent repetitive structures and the equally prevalent sense of frustration of loss and longing that fills these poems," and I tend to agree with her arguments.

feeling of contentment.[28] In lines 19-20 the lover-poet admits that he wishes not only for a simple and prosperous life on his farm, but also for that rustic life to be enough for him.[29] The lover-poet reveals that his dream of rural bliss may have failed before it has even taken shape. Although the poem opened with the lover-poet's rejection of the life of the *alius* in favor of the life of his dreams, he already betrays his fear that those dreams may not satisfy him.

Seemingly undeterred by these underlying doubts, the lover-poet continues to describe a leisurely life spent lying by the riverside and herding sheep and goats (27-32).[30] But the vulnerability of his dream emerges yet again when he prays that thieves and wolves stay away from his flocks:[31]

> at vos exiguo pecori, furesque lupique,
> parcite: de magno est praeda petenda grege. (1.1.33-34)

> But you, thieves and wolves, spare the thin flock:
> you should seek out plunder from a large herd.

[28] Putnam (1973) suggests in his Introduction to poem 1.1 that phrases such as *iam possim contentus, non ego requiro, non ego laudari curo* seem almost apotropaic in this poem, as the lover-poet insists again and again that he only requires modest means to find peace and security. He emphasizes that Tibullus' possible progress in convincing himself of the sufficiency of his current estate is still based largely on hope for the future instead of a description of the present.

[29] Putnam (1973) expresses this sentiment well *ad loc*. 1.1.25-26: "Is the exhortation in *possim* a reflection of positive desire or negative self-control?" Lee-Stecum (1998) 39 states that the syntax of the couplet "suggests both that, in the past, he was not *contentus vivere parvo*, and that, in fact, he finds it difficult to do this."

[30] The *locus amoenus,* or "pleasant place," of relaxation in a natural setting is a familiar motif in Greek and Latin literature, going back as far as Homer *Od.* 5.63-73 and Sappho fr. 192 [Page]. Examples more contemporary with Tib. 1.1.27-32 include Virg. *Ecl.* 10.42-43, *Georg*. 3.331-34, and Hor. *Od.* 1.1.21-22, 2.3.6-12, and *Epod.* 2.23-28.

[31] For thieves and wolves as a common threat to flocks, cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 3.16ff., Virg. *Georg*. 3.406-8, and Hor. *Epod.* 2.60.

In addition to worrying that he will not be content with his modest means, the lover-poet also fears that what little he has may be taken away.[32] The lover-poet continues his pattern of pressing on with his fantasy, however, without acknowledging these implicit concerns. This time, he simply returns to his account of his rustic piety.

The lover-poet brings ritual and worship to the forefront once more, as he describes how he purifies his shepherd each year and makes his humble offerings to Pales (34-36).[33] The mention of the worship of Pales, however, seems to remind the lover-poet of the importance of the gods in this rustic fantasy, and that reminder evokes another moment of anxiety:

> adsitis, divi, neu vos e paupere mensa
> dona nec e puris spernite fictilibus: (1.1.37-38)

> Be here, gods, and don't reject
> gifts from a poor table and from plain earthen pots:

The lover-poet is suddenly struck by the fear that calling upon all of these gods may not result in their presence.[34] Although the lover-poet has already mentioned his gifts to at least six gods, he now worries that they will not accept his offerings.[35] In these lines the lover-

[32] Fineberg (1991) 31 notes that the use of the imperative and the gerundive in this couplet reveals the lover-poet's potential for "jealousy, anger, ambition, and desire" in spite of his insistence before (line 25) and after (line 43) that he can be content with his simple rustic existence. Lee-Stecum (1998) 42 admits that these lines reveal that "this lifestyle is vulnerable."

[33] For the worship of Pales, see Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.35-36.

[34] Lee-Stecum (1998) argues that the lover-poet's request has little hope of success, since the poet is still using the subjunctive mood and the decline of his estate in lines 19-22 suggests that the gods have not been sufficiently helpful in the recent past.

[35] The nature of the offerings and their vessels reinforces this reading, as they should be especially acceptable to the gods given their traditional and ritual value. Lee-Stecum (1998) 44 agrees that lines 39-40 argue for "the superior morality" of the lover-poet's offerings, citing the relationship of these vessels to the self-sufficency and traditional piety of the

poet reveals the possibility that his rural fantasy may be out of reach in yet another way. He has already hinted that he may not be happy with having little, or that he may lose what he has to external threats. Now he acknowledges a more fundamental problem: the gods may refuse to bless him in the first place.

At this point in the poem the lover-poet tries a new strategy. He stops wishing and begins insisting that his fantasy of a simple rustic life will in fact satisfy him:

> non ego divitias patrum fructusque requiro
> quos tulit antiquo condita messis avo:
> parva seges satis est, satis est requiescere lecto
> si licet et solito membra levare toro. (1.1.41-44)
>
> I do not miss[36] the wealth of my fathers and the produce,
> which the harvest stored up by my ancient grandfather provided:
> A small crop is enough, it is enough to rest on a couch—
> if it is permitted—and rest my body on my usual bed.

For the first time, the lover-poet uses the word *satis* to describe his rustic fantasy, and the repetition of the phrase "it is enough" (*satis est*, 43) draws attention to his use of the word. [37] As in line 25, the repetition highlights the lover-poet's urgency.[38] But in light of the anxiety

---

peoples of the past. *Fictilia* are "earthenware vessels," usually associated with rustic piety in the early history of Rome, as implied by the lover-poet himself in 1.1.39-40. Livy 34.4.4 uses the term *fictilis* to describe earthenware statues of the gods. For the moral implications of the term and its relationship to ritual offerings, see Val. Max. 4.4.11, Juv. 3.168-70, 10.25-6, and Plin. *Nat*. 35.158 as well as Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.37-40.

[36] *OLD* s.v. 5.

[37] In light of this use of *satis*, Lee-Stecum (1998) 45 suggests that these lines make a statement of the minimum necessary for the lover-poet's security and comfort, arguing that the lover-poet continues to backtrack from his earlier requests for "plentiful, heaped up produce" to smaller and smaller demands. This interpretation fits nicely with my own, although I am less interested in what the lover-poet claims to want and more interested in the language in which he frames those desires.

[38] See Fineberg (1991) 47-93.

that he has been expressing, the lover-poet's insistence that "it is enough" seems more desperate than reassuring.[39] *Si licet*, "if it is permitted," adds another moment of hesitation that heightens the reader's sense of the lover-poet's uncertainty in these lines. Although the use of the indicative mood should point to a shift from the abstract to the concrete, in this case the indicative expressions seem like a more emphatic form of wish, as if the lover-poet is attempting to speak his wishes into existence.[40]

The lover-poet insists *non ego…requiro,* "I do not miss…" (41), but the many possible meanings of *requiro* allow for several possible readings of his statement. Perhaps the lover-poet is insisting that he does not "miss" his family's former wealth, so that he no longer feels the loss of what was there before.[41] Perhaps he is claiming that he no longer "needs" that former wealth, so that he is content with what he has now.[42] But *non ego…requiro* can also mean that the lover-poet has stopped demanding the wealth of the past, regardless of his needs or wants.[43] The ambiguity of the lover-poet's choice of words betrays just as much as his desperate insistence. Holding the many possible meanings together reveals that the lover-poet is admitting what he keeps trying to deny: he feels a loss and a lack of what he had before, and his fantasy life may not be enough to fill the void.

---

[39] Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 1.1.41-42 "The reiteration of the poet's willingness to accept his present reduced status sounds occasionally like a despairing litany." Gardner (2010) 463 agrees that "the poet protests too much" in these lines.

[40] Maltby echoes this interpretation of the use of moods in this poem in his Introduction to 1.1, see Maltby (2002) 116. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.1.57-58 refers to these indicatives as "indicatives of (assumed) fulfillment," and the frequent subjunctives in the poem as "subjunctives of hope."

[41] *OLD* s.v. 5.

[42] *OLD* s.v. 4.

[43] *OLD* s.v. 2 and 3.

In these lines the lover-poet also changes his representation of his family's former wealth from an image of idealized abundance to one of dangerous excess. He refers to their wealth as *divitias* (41), a word which brings with it with the negative associations of excess that the lover-poet placed on the side of the *alius* in lines 1-4.[44] The use of the term *divitias* (41) reinforces the lover-poet's rejection of a past he formerly idealized (19-22). By representing his family's past prosperity as the same kind of corrupting wealth he has criticized, the lover-poet can justify no longer wanting it. Yet the reader may suspect that the lover-poet simply finds it safer to reject his desire outright rather than risk never attaining it, and that his insistence is only a ploy to cover over his sense of loss.

In the second half of poem 1.1, the countryside and its gods fade into the background as the lover-poet incorporates his patron, Messalla, and his girlfriend, Delia, into his poetic world for the first time.[45] He expressly praises Messalla's military glory and declares his preference for Delia's door.[46] As he reflects on Delia's role in his world, Venus appears for the first time with the crash of broken door frames and the commotion of lovers' fights.[47] But the lover-poet's turn to his affair with Delia is only temporary. As the poem draws to a

[44] cf. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.41.

[45] Lee-Stecum (1998) 49-67 argues at length that the introduction of Delia in this section shows that *amor* and Delia are the "dominating subject for the elegiac poet" and that this realization leads the reader to reevaluate the lover-poet's previous statements about his preferred lifestyle in light of Delia's power over him. Yet because the lover-poet opens and closes the poem with the country fantasy without any mention of his patron or his *puella*, I want to set up the framework of the rustic fantasy more thoroughly before engaging with the figure of Delia. I will return to the question of the introduction of Delia and *amor* in poem 1.1 in chapter 2.

[46] Tib. 1.1.53-58.

[47] Tib. 1.1.73-74.

close, the lover-poet returns to his initial attempt to distinguish his life of rustic simplicity from a life of military service and restless acquisition.

The lover-poet tries to contrast his rustic fantasy with the life of men who participate in military campaigns, declaring:

> …vos, signa tubaeque,
> ite procul; cupidis vulnera ferte viris,
> ferte et opes: ego composito securus acervo
> dites despiciam despiciamque famem. (1.1.75-78)

> …you, standards and trumpets,
> go far away; take your wounds to men full of desire
> and take the wealth: I, free from care, with a pile heaped up,
> will look down on wealth and look down on hunger.

Although the lover-poet implies a difference between himself and the *cupidi viri*, suggesting that we read *cupidis* as "men full of desire *for war* and *for wealth*," the term *cupidus vir*, "man full of desire," can just as easily be applied to the lover-poet himself. Lee and Maltby point out the double pun in these lines, as *viris* can refer to soldiers or husbands, and they may be "desirous" for either money or sex.[48] Despite the lover-poet's attempts to separate himself from the quest for monetary acquisition in the opening lines of the poem, in these lines he hints that regardless of what men are seeking, they remain vulnerable to the force of desire. The multiple meanings of *cupidis* reveal that it makes little difference whether a man's desire is for Delia or for conquest, for love or for wealth; desire rules him either way. And as we have seen, it is not so clear that the lover-poet does not long to acquire more and greater wealth himself (41-44). As the poem comes to a close, the identities of the lover-poet and the *alius* seem to coincide more than ever, casting even more doubt on the lover-poet's stated satisfaction with his life on the farm.

---

[48] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.1.76 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.75-76.

Yet as always, the lover-poet does not acknowledge his paradoxical comment and instead continues with his final couplet. To end the poem, he returns once more to his fantasy of rustic abundance and his dream of a world between excess and lack. In these final lines the lover-poet describes himself with a word he first used in line 48, *securus*, "free from care."[49] In that first instance, the lover-poet imagined feeling *securus* while relaxing indoors with his girlfriend by the fire during a winter storm. In this closing couplet, he links the feeling of being *securus* directly with his fantasy of rural abundance, placing the word between the phrase *composito…acervo*, "with a pile heaped up," and including it just before the explicit statement of his longing for a life between wealth and hunger. To have enough and thus to be free from worry and concern reemerge as the hallmarks of the lover-poet's rustic dreams.

In these final lines, the lover-poet makes one last assertion of his hopes for a carefree life of plenty. He claims his place on a middle road between wealth and poverty, where he has enough but not too much.[50] But in these last lines he has woven his uncertainty about his dream into the very language itself. This last line could also read: "*May I*, free from care,

[49] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.77-78 comments that the word *securus* recalls the "peace of mind" that is "an integral part of Tibullus' ideal existence," comparing thes lines with 1.1.25-26 and 48. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.77-78 similarly claims that the idea of being *securus* is at the center of Tibullus' ideal, citing the same passages. For the ancient interpretation of *securus* as *sine cura,* see Servius *auctus* on Virg. *Aen.* 2.374 and Maltby (1991) 555. Wimmel (1968) 196 n.45 expands on *securus* in Tibullus specifically.

[50] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.77-78 cites these lines as an example of the ideal of *mediocritas*, "the avoidance of excessive riches and of excessive poverty." Horace famously calls this *aurea mediocritas*, "the golden mean," in *Ode* 2.10.5, cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.106-7 and *Epod.* 1.31-4. Miller (2004) 200 points out the inconsistency of the lover-poet's description of his own pile of produce in terms reminiscent of the excessive accumulation which he has spoken against since lines 1-4.

with a pile heaped up, look down on wealth and look down on hunger."[51] In lines 41-44, the shift from the subjunctive to the indicative seemed to signal a shift from wishing to insisting, from hoping to declaring that his hopes had been realized. In this final couplet the subjunctive and the future tense are indistinguishable, and the wishful nature of the lover-poet's insistence becomes inherent in the words themselves. The lover-poet's uncertainty about the attainability of his fantasy creeps in through the double-meaning of his own words. In this last line, the lover-poet circles back to both his hope for and his anxiety about having enough, and it seems ever more likely that he suffers from the same unbounded desire as the *alius*, whose lifestyle he so emphatically rejected.

The opening scenes of poem 1.1 set up the lover-poet's fantasy world of sufficiency in the country for the first time. The lover-poet contrasts this ideal world with the life of the *alius*, who seeks greater and greater wealth through the hardships of military service. But the lover-poet's fantasy is interrupted and undermined from the very beginning, as his growing anxiety reveals that every aspect of his rural fantasy, from his material goods to his relationship with the gods, may not be "enough" for him. At the same time, the distinctions he seeks to set up between his own life and the life of the *alius* he rejects do not seem as stable as he hopes. By the end of the poem, it is clear that desire, whatever that desire may be for, is the central problem for the lover-poet and the *alius*. Try as he might, the lover-poet cannot maintain a stable sense of having enough.

---

[51] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.1.77-78 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.1.77-78 do not take a position on the mood of the verbs here. Lee (1990) translates 1.1.77-78 "But let me live at peace myself, with produce heaped in store, looking down on hunger as I look down on the rich." Although Lee interprets the line as a wish, the constant shifts between the indicative and the subjunctive mood throughout the poem support preserving the ambiguity.

Disturbing the Peace: Poem 1.10

The lover-poet fills Book 1 with poems about his girlfriend, Delia (1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6), his patron, Messalla (1.7), and his boyfriend, Marathus (1.4, 1.8, 1.9), but in poem 1.10 these figures are not named at all.[52] In this closing poem, the lover-poet returns to his fantasy of a happy life in the country, this time from the perspective of a soldier who is about to leave his farm and join the army on campaign.[53] Reflecting on his fears about war and death leads the lover-poet to express more fundamental anxieties about the possibility of attaining his rustic fantasy. As it turns out, his dream may be impossible even if he imagines a world at peace. Although the lover-poet's approach to his country fantasy is different in this poem, we will see that the lover-poet's dreams of happiness in poem 1.10 are just as vulnerable to the disruptions of desire as they were in poem 1.1.

The lover-poet opens poem 1.10 by railing against the anonymous inventor of the sword, blaming him for the violence and death that plagues the world. He declares that once upon a time there were no wars, in an ideal past age that looks a lot like the lover-poet's country fantasy from poem 1.1:[54]

[52] Solmsen (1962) 306-7, Littlewood (1970), and Gaisser (1983) 72 all suggest that *amor* is suppressed in poem 1.10, so that *rura* can be foregrounded. I certainly agree with the prominence they attribute to *rura* in poem 1.10, although I will argue for the continuing significance of *amor.*

[53] Tib. 1.10.13-14. Murgatroyd (1980) 47-48 and 279 argues that the opening poem of Book 1 is also spoken by the lover-poet when under pressure to go on campaign. This may be the case, but it is not explicitly stated as a reason for the poem's composition. For this reason, I only highlight the need to depart for war as the context for poem 1.10, where the lover-poet does explicitly say "*nunc ad bella trahor"*.

[54] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.47-48 notes that the absence of war was a characteristic of the Golden Age in Aratus *Phaen*. 108-9 and Virg. *Georg*. 2.539-40. Murgatroyd (1980) 281 and Lee-Stecum (1998) 269 link the lover-poet's description of a time before war with the lover-poet's representation of the "Golden Age" in poem 1.3.

….nec bella fuerunt
faginus astabat cum scyphus ante dapes.
non arces non vallus erat, somnumque petebat
securus varias dux gregis inter oves. (1.10.7-10)

…there were no wars
when a beechwood cup stood at the feast.
There were no strongholds; there were no stakes, and the leader of the herd
sought sleep, free from concern, among varied sheep.

He describes this lost, idealized past as a time of rustic celebrations (6-7), making clear allusions to other pastoral poems.[55] The shepherd's pursuit of sleep (10) recalls the lover-poet's fantasy of resting indoors on his farm at 1.1.47-48, as does the term *securus* (10), which the lover-poet used to describe himself in his country fantasy at 1.1.48 and 77.

But just like the formerly prosperous estate of his ancestors from poem 1.1,[56] this age before war is in the lost past. That ideal age was *tunc,* "then" (11), but the lover-poet lives *nunc*, "now" (13). He reveals that his fantasy of happiness in the countryside is "now" at risk, because he is being "dragged off to war" (*nunc ad bella trahor,* 13).[57] The lover-poet responds to his fears about life on campaign by retreating into his fantasy of happiness in the country, but this time he situates that fantasy within his childhood years on his family's farm:

sed patrii servate Lares: aluistis et idem
cursarem vestros cum tener ante pedes.
neu pudeat prisco vos esse e stipite factos:
sic veteris sedes incoluistis avi.

[55] Putnam (1973), Murgatroyd (1980), and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.7-8 note that beechwood objects, such as the *faginus scyphus*, were usually associated with the simple life of the rustic past. cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 3.36-37 and *Georg.* 3.172.

[56] cf. Tib. 1.1.19-20, 41-42.

[57] Lee-Stecum (1998) 269 emphasizes that the lover-poet represents freedom from war and the struggle for wealth as something that belongs to the lost past, which cannot be regained in the present.

tum melius tenuere fidem cum paupere cultu
    stabat in exigua ligneus aede deus.
hic placatus erat, seu quis libaverat uvam
    seu dederat sanctae spicea serta comae;
atque aliquis voti compos liba ipse ferebat
    postque comes purum filia parva favum.
at nobis aerata, Lares, depellite tela
    ...
…
    hostiaque e plena rustica porcus hara.
hanc pura cum veste sequar, myrtoque canistra
    vincta geram, myrto vinctus et ipse caput.
sic placeam vobis… (1.10.15-29)

But protect us, ancestral Lares: you also raised me in the same way
    when I would run before your feet as a tender boy.
Nor may it be a source of shame for you to be made from an ancient sapling:
    in this way you dwelt in the house of my old grandfather.
At that time they maintained trust better, when a wooden god,
    tended with modest means, stood in a narrow shrine.
This one was pleased, whether someone had offered a grape
    or had given a wreath of grain made from sacred stalks;
and someone, having his prayer answered, would bring cakes himself,
    and a little daughter would bring pure honey behind him.
But you, Lares, drive away bronze weapons from me,
    …
…
    and a pig as a rustic sacrifice from a full sty.
I will follow it with purified clothes, and I will carry a basket
    woven with myrtle, and I will be bound myself with myrtle on my head.
May I be pleasing to you by doing this:

He pleads with the Lares of his family estate for help, reminiscing about their provision for him and his family in the past (15-16).[58] The simple sufficiency that he wished for so fervently in poem 1.1 he now describes as a distinguishing part of his family's former life. Instead of imagining his family's former life as having even more than "enough" (19-20), this time he imagines them as have precisely that perfect level of prosperity that he longed

[58] Lee-Stecum (1998) 271 connects this image of the lost past of the lover-poet's childhood with the lost past of the world before war. Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.19-20 points out the links between this passage and the descriptions of early Rome at Prop. 4.1.1ff and Ov. *Fasti* 1.197ff.

for throughout poem 1.1. “At that time,” he claims, the Lares did not mind being carved from wood, and they accepted simple offerings of grapes, grain, cakes, and honey (21-24).[59] The ideal of “having enough” that the lover-poet associated with *paupertas* in poem 1.1 is again a defining feature of his rustic ideal. The lover-poet connects his vision of his family’s past directly with his dream of *paupertas* by describing it as a time of *paupere cultu* (19), and he links that *paupertas* explicitly with a sense of *fidem* (19) or “trust” between his family and the gods.[60] Again the lover-poet imagines a life of sufficiency in the countryside, where people live in harmony with the gods of the family farm and have what they need to feel happy and fulfilled.

The lover-poet’s reference to his family’s past happiness suggests that that he may be able to have this same kind of prosperity in the present. Thus far in the poem, it is unclear how he pictures the current state of his farm. But he promises a future offering to the Lares that will be much larger than his ancestors’ simple grapes and cakes; he plans to sacrifice a pig “from a full sty” (26-28).[61] In spite of the lacuna after line 25,[62] it seems most likely that

[59] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.10.17-18 remarks that the earliest statues were made from wood or terra cotta, so that such statues represent an ideal of “primitive simplicity.” Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.17-18 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.17 claim that wooden statues imply ancient, pious simplicity, cf. Prop. 4.2.59f. and Pliny *N. H.* 34.34. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.17 adds that the adjective *priscus* connotes traditional religion and moral uprightness, cf. Fordyce (1961) *ad loc.* Cat. 64.159 and Mankin (1995) *ad loc.* Hor. *Epod.* 2.2.

[60] In support of this point, Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.10.19-20 suggests that the *cultu* that people offer to the gods corresponds to the *incoluistis* that the gods are doing in human homes.

[61] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.26 notes that a pig was a typical offering to the Lares, cf. Plaut. *Rud.* 1207-8, Hor. *Od* 3.23.4. See Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.21-22 for a list of other appropriate offerings to the Lares.

[62] At least one pentameter and one hexameter are missing from this part of the poem, see Maltby (2002) 1.10.25-26.

the sacrifice the lover-poet envisions is meant to be a thank-offering for the protection of the Lares while he is on campaign.[63] Due to the lacuna, it is unclear whether the "full sty" and the pig itself should be attributed to the lover-poet's estate or someone else's. But the fact that the lover poet will process behind it in ritual clothing (*hanc pura cum veste sequar*…27) and that he hopes that he will be pleasing to the gods as a result of the offering (*sic placeam vobis*, 29), implies that he is the one making the sacrifice. Regardless of the details, he imagines that his estate will be able to afford a much larger sacrifice upon his return than it did when he was a young boy. He envisions a future where his prosperity surpasses the kind of idealized sufficiency that appears in his repeated fantasy of rustic happiness, imagining a reversed version of his estate's development in poem 1.1.

It is still uncertain, however, whether or not the lover-poet imagines having those resources already in the present, or whether he imagines that he will have acquired this wealth by the time he makes his offering upon his return. If he is proposing a future gift from his present prosperity, there is a marked difference between his representation of his present farm in poem 1.10 and his fears of not having enough in poem 1.1. Yet it is telling that he only envisions his family estate as having this kind of abundance in the present after he has been ordered to leave it all behind.[64] If we take this reading, the lover-poet portrays his estate as already having the idealized abundance he had longed for in poem 1.1 when he is

[63] As seems to be the view of Lee and Maltby, who suggest that the lacuna includes Tibullus' promise to the Lares that he would make a thank-offering if they saved his life in battle, see Lee (1990) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.25-26. Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.15-16 clarifies that the protection of the Lares extended to the family members while they were away at war, cf. Prop. 3.3.11 and Ov. *Tr.* 4.8.21-22. Sacrifices of pigs are common as sacrifices to the Lares as thank-offerings for returning from war, see Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.25-26 and cf. Macrob. *S.* 6.9.4 and Gell. 16.6.7.

[64] Gardner (2010) 470 makes a similar observation when she suggests that the Lares here are distinguished by "their role in measuring what has already been lost."

already in the process of losing it. It is either something that was lost to the past (in poem 1.1) or something that is already being left behind in the present (in poem 1.10). In poem 1.10 the lover-poet remains separated from the enjoyment of his current prosperity by his need to endure the horrors of battle first, with no guarantees that the gods will keep their promise to spare him. Even if we are meant to assume that he is already in possession of these greater resources, in another sense the lover-poet's rustic dreams remain as far away as ever.

If instead we assume that the lover-poet's estate is still the modest estate of poem 1.1, and that he anticipates acquiring greater resources in the time before he returns, this passage grows even more complicated. Since it seems unlikely that the lover-poet would assume that his estate would grow while he was away at war, this reading implies that he envisions acquiring greater wealth in his conquests abroad. The pig that he imagines sacrificing would come from the profits of his time on campaign. By envisioning this future sacrifice as a ritually purified part of his idealized rustic world, the lover-poet tries to inoculate his sacrifice against the negative connotation which the profits of war hold elsewhere in the poems.[65] But identifying the offering as one bought with the spoils of war provides a plausible explanation for the lover-poet's hesitation at line 29, "May I be pleasing to you by doing this" (*sic placeam vobis*). In spite of making a larger offering to the Lares than his ancestors had made, the lover-poet still expresses concern that the offering will be unacceptable to them.[66] Offering goods acquired through military conquests to his Lares

[65] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.15-32 highlights the verbal echoes between the offering made in lines 25-28 and the ideal of the simple offering of his ancestors at lines 23-24, marking out the positive representation of the lover-poet's sacrifice.

[66] Lee-Stecum (1998) 271-73 notes how the repeated use of the subjunctive and imperative in the lover-poet's address to the gods (1.10.17, 25, 29) hints at his fear that they

would certainly go against the lover-poet's stated reverence for rustic abundance over military profit, and the cognitive dissonance of presenting such an offering would certainly explain this moment of anxiety.

Whether we read the lover-poet's future offering as a result of his present resources or his future profits in war, the lover-poet remains harshly separated from the contentment he craves. Either way, his time at war is the cost for having his rustic fantasy upon his return, and that time abroad holds the risk of increasing his wealth to excess, causing the displeasure of his gods, or even leading to his early death. These potential disasters cast an ominous shadow over any hope of attaining his fantasy. The lover-poet also faces the collapse of his identity into that of the *alius* of poem 1.1 (1-4) yet again. He has already claimed that he is being dragged off to war (13), and he already seems to be imagining what it would be like to reintegrate into his country world after he returns from campaign (26-29). As if in response to this momentary similarity, immediately after his description of the pig sacrifice, he reiterates his previous wish to be different from the *alius*, whom he again characterizes as a dedicated soldier:

> …alius sit fortis in armis,
> sternat et adversos Marte favente duces
>
> …let another man be brave amidst weapons,
> and let him slay hostile generals as Mars shows him favor. (1.10.29-30)

Although the lover-poet attempts to distinguish himself from the soldier, the wishful nature of his plea gives no guarantee that his wish will take precedence over the forces that he

---

will no longer accept the offerings of the past. In contrast, Whitaker (1983) 77 optimistically suggests that his reminiscence of the past shows that his current offering should be acceptable. Both emphasize the relative size of the offering, rather than its origins.

implies are “dragging” him off to war (13).[67] In this poem, the lover-poet only attempts to distinguish himself from the *alius* after he has already undermined the possibilities of that distinction. In a similar way to in poem 1.1, the distinction between the lover-poet and the *alius* becomes more and more difficult to maintain.

As the lover-poet continues to reflect on the consequences of a soldier’s life, he launches into a harsh critique of death, which he considers an almost necessary result of his departure on campaign (*nunc ad bella trahor, et iam quis forsitan hostis haesura in nostro tela gerit latere*, “now I am being dragged off to war, and perhaps already some enemy is carrying weapons which are about to plunge into my side,” 1.10.13-14). His reflections on death lead directly into a vision of the shades in the underworld:

> quis furor est atram bellis accersere Mortem!
> imminet et tacito clam venit illa pede.
> non seges est infra non vinea culta sed audax
> Cerberus et Stygiae navita turpis aquae;
> illic percussisque genis ustoque capillo
> errat ad obscuros pallida turba lacus. (1.10.33-38)
>
> What madness it is to summon black Death with wars!
> She looms over and comes in secret on a silent foot.
> There is no crop in the underworld, there is no cultivated vineyard, but bold
> Cerberus and the foul sailor of the Stygian water;
> there a pallid crowd wanders along dark lakes
> with beaten cheeks and burned hair.

The scene of the afterlife that the lover-poet paints here is the exact opposite of his country fantasy, a barren land where there are no fields or vineyards at all (35).[68] Lee-Stecum

[67] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.29-32 notes the epic undertones of this couplet, including the references to slaying prominent generals (30), the importance of divine favor (30), and the recounting of heroic deeds (31-32).

[68] Although the lack of cultivated fields is also mentioned as a characteristic of the Elysian fields at 1.3.61, here it seems to be a declaration of infertility (or at least significantly lessened productivity), whereas there it is an assertion of the spontaneous

comments that "the comfort and security associated with rural life are negated by death's power,"[69] and the sense of *felicitas* or *securitas* that so often accompanies the lover-poet's country fantasies is certainly nowhere to be found. The lover-poet describes the shades of the underworld as beaten and burned, still wearing the pallor of death and the marks on their bodies from their funeral rites (37-38).[70] The lover-poet links the practice of war explicitly with the experience of death and sets up an even more dramatic contrast between the life of a soldier and a happy life on his farm.

The lover-poet's visceral reaction against war and death transitions immediately to his praise of the life of an aging farmer, as he imagines a life in which he would not have to go to war and would not face death until he is old. This idealized farmer is content with a small house and grows old on his farm with his children (*prole parata occupant in parva pigra senecta casa,* 39-40). His son cares for his flocks, and his wife brings him drinks of water while he works in the fields (*ipse suas sectatur oves at filius agnos et calidam fesso comparat uxor aquam,* 41-42). In this scene, the lover-poet adds a nuclear family to his vision of abundance in the countryside. Since the relationship between husband and wife is rare in elegy, it provides a comforting contrast with the lover-poet's constant fights and fallouts with his defiant and distant mistress.[71] The lover-poet wishes expressly for the kind

---

fertility of Elysium, which has even more abundance than any cultivated field. cf. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.35.

[69] Lee-Stecum (1998) 275.

[70] Putnam (1973), Murgatroyd (1980), and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.37-38 explain that the dead are often represented as marked by the way they died and the effects of their funeral rites. cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.40f., Virg. *Aen.* 6.494ff., Ov. *Met.* 10.49, Tac. *Ann.* 1.65, and Propertius 4.7.8-9.

[71] cf. Tib. 1.2.5-24, 1.5.1-18, and 1.6 (all). *Uxor* is also used to refer to a "wife" in Tibullus' poetry at 1.9.54 and 2.2.11.

of life the farmer has (*sic ego sim*, 43): to grow old with his wife and children in the prosperity of the family farm.[72] As the demands of life at war threaten to destroy the lover-poet's rustic hopes, he argues that Peace still has the power to make his dream possible:

> interea Pax arva colat. Pax candida primum
> duxit araturos sub iuga curva boves.
> Pax aluit vites et sucos condidit uvae,
> funderet ut nato testa paterna merum.
> Pace bidens vomerque nitent, at tristia duri
> militis in tenebris occupat arma situs. (1.10.45-50)
>
> In the meantime, may Peace tend the fields. Bright Peace first
> led oxen who were about to plow under curved yokes.
> Peace nourished vines and stored up the juices of the grape,
> so that a father's jug might pour out wine for his offspring.
> Because of Peace the hoe and plowshare shine, but in the shadows rust takes over
> the sad weapons of the hardened soldier.

He prays to Peace to make his hopes a reality, imagining that she could return his estate to something like the pastoral world without war of which he dreamed in the beginning of the poem.[73] He represents Pax as the originator of agriculture itself, having taught humans to plow the fields and make wine.[74] But in his view she not only helps people cultivate grain

[72] cf. Johnson (1990) 102.

[73] Boyd (1984) 279 goes so far as to call this *Pax* "a peace which guarantees that Tibullus' rural landscape will thrive." On a more political note, Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 10.45-50 notes that Pax was typically associated with internal concord in Rome after the civil wars. Mynors (1990) *ad loc.* Virg. *Georg.* 2.425 notes that link with internal peace goes back to Pindar *Ol.* 13.6-8, where Peace appears with Eunomia and Dike. He also mentions that Pax appeared on the coins of Julius Caesar and of Augustus (in the East).

[74] Murgatroyd (1980) 280 comments on Tibullus' originality in making Peace the inventor of agriculture (1.10.45-46) and connecting peace with the life of love (1.10.53-56). Within Tibullus' poetry, the image of Pax in these lines is reminiscent of many of the qualities of Osiris at 1.7.29-38, cf. Bowditch (2011), and of the rustic gods more generally in 2.1.37-42. Murgatoryd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.45-56 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.45-50 note that in this passage Peace has many of the attributes of Ceres (e.g. the invention of agriculture was traditionally associated with Demeter/Ceres, cf. Call. *Hymn.* 6.19ff, Virg. *Georg.* 1.147ff). They also note how the two goddesses were linked in Augustan art and

and grapes; she also allows the weapons of war to erode away, unused (47-50).[75] The lover-poet's dream has subtly broadened over the course of the poem, from a plea to his Lares that he might not be harmed as he goes to battle (15), to a wish that he might not have to leave for war at all (29), to a prayer that the rule of Peace may prevent war entirely (45).

But the lover-poet introduces his prayer to Peace with the word, *interea*, "in the meantime" (45). "In the meantime, may Peace tend the fields" (*interea, Pax arva colat,* 45). Until when? Perhaps this prayer makes most sense in reference to the wish that the lover-poet has just made to grow old on his farm. In that case, this passage would be a more generalized reiteration of his wish to live as a peaceful farmer on his family estate. Although someday war may resume, so long as the lover-poet lives, he wishes for Peace to rule.

But the abrupt transition initiated by *interea* (45) opens up the possibility of several other readings. If the lover-poet is returning to his previous reflection on his departure for war, he may be praying for Peace to rule until he has to leave. That would seem to be an unusually limited request, however, not quite in keeping with his typically ambitious prayers. In that case, it seems more reasonable to consider his prayer as a prayer that Peace would remain at home and protect his farm while he is away, so that he will in fact have his prosperous farm to return to. Even though it is rather strange to suggest that there would be peace at home while he is experiencing war abroad, this sentiment resonates well with the

---

literature, cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.704 and 4.407-8. Some scholars argue that Ceres was a key figure on the *Ara Pacis Augustae,* cf. Spaeth (1996) 68-69, 125-152.

[75] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.47 notes that the word *aluit* (47) looks back to *aluistis* (15), connecting *Pax* with the ancient Lares. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.49-50 notes that this traditional scene of eroding weapons goes back at least as far as Homer, cf. Hom. *Od.* 16.284ff. and 19.4ff. The closest parallel is Bacchylides *Paean.* 4.29-72 Sn.-M (also in praise of Peace).

Augustan attitude toward peace.[76] If we leave aside the context of departure for war, however, we could simply interpret *interea* as a reference to a wished-for time of peace between wars, however short or long it may be.

Regardless of the specific circumstances, *interea* (45) implies that the lover-poet is wishing for Peace to preserve his rustic fantasy for the time being, with the subtle admission that this time of Peace cannot and will not last. The final lines of his prayer reinforce the fact that war is not gone forever (*Pace bidens vomerque nitent, at tristia duri militis in tenebris occupat arma situs*, 49-50). Although the soldier's weapons grow rusty in the shadows, they still linger in the darkness. They have not been buried or discarded or repurposed for new use.[77] They remain, waiting to be sharpened again, waiting for when "the meantime" has passed.[78]

Yet the lover-poet does not seem to acknowledge these subtle suggestions of the fragility of Peace, pressing on instead with his fantasy of what a world at peace could be like. He begins another story about a farmer and his family, and it seems at first like another scene of rustic bliss, as the farmer's family returns home from celebrating a local festival:[79]

---

[76] cf. *Res Gestae* 13, *parta victoriis Pax*, "Peace gained from victories." See also Galinsky (1996) 106-121.

[77] cf. Virg. *Georg.* 1.493-97.

[78] Lee-Stecum (1998) 279 suggests that this anxiety is present even in his insistent repetition of his desire for peace (*Pax…Pax…Pax…Pace*) and that the lover-poet's earlier admission that he is about to leave for war suggests "that peace has *not* yet been achieved and does *not* now appear imminent."

[79] Although the specifics of the festival are excluded, the term *lucus* points toward a religious purpose for the trip. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.10.51-52 cites Servius on Vergil *Aen.* 1.310 to define *lucus* as "*arborum multitudo cum religione*." Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.51-52 cites other examples of *lucus* as a sacred grove at Hor. *Od.* 1.4.11, Virg. *Aen.* 11.740. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.51 uses other examples from Tibullus (2.1.29f and 5.101f) to suggest that drinking was a regular feature of rustic festivals, cf. Ov. *Fasti* 3.523ff.

rusticus e luco revehit male sobrius ipse
uxorem plaustro progeniemque domum. (1.10.51-52)

A farmer, far from sober himself, carries back from the sacred grove
his wife and his offspring on a wagon toward home.

At first glance, the family resembles that of the idealized farmer of lines 39-44. The lover-poet again uses the term *uxor* (52), so rare in Tibullus' poetry, to refer to the farmer's wife, and he specifically mentions the farmer's children, who played such a prominent role in his description of an ideal farmer's life.[80] Yet the seemingly peaceful scene takes a sudden turn:

sed Veneris tunc bella calent, scissosque capillos
femina perfractas conqueriturque fores.
flet teneras subtusa genas, sed victor et ipse
flet sibi dementes tam valuisse manus.
at lascivus Amor rixae mala verba ministrat,
inter et iratum lentus utrumque sedet. (1.10.51-58)

But then the wars of Venus heat up, and the woman
complains of her torn hair and shattered doors.
She weeps, bruised on her soft cheeks, but the victor also himself
weeps for himself that his mad hands were so strong.
But impudent Love supplies curses to the brawl,
and he sits unmoving between both angry people.

Without warning the "wars of Venus" arise, and torn hair and shattered doorways come with them (53-54).[81] Looking back on Book 1, however, the eruption of violence

---

Although Haupt (1876) suggested that there was a lacuna between lines 50 and 51 because of the abrupt shift in scene, all recent commentators consider this assumption unnecessary, cf. Murgatroyd (1980), Lee (1990), and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.51.

[80] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.51-52 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.39-40 and 52 note that children are one of the blessings of Peace, cf. Hes. *Works.* 228ff, and of the country life, cf. Hor. *Epod.* 2.40 and Virg. *Georg.* 2.523. The idea is emphasized by the repetition of *filius* 41, *nato* 48, and *progeniem* 52 throughout poem 1.10.

[81] Gaisser (1983) 70 sees here the transformation of *rura* into the world of *amor*, although I would contend that *rura* is still very present. Boyd (1984) 279 accepts erotic violence as an unproblematic part of the genre and argues that this scene shows how Peace allows the lover-poet's elegiac lifestyle to flourish. I interpret the violence of the scene quite differently in light of the lover-poet's rebuke of the husband's violence in lines 59-60.

around Venus and Amor may not be so surprising.[82] Violence has accompanied the lover-poet's descriptions of Venus since poem 1.1, where he referred to "practicing Venus" interchangeablely with "breaking doorframes" and "starting brawls" (*nunc levis est tractanda Venus dum frangere postes non puet et rixas inseruisse iuvat,* 1.1.73-74).[83] The lover-poet even describes her as the goddess "born from blood" (*sanguine natam*, 1.2.41) to drive home his threats about the power of her vengeance on those who betray her.[84] The lover-poet is especially confused in situations in Book 1 where Venus seems to be punishing him in spite of his faithfulness to her.[85] At times, the lover-poet describes both Venus and Amor explicitly as "cruel" (*saevit...Venus*, 1.5.58; *saeve* 1.6.3) as the gods of love continue to torture both their loyal servants and their foolish enemies.[86] Lee-Stecum argues that "…*amor* is firmly placed on the side of *bella* and violent struggle," in the poems, suggesting that the episode of domestic violence in poem 1.10 is "an ultimate expression of the conflict

[82] The battles of love are also a trope of elegy in general. Murgatroyd (1975) 59-79 and Lyne (1980) 71-78 discuss *militia amoris* at length. See also Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) *ad loc.* Hor. *Od.* 1.17.24 and cf. McKeown (1989) *ad loc.* Ov. *Am.* 1.7. Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.53-56 notes that broken doors also appear in lovers' fights at Theoc. *Id.* 2.127-128, Ter. *Ad.* 102f., Prop. 2.5.22, Hor. *Od.* 3.26.6-8, Ov. *Am.* 1.9.20, and *Ars* 3.567. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.53 notes that torn hair also appears in lovers' fights at Prop. 2.5.23, Ov. *Am.* 1.7.11 (cf. McKeown (1989) *ad loc.*), and *Ars* 3.570.

[83] Tib. 1.1.73-74. In Tibullus' poetry Mars and Venus are always tangled together and frequently interchangeable with Amor, cf. 1.3.57-58, 1.5.57-58, 1.8.5-8, 1.8.55-58, 1.8.70-71, 1.9.19-20, 1.9.80-84. Propertius makes a distinction between the lover's quarrels in his own poetry and the brutality of the brawls in Tibullus' poetry at 2.5.21-26, see Solmsen (1961) 275-76 and Lyne (1998) 534-35. The apparent criticism of the violence between lovers in Tibullus' poetry supports the argument that the connection between Venus and violence is particularly marked in Tibullus' text.

[84] Tib. 1.2.41-42.

[85] Tib. 1.2.99-100.

[86] For the gods of love as *saevus*, see Tib. 1.5.57-58 and 1.6.1-4. For their methods of torture, see Tib. 1.5.1-6 and 1.8.1-8.

and struggle which has surrounded *amor* throughout the ten poems."[87] Wherever Venus and Amor appear in Book 1, violence and vengeance are not far behind.

The relationship between husband and wife seemed like an alternative to the fraught relationship between the lover-poet and his mistress in lines 39-42, but the lover-poet now admits that the role that Venus and Amor play in marriage creates the same possibilities for disruption and destruction that they cause for other lovers. Although Peace may mean the absence of formal wars, it also allows the leisure for the life of love. Wherever there is Venus or Amor there is a risk for violence, even in the supposed security of the nuclear family in a rustic world at Peace.[88] When Venus arrives the *uxor* becomes a *puella* (59), and Amor ensures that the dream of a happy family in a peaceful countryside falls apart. The lover-poet reveals his fear that Pax is not in fact sufficient to bring about his rustic fantasy. So long as love remains a part of his dream world, his rustic fantasy contains forces that can destroy it from within.

The scene of domestic violence in the second half of poem 1.10 recalls not only the earlier savagery of love in Book 1, but also the vision of the shades of the underworld from

---

[87] Lee-Stecum (1998) 280.

[88] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.45-68 agrees that the passage closely links the violent lover and the soldier through the metaphor of *militia amoris*. Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 1.10. 53-54 argues that these metaphorical *proelia* or *bella* are different in nature from "true *proelia* or *bella*" and goes so far as to claim that they are "permissible" because they are only possible in times of peace. I would argue that the lover-poet's immediate rebuke of the farmer implies that these battles are just as morally culpable as what Putnam calls "true" wars. In his introduction to poem 1.10, Putnam (1973) suggests that these battles are important to Tibullus because they are concerned with the family and that unlike literal battles they are "symptomatic of fertility and not the deadly divisiveness of war." I would argue that the terms in which the lover-poet represents these battles and the way that both he and Propertius rebuke these acts of violence, cf. Prop. 2.5.21-26, show that the similarities between domestic assaults and literal wars are at least as important to our reading as their potential differences.

1.10.35-38. The victims of the wars of Venus look like the dead of the wars of Mars, with similarly wounded cheeks (*percussis genis,* 37, and *teneras subtusa genas*, 55) and ruined hair (*ustoque capillo,* 39 and *scissosque capillos*, 53).[89] The descriptions of the victims of the battles of Venus and Mars both include terms that link them closely with the genre of elegy, alluding to the frequent overlap between love and war in elegiac poetry.[90] Through the medium of love, the war and death that the lover-poet tried so hard to avoid break into his rustic reverie with all their brutal force. The lover-poet hints that long as there are lovers, there will be Amor, and as long as there is Amor, the risk of violence remains.

In the first half of poem 1.10, the lover-poet longs for a sense of abundance and sufficiency in the countryside that resembles the rustic fantasy that he describes throughout poem 1.1. In light of the threats that a life at war brings, he looks back on the past with fondness and hopes that his time at war will not prevent him from enjoying his dream of rustic prosperity upon his return. Going even further, he wishes for a family that will bring stability after his rocky relationships in Book 1 (*sic ego sim*, 43). In the middle of the poem, the lover-poet hopes that Pax might be able to keep his fantasy alive, in spite of the constant threat of the return of war (45-50). In the scene of domestic violence which fills the second half of the poem, the lover-poet reveals his fear that the fantasy of Peace itself contains the possibility of the violence it is supposed to prevent. For the lover-poet, Venus and Amor always maintain the link between the world of Peace and the world of war. The lover-poet reveals that his vision of a life of peace and prosperity in the countryside is ultimately

[89] cf. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.37-38 and 55.

[90] References to the cheeks and hair (*genae* and *capilli*), esp. of the beloved, frequently appear in elegiac poems, cf. esp. Tib. 1.8, Prop. 1.3.23 and 2.1.7, Ov. *Am.* 1.7 and 1.14. The word *tener* is a commonplace pun on the "softness" and "delicacy" of elegiac poetry, appearing twenty-nine times in Tibullus' poems alone.

vulnerable to the forces inherent in it, forces which are inextricable from the relationships that make that fantasy possible.

The lover-poet condemns the violence of the farmer's attack on his wife with his stern rebuke in lines 59-60 (*a lapis est ferrumque, suam quicumque puellam verberat: e caelo deripit ille deos*, "he is stone and iron, whoever beats his girl: that man rips the gods down from the sky").[91] It is here that the lover-poet returns to the refrain of *satis* from poem 1.1:

> sit satis e membris tenuem rescindere vestem,
> sit satis ornatus dissoluisse comae,
> sit lacrimas movisse satis. … (1.10.61-63)
>
> May it be enough to tear the thin clothing from her limbs,
> may it be enough to have undone her styled hair,
> may it be enough to have moved her to tears. …

Although the lover-poet's repetition of the phrase *sit satis* echoes the repetition of *satis est* from poem 1.1.43-44, the mood of his refrain has shifted significantly.[92] The lover-poet repeatedly interrupted poem 1.1 with his fears that his rustic fantasy would be sabotaged by outside forces or would be inadequate to fulfill his desires. In poem 1.1, the lover-poet's insistence that his rustic fantasy was "enough" for him revealed his lingering fears about feeling unfulfilled even if he obtained it. In poem 1.10, the lover-poet reveals his fear that even if he could have his rustic fantasy, the forces that make it possible would eventually

[91] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 53-64 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.61-64 emphasizes the first of these interpretations, pointing toward the possible criticism of this passage in Prop. 2.5.21-26. Solmsen (1961) 275-76 suggests that Propertius' disapproval of such passages may be the reason why they do not appear in book 2.

[92] Boyd (1984) 279 also emphasizes the repetition of *satis* here, although she reads the suggestion of moderation in violence more optimisitically, as an indication that the lover-poet has achieved the moderation that he is seeking in his elegiac world. I place more emphasis on the shift from the indicative in poem 1.1 to the subjunctive in poem 1.10, which contributes to my more pessimistic reading.

destroy it. The lover-poet's reflections on sufficiency now express his fear of excess, rather than his fear of lack. "May it be enough" is the lover-poet's wish that the violence inherent in the erotic relationships of his fantasy world will be limited, while he simultaneously admits that that violence is unavoidable. With his wish that the violent husband would only tear at the woman's clothes and make her cry, it seems the lover-poet cannot imagine an erotic relationship without some kind of violence.[93]

As we have seen, the close connection between love and violence corresponds closely to the lover-poet's representation of Amor throughout Book 1. If violence is unavoidable in erotic relationships, the presence of those relationships brings with it the fear that that violence will become excessive. The lover-poet wishes for limits to the violence inherent in Amor, but the expression of his wish reveals two major problems with the possibility of its realization. The ambiguity of the degree of violence which would be "sufficient," but not "excessive," reveals that it is impossible to find a clear line at which "enough" violence can be delineated. Worse still, the subjunctive mood makes it unclear whether limiting oneself to examples of "sufficient" violence would be "enough" to satisfy the attacker. The lover-poet prays for limits, but it is unclear whether those limits can be implemented. Regardless of his efforts, it seems that a lover will always run the risk of excessive violence toward his beloved. The lover-poet implies that so long as Venus and Amor remain, even a country fantasy ruled by *Pax* cannot bring him the happiness he craves, since the forces of desire lead to a lack of clear limits and a resulting tendency toward

---

[93] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.10.61-64 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.61-63 emphasize the ways that this second assault differs from the first: the girl's clothes should be ripped (not her body), the girl's hair should be undone (not torn out), and it should be sufficient to make the girl cry rather than to prolong her tears. While it is interesting to point out the subtle changes, the fact remains that the man is tearing her clothing, tearing her hair, and making her cry—hardly a straightforward image of *Pax* and *felicitas* in the countryside.

excess. In poem 1.10, the lover-poet encounters a new set of problems with having "enough": both with knowing how much is "too much," and with preventing that excess from invading his perfect world.

The lover-poet's reflections on domestic violence seem temporarily to change his attitude toward war, when he suggests that it is good for those who are *saevus* to get away from "gentle Venus" by going on campaign (*sed manibus qui saevus erit, scutumque sudemqueis gerat et miti sit procul a Venere*, 1.10.65-66). In response to the excess of violence in his fantasy world the lover-poet attempts to remove the offending husband from the rustic landscape and send him off to the world of war where he supposedly belongs.[94] But there is great irony in his words. This solution requires the lover-poet to contradict the way that he has represented Venus throughout Book 1. Venus has been far from gentle, and she is *saevus* herself.[95] *Mitis* may be what he wishes Venus would be, it may even be what he believes Venus should be, but it contrasts explicitly with who Venus has been throughout Book 1. The lover-poet argues that war provides a necessary alternative for the violent man, but his admission that violence is inherent in love suggests that this alternative cannot solve his problem. Once again, the life of the *alius* and the life of the lover-poet cannot easily be separated. It is not the presence of a particular individual, but the presence of Venus herself that puts the lover-poet's fantasy at risk. So long as Venus and Amor are a part of his dream world, violence can always disturb the peace.

---

[94] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.10.65 "*sudis* is another word for *vallus*…the stake carried by every Roman legionary, cf. Cicero *Tusculans* 2.37."

[95] cf. Tib. 1.5.57-58. For Venus as "born from blood," see Tib. 1.2.41-42. For Venus imprisoning and torturing, see Tib. 1.2.91-92, 99-100, 1.8.5-6. For Venus as "harsh" (*acerba* or *aspera*) see Tib. 1.6.83-84 and 1.9.19-20. For Venus' punishments, see 1.2.81-82 and 1.8.27-28.

In the final lines of the poem, the lover-poet attempts to undo the mess he has made by papering over the cracks and making a final appeal to Pax:

> at nobis, Pax alma, veni spicamque teneto,
> profluat et pomis candidus ante sinus. (1.10.67-68)

> But come to us, nourishing Peace, and hold an ear of grain,
> And may your bright lap overflow in front with fruits.

The lover-poet abandons any mention of war or love and focuses solely on his vision of rustic prosperity.[96] He returns to his prayer to Pax for a life of prosperity in on his farm.[97] But his appeal rings hollow in light of the events that we have just seen in a world ruled by Pax.[98] Pax is no guarantee of satisfaction and security so long as erotic relationships remain a part of the lover-poet's ideal fantasy life. They provide an opening for the arrival of Venus and Amor and the violence and excess that accompanies them. Although Venus and Amor are necessary for the relationships that are central to his rustic fantasy, they are forces that will inevitably destroy it. The violence they bring constantly threatens to collapse the life of love into the life of war from which the lover-poet is trying to escape. The lover-poet implies that he does not only need to distance himself from the life of the soldier, but also from any

[96] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.10.67-68 suggests that the connections between the adjective *candidus* and the "pure style" of Tibullus may make *candidus* in this couplet a kind of *sphragis* at the close of Book 1.

[97] Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.10.67-68 suggest that this description of Pax may correspond to images in art or on coins during the period. Putnam (1973) ad loc. 1.10.67-68 draws a comparison between Pax in this passage and the representations of Ceres/Demeter, citing 1.1.15-16, 2.1.4, and Ovid *Fast*. 4.407. Cairns (1999) 230 connects the importance of Pax in this poem with Octavian's closing of the gate of Janus in 29 BCE as a declaration of universal peace.

[98] For different arguments that come to a similar conclusion about the contradictory aspects of this final couplet, see Lee-Stecum (1998) 282 and Miller (1999) 221.

kind of erotic relationship, if he is ever going to escape the excesses that threaten his dream of a life of happiness and sufficiency.

Beginning Again: The Rustic Gods in Poem 2.1

The beginning of a new poetry book provides a fresh start for the lover-poet and his rustic fantasy. In poem 2.1, the lover-poet appears as a priest performing rituals in honor of the gods of the countryside.[99] Although the lover-poet seems to be combining the elements of many rituals, the poem most closely describes the celebration of the Ambarvalia, a yearly festival held in May by the Arval Brethren to purify the fields and pray for the fertility of the crops and herds.[100] The lover-poet's opening words imply that he is already standing before a group of celebrants, openly declaring the beginning of the ritual for which they have gathered:

> Quisquis adest, faveat: fruges lustramus et agros,
> ritus ut a prisco traditus exstat avo.
> Bacche, veni dulcisque tuis e cornibus uva

[99] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.1-2 and Murgatroyd (1994) 19 highlight how this poem draws the reader into the rustic rituals *in media res* and how the poet takes on the role as priest within the ritual itself. Williams (1968) esp. 211-12, elaborates on this technique of recreating rituals in Latin literature. Murgatroyd (1994) 19 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.1-2 note that other poets also describe "ceremonies in progress," cf. Call. *Hymn.* 2 (to Apollo), Cat. 61 (the wedding of Torquatus), and Hor. *Od.* 1.27 (a private drinking party).

[100] See Maltby (2002) 359 and Murgatroyd (1994) 18-19. Maltby comments that the Ambarvalia included a procession around the fields and a sacrifice to promote the fertility of the fields and livestock. The ritual also appears in Cato *De Agri Cultura* 141 with the title *lustratio agri*. Macrobius *Sat.* 3.5.7 associates the Ambarvalia specifically with Virg. *Ecl.* 5.75 and *Georg.* 1.345. Pöstgens (1940) argues at length for identifying the festival in poem 2.1 as the Ambarvalia, while Ball (1983) 162-63 explains the arguments against connecting the poem with any specific celebration. Cairns (1979) 133-34 points out that to combine the elements of several rituals would be appropriate for a poet in the Hellenistic tradition. Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.1-2 mentions that it would be historically appropriate for Tibullus to refer to the Ambarvalia, since it seems that Cornutus and possibly even Messalla were members of the Arval Brethren, which had been revived under Augustus' rule, cf. Cairns (1979) 130.

pendeat, et spicis tempora cinge, Ceres.
luce sacra requiescat humus, requiescat arator,
et graue suspenso vomere cesset opus.
soluite uincla iugis: nunc ad praesepia debent
plena coronato stare boves capite. (2.1.1-8)

Let whoever is here, be silent: we are purifying the fruits and fields,
as the ritual handed down from an ancient grandfather stands.
Bacchus, come and let the sweet grape hang from your horns,
and ring your temples with ears of grain, Ceres.
On this sacred day let the earth rest, let the farmer rest,
and let heavy work cease, while the plowshare is hung up.
Loosen the chains from the yokes: now the oxen should stand
at full mangers with garlanded heads.

Whether or not we interpret this prayer as an opening prayer for the Ambarvalia, it is clear that the lover-poet is focusing most closely on the purity and productivity of the country landscape. In his position as mediator between the gods and humans, the lover-poet tries to purify the countryside and convince the rural gods to come and bring fertility to the land. As in Book 1, he represents the countryside as a world of abundance where the gods intermingle with the inhabitants of the fields. He asks that the rural gods be present at the festivities, especially Bacchus and Ceres (3-4).[101] There are offerings of grapes and grain, although the exact nature of the offerings is debated.[102] He calls the land, the farmers, and the animals to rest (5-6), while the animals enjoy full feeding troughs[103] and the worshippers and gods

[101] Murgatroyd (1994) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.3-4 note that Bacchus and Ceres are often linked, cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 274-85, Call. *Hymn.* 6.70, Lucr. 5.14-15, Varro *Rust.* 1.1.5, Virg. *Georg.* 1.7, Tib. 2.3.65ff. Murgatroyd (1994) 18 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.3-4 also point out a contrast between 2.1 and Cato *Agr.* 141, where Mars, Janus, and Jupiter are the gods of the *lustratio.*

[102] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.3-4 explains that depending on the time of year, this offering may include ripe grapes and grain, or dried grapes from the previous year and newly ripening grain. Maltby favors the former interpretation.

[103] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.7-8 emphasizes that whether *praesepia* are “pens” or “mangers,” they imply an abundance of either livestock or feed. He agrees that *plena* reaffirms the idea of fertility in this passage.

stand adorned with fruits and flowers (7-8). The love-poet's vision of peace and prosperity on his farm returns with fresh vigor.

The lover-poet returns again and again to the theme of purification (1, 13-14, 17).[104] He describes the worshippers as a *candida turba*, referring both to their white clothing and to their ritual purity.[105] He banishes lovers from his rites, insisting that chastity and purity are pleasing to the gods (11-14).[106] Thus far poem 2.1 seems like a fresh start, where the lover-poet can create a rustic fantasy untarnished by the doubts and frustrations that gnawed at him in Book 1.[107] Most notably, the fantasy does not include the presence of a beloved, or even of Amor. It seems that the lover-poet's fantasies of country life may at last provide the fulfillment he desires, if they can finally escape the disruptive influence of love.

At this point in the poem, the lover-poet has summoned both Bacchus and Ceres to his rites, and he repeatedly refers to the recipients of his prayers and offerings as *superis* (13), *di patrii* (17), *deos* (26), *agricolis caelitibus* (36), and *ruris deos* (37) throughout the

---

[104] This theme also appears in Virgil's *Eclogues* 5.75. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.21-22 notes that *lustrare* usually means to purify with rituals such as processions and sacrifices. Lee-Stecum (2000) 183 suggests that the emphasis on purification suggests "a renewal of the rural focus of Tibullan elegy *purged* of the *amor* which was seen to be a determining element of its configuration in 1.1."

[105] See Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.15-16. For practices of ritual purity, cf. Ov. *Fast*. 2.654 (rites for Terminus) and 4.906 (ritual against Mildew). For the purity required when approaching the gods, cf. Cicero *De Legibus* 2.19.

[106] Ritual celibacy also occurs in Tibullus as 1.3.25-26, when Delia remains celibate for Isis. Clausen (1994) discusses celibacy specifically at the Ambarvalia *ad loc.* Virg. *Ecl.* 3.76-77. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.11-12 points out the irony in leaving the goddess of love out of a ceremony in an elegiac poem.

[107] Lee-Stecum (2000) 182-83 sees similar dynamics in poem 2.1 and emphasizes the way these early lines defy the reader's expectations about the controlling power of *amor* from Book 1.

first half of the poem.[108] He breaks this pattern, however, with an odd slip in line 9, "Let everything be given over to the service of the god" (*omnia sint operata deo*). The use of the singular stands out in a context where multiple gods have already been invoked and the where the lover-poet reaffirms the multiplicity of the gods involved in the rituals throughout the scene. Robert Maltby acknowledges the ambiguity of this reference by leaving out any identification of the god in his comments on line 9.[109] In fact, Maltby, Putnam, Murgatroyd, and Lee all leave off any attempt to specify the referent of *deo* here.[110] The line is noteworthy not only for the singular *deo* but by the extent of the god's influence: the lover-poet asks that *everything* be given over to the service of this god, whoever he may be.

I suggest that the ambiguity of *deo* allows for the invasion of Amor in this sacred space.[111] Throughout book 1, commentators almost invariably assume that when the lover-poet refers to an unnamed god, he is referring to Amor.[112] Indeed, the lover-poet makes a habit of implying Amor's name rather than including it specifically. Although we cannot conclusively resolve the ambiguity, the lover-poet's habit of leaving a god who resembles

---

[108] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.17-18 confirms that *di patrii* usually includes native gods such as Bacchus, Ceres, and the Lares.

[109] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.9 does link this passage with 1.10.20 and imply that this may be an instance of the use of a singular to represent a previous plural. I would argue that the two passages are quite different, leaving the referent of *deo* unclear. In the comparison text of poem 1.10, the lover-poet switches from referring to several Lares to just one, while in this passage in 2.1 the lover-poet has been listing several gods and goddesses, but now seems to refer to only one.

[110] See Maltby (2002), Putnam (1973), Murgatroyd (1994), and Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 2.1.9.

[111] I propose that this suspicion is confirmed by Amor's takeover of the lover-poet's rites in lines 81-90. cf. pgs. 69-71 of this chapter.

[112] See Maltby (2002), Putnam (1973), Murgatroyd (1980), and Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.3.21-22; 1.5.3-4, 20; 1.6.43-44; 1.8.7, 56; and 1.9.25-26.

Amor unnamed allows for the plausible connection between Amor and the unnamed god in this passage as well. Even though Amor has not appeared yet in this poem, the lover-poet's linguistic tic hints at the possibility of his appearance. With a simple shift from plural *deis* to singular *deo*, the lover-poet betrays how easily his fantasy can be infiltrated by Amor. More frightening still is the potential extent of Amor's power, as a god to whom "everything should be handed over" (9). The lover-poet hints at how easily Amor can creep back into his rustic ideal when he begins to use potentially erotic language such as *casta placent* (13) and *pura*/*puris* (13, 14) to describe the ideal attendees at his rites.[113] The presence of Amor is still covered over with ambiguity and double-meanings at this point in the poem, but these brief slips serve as a powerful warning of Amor's potential reappearance.

This linguistic aberration is passing, however, and in lines 17-24 the lover-poet returns to asking the rustic gods to purify and protect the fields and provide abundance for the farmers:

> di patrii, purgamos agros, purgamos agrestes:
> uos mala de nostris pellite limitibus.
> neu seges eludat messem fallacibus herbis,
> neu timeat celeres tardior agna lupos.
> tunc nitidus plenis confisus rusticus agris
> ingeret ardenti grandia ligna foco,
> turbaque vernarum, saturi bona signa coloni,
> ludet et ex virgis extruet ante casas.
> eventura precor. viden ut felicibus extis
> significet placidos nuntia fibra deos? (2.1.17-26)

[113] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.13-14 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.13 note that *castus* can mean "pure" in either a ritual or sexual sense, and Maltby suggests this double-meaning for *purus* as well. Both commentators argue that *placeo* (cf. 1.4.11 and 1.8.15) and *venio* (cf. 1.1.70) have erotic implications. The phrase *casta placent* occurs in a similar at Ov. *Fast.* 4.412 (referring to Ceres) and *Anth. Lat.* 935.5. Lee-Stecum (2000) 184 points out how the "amatory language" of purity and chastity could arouse suspicion in the reader about the lingering influence of Amor, although he suggests that that concern would be discouraged by the "signs" in 2.1.25-26.

> Gods of our fathers, we purify the fields, we purify the farmers:
> You, drive away troubles from our borders.
> May the crop not cheat the harvest with deceptive weeds,
> may the slower lamb not fear the swift wolves.
> Then the shining farmer, confident in his full fields
> will pile up large logs on a burning hearth,
> and a crowd of home-born slaves, good indicators of a satisfied farmer,
> will play and will build huts in the front out of twigs.
> I pray that these things will happen. Do you see how the entrails are favorable
> and the liver, carrying its message, shows that the gods are gentle?

The lover-poet asks the gods to drive away "troubles" (*mala*, 18), which include the "cheating" of "deceptive weeds" (*neu seges eludat messem fallacibus herbis*, 19) and the "fear" caused by "swift wolves" (*neu timeat celeres tardier agna lupos,* 20).[114] His request for protection from these common threats reminds the reader how easily his renewed fantasy can fall apart. The metaphors he chooses show that his ideal countryside is marked not only by a sense of sufficiency but also by freedom from falsehood and fear. The lover-poet insists that the farmers will celebrate if the gods grant his requests. The farmer will be *nitidus*, glowing with health and prosperity, and *plenis confisus…agris*, "confident in his full fields."[115] As in poems 1.1 and 1.10, the happiness which comes from abundance emerges as the driving force behind the lover-poet's rustic fantasy. The lover-poet even returns to the

[114] There are echoes in these lines of Virgil's *Georgics* 1.225ff *exspectata seges vanis elusit aristis*. Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.19-20 note that *eludat* is usually associated with cheating your opponent in a gladiatorial contest, although Virgil uses it in a similar context to Tibullus at Virg. *Georg.* 1.225f. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.19-20 compares similar metaphors of lying or cheating at Hor. *Epod.* 16.45, *Od.* 3.1.30, *Epist.* 1.7.87, Prop 2.15.31, and Ov. *Ars.* 1.401. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.19-20 suggests that the prayer for the slow lamb to be free from fear of the wolf is a prayer for the "impossible," and that the suggestion that such an impossibility might be possible is a kind of prophecy of a golden age, cf. Vergil *Ecl.* 4.22-25.

[115] Murgatroyd (1994) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.21 note that *nitidus* literally means "glowing" but here reflects the farmer's health and prosperity, citing *OLD* s.v. 3, 5 and 6. Cato uses the term in *Agr.* 1.2 to describe well-maintained estates. He advises prospective buyers to buy land where farmers keep their farms *nitidi*, or in excellent condition.

theme of having enough by describing the farmer specifically as *satur* “satisfied/well-fed” (21, 23).[116] Yet the lover-poet’s use of the subjunctive mood in lines 19-20 (*eludat…timeat…*) already suggests the tenuous hope of his wishes. As he concludes the scene, he declares, *eventura precor*, “I pray that these things will be so,” admitting that he is praying for things he does not yet have and letting slip his uncertainty about having such things in the future.[117]

As usual, the lover-poet quickly pushes aside his insecurities. This time he declares that he has read the entrails of his sacrifice and that the signs confirm that the gods will show favor to his requests (25-26).[118] He begins the celebration by asking the crowd to pass around the wine. “Let the wines celebrate this day: it is not shameful to get drunk on a festival day, nor for wandering feet to stumble [with drunkenness]” (*vina diem celebrant: non festa luce madere est rubor, errantes et male ferre pedes*, 29-30).[119] Although the lover-poet means for the call to drinking to be a call to celebration, his call for drunken revelry simultaneously recalls the scene of drunkenness that took over poem 1.10. In that poem, the drunken “battles of Venus” interrupted another peaceful rustic festival after the farmer and his wife returned home. An outbreak of Amor and of violence may not be as distant as the

[116] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.23-24 suggests that the meaning of *saturi* here is “rich, affluent.” I prefer the language of satisfaction and sufficiency, due to the negative associations with literal wealth (esp. *divitiae* and *opes*) in Tibullus’ poetry.

[117] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.25-26 notes “the main verb [*precor*] is a favorite of Tibullus’ suggesting, secondarily, his insecurity about his deepest desires (especially when juxtaposed, as here, with a future participle).”

[118] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.24 argues that *felix* has an active meaning here, “bringing prosperity,” cf. Virg. *Georg.* 1.345, where a sacrificial victim is described as *felix*.

[119] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.29-30 notes that such drunkenness is condoned at festivals at Livy 40.14.1 and Ov. *Fasti* 6.776-80.

lover-poet hopes, but thus far it seems possible that the absence of any lovers at the gathering (11-14) may prevent the excesses that Amor and Venus brought in poem 1.10.

The drinking party is not just in honor of the gods, but of Messalla. "But let each man say to his own cup, 'To Messalla!' and let their every word sound out the name of the one who is absent" (*sed 'bene Messallam' sua quisque ad pocula dicat, nomen et absentis singula verba sonent* 31-32).[120] The lover-poet addresses Messalla as if addressing a god, asking for his presence just as he does for other deities.[121] He asks for Messalla's inspiration as he sings a song for the rural gods (35-36).[122] The lover-poet's hymn quickly transforms into a retelling of their involvement in the early days of agriculture, when they taught people to harvest acorns and build huts and then to plow fields and plant vineyards (37-46).[123]

Yet the lover-poet's fantasy about the origins of agriculture takes a new turn in line 51, when he begins to sing about the beginnings of poetry:

---

[120] It is noteworthy that the lover-poet specifies that Messalla is not present at this country gathering. Cairns (1979) 130 argues that Messalla must have been participating in his own rituals in the city as one of the Arval Brothers. It is possible that Messalla had become founding member of the Arval Brothers when they were refounded by Augustus, see Cairns (1999) 225.

[121] cf. Murgatroyd (1994) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.35-36. Both note that *huc ades* and *aspira* are common formulae for invoking a god, cf. 1.7.49, 3.10.1, Virg. *Aen.* 9.525, and Ov. *Am.* 1.6.54.

[122] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.35-36 notes that *triumphatores* had a semi-divine status in Rome, so that the poet could invoke him like a god to inspire his hymn to the gods of the countryside. While Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.35-36 acknowledges the semi-divine status of *triumphatores*, he suggests that Tibullus is asking for Messalla's favor rather than literal inspiration.

[123] Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.37-38 suggests that there are links between the sequence of couplet 37-38 and Virg. *Ecl.* 2.31-33, cf. Wills (1996) 40 n.67, and that Tibullus is linking his rural hymn to the tradition of Virgil's *Eclogues*. Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.37-38 comments that "Early life was already a battle for survival. Its chief enemy to be routed was hunger." Thus, Putnam also emphasizes the need for sufficiency and abundance in the countryside.

agricola assiduo primum satiatus aratro
    cantavit certo rustica verba pede,
et satur arenti primum est modulatus avena
    carmen, ut ornatos diceret ante deos;
agricola et minio suffusus, Bacche, rubenti
    primus inexperta duxit ab arte choros;
huic datus a pleno memorabile munus ovili
    dux pecoris hircus: auxerat hircus opes. (2.1.51-58)[124]

A farmer, satisfied with continual plowing,
    first sang rustic words in a fixed meter,
and, satisfied, first played a song with a dry reed,
    so that he might speak before the decorated gods.
And a farmer colored with red lead, Bacchus,
    first lead choruses with inexperienced skill;
A ram, the leader of the herd, was given to him as a memorable gift
    from a full sheepfold: the ram increased his wealth.

According to the lover-poet, it is in this setting of newly plowed fields and abundant harvests where a farmer first composed poetry and "sang rustic words in a fixed meter" (52).[125] The lover-poet explictly describes this first singing farmer as *satiatus*, "satisfied" with continual plowing (51), connecting the beginnings of song to the recurring theme of satisfaction and sufficiency in the countryside. Line 53 reemphasizes this characterization of the farmer as "satisfied" by including the adjective *satur.*[126] Yet in this passage these terms also have another level of meaning.

Commentators usually explain *satiatus* and *satur* as punning references to the genre of satire.[127] Reading the passage in this way fits the lover-poet's hymn with other origin

[124] For the controversy over the text of 2.1.57-58, see Cairns (1998) 47-54.

[125] Scholars argue that this description is an allusion to the development of satire from Fescennine verse, see Maltby *ad loc.* 2.1.51-58.

[126] Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.53-54 glosses *satur* here as "after a good meal," and suggests comparison with lines 23 and 51.

[127] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 2.1.53 suggests that the close repetition of *satur* and *satiatus* "seems to be making a point" and "looks like an etymological reference to *satura*, cf. Livy

stories about Roman poetry that appear in Virgil, Horace, and Livy. Virgil describes the first songs as praises for Bacchus at the grape harvest, while Horace and Livy link early rustic songs to the Fescennine verses and eventually the beginnings of satire.[128] An explicit link between the words *satura* and *satur* is attested by the ancient commentators Pomponius Porphyrion and the scholiast on Persius' *Satires*.[129] With these allusions the lover-poet transforms his hymn to the rustic gods into a history of Latin poetry. As we will see, the lover-poet uses his hymn to the rustic gods to trace the development of Latin poetry from satire to drama and then to comedy and elegy as well. Throughout his narrative, the lover-poet uses illustrations of country life as a metaphorical backdrop for the context out of which each genre evolves. Ultimately, the hymn creates a programmatic representation of the defining characteristics of elegiac poetry and closely links the genre of elegy to the problems with sufficiency and contentment that we have seen throughout poems 1.1 and 1.10.

Although several scholars have noticed the punning allusion to the genre of satire in these lines, I suggest that this pun on the word *satur* becomes even more meaningful in light of the links we have seen between the words *satiatus* and *satis* and the lover-poet's rustic fantasy in Book 1. These links allow us to connect the lover-poet's narrative of the

---

7.2.7." cf. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.51-58. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.53 furthers the argument by suggesting that "It is perhaps no coincidence that both *satiatus* and *satur* are followed by a word beginning with a." For more on punning word-play with *satis* and *satura* in Horace *Sat.* 1.1 see Dufallo (2000).

[128] Virg. *Georg.* 2.385-96 describes the beginnings of rustic songs as praises for Bacchus. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.139-55 and Livy 7.2.5ff link these rustic songs with the Fescennine verses and suggest that they led to the beginnings of satire and drama. Putnam (1973) and Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.51-52 suggest comparison with Lucretius' account of the origins of poetry at 5.1379ff. See also Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.51-58 and *ad loc.* 2.1.52 and 53. Mynors (1990) suggests that Varro's lost works on early Roman theater may have been a common source for these stories in his note on Virg. Georg. 2.380ff.

[129] See Porph. *ad* Hor. *Epist*. 1.11.12 and Schol. Pers. *Sat*. Prol. 1.

development of Latin literature with some of the broader themes of his elegies thus far. If we connect *satiatus* and *satur* not only to *satura*, "satire," but also to the idea of *satis* which recurs throughout the lover-poet's visions of country life, we can read these lines as a metapoetic commentary, in which the lover-poet distinguishes the environment that produced satire from the circumstances which provoke his elegies. The feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment described in these lines eluded the lover-poet throughout Book 1, but here it is that same feeling that prompts the composition of the first satire. Since fear of loss and anxiety over having enough have been the constant inspiration for the lover-poet's songs, it is noteworthy that the lover-poet suggests that the genre of satire was born directly out of the state of sufficiency and plenty that the lover-poet could only dream of throughout Book 1.[130]

The lover-poet continues with a series of allusions to the origins of drama, which are accompanied by still more images of abundance and plenty. The lover-poet mentions the farmer covering his face in red paint, a possible allusion to the etymology of tragedy from the Greek τρύγες, red wine lees, which the first actors smeared on their faces.[131] He also

[130] The lines that follow provide opportunities for this metapoetic reading with the beginning of epic. Just after redescribing the farmer as satur, the lover-poet makes an allusion to Virgil's *Aeneid*. Both Maltby and Putnam point out a connection between line 53 and the line which Donatus claims once began the Aeneid, *ille ego qui quondam gracile modulatus avena/carmen*, see Maltby (2002) 62 *ad loc.* 2.1.53, as well as Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.53-54. Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.53-54 adds an additional comparison to Vergil *Ecl*. 1.2 and 10.51. If this connection holds, the lover-poet may be linking the idea of "having enough" not only to the genre of satire, but to the genre of epic as well.

[131] Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.55 mentions accounts of actors wearing makeup made from wine lees at Hor. *Ars* 275f and Evanthius *De Com.* 1.2. Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.55-56 also references Hor. *Ars* 275f and explains that the use of this makeup led to the equivocation on the word "tragedy" for both tragedies and comedies, see Aristophanes *Ach*. 499-500. Putnam concedes that the farmer may have simply painted himself as a part of a celebration. Pan appears painted red at Vergil *Ecl*. 10.27, cf. Priapus at 1.1.17. Triumphing Roman generals were painted bright red, see Pliny *Hist. Nat.* 33.111.

repeats the traditional connection between the worship of Bacchus and the beginnings of tragic performance.[132] The description of the farmer leading the choruses may allude to Aristotle's arguments that tragedy evolved out of the dithyramb.[133] When the lover-poet mentions that a goat was given to commemorate the farmers' performance, he comments that the goat comes from "full goat pens," confirming the prosperity that makes the performance and its celebration possible.[134] In the lover-poet's hymn to the rustic gods, forms of poetry such as satire and tragedy are products of an environment defined by satiety and fullness and by the vision of sufficiency which the lover-poet himself has repeatedly failed to grasp. Where will elegy fit in this idealized landscape?

Thus far in his hymn, the lover-poet has focused on the figure of the farmer (51, 55), but new characters begin to appear in the countryside in line 59:

> rure puer uerno primum de flore coronam
> fecit et antiquis imposuit Laribus;
> rure etiam teneris curam exhibitura puellis
> molle gerit tergo lucida uellus ouis;
> hinc et femineus labor est, hinc pensa colusque,
> fusus et apposito pollice uersat opus,
> atque aliqua assidue textrix operata Mineruae

---

[132] Maltby (2002) ad loc. 2.1.55 references the connection between Bacchus and tragedy by Diom. *Ars Gramm.* I 487.13 and the songs sung to Bacchus along with the sacrifice of a goat in the celebration at Virgil *Georg*. 2.393-96.

[133] Aristotle presents this theory at *Poet*. 1449a. Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.55-56 connects this description with Horace's description of Venus (*Carm.* 1.4.5) and of Gratia (*Carm.* 4.7.6), leading their respective choruses. The link between rustic festivals and dramatic performances was still current in the time of Augustus, when seven days preceding and including the Cerealia (April 19) were devoted to *ludi scaenici*, see Duckworth (1952) 77 and Taylor (1937) 286.

[134] Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.57-58 notes that the herd had grown so full that a goat could be removed without threat to the group. The goat-prize alludes to the etymology of tragedy from the Greek τράγος and the legend that a goat was originally provided as a prize for the winning playwright. cf. Putnam (1973), Murgatroyd (1994), and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.57-58 and Brink (1971) on Hor. *Ars* 220. See also Szemerenyi (1975).

cantat, et a pulso tela sonat latere. (2.1.59-66)

In the countryside, a boy first made a crown out of spring flowers
and placed it on the ancient Lares.
Also in the countryside, a bright sheep, about to offer a task
to tender girls, bears a soft fleece on its back.
Also from here comes women's work, from here comes the wad of wool and the distaff,
and the spindle turns its yarn when a thumb is applied.
And some weaving-woman, dedicated to Minerva, sings tirelessly,
and she makes the loom resound by beating the side.

The lover-poet introduces several new characters, including a young boy and several girls. The boy is preoccupied with his offerings to the Lares, crafting flower garlands and crowns in order to present them to the gods.[135] The girls are described as future wool-workers, making use of the sheep fleece (61-64). The lover-poet foretells their dedication to the distaff and spindle and to the goddess Minerva.[136] Although the lover-poet brings a boy and several girls into his country fantasy, he initially describes them as separate from one another. They do not seem to have any relationships with each another, and both are dedicated to the traditionally pious duties expected of them according to their gender. As he has done throughout poem 2.1 thus far, the lover-poet stays away from including any erotic relationships in his country fantasy, even as the usual suspects begin to appear in it.

Yet even in these seemingly innocuous scenes, there are hints that Amor will soon appear on the horizon. Although the boys are offering their garlands specifically to the Lares

[135] Murgatroyd (1994) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.59-60 note that children in general were under the care of the Lares, and that these lines reflect the traditional piety associated with early rustic life elsewhere in Tibullus, cf. 1.1.39-40 and 1.10.19-20. Murgatroyd adds that the boy could also be a slave, since slaves were associated with the worship of the Lares, cf. Suet. *Dom.* 17.2. Garlands are also offered to the Lares elsewhere in Latin literature at Juv. 12.87 and Plaut. *Aul . prolog.* 25.

[136] For a detailed discussion of Minerva as the goddess of spinning and weaving and of the metonymy of *Minerva* for "weaving" in Augustan poetry, see Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.65-66.

(60), those garlands still evoke the elegiac motif of the lover-poet offering a garland at the beloved's door.[137] The description of the girls as *tenerae* (61) also marks them as potential elegiac *puellae*, since this adjective is usually associated with the beloved women of elegy.[138] Even without these generic echoes, the simple presence of boys and girls themselves might make the reader suspicious that trouble is brewing in the lover-poet's idealized world. After all, most of the lover-poet's poems in Book 1 involved his love for either a *puer* (1.4, 1.8, 1.9) or a *puella* (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6).

As if on cue, Amor suddenly bursts into the peaceful pictures of life in the countryside in line 67:

> ipse quoque inter agros interque armenta Cupido
> natus et indomitas dicitur inter equas.
> illic indocto primum se exercuit arcu:
> ei mihi, quam doctas nunc habet ille manus!
> nec pecudes velut ante petit: fixisse puellas
> gestit et audaces perdomuisse viros. (2.1.67-72)

> They say that Cupid himself was also born among the fields
> and among the livestock and among the untamed mares.
> There he first practiced with his unlearned bow:
> woe is me, what learned hands that boy has now!
> He does not seek out herd animals like before: he takes delight in
> attacking young girls and thoroughly taming bold men.

[137] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.13-14 notes that lovers' offerings of garlands at their beloved's door first appear in Hellenistic poetry, cf. *AP* 5.191.5-6 (Meleager). Perhaps the most well-known examples of this motif in elegy occur at Prop. 1.16.7 and Ov. *Am.* 1.6.67-70. McKeown (1989) *ad loc.* Ov. *Am.* 1.6.67-68 invites comparison with Lucr. 4.1177f, describing the shut-out lover at his beloved's doorstep, as well as Ov. *Ars* 2.528 *and Rem.* 32.

[138] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.61-62 connects this word with love and with girls in elegy in particular. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.61 notes that the phrase *tenera puella* is used of the mistress in elegy at Prop. 2.25.41, Tib. 1.3.63, 10.64, and Ov. *Am.* 2.1.33, 2.14.37, among others, and that the use of this vocabulary prepares the way for the arrival of Amor.

In spite of all the lover-poet's efforts to exclude lover's from his rites (11-12) and erotic relationships from his idyllic representation of the countryside (59-66), Cupid is born right in the midst of his country fantasy, "among the fields and among the livestock and among the untamed mares" (67-68). In poem 1.10, Amor's power to disrupt the world at Peace came from exploiting the erotic relationship between husband and wife, which was necessary for a happy family to become a part of the lover-poet's rustic world. But in poem 2.1, even such idealized relationships between a husband and wife are nowhere to be found. Boys and girls are present, but they are each preoccupied with their own pious duties. Yet in spite of this sanitized setting, Cupid still is born among the fields and herds themselves.[139]

The originality of Tibullus' story of the birth of Amor reinforces the reader's inclination to unpack the implications of this story.[140] When the landscape of the country fantasy itself gives birth to Amor, the lover-poet suggests that erotic relationships are not in fact a necessary condition for Amor to emerge. Even though the boys and girls appear

---

[139] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.67-80 traces the link from *tenerae puellae* to Cupid, although he admits *ad loc.* 2.1.67-68 that "the progression [to Cupid] is unexpected," because of how infrequently Cupid is associated with the countryside by other authors. Lee-Stecum (2000) 185 suggests that a reader who had been suspecting the movements of *amor* in the background of this poem would "feel an initial rush of 'recognition' (of being proved 'right')" when Cupid appears on the scene.

[140] The birth of Amor may be linked to the excessive sexuality associated with herds and horses, see Virg. *Georg*. 3.209-41 and 3.266ff. Murgatroyd (1994), Lee (1990), and esp. Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.67-68 note that although the lover-poet claims to be repeating a story told by others, this is the first extant example of this tradition. Similar examples in earlier literature include Soph. *Ant*. 785 (where Eros dwells in the houses of "those who pasture in the fields" ἀγρονόμοις), Eur. *Hipp*. 1276f. (where Eros charms animals on the mountainsides and in the sea), and Plat. *Symp*. 196a (where Eros is said to dwell among flowers). The tradition reappears after Tibullus in *Pervigilium Veneris* 77. Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 2.1.69-90 and esp. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.67-68 emphasize Cupid's role as "the last and most important" of the rustic gods. They do not explore, however, how his inclusion in this group relates to the relationship between Amor and the countryside throughout the corpus.

shortly before Amor's birth, it is interesting that he does not appear among them, but among the fields and herds in particular. By representing the birth of Amor in this way, the lover-poet makes clear that Amor can disrupt even the most idyllic fantasy world, regardless of the purity or piety of its inhabitants. Worse still, Amor is inherently violent from the beginning. From the moment Amor appears, the lover-poet defines him by his aggressive nature and by the use of the bow.[141] The lover-poet's narrative of Amor's origins suggests that the lover-poet's fantasy of wholeness, satiety, and abundance can never escape Amor's destructive powers. Amor's forceful and violent influence can arise anywhere, even in the most idealized of settings, and transform them according to his will.

As in the earlier parts of the hymn, the lover-poet links what happens in this scene with the story of the development of Latin poetry. The birth of Amor coincides with a transition to allusions to comedy and to elegy. The lover-poet claims that Cupid's weapons were first "unlearned," but are now powerfully "learned" (69-70).[142] It may be that these lines serve as a metapoetic commentary on the shift from the importance of erotic narratives in comedy to their prominence in elegiac poetry. Just as the term *satur* can also serve as an allusion to satire, the term *doctus* serves as an allusion to Hellenistic poetry, and thus to the

---

[141] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.69-70 notes that this couplet includes the first appearance of Cupid's weapons in Tibullus' corpus. Cupid only holds weapons in Book 2, cf. 2.5.105. For Cupid's weapons, cf. Ov. *Am.* 2.5.1 (a quiver), 3.9.7-8 (quiver, bow, and torches) and Kenney (1990) on Cupid's weapons in Apul. *Met.* 4.30.4. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.81-82 notes that Eros also carries arrows in Greek poetry, such as Eur. *Trojan Women* 255, Asclepiades *AP* 12.75, 162, 166, Meleager *AP* 5.180.1, and Philodemus 16.3 (=*AP* 5.124.3). Cupid appears with his torches as well at 2.4.6 and 2.6.16. Although Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.81-82 suggests that the arrows and torches of Amor are proverbial and "have no place" at the celebration, it is uncertain that they can be kept away.

[142] Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 2.1.69-70 notes parallels for Cupid's archery skills in Prop. 1.7.15 *certo arcu* and Ovid *Am.* 1.1.25 *certas sagittas* (with McKeown (1989)'s note). The phrase occurs in Tibullus for the first time, but becomes common in Ovid and later poets.

elegists as well.[143] This reading is reinforced by the transition from allusions to comedy to allusions to elegy that occurs in the next several lines:

> nec pecudes velut ante petit: fixisse puellas
> gestit et audaces perdomuisse viros.
> hic iuveni detraxit opes, hic dicere iussit
> limen ad iratae verba pudenda senem; (2.1.71-74)
>
> He does not seek out herd animals like before: he takes delight in
> attacking young girls and thoroughly taming bold men.
> He drains wealth from a young man; he commands an old man to speak
> shameful words at the threshold of an angry girl.

After his sudden appearance, Amor does not stay within the confines of the animal world, or even those of the countryside. The world of the rustic fantasy transforms into the world of comedy, as the farmers, boys, and girls transform into the stock figures of that genre. [144] Young men pour out their wealth in pursuit of their girlfriends and old men lie in disgrace on the doorsteps of angry mistresses.[145] Amor runs roughshod over men and women, young and

---

[143] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.4.61-62 notes that the term *doctus* was applied to poets and to the Muses beginning with Catullus (35.17, 65.2) and Lucretius (2.600). He adds that several Latin poets call Catullus himself *doctus*, cf. Ovid *Am.* 3.9.62, Lygd. [Tib.] 3.6.41 and Martial 1.61.1 and 7.99.7. The tradition of "learned" poets goes back to Greek poetry, see Cairns (1979) 11-12, Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) on Hor. *Od.* 1.1.29, and Navarro Antolin (1996) on Lygd. [Tib.] 3.6.41. The term refers refers to literary and mythological learning and is closely linked with Callimachean poetics in the Latin poets. Tibullus implies that he is a member of the *docti poetae* at 1.4.61-62, see Maltby (2002) *ad loc.*

[144] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.73-74 notes on the reference in these lines to the stock characters of the *iuvenis* and the *senes* in comedy, cf. McKeown (1989) 262 and 281. Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.73-74 point out that the young man who fritters away his wealth for love and the foolishness of pursuing love affairs in old age are both stock themes in comedy that make their way into elegy. By including these images first, the lover-poet seems to acknowledge the development of elegy through new comedy.

[145] For a young man wasting his money on his girlfriend, cf. Menaechmus in Plautus' *Menaechmi* and Ctesipho in Terence' *Adelphoe*. For an old man making a fool of himself for a girl, cf. Demaenetus in Plautus, *Asinaria,* Philoxenus and Nicobulus in Plautus' *Bacchides,* Demipho in Plautus' *Cistellaria,* Lysidamus in Plautus' *Casina,* Demipho in Plautus' *Mercator,* and Antipho in Plautus' *Stichus*.

old, country folk and city dwellers alike.[146] Amor turns the world of sufficiency that defined the first half of the hymn upside down. Now he "drains wealth" (*detraxit opes*, 73) where before the gift of a ram "had increased wealth" (*auxerat opes*, 58) and the "rustic words" (*rustica verba*, 52) of the farmer's songs are now the "shameful words" (*verba pudenda*, 74) of a locked-out lover.[147] The sense of abundance and piety evaporates, degenerating into prodigality and shame.

Soon, the poem takes on a more elegiac tone, including allusions to poems by all three extant elegists:[148]

> hoc duce custodes furtim transgressa iacentes
> ad iuvenem tenebris sola puella venit,
> et pedibus praetemptat iter, suspensa timore,
> explorat caecas cui manus ante vias.
> a miseri quos hic graviter deus urget, at ille
> felix cui placidus leniter afflat Amor. (2.1.75-80)
>
> With him as her leader a girl, alone, passes stealthily by her resting guards and
> comes to a young man in the darkness.
> And she tests the way ahead of her with her feet, hesitant with fear,
> a girl whose hand explores the blind paths in front of her.
> O miserable are those whom this god pressures heavily, but that one
> is fortunate on whom gentle Love blows softly.

---

[146] In this interpretation I differ from Gardner (2013) 111 on this same passage, where she argues that "placing love in the litany of divine services to humankind…diminishes its significance." She suggests that love's "transgressions" are here "couched explicitly in terms of age-appropriate behaviors—both acknowledged and contained." I read Amor's role differently in light of the change of tone in the poem after Amor's arrival and the shift in focus after these lines onto Amor alone.

[147] cf. Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.73-74.

[148] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.73-74 comments that in lines 71-74 the poem transitions from the countryside to the "world of elegy." Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.75-76 points out that *iuvenis* is "almost a technical term" for the male beloved in elegy. For the use of *venio* meaning "come to a lover's assignation", and for its possible etymological links with Venus, see Maltby (1993) 273-74.

The image of the young girl feeling her way in the darkness recalls a similar encounter by the lover-poet and his girlfriend in the streets of the city in poem 1.2.[149] The description of Amor as *dux* alludes directly to the metaphor of *militia amoris* that frequently appears in elegiac poetry,[150] and the *custodes* outside the girl's door are common adversaries of a locked-out lover.[151] The people whom Amor urges on are described as *miseri,* "miserable," a term linked almost exclusively with the lover-poet and his elegiac suffering in Tibullus' poetry.[152] All of these allusions point to a metapoetic commentary on the origins of elegy in these lines.

Read in this way, the lover-poet suggests that elegy does not result from the same sense of satisfaction and abundance from which satire and early drama emerged. Elegy only comes about after the disruption of that fantasy by the violent arrival of Amor and the development of the genre of comedy which first embraced him. The lover-poet locates the origins of elegiac poetry at the point where love and violence and learnedness coincide, and where the sense of abundance and happiness that allowed for the creation of satire and drama are nowhere to be found. The lover-poet now calls "happy" (*felix*, 80) any man whom Amor does not harass as much others, suggesting that now he harasses them all, just to differing

---

[149] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.75-76 compares this passage with 1.2.15ff., 1.6.59ff., 1.8.63ff., and 1.9.43f. He also notes the lover's deception of the guards at 1.6.9-10. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.75-76 also compares this passage with examples of sneaking past guards in 1.2.17ff and 1.8.56ff.

[150] The battles of love are a trope of elegy in general. Murgatroyd (1975) 59-79 and Lyne (1980) 71-78 discuss *militia amoris* at length. See also Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) *ad loc.* Hor. *Od.* 1.17.24 and cf. McKeown (1989) *ad loc.* Ov. *Am.* 1.7.

[151] cf. Tib. 1.2.5, 15, 1.6.10, 1.8.55, 2.4.32-33; Prop. 2.23; Ov. *Am.* 2.2 and 2.3.

[152] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.79-80 comments that *graviter* is also used by other poets to describe the sufferings caused by love, see Hor. *Epod.* 11.1 and Prop. 2.30.7-8, 3.8.10, 21.2.

degrees. The lover-poet's country fantasy has now been thoroughly thwarted by the disruptive power of Amor, and the lover-poet ties Amor's interference specifically to the emergence of comedy and then of elegy. Through his hymn to the rustic gods, the lover-poet characterizes elegy as learned poetry about the disruptive and destructive movements of Amor.

The rest of poem 2.1 plays out the implications of Amor's arrival for the world of the lover-poet beyond the world of the hymn. At this point the presence of Amor has completely overshadowed the pictures of purity, brightness, and ritual celebration that filled the first half of the poem. The lover-poet returns to his role as priest, but now he leaves out any mention of the rustic gods, and he addresses Amor alone:

> sancte, veni dapibus festis, sed pone sagittas
> et procul ardentes hinc, precor, abde faces.
> vos celebrem cantate deum pecorique vocate:
> voce palam pecori, clam sibi quisque vocet,
> aut etiam sibi quisque palam, nam turba iocosa
> obstrepit et Phrygio tibia curva sono. (2.1.81-86)
>
> Sacred one, come to our festival feasts, but set down your arrows
> And hide your burning torches far from here.
> You all, sing of the celebrated god and call on him for the herd:
> May each call openly with his voice for the herd, secretly for himself,
> or may each call openly for himself as well, for the joking crowd
> resounds, and the curved flute with its Phrygian sound.

Leaving behind his earlier prayers to the gods of the countryside more generally, the lover-poet now invites only Amor's presence. He pleads with Amor to set aside his violent tendencies and to leave his weapons behind.[153] But unlike the favorable omens from lines

[153] Lee-Stecum (2000) 187 suggests that these lines may be read "as an attempt to re-appropriate the power of Cupid/Amor within a benign rural context," although he does not necessarily take a stand on its success or failure.

25-26, he provides no indication that Amor will honor his request.[154] From this point on, Amor is the only god who appears in the poem. Amor does not seem to join the rustic gods, so much as to eclipse them entirely. His takeover of the lover-poet's rustic rites confirms the reader's suspicion in line 9 that the *deus* to whom everything must eventually give way is in fact Amor himself (*omnia sint opera deo,* "Let everything be given over to the service of the god"). Beginning in line 81, everything has indeed been handed over to him. Amor even replaces Messalla as the object of the audience's celebration, as the lover-poet now calls Amor *celeber* (83) and bids the audience to sing for him instead. [155] Amor has sabotaged the lover-poet's attempts to commune with the gods of the countryside, his sense of satisfaction and safety, and even his relationship with his patron. The peaceful rituals of rustic religion transform into shrieking and Phrygian flute-playing (85-86) in the name of Amor.[156]

As the poem draws to a close, the lover-poet attempts to limit Amor's expansion one last time. The lover-poet makes an appeal to the audience to invoke the power of Amor only

---

[154] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.81-82 notes that the use of the verb *precor* points to the lover-poet's uncertainty about his prayer's effectiveness.

[155] Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. comments that *celebrem deum* is "deliberately vague," but agrees that Amor is probably meant. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.83 claims that the use of the term *celeber* links the patron and the gods, but I think in this case it seems to connect Messalla with Amor specifically. It is true that the adjective is frequently used of the gods in the sense of "honored" or "revered by celebration" by other Augustan poets, cf. Hor. *Od.* 2.12.20 (of Diana), Ov. *Met.* 1.747 (of Isis), [Tib.] 3.10.23 (of Apollo).

[156] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.7.47 notes that the *tibia* (like the Greek *aulos*) was a pair of pipes associated with the worship of Bacchus and a general sense of celebration, cf. Comotti (1989) 67-72. The pipes were considered a Phrygian invention, see Isid. *Orig.* 3.21.4. Putnam (1973), Lee (1990), and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.86 note that the "Phrygian sound" was associated with the orgiastic rites of the Magna Mater, Cybele, and corresponds to 1.4.67-70 and Catullus 63. The pipes were considered a Phrygian invention, see Isid. *Orig.* 3.21.4.

to themselves, privately,[157] but the chaos of the music and shouting soon cause him to give up these efforts. The rapid spread of Amor has filled his celebration with confusion and threats of violence, heralded by the sounds of the Phyrgian flutes.[158] The reader may recall that the lover-poet has linked Phrygian music with the threat of castration, especially castration through self-mutilation, since poem 1.4. In that poem, the lover-poet wishes that boys who reject his love would become followers of Cybele and "cut off their worthless members to Phrygian tunes" (*et secet ad Phrygios vilia membra modos,* 1.4.70), emulating the practice of self-castration associated with the priests of Cybele.[159] While lines 85-86 of poem 2.1 include Phrygian music as an illustration of the general confusion and turmoil that Amor brings, the echoes of castration rites may add another layer of meaning at this point of crisis. The potential threat of literal castration suggests the logical conclusion of Amor's inherent violence, implying that the relentless pressure of Amor may lead to permanent frustration and even self-destruction. The Phrygian flute-playing alludes to the possibility that by eroding the lover-poet's self-control, Amor can make him dangerous to himself. This danger persists regardless of the lover-poet's attempts to escape Amor by banishing lovers from his rites and performing purification rituals in his idealized countryside.

[157] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.83-84 sees in these lines an allusion to participants having sex at the festival, far from the insistence on chastity that the lover-poet proclaimed in lines 11-14.

[158] Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.85-86 comments that the mention of "Phrygian flutes" could refer to the tradition of the Phrygian invention of the pipes, but may also refer explicitly to the Phrygian mode of excited music or even the wild and loud music associated with the Phrygian goddess Cybele, cf. Ovid *A.A.* 1.508 and *Fasti* 4.189-90. It is noteworthy that Phrygian flutes were also used to accompany the performance of New Comedy, continuing the close connection between comedy and elegy in this passage, see Moore (2012) 48-49.

[159] cf. Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.4.67-70. Perhaps the most famous account of this practice occurs in Catullus 63.

The feeling of dread grows throughout the final couplets of the poem:[160]

> ludite: iam Nox iungit equos, currumque sequuntur
> matris lascivo sidera fulva choro,
> postque venit tacitus furvis circumdatus alis
> Somnus et incerto Somnia nigra pede. (2.1.87-90)

> Play: for Night yokes her horses, and the yellow stars
> follow their mother's chariot with an impudent chorus,
> and after her silent sleep comes, surrounded by black wings,
> and black dreams on an uncertain foot.

The poet encourages the audience to "play" as Night, Sleep, and black Dreams close in around them. In the early lines of the poem, he had told lovers to stay away from his rites, but now he calls the audience to play in terms that are markedly erotic. The verb *ludo* (87) is a common euphemism for sexual intercourse in the poetry of Catullus and the elegists.[161] The surrender to Amor is complete, and with it comes a surrender to darkness. Night, Sleep, and Dreams close in, and the lover-poet's descriptions echo descriptions of Death elsewhere in the poems.[162] Amor's arrival in the world of the countryside has evolved far from an

---

[160] In this interpretation I differ from Murgatroyd (1994) 22 who suggests that there is "an overall serenity and happiness" which means "we are quite unprepared for the Nemesis affair with its growing blackness and bleakness." I argue that this "growing blackness and bleakness" is already quite apparent as 2.1 draws to a close.

[161] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.87 comments that "*ludite*: suggests 'play' of all kinds, including amatory play," and Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.87-88 comments "*ludite*: of 'game' in every sense." Murgatroyd (1994) *ad loc.* 2.1.87-88 compares this use of *ludo* with Catullus 61.204, Prop. 2.6.4, and Prop. 2.15.21. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 2.1.87-88 privileges the picture of playfulness over the "latent, more negative connotations of Nox," but I argue that the violent aspects of Amor's arrival, the chaos of the Phrygian music, and the eventual connections between Nox and Death bring those negative connotations to the forefront. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.88 agrees that the expression *lascivo choro* "probably also continues the erotic associations of 84ff."

[162] cf. Tibullus 1.3.4. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.3.3-4 notes that *atra* is the most common epithet of death in Latin literature. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.4-5 details the association between darkness and death and the underworld throughout Greek and Latin literature, including Theognis 707, 1014, Hor. *Od.* 1.28.13, 2.14.17, Virgil *Aen.* 6.132, Prop. 4.11.2, 5, Ov. *Her.* 2.72, *Trist.* 1.2.22, and Lygd. [Tib.] 3.3.37, 5.5. Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) on

unsettling interruption of a vision of piety and prosperity. Now Amor is the precursor to troubled sleep and dark nightmares and the looming specter of Death.

In poem 2.1, the lover-poet attempts to start anew and to reimagine a happy life in the countryside without the threats of Amor that plagued him throughout poems 1.1 and 1.10. Yet the birth of Amor in the midst of that fantasy reveals that the lover-poet's attempts to purify his poetry and to escape the influence of Amor are all in vain. Through his hymn to the rustic gods, the lover-poet creates a narrative of the origins of elegy, and Amor emerges as its driving force. Neither piety nor purity can protect the lover-poet from the destruction and devastation that Amor brings.

Throughout the three poems we have explored so far, the lover-poet's country fantasy holds out the promise of a world of sufficiency and happiness that he can never fully realize. However the lover-poet reimagines this ideal world, it is susceptible to attacks and interventions from without and vulnerable to the disruptive force of Amor from within. In his dream of rustic happiness, the lover-poet seeks a feeling of sufficiency, an ideal of peace, and a world of pious purity free from the interference of Love, but his efforts fail miserably. His dreamed-for sufficiency cannot satisfy (1.1), his imagined peace breeds violence (1.10), and his fantasy of a world which excludes erotic relationships gives birth to Cupid himself

---

Hor. *Od.* 2.13.21 connects the term *furvus*, "dusky," with Death. Black wings are a common characteristic of Night in Virg. *Aen.* 8.369 and of Death in Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.58. The adjective *nigra* also reminds the reader of the description of *Mors nigra* at 1.3.4. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.87-90 notes that Night had no official cult in Rome, but that the Romans associated her with chthonic rites, cf. Virg. *Aen.* 6.249-50, and magic. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.89-90 adds that Sleep and Dreams were children of Night, just like the stars, cf. Hes. *Theog.* 212, but that Sleep was also the brother of Death. Maltby confirms the links between the silent, dark arrival of Sleep and the approach of Death in 1.1.70 and 1.10.34. Sleep is also linked to the underworld in Virg. *Aen.* 6.278, 390, and 893. Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 2.1.89-90 note that the *incerto pede* on which nightmares approach contrasts with the *certo pede* of the farmer's first song in 2.1.52.

(2.1). By poem 2.1, the lover-poet's fantasy of happiness in the countryside seems like just a precursor to the main event of Amor's disruption and destruction of his hopes for fulfillment.

The Search for Satisfaction and the Disruptive Nature of Desire

Thus far we have seen the importance of the lover-poet's country fantasy for framing Books 1 and 2 and explored how Amor reappears to disrupt each iteration of that fantasy. In doing so we have unpacked the lover-poet's programmatic poems with little or no mention of the key characters that we expect in an elegiac narrative. Delia, Messalla, Marathus, and Nemesis have all remained in the background. But by decentering the characters of the elegies—whether beloveds, patrons, or friends—we have been able to recenter desire as their primary focus.

I say "recenter" because we have simply shifted our attention to dynamics in the text that were more difficult to see when we focused on particular characters or topics in the elegies. In all his country fantasies, the lover-poet returns most consistently to his longing for satisfaction, satiety, and happiness in general. The country fantasies reveal that when we ask, "What does the Tibullan lover-poet want?" the answer is more complex than "his girlfriend, Delia" or "his boyfriend, Marathus" or even "his family farm." The constantly shifting details of the lover-poet's rustic fantasy circle around the concepts of contentment and fulfillment, regardless of what he imagines "having enough" might mean at any particular moment.

It is as this point that we can bring in Lacan's theory of subjectivity to make sense of the lover-poet's construction of his country fantasy around an elusive sense of satisfaction and completeness. In Lacanian theory, the human subject is split from its inception by an

ever-present sense of lack that keeps it perpetually searching for a sense of wholeness. For Lacan, this split is intimately connected with the subject's coming-to-be in language. In our everyday lives, as we strive for coherence, constructing a self and a world that we can make sense of, Lacan's insistence on paying attention to the inconsistencies, contraditions, and gaps in our conscious life can seem at least annoying, and at most downright infuriating. But in a text like Tibullus,' where the inconsistencies, contradictions, and gaps in his poems' meaning evoke similar frustrations, Lacan's theory of the split subject becomes a compelling way to account for these poems' complexity. Lacan's account of how desire disrupts the subject's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and how each subject attempts to mediate his desire through language gives us hope for a different kind of coherence. It provides a framework that can encompass contradiction, that expects non-sense, and that finds meaning in fragments, not just wholes. If we read the lover-poet's ever-evolving fantasies of happiness in the countryside as a series of reflections on the human subject's struggle for satisfaction and an exploration of the forces that interfere with his sense of fulfillment, we can use Lacanian theory to understand what we see in Tibullus' poems. Lacan's theoretical framework can help us unpack the obsession with "having enough" that anchors the programmatic poems we have discussed in this chapter, as well as the lover-poet's complex reflections on the role of Amor in his fantasy world.

The Split Subject

One of Lacan's most important formulations is his concept of the split subject, which he approaches in several different ways throughout his seminars. Like his predecessor, Freud, Lacan emphasizes the importance of the unconscious and its role in psychological life. He famously proposes that "the unconscious is structured like a language," arguing that

the unconscious operates through the same mechanisms, such as substitution and displacement, that govern our use of language.[163] But on Lacan's view the subject is not identical with the unconscious chain of signifiers that persists behind each person's conscious thought. Nor is the subject identical with that conscious "self," which each person believes him or herself to be. Instead, the subject in Lacanian theory is the split between these two layers of psychological life, which appears in the momentary failures and inconsistencies in speech that reveal the presence of the subject's unconscious.[164] By focusing on these moments of contradiction, paradox, or inconsistency, Lacan discovers the subject at the points of discontinuity in a person's conscious life.[165] As a result, the "subject" of which Lacan speaks only ever appears in a fleeting moment, eclipsed by the very signifiers that reveal it. The subject for Lacan only ever appears as this breach in discourse.[166]

If Lacan's unconscious were simply a string of such incoherent moments, however, there would be little we could do to study this "subject." But for Lacan, the unconscious is not only defined by these gaps, but by repetition.[167] For Lacan, there are structuring principles to the unconscious that we can map out by studying the fleeting moments in which it appears. What we see of the unconscious is in no way due to chance. There is a network of

---

[163] Lacan *SXI* 20-21, 149 and *Écrits* 505-508/420-423, 511/425, 688-89/578.

[164] J-A Miller (1995) 10 and Fink (1995) 45. cf. Lacan *SXI* 126 and *Écrits* 800-801/677-78.

[165] Lacan *SXI* 25.

[166] Fink (1995) 41. cf. Lacan *SXI* 25.

[167] J-A Miller (1995) 10-11. cf. Lacan *SXI* 45.

signifiers that we can trace, which constantly circle back to the same place.[168] Lacan calls this place the Real, a place to which the subject's unconscious always returns, but which the signifying chain of unconscious (and conscious) thought can never reach.[169] The most accessible example of this phenomenon is the difficulty people face in articulating traumatic experiences.[170] Even through extensive therapy, there is something about a Real experience of trauma to which the unconscious must always return but cannot fully articulate. The repetition of the unconscious is always the repetition of this failure, a repetition of an attempt to reach something that can never be found.[171] For Lacan, this failure is fundamental to all attempts to explain human experience using language, since language can never fully represent the Real.[172]

How did the subject become split in the first place? How did language cut it off from the Real and trap it in this cycle of repetition? Lacan describes the logical structure of the subject's splitting through two processes, which he calls "alienation" and "separation."[173] Alienation is the result of a person's birth into a world already filled with a language that is not his own.[174] Often even before a child is born, a place is prepared for it within language by the assignment of a name. Yet at the same time as the subject is born into language by

---

[168] Lacan *SXI* 48-55.

[169] J-A Miller (1995) 14. cf. Lacan *SXI* 49, 53-54, 61-62 and *Écrits* 34/24-25, 40/29, and 518-19/431-32.

[170] Lacan *SXI* 55.

[171] J-A Miller (1995) 14. cf. Lacan *SXI* 49, 53-54, 61-62.

[172] J-A Miller (1995) 13.

[173] Lacan explains alienation rather succinctly at *Écrits* 840-42/712-714 and *SXI* 207-208 and 210-213 and separation similarly at *Écrits* 842-44/714-16 and *SXI* 213-215 and 218-219.

[174] Fink (1995) 5 and 52. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 279/231 and 495-96/413-14.

being assigned a place within it, the subject is destroyed by that same signifier, replaced and erased by it.[175]

Lacan illustrates the forced choice of alienation with the illustration of the choice provided by a thief's threat of "your money or your life."[176] If the subject embraces language, it gains meaning produced by the signifier. But because that signifier names a void, bringing into being a subject that was nothing before, the subject appears as non-being at the very same time as it receives its first meaning.[177] If instead the subject refuses language and chooses being, the subject never appears within language, and it loses both its meaning and its being in a world ruled by language.[178] Alienation is the first loss experienced by the subject. It is the loss of being, the first lack which sends the subject searching for a sense of wholeness it supposes must have existed before it came to be within language.[179]

The process of alienation only progresses over time, as the child learns to speak for himself and communicate his desires to his parents or caregivers.[180] Because children must learn the language of their caregivers, they must use the words of others to describe their wants and needs. As they use those words, they subtly shape the child's demands after the wants and needs of others before them.[181] For this reason, in alienation the subject

---

[175] Soler (1995) 43. cf. Lacan *SXI* 198-199 and 207 and *Écrits* 800/677 and 802/679.

[176] Soler (1995b) 46-47. cf. Lacan *SXI* 212.

[177] Fink (1995) 52-53 and Fink (1995c) 228. cf. Lacan *SXI* 141, 210, and 218.

[178] cf. Lacan *SXI* 211 and *Écrits* 840-42/712-14

[179] Fink (1995c) 228.

[180] Fink (1995) 5-6.

[181] Fink (1995) 6.

encounters what Lacan calls the Other of language.[182] This Other transforms our desires even as we express them, even though it is the only way that we can communicate those desires in the first place.[183] Lacan argues that the alienation of the subject within this Other is the reason why a person can both want and not want both the same thing and why a person is never quite satisfied when he gets what he thought he wanted.[184] Since our spoken demands never quite express the Real, it is not at all surprising that we can never quite say what we want, and that what we say we want can never quite satisfy.

The subject encounters another lack in the process Lacan calls separation. In separation, the subject encounters a lack in the Other.[185] As the subject enters language and interacts with other subjects, it senses a lack in the space between the signifiers in the Other. Since language can never fully represent the Real, and it is impossible for any subject to say precisely what he or she wants, [186] the subject constantly asks himself what the Other *really means* or *really wants* when he or she says something to him.[187] For this reason, the lack in the Other and the desire of the Other amount to the same thing. The subject recognizes the lack in the Other as equivalent to the lack that he has become as a subject alienated within language.[188] In separation, the subject assumes that the lack in the Other corresponds with

[182] Fink (1995) 5. cf. Lacan *SXI* 203 and *Écrits* 689/579.

[183] Fink (1995) 6 and Laurent (1995) 22. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 690/579.

[184] Fink (1995) 7. cf. Lacan *SXX* 101/111-112.

[185] Soler (1995b) 47-48.

[186] Soler (1995b) 50.

[187] Soler (1995b) 49. cf. Lacan *SXI* 214 and *Écrits* 814-15/690.

[188] Soler (1995b) 50.

the lack that he has experienced himself.[189] As a result, the subject tries to find a sense of being by filling the space of the Other's desire with his own lack of being. [190]

Put another way, in separation the alienated subject attempts to cope with the Other's desire by filling it with himself.[191] But because he cannot entirely fill the lack in the Other, the Other's desire escapes the subject. Separation is thus a failure of the subject to find a sense of being by filling the lack in the Other. Yet just as the process of alienation leads the subject to imagine a past where he was not split by language, the process of separation leads the subject to imagine a time where his lack did in fact coincide with the Other's desire. The remainder of this second split and the reminder of this "lost" sense of being is *objet a*, the Real object which the subject must always pursue in an attempt to "regain" his sense of being in relation to the Other.[192] The subject has now officially become a "desiring subject."

From this point on, the subject constantly works to mediate its relationship to the Other's desire, which brought him into being as a "desiring subject."[193] Throughout his life, the subject attempts to neutralize the Other's desire by translating it into words.[194] Every attempt to speak is an attempt by the subject to mediate its relationship to the Other's desire. But because of the impasse between language and the Real, every attempt to do so ultimately fails. The split that founds the subject means that the more the subject tries to find its place

---

[189] Soler (1995b) 50.cf. Lacan *SXI* 214-215 and *Écrits* 842-844/714-16.

[190] Fink (1995) 54. cf. Lacan *SXI* 215, 218-19.

[191] Fink (1995) 50.

[192] Fink (1995) 61. cf. Lacan *SX* 26-27 and *SXX* 114/126.

[193] Fink (1995) 54, 58.

in relation to the Other's desire, the more it becomes alienated in language, and the more its desire will be based on the Other's desire, rather than its own.[195] The Lacanian subject is thus fundamentally and irreparably split as a result of coming-to-be within language.

The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary

Another way of explaining the fundamental split in the subject is through the three registers of psychological experience on Lacan's view: the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary.[196] The Real has already come up in our discussion of the process of alienation and separation, but it is easier to understand in relation to the other two registers. The Symbolic is world of language, which makes communication between subjects possible and allows the construction of social and cultural codes and norms.[197] The Imaginary is the register of the subject's self-images and self-narrative. The Imaginary and the Symbolic closely intersect, since the subject forms his idea of himself partially in response to the socio-cultural categories he learns from those around him, and he must use the Symbolic to express his Imaginary self-image to other subjects.[198] In contrast to these first two registers, the Real is the world of objects and experiences beyond the images of the Imaginary and the codes of the Symbolic.[199] But the Real is not what we typically refer to as "reality."[200]

---

[194] Fink (1995) 58.

[195] Fink (1995) 73. cf. Lacan *SXI* 188.

[196] I capitalize these terms to make clear when I am using the theoretical meaning of the term.

[197] Lacan *SII* 29-31.

[198] cf. Lacan *SII* 47. There are, however, also unconscious Imaginary images and Symbolic chains of meaning.

[199] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 131.

"Reality" is the result of the subject's attempts to account for the Real through the first two registers, which can never correspond exactly to what Lacan calls the Real.[201]

For an adult the three registers seem inseparable. The Imaginary constantly reimagines its "self" in response to the events of the Real and to the Symbolic interactions of the subject's social world.[202] The subjects' Real experiences are constantly personalized by Imaginary processes and then rearticulated using Symbolic language.[203] But because of the non-representational nature of the Real, the subject is stuck in a constant struggle to bring his Imaginary self-image, his Symbolic expressions, and his Real experience into alignment with one another.[204] Sometimes, this sense of coherence is easy for the subject to piece together. But in times of crisis, the impossibility of this task leaves the subject chasing an elusive sense of coherence that he can never quite find. In this sense as well, the subject is irreparably split as a result of his coming-to-be within language.

The Movements of Desire in Tibullus

Because the subject is split in these fundamental ways, the subject's desire has no particular object. Althought the subject may pursue countless individual objects during his

---

[200] Lacan *SII* 218-220.

[201] Fink (1995) 25. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 497-98/414-15.

[202] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 131. cf. Lacan *SII* 47.

[203] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 77. Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 187 cites Lacan's example of the stars: "The example of the stars makes Lacan's point easily. They have always been, more or less, in the same place. Man humanizes their Real fixity by naming them, thus including them in his Symbolic order. Throughout the ages, some individuals have linked this Real fixity and Symbolic familiarity to their own "self"-systems and have lent the stars and Imaginary, astrological efficacy there."

[204] cf. Lacan *Écrits* 94/76 and 117-18/95-96, also *SII* 243-47.

lifetime, none of them will satisfy the fundamental desire that brought the subject into being in the first place. That desire, by nature, is constantly expanding and utterly insatiable.[205] With this understanding of the nature of the desiring subject, we can return again to the Tibullan lover-poet. The constant search for satisfaction and fulfillment, that seeks after a series of ever-shifting objects, and is constantly disrupted by a desire that exceeds them all, is precisely what we have found in the lover-poet's country fantasies in poems 1.1, 1.10, and 2.1.

Lacan's account of the split subject makes sense of why the lover-poet defines his recurring country fantasy with a variety of synonyms for "having enough." Lacan's theory of desire reveals the irremediable split at the heart of the subject, which leads it to a never-ending pursuit of objects which it supposes will satisfy it but which can never fulfill its deepest longings.[206] We can use Lacan's theory of the split subject not only to explain why the lover-poet is looking for this general sense of wholeness, but also why his fantasies of happiness and peace never seem to hold together. As the lover-poet reflects on what will make him feel fulfilled, he finds that he is looking for an elusive sense of satisfaction and freedom from anxiety that the possession of specific material goods or particular relationships will not satisfy. In these poems the lover-poet keeps trying to reimagine what this having this sense of "enough" might look like, but it is always out of his grasp. Desire always disrupts his fantasy of fulfillment.

When the lover-poet speaks, we see how the experience of desire plays out for a particular subject. We can see desire driving the subject's longing for particular objects

[205] Fink (1995b) x.

[206] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 82 and Fink (1995) 90-92. cf. Lacan *SXX* 101/111-112.

(such as material prosperity) and watch as each of those objects never satisfy the lover-poet for very long. We can also see the lover-poet's attempts to master his sense of lack through language.[207] We can read the subject's narratives of himself and his place in the world, his account of his relationships and his surroundings, and his constantly shifting fantasies as attempts to make sense of his world and paper over the lingering sense of loss and lack that plagues him.[208] Like any subject, the lover-poet attempts to control his sense of lack by narrativizing it, explaining it, and articulating it.[209] On Lacan's view there is no surprise that writing poetry and writing about love and writing about the self are intimately intertwined in Tibullus' elegies.[210]

Through Lacan's theory of subjectivity we can see that the lover-poet's fantasies repeatedly fall apart not only because his desire is fundamentally irreparable and ultimately insatiable, but also because his experience of desire can never be translated entirely into Imaginary self-images and Symbolic codes. No matter how hard the lover-poet tries to articulate his Real experience, there will always be a remainder of the Real that perpetuates his desire.[211] The repetition of the recurring fantasies of the lover-poet and the insistent

---

[207] cf. Lacan *Écrits* 116/95.

[208] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 85. cf. Lacan *SIII* 275-79 and *SXI* 70.

[209] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 131 and Fink (1995) 58.

[210] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 172.

[211] Fink (1995) 26-27.

disintegration of each new dream shows us the process of repetition that plagues the subject, as he attempts to articulate "what he really wants" and then at last to find it.[212]

Lacanian theory allows us to broaden our definition of desire so that we can explain why visions like the rustic fantasy become so important in poems that we expect to be about "love." I argue that Tibullus' poems are often not about any particular love affair precisely because they are so much about desire. The repeated return of Amor into the lover-poet's ideal of country life affirms how central desire is to Tibullus' poems. The lover-poet is trapped in a constant search for "having enough" and being at peace, while Amor is a perpetually disruptive and destructive force that interferes with his search for satisfaction and happiness. It is in this broader exploration of the movements of desire that the lover-poet will weave his relationships with individual beloveds and with his patron, Messalla.

As we look back, we can see how poems 1.1, 1.10, and 2.1 each play out this drama of desire in a different way. In poem 1.1, the lover-poet begins to build his dream of a happy life around the ideals of sufficiency and satiety, but he is plagued by the constant anxiety that what he has can be taken away from him, and that what he wants may not be enough to satisfy him. In poem 1.10, the lover-poet shows how desire can even disrupt a world at peace, so long as an erotic relationship makes it vulnerable to desire's tendency toward excess and violence. Poem 2.1 takes the lover-poet's reflections on desire to a new level, showing that no amount of piety or purity can keep desire at bay for long. The lover-poet's fantasy is constantly threatened by the reemergence of desire, which keeps him from ever finding something that can satisfy him. A sense of lack and fear of loss pervade every aspect

[212] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 112 and Fink (1995) 90-92. Miller and Platter (1999) see a similar dynamic in the unresolvable "cruxes" of elegy, and see a similar solution in using post-structuralist theory.

of the lover-poet's elegiac world, and make the return of anxiety, aggression, and even violence inevitable in his poems. By incorporating Lacanian psychoanalytic theory into our interpretation, we can see more clearly the complexity of the lover-poet's exploration of the dynamics of human desire. When Lacan's account of the split subject fits so well with Tibullus' representation of his lover-poet, we have reason to believe that Lacan's formulations hold even more possibilities for unpacking Tibullus' poems.

Chapter 2

A Parallel Fantasy: "To Be With Delia"

In chapter 1, I suggested that the structure of lover-poet's country fantasy provides a framework for tracing the movements of desire throughout Tibullus' poems. I also showed how we can interpret the lover-poet's complex desire for "having enough" in the countryside using Lacan's account of the split subject. In chapters 2 and 3, we will explore how the lover-poet's desire operates with respect to a specific person, a woman he calls Delia. The Tibullan lover-poet's relationship with Delia allows us to unpack another example of his representation of himself and his experience of desire in the poems. In chapter 2 I will show how the dynamics of the lover-poet's desire for Delia turn out to be strikingly similar to those of his rustic fantasy, as his dream of happiness with his beloved ends up tangled in similarly empty promises and recurring risks. We will also see how Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts can help us draw meaning out of the seeming contradictions in the lover-poet's dreams of "being with" Delia. By drawing these connections, we will be able to situate our analysis of the lover-poet's construction of Delia in chapter 3 within the context of the lover-poet's account of his desire for her.

Beginning in poem 1.1, the lover-poet represents his desire to be with Delia as parallel to his desire for a sense of wholeness and happiness on his family farm. Like in his rustic fantasies, a series of concepts reappear in the lover-poet's relationship with Delia that represent what it is that he wants from his relationship with her. Unfortunately, complications arise for defining what the lover-poet means when he says he wants to "be with Delia" (1.1.57), which are reminiscent of the problems with articulating what it means

to "have enough" in the context of the lover-poet's country fantasy. We will see that the lover-poet's relationship with Delia is threatened by the same excesses of violence and fear of death that plague the country fantasy in the presence of Amor. Just as the lover-poet's distinction between himself as peaceful farmer and the *alius* as covetous soldier disintegrates throughout poem 1.1, so does any distinction between the lover-poet's roles as lover and soldier. Combining these two parallel fantasies proves so difficult that by the end of poem 1.1 the lover-poet seems to abandon the attempt to intertwine them altogether. But even as the lover-poet struggles to integrate these two visions of happiness, a Lacanian reading of these passages suggests that they are more closely related that we might think.

The lover-poet's interest in combining his dream of "being with Delia" and his dream of happiness in the countryside reemerges in poem 1.5, where he features Delia front and center in his fantasy of life on the farm. Yet this dream too is full of inconsistencies which betray its impossibility. The lover-poet admits at both the beginning and end of his vision of life in the countryside with Delia that he imagined all of it, in a state that he describes as "maddened" (*demens,* 1.5.20). Any attempt to find the lover-poet within his own fantasy proves unexpectedly problematic. At the same time as the lover-poet's dream of Delia and his dream of the countryside seem to magnify each other, he himself seems to fade from view, and possibly from existence all together. In chapter 1, we saw how the lover-poet's poetry centers around the sense of lack and loss and fear of excess that accompanies the presence of Amor. In chapter 2, I suggest that the lover-poet's emphasis on the dynamics of desire in both his fantasies of "having enough" and "being with Delia" reinforces the importance of his investigation of the experience of the desiring subject in Book 1 as a whole. By looking more closely at the lover-poet's dream of "being with Delia" in this

chapter, however, we will also reach a further conclusion. Desire is not just the center of Tibullus' elegies: desire is a condition of the lover-poet's very existence.

Delia *and* the Countryside: Poem 1.1

Just after his declaration that *parva seges satis est, satis est requiescere lecto…* ("A small crop is enough, it is enough to rest on a couch—…," 43-44), the lover-poet brings a new character into his fantasy:

> quam iuvat immites ventos audire cubantem
> et dominam tenero continuisse sinu
> aut gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit Auster
> securum somnos igne iuvante sequi.
> hoc mihi contingat: … (1.1.45-49)
>
> How delightful it is to listen to the hostile winds while lying down,
> and to hold[1] a mistress on a soft chest
> or, when the wintry south wind pours out icy waters,
> to pursue sleep safe and sound while the fire delights you.
> May this happen to me…

Already in this initial introduction of the *domina*, there are telling similarities between the lover-poet's depiction of the scene on his couch and his depictions of his ideal life on his farm. In lines 45-48, lover-poet proclaims that the "enjoyment" of lying with his *domina* is just like lying indoors during a storm pursuing sleep "free from care" (*securum,* 48).[2] As we saw in chapter 1, the word *securus* is a hallmark of the lover-poet's country fantasy, which fits closely with his idealized dream of having *satis*, "enough." In these lines we can already see a verbal parallel between the satisfaction of enjoying the presence of his girlfriend and the happiness of enjoying a care-free existence in the countryside. The lover-poet sets up his

[1] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.29-30 notes that the Augustan poets often use the "metrically convenient" perfect infinitive in place of the present.

[2] Lee (1974) 104 makes note of the parallel clauses dependant on *quam iuvat* in these lines.

domina as another source of the same satisfaction that he seeks from his fantasy of his farm. Unfortunately for the lover-poet, just as with his country fantasy, he reveals almost immediately that this state of being is only a wish. In line 49, he prays, *hoc mihi contingat* ("May this happen to me"). The fragility of the lover-poet's dream becomes even more apparent in the lines that follow.

The lover-poet allows a surprising degree of ambiguity in the introduction of his mistress, referring simply to a *domina*, rather than specifying the object of his love.[3] He does not include any adjectives to describe her that might fill out our picture of her. Her ambiguity is so striking that Bright suggests that we cannot even confidently identify this *domina* as Delia. He proposes that the lover-poet does not so much give the name Delia to this *domina* as approximate Delia to this initial concept of the *domina*.[4]

I suggest that the other uses of *domina* in Book 1 lend weight to Bright's reading. Although the lover-poet does not refer to Delia explicitly as his *domina* at any point in poems 1.1, 1.2, or 1.3, he uses it two times in poem 1.5. Both instances reinforce the reader's sense that the *domina* is an idealized concept of what the lover-poet wants his beloved to be. In the lover-poet's vision of happiness with Delia in the countryside, Delia explicitly appears as the *domina* of the *garrulus verna* "talkative slave" (1.5.26) who plays in her lap. Later, when the lover-poet tries to move on by having sex with another woman, he claims that he is thwarted by the memory of his *domina* (1.5.40). It is noteworthy that both examples are explicitly marked as fantasies about Delia. They are a maddened dream and a memory of lost

[3] cf. Prop. 1.1.1, where Propertius opens his entire corpus with the phrase *Cynthia prima*, and the initial poems of Ovid's *Amores*, where Corinna remains unnamed until poem 1.5.

[4] Bright (1978) 125-126.

love, respectively. In each of these cases the *domina* can also be read as an ideal beloved that the lover-poet approximates to Delia.

Bright's suggestion, in combination with the uses of the word *domina* elsewhere in Book 1, raises several questions about how we should understand the figure of Delia. As we shall see, Delia is always already not quite who she is supposed to be. She is an approximation of a perfect beloved, a stand-in for the ideal *domina*, the specific example we see of the woman the lover-poet wants. One of the problems inherent in being with Delia turns out to be the question of whether Delia herself is who the lover-poet really wants.

After contrasting his life on his farm with Messalla's pursuit of spoils of war in lines 43-54, the lover-poet describes his beloved as the *puella* who holds him bound outside her doors:

> me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
> et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores. (1.1.55-56)
>
> The chains of a beautiful girl hold me back, bound,
> and I sit as a door-keeper before hard doors.

The lover-poet represents himself specifically as his *puella*'s *ianitor* (56). Yet this position as a *ianitor* outside his beloved's house already contains an inherent problem for his ideal of enjoying his beloved's presence in the countryside. With the mention of Messalla's *domus* (54) and the description of his place outside his *puella*'s door (55-56), the lover-poet has subtly shifted the scene from the country to the city.[5] This shift is one of several hints that the lover-poet's relationship with this *puella* may not fit as neatly into his country fantasy as he has first implied.

[5] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.54.

This juxtaposition of Messalla's house and the *puella*'s house functions in another way as well. As we saw in chapter 1, the lover-poet explicitly attempts to set up his country fantasy as the opposite of the military life embraced by the *alius*. In a similar way, he sets up the house of Messalla as a contrast to Delia's house in lines 53-56. But the same equivocations haunt the contrast between the two houses that erode the contrast between the *rusticus* and the *alius* elsewhere in poem 1.1. The lover-poet chained outside his *puella*'s door (55) takes the place of the *exuvias* displayed outside Messalla's door (54).[6] As it turns out, the lover-poet's description of life with his *domina* has carried military undertones from the beginning.[7] The word *continuisse*, "to hold" (46) is also a military term meaning "to hem in."[8] The verb *sequor* in the expression s*omnos…sequi* (48), "pursuing sleep," can be used of an army's pursuit of an enemy in battle.[9] The word *retinent*, referring to the action of the chains "holding back" the lover-poet, also has a military connotation for holding back troops.[10] The verb *sedeo* "I sit" (56) can refer to besieging, especially with reference to a harsh barrier like the "hard doors" of the *puella*. When we consider the multiple uses of the word, the lover-poet appears both as a slave of his mistress and as her besieger.[11] Just like the lover-poet's rustic lifestyle in poem 1.1, his relationship with his *puella* looks far more like a soldier's life than he would like to admit. The ideals of life on the farm and of life with

---

[6] Bright (1978) 127 and Lee-Stecum (1998) 48.

[7] Lee (1974) 107-109 takes note of potential military echoes throughout lines 5-58.

[8] Murgatroyd (1980), Lee (1990), and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.5.46.

[9] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.48.

[10] Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.1.55. cf. Caesar *B. G*. 7.47.2 and 52.1 and Livy 40. 35.7.

[11] Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.1.56. cf. *OLD* s.v. *sedeo* 4 and Livy 2.12.1. cf. Ch. 4 pg. 162.

the *domina* both hold out a similar hope of wholeness, and yet both are vulnerable to the same excesses and the same violence that mark the military lifestyle he tries so overtly to avoid.

At this point in poem 1.1 the *puella* is still a generalized image of the elegiac woman, without distinctive features and with a generic role. The only adjective used to describe her is *formosae* (55), which is hardly specific. The lover-poet finally refers to his *puella* as Delia in line 57:[12]

> non laudari curo, mea Delia; tecum
> dum modo sim, quaeso segnis inersque vocer. (1.1.57-58)

> I don't care about being praised, my Delia; so long as
> I may be with you, I pray that I may be called lazy and inactive. [13]

Even this couplet does not give us any additional information about Delia (aside from, of course, her name), but it does include the first expression of the relationship that the lover-poet wants with her. The lover-poet wishes explicitly for one thing, *tecum dum modo sim*, "so long as I may be with you" (57-58). This initial request articulates the importance of Delia's presence for the lover-poet's fantasy. It also conveys the ambiguity of his desire for Delia, since being "with" her can mean anything on a scale from reasonable physical proximity to sexual intercourse. While most commentators pass over the obscurity of this phrase, I hope to show that this lack of clarity about what precisely the lover-poet wants from his relationship with Delia is in itself part of the point. As we will see, whether we

---

[12] Murgatroyd (1980) 7 and Maltby (2002) 42-43 give a helpful overview of the debate over Delia's "real" identity, which centers around Apuleius' claim in *Apol.* 10 that Delia's real name was Plania. On the possible meanings of the name Delia, see Bright (1978) 103, 107-8, and 113, Maltby (2002) 43-44, and Kennedy (2017).

[13] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.57-58 translates these terms using their military connotations as "cowardly" and "unwarlike," respectively. Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.1.58 calls them words of "military disapproval."

interpret this phrase as the physical presence of the beloved or an erotic double entendre, the lover-poet's desire turns out to be difficult—and perhaps impossible—to articulate. The ambiguity of what the lover-poet wants from Delia only serves to emphasize the extent to which he cannot attain it. The vagueness of the lover-poet's desire for her resembles the indefinable quality of "satisfaction" and "sufficiency" that characterized his fantasy of rustic life.

In just a few short lines, the lover-poet has already raised considerable doubt about whether "being with Delia" can provide the happiness he seeks. Disregarding these potential problems, the lover-poet launches directly into a description of what he imagines a moment of closeness with Delia would look like. This moment turns out to be a vision of the moments leading up to his death. He hopes that she will be by his side:

> te spectem suprema mihi cum venerit hora;
> te teneam moriens deficiente manu.
> flebis et arsuro positum me, Delia, lecto,
> tristibus et lacrimis oscula mixta dabis.
> flebis: non tua sunt duro praecordia ferro
> vincta nec in tenero stat tibi corde silex (1.1.59-64)
>
> May I look on you when my final hour comes;
> May I hold you while I am dying with my failing hand.
> You will weep, and you will give me, Delia, kisses mixed with sad tears
> when I have been placed on the bier which will be burned.
> You will weep: your heart is not bound with hard iron
> nor does flint stand in your soft heart.

This scene adds further dimension to the lover-poet's portrayal of Delia, and yet his moving depiction of her devotion seems more wishful than convincing. The subjunctives *spectem* (59) and *teneam* (60) emphasize that this moment is only hypothetical. The lover-poet's confident predictions that "You will weep" (61) and "You will give kisses mixed with tears" (62) seem more like wishes than statements of fact in light of the explanation that follows. The lover-poet's reasoning betrays the unlikelihood of this response from his beloved, as he

explains to Delia that she will weep because, “your heart is not bound with hard iron nor does flint stand in your soft heart” (63-64). This justification contrasts sharply with the image of Delia we have just seen in lines 55-56, as the *puella* who holds the lover-poet chained as a slave outside her door. That illustration hardly paints her as particularly soft or kind-hearted.[14] The repetition of the words *durus* (56, 63) and *vinctus* (55, 64) in these lines echoes the lover-poet’s description of his position as *ianitor,* inviting a comparison between the two scenes that suggests that the lover-poet is not confident that Delia will act in the way that he hopes when his life comes to an end.[15] This scene betrays another key limitation of the lover-poet’s dream of “being with” Delia. She must fall into line with his expectations for her behavior and her treatment of him. This scene also brings up important barrier that haunts their future together. Regardless of Delia’s compliance now, the lover-poet’s relationship with her is doomed to be ended by death (*…iam veniet tenebris Mors adoperta caput*, “already death will approach, her head covered in darkness,” 69-70). “Being with” Delia always already has an expiration date.

The lover-poet uses the example of impending death as an excuse for himself and Delia to enjoy love in the present (69-70). But as the poem draws to a close, the presence of erotic desire brings with it an increasing tendency toward violence that jeopardizes the happiness the lover-poet can have in his relationship with her. Murgatroyd draws a connection between the lover-poet’s hopeful declaration, *iungamus amores*, “let us join in

[14] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.63-64 comments on other uses of this metaphor at Prop. 1.16.30 and Ovid *Am* 3.6.59 as descriptions of insensitive mistresses.

[15] Lee-Stecum (1998) 56 also notes these verbal echoes.

love," and the military expression *iungere exercitum*, "to join battle."[16] When the lover-poet describes what it means to "practice Venus," it is clear that it includes "breaking doorposts and starting brawls" (*nunc levis est tractanda Venus, dum frangere postes non pudet et rixas inseruisse iuvat,* 73-74).[17] Love and violence are shown to be dangerously intertwined.

The lover-poet concludes his wishful appeals to Delia in poem 1.1 by declaring his service to love rather than to the army. Paradoxically, however, he does so by declaring that he *is* a *dux,* "general," and a *miles bonus,* "good soldier" (75). The contrast he tried to make between those who love and those who fight seems to have entirely fallen apart. With just as much self-contradiction, the lover-poet orders the standards and trumpets of soldiers to depart and take their wounds *cupidis…viris*, "to men full of desire" (75-76). Although one may assume that he means "men full of desire *for war,*" it is telling that the lover-poet does not specify the men's desire.[18] Just as the roles of the farmer and the soldier look more and more alike as poem 1.1 proceeds, the roles of lover and soldier come to overlap so closely that it becomes impossible to separate them.

Almost as if he realizes the extent to which love and war have become entangled in the text, the lover-poet drops the themes of love and war entirely in his final couplet. In the closing lines, as we saw in chapter 1, the lover-poet wishes to be *securus*, and to have a

---

[16] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.69. cf. Virg. Aen. 2.267, Vell. 2.113.1, and Front. Strat. 1.2.9.

[17] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.73-74 invites comparison with the phrase *bellum tractare*, cf. Livy 23.28.4 and Tac. *Ann.* 1.59. He also notes the military connotations of the expression *postes frangere*, cf. Ovid *Am.* 1.9.20 and Luc. 2.444 and *OLD* s.v. *frango* 9.

[18] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.1.76 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.75-76 point out the double pun in these lines, on both the meanings of *cupidis* "desirous of…" and of *viris* "men/husbands." cf. Chapter 1 pg. 27.

sense of satisfaction between the extremes of wealth and hunger (77-78).[19] Delia has simply disappeared from his fantasy of sufficiency in the countryside. For now, it seems that the lover-poet cannot find a way to integrate his fantasy of a relationship with Delia with his ideal of rustic happiness. Even this failure to bring his fantasies together, however, reinforces the lover-poet's emphasis on exploring the subject's experience of desire in poem 1.1.

The lover-poet's relationship with a *domina* seemed like another vision by which he could attain the sense of wholeness he was looking for in his fantasy of life on his farm. But it turns out to have its own limitations and difficulties for the lover-poet. Disconcerting questions haunt the lover-poet's dream of "being with Delia." Even as the lover-poet first introduces his ideal *domina,* the reader has the troubling sense that Delia is always already not who the lover-poet wants her to be. The ambiguity of the expression "to be with Delia" (*tecum dum modo sim,* 57-58) only reinforces the reader's sense that the lover-poet cannot articulate precisely what he wants, and that having it may not, perhaps even cannot, be what he hopes it will be. At the same time, the lover-poet's depiction of Delia's response to his future death reminds the reader that his relationship to Delia will always be radically limited, both by Delia's willingness to play the part the lover-poet has marked out for her and the fact of human mortality. Finally, the lover-poet's attempts to distinguish the roles of the soldier and the lover brings an additional series of complications into his hopes of "being with Delia." The lover-poet's self-representation as Delia's *ianitor* brings in unwelcome military connotations that reappear in the explicitly military language of his later declarations of his preference for the life of love. It becomes clear from his descriptions of the practice of

[19] Chapter 1 pg. 28-29.

Venus (73-74) that love and violence are ineluctably intertwined. Just as the rustic fantasy itself turns out to contain the anxiety and violence that it is supposed to prevent, so the lover-poet's dream of "being with Delia" results in a similar crisis. In poem 1.1, the lover-poet's dreams of "having enough" and "being with Delia" run parallel to one another, but eventually disintegrate under the weight of similar ambiguities, inconsistencies, and outright contradictions. A Lacanian reading offers us a way to bring all of these disparate pieces together and to explain why this process of dissolution becomes so central to Tibullus' poetry as he attempts to articulate the experience of the desiring subject.

Delia *in* the Countryside: Poem 1.5

The lover-poet describes his most elaborate vision of a life with Delia in the countryside in poem 1.5. The poem opens with his lament over his recent separation from Delia, which he represents as particularly torturous for him (1-4). The lover-poet soon begins to reminisce about his past behavior when Delia was sick, recounting his careful vigil by her bedside and the many religious and magical rites which he practiced in order to secure her recovery (9-16). Yet in spite of his efforts, he reports that when Delia regained her health, she ran off with another man:

> …fruitur nunc alter amore,
> et precibus felix utitur ille meis.
> at mihi felicem vitam, si salva fuisses,
> fingebam demens, sed renuente deo: (1.5.17-20)
>
> …Now another enjoys the love,
> and that happy man benefits from my prayers.
> But out of my mind, I used to imagine a happy life,
> if you would have been safe and sound, but the god refused.

The lover-poet complains that now another man enjoys the fruit of his pious actions. That rival *fruitur…amore* "enjoys the love" and is "happily taking advantage of [his] prayers,"

(*precibus felix utitur ille meis*, 18). The lover-poet equates being *felix* with enjoying Delia's love.[20] Throughout Book 1, the sense of *felicitas* is most closely associated with the lover-poet's experience of his country fantasy (1.1.19, 1.5.19).[21] The two objects of desire are again shown to be related to one another.

The lover-poet laments that before he was abandoned for another man, he had been fantasizing about what his own *felicem vitam*, "happy life" (19) with Delia would look like if she were *salva*, "safe and sound" (19). He imagines their life together on his farm:

> 'rura colam, frugumque aderit mea Delia custos,
> area dum messes sole calente teret;
> aut mihi servabit plenis in lintribus uvas
> pressaque veloci candida musta pede.
> consuescet numerare pecus; consuescet amantis
> garrulus in dominae ludere verna sinu.
> illa deo sciet agricolae pro vitibus uvam,
> pro segete spicas, pro grege ferre dapem.
> illa regat cunctos, illi sint omnia curae,
> at iuvet in tota me nihil esse domo.
> huc veniet Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma
> Delia selectis detrahat arboribus,
> et tantum venerata virum hunc sedula curet,
> huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat.'
> haec mihi fingebam, quae nunc Eurusque Notusque
> iactat odoratos vota per Armenios. (1.5.21-36)

> "I will tend the countryside, and my Delia will come as the guardian of the crops,
> while the floor threshes the harvest when the sun is hot.
> Or she will keep grapes for me in full treading vats
> and white must pressed with a fast foot.
> She will get used to counting the herds; and the chatty home-born slave
> will get used to playing in the lap of his loving mistress.
> She will know how to offer a grape to the god of the farmer on behalf of vines,
> and ears on behalf of the grain, and a feast on behalf of the herd.
> May she rule everyone, and may everything be her concern,

[20] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.17-18 notes that *felix* is often used in elegy to describe a successful lover, cf. Prop. 1.16.33, 18.7, 2.16.28, 17.11 and Ovid *Her.* 17.190.

[21] cf. *infelix* 1.2.4 and 1.4.60, which appears in contexts where the lover-poet describes love as somehow thrwarted.

> but may it delight me to be nothing in the whole house.
> Here my Messalla will come, for whom Delia
> may draw down sweet fruits from choice trees.
> And finally, revered, may she care for this man,
> may she get ready for him and may she bring him a feast as his attendant."
> I was imagining these things, prayers which now the East wind and the South wind
> toss across sweet-smelling Armenia.

The lover-poet's dream in these lines has many of the central characteristics of his recurring country fantasy.[22] Farming is central to daily life, and the farm is distinguished by its bountiful wheat harvests (*area dum messes…teret,* 22) and "grapes in full wine vats" (*plenis in lintribus uvas*, 22-23).[23] The estate has a sizable herd and home-born slaves, both signs of ongoing prosperity (25-26). There is a consistent habit of cultivating a close relationship with the rural gods, whose presence has been a key to having sufficiency in the countryside since poem 1.1.9-24.[24] In this renewed vision of rustic happiness, the lover-poet's reiterates his dream of having all kinds of abundance and continuing closeness with the gods of the countryside. Perhaps the most notable difference between this rustic fantasy and the others we have seen is that this vision is the only country fantasy where the lover-poet explicitly includes Delia.

Although the lover-poet opens his fantasy by declaring he will "tend to the countryside" (*rura colam,* 21), the rest of his vision recounts how Delia is the one who oversees everything. Delia is the "guardian of the crops" (*frugum…custos,* 21). She is responsible for storing all of the grapes and wine (23-24). She continually takes

---

[22] See also Lee-Stecum (1998) 165 for more on the similarities between these two visions.

[23] Scioli (2015) 63 comments that the intricacy of the description of wine-making here as an indication of "the abundance of the grapes and the superior quality of the wine they produce."

[24] cf. Tib. 1.1.9-24, 35-38. See also Chapter 1 pgs. 18 and 22-23.

responsibility for the livestock and cares for the home-born slaves (25-26). She has the knowledge about which kinds of offerings to make and to whom to make them (27-28). The lover-poet goes so far as to wish that Delia "rule everyone" and that "everything be her concern" (*illa regat cunctos, illi sint omnia curae,* 29). To close his vision of rustic bliss, he recounts how he hopes that she will attend to Messalla when he visits (31-34).

Several commentators focus on Delia's role as a traditional *materfamilias* in this scene.[25] Indeed, the role of the wife as the manager of the estate is not at all unusual in ancient Roman culture. Overseeing the crops, taking responsibility for the flocks, and dealing with household slaves are all traditional wifely duties.[26] We can also read Delia's role in other ways. Bright suggests that Delia here represents Diana's role as the guardian of crops, the land, and animals.[27] Lee-Stecum suggests that the key to understanding Delia's role in this fantasy lies in the certainty and stability of the lover-poet's relationship with her and their shared relationship with Messalla.[28] Each of these viewpoints adds something important to the structure of the lover-poet's vision of a happy life in this scene.

I would like to suggest yet another way of framing Delia's role in this country fantasy. While the interpretations above all focus on Delia's role as the lover-poet's female counter-part, they do not address the fact that in this vision of a "happy life" for the lover-poet, Delia does everything the lover-poet dreamed of doing as the idealized *rusticus* of

---

[25] See Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.21-34, Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.21, 31-34, and especially Gardner (2010) 467-469.

[26] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.21-30 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.21. cf. Xen. *Oec*. 7.35ff., 9.14ff, Cato *Ag. Cult.* 143, Col. *R.R*. 12, *Praef*. 4ff., Hor. *Epod*. 2.45f., Virgil *Ecl*. 3.33f, and Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) 216 on Hor. *Odes* 1.17.

[27] Bright (1978) 113.

[28] Lee-Stecum (1998) 167.

poem 1.1. Moreover, Delia does it with greater success. The lover-poet hopes for full vats (1.1.10), but she keeps full wine troughs (1.5.23). He chases down the lambs and kids that run astray (1.1.31-32), while she need only count the herds (1.5.25). She knows how to worship the gods in every situation (1.5.27-28), but he worries that they will not accept his offerings (1.1.37-38). The lover-poet admires Messalla's accomplishments from afar (1.1.53-54); she serves him in person as devotedly as a priestess would serve a god (1.5.31-34).[29]

When the lover-poet imagines being with Delia and being in the countryside, the two fantasies seem to magnify one another. Being with Delia in the countryside means that she would curate his rustic fantasy for him. When she does so, all of the hoped-for outcomes occur. There is abundance of all kinds, and there is communion with the gods. Messalla becomes a part of his fantasy world. She makes his ideal country fantasy possible. As she takes over his role, all of the concerns and all the responsibilities are transferred to her with impressive results.[30]

As his fantasy of being with Delia in the countryside develops, the lover-poet finally seems to be *securus* and *iners* (29-30). Although he does not reiterate those terms exactly, they are implied by his description of everything being Delia's concern (*illi sint omnia*

[29] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.33-34. cf. Cat. 63.68 and Prop. 4.11.52. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.31-34 links this passage to Hellenistic descriptions of hosting gods and heroes, cf. Call. *Aet*. Fr. 54 Pf. and SH 256-66 (Hercules as the guest of Molorchus), *Hecale* frr. 240-52 Pf. (Theseus as a guest of Hecale).

[30] Gaisser (1983) 69 interprets this scene differently, as an example of *amor* being eclipsed by *rura* as Delia is absorbed into the landscape of the countryside (in her view, a combination of two opposites which is clearly marked as unattainable). I do not make as harsh of an opposition between *amor* and *rura*, and my reading combines the two quite differently, as the country fantasy (*rura*) is itself an object of desire/Amor as well as a setting in which relationships of *amor* can take place.

curae, 29) and Delia doing all the work (21-34). The fact that he does not describe himself explicitly as *securus* or *iners* has less to do with the inaccuracy of these terms and more to do with how he stops mentioning almost any detail of his own role in this iteration of his fantasy. The lover-poet literally fades away as Delia comes to the forefront.

Scioli observes that by line 23, the lover-poet is already shifting out of the center of the picture (*mihi servabit…*, "she will preserve *for me*...").[31] She notes that beginning in line 21, the lover-poet is only mentioned as a direct object, indirect object, or with a possessive adjective (*mea* 21, *mihi* 23, *me* 30, *meus* 31).[32] But pointing to those references is a bit misleading. I would argue that the list almost overstates the lover-poet's role in these lines. While the lover-poet does open his list of Delia's tasks by mentioning that she does it all *mihi,* "for me," (23), her list of duties marches on without any acknowledgment of their relationship to him. The appearance of *me* is particularly problematic, since it appears when the lover-poet declares, *at iuvet in tota me nihil esse domo,* "but may it delight me to be nothing in the whole house" (30). Even if we read this passage looking specifically for the lover-poet, he literally fades to nothing as the scene unfolds. We could argue that in this passage the lover-poet finally achieves a state of being *securus* and *iners*. But it seems particularly problematic that in order to achieve that state, the lover-poet implies that he would have to fade from existence entirely. It is unsettling that "being nothing" (*esse nihil*, 30) could be the cost of experiencing the sense of happiness and fulfillment which the lover-poet desires.

[31] Scioli (2015) 63.

[32] Scioli (2015) 66. She contrasts this language with the anaphora of *illa, illa,* and *illi* referring to Delia in lines 27 and 29. cf. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.19-36.

There is one character in this dream which some scholars identify as the lover-poet: the *garrulus verna* (26). Bright is especially drawn to this identification, noting the description of Delia as the *verna*'s *amans domina* ("loving mistress," 25) and her habit of "playing" with him (*ludere,* 26) with its obvious erotic undertones.[33] The lover-poet does sometimes represent himself as Delia's slave,[34] but it is impossible to identify this slave with certainty. The uncertainty surrounding his identity reinforces the reader's sense of how difficult it is to find the lover-poet's place in his own fantasy. If he is anyone, he is simply a babbling slave who cannot stop talking. He chatters, but as far as we can see, he adds nothing to the prosperity of the farm. In a sense, he would achieve the lover-poet's stated desire of "being with Delia," but in a way that has profound limitations. He would finally be able to play in her lap, and she would finally be loving toward him, but he would have a constricted role in his own fantasy. Even if we read the *verna* as the lover-poet, we can suggest that the lover-poet fades from significance in his fantasy as his dream proceeds.

Lee-Stecum suggests that the picture of the *garrulus verna* and the use of the erotically charged words *amans,* "loving," *ludere*, "to play," and *in sinu* "in her lap" (25-26) point instead to the lover-poet's growing anxiety about Delia's infidelity.[35] This reading makes sense in light of the context of this vision, which is brought on by the lover-poet's frustration that Delia has run off with someone else (17-18). It is also in keeping with the threat posed by Amor to the other iterations of the country fantasy that we have seen throughout Book 1. It is telling that the only character who could possibly be identified as

---

[33] Bright (1978) 114.

[34] cf. Tib. 1.1.55-56, 1.5.59-66.

[35] Lee-Stecum (1998) 166.

the lover-poet in this scene can also be read as a reminder of how Amor can upset the balance of the country fantasy. Delia and the country fantasy together make a perfect pair, but the intrusion of desire still brings with it the fear that everything may fall apart.

In lines 29-30, the lover-poet declares of Delia: “May she rule everyone, and may everything be her concern.”[36] He continues, “but may I enjoy being nothing in the whole house.”[37] The juxtaposition of everything coming under Delia’s supervision and the lover-poet finally being “nothing” emphasizes the degree to which the lover-poet’s presence in this perfect world turns out to be impossible. The closer that the lover-poet’s ideal *securitas* and *inertia* come to him and the more clearly that the dream of “being with Delia” and having his country fantasy comes into view, the more the lover-poet himself disappears.[38] As Delia serves Messalla in the closing lines of the fantasy, the lover-poet entirely fades from view. It

[36] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.19-36 comments that the lover-poet describes Delia as having “complete control.” Lee-Stecum (1998) 167 similarly emphasizes that the lover-poet gives up control of his estate as a way to achieve his desires with respect to love and ensure a well-defined relationship with Delia. I question whether he can be said to achieve this desire when he literally becomes “nothing” to her in this fantasy.

[37] Scioli (2015) 64 points out that the lover-poet’s “marginal role” in Delia’s work on the farm, suggesting that “he is present, but does not participate in the activities of the fantasy. I argue that “to be nothing” seems to be an even stronger statement. Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 29-30 translates the expression as “to be of no use or value.” Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.29-30 sums up these lines by saying, “An emphatic summary. Delia would be everything, Tibullus nothing.”

[38] Gardner (2010) 468 points out the correspondence between this the lover-poet’s fading into the background of this fantasy and the exclusion of the distinctive family Lares from his country fantasy in this passage. Later on pg. 469 she comments that in this poem “a vision of domesticity serves to illustrate the speaker’s marginality, his (ironic) displacement in the world of his own making.” Johnson (1990) 103 argues that in poem 1.1 and in Tibullus’ poems in general that “The dream of Arcady, of good *otium* enhanced by *amor*, the refuge from the metropolis and its claims upon him, can sometimes ward off Tibullus’ feelings of inadequacy, of being out of place, of having no place in the scheme of things.” But the fragility of that dream—as Johnson admits—causes its repeated failure. It fails in its own way here in poem 1.5, when the dream of country life in fact leads to the lover-poet’s declaration of “having no place in the scheme of things.”

seems that lover-poet cannot imagine his role in his own fantasy if it is not driven by worry, concern, and desire.

The lover-poet emphasizes that this iteration of his country fantasy was only imagined, repeating the refrain, *haec mihi fingebam* (19-20, 35).[39] None of this dream ever happened. Perhaps Messalla can attain this perfect happiness (31-34), perhaps the rival already has (17-18), but the lover-poet can only imagine it for himself. He can only dream of what that happy life might be like, and even then he cannot seem make a place for himself in it.

Bewitched by *flavae comae*

While most scholars of poem 1.5 focus on the lover-poet's fantasy of being with Delia in the countryside, we can also trace the fallout of the lover-poet's fantasy into his description of his current circumstances in lines 37-44. Back from his rustic reverie, the lover-poet is left in a world full of *curas,*[40] *dolor,* and *lacrimas* ("cares," "grief," and "tears," 37-38). The lover-poet, still desperate to feel *securus*, tries to "drive away his worries with wine," (*curas depellere vino*, 37), but his grief over his separation from Delia exceeds his ability to forget. He tries to find happiness in the arms of another (39-42) but he finds himself unable to follow through with the affair, explaining that he has been bewitched by Delia's beauty:

[39] This expression was immortalized in Tibullus scholarship by Bright's 1978 monograph entitled *Haec Mihi Fingebam: Tibullus in His World*. Scioli (2015) 62-75 explores the language of dreams and fantasies to highlight how *fingebam* emphasizes the lover-poet's creative process at work in shaping his own fantasy in contrast to involuntary sleeping dreams. Miller (1999) 219 is especially interested in why the lover-poet's vision of Delia and Messalla being present together in the lover-poet's country fantasy can only be an explicitly unrealizable dream.

[40] For "the cares of love," cf. Tib. 2.3.13, 2.6.51 and Prop. 1.3.46, 5.10, 10.17.

…et narrat scire nefanda meam.
Non facit hoc verbis: facie tenerisque lacertis
devovet et flavis nostra puella comis. (1.5.42-44)

…and she says that my girl knows unspeakable curses.
She does not do this with words: my girl curses with her appearance
and her soft arms and her blond hair.

As the lover-poet elaborates on his woes, he describes Delia's power over him as a power apart from words: *non facit hoc verbis* (43).[41] He claims that Delia "curses" him with her "beauty" and her "soft arms" and her "blond hair" (43-44). The reference to Delia's "blond hair" is the only specific comment on Delia's appearance in Book 1. The only other comments are exceedingly generic, including the lover-poet's mention of her "soft arms" (*tenerisque lacertis,* 1.5.43) and "snow-white foot" (*niveo…pede,* 1.5.66) in poem 1.5 and of her "long hair" (*longos…capillos,* 1.1.91) in poem 1.1. This choice of this specific characteristic is striking for its uniqueness in the corpus, but also for the layers of meaning it holds. The phrase *flavae comae* links Delia with *flava Ceres* from poem 1.1.15, drawing a parallel between Delia to the goddess of crops.[42] The only other use of the phrase *flavae comae* in Tibullus' corpus confirms this double-meaning. Since the word *coma* can also be used of foliage or leafy growth, the phrase can also be translated "golden foliage."[43] In the lover-poet's hymn about farming in poem 2.1, he sings, *deponit flavas annua terra comas*, ("each year the land puts down its golden crop," 2.1.48). It is noteworthy that when the

[41] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.43-44 notes this expression. For examples of the use of *verba* as "charms" or "spells," see Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.43-44 and cf. Hor. *Epist*. 1.1.34 and Ovid *Met*. 7.203, 248, 14.57, 301.

[42] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.43-44. cf. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.15.

[43] *OLD coma* s.v. 1-4.

lover-poet describes what is so bewitching about Delia's appearance, he chooses to specify the characteristic that could apply just as easily to the bounty of his farm at harvest-time.

There are several ways that we can understand the linguistic overlap between the lover-poet's description of Delia's beauty and the abundance of the lover-poet's idealized country farm. We could read these lines as a joke about Delia being an embodiment of Tibullus' poetry and taking on the characteristics that make his poems particularly distinctive. But in light of what we have seen thus far, it makes sense to consider what this parallel between the lover-poet's representation of his farm and of Delia might tell us about his experience of desire in each of these contexts. With this linguistic pun, the lover-poet suggests that his longing for Delia and his longing for his country fantasy are caused by something eerily similar. Something that he would go so far as to call the same thing.

The Structure of Desire Returns

Just as we did in chapter 1, we can bring in Lacan's theory of subjectivity to make sense of the similarities that emerge between the structure of the lover-poet's country fantasy and his desire for Delia. In a way reminiscent of his rustic fantasy, the lover-poet repeatedly links his desire to be with Delia with his hope for a sense of wholeness, which he calls by names like *securitas* (1.1.48) and *felicitas* (1.5.19-20). We recall that in Lacanian theory, the human subject is split by an ever-present sense of lack that keeps it perpetually searching for a sense of fulfillment. We can read the lover-poet's fantasies of a life with Delia as yet more reflections on the subject's struggle for satisfaction and on the forces that interfere in it. The parallelism between the two desires is unsurprising on a Lacanian model. The lover-poet's desire for Delia is simply an instantiation of his experience of desire more generally, this time appearing in his longing for a particular object of his affection.

The lover-poet's dream of being with Delia in poem 1.1 follows the same pattern of a vague sense of longed-for wholeness sabotaged by the potential excesses of Amor that we saw repeated in the lover-poet's fantasies of happiness on his farm. As we have seen, the question of what "being with" Delia really means and the question of whether Delia really is the *domina* the lover poets wants undermine the reader's certainty about his dream of "being with Delia" from the beginning. The lover-poet's idea of "being with Delia" is so unclear that it becomes impossible to ascertain whether it is in fact possible to attain, or whether attaining it could in fact provide the sense of fulfillment that the lover-poet seeks. The lover-poet cannot settle on an articulation of what he really wants from his relationship with Delia any more than he can clearly explain what it is he really wants from his fantasy of the countryside.

Even if we accept these inherent ambiguities in the lover-poet's fantasy of "being with Delia," the lover-poet reveals many more problems inherent in his visions of happiness with his girlfriend throughout poems 1.1 and 1.5. Although the lover-poet attempts to set up his relationship with his beloved as a source of enjoyment and freedom from anxiety (1.1.45-48), it quickly becomes obvious that he cannot keep his ideal separate from the threat of human mortality (1.1.69-70) and the violence that he is trying to escape (1.1.73-76). This conclusion is also unsurprising from a Lacanian perspective. Just as the lover-poet's fantasies of abundance and fulfillment and peace fell apart in chapter 1, the lover-poet's dream of being with Delia falls apart even as he constructs it. Something always threatens his sense of fulfillment, whether it is the lingering question of what Delia desires, the inevitability of death, or the violence inherent in Amor. The conditions within which the lover-poet must imagine his fantasy of "being with Delia" will always already undermine it. A Lacanian reading provides a way to articulate the many levels on which the lover-poet's

dreams dissolve, while also offering us a way to see these two seemingly incompatible fantasies as linked in a fundamental way. From this viewpoint, we can explain why the lover-poet's attempts to articulate his experience of desire only ever remphasize the inherent impossibility of his visions of lasting happiness.

The Split Subject Encounters *Objet a*

There is another Lacanian concept that is especially useful for articulating the parallels we see in the lover-poet's desire for Delia and his longing for a peaceful life on his farm. In chapter 1, I briefly introduced the concept of *objet a*, the Real cause of the subject's desire.[44] *Objet a* is the remainder of the process of separation, which results in the birth of the subject as the subject realizes that he cannot fill the lack that he senses in the Other. *Objet a* is the reminder of this sense of being that is always already lost.[45] It is the Real object which the subject must always pursue in an attempt to "regain" his or her sense of being in relation to the Other.[46] In everyday life, Lacan sees the function of *objet a* in situations where a subject is drawn to someone who has a particular way of speaking or a

---

[44] cf. Lacan *SX* 101 and *SXI* 242-43, 257-58, and 268.

[45] Fink (1995) 59-61. cf. Lacan *SX* 174-75.

[46] Fink (1995) 61, cf. 83. cf. Lacan *SX* 26-27 and *SXX* 114/126. It should be noted that this desiring structure (the subject seeking objet *a* as the source of its lost sense of being) is one Lacan termed the "obsessive neurotic." cf. Lacan *Écrits* 823-24, 26/698-700. Most obsessive neurotics on a Lacanian schema happen to be men (cf. Fink (1997) 119) and the Tibullan lover-poet can be understood using this model. The opposite of the obsessive is the "hysteric," who responds to the problem of separation by seeking to fill the lack in the other, see Fink (1997) 119-120. In Lacan's diagnostic schema, all subjects who have entered into the Symbolic and experienced separation will be either an obsessive or a hysteric neurotic. The terms are not meant to denote the degree of symptoms, but the subject's positioning with respect to objet *a*.

particular way of looking that evokes that subject's desire for him or her.[47] It is important that these causes of desire are almost always qualities like a person's voice or gaze, which are extremely difficult (if not impossible) to articulate for the subject who experiences them. In this sense, they are Real objects; they are the Real cause of desire.[48] It is this Real nature of *objet a*, which cannot ever entirely be translated into the Symbolic, which requires the subject to return to it again and again, seeking it wherever it can be found.[49]

Because *objet a* is not an object in the usual sense of the term, on a Lacanian view, a particular object of desire, such as the lover-poet's *puella*, is actually of secondary importance to the *objet a* that inheres in that object.[50] As the subject's desire seems to shift from object to object (for example, from one woman to another), Lacan argues that the Real cause of desire, *objet a*, remains the same. On this model, the lover-poet is attracted to the cause of desire as it manifests itself in the *puella*, but not the *puella* per se. Of course, the subject usually does not distinguish between the two, mistaking the object for what he "really wants."[51] But *objet a* is never identical with the specific partner per se: it is "something" about them, but it is not them.[52]

The concept of *objet a* can help us understand the analogous structures of the lover-poet's desire for his farm and his desire for Delia in several ways. For one, it explains why

[47] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 80. cf. Lacan *SXI* 73-77, 82-85.

[48] Fink (1995) 92.

[49] Fink (1995) 92 and Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 82. cf. Lacan *SXI* 53-56 and 257.

[50] Fink (1995) 91-92. cf. Lacan *SXI* 267-70 and *SXX* 72.

[51] Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 40. cf. Lacan *SXX* 101/111-112.

the lover-poet would describe what he wants from his relationship with Delia in such vague terms as "being with" her (1.1.57-58), without being able to explain clearly what that means. It can also provide an account of why Delia always already seems to be not quite the *domina* whom the lover-poet really wants. On Lacan's view, Delia herself is not in fact what the lover-poet wants from his relationship with her. It also explains the lover-poet's striking declaration that Delia bewitches him with something other than her words (1.5.43-44). If the cause of the lover-poet's desire is inexpressible in language because it belongs to the Real, it makes sense that the terms he uses to describe it would be consistently ambiguous and indefinite. On a Lacanian view, the thing that draws him to Delia and the thing he wants from Delia are impossible to explain in so many words. The lover-poet's desire for that thing both makes Delia irresistible and means that Delia herself will never be quite what he wants.

The concept of *objet a* can also help us make sense of the lover-poet's playful linguistic alignment of Delia's bewitching blond hair and the golden harvest of his ideal farm (*flavis…comis,*1.5.44, *flavas…comas,* 2.1.48). Both Delia and the countryside represent *objet a* to the lover-poet. They both have "that one thing," the thing "in you more than you"[53] that causes his desire. Through this linguistic connection he admits that the cause of desire inherent in each is ultimately the same indescribable object. "That thing" is not actually blond/golden hair/foliage specifically. In fact, the obvious difference between these two physical objects given the same name suggests that their sameness is not necessarily a physical, definable quality. The particular name he chooses is less important than the fact

[52] Fink (1995) 90-92. In its most extreme manifestations, people with an obsessive desiring structure treat their partners quite explicitly as mere containers for objet *a*. See Fink (1997) 119 and 123.

[53] Lacan *SXI* 263.

that the pun reveals that the cause of the lover-poet's desire for Delia and for the countryside amount to the same "thing," *objet a*.

There is yet another way that we can use the concept of *objet a* to explain the dynamics of the lover-poet's fantasies of Delia and the countryside. The fantasy of 1.5 is also different from the others we have seen because it actually seems to represent a happy life. It largely escapes the anxiety brought by Amor, and it does not include the same persistent anxieties that plague the other instances of the lover-poet's country fantasy. In 1.5 we finally see the possibilities of the lover-poet's rustic dreams imagined in full. And yet at the same time as all of these dreams come into focus—the subject disappears.

On a Lacanian model, this outcome is not at all surprising. The closer that the subject gets to the object of his desire, the more power that *objet a* holds over the subject. Although *objet a* is the cause of desire, it is also the remainder created by the process of separation that produces the subject.[54] If the subject were to ever attain the wholeness and sense of being that it represents, he would cease to exist. Lacan uses this concept to explain why a person usually falls in love with someone who is totally unattainable or sets impossible standards that his beloved cannot live up to; he is avoiding being entirely eclipsed by a reunion with the Other through the attainment of *objet a*.[55] On a Lacanian view, the subject would fade to nothing if it were not defined by its desire. Possessing *objet a* would give the subject a sense of being, but would also erase the separation that brought the subject into existence in the first place. On Tibullus' model, the lover-poet finds himself in the same position. In the country fantasy of poem 1.5, the subject is entirely erased by the imagined realization of the

[54] Fink (1995) 61, 83.

[55] Fink (1997) 124. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 814/689, 824/698, *SX* 53-54 and *SXX* 58-62.

dream for which he longs. From a Lacanian perspective, it is unsurprising that in poem 1.5 the lover-poet's *curae*, *dolor,* and *anxietas* turn out to be essential to his very existence. A Lacanian interpretation of Tibullus' poems highlights the central role that desire plays in the lover-poet's account of both his rustic fantasy and his relationship with Delia. It provides a way to explain how these seemingly disparate fantasies each engage with the plight of the desiring subject, defined by his constant pursuit of *objet a*. By reading these poems in this way, we can contextualize the lover-poet's relationship with Delia within Tibullus' larger poetic project. We can study his relationship with Delia as one of several instances of his experience as a desiring subject, which provides him the opportunity to investigate how desire operates when it is directed at a Woman in particular. The lover-poet's exploration of the dynamics of Man's desire for Woman will be the focus of chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Constructing Delia

In chapter 2, we saw how the lover-poet's representation of his ideal relationship with Delia suffers from inconsistencies and contradictions similar to the ones that prevented his country fantasy from ever being fully realized in chapter 1. In this chapter, we will explore how the lover-poet represents the figure of Delia herself in poems 1.2 and 1.3. Whereas before we explored the dynamics of the lover-poet's desire for Delia, in this chapter we will look at the lover-poet's construction of his beloved. As we unpack these poems, we will see that Delia is a surprisingly elusive figure, whose shadowy presence repeatedly provokes the lover-poet's anxiety about what he does not (and perhaps cannot) know about her. Again and again, he confronts the limitations of his understanding of who Delia is and what she wants. By the end of poem 1.3, it becomes clear that the lover-poet's idea of Delia takes precedence in his account of his desire for her, while the parts of Delia's nature that remain unknown to him repeatedly undermine the possibility of him ever having the relationship he wants with her. In this chapter, we will consider how the lover-poet's representation of Delia creates an account of what "woman" is like, an account that Lacan's own theory of "Woman" can help us understand. If we analyze the lover-poet's depictions of Delia from a Lacanian perspective, we will see that Lacan's framework for understanding Man's desire for Woman can help us explain the lover-poet's account of Delia in both poems 1.2 and 1.3.

As we saw in chapter 2, when the lover-poet introduces his *domina* in poem 1.1, he allows a surprising degree of ambiguity in the portrayal of his mistress. He refers simply to a

domina, rather than specifying the object of his love (1.1.46). As we saw in chapter 2, the *domina*'s ambiguity is so striking that Bright suggests that the lover-poet does not so much give the name Delia to this *domina* as approximate Delia to this initial concept of the *domina*.[1] We discussed how the gap between the ideal *domina* and Delia herself implies that Delia is always already not quite who the lover-poet wishes she would be. In this chapter, I suggest that this gap also allows us to read Delia as a specific example of the lover-poet's idea of "woman" in general, and his relationship with Delia as an example of the relationship between Man and Woman writ large. After looking at the lover-poet's relationship with Delia as another instantiation of his experience of desire in chapter 2, we will now focus specifically on how the lover-poet represents his relationship with Delia as a relationship with Woman.

There is something about Delia that the lover-poet cannot quite put his finger on, and that he cannot quite explain. In the last chapter, we explored how the ambiguity of what the lover-poet desires from Delia can be elucidated using Lacan's concept of *objet a*. In this chapter, we will see that Tibullus' poems also allude to inherent problems in representing Delia herself. Delia's uncertain presence in poem 1.2 reveals that it is what the lover-poet does not (and cannot) know about Delia that continually motivates his pursuit of her. I propose that Lacan's theory of sexuation and his account of "Woman" can help us explain why this is so. Later, in poem 1.3, the lover-poet constructs several explicit fantasies of Delia's words and behavior and of her piety, faithfulness, and loyalty to him. But for all the effort the lover-poet puts into these ideas of Delia, he is constantly haunted by the ways that Delia's individual words and actions may not match his expectations. I show that we can use

[1] Bright (1978) 125-126.

Lacan's concept of *objet a* yet again in this instance to account for the repeated complications that interfere with the lover-poet's construction of Delia.

Is Delia There?: Poem 1.2

In poem 1.2, the lover-poet appears as an *exclusus amator* outside his mistress' door. Yet unlike the second half of poem 1.1, in which the lover-poet directly addresses Delia three separate times (57, 61, 68), it unclear from the opening lines of poem 1.2 whether this poem will be addressed to her as well. Indeed, the lover-poet addresses a slave and even a door before he ever speaks to Delia directly (15).[2]

In lines 1-2, it seems most likely that the lover-poet is addressing a serving boy:

Adde merum vinoque novos compesce dolores,
occupet ut fessi lumina victa sopor; (1.2.1-2)

Add undiluted wine and restrain my fresh griefs with drink,
so that deep sleep may take over the conquered eyes of an exhausted man.

The presence of a serving boy would fit the context of a drinking party, which could be the setting of the beginning of the poem.[3] But just a few lines later the lover-poet begins to address a door, suddenly envisioning himself on his beloved's threshold:

ianua difficilis domini, te verberet imber,
te Iovis imperio fulmina missa petant.
ianua, iam pateas uni mihi, victa querelis, (1.2.7-9)

Door of a difficult master, may a rainstorm beat on you,

[2] Murgatroyd (1980) 73 suggests that the length and variety of addressees in this poem marks it as especially unique in its genre.

[3] Miller (2012) 60 describes the controversy over the poem's setting at length. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.1-4 suggests that the generic markers of the opening lines, as well as their similarity to Meleager *AP* 12.49, imply that the lover-poet is initially addressing a slave serving the members of a drinking party, cf. Lyne (1980) 180 and Bright (1978) 137. This sense fades, however, as it becomes more likely that the lover-poet is outside Delia's door, cf. Murgatroyd (1991) 71, Cairns (1979) 166-67, Putnam (1973) 10.

may lightning bolts sent by Jove's command attack you.
Door, may you open now for me alone, conquered by my complaints.

The lover-poet's rebuke of Delia's door continues from lines 7-14, after which he finally turns to address Delia herself.

Yet even after the lover-poet finally calls Delia by name in line 15 (*tu quoque ne timide custodes, Delia, falle,* "You also, don't be afraid to deceive the guards, Delia"), there is still a sense in which it seems strange to call Delia the addressee of poem 1.2. As the lover-poet gives Delia his instructions to escape from her room and attempts to teach her the ways of Venus in lines 15ff., he seems to wander in and out of direct address, losing himself in a monologue about Venus' aid to lovers:

tu quoque ne timide custodes, Delia, falle;
audendum est: fortes adiuvat ipsa Venus. (1.2.15-16)
illa favet, seu quis iuvenis nova limina temptat
seu reserat fixo dente puella fores;
illa docet molli furtim derepere lecto,

You also, don't be afraid to deceive the guards, Delia;
you ought to dare to do it: Venus herself helps the brave.
She shows favor whether some young man tests new thresholds,
or a girl unlocks doors with the fixed tooth [of a key].
She teaches how to creep down stealthily from the soft bed…

The lover-poet's lesson in the ways of Venus extends until at least line 32. Then, after warning passers-by that they should keep silent if they bear witness to his affair, the lover-poet returns to addressing Delia (43-44). He immediately launches into yet another monologue, however, about a witch whom he claims to have consulted on Delia's behalf:

nam fuerit quicumque loquax, is sanguine natam
is Venerem e rapido sentiet esse mari.
nec tamen huic credet coniunx tuus, ut mihi verax
pollicita est magico saga ministerio.
hanc ego de caelo ducentem sidera vidi; (1.2.41-45)

For whoever gossips, he will realize that
Venus was born from blood and from the raving sea.

Still your *coniunx* will not believe him, just as the truthful witch
promised me with her magical work.
I have seen her drawing the stars down from the sky;

The lover-poet's story about the witch continues for another twenty lines (46-66). As his narrative of the witch's magical rites concludes, he begins to give Delia advice about how to perform the spells herself and explains why she can trust the witch's expertise (55-66). But he transitions yet again to a ruthless critique of a rival who has apparently abandoned Delia to go off to war:

non ego totus abesset amor sed mutuus esset
orabam, nec te posse carere velim.
ferreus ille fuit qui, te cum posset habere,
maluerit praedas stultus et arma sequi. (1.2.65-68)

I was praying not that all love would be gone but that it would be mutual,[4]
and that I would not want to be without you.
That man was iron who, when he could have you,
would have preferred, foolishly, to pursue spoils and weapons…

The constant shifting back and forth between the lover-poet's address to Delia and his own tangential reflections culminates in the lover-poet seemingly giving up on a conversation with Delia altogether and addressing the last twenty lines of the poem to Venus instead (81-100). We will consider this passage more closely at the end of this section.

The repeated change in addressee has several effects on our understanding of poem 1.2. First of all, it causes considerable confusion about the setting of this poem. Scholars have proposed that it takes place at a symposium, or on the street, or at Delia's threshold, or

[4] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.65-66 gives an extensive commentary on the idea of mutual love in Greek and Latin poetry. It is noteworthy that the expression *mutuus amor* is never used with respect to Tibullus' love for Nemesis.

even while the lover-poet is alone at home.[5] For the most part, it seems that the lover-poet is either at Delia's door, or at least imagining himself there. The persistent shift of addressee also raises concerns about the lover-poet's state of mind. It is likely that the lover-poet is drunk (1-4) and it is even possible that he is hallucinating or otherwise dreaming this entire sequence.[6] I suggest that even if the events of poem 1.2 are all in the lover-poet's head, we can still study the structure of these scenes carefully and explore the way he represents Delia in his poems. As we have already seen in our analysis of poems 1.1 and 1.5, much of the lover-poet's relationship with Delia straddles this line between fantasy and reality.

More important for this chapter is how the phenomenon of the constantly shifting addressees brings to life the setting of the *paraclausithyron*. In poem 1.2, the shut-out lover laments to his girlfriend without any guarantee that she will either listen or respond. The lover-poet hammers the door repeatedly with complaints, while it grows more and more likely that Delia either is not listening or is not even at home in the first place. The poem ends with the lover-poet abandoning any attempt to address Delia at all. Throughout the entirety of poem 1.2, the lover-poet gives us no indication that Delia is letting him in or even that she is acknowledging his pleas from her doorstep. It seems that Delia is simply not there.

Bright notices this quality of the poem, commenting that although Delia "is introduced immediately," she "quickly fades into the background as Tibullus delivers a

---

[5] For various arguments as to the setting of this poem, see Vretska (1955) 20-46, Copley (1956), Putnam (1973) 10, Bright (1978) 137, Cairns (1979) 166-7, Kennedy (1993), Murgatroyd (1980) 71-73, Maltby (2002) 153 and *ad loc.* 1.2.1-2, and esp. Miller (2012) 60.

[6] In fact, these idiosyncratic elements of Tibullus' style once led Wageningen (1913) to argue that Tibullus suffered from a brain abnormality. More recently, Miller (1999) 181-191, (2004) 95-107, and (2012) 53-55 has explored this quality of Tibullus' poetry at length. See also Bright (1973) 140-41.

lecture on the precepts of urban love [in lines 15ff]." [7] He goes so far as to suggest that in this poem "She seems in fact almost a mechanism allowing the poet to move on to a general development of themes not focused on her."[8] This observation hits on a fascinating aspect of poem 1.2; although the topic of the poem is ostensibly the lover-poet's relationship with Delia, surprisingly little of the poem has anything to do with her.

Bright suggests that the lover-poet's idea of Delia fails to become concrete in the urban setting of poem 1.2. Bright sees this as a "serious defect" that makes poem 1.2 far "less effective" than poem 1.1. He claims that this frustrating ambiguity in Delia's character stems from the poet's inability to reconcile the world of his country fantasy with the urban setting in which he must pursue a relationship with her. He suggests that she cannot be both the girl of his dreams and a girl who must be sought out on the rough streets of Rome.[9] I read this "defect" in a different way. I think it shows just how much the lover-poet's ideas of Delia take precedence over her physical presence, words, or actions. It also makes a statement about the influence which the lover-poet's idea of Delia has over the lover-poet's relationship with her even when he knows so little about her.

I propose that Delia's ambiguity in this poem does not make the lover-poet's vision of her any less influential over the lover-poet's narrative. The lover-poet envisions himself at her whim, but what the lover-poet believes she wants does not need to be clear or defined for the lover-poet to construct a story around it. In fact, its unknowability seems to be what keeps the narrative moving forward, unable to stay in one place for long. Delia's lack of

---

[7] Bright (1978) 138-39.

[8] Bright (1978) 138-39.

[9] Bright (1978) 148-49.

response only keeps the lover-poet trying more and more ways to win her and imagining more and more scenes of what it would be like for them finally to be together. It is the extent of the influence of the lover-poet's idea of Delia in a story in which she is so ephemeral that is the most interesting aspect of this poem.

The question of Delia's desire and the influence that the lover-poet's idea of Delia's desire has even when it is not fully understood already comes into play in the early lines of the poem. When the lover-poet finds himself in front of his beloved's door, instead of casting himself as the doorkeeper as he did at 1.1.55-56, this time there is some kind of guard blocking his entrance.

> nam posita est nostrae custodia saeva puellae,
> clauditur et dura ianua firma sera. (1.2.5-6)

> For my girl's cruel guard has been put in place,
> and the hard door is shut with a strong bolt.

It is unclear whether this guardian is a *ianitor*, a *lena*, or some other protector.[10] The shift in circumstances from poem 1.1 raises the question of why the lover-poet is now the *exclusus amator*. Is Delia a *matrona,* so that social propriety demands that she be kept only for her husband and prevented from having extramarital affairs? Is she a *meretrix,* so that we are meant to assume that the lover-poet is unable to come in because he did not bring the payment she requires? Regardless of her social status, the question of Delia's attitude toward this guardian remains open. Is the guard working for her to protect her from unwanted suitors? Or is he working for her *coniunx* (1.2.43), whoever he might be, to keep Delia from having liaisons with other men in spite of her own wishes? The ambiguity surrounding the

[10] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.5-6 lists as possibilities a doorkeeper, an old woman attendant (cf. Plaut. *Curc.*), or a male chaperone like Bagoas in Ovid *Am.* 2.2 and 2.3. McKeown (1998) 28 notes that such attendants were common for married women in real life.

placement of the guardian introduces the importance of the lover-poet's understanding of Delia's desire in shaping his relationship with her. The lover-poet's description of his situation implies that he believes that the most important factor in changing his position as an *exclusus amator* is not so much the guardian's will as what Delia wants.

As the poem proceeds, the lover-poet explicitly claims that Delia is the one who controls the outcome of his *labor* outside her door (33). At the end of his lengthy monologue about Venus' lessons for lovers and her commitment to protecting them as they wander the streets at night (15-32), the lover-poet declares that the dangers of the Roman streets are unable to harm him, so long as Delia lets him in:

> non labor hic laedit, reseret modo Delia postes
> et vocet ad digiti me taciturna sonum. (1.2.33-34)

> This hardship does not harm me, if only Delia unlocks the door
> and calls me quietly toward the sound of her fingertip.

Although the lover-poet has just claimed that Venus is the one who will protect him in the dark of night (25-30), he now claims that Delia holds the ultimate control over whether he suffers outside or not.[11] Perhaps these lines provide an answer to Delia's attitude toward being guarded in lines 5-6. If he is simply waiting for her signal, one would suppose she is being guarded against her will. But the lover-poet's phrasing leaves open the possibility that Delia's potential signals are only wishful thinking on the part of a lover-poet who is lost in his own fantasy. We still have no evidence that Delia will in fact let him in, or that she is even listening to his pleas. In this passage the lover-poet again suggests that knowing what Delia wants would provide the key to knowing where he stands in relationship to her. And yet again we have no indication of what that desire might be.

[11] cf. Lee-Stecum (1998) 83.

Yet the lover-poet continues on with what turns out to be the longest poem in Book 1. As we noted, he describes his dealings with a local witch to get love spells (43-66), criticizes a rival who chose to go off on campaign and leave Delia all alone (67-70), and insists that life with Delia in the countryside is better than having the greatest of riches all alone (71-76). When the poem draws to a close, the lover-poet seems to realize that his best efforts at manipulating Delia into letting him inside are coming to nothing. At this point he begins to second-guess his strategies thus far. He expresses concern that he has angered Venus in some way, so that he now remains outside the door:

> num Veneris magnae violavi numina verbo
> et mea nunc poenas impia lingua luit?
> num feror incestus sedes adisse deorum
> sertaque de sanctis deripuisse focis?
> non ego, si merui, dubitem procumbere templis
> et dare sacratis oscula liminibus,
> non ego tellurem genibus perrepere supplex
> et miserum sancto tundere poste caput. (1.2.81-88)

> I didn't violate the powers of great Venus with a word, did I?
> and my impious tongue is not now paying the punishment, is it?
> People don't say I approached the house of the gods impurely, do they?
> and that I tore garlands from sacred hearths?
> I would not hesitate, if I deserved it, to fall prostrate at temples
> and to give kisses to sacred thresholds,
> I would not hesitate to creep along on the ground on my knees as a suppliant
> and beat my miserable head on a sacred doorpost.

Earlier in the poem, the lover-poet threatened those who would expose his affair with Delia by saying that they would come to know firsthand Venus' origins as a goddess "born from blood" (*sanguine natam* 41-42).[12] In this passage he repeats his connection between Venus and violent punishment. The possible sacrileges that he imagines escalate from a brief curse

[12] See Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.41-42 for more on the accounts of Venus' origins found in Greek and Latin poetry.

to the violation of a sacred space, but his description of his potential penance is far more vivid.[13] The lover-poet promises full self-abasement and physical abuse at his own hands.[14]

Several scholars have raised the question of whether the picture the lover-poet paints here of his punishment in front of Venus' temple conflates Venus' temple with Delia's house. There are many verbal echoes that support this reading. The first question that the lover-poet poses is whether he has uttered a word that has offended Venus (81), a question that could allude to his earlier curse against Delia's door (7-8). He wonders whether he has been accused of tearing down *serta* (84),[15] which he claimed that he had offered at Delia's door many times before (14). The verb that he chooses for "lying prostrate" before the temple (*procumbere*, 85) is also used to describe the behavior of *exclusus amatores* in Lucretius and Propertius.[16] The lover-poet uses the word *supplex*, "suppliant," twice in this poem: once when describing his position outside Delia's door (14), and once in this scene

[13] Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 1.2.81-82 also notes how easily Venus is offended in this passage and how extreme the lover-poet's punishment is, commenting "One word uttered in a rash moment of blasphemy would be sufficient to bring down the wrath of Venus." Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 1.2.85-86 also notes the extreme nature of the lover-poet's self-humiliation in this passage, although he acknowledges that the behavior is rather common for an *exclusus amator* c.f. Lucr. 4.1179 and Prop. 1.16.41-42.

[14] Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.2.85 notes that *procumbere* appears in Lucr. 5.1198-1202 as an example of religious excess, and also of prostration before the beloved at Tib. 1.9.30 and Ovid *Am*. 1.7.61. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.88 also notes the comparison between the lover-poet beating his head on the doorpost and Augustus beating his head in grief at the loss of Varus' legions in Suet. *Div. Aug.* 23. He does admit, however, that there is no other extant example of banging one's head on a doorpost.

[15] Garlands are a typical mark of the *exclusus amator*, cf. Ovid *Am.* 1.6.67ff and Lucr. 4.1177ff. Bright (1978) 146 notes the likely analogy of the *serta* in lines 14 and 84.

[16] cf. Lucr. 4.1179 and Prop. 1.16.42.

where he comes to humble himself for violating Venus (87).[17] As the scene of his self-abasement before Venus unfolds, the echoes of the *exclusus amator*'s plight only grow stronger. In order to make up for upsetting the goddess, the lover-poet gives kisses (*oscula*, 86), kneels at the threshold (*sacratis…liminibus*, 86), calls himself *miserum* (88), and beats his head on a doorpost (*poste,* 88).[18] By the end of the poem, Venus sparing the lover-poet and Delia opening her door start looking very similar. It is very plausible that by saying "but spare me, Venus" (99), the lover-poet really means "Delia, for goodness sake, open the door!"

Bright has proposed his own explanation for the conflation of Delia and Venus in this poem. When commenting on this passage, Bright goes so far as to call Delia "the goddess' embodiment," pointing to other places where the beloved and Venus are conflated in elegiac poetry.[19] Bright argues that in this passage the lover-poet shows how the lover-poet's affronts to Delia are reimagined as a violation of Venus herself,[20] making Delia the incarnation of the goddess on earth. I am more interested, however, in how the conflation of Delia and Venus in this scene serves as an analogy for how the lover-poet's fantasy of Delia and of her desire drive the lover-poet's narrative throughout the poem. Just like a goddess, Delia is the focus of the lover-poet's attempts at constructing a relationship with her without her presence being explicit, and without her desire ever becoming known. Moreover, the

---

[17] For other examples of the *exclusus amator* as a suppliant, cf. Prop. 1.16.14 and Ovid *Ars* 2.527. See Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.2.13-14.

[18] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.2.86 and 88 for examples of these elements in *paraclausithyra*, cf. Prop. 1.16 and Ovid *Am.* 1.6.

[19] Bright (1978) 145, cf. esp. Tib. 2.3.3-4.

[20] Bright (1978) 146.

comparison suggests that the lover-poet conceives of Delia's desire as insatiable and unceasing, since worshippers can never propitiate the gods once and for all. In this poem, the absent Delia functions in the same way as a goddess, whose worshippers envision her whims as unpredictable, undefinable, and ultimately unfulfillable.

In the lover-poet's promised rituals of self-abasement, the goddess's presence is beside the point. We do not get an answer to any of the lover-poet's questions about whether or not Venus would wish him to carry out any of the punishments that he proposes. The repeated questions expecting negative answers (*num…num…* 81-84) suggests that he did not even commit any of the offenses that he describes. But this reveals that Venus' presence and response is not actually necessary for the lover-poet to construct his story around what he believes she wants from him. In the same way, Delia's presence is not necessary for the lover-poet's fantasy of her desire to be the unspoken force that drives his narrative of his relationship with her.

In poem 1.2, Delia is in fact only the idea of Delia. We know how the lover-poet wants her to act (15-16, 33-34) and what he wants from their relationship (65-66), but we have no more information about her responses to him, or whether she is even there to respond. We learn nothing about her in this poem, other than that she has a *coniunx* (43). Poem 1.2 shows us how little meaningful knowledge of Delia is necessary for the lover-poet to develop a narrative about himself around his relationship with her. And yet, the lover-poet stresses again and again that knowing Delia's desire holds the key to ending his misery and allowing him to have what he wants. It is telling that in poem 1.2, the lover-poet does not only express his desire to "be with Delia" (*si tecum modo Delia possim,* 73), but his longing for "mutual love" (*amor…mutuus*, 65)—his wish that her desire would complement his own. By the end of the poem, the main force driving the lover-poet's story seems to be precisely

his persistent failure to understand what Delia might want. The question of Delia's presence or absence itself fades to the background, as the lover-poet's struggle to envision what Delia wants and bring it into line with what he wants comes to the forefront.

What Does Woman Want?: Woman Does Not Exist

I suggest that Lacan's model of sexual difference provides a way to understand the lover-poet's representation (or perhaps more accurately, lack of representation) of Delia in poem 1.2. It will take a bit of explanation to articulate what Lacan claims about the nature of sexual difference, but the outcome will illuminate several aspects of the lover-poet's account of Delia is in this poem.

When we consider Lacan's account of how the subject becomes split, we see just how important the function of language is in alienating and eventually separating the subject from the Other. This process creates a split in the subject, a sense of lack, loss, and limit that brings it into existence. Thus far, I have focused on a more generalized account of the birth of the subject, but the results of this same process also create what Lacan calls sexual difference. In the process of alienation and separation, one signifier comes to represent the lack in the Other which extends beyond the subject. Lacan calls this signifier the phallus.[21]

Lacan's definition of the phallus as the signifier of desire is central to his theory of sexuation. Lacan maintains that in Western cultures in general, the phallus is equated with the penis, but he insists that there is no theoretical necessity to this connection.[22] What is far more important is the phallus's role as the signifier of desire, and thus as a signifier of the

[21] Fink (1995) 101-2. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 690/579.

[22] Fink (1995) 102. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 682/581 provides various reasons for the penis to play this role.

lack that founds the subject.[23] Because it signifies this lack, the "phallic function" in Lacanian terms is the alienating function of language, which is the source of the split in the subject.[24] Thus, the birth of the subject leads to one of two possible relationships to this function, which result in two different psychological structures. Since we culturally associate these two different structures with biological males and biological females (although they are in no way determined by anatomy and biology[25]), Lacan describes them as "masculine structure" and "feminine structure," respectively.[26]

A subject with masculine structure submits entirely to this alienating function of language during the process of separation, becoming wholly contained within the Symbolic.[27] He must constantly negotiate his relationship to the Real cause of desire, *objet a*, from within the constraints of the Symbolic order.[28] His jouissance can only ever be what Lacan calls "phallic jouissance," and which we might call "symbolic jouissance," which comes from the enjoyment of language or the enjoyment of sexual intercourse.[29] A subject with feminine structure is partially defined by the alienating function of language, and so to a certain extent she participates in the same process of negotiating her experience of desire

---

[23] Fink (1995) 101-2. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 715/598-99, 722/606-7, 730/614.

[24] Fink (1995) 103. cf. Lacan *SXX* 67-69/71-74.

[25] Fink (1995) 108.

[26] Lacan sums up these "formulae of sexuation" in a famous schema at *SXX* 73f./78f. See further Fink (2002) "Knowledge and Jouissance" 38-41.

[27] Fink (1995) 106-7. cf. Lacan *SXX* 67-68/71-72.

[28] Fink (1995) 106-7. cf. Lacan *SXX* 58-59/63 and 74-75/80.

[29] Fink (1995) 106-7. cf. Lacan *SXX* 66/70 and 13-15/6-10. Fink (2002) "Knowledge and Jouissance" 37-39.

within the Symbolic.[30] Unlike someone with masculine structure, however, a part of her jouissance is not defined by this function.[31] For a person with masculine structure, the signifier which founds the subject (also called the "unary signifier" or the Name of the Father or the "No" of the Father) serves as a boundary that limits his options for jouissance, but a person with feminine structure maintains the ability to obtain jouissance from a relationship to the unary signifier itself.[32] This jouissance, which Lacan calls "Other jouissance" is exceedingly difficult to articulate. Lacan likens it to ecstatic religious experience and other kinds of transcendent spiritual encounters.[33] Thus, a subject with feminine structure has access to a kind of jouissance that does not exist within the Symbolic, which cannot be signified and thus cannot be known.[34]

Since these structures are associated by the Symbolic with "Man" and "Woman," respectively, they play an important role in our self-constructions and our constructions of others in terms of gender. This explanation of feminine structure can help us unpack one of Lacan's most strange and controversial aphorisms: "Woman does not exist." Lacan is not denying the existence of individual women, but the possibility of conceptualizing Woman entirely within the Symbolic order.[35] Since, according to Lacan, there is something about

---

[30] Fink (1995) 112. cf. Lacan *SXX* 67/71. Otherwise, she would be psychotic on a Lacanian model. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 575-577/479-81.

[31] Fink (1995) 107, 112. cf. Lacan *SXX* 58-59/63, 68-69/72-74, and 75/80-81.

[32] Fink (1995) 107, 113-115. cf. Lacan *SXX* 78/84 and 75/80-81 and further Fink (2002) "Knowledge and Jouissance" 40-41.

[33] Fink (1995) 114-15 and Fink (2002) "Knowledge and Jouissance" 35-36. cf. Lacan *SXX* 71-72/76-77.

[34] Fink (1995) 112-13. cf. Lacan *SXX* 69-71/74-77.

[35] Fink (1995) 115-116. cf. Lacan *SXX* 68-69/72-74 and 75/80.

Woman's desire that extends beyond the alienating function of language, Woman ex-sists beyond language and cannot ever be represented entirely thereby.[36] As a result, for Man, something about Woman is always uncertain, always impossible for him to contain within his Symbolic codes.[37]

In his own way, the Tibullan lover-poet gets at a similar point with his representations (or lack thereof) of Delia in poem 1.2. Delia's literal absence from the narrative dramatizes just how little the lover-poet knows about her. At the same time, it shows the extent to which Delia's unknowability drives the story forward, as the lover-poet continues to try to articulate his experience and construct meaning around their relationship. The lover-poet implies that the poem can proceed without Delia's presence or interference because the most consequential aspects of Delia as his counterpart are aspects that he cannot articulate. The lover-poet imagines that the unspoken desire of Delia—what Delia really wants—will ultimately determine the outcome of his situation throughout the poem. Yet it is apparent even from within the poem that this is precisely what cannot be known, and its utter absence from the text hints at the idea that it cannot even be spoken.

We can use Lacan's idea that Woman cannot ever be fully represented in the Symbolic to explain her strange absence in this poem. Woman's ex-sistence beyond language is figured in poem 1.2 by Delia's literal absence. Yet the impossibility of inscribing Woman entirely within the Symbolic does not stop Man from trying to explain his relationship to her or negotiate his relationship with her using language. Delia's absence in no way hinders the progress of the lover-poet's own self-construction and self-narrative. In

[36] Fink (1995) 116, 122.

[37] Fink (1995) 113. cf. Lacan *SXX* 67-71/71-77.

fact, as we have seen, the lover-poet's uncertainty about what Delia wants consistently drives the poem onward. Lacan's theory of Woman provides a way for us to explain the dynamics of the lover-poet's repeated attempts to bring his fantasy of Delia's desire in line with his own desire, and it helps us explain why those attempts fail.

Woman does not exist, but Man's fantasies about her desire can still drive his construction of a narrative. In fact, the lover-poet's idea of Delia's desire has infinite potential to drive his narrative precisely because he cannot ever fully articulate it. Woman does not exist, but that does not mean that the lover-poet has any shortage of narratives about who she is (or at least should be) for him.

"Delia Is Nowhere": Poem 1.3

The choice to leave Delia so ambiguous in poem 1.2 suggests that there is something about Woman beyond what Man can know that serves as the driving force of the lover-poet's narrative of desire. Even if one cannot ever fully represent Woman's desire in the Symbolic, however, one can still say plenty of things about Woman. In poem 1.3, we see several examples of how the lover-poet imagines his beloved. Yet what the lover-poet does not know about her choices, will, and intentions still haunts each of his constructions of his ideal Delia.

The lover-poet sets the stage for this poem with a dramatic send-off for his patron, Messalla, and Messalla's army. He laments that he must remain behind while they continue on campaign, since he has fallen ill and is near to death (1-4). He claims to be stuck in the land of Phaeacia (3),[38] making an allusion to the place where Odysseus was shipwrecked on

[38] Much has been made of the lover-poet's description of the land as "Phaeacia" and the comparison that the name invites between Tibullus and Odysseus. Putnam (1973) and

his journey home from Troy. The reference to Phaeacia already places the poem in the realm of myth and fantasy, which reappears in many guises in this poem.

The lover-poet's main concern seems to be that if he dies abroad, there will be no one present to mourn him properly:

> abstineas, Mors atra, precor: non hic mihi mater
> quae legat in maestos ossa perusta sinus,
> non soror Assyrios cineri quae dedat odores
> et fleat effusis ante sepulcra comis;
> Delia non usquam… (1.3.5-9)
>
> I pray, black Death, that you stay away: my mother is not here,
> who would gather the burned up bones in her mourning clothes,
> My sister [is not here], who would give Assyrian perfumes to my ashes
> and weep before my tomb with her hair let down.
> Delia is nowhere…

He mentions the absence of his mother and his sister, both of whom he imagines would have performed his funeral rites for him (5-7). He laments that Delia is not there either (9). Most scholars have focused on how noteworthy her inclusion is here among the lover-poet's family members, since we do not have reason from any other poems to believe that she is a part of his family in a formal sense.[39] Certainly it is important to note the way that the lover-poet incorporates his *puella* into the more traditional relationships upon which Roman men placed a high priority. But there is a subtle difference between the way he describes his

---

Maltby (2002) 183 *ad loc.* 1.3.3 note that Phaeacia was said to be the name of ancient Corcyra (modern-day Corfu) by Callimachus, which may have been a stop on Messalla's journey East. Bright (1978) 16-37 devotes much of his chapter on 1.3 to the possible links between the lover-poet's journey and that of Odysseus.

[39] Lee-Stecum (1998) 105 suggests that this representation of his mother, sister, and girlfriend in mourning links these women with the traditional role played by women in epic poetry as mourners of dead heroes. He and Gardner (2010) 464-65 also comment on the way that this passage attempts to include Delia in the "social unit of the family," although she would have normally been barred from this role if she was unmarried and of low status (e.g. a *meretrix*, cf. James (2003) esp. 21-25 and 35-41).

mother's and sister's absence and the way that he describes Delia's. This difference has gone unmentioned in other discussions of this poem, but I believe that it is especially important for our interpretation of Delia in poem 1.3. The lover poet claims that "my mother is not here…nor my sister…" but he declares that "Delia is *nowhere*."[40]

How are we to interpret this turn of phrase? Is the lover-poet admitting that Delia is entirely a figment of his imagination? Does she in fact not exist? Or is she "nowhere" in a figurative sense, meaning that it would be so difficult to get in contact with her from this far-off land that she is as good as lost to him? Does he simply mean that she is "nowhere to be found" in Phaeacia? Even if we take a more figurative reading of this line, the implications of the expression still linger, and they draw attention to the ambiguity of Delia's presence throughout the earlier poems. The phrase pushes us to ask what we know with certainty about Delia. Thus far, in any poem, we have learned very little. Although in this poem Delia will take a particularly prominent role, we will end up once again with surprisingly little knowledge about her.

As Delia enters the narrative, the lover-poet launches into a lengthy account of her petitions to the gods on his behalf as he was preparing to leave for the army (9-14, 23-32). He first details her appeals to a local boy who draws lots:

> Delia non usquam, quae me cum mitteret urbe
> dicitur ante omnes consuluisse deos.
> illa sacras pueri sortes ter sustulit: illi
> rettulit e trinis omina certa puer.
> cuncta dabant reditus, tamen est deterrita numquam
> quin fleret nostras respiceretque vias. (1.3.9-14)

Delia is nowhere, who, when she sent me from the city,

[40] There is an interesting similarity here between the declaration that *Delia non usquam* (1.3.9) and the lover-poet's admission in poem 1.5 that if Delia were head of his household he would be happy *in tota…nihil esse domo* "to be nothing in the whole house" (1.5.30).

is said to have consulted all the gods ahead of time.
She drew the boy's sacred lots three times: the boy
gave her certain omens three times.
Everything foretold returns, nevertheless she was never deterred
from weeping or looking back at my journeys.

The lover-poet is at pains to describe just how concerned Delia was about his departure, emphasizing her repeated requests for prophecies about his journey. Although the details that the lover-poet includes seem intended to reinforce her distress at his leaving and her fears that he will not return, there are many indications that not everything happened as the lover-poet describes it now.

The whole scene is cast into doubt by the introduction of this section with the words, "who…*is said* to have consulted all the gods beforehand [emphasis mine]" (10). Maltby points out that the expression *dicitur* in elegy is most often used to introduce a retelling of a myth.[41] It could be that, as Maltby suggests, this choice of words is meant to cast Delia's words and actions in the "dimly remembered past,"[42] but it could also be the case that the actions he describes never happened at all. Although these lines give us the most detailed description of Delia and her behavior thus far, the lover-poet's choice of words already casts it as hearsay about what she used to be like.

Lee-Stecum builds on this ambiguity and points out the many ways that this story already falls apart even as the lover-poet constructs it.[43] Although the lover-poet tries to imply that Delia consulted the gods on behalf of his safety, it is not actually clear that she

[41] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.10. cf. Tib. 2.1.68, 2.3.18, 2.5.20, and Prop. 2.15.15-16. The phrases *ferunt* and *dicitur* are often markers of an "Alexandrian footnote," or learned allusion to a word, phrase, or story in Greek or Roman literature.

[42] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.10.

[43] Lee-Stecum (1998) 106-7.

wants him to return at all. There is no reason why her weeping and worrying about the lover-poet's journey must be in spite of the predictions of the lover-poet's safe return, rather than because of them. In fact, it seems all the more likely that she is crying because of the favorable omens, since the lover-poet emphasizes that every prophetic ritual predicted his return (*cuncta dabant reditus,* 14). Even as we see more of Delia's behavior, her motives and intentions remain just as uncertain as ever.

The lover-poet repeats this pattern of emphasizing Delia's devotion to him while subtly calling into question the likelihood of her loyalty, when he details her petitions to Isis on his behalf:

> quidve, pie dum sacra colis, pureque lavari
> et (memini!) puro secubuisse toro?
> nunc, dea, nunc succurre mihi, nam posse mederi
> picta docet templis multa tabella tuis,
> ut mea votivas persolvens Delia noctes
> ante sacras lino tecta fores sedeat
> bisque die resoluta comas tibi dicere laudes
> insignis turba debeat in Pharia (1.3.25-32)
>
> Or what [good is it], when you piously practiced rites, that you washed yourself purely
> and (I remember!) slept separately from me in a pure bed?
> Now, goddess, now run to help me, for the many tablets painted at your temples
> teach me that you are able to heal,
> so that my Delia, fulfilling the nights she vowed,
> may sit before the sacred doors covered in linen
> and so that twice per day she should sing your praises with her hair down,
> drawing distinction in the Pharian crowd.

Although Isis is an Egyptian goddess, her worship had been a part of Roman culture since the late second century B.C.E.[44] In Augustan literature, the *puellae* of elegy are particularly

[44] cf. Apuleius *Met.* 11.30. On Isis see Plut. *De Iside et Osiride*, Griffiths' (1975) commentary on Apul. *Met.* 11, Hollis (1977) on *Ars* 1.77-8, and Witt (1971). On Egyptian influences on Tibullus more generally, especially in poem 1.7, see Koenen (1976).

noteworthy devotees of the goddess.[45] Commentators highlight how important ritual purity was in the worship of Isis. Bathing, wearing linen, and abstinence from sex were all important aspects of devotion to the goddess.[46] In this passage, the lover-poet is at pains to emphasize Delia's piety and purity. He repeats words for these qualities in an almost obsessive manner. In lines 25-26 alone, he mentions "practicing sacred rites piously," "being washed purely," and "sleeping apart in a pure bed" (*pie dum sacra colis, pureque lavari et (memini!) puro secubuisse toro?* 25-26).

But for all of his efforts to paint a picture of an excessively pious *puella*, it is worrisome that what he seems to remember best is her choice to sleep apart for him because of her dedication to the goddess' rites.[47] How could he know whether she was in fact doing what she said? The rituals of Isis were practiced almost exclusively by women in this period. The lover-poet does not seem to have participated in those rites himself, which suggests that all he knows of them is what she told him she was doing or what he heard from others. What comes across in this passage is more the lover-poet's need to believe in her piety and purity, rather than any persuasive evidence that this was in fact the way she was behaving. His insistence on her purity and repeated examples of her devotion to him begin to seem like protesting too much. The lover-poet would hardly need to emphasize Delia's chastity to this extent if it were widely accepted and if he firmly believed in it. The fact that the lover-poet has now fallen so ill suggests that Delia's prayers have been ineffective, and perhaps may

[45] For other examples, see Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.23-32.

[46] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc*. 1.3.29-30.

[47] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.27-28 writes "the periods of chastity offered to Isis, which usually lasted ten days (Prop. 2.33.2), were a matter of particular concern to the elegists." cf. Prop. 2.28.61-2, 2.33.1f. and Ovid *Am.* 1.8.74, 2.19.42, and 3.9.33-4.

not have even been made in the first place. While in this poem the lover-poet is at pains to paint a picture of a perfect and pious Delia, there are hints once again that the lover-poet is giving us just one side of the story, that tells us far more about who the lover-poet wishes Delia to be than who she in fact is.

The lover-poet's fevered dreams now transition to a vision of the Golden Age, which brings us firmly into the realm of fantasy. We will explore the lover-poet's ideal of the Age of Saturn in this poem at greater length in chapter 4.[48] Fantasizing about this perfect past leads the lover-poet to lament the current age of Jupiter, where *caedes,* "slaughter" (49), *vulnera,* "wounds" (49), *mare,* "the sea" (50), and *leti mille repente viae,* "a thousand paths to sudden death" (50) rule the day.[49] This train of thought leads the lover-poet back to his fear of his impending death, so he transitions to a new vision of the afterlife he foresees for himself in Elysium.[50] He launches into a vision of eternal happiness in the Elysian Fields after the suffering of his life on earth:

> sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori,
> ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios.
> hic choreae cantusque vigent, passimque vagantes
> dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aves;
> fert casiam non culta seges, totosque per agros
> floret odoratis terra benigna rosis:
> ac iuvenum series teneris immixta puellis
> ludit et assidue proelia miscet Amor.

---

[48] Chapter 4 pg. 172-174.

[49] Lee-Stecum (1998) 117 points out the repetition of *nunc…nunc…nunc…* building up to …*Iove sub domino* heightens the contrast between the idealized past and the disastrous present.

[50] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.58 notes that Elysium was initially assumed to be above ground in the far West and equated with the Isles of the Blessed, cf. Hom. *Od.* 4.563ff, and Hes. *Works* 167ff. Cairns (1979) 45 suggests that Tibullus may be alluding to a tradition from the Homeric scholia about the geographical proximity of Phaeacia and Elysium, adding another meaning to the proverbial "being at death's door."

illic est cuicumque rapax Mors venit amanti,
et gerit insigni myrtea serta coma. (1.3.57-66)

But because I am always lenient to tender Love,
Venus herself will lead me to the Elysian Fields.
Here dancing and singing thrives, and birds wandering to and fro
sound a sweet song with a thin throat.
The uncultivated fields produce cinnamon, and throughout whole fields
the kind earth flowers with sweet-smelling roses;
And a row of young men mixed in with soft girls
plays, and Amor mixes up battles constantly.
Every lover to whom greedy Death comes is there,
and he wears a myrtle wreath in his distinguished hair.

The lover-poet cites his close relationship with Amor as his way of earning entrance to Elysium, and Venus herself guides him to his final resting place (57-58).[51] His Elysian Fields are set apart for dancing and singing, which flourish in the overflowing and abundant landscape (59). The inhabitants live in harmony with the natural world, singing along with the strains of the sweet-sounding birds (60). Even though the fields remain uncultivated, they spontaneously produce rich spices and sweet-smelling flowers (61-62).[52] Everyone in Elysium is youthful, and the young men and women all mingle together (63). They are rewarded with crowns of myrtle which they wear in their hair (66).

It may come as a surprise to the reader that there is no specific indication of Delia's presence in the lover-poet's afterlife. In fact, as we will discuss further in chapter 4, several scholars have found her absence so unexpected that they have read Delia into this passage in

[51] Bright (1978) 28 connects this appeal to the lover-poet's relationship with Amor with the tradition that heroes earned entry to Elysium through their closeness to a particular god.

[52] Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.3.61-62 both note the correspondence between the lack of cultivation in the Golden Age and the world of Elysium. Lee-Stecum (1998) 120 suggests that the abundance of these fields are for sensual pleasure rather than sustenance, since the shades of the Underworld no longer need that sustenance.

spite of the lack of evidence.[53] There is not even any suggestion that the lover-poet is waiting for her to arrive later.[54] Although the lover-poet imagines a sense of fulfillment in a paradise for lovers in Elysium, he does not mention Delia's presence at all. Of course, she is not dead at the time of the poem, which could explain her absence from the underworld. But it is telling that he does not mention her future presence with him in Elysium either. He never states with certainty that she is fated for the same afterlife as he is.

Following his detailed description of life in Elysium, the lover-poet also elaborates on the terrible punishments endured by those suffering in Tartarus. There are many ways to explain the crimes of the sufferers in the lover-poet's Tartarus, but most scholars conclude that these criminals all find their place in the underworld because of a crime against love.[55] I propose that the lover-poet's description of the punishment of those in Tartarus suggests an even more sinister implication of Delia's absence from Elysium. Perhaps she is not included in the underworld because the lover-poet is uncertain where she will end up. She may not fit into his vision of the underworld because he does not know what she has been doing since he has been away. When the lover-poet closes the description of Tartarus with the wish that "whoever has violated my love" would end up there, he leaves ominously open the question of just what has been going on since his absence:

> illic sit quicumque meos violavit amores,
> optavit lentas et mihi militias. (1.3.81-82)

---

[53] cf. Chapter 4 pg. 175-177.

[54] cf. Dido and Sychaeus in Virg. *Aen.* 6.472-74 and Cynthia and Propertius in Prop. 4.7.93-94.

[55] Debate swirled for years around the question of Tantalus' particular crime against love, as it seemed to be the missing piece for understanding the "reason" behind his inclusion in the group of those punished. cf. Cairns (1979) 54-57.

May whoever has violated my love be in that place [i.e. Tartarus],
and [whoever] wished for me to have a long service in the army.

It is unclear when and where these so-called "violations" of his love took place and just what the lover-poet means by "violations."[56] Perhaps they have nothing to do with Delia at all. But in the context of the lover-poet's *lentas militias* (82), and the uncertainty surrounding Delia's faithfulness in the first half of the poem, the reader has plenty of reasons to be suspicious. While hope that Delia will end up in a paradise for lovers still remains, the lover-poet allows for the possibility that Delia has been disloyal to him, and that he might eventually condemn her to his lovers' Tartarus.[57] Just as he did in his earlier story about Delia's requests for prophecies and worship of Isis, the lover-poet allows a certain amount of uncertainty about Delia's actions and intentions in his dreams of life after death.[58]

As the lover-poet begins to address Delia and envisions the scene of his return, his insistence on Delia's perfection and purity rises to a higher pitch than ever before:

at tu casta, precor, maneas sanctique pudoris
assideat custos sedula semper anus.
haec tibi fabellas referat positaque lucerna
deducat plena stamina longa colu,
ac circum gravibus pensis adfixa, puella

[56] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.3.81-82 points out the ambiguity about whether this line refers to a current rival and potential lover of Delia's or to past instances when someone cheated on the lover-poet. He ultimately suggests that while it is likely that the lover-poet's love for Delia is in question, the line does not necessarily mean that Delia has been unfaithful to him while he is away.

[57] Lee-Stecum (1998) 123 adds yet another layer to this interpretation when he points out that "It might be observed that the poet himself could be said to have offended the power of Venus (1.2.81) or at least to be suffering at her hands, and he certainly, within the scope of this poem, has attracted the wrath of Amor, or at least a god associated with love (1.3.21-2). Ironically, it is possible that the poet himself would be a more appropriate inhabitant of his Hell than his Elysium."

[58] Perhaps more unsettling is the realization that his happiness in the afterlife is not contingent on her presence there. We will explore this problem in more detail in chapter 4.

paulatim somno fessa remittat opus.
tunc veniam subito nec quisquam nuntiet ante
sed videar caelo missus adesse tibi.
tunc mihi qualis eris, longos turbata capillos,
obvia nudato, Delia, curre pede.
hoc precor: hunc illum nobis Aurora nitentem
Luciferum roseis candida portet equis. (1.3.83-94)

But may you, I pray, remain chaste and may a careful old woman
always be diligent as the guardian of your consecrated modesty.
May she tell you stories and draw down long threads
from a full distaff with a lamp set up,
and nearby may a girl, intent on heavy weights of wool,
exhausted by sleep, do her task little by little.
Then may I come suddenly, and may no one announce me beforehand,
but may I seem to appear to you as if I have been sent from heaven.
Then you will run to me as you are, with your long hair in disarray,
Run to meet me, Delia, with a naked foot.
I pray for this: may bright Aurora bring us
that shining morning star on her rosy horses.

The lover-poet's concluding fantasy repeats the same pattern of idealization that has characterized his other visions of happiness in the Golden Age and in Elysium, but this time, it includes Delia herself.[59] He wishes that Delia maintain her faithfulness to him in his absence (*at tu casta…maneas*, 83) and imagines what such a scene would look like. She is first described as *casta*, "chaste," (83).[60] He envisions a "careful guardian" (*sedula custos*, 84), who is explicitly described as the protector "of [her] consecrated modesty" (*sanctique*

[59] Bright (1978) 33 comments that "The scene is remote, detached from time and flowing directly out of the twin visions of Elysium and Tartarus." Lee-Stecum (1998) 128 raises the question of "whether the poet foresees this ideal being realized during his life or imagines returning as a vision after his death," adding "The second possibility might again suggest the insubstantiality of his ideal." I agree that the question of the lover-poet's status emphasizes the idealization of the scene. We will explore the implications of the lover-poet's possible return as a ghost in chapter 4.

[60] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.83 comments that *casta* also means " 'faithful,' in the sense of 'keeping away from other men,'" at Tib. 1.6.65 and 75, Prop. 1.11.29, and Ovid *Am.* 3.4.3.

pudoris, 83).[61] The *custos* in this case is an old woman rather than a man, minimizing the danger that the guard might steal away his beloved. The servants surrounding Delia are also women. They are all dutifully spinning and weaving, although it is unclear whether she is participating (85-88).

The fantasy of returning to find your mistress quietly (and chastely) spinning at home is a recurring ideal of the Roman literary imagination. Spinning was an iconic symbol of the chaste Roman *matrona,* and the only respectable way for an unmarried woman to make a living.[62] The lover-poet implies that his surprise arrival will not find Delia doing anything inappropriate. Instead, he imagines her waiting chastely with her hair disheveled as if she has been mourning for him. She is not dressed for any visitors and seems to have been doing nothing but waiting for him to return.[63] In many ways he casts her as a reincarnation of Penelope, the counterpart to Tibullus in "Phaeacia" as a reincarnation of Odysseus.[64]

Yet there are hints that the lover-poet's fantasy of being reunited with Delia is not what it seems. As Lee-Stecum observes, the lover-poet's previous admission that his *lentae militiae* would create opportunities for a rival suggests that the lover-poet's anxieties about

[61] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.84 and Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.3.85-86.

[62] Staying at home spinning is also associated with paradigmatically faithful wives at Hom. *Od.* 24.138-48 (Penelope) and Liv. 1.57.7ff and Ov. *Fast.* 2.725ff (Lucretia). The image appears in Latin literature as early as Ter. *Heaut.* 275ff, where a lover hears of the quiet way in which his mistress spent her life during his absence. See also the description of the hardworking farmer's wife in Virgil *Georg.* 1.293-94, 390. For an unmarried woman making a living by spinning, cf. Ter. *Andr.* 74-75.

[63] Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.91-92. cf. Prop. 3.6.9, and see McKeown on Ovid *Am.* 1.14.19-22.

[64] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.83-89. cf. Hom. *Odes* 2.93-109, 19.136-58, as well as Prop 1.3.41-46 and 4.3.33-42.

this vision of Delia's faithfulness were already creeping up before it had even taken shape.[65] Although Delia has a *custos*, her presence suggests that Delia may not necessarily be chaste because she wants to be, but rather because she has to be.[66] This suspicion is confirmed by the fact that the *custos* is "always diligent," (*assideat…semper*, 84), which could mean that the lover-poet would have far more to worry about if she were not on her guard. Perhaps more problematic is Maltby's note that an older woman is "not always in the role of the guardian of her mistress' virtue" elsewhere in Tibullus' poetry or in elegiac poetry more generally.[67] It is possible that the old woman could be Delia's *lena*. Putnam confirms that *referat* and *deducat* are reminiscent of the actions of the *lenae* as they lead the lover-poet's rivals to and from his *puella*.[68] The lover-poet hints from the beginning of the scene that his dream of a chaste Delia is vulnerable to the treachery of his beloved and of her supposed guardians.

There are other verbal effects that contribute to the reader's sense that this scene only exists in fantasy. Bright observes that the lover-poet slips out of direct address and into the third person in lines (87-88), "as if he were a spectator rather than one participant speaking to the other."[69] The use of verb tenses and moods throughout the scene also betrays the lover-poet's uncertainties about its fulfillment. The entire scene is set in the subjunctive (83-88), escalating to future tense predictions as the lover-poet describes his return (89-90), and

---

[65] Lee-Stecum (1998) 126.

[66] cf. Tib. 1.6.

[67] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.84, cf. Tib. 1.5.48 and Ov. *Am.* 1.8.

[68] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.3.85-86. cf. Tib. 1.6.57-68, where Delia's mother serves as her *lena*.

[69] Bright (1978) 33.

culminating in a direct command to Delia to run to greet him when he comes (92).[70] As we have seen before in poems 1.1 and 1.2, the lover-poet's use of the future rarely serves to confirm the certainty of his predictions, but rather adds additional desperation to his expression of a wish.[71] In this case, the lover-poet's use of the imperative at the culmination of this scene re-emphasizes his anxiety that this behavior may not be Delia's natural inclination upon his return. The lover-poet concludes the scene by saying *hoc precor*: "this I pray," placing his vision of his return to Delia firmly in the position of a wish. The impact of the lover-poet's language is so strong, that Bright claims that "[the lover-poet] implies that the end of the poem is a return to reality, while in fact it is a complete escape,"[72] and that the lover-poet creates here "a psychological fulfillment of what those poems [1.1 and 1.2] longed for—and yet places it in the realm of memory and of hope."[73]

The lover-poet only imagines his return. His fantasy of being with Delia in a perfect and faithful relationship is clearly marked as a fantasy. It is quite obvious that this Delia does not exist. The lover-poet's enigmatic statement about Delia at the outset of the poem turns out to be true: this Delia *is* nowhere. The version of Delia we see eagerly seeking the gods on the lover-poet's behalf or chastely awaiting his return at her spinning wheel is entirely constructed by the lover-poet and liable to be shattered by the smallest movement of Delia's own intention or agency. Lee-Stecum suggests that "…inconsistencies in the poet/lover's

[70] Bright (1978) 34 also comments that this passage is written in "subjunctives and urgent imperatives." He adds, "*Veniam* looks for an instant like a future but we soon realize that it too is only a wish."

[71] See discussion of poem 1.1 in chapter 2 on pg. 94-95.

[72] Bright (1978) 152.

[73] Bright (1978) 153.

presentation of the figure 'Delia'can be figured as the conflict between the poet/lover's delusions/ideals and the disruptive 'reality' of the elegiac mistress' attitude."[74] In the remaining portion of this chapter, we will see just how important this conflict is.

The Ideal Delia as a Fantasy around *Objet a*

In chapter 2, I explained how the lover-poet sets up his desire for Delia as having an analogous structure to his desire for happiness in the countryside. For the lover-poet, Delia is one of the objects in which he finds *objet a* in the present.[75] He sees in her the link to the happiness he seeks.[76] In poem 1.3 we see one way the subject responds to encountering a woman who represents *objet a* for him: by idealizing her to excess. The lover-poet constructs extravagant fantasies of what Delia is like and how wonderful she is, which justify his desire for her.[77] In this case, they center around her piety and purity, which reflect her total devotion to him and hold out the promise that he might possess the object he seeks with unwavering certainty. I suggest that the lover-poet goes to great lengths not only to idealize Delia but also to emphasize the extent of his wishful thinking about her. His manner of telling the story reinforces how much more important his ideas of Delia are than her thoughts, words, or actions.

If anything, the lover-poet seems fearful of any possibility that Delia might have intentions, motivations, or wishes different from his own. As in poem 1.2, he imagines that

---

[74] Lee-Stecum (1998) 129-30.

[75] Fink (1995) 92 and Ragland-Sullivan (1986) 80. cf. Lacan *SXI* 82-85 and 242-43.

[76] Fink (1995) 61, cf. 83. cf. Lacan *SXI* 257-58, 268 and *SXX* 114/126.

[77] The story the *ego* consciously tells, and the Real cause of desire are never the same. See Fink (1995) 91-92 and Fink (1995) 107.

what *she* wants holds the power to determine the outcome of his story, but he can never attain the certainty about her desire that he seeks. Instead of focusing on how ambiguous Delia's desire is, however, in poem 1.3 he lingers on the way that fantasy fills the gap, revealing the extent to which such fantasies drive his relationship to Delia. As poem 1.3 unfolds, the lover-poet explores the ways that his stories about Delia serve to mitigate, but ultimately fail to assuage, his anxieties about his relationship with her.

The markedly hypothetical aspects of the lover-poet's dream of return betray the problem with Real objects of desire. Delia may not in fact do what he hopes she will do. Delia may not actually be who he wants her to be. Bright argues that "[The lover-poet] holds Delia in such high esteem—one is tempted to say reverence—that he will not depict a real relationship. He will indeed aspire to have her, but will not depict her as accessible."[78] Interestingly, what Bright describes as "not…a real relationship" is in fact caused precisely by the Real from a Lacanian perspective. The lover-poet will never get what he wants, because what he desires belongs to the Real (*objet a*), and it is not Delia, although he believes it is.[79] Although the lover-poet continues to construct and reconstruct a relationship with Delia through his use of language, he can never guarantee that he will attain the Real object of his desire.

Lacanian theory provides not only an explanation of the lover-poet's juxtaposition of fantasy and actuality in this poem, but also an explanation of why the lover-poet would construct a fantasy that seems doomed to disappoint him. Why create a fantasy that is so obviously unrealistic, and so obviously only a dream? We saw in chapter 2 how the lover-

---

[78] Bright (1978) 116.

[79] Fink (1995) 91-92. cf. Lacan *SXI* 268 and *SXX* 114/126.

poet's desire for *objet a* can never be realized without erasing the subject entirely. While the lover-poet's desire is continually set in motion by *objet a*, to attain it would be the death of the subject.[80] As a result, the subject often sabotages his own attempts to gain the object of his desire so as to keep his pursuit of *objet a* going.[81] Lacan suggests that this is why men so often construct their beloveds as unattainable or impossibly wonderful, so that they will remain forever out of reach.[82] Yet there was never much to worry about in the first place, since no object could ever be unchangeable and certain enough to provide the fulfillment the subject seeks.

We see in poem 1.3 another example of the lover-poet exploration of Man's desire for Woman, and the difficulties that he encounters in trying to make her what he wants her to be. The impossibility of fully articulating "Woman" in the Symbolic in no way limits his fantasies about her. Yet those fantasies are doomed to fail before they begin, and they are often even undermined by the very subjects who construct them. The lover-poet illustrates all of these dynamics of Man's desire for Woman in his fantasies about Delia. In so doing, he explores not only how Man's desire for Woman parallels the dynamics of his other failed fantasies of wholeness, but also how the distinctive nature of feminine subjectivity shapes Man's relationship to her as an object of desire.

---

[80] Fink (1997) 124. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 814/689, 824/698, *SX* 53-54 and *SXX* 58-62

[81] Fink (1997) 124 and Fink (1995) 107. cf. Lacan *SXX* 55-57/58-62.

[82] Fink (1997) 124.

Chapter 4

The Fate of the Subject: The Tibullan Lover-poet

There is one more angle from which we should investigate the lover-poet's representation of his relationship with Delia. In chapter 2, we explored how the lover-poet sets up his dream of "being with" Delia alongside his dream of "having enough" in the countryside. In chapter 3, we considered how the lover-poet represents Delia as a Woman on Lacan's model of feminine psychological structure as well as a fantasy around *objet a*. Finally in chapter 4, I want to look closely at several instances where the lover-poet represents himself as "being with" Delia in some sense, and the conditions under which he imagines he might somehow be near to her. While the examples that we discussed in chapter 2 presented an idealized fantasy of "being with" Delia, there are several cases in the poems where the lover-poet conceptualizes a particular example of what "being with" Delia might look like for him. These scenes form the basis of chapter 4.

As we will see, each scene where the lover-poet envisions being with Delia fits into a recurring pattern of overdetermined impossibility. When the lover-poet first envisions his relationship to Delia, he casts himself as the *ianitor* chained outside Delia's door. The lover-poet imagines himself in control of others' access to Delia, but in order to have that ability, he must serve as her slave. Ironically, he presents himself as shut out by the same doors that enable his position as doorkeeper. I suggest that the dynamics of the lover-poet's role as *ianitor* is the first of a series of instances where he envisions how he could "be with" Delia, all of which explore the limitations within which the lover-poet must negotiate his relationship to the object of his desire.

As the lover-poet continues to imagine how he might somehow be with Delia, a troubling pattern emerges. When he envisions finally "being with" Delia, he either ends up dying or is already dead. For example, the lover-poet imagines "being with" Delia as she mourns for him in poem 1.1, but only at the moment of his death. In this case, his nearness to Delia is made possible only by the loss of his life. In poem 1.3, the lover-poet imagines the afterlife as a place where he might escape the restrictions of his experience as a subject, but the disappearance of those restrictions corresponds with the absence of Delia from his fantasy world. The lover-poet's closeness to Delia in life is predicated on the imposition of strict limitations, but the dissolution of those constraints results in the evaporation of his need for Delia's presence. As poem 1.3 draws to a close, the lover-poet reimagines a fantasy of fulfillment with Delia included, but he ends up returning to Delia as merely a ghost or a dream. At the times when the lover-poet is closest to Delia and nearest to happiness, he is dying or already dead. The afterlife represents the fullest satisfaction of his desire, but it also represents the disappearance of his need for Delia.

Almost as if he realizes that he has not yet come up with a way that he can be with Delia without dying, in poem 1.5 the lover-poet makes one last attempt to imagine a relationship with Delia that might be possible while they are still alive. After his fantasy of Delia and Messalla enjoying the countryside together, the lover-poet portrays himself as Delia's impoverished attendant. He promises to be the slave who is always by her side. Yet he suggests that as her escort, he will also have to lead her to meet with his rivals. As in the case of the *ianitor*, the lover-poet again imagines himself in a position of servitude. He describes himself in a position that enables him to be close to Delia but simultaneously forbids him from having exclusive possession of her. When the lover-poet envisions his relationship with Delia while they are living, the possibility of his nearness to her is always

predicated on the imposition of strict constraints which radically limit his access to her. The lover-poet can only ever imagine a drastically limited way of "being with Delia" in life, and in the moments where he does envisage finding a sense of fulfillment in his relationship with Delia, he is dying or already dead. The afterlife is the only place in which he can envision an escape from his position as a subject, but as soon as he leaves those boundaries behind, Delia disappears with them.

"Being with" Delia: Overdetermined Impossibility

In each of the passages that follow, the conditions which the lover-poet imagines as allowing him to "be with" Delia also result in the impossibility of their union. Why would the lover-poet go to so much trouble to represent such a paradoxical image of his relationship with Delia? I suggest that the recurrence of these images creates a compelling portrait of the plight of the lover-poet as a subject, as he searches for a sense of wholeness through his relationship with his beloved. Through a Lacanian lens, we can see how the lover-poet's representation of himself in these scenes illustrates the imposition of limit and loss which founds the subject and which perpetuates the subject's desire.

As we saw in chapter 1,[1] the Lacanian subject comes into being through the processes of alienation and separation.[2] The subject becomes alienated within the Other when he is given a place in language and at the same time becomes erased by it.[3] He then becomes separated from the Other when he realizes that he will never be able to fill the lack

[1] Chapter 1 pg. 77-81.

[2] cf. Lacan *Écrits* 840-44/712-716 and *SXI* 207-208, 210-15, and 218-19.

[3] Fink (1995) 5 and 52-3 and Soler (1995) 43. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 279/231, 495-96/413-14, 800/677, and 802/679, as well as *SXI* 198-99, 141, 207, 210, and 218.

he perceives in the Other.[4] There will always be something more that the Other desires, and the failure of language to represent the Real constantly reaffirms the impossibility of ever fully being what the Other *really* wants.[5] Thus, the limits of language become a prohibition that forbids the subject's union with the Other, because it causes the separation that prevents the subject from ever being one with the Other.[6] This "No!" both establishes the subject's position as as subject and traps him in an endless pursuit of *objet a*.[7]

Lacan recasts this narrative of alienation and separation in several ways throughout his work. In terms of the three registers of the Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary, the birth of the subject occurs through the intervention of the Symbolic in the subject's world, which severs any ideal Imaginary unity with the Other.[8] Lacan also maps the process of alienation and separation onto the figures of Freud's Oedipus complex, reinterpreting the mother as the Other with whom the subject imagines an ideal sense of wholeness and the father as the imposer of the limitations on that union (i.e. language and the Symbolic).[9] This is why Lacan identifies the "No!" that founds the subject as the Name-of-the-Father, and why the Lacanian concept of the Father is linked with the Symbolic order.[10]

---

[4] Fink (1995) 50 and Soler (1995b) 47-48.

[5] Soler (1995b) 49-50. cf. Lacan *SXI* 214.

[6] cf. Lacan *SI* 222-223.

[7] Fink (1995) 61. cf. Lacan *SX* 26-27, *SXI* 268, and *SXX* 114/126.

[8] cf. Lacan *Écrits* 53/40, 94-98/76-79, 117-18/95-96, and 835-86/708-709, also *SII* 243-47.

[9] Fink (1995) 55-58. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 278/230 and *SIII* 111/96, 230-31/204-205, and 240-41/212-13.

[10] Fink (1995) 74-76. cf. *SX* 46. The overlap of these two terms works through the pun in French on *nom du père* and *non du père*.

The correspondence between the processes of alienation and separation and Freud's Oedipus complex leads Lacan to preserve the language of "castration" in his account of the split subject. Rather than referring to any literal castration, Lacan's notion of castration refers to the fact that the subject must give up any potential fulfillment through being united with the Other in order to become a speaking subject.[11] In order to regain any hint of that lost sense of wholeness and to experience any bit of what Lacan calls *jouissance,*[12] the split subject must continue to negotiate his desire through the use of language and thus to alienate himself even further in the Other.[13] The birth of the subject in language both makes the sense of wholeness and happiness he longs for impossible and sets up the limitations within which he can attain any fleeting sense fulfillment during his lifetime.[14]

The scenes from Tibullus' poems included in this chapter create a compelling portrait of the plight of the subject repeatedly failing to find a sense of wholeness in his relationship with his beloved. Taken together, these scenes also portray the subject as one trapped by the very prohibitions that make any satisfaction of his desire possible. They suggest that the only way to imagine the fulfillment of desire is to imagine death. As the lover-poet explores his relationship to Delia, he circles back to the crisis of subjectivity that rules his very existence.

---

[11] Fink (1995) 72-73, 99.

[12] Fink (1995) 59-61. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 821/696.

[13] Fink (1995) 73, 106-107. cf. Lacan *Écrits SXI* 188 and *SXX* 67-68/71-72, 73-75/78-80. See esp. *Écrits* 827/700: "Castration means that *jouissance* has to be refused in order to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire."

[14] Fink (1995) 99-101, 106-107. cf. Lacan *SXX* 101/111-112.

Delia and Messalla: 1.5.29-34

The portrayal of Messalla in Tibullus' poems underscores the lover-poet's struggle to "be with" Delia, in so far as Messalla seems immune to the restrictions that torment the lover-poet. As we will see, Messalla is able to "be with" Delia in the countryside and to enjoy her presence and her adoration in a way that the lover-poet is never able to achieve (1.5.29-34). If we read the lover-poet as a Lacanian subject, how can we account for another man in the poems whose experience in relation to Delia is so diametrically opposed to the lover-poet's own?

In Lacan's schema, there is one figure who does not share the predicament of other subjects: the Father. As we have seen, in the process of alienation and separation the subject comes to assume that he has lost a sense of wholeness that he imagines he must have had before.[15] At the same time, the subject imagines that somewhere there exists a figure who is not subject to the same prohibitions and who enjoys that "lost" sense of wholeness without limit.[16] In Lacan's framework, the Father comes to signify the imposition of limits on the sense of fulfillment that the subject can attain with respect to the Other.[17] He represents the maker of prohibitions who himself faces no limitations.[18] If we restate his role in terms of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real, the Father represents the realm of language and social exchange which intervenes when the Symbolic cuts into the subject's Imaginary

[15] In other words, objet *a*. Fink (1995) 59-61, 90-94. cf. Lacan *SX* 26-27 and *SXX* 114/126.

[16] Fink (1995) 110-11.

[17] Fink (1995) 55-58. This use of the paternal metaphor is a Lacanian rewriting of the role of the primal father from Freud's *Totem and Taboo*.

[18] Fink (1995) 110-11.

images and Real experiences.[19] The Father thus has a twofold impact on the subject in Lacanian theory. On the one hand, he signifies the institution of any and every kind of social interaction, including language, money, property, family ties, social norms, and formal laws.[20] The Father brings the subject into being and establishes the terms by which he can interact with other subjects. On the other hand, he institutes the limitations that prevent any relationship from ever providing the sense of fulfillment which the subject craves, by preventing him from ever being one with the Other.[21]

Allen Miller has shown one way that we can map the theoretical figure of the Lacanian Father onto the figure of Messalla in Tibullus' poems.[22] He explains how Messalla's world of social norms and expectations is necessary for the lover-poet to attain his dreams of having exclusive possession of Delia or of his perfect farm, and how it simultaneously undermines those dreams by bringing in systems of exchange, the need for travel, and the obligations of military service.[23] The lover-poet both needs Messalla's world to have the life he wants, but he must also somehow escape its fundamental governing principles in order to achieve his fantasies.[24]

---

[19] Fink (1995) 55-58, 110-11.

[20] Fink (1995) 56 and Miller (1999) 215. cf. Lacan *Écrits* 117-119/95-97.

[21] Fink (1995) 55-58, 110-11 and Miller (1999) 213.

[22] Miller (1999) 209. cf. Johnson (1990) 103 and Fineberg (1991) 153.

[23] Miller (1999) 218.

[24] Miller (1999) 218 and 221. cf. Van Nortwick (1990) 118, Moore (1989) 427, 429, and Bright (1978) 59.

Miller argues that Messalla's role as the Father who faces no limits leads to the larger than life persona that he has in Tibullus' poems.[25] Messalla enjoys freedom from the restrictions within which the lover-poet must forever negotiate his fleeting moments of happiness. The most telling example that Messalla is the exception to the rule that governs the lover-poet's own experience of subjectivity appears in poem 1.5. In the lover-poet's vision of being with Delia in the countryside, Messalla finally enters the lover-poet's fantasy world:

> illa regat cunctos, illi sint omnia curae,
>   at iuvet in tota me nihil esse domo.
> huc veniet Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma
>   Delia selectis detrahat arboribus,
> et tantum venerata virum, hunc sedula curet,
>   huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat. (1.5.29-34)
>
> May she rule everyone, and may everything be her concern,
>   But may it delight me to be nothing in the whole house.
> Here my Messalla will come, for whom Delia
>   will draw down sweet fruits from choice trees.
> And honoring such a great man, may she care for him,
>   may she get ready for him and may she bring him a feast as his attendant.

In chapter 2, we saw how the lover-poet fades from view as his fantasy of union with *objet a* in the figure of Delia comes closer and closer.[26] As the lover-poet fades to nothing at the moment where he would have reached *securitas* and satisfaction in his relationship with Delia, Messalla takes his place as the one who can "be with" Delia and enjoy the perfect abundance of the countryside at the same time. Miller suggests that "[Messalla] occupies the position Tibullus longs for but of which he cannot truly even dream."[27] Messalla is the one

---

[25] Miller (1999) 217. cf. Johnson (1990) 105, Moore (1989) 424, 428, and Bright (1978) 53-54.

[26] Chapter 2 pg. 103.

[27] Miller (1999) 219.

who can experience the sense of wholeness and happiness that the lover-poet longs for without fading into nothingness as the lover-poet does.

The lover-poet represents this larger than life ability of Messalla by describing him as a divinity.[28] *Venerata* (33) implies religious veneration, and *epulas* (34) is an appropriate term for a feast honoring a god.[29] Delia appears as his *ministra*, someone who is usually "a priestess or a woman dedicated to the service of a deity."[30] Maltby points out several parallels between this scene and Hellensitic descriptions of hospitality offered by farmers and their wives to gods and heroes.[31] Bright goes so far as to say that "Messalla's arrival, his acceptance of *veneratio,* and the offering of *epulae* by his *ministra* combine to make of him an object of worship, a genuine god."[32] Messalla's position is strikingly different from the lover-poet's own.

Messalla enters the lover-poet's fantasy as a mythical figure who can have everything the lover-poet cannot have and can enjoy the sense of fullness that always eludes him. Messalla personifies the fantasy of being able to ignore all the restrictions that trap the subject in the world of language and of loss. He represents the presence of all prohibitions and the dream of facing no prohibitions. In this sense, he takes the position of the Lacanian Father. In sharp contrast to the Father, the subject must negotiate limits on every side in

[28] Bright (1978) 159, see also 47.

[29] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.31-34 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.33-34. *Venerata* also appears in Tibullus' poems with a god as object at 1.1.11 and 2.5.43 and with Messalla again in 1.7.56.

[30] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.33-34. cf. Cat. 63.68 and Prop. 4.11.52.

[31] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.31-34. cf. Call. *Aet*. Fr. 54 Pf. and SH 256-66 (Hercules as the guest of Molorchus), *Hecale* frr. 240-52 Pf. (Theseus as a guest of Hecale).

[32] Bright (1978) 48.

order to attain any sense of fulfillment, trapped within the conditions that enable him to become a subject in the first place. There are no limits to the Father's enjoyment, while there is nothing but limits on the subject's. He must constantly cope with the restrictions that surround him, whether they take the form of social norms and expectations or the limits of language itself. The only way to imagine an escape from those constraints and the fulfillment of desire is through death. We will see several ways that the lover-poet represents himself in a remarkably similar position to the Lacanian subject in his relationship with Delia.

The *Ianitor*: Poem 1.1.53-58

With this dynamic between the lover-poet's position and Messalla's role in mind, we can turn to the first instance where the lover-poet portrays his relationship to Delia. These lines follow the lover-poet's initial fantasy of lying indoors with his *domina* as a storm rages outside on his farm. The lover-poet transitions from his hoped-for ideal of "being with" his *domina* to his first representation of his relationship to Delia.[33] He sits held back by chains (55), as a door-keeper outside his beloved's doors (56):

> te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique
> ut domus hostiles praeferat exuvias:
> me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
> et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores.
> non ego laudari curo, mea Delia; tecum
> dum modo sim, quaeso segnis inersque vocer. (1.1.53-58)

> It is fitting for you to wage war, Messalla, on land and sea
> so that your house displays the spoils of the enemy:
> The chains of a beautiful girl hold me back, bound,
> and I sit as a door-keeper before hard doors.
> I don't care about being praised, my Delia; so long as

[33] Lee-Stecum (1998) 48 suggests that in these lines the lover-poet transitions from "the world of optative and potential subjunctives" to present indicatives so that we are now "dealing with reality."

I may be with you, I pray that I may be called lazy and inactive.[34]

As we noticed in chapter 2, the lover-poet contrasts his position outside Delia's door with Messalla's display of spoils from his campaigns. Just as Messalla shows off his captured *exuvias* at his own threshold (54) so she displays the entrapped lover-poet (55). These lines draw attention to the juxtaposition between the circumstances of the lover-poet and the situation of his patron.[35] As he will do again in poem 1.5, the lover-poet portrays Messalla in an entirely opposite position from himself with these two images.[36] This time, however, he also gives us a picture of how he envisions his own situation.

The lover-poet represents himself as Delia's *ianitor*, the door-keeper chained on her threshold. Miller emphasizes how the lover-poet as *ianitor* holds "the position of the lowest of the low," since he is "bound to the house of another and a man subjected to the whims of a woman."[37] He shows how Messalla embodies the values of Roman manhood by serving in the military and gaining glory and displaying the symbols of his victories, while the lover-poet represents the renunciation of those norms and values as he takes up the position of a slave.[38] Several scholars also emphasize the lover-poet's representation of himself as *ianitor*

[34] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.57-58 translates these terms using their military connotations as "cowardly" and "unwarlike," respectively. Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.1.58 calls them words of "military disapproval." Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.57-58 invites comparison with the use of *segnis* at Virg. *Aen.* 9.787 and Livy 29.1.6.

[35] Lee (1974) 105.

[36] Lee-Stecum (1998) 48 and Bright (1978) 127.

[37] Miller (1999) 210.

[38] Miller (1999) 211.

as an example of *servitium amoris*,[39] focusing on his representation of himself as a very low-ranking slave in particular.[40] Yet the lover-poet is not just any slave. He casts himself specifically as a *ianitor. Ianitores* appear frequently in elegy, but they usually serve as a hindrance to the *exclusus amator*'s attempts to get through the door and gain access to the beloved. This passage is the only extant example where the *exclusus amator* places himself the role of the *ianitor*.[41] How do we understand the Tibullan lover-poet's choice to fashion *himself* as the *ianitor* rather than simply the locked-out lover?[42]

Bright comments that in his role as *ianitor*, "[the lover-poet] has thus attained, even by his admission of surrender, the state for which he has longed."[43] He cites the lines following the lover-poet's description of himself as the door-keeper, when he declares, "so long as I may be with you, I pray that I may be called lazy and inactive" (*tecum dum modo sim, quaeso segnis inersque vocer*, 57-58). Bright proposes that as a *ianitor*, the lover-poet personifies the *inertia* that characterizes his ideal existence.[44] He sees in the verb *sedeo* "the

---

[39] On the theme of *servitium amoris*, see Copley (1947), Lyne (1979), Murgatroyd (1981) and McKeown (1987) *ad loc.* Ov. *Am.* 1.3.5-6.

[40] Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.54, 55 also point out the important parallels between the lover-poet's captivity outside Delia's door and the *exuvias,* "spoils," outside Messalla's door. This contrast between Messalla's position and the lover-poet's position is explored further in poem 1.5, as Messalla turns out to be the only man who can "be with" Delia, whereas the lover-poet is always barred from uniting with her without some profound qualification.

[41] Lee (1990) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.56.

[42] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.1.55-56 notes that although the idea of the lover performing slave's duties is not new, this is the first time the lover is portrayed as a *ianitor*.

[43] Bright (1978) 129.

[44] Bright (1978) 128.

suggestion of immobility."[45] He describes the lover-poet's "imprisonment by love" as an "outward sign of his inward *inertia*."[46] Similarly, Gardner describes the lover-poet's self-representation as the *ianitor* as "ideally *segnis* and *iners*."[47] Indeed, there is an important sense in which the lover-poet envisions being Delia's *ianitor* as an ideal way of "being with her" (*tecum dum modo sim*, 57-58). Yet it is also the case that the lover-poet's role as a door-keeper keeps him utterly separated from Delia. How does this simultaneous division alter our understanding of the lover-poet's position as *ianitor*?

Beginning from this complicated relationship between the lover-poet as door-keeper and the door that he keeps, I want to propose a further explanation for why the image of the Tibullan lover-poet as *ianitor* is so important for understanding his relationship with Delia. I suggest that the role of *ianitor* is one instantiation of a precise and yet paradoxical position where the lover-poet will find himself again and again. Putnam comments that "the lover is the slave-doorkeeper, chained helplessly to his post but without the power to open the door."[48] By portraying himself as the *ianitor*, the lover-poet represents himself as the one who polices the boundaries that enclose his *puella* and as the one who holds control over others' access to her. Yet as a slave door-keeper, the lover-poet is just as controlled by the boundaries he keeps as he is in control of those boundaries. It is noteworthy that unlike most

---

[45] Bright (1978) 128.

[46] Bright (1978) 44.

[47] Gardner (2010) 91. Because of her interest in time in elegiac poetry, Gardner emphasizes how these two terms have a temporal slant, *segnis* meaning "slowness, sluggishness," and *iners* meaning "idle."

[48] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.1.55-56.

ianitores, this *ianitor* sits outside the doors he guards.[49] Both Lee and Maltby observe that the lover-poet's unusual role can be explained by imagining that he has voluntarily taken on the role of *ianitor* as the *exclusus amator.*[50] He holds ultimate access to his *puella*, but he is also profoundly separated from her. *Sedeo* has a military connotation and is often used in the context of besieging.[51] Maltby observes that "Tibullus is both prisoner and besieger of his mistress."[52] No matter how much time he spends in his role as *ianitor*, no matter how close in proximity he may be, he will never "be with" Delia in the way that he wants. He is *iners* not only because he is unmoving and indolent as he sits on Delia's doorstep, but because he is stuck in a relationship to the object of his desire which he claims that he cannot escape.

Why would the lover-poet take up the position of an *iners* "inactive" and *exclusus* "shut out" *ianitor*? In what sense is the lover-poet "with Delia" while he sits outside her door? In what sense is he "with her" if he is chained and unable to act of his own accord? In what way is he "with her" if he is *iners* (which, as Miller points out, is an unfortunate state for a lover)?[53] The circumstances which the lover-poet imagines as a condition of being with Delia simultaneously prevent him from ever being with her at all.

The lover-poet's account of himself as *ianitor* marks him as emphatically different from Messalla in poem 1.1. Bright describes Messalla in this poem as "all that Tibullus is

---

[49] Lee (1990) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.56 note that the *ianitor* was usually a slave doorkeeper, but that he would sit behind the doors, rather than outside of them, cf. Ovid *Am.* 1.6.

[50] Lee (1990) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.56.

[51] *OLD* s.v. 4 and cf. Livy 2.12.1.

[52] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.1.56.

[53] Miller (1999) 211.

not." He is "the vigorous, public man of action, firmly in control of the events in which he is involved, and able to face the strenuous horrors of military life and turn them to profitable ends." Bright emphasizes that "In particular, a contrast is constantly made between Tibullus' *inertia* and Messalla's restless activity and movement." He points out that it is not only that the lover-poet is stationary by nature, but that he "cannot break free of the restraints of his situation as Messalla can on such a grand scale."[54]

Bright's observations fit neatly with the Lacanian interpretation I have used for the role of Messalla as the Lacanian Father in Tibullus' corpus, and they point toward a Lacanian answer to the lover-poet's representation of himself as the *ianitor*. While Messalla can break free of all restraints and find a way to enjoy the fullness and happiness that the lover-poet craves, the lover-poet remains trapped by the prohibitions that define his position as a desiring subject. Like the subject, the lover-poet must enter into a strict set of limitations to take up a place in the economy of desire. The lover-poet strives for a sense of satisfaction from within his position as an *iners ianitor*, forever trapped by the very limitations that give him his only possibility of ever "being with" Delia. Like the subject, the lover-poet must settle for the bits of fractured happiness that he can attain from his paradoxical and impossible relationship to the object of his desire.

[54] Bright (1978) 41.

Together at Last: Poem 1.1.59-68

In poem 1.1 the lover-poet also includes a scene where his closeness to Delia is contingent on their imminent separation through death. As we saw in chapter 2, in lines 59-68 he imagines his eventual death and Delia's presence by his side:[55]

> te spectem suprema mihi cum venerit hora;
> te teneam moriens deficiente manu.
> flebis et arsuro positum me, Delia, lecto,
> tristibus et lacrimis oscula mixta dabis.
> flebis: non tua sunt duro praecordia ferro
> vincta nec in tenero stat tibi corde silex.
> illo non iuvenis poterit de funere quisquam
> lumina non virgo sicca referre domum.
> tu manes ne laede meos sed parce solutis
> crinibus et teneris, Delia, parce genis. (1.1.59-68)

> May I look on you when my final hour comes;
> May I hold you while I am dying with my failing hand.
> You will weep, and you will give me, Delia, kisses mixed with sad tears
> when I have been placed on the bier about to be burned.
> You will weep: your heart is not bound with hard iron
> nor does flint stand in your soft heart.
> No young man or young woman will be able to go home
> from that funeral with dry eyes.
> You, do not wound my shade, but spare your loosened hair
> and spare, Delia, your soft cheeks.

We have already explored how this representation of Delia provides an example of the lover-poet's tendency to idealize Delia, while simultaneously admitting his ongoing anxiety about whether she will behave how he would like. Previously, we focused on the way that the lover-poet's choice of words points to his lack of confidence that this scene will ever take place. In this chapter, however, I want to highlight how the lover-poet stages this moment of nearness to Delia at the moment of his death.

[55] On the theme of death in Roman elegy see Eisenberger (1960), Putnam (1973) 49, 58-59, and Papanghelis (1987).

Several scholars have noted the similarities between the scene of Delia's mourning at the lover-poet's side and his initial fantasy of a *domina* resting in his arms in his dream of rural bliss (1.1.43-48). As we saw in chapter 2, the happiness that the lover-poet seeks from holding his *domina* in the countryside parallels the sense of satisfaction he hopes for from his country fantasy. Bassi notes that the reference to the "couch" on which the lovers lie (43) as a *lectus* links this passage directly with the scene of the lover-poet's death where the lover-poet lays dying on another *lectus*, this time a funeral "bier" (61).[56] Thus, we can read the lover-poet's vision of being with Delia at his death as a realization of his fantasy of "being with" his ideal *domina*.[57] As we saw in chapters 2 and 3, Bright advises that the *domina* in lines 43-48 may not necessarily be Delia, although she seems to be the standard to which the lover-poet approximates Delia.[58] The similarities between his vision of holding his *domina* and his fantasy of being with Delia at the time of his death support this reading. Yet while they both present a fantasy of an idealized union with the beloved, the lover-poet's closeness to Delia is predicated on his impending death. Delia's mourning for the lover-poet brings with it a moment of connection with her that mirrors the happiness he seeks from being with his *domina*, but this same scene highlights the fact that he only experiences this moment when he faces death.

[56] Bassi (1994) 56.

[57] Bright (1978) 129 also makes this connection. He draws attention to how the lover-poet holds his mistress in both passages (*continuisse*, 46 and *teneam* 60) and suggests that the flames that warmed the lover-poet's hut (*igne*, 48, see Bright's note on his text critical choice of *igne* over *imbre* at 129 n.13) reappear in the flames that consume the pyre in 61 (*arsuro lecto*).

[58] Bright (1978) 125-26.

The lover-poet may be perfectly united to Delia in lines 59-64, but only at the precise moment of his complete separation from her.[59] The words *suprema…hora* (59),[60] *moriens* (60), and *deficiente* (60) repeatedly emphasize that the lover-poet envisions this scene happening while he is on the brink of death. His description of "the bier[61] about to be burned" (*arsuro…lecto,* 61) links the scene directly to the funeral rites that will take place after he has died. The lover-poet imagines the moment at which he finally holds his *puella* as the same moment as his union with her is utterly severed. Lee-Stecum interprets this scene as a justification for the lover-poet's argument that the lovers should enjoy love now, because death is looming.[62] Bassi lingers on this image, however, recommending that here we see that the lover-poet's ideal of "…erotic fulfillment with the *puella* in a non-threatening environment, can more precisely (and ironically) be described as the freedom not to desire her at all."[63] She argues that this scene implies that the lover-poet's ideal *inertia* is only possible through death.[64] Bassi's interpretation invites a Lacanian reading of this scene, with death representing the ultimate (and only) end to desire, and with the fulfillment of desire corresponding with the death of the subject.

---

[59] Lee-Stecum (1998) 62 also picks up on the ways that the lover-poet constantly finds himself in positions in poem 1.1 where he is unable to get to Delia (as an *exclusus amator*) or will be unable to do anything once he has her (due to old age or death).

[60] cf. Cat. 64.191, Virg. *Ecl.* 8.20. Similar expressions are also common in epitaphs, including the use of *suprema hora* in *CLE* 563.5, see. Navarro Antolin (1996) 422-23.

[61] *OLD* s.v. 3.

[62] Lee-Stecum (1998) 57.

[63] Bassi (1994) 55-56.

[64] Bassi (1994) 56-57.

Bright observes how this moment of closeness to Delia coincides with the imminence of the lover-poet's death, saying, "…only in death, it seems, can Tibullus safely imagine to himself that Delia will show that consuming passion which he would ask of her."[65] Thus, Bright concludes that "for Tibullus death itself is an emblem of love's fulfillment."[66] Bright's comments direct us toward a Lacanian reading of this scene, as the lover-poet imagines that his desire to "be with" Delia will finally be fulfilled as he takes his last breath. We could argue that this scene points toward the lover-poet's fantasy of being in the countryside with Delia in poem 1.5, where the lover-poet fades away into nothingness as Delia adopts all of the concerns of the farm. Yet in this scene the lover-poet's imminent death also seems to be the condition upon which he imagines that he can finally "be with" Delia. It is through his impending separation from her that he will at last be close to her.

Bright suggests that this paradoxical setting, where the lover-poet is finally able to be with Delia precisely because he is approaching death, is why the lover-poet urges Delia not to mar her beauty with her mourning rituals. He writes, "Her protection of her beauty is a favor to Tibullus, not herself. Seeing the time of his death as the moment of their greatest closeness, the poet wants to spare Delia in order to have her perfect then."[67] He goes so far as to say that "[Lines 67-68] is the moment of her perfect devotion, and should not be a time for lessening her beauty."[68] Bright emphasizes both the extent to which the lover-poet

---

[65] Bright (1978) 130.

[66] Bright (1978) 130.

[67] Bright (1978) 132.

[68] Bright (1978) 131.

idealizes his relationship with Delia in this scene and the incongruity that it happens exactly at the moment that he dies.[69]

The lover-poet implies in lines 59-64 that he might finally be united with Delia if he were near to death, but if he ever achieved that kind of closeness with her, he would have to die. This scene has troubling implications for the lover-poet's relationship with Delia, if he can only imagine "being with" her by imagining himself dying. In poem 1.1, the lover-poet suggests not only that death is the end to desire, but that the fulfillment of his desire requires his death. I suggest that this scene recasts the lover-poet's position as *ianitor* in lines 53-58 in more drastic terms. As we have seen, the *ianitor* sits in a position to give orders and to set limits, but only because he is bound by those same limits himself. In a sense, he is with Delia, but at the same time he is distinctly separate from her. The limitations of his role as door-keeper enable him to be in relationship with the object of his desire. When we move to lines 59-68, the constraints have intensified, but so have the rewards. The dying lover-poet nears a moment of perfect connection to Delia, but he does so only as he simultaneously approaches his death. The looming separation enables a brief moment of happiness. Both of these fantasies reflect Lacan's paradoxical representation of the split subject, whose subjectivity is dependent on the acceptance of limitations that prevent him from ever enjoying the lasting fulfillment he seeks, but also enable the fleeting moments of *jouissance* that he can still have. They also point to the troubling Lacanian realization that the

[69] Lee-Stecum (1998) reads this scene in terms of the power dynamics between the two lovers in this scene, which leads him to admit the same paradox which allows the lover-poet to exercise any influence over Delia's emotions. At pg. 55 he observes that it is "in the throes of the ultimate hardship of death" and "enduring the ultimate discomfort," while "he is at his most physical powerless…and passive" that "the lover-poet believes he will have some power, at least emotionally, over Delia." Then at pg. 57 he adds "the poet must undergo the extreme suffering of death…in order to reach this point of power."

fulfillment of desire coincides with the death of the subject. The lover-poet will continue to reimagine similar situations in new ways in the examples that follow.

Love in the Afterlife: 1.3.57-66

The lover-poet returns to the question of the relationship between love and death in poem 1.3. When we discussed the lover-poet's vision of the afterlife in chapter 3,[70] we emphasized how Delia's absence suggested the lover-poet's ambivalence about her faithfulness. This time, we will unpack the specifics of his Elysian fantasy more thoroughly, exploring how the lover-poet's dream of a lover's Elysium suggests that somehow in it the lover-poet might be able to reclaim a piece of the mythical Golden Age after his death. Yet as we will see, the circumstances of the lover-poet's vision of paradise present problems for his ever having his beloved entirely to himself, even in a fantasy world. Furthermore, the most prominent aspects of his ideal afterlife suggest that the sense of happiness that the lover-poet seeks may not include Delia herself at all.

In poem 1.3, the lover-poet represents the relationship between love and death by describing his eventual journey to the underworld after he dies:

> sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori,
>   ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios.
> hic choreae cantusque vigent, passimque vagantes
>   dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aves;
> fert casiam non culta seges totosque per agros
>   floret odoratis terra benigna rosis:
> ac iuvenum series teneris immixta puellis
>   ludit et assidue proelia miscet Amor.
> illic est cuicumque rapax mors venit amanti,
>   et gerit insigni myrtea serta coma. (1.3.57-66)
>
> But because I am always lenient to tender Love,
>   Venus herself will lead me to the Elysian Fields.

[70] Chapter 3 pg. 140-141.

Here dancing and singing thrives, and birds wandering to and fro
sound a sweet song with a narrow throat.
The uncultivated crop produce cinnamon, and throughout whole fields
the kind earth flowers with sweet-smelling roses;
And a row of young men mixed in with soft girls
plays, and Amor mixes up battles constantly.
Every lover to whom greedy Death has come is there,
and he wears a myrtle wreath in his hair.

As we saw in chapter 3, the lover-poet includes a lengthy vision of eternal happiness in the Elysian Fields after the suffering of his life on earth.[71] We previously considered this scene in terms of Delia's absence and the meaning of that absence for the lover-poet's representation of her. But we have not yet considered what this passage teaches us about the lover-poet's idea of a paradise for lovers. His description of Elysium shows influences from several sources, but the specific combination of characteristics is particular to Tibullus' account.[72] The distinctiveness of the lover-poet's fantasy of Elysium implies that we should be especially attentive to the elements that he includes.

The lover-poet's Elysian Fields are full of dancing and singing and delight in the overwhelming abundance (59). There are no limits or prohibitions to inhibit the inhabitants' enjoyment of their surroundings or of each other. They sing along with the birds and dance

[71] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.58 notes that Elysium was initially assumed to be above ground in the far West and equated with the Isles of the Blessed, cf. Hom. *Od.* 4.563ff, and Hes. *Works* 167ff.

[72] Putnam (1973) *ad loc*. 1.3.57-58 comments that "Tibullus provides the first surviving description of the Elysian fields in Roman literature which cannot be traced as a whole to any particular Greek source." See also Eisenberger (1960) 193. Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.3.58 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.57-66 comment that the idea of an "Elysium for lovers" may have originated with Tibullus but suggest that similarities between Tib. 1.3 and Virg. *Aen.* 6.440-76 and Prop. 4.7.59-69 suggest that this concept probably belonged to a Greek source. cf. Wille (1967) 542-43, Wimmel (1968) 203ff, Navarro Antolin (1996) 444-46. For Tibullus' underworld as a response to Lucretius, see Henderson (1969).

among the spontaneously-growing fields of roses and cinnamon (60-63).[73] The young men and women all intermingle and play together (63). There are no doors, so there can be no *exclusi amatores*.

The importance of Amor in this scene leads Houghton to argue that "the lovers' Elysium represents the ultimate fulfilment of the generically enshrined desires of the love elegist, the posthumous realization of elegy's characteristic tropes and aspirations."[74] There are certainly many echoes of the elegiac world in the lover-poet's Elysium that support his argument. In his study of Tibullus' Elysium, Houghton shows how many of its characteristics can be found in other images of Elysium in literature and art. He argues persuasively, however, that Venus as *psychopompos* (57-58), the birds singing *tenui gutture* (60),[75] and the role of Amor in the afterlife (63-64) make the lover-poet's Elysium distinctively elegiac. [76] Houghton also argues that the close relationship between poetry and love in Elysium recalls the intertwining of love and poetry that characterizes elegiac poetry.[77] His observations suggest that this vision of Elysium can be read as the lover-poet's vision of an ideal elegiac world.

---

[73] Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.3.61-62 both note the correspondence between the lack of cultivation in the Golden Age and the world of Elysium. Lee-Stecum (1998) 120 observes that the abundance of these fields are for sensual pleasure rather than sustenance, since the shades of the Underworld no longer need that sustenance.

[74] Houghton (2007) 157.

[75] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.3.60 and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.59-60 agree that the *tenui gutture* metapoetically marks the bird's song as amenable to elegy.

[76] Houghton (2007) 155.

[77] Houghton (2007) 156.

The similarities between the lover-poet's Elysium and the Age of Saturn described earlier in the poem (1.3.35-50) add an additional layer of complexity to this dream of life after death. The Age of Saturn has several distinguishing features, which all come together in a vision of the ideal past when the lover-poet suggests people "lived well" (*bene…vivebant,* 35). The lover-poet argues that Age of Saturn was a time before "long journeys," (*longas vias,* 36), like the journey on which he finds himself with Messalla at the beginning of the poem. It was a time before sailing and overseas trade, and therefore a time before danger and greed (37-40).[78] It was also a time before agriculture, before oxen or horses were tamed by the plow or the bit (41-42).[79] The lover-poet claims that in that age people lived together and held everything in common; there were no doors and no property lines (43-44).[80]

The Age of Saturn is not only defined by what it lacks, but also by the elaborate bounty which it has. Even though it was a time before farming, the lover-poet emphasizes that nature spontaneously produced food for humans (41-46).[81] The trees and the flocks provided milk and honey to anyone passing by (45-46). The lover-poet describes the people

---

[78] Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.37-38 notes that sailing and the greed for gain which followed it was often considered the beginning of the end of the Golden Age, cf. Hes. *Works* 232ff., Virgil *Georg*. 1.136-37, Virgil *Ecl.* 4.32, and Hor. *Epod*. 16.57-60. Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.39-40 comments that the connection between sailing and greed was made by several writers, cf. Solon 13.43-4 [West], Prop. 3.7.1-6, and Ov. *Am.* 2.10.33-34, and that sailing remained unknown in the Golden Age, cf. Arat. *Phaen.* 110f.

[79] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.41-42 notes that "The anaphora of *non*, which carries on into the next couplet (43), emphasizes the absence of restrictions of all kinds."

[80] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.43-44 comments that the lack of private property appears in other Golden Age fantasies at Lucr. 5.1110-16, Virg. *Georg.* 1.126-27, Hor. *Od.* 3.24.11-13.

[81] Spontaneous produce also comes from the land in Hes. *Works* 117-18, Hor. *Epod.* 16.43-48, Virg. *Ecl.* 4.18ff, and Virg. *Georg.* 1.125. See Putnam (1973) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.45-46.

whom the eager flocks come to feed as *securis*, “free from care,” suggesting that those who lived in the Age of Saturn experienced the freedom from worry and concern that the lover-poet wished for in his country fantasy in poem 1.1.[82] The fantasy of the Age of Saturn expresses the lover-poet’s desire for a spontaneous abundance that he could enjoy without work, or danger, or risk.[83]

The close correlation between the lover-poet’s vision of the Age of Saturn and his dream of an afterlife in Elysium invite us to read the two alongside one another. The resonances between the two scenes cause Bright to suggest that “In the second part of the poem Tibullus finds an acceptable substitute [for the Golden Age] in the rewards awaiting the lover after death.”[84] The spontaneous flourishing of the untilled fields is indeed a telling parallel to other Golden Age scenes.[85] Cairns argues that Tibullus is drawing on a Greek tradition that called Kronos (Roman Saturn) first the ruler of the Golden Age and later the ruler of the Isles of the Blessed.[86] The lover-poet’s parallels between the Age of Saturn and

---

[82] Tib. 1.1.48 and 77. Lee-Stecum (1998) 116 also remarks on this similarity with the country fantasy of poem 1.1.

[83] In this sense, the vision of the Age of Saturn may be taken yet another illustration of the lover-poet’s desire to be *segnis* and *iners* (1.1.57-58).

[84] Bright (1978) 25. Cairns (1979) 46-54 is more interested in the links between the two passages, arguing that the lover-poet’s epitaph reveals an underlying structure in the poem and careful balance between the descriptions of the Age of Saturn and Elysium. Other scholars interpretations of the similarities between the Age of Saturn and Elysium include Houghton (2007) 153-165, Maltby (2002) 184, Lee-Stecum (1998) 120, and Whitaker (1983) 72.

[85] cf. Hes. *Works* 117-18, Hor. *Epod*. 16.43-48, Virg. *Ecl*. 4.18ff, and Virg. *Georg*. 1.125.

[86] Cairns (1979) 46-54.

Elysium suggest that it is possible to regain the ideal happiness of the Golden Age, but it is only possible through death.[87]

Yet this elegiac Golden Age does not necessarily reflect the realization of the fantasies that we would expect given the examples we have seen of the lover-poet's visions of happiness in chapters 2 and 3. For example, in Elysium all the young men and women play at love, without any clear regard for particular couplings. The repeated reference to mixing (*immixta, miscet,* 63, 64) reinforces the generality of their practice of love in contrast to the exclusivity that is usually hoped for in elegiac relationships. The lover-poet may be in a paradise for lovers, but there is no indication that "being with" any particular beloved is a part of his vision. By claiming that the lover in Elysium is the "elegiac lover *par excellence*," who is "able to pursue the 'life of love' in its purest form, without impediment," Houghton makes a provocative statement that opens up possibilities for a Lacanian interpretation. But if the lover-poet in Elysium is describing an experience of the life of love in its purest form, then why is his beloved, Delia, not there?

As we noted in chapter 3, there is no indication in this scene that Delia is present in the lover-poet's Elysium.[88] At that time, we focused on the way that her absence implied the lover-poet's doubt about Delia's ability to live up to his ideal of her loyalty and chastity. Here I suggest that the implications of her absence are even more far-reaching. Bright comments that the joy of paradise is so overwhelming in Elysium that "We have forgotten,

---

[87] If we take the Age of Saturn as yet another image of the *iners vita*, this observation fits neatly with Bassi's argument cited above. She argues that the juxtaposition of the lover-poet's fantasy of being with Delia in the countryside and his fantasy of dying by her side in poem 1.1 implies that his ideal *inertia* is only possible through death, see Bassi (1994) 56-57.

[88] Chapter 3 pg. 140. cf. Dido and Sychaeus in Virg. *Aen.* 6.472-74 and Cynthia and Propertius in Prop. 4.7.93-94.

or at least ignored, the fact that this whole vision of death was a metaphor for separation from Delia, *or else* was the culmination of Tibullus' morbid reflections on his physical condition."[89] Indeed, scholars' expectations of Delia's presence in Elysium have led several of them to read that presence into this paradisical scene. Gardner suggests that Delia plays a "generic role" in this Elysium, "as presumably one of the *tenerae puellae*."[90] While her interpretation is one of the possibilities, she undermines it herself when she draws a contrast between the generality of the figures in Elysium and the specificity of the lover-poet's naming of himself and Messalla in line 55.[91] The lover-poet draws attention to the generality of the inhabitants of Elysium and their mixing together by individually naming Tibullus and Messalla in line 55 and the many inhabitants of Tartarus in lines 73-80. The suggestion that Delia is one of the many lovers seems unlikely in this context.

Practically, of course, one might argue Delia is not in Elysium because she is presumably still alive. But the fact that she is not present, and that the lover-poet does not seem to assume her future arrival, points to a deeper meaning in his exclusion of Delia from his ideal afterlife, which goes beyond his ambivalence about her faithfulness. I suggest that Delia is not present in the afterlife because the lover-poet does not actually need her presence to be happy. He needs the sense of abundance, of joy, of having no limitations on his desires, all things which he does in fact include in his fantasy of Elysium. His exclusion of Delia from his perfect afterlife is a subtle admission that what he wants in Delia is "more than Delia"—is *objet a*—and that having a sense of wholeness does not require having her,

[89] Bright (1978) 28.

[90] Gardner (2013) 100.

[91] Gardner (2013) 100.

but only that lost "thing" that would provide a sense of fulfillment. When the lover-poet considers what would make him happy in paradise, it is not necessarily being with Delia. In fact, what we have seen in chapter 3 hints that it cannot include Delia, because with her presence would always come the possibility of the disruption of his ideal. Once again death and the fulfillment of desire coincide. But once the lover-poet's desire disappears, so does the object of his desire.

Even if the lover-poet's afterlife did include the specific realization of the fantasies he recounts in other poems, we have already noted the importance of the fact that the ideal life of love in Elysium can still only be experienced after the lovers are dead.[92] Gardner comments that poem 1.3 explores "another outlet for escaping [the lover-poet's] current plight, the end point of linear time, death itself, in which there are no drives, no crises, indeed, no subjects."[93] The lover-poet has finally found a place where he might be able to escape the limitations and prohibitions that hinder his attempts at happiness in this life. In death, his desire can finally be fulfilled. But to experience this sense of gratification, the lover-poet must be dead.

Miller interprets the complexities of the lover-poet's Elysium by saying that "In truth, the only way Tibullus can be present, can even imagine being present, in this unity…of the Golden Age and the institution of those boundaries that would allow him exclusive

[92] Miller (1999) 220 n. 47 memorably sums up the differences between the lover-poet's Golden Age and his description of Elysium when he declares that "In the Golden Age there is no love. In Elysium everyone is dead." This position differs from Cairns (1979) 54 who argues that the descriptions of the Golden Age and Elysium are equated.

[93] Gardner (2010) 98. Freud famously declared the "aim of all life is death" in *Beyond the Pleasure* Principle, see Gay (1989) 613. Eagleton (1996) 139, "the final goal of life is death, a return to that blissful inanimate state where the ego cannot be injured."

possession of Delia, is through death."[94] Gardner sums up Miller's position by explaining that he envisions the lover-poet's Elysium as "a solution to the poet's paradoxical desire to possess Delia exclusively but also exist in a world without boundaries."[95] I agree that the image of Elysium is in many ways a Golden Age fantasy, as well as that it is the only example where the lover-poet imagines himself present in a Golden Age fantasy in his poems. But Tibullus does not include the possibility of exclusive possession of Delia in his vision of the afterlife. He does, however, attempt to imagine relationships that are free from the limitations and prohibitions to the satisfaction of desire which the lover-poet experiences elsewhere in the corpus.[96] By placing this paradise for lovers in the afterlife, the lover-poet suggests that the happiness he longs for is not possible in life. To attain it, something about his very existence must change, something as profound as his death. If he could escape desire, however, the lover-poet would no longer have any need for the object of his desire. And so Delia disappears from his vision of a happy afterlife.

Again the lover-poet has set up a fantasy of elegiac love that is structured around overdetermined impossibility. Similarly to his vision of his death in poem 1.1, in poem 1.3 the fulfillment of the lover-poet's desire only seems possible through his profound separation from Delia through death. The lover-poet longs to escape from the demands that prevent him from being with Delia, and his lover's Elysium resembles the Golden Age where there were no military campaigns or long journeys to separate lovers. Death brings with it the realization of this dream. Yet the lover-poet becomes so caught up in his fantasy

[94] Miller (1999) 219.

[95] Gardner (2010) 99 n. 27.

[96] Miller (2004) 127-28.

of freedom from the restrictions that rule his experience of desire in this life that he begins to imply that Delia may not need to be a part of his ideal paradise at all. Death brings the lover-poet the sense of happiness he has longed for, but when his desire is fulfilled, it no longer needs an object to pursue. Instead of accepting Delia's absence from his fantasy, however, the lover-poet presses on with the poem, imagining one more scene of what "being with" Delia might look like for him.

Love After Death: 1.3.83-94

When the lover-poet imagines his return to Delia at the end of poem 1.3, he makes another attempt at envisioning what it would be like to "be with" Delia. But he only ends up reemphasizing the necessity of escaping the limitations of his position as a subject in order to attain the boundless access to Delia which he seeks. The lover-poet's reflections on the limits of love and death continue as he transitions to his closing vision of a return to Delia:

> at tu casta, precor, maneas sanctique pudoris
> assideat custos sedula semper anus.
> haec tibi fabellas referat positaque lucerna
> deducat plena stamina longa colu,
> at circum, gravibus pensis affixa, puella
> paulatim somno fessa remittat opus.
> tum veniam subito nec quisquam nuntiet ante
> sed videar caelo missus adesse tibi.
> tunc mihi qualis eris, longos turbata capillos,
> obvia nudato, Delia, curre pede.
> hoc precor: hunc illum nobis Aurora nitentem
> Luciferum roseis candida portet equis. (1.3.83-94)

> But may you, I pray, remain chaste and may a careful old woman
> always be diligent as the guardian of your consecrated modesty.
> May she tell you stories and draw down long threads
> from a full distaff with a lamp set up,
> and nearby may a girl, intent on heavy weights of wool,
> exhausted by sleep, do her task little by little.
> Then may I come suddenly, and may no one announce me beforehand,
> but may I seem to appear to you as if I have been sent from heaven.

> Then you will run to me as you are, with your long hair in disarray,
> Run to meet me, Delia, with a naked foot.
> I pray for this: may bright Aurora bring us
> that shining morning star on her rosy horses.

After her absence from the lover-poet's visions of the Age of Saturn and the afterlife, Delia's presence in this scene is particularly striking. Bright claims that through his dream of a return to Delia, "Tibullus brings himself as close as is now allowed to the bliss of that lost Golden Age."[97] When the lover-poet was lamenting his imminent departure on campaign in lines 15-18, he mentioned that "the day of Saturn" (*dies Saturni,* 18) kept holding him back. Bright proposes that when Delia reappears at the poem's end, "we realize that being detained by *dies Saturni* (18) is a somewhat complex play on words to convey his relationship with Delia." This verbal echo implies a possible connection between the lover-poet's relationship with Delia and the ideal of the Age of Saturn.[98] The lover-poet also includes a potential allusion to his fantasy of the Golden Age in this final scene, as he imagines that Delia will come to meet him (*obvia*, 92) like the sheep came to meet the "carefree" (*securis*, 46) inhabitants of the Age of Saturn.[99] Bright's observation frames the return to Delia as a renewed attempt for the lover-poet to imagine a world of idealized happiness in the future, similar to the paradise of Elysium, but this time with Delia front and center.

---

[97] Bright (1978) 28, 33. Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.3.83-94 echoes this sentiment.

[98] Bright (1978) 28. Gardner (2013) 98 mentions that this same wordplay connects Delia to the fantasy of a world without linear time that so often characterizes the *puella*.

[99] Fineberg (1991) 138-139 makes much of these uses of *obvia* in her chapter on *viae* in Tibullus' poems. She suggests that *obvia* emphasizes the coming together that can happen in the Saturnian world and in Tibullus' idealized vision of homecoming, calling it "a subversive undercurrent that unites," as opposed to the *viae* which often separate the lover-poet from his beloved and his ancestral home. I too find the use of *obvia* in the two scenes noteworthy, although I would emphasize the way that this verbal connection renders the final vision even more dream-like and uncertain, if the rest of the poem suggests that the Golden Age only returns in death.

In chapter 3, we focused on the implausibility of the idealized Delia portrayed in this scene. I now want to turn toward the representation of the lover-poet himself. The manner of the lover-poet's arrival raises questions about the nature of his return. The suddenness of the lover-poet's coming is highlighted by the contrast between *paulatim* (88) and *subito* (89) and the transition from the spondaic rhythm of 87-88 to the dactylic opening of 89.[100] The verb *videar*[101] and the phrase *caelo missus* both liken his arrival to a god's epiphany.[102] Has the lover-poet returned in the flesh, healed from the disease that plagued him at the opening of the poem—or is he only returning after his death?

Several scholars skirt around the possibility that the lover-poet is in fact a ghost when he returns to Delia in these lines. Murgatroyd observes that "Tibullus gives himself a very dramatic entrance (especially as he has not referred to himself as anything but dead since 53)."[103] Bright comments, "Tibullus, who has just imagined in lavish detail his own death and *katabasis*, will *almost literally* return from the dead."[104] Other scholars confront the question of the lover-poet's status directly. Lee comments that the lover-poet returns in 89, "Not, surely, as a ghost, which would conflict with the final couplet, there being no dawn in the underworld."[105] Although Lee-Stecum leaves the question open, he acknowledges that "In [this scene] is he is definite, active, vaguely heroic, unlike his character as suggested

---

[100] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.89-90.

[101] Clausen (1994) *ad loc.* Virg. *Ecl.* 10.26 and Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) *ad loc.* Hor. *Carm.* 2.19.2 also comment on the use of *video* in similar contexts.

[102] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.3.89-90.

[103] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.3.89-92.

[104] Bright (1978) 33, my emphasis.

[105] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.3.89.

elsewhere."[106] Putnam tellingly compares the lover-poet's appearance to Delia and her response with the description of Hector's appearance to Aeneas in *Aen*. 2.270-74.[107] Although the evidence is far from conclusive, these lines seem carefully designed to raise our suspicions about just how the lover-poet is reuniting with Delia.

In chapter 3, we explored how this image of Delia betrays itself as a fantasy in the first place. Bright goes so far as to say that Delia is so idealized in this scene that she becomes "a part of the Elysian picture."[108] Bright concludes that instead of a return to reality, this final scene reveals the lover-poet's decision that "the best terms in which to view his situation are those of remoteness and myth."[109] As we saw in chapter 3, this Delia does not exist. The lover-poet's union with this Delia is already impossible.

But the lover-poet adds an additional layer of impossibility to this fantasy of reunion between the two lovers by introducing the question of his return after his death.[110] If death was a condition of returning to the bliss of the Golden Age in Elysium, is it thus also a

---

[106] Lee-Stecum (1998) 128.

[107] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.3.91-92.

> *in somnis, ecce, ante oculos maestissimus Hector*
> *visus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus,*
> *raptatus bigis ut quondam, aterque cruento*
> *pulvere perque pedes traiectus lora tumentis.*
> *ei mihi, qualis erat…* (*Aen.* 2.270-74)
> In a dream, behold, most gloomy Hector
> Seemed to approach me and to pour forth huge tears,
> having been dragged by chariots as in the past, and blackened with bloody
> dust and pierced with thongs through swollen feet.
> Woe to me, he was just like that…

[108] Bright (1978) 28.

[109] Bright (1978) 35.

[110] Bright (1978) 28.

condition of his return to Delia? Bright describes this final scene as "an escapist world of dreams where he can succeed. That world means death."[111]

In Elysium we saw the lover-poet experiment with death as a removal of the prohibitions he currently experiences in order to enable a sense of fulfillment in the life of love. If the lover-poet returned to Delia after his death, he would easily be able to appear to Delia unannounced and enter without anyone blocking his path. He could finally move within his elegiac world without doors standing in his way. A change in the effectiveness of limitations on the lover-poet would explain why the lover-poet finally seems to be able to walk right through Delia's door and into her private rooms in this scene, in sharp contrast to his experience outside her door in poems 1.1 and 1.2. But then, of course, the lover-poet would have to be dead. In the end, this thought experiment ends up in the same inevitable paradox that plagued his attempts to imagine being united with Delia at the moment of his death in poem 1.1. In order for the lover-poet to "be with" Delia upon his return, she has to be an ideal of perfection, and he has to escape the restrictions that constrain him. The lover-poet must achieve a state of boundlessness that would only be feasible after death. Thus once again, his ultimate separation from Delia becomes the condition of their perfect closeness. The lover-poet's imagined union with Delia again contains several layers of overdetermined impossibility, and it again places the possibility of fulfillment only after death. Taken together, these scenes raise the question: can the lover-poet "be with" Delia in this lifetime?

The *Puella* and the *Pauper*: 1.5.59-68

Thus far we have seen how the lover-poet reflects on the limits of love and death to imagine the conditions under which he might finally be able to "be with" Delia. As we have

[111] Bright (1978) 36.

seen, the lover-poet has not yet come up with a satisfactory way he can experience the fulfillment of his desire without also imagining himself dead. In the second half of poem 1.5, the lover-poet provides one last metaphor for his relationship with Delia, making one more attempt to articulate what "being with" Delia might look like while he is still living. After his fantasy of *felicitas* with Delia in the countryside disintegrates in poem 1.5, the lover-poet begins to lament the current circumstances of his affair with her. He complains that a rich lover has taken his place (47), and that a *lena* has persuaded her to receive the rich lover and to reject him (48). He responds with a plea for what he could offer Delia as a poor lover, demonstrating the services he could provide her if she would accept him:

> at tu quam primum sagae praecepta rapacis
> desere, nam donis vincitur omnis amor.
> pauper erit praesto semper tibi, pauper adibit
> primus et in tenero fixus erit latere.
> pauper in angusto fidus comes agmine turbae
> subicietque manus efficietque viam.
> pauper ad occultos furtim deducet amicos
> vinclaque de niveo detrahet ipse pede. (1.5.59-66)

> But you, abandon the instructions of the grasping witch
> as soon as possible, for all love is conquered by gifts.
> A poor man will always serve you, a poor man will come to you
> first and will be fixed at your soft side.
> A poor man, a faithful companion, will throw up his hands
> in the narrow column of the crowd and make a path.
> A poor man will lead you down secretly to hidden companions
> and undo the bindings of your snowy foot himself.

The lover-poet offers his services as a *pauper*, but in the busy-ness of the city he looks more like a slave than the idealized farmer figure who has been associated with *paupertas* throughout the corpus.[112] Several of the lover-poet's behaviors are reminiscent of

---

[112] Putnam (1973) *ad loc.* 1.5.63-64 does not even comment on the use of the term *pauper* and simply says that "the lover's posture is that of a slave." Maltby (2002) 1.5.59-66 notes that the poor man also appears as an especially faithful lover in Ov. *Am.* 1.3.9-14, 1.10.57, and *Ars* 2.161-8.

slave duties.[113] For example, *esse praesto* can be used to describe a slave attending his master.[114] Making a way for his mistress through the crowd is also a servile task.[115] Finally, removing someone's sandals is also a task typically assigned to a servant.[116] The lover-poet suggests that unlike the rich man, he is willing to do whatever it takes to be near to her, even taking on the position of a slave.

In this case, the lover-poet's position as a *pauper* enables him to get close to Delia by literally staying by her side. These many allusions to servile tasks open up possibilities for double meanings that reflect the lover-poet's ulterior motive for staying so close to her. The distinctive phrasing of *in tenero fixus erit latere* can also be read as a reference to sexual intercourse.[117] A *fidus comes,* "faithful companion," could simply be a loyal slave, or instead a faithful lover.[118] The sense that the lover-poet will loosen the binding of Delia's shoes may also carry erotic connotations.[119] The most telling line is the lover-poet's promise that he will *ad occultos furtim deducet amicos*, "lead [her] down secretly to hidden companions" (65). We have seen how the adverb *furtim* is frequently associated with lover's activities.[120] *Deduco* is a verb typically associated with leading a bride to her husband or a mistress to her

---

[113] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.59-66.

[114] Murgatroyd (1980) and Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.61-62. cf. Plaut. *Men*. 982.

[115] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.63-64. cf. Petron. *S.* 28, Mart. 2.18, 3.7.2, 10.74.3.

[116] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.5.65-66 and Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.5.66. cf. Ter. *Heaut*. 124, Mart. 14.65

[117] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.61-62.

[118] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.63-64.

[119] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.5.64.

[120] Maltby (2002) *ad loc.* 1.5.65-66.

lover, and *amicus* is a term which can also be used for a lover.[121] The gender of the noun *amicos* implies that at least some of these “companions” are men. Lee-Stecum explains how the initial examples that the lover-poet gives of his service to Delia suggest that he might be trying to keep her from others, but this expectation is contradicted by lines 65-66, when the secrecy of his accompaniment of Delia implies that he will actually facilitate her liaisons with other lovers.[122] Why would the lover-poet imagine for himself a position in which he can finally “be with” Delia which would include that he will escort her to his rivals?

Bright observes that the roles of slave and lover eventually become completely entwined in these lines. He claims, “By the end of the poem, the slave, so abject in the opening scene, has become the one in control of the situation.”[123] Although the lover-poet initially implies that as a *pauper* he will serve as Delia’s slave, it turns out that his role looks far more like that of a *leno* or *lena*. His debasement as her slave in these lines would paradoxically enable him to control her comings and goings and who can have access to her. He tries to claim that he is willing to give up his autonomy, to be her slave and serve her faithfully, but the double entendres inherent in the tasks he proposes give his intentions away. The lover-poet imagines what it would be like to “be with” Delia, and once again he represents himself as facing radical limitations in order to take control of her. He will accept these limits, but only if they provide the promise of unlimited access to Delia. Yet what does it mean for the lover-poet to “be with” Delia if he must serve as her slave and facilitate her relationship with other lovers?

---

[121] Lee (1990) *ad loc.* 1.5.65. cf. *OLD deduco* 10b and *amicus* 2.

[122] Lee-Stecum (1998) 176.

[123] Bright (1978) 159.

The reader may certainly assume that the lover-poet is not sincere in his insistence that he will bring her to other lovers and that he is simply using the pose of *servitium amoris* to gain the upper hand in their relationship. This interpretation is certainly typical of the way that the lover-poet plays with balances of power between himself and others throughout the elegies. Yet the other internally contradictory examples of the lover-poet's simultaneous nearness and separation from Delia suggest that there is more to this metaphor of the *pauper* and his *puella*. When faced with a rival, the lover-poet does not simply wish to have her and only her. He does not wish to be wealthy himself. Instead, the lover-poet proposes that he will serve as her slave as a condition of having access to her. Yet if he were her slave, there is no guarantee that he would enjoy any erotic relationship with her at all. In fact, as he claims, it is very possible that he would be reduced to her escort and continue to take second place to other rivals. Once again, the lover-poet imagines unlimited access to Delia as predicated on conditions that simultaneously undermine the union with Delia that he desires. It is almost as if he cannot imagine their relationship structured in any other way.

The lover-poet's representation of himself as the slave-like attendant of his *puella* brings us back to his programmatic role as the *ianitor* in poem 1.1. In both cases, the lover-poet imagines himself as taking on the role of a slave in the pursuit of his *puella*, but the specifics of his duties and his relationship to Delia in each context hold the key to understanding his self-representation. As both the *ianitor* and the *pauper*, the lover-poet envisions only being able to be close to Delia by imagining strict limitations on his relationship with her. He can finally have control over who has access to her, but he is ultimately at the mercy of someone else's orders. It is quite likely that not only as the *pauper*, but also as the *ianitor*, the lover-poet would have to be complicit in Delia's affairs with other men. The lover-poet's inability to gain exclusive access to his beloved in these

contexts only reinforces the extent of the constraints within which he imagines he will be forced to pursue the object of his desire.

The Tibullan Lover-poet: the Subject of Desire

In this chapter we have seen how the Tibullan lover-poet turns his reflections on his relationship with Delia into a complex exploration of the experience of the subject of desire. In the end, the lover-poet never envisions a way of “being with” Delia in life that does not include some kind of overwhelming prohibition that limits his relationship with her. The lover-poet’s plight is made more obvious by its contrast with the position of Messalla, who is able to enjoy Delia’s presence in a way in which the lover-poet never can. The lover-poet repeatedly represents his relationship to Delia as enabled by the imposition of the same limits that would prevent its realization. When he imagines his escape from these restrictions in the afterlife, Delia ceases to have a place in his dream of paradise. Every time he imagines himself experiencing a sense of happiness in his relationship with Delia, the lover-poet is dying or already dead.

When the lover-poet takes up the position of the *ianitor,* he imagines gaining access to Delia in circumstances that simultaneously prevent him from ever being exclusively and permanently united with her. The lover-poet only ever envisions escaping the limitations that constrain him and experiencing fulfillment from “being with” Delia when he is near death or has already died. Near the end of poem 1.1, he can be close to her at his final hour, but only because of his impending death. When he returns to Delia after his death, he is only a ghost. In poem 1.3, he imagines love without boundaries in the afterlife, but he does not possess Delia there. At the end of poem 1.5, the lover-poet makes one last attempt to imagine “being with” Delia while he is still alive, by posing as Delia’s attendant. But in order to stay by her

side, he has to participate in escorting her to other men. As the lover-poet explores the conditions under which he might somehow "be with" Delia, he imagines himself in positions defined by the imposition of radical constraints that prevent him from ever having exclusive possession of her. He can only ever be with her in a notably limited sense while he is living, and the only times he can imagine "being with" her in a gratifying way require him to be dying or already dead.

These paradoxical images of the lover-poet's subject position expand his reflections on his relationship to Delia into an exploration of the experience of the subject more generally. On Lacan's view, the sense of loss that founds the subject categorically prevents the subject from ever experiencing the sense of wholeness that he supposes he must have had at some time in the past. Entering into the limits of language and the terms of the Symbolic are the prerequisite to the subject's coming-into-being as a subject, but they simultaneously prevent any experience of wholeness through union with the Other. I propose that the images of the lover-poet as *pauper* and as *ianitor* reflect the Lacanian subject's dilemma especially well: the lover-poet is seeking to control the restrictions that will enable him to have Delia, but he cannot conceptualize such a role without finding himself simultaneously trapped by those same limitations. Unlike Messalla, who faces no such constraints, the lover-poet is constantly plagued by his inability to fulfill his desires and to be one with Delia. The lover-poet, like every subject, is destined to be forever trapped by the same limitations that set in motion his longing for wholeness in the first place. The only way out of the constraints of desire and subjectivity is through death. For both Tibullus and Lacan, the only way to imagine the lasting fulfillment of desire is to imagine death.

Chapter 5

A Crisis of Self-Construction: (Mis)Recognizing Marathus

In chapters 1-4, we saw how the Tibullan lover-poet explores his experience of desire through his fantasy of the countryside and his relationship with his girlfriend, Delia. We uncovered how the dynamics of these fantasies point to the sense of lack and loss that founds the subject and to the Real *objet a* that serves as the underlying cause of desire. Finally, we unpacked the paradoxical prohibitions which make the lover-poet's subject position possible. In this final chapter, we will consider one more example of the lover-poet's experience of desire, this time with respect to the beloved boy, Marathus, in poem 1.8. We will investigate both how the lover-poet represents Marathus and how he constructs his sense of self in relation to him.

There are several reasons why the figure of Marathus deserves our attention as a distinctive feature of Tibullus' corpus. While Propertius and Ovid both mention the love of boys,[1] Tibullus is the only elegist to include the same boy in several poems and to give him a name.[2] Furthermore, Marathus is unique in extant elegiac poetry because he appears as both the beloved of the lover-poet and as the lover of his own *puella*, Pholoe, in poems 1.8 and 1.9. I will show how the multiplicity of roles played by Marathus and the variety of ways that the lover-poet represents him add layers of complexity to the lover-poet's relationship with the boy and allow further possibilities for the lover-poet's construction of himself.

[1] Ovid *Am.* 1.1.20 and Prop. 1.20 and 2.4.

[2] While Catullus includes his beloved boy, Iuventius, in several poems, they are not formally considered elegiac poems.

Before I proceed with my own analysis, I first want to mention two recent investigations into Marathus' role in Tibullus' poems. These readings have laid some important groundwork for articulating Marathus' position in Book 1. Konstantinos Nikoloutsos argues that Marathus has a queer gender identity, and that as a queer figure he calls into question socially-accepted binaries, such as male/female and active/passive. In Nikoloutsos' view, poem 1.8 represents the boy as a disempowered figure with whom the *amator* can identify based on his own experience. Nikoloutsos suggests that the *amator* feels similarly disempowered with respect to other figures, such as his patron, Messalla.[3] In this chapter, I will argue for ambiguities in the presentation of Marathus' gender identity, but I do not want to smooth out those tensions by suggesting a separate, queer identity for the boy. I want to highlight the conflicting aspects of the representation of Marathus' character and to nuance further the connections between the representation of the boy and the representation of the *amator*. I will argue that maintaining the tension between the conflicting aspects of Marathus' gender identity opens additional possibilities for our understanding of his relationship to the lover-poet.

Megan Drinkwater has shown how the Marathus poems provide Tibullus with the opportunity to explore the elegiac relationship between *amator* and *puella* from a new perspective, as the *amator* views the relationship between the boy and the boy's *puella*, Pholoe. Drinkwater suggests that the roles of the male and female beloved and the roles of the beloved boy and *amator* interchange in the poem in order to highlight the possible permutations of male and female roles in Latin elegy.[4] She argues that poem 1.8 portrays a

---

[3] Nikoloutsos (2011) 47-50.

[4] Drinkwater (2012).

microcosm of male-female elegy within the frame of the relationship between the lover-poet and the boy, a frame which reaffirms the primacy of the male voice and male perspective in the elegiac world.[5] In the pages that follow, I want to emphasize instead the way that our understanding of the relationship between Marathus and Pholoe affects our understanding of the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus himself. I will suggest that the discussion of Marathus' relationship with his *puella* adds complexity to Marathus' erotic relationship with the lover-poet and the lover-poet's self-construction in relation to him.

In this chapter, I will show how the lover-poet represents the boy as a figure who can be mistaken for a *puella* in the first half of poem 1.8, and then represents him as an *amator* who looks surprisingly similar to the lover-poet himself in the second half. In the process, the lover-poet raises questions about how one recognizes the gender and status of elegiac characters and problematizes the use of terms such as male and female or slave and free. The ambiguous gender and status identity of the boy reminds the reader of the lover-poet's own paradoxical self-constructions throughout Book 1. As we have seen, in Tibullus' poems the lover-poet represents himself in such self-contradictory roles as an effeminate man and a voluntary slave of love. I propose that poem 1.8 draws attention to the way that categories such as gender and status remain unstable and at risk of dissolution, even as the lover-poet attempts to revive their usefulness by shifting their meanings in his poetry. As the poem progresses, even the fundamental elegiac distinction between *amator* and *puella* becomes permeable.

In my discussion of the Delia poems in chapters 2-4, I have emphasized how the lover-poet's representation of his relationship with Delia reflects the relationship of the split

[5] Drinkwater (2012) 431-38.

subject to *objet a* in Lacanian theory. As the lover-poet explores the dynamics of his relationship with Delia, he reveals the sense of loss and lack at the heart of the subject's experience of desire. In the process, the lover-poet repeatedly tries to paper over this split by fitting the terms available to him onto his disintegrating self-image. These attempts result in a series of unlikely self-constructions, such as the effeminate *amator* and the *servus amoris*.

As we will see, in poem 1.8 the lover-poet is preoccupied with finding a way to represent the boy's role in the terms of his social and literary world. As he does so, we see the limits of language to account for the boy's position and to explain the lover-poet's relationship to him. At the same time, however, the boy unexpectedly begins to reflect the lover-poet's image of himself back to him, bringing this crisis of categories to bear on the lover-poet's own self-conceptions. This process forces the lover-poet to come face-to-face with the implications of his paradoxical self-constructions throughout Book 1 as an effeminate male *amator* and a freeborn man serving as a slave of love. As a result, the lover-poet must confront the inadequacy of his Imaginary self-images and Symbolic codes to provide him with the sense of wholeness and coherence he seeks.

The lover-poet's relationship with Marathus in poem 1.8 underscores the problems the split subject encounters while attempting to construct a sense of self and attain a sense of wholeness from the Imaginary and Symbolic registers. The subject attempts to suture its split by aligning itself with Imaginary images of a whole, complete self and with Symbolic categories which offer it a place in its social world. All of these promise a consistent and meaningful identity for the subject, but they always fall short of encapsulating the subject's lived experience. In this chapter, I show how the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus foregrounds his anxieties about the Imaginary identities that he appropriates throughout

Book 1 and about the failure of the Symbolic to represent himself and his beloved with consistency.

Poem 1.8 exposes the fragility of the subject's attempts to soothe its sense of loss and lack by appealing to such Imaginary images and Symbolic categories. As the lover-poet tries to fit Marathus into the available categories of Roman society and elegiac poetry, his efforts repeatedly erode the distinctions they are meant to solidify. The breakdown of terminology and meaning in this poem is magnified by the similarities between the lover-poet's representation of Marathus in poem 1.8 and his self-representation in his other poems. The lover-poet seeks safety in his role as a *praeceptor* and in his expertise in the ways of love, but the collapse of categories and the undermining of knowledge throughout the poem deny the possibility of ever having such certainty. The lover-poet's relationship with Marathus in poem 1.8 ultimately exposes the problems inherent in the lover-poet's attempts at self-construction and his conflicting attitudes toward the self-identity he has created throughout Book 1. The dynamics of desire do not only emerge in the lover-poet's country fantasy and his relationships with his beloveds. We can see from the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus that they play an integral part in the lover-poet's very process of self-construction.

Master of Signs

The opening lines of poem 1.8 introduce the theme of recognizing signs that persists throughout the poem. It also presents a double and ambiguous identity for the lover-poet, as both a *praeceptor* and a *servus amoris*:

> Non ego celari possum quid nutus amantis
> quidve ferant miti lenia verba sono,
> nec mihi sunt sortes nec conscia fibra deorum,
> praecinit eventus nec mihi cantus avis:
> ipsa Venus magico religatum bracchia nodo

perdocuit multis non sine verberibus. (1.8.1-6)

I am not able to have concealed from me, what the nods of a lover
or what soft words convey with a gentle sound
and I don't have lots or the knowing entrails of the gods,
nor does the song of a bird prophesy events to me.
Venus herself with many blows of the whip has taught me thoroughly,
tied by my arms with a magic knot.

The first lines describe the process of reading a specific set of signs, the gestures and words between people in love. The lover-poet presents himself as an expert in reading these signs of love, claiming that they cannot be hidden from him (1-2).[6] He proceeds to explain the source of his ability to recognize the signs, arguing that he does not need the prophetic arts to diagnose love (3-4). Yet the source of his superior knowledge ironically creates a self-contradictory identity, as the lover-poet claims that his *servitium* to Venus is what allows him to interpret the signs of lovers and to serve as a *praeceptor amoris* (1-4). The lover-poet's testimony about his experience as the victim of violent abuse and oppression is meant to give authority to the instructions he provides. Taking the position of a slave paradoxically gives the lover-poet superiority over others and the ability to direct and instruct them in the ways of love (5-6).[7] The multi-layered representation of the lover-poet as *praeceptor* and *servus amoris* sets the stage for the recurring phenomenon of multiple and even self-contradictory identities throughout the poem.

[6] The lover-poet does seem to have extensive knowledge about the role of deception in love affairs, see poem 1.2.15-24 and 1.6.7-14. He also poses as *praeceptor amoris* in 1.4 and 1.6.

[7] Lee-Stecum (1998) 228-29 traces the paradox of authority acquired from suffering in these lines as well. See also Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.8.5-6. The stance is a common trope in elegy, as Prop. 1.1 and Ovid *Am.* 1.1 make this kind of captive service to love programmatic to their elegies.

Already, however, the reader may suspect that the signs the lover-poet claims to be able to read may not be as clear as he suggests. Mere *nutus* and *lenia verba*, “nods” and “soft words,” hardly seem so unambiguous in their meaning. In previous poems, the lover-poet has alluded to the potential for self-deception in the (mis)reading of the signs of a love affair, and he has admitted that he can be deceived by the very tricks he taught his own *puella.*[8] Reading signs, even as a teacher of love, is not so straightforward. As we will see, poem 1.8 consistently requires the reader to identify characters using indicators which turn out to have unstable or inconsistent meaning.

The Beloved’s Toilette

After introducing himself as a teacher of love, at line 7 the lover-poet turns abruptly to address another person directly:

> desine dissimulare: deus crudelius urit
> quos videt invitos succubuisse sibi.
> quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos
> saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas,
> quid fuco splendente genas ornare, quid ungues
> artificis docta subsecuisse manu
> frustra iam vestes frustra mutantur amictus
> ansaque compressos colligat arta pedes.
> illa placet, quamvis inculto venerit ore
> nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput. (1.8.7-16)

> Stop pretending: the god burns more cruelly
> those whom he sees have submitted to him unwillingly.
> What good does it do you now to do up your soft hair
> and to arrange your dyed hair often?
> What good does it do to decorate your cheeks with shining rouge,
> what good to have trimmed your artificial nails with a learned hand?
> Now your clothing is changed in vain, your cloak is changed in vain,
> and a narrow shoe string binds your tightened feet.
> *That* girl is pleasing, although she comes without her face done-up
> and she has not tended her shining head with a slow art.

[8] cf. Tib. 1.2.55-60 and Tib. 1.6.7-14.

The sudden shift includes a sudden change in tone, with the swift order to "Stop pretending" (*desine dissimulare*, 7). The lover-poet then gives a reason: "the god burns more cruelly those whom he sees have submitted to him unwillingly" (*deus crudelius urit quos videt invitos succubuisse sibi*, 7-8). Because the lover-poet has set up the context of *amantes* "lovers" (1) and Venus (5), we can most plausibly identify the *deus* as Amor or Cupid.[9] The god's "burning" of his victims reinforces this reading (*urit*, 7).[10] The lover-poet seems to have found a fellow victim of love to instruct, someone who is pretending not to be in love, but cannot escape the lover-poet's alleged expertise in reading the signs of love-sickness. It is unclear, however, who this person might be.

A series of rhetorical questions to the addressee follow, as the lover-poet walks the reader through the addressee's beauty regimen. "What good does it do you now to do up your soft hair…?" (*quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos*, 9), he asks, listing several beauty treatments. The reader is told of elaborate hair-dos and hair-dyeing, of rouge and artificial nails and tiny shoes (9-14). Such toilettes come up many times elsewhere in elegy.[11] Later in poem 1.8, for example, the lover-poet threatens the girl, Pholoe, with a future toilette in her old age where she must carefully conceal her white hair and wrinkled skin.[12] In poem 1.9, an older rival's wife does up her hair and puts on her jewelry to impress her

[9] cf. Chapter 1 pg. 53.

[10] Lee-Stecum (1998) 229 affirms this link as evidence that the god referred to is Amor. cf. Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.8.7-8.

[11] Zimmerman Damer (2014) 497-98 argues for intertextual references within the toilette that extend beyond Latin elegy to Callimachus' hymn on the bath of Athena and to Philitas' erotic epigrams.

[12] Tib. 1.8.41-46.

younger boyfriend.[13] In the poetry of the other elegists these dressing scenes are even more common. Propertius sometimes criticizes Cynthia for doing her hair and makeup excessively,[14] while at other times, he encourages her to dress up in a way that pleases him.[15] Ovid devotes an entire poem to a hair-dyeing mishap[16] and writes extensively in the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Medicamina Faciei Femineae* about how women should do their hair and makeup to attract a man.[17]

As the toilette scene draws to a close, the lover-poet mentions a girl who "is pleasing although she comes without her face done-up, and she has not tended her shining head with a slow art" (*illa placet, quamvis inculto venerit ore nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput*, 15-16). This comparison implies that the addressee has fallen for the common mistake of valuing artificial beauty over natural beauty, a blunder often attributed to elegiac *puellae*.[18] Throughout the poem, the lover-poet draws attention to the artifice of outward appearances. For example, there are two extended descriptions of beauty treatments in this poem (9-14, 43-46), although there is only one other account of such treatments in the rest of Tibullus'

---

[13] Tib. 1.9.67-70.

[14] Prop. 1.2.1-8 and 2.18c.24-32. Lee-Stecum (1998) 230 draws connections between the dressing scene in Tib. 1.8 and Prop. 1.2.1-8 in particular. Zimmerman Damer (2014) 502 argues that the contrasts between the two passages emphasizes the elaborateness of this addressee's *cultus* as well as the addressee's relative lack of success in attracting the beloved.

[15] Prop. 3.10.11-16. As his third book of elegies draws to a close, he threatens Cynthia in a manner reminiscent of Tibullus' threats to Pholoe in poem 1.8, see Prop. 3.25.11-13.

[16] Ovid *Am.* 1.14.

[17] Ovid *Ars* 3.100-279 and *Med.* 51-100.

[18] See Propertius 1.2 and 2.18c and Ovid *Am.* 1.14. Sharrock (1991) 39-41 discusses the debate over natural and artificial beauty in elegy.

poetry.[19] There are six references in poem 1.8 to dyeing or coloring the hair or the skin (*mutatas…comas* "dyed hair" 10, *fuco…ornare* "adorned with rouge" 11, *infecit* "dyed" 42, *coma mutatur* "hair is dyed" 43, *tincta* "dyed" 44, *tingit* "dyes" 52), and the poem includes six different words for colors and dyes (*fuco* "rouge" 11, *pallentibus* "pale" 17, *cana* "white" 42, *viridi* "green" 44, *albos* "white" 45, *luto* "yellow" 52). This emphasis on the artifice of outward appearance reinforces the links between the addressee and female characters elsewhere in elegy. The importance of physical descriptions in the poem in general underlines the importance of physical appearance for the reader's interpretation of the roles played by different characters. Aspects of outward appearance serve as another kind of sign that can help (or hinder) a reader's understanding of what is happening in the poem.

The lover-poet's critique of the addressee's interest in outward appearances suggests a different reading of his initial command to "Stop pretending" (*desine dissimulare,* 7). Upon the first reading of the couplet, it seemed like the addressee was pretending not to be in love. Such a reading would explain why the lover-poet warns the addressee about what happens to those who are unwilling to submit to "the god" (*deus,* 8). Yet the lines that follow describe the addressee's attempts to dress up to impress a lover, rather than any attempt to hide feelings of love. With this command, the lover-poet claims to be able to see right through the pretense, not only of emotion but of outward appearance. He insists on his ability to read signs accurately, not only signs of affection but also signs of pretense. His claim to authoritative reading is about to be complicated in several ways beginning in line 23.

[19] Interestingly, these treatments are highlighted in poem 1.9.67-74, another poem of the "Marathus cycle."

Because the behaviors which the lover-poet recounts in these lines are overwhelmingly linked with *puellae* and other female characters in elegy, it is easy to miss that the gender of the addressee remains unspecified by a gendered pronoun or adjective until line 23, nearly a third of the way through the poem, when the lover-poet describes the cause of the addressee's love-sickness:

> quid queror heu misero carmen nocuisse, quid herbas?
> forma nihil magicis utitur auxiliis. (1.8.23-24)

> Why am I complaining, alas, that a spell has harmed you, miserable boy, or herbs?
> Beauty does not need the help of magic at all.

The description of the addressee as *misero*, and therefore as male, may come as a surprise to the reader. In fact, most commentators interpret this line as an unexpected twist in the poem's progress.[20]

Looking further into this passage reveals a unique set of problems surrounding the recognition of the boy's gender identity, problems which differ from the questions about gender that typically emerge from the juxtaposition between the effeminate *amator* and his *dura puella*. Although the genre of elegy sets up non-traditional expectations for the traits of its male and female characters, the willful assertion of a binary between male and female still lies beneath the genre's representation of gender dynamics. The male lover is often represented as effeminate, while the *puella* is represented as in control, but they remain in supposed opposition, regardless of their failure to fit Roman gender stereotypes. The boy complicates the categorization of characters in terms of male and female in a unique way,[21]

[20] See Putnam (1973) 130 *ad loc*. 1.8.23, Murgatroyd (1980) 235, Lee (1990) 138 *ad loc*. 1.8.23, and Maltby (2002) *ad loc*. 1.8.23.

[21] Nikoloutsos (2011) 67-70 argues this point for Tib. 1.4, and Nikoloutsos (2011) 47-50 argues the same for poem 1.9, although he is much more interested in the relationship between the discourse of gender and metapoetics in these poems.

since the lover-poet only confirms that he is male after representing him in a way that would lead most readers to identify him as a *puella*. Unpacking the misunderstanding that is created by these first twenty-three lines and understanding the complexity of the representation of the boy's gender identity is crucial to exploring his role as a beloved, and the way the lover-poet constructs his own identity in relationship to him.

Upon reconsideration, the details provided in the early lines of the poem regarding the *puer*'s appearance and behavior, details which the reader could so easily align with the representation of *puellae*, could also fit with the expected behavior of a *puer delicatus*.[22] The signs of the addressee's identity were more ambiguous and misleading than the reader likely supposed. The *puer's* long, soft hair is characteristic of other *pueri delicati* in lyric poetry, especially Hellenistic poetry, as is the emphasis later placed on his smooth face.[23] The image is reminiscent of the representation of Apollo and Bacchus as ideals of youthful beauty, images which even appear elsewhere in Tibullus' corpus.[24] It turns out that these previous clues to the addressee's identity could refer to a member of either gender.[25]

[22] No *puer* in Tibullus' corpus is ever explicitly marked by the use of the term *delicatus*, although this meaning is implicit. The closest word to *delicatus* used to describe the boy is *tener*, "tender, gentle, soft," a term which is used elsewhere in Tibullus not only for the *puella* but also for the lover-poet himself. Booth (1996) 238 argues that *tener* has the exact same connotations as *delicatus* in this passage, but she does not take into account its varied usage throughout Tibullus' corpus. Nikoloutsos (2007) 67 and (2011) 34-41 note that the description of the boy as *tener* can be read as metapoetic. He points out that this description goes back to the descriptions of beloved boys in Hellenistic poetry. The use of the term *tener* is yet one more example of the difficulty of classifying the *puer*'s gender identity within a binary of male and female.

[23] Murgatroyd (1992) 105-106 and 111-12.

[24] Nikoloutsos (2011) 34. cf. Tib. 1.7.33-43, 2.3.11-14, 23-26, and 2.5.7-8.

[25] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.8.9-14 explains how each of the aspects of this particular toilette could be attributed to a boy. Olson (2014) argues that there was an entire group of

The necessary reinterpretation of the *puer's* gender identity at line 23 reveals an implicit assumption that the reader will read the gender of a character from his or her performance of a series of behaviors.[26] This portion of poem 1.8 plays with the question of what can be concluded from such behaviors. In the *puer* we can see the kind of "space of possibility" that emerges from Marjorie Garber's writings on cross-dressing: a figure who does not call gender identity into question merely by suggesting that it is performed but by problematizing the reliability and stability of interpretations based on those performances.[27] The poem plays on the reader's desire to categorize characters in terms of gender and reveals that the assumption that gender can be read from behavior willfully ignores the lingering possibility of misunderstanding. The awareness that the *puer*'s actions and appearance can be referred to either of the sexes causes an unsettling realization about the instability of the categories of male and female. Rather than destabilizing the reader's understanding of his gender identity by pretending to be a member of another gender, however, the *puer* destabilizes the categories of gender while behaving within the parameters of his expected literary role.[28]

Line 23 leads the reader to reevaluate the narrative described thus far.[29] The *praeceptor* appeared to be mocking a *puella* for refusing to acknowledge that she had fallen

---

men who seem to have proudly dressed in a so-called effeminate way at this time. She calls this group of young men of fashion "dandies."

[26] Lindheim (1998) 28-30.

[27] Garber (1992) 16-17.

[28] Murgatroyd (1992) 105-106 and 111-112.

[29] Lee-Stecum (1998) 232-34 and 245 explores the implications of the effect of this rereading in terms of the narrative itself and the relationship between the reader and text.

in love and then to be instructing her on how to appear most attractive to her lover. The *puella* seemed to be playing her expected role as the beloved in an erotic relationship but to be going about it in a way of which the *amator* disapproved. After line 23, the reader realizes that the *praeceptor* is instead instructing a *puer* who has dressed himself up in a way reminiscent of a *puella* to impress his own beloved. The reader still does not know, however, whom the boy is trying to impress.

***Puer* or *Puella*?**

At this point of the poem, the lover poet suddenly switches the addressee of his poem, and again he avoids any adjectives that might provide conclusive evidence of his or her grammatical gender.

> nec tu difficilis puero tamen esse memento;
>   persequitur poenis tristia facta Venus.
> munera ne poscas; det munera canus amator,
>   ut foveat molli frigida membra sinu.
> carior est auro iuvenis, cui levia fulgent
>   ora nec amplexus aspera barba terit.
> huic tu candentes umero suppone lacertos,
>   et regum magnae despiciantur opes.
> at Venus invenit puero concumbere furtim,
>   dum timet et teneros conserit usque sinus,
> et dare anhelanti pugnantibus umida linguis
>   oscula et in collo figere dente notas.
> non lapis hanc gemmaeque iuvant, quae frigore sola
>   dormiat et nulli sit cupienda viro. (1.8.27-40)
>
> And you, still remember not to be hard on the boy;
>   Venus pursues deeds which cause sadness with punishments.
> Don’t demand gifts: let the old lover give gifts,
>   so that he might warm his cold limbs on a soft breast.
> A young man is worth more than gold, whose smooth
>   face shines and whose rough beard does not rub against embraces.
> You, support his shining arms for him with your shoulder,

This line is just one of many examples in this poem which he argues have a destabilizing effect on the reader.

and let the great wealth of kings lie despised.
But Venus finds a way to lie secretly with the boy,
while he is afraid and continually joins tender embraces,
and a way to give wet kisses with fighting tongues to the panting boy,
and to fix marks on his neck with her teeth.
No stone or gems help the girl who sleeps alone in the cold, and who
is desirable to no man.

Although most scholars approach these lines with the assumption that the addressee is a *puella* whom the *puer* is now trying to attract, perhaps even the *illa* of line 15, I want to suggest that this assumption is somewhat premature when we look carefully at the text itself. The gender of the new addressee at line 27 is unclear if we maintain the same skepticism which we learned from the overturned expectations of lines 7-24. The revelation that the boy is male in line 23 encourages the reader to be suspicious of the signs of identity that she sees in the text, however certain they may seem at first glance. Again in this passage we see a series of allusions to the behavior of elegiac *puellae*. The plea to the *puella* not to be *difficilis*, harsh, or cruel with her lover is a constant theme in poems addressed to elegiac girlfriends, as is the insistence that she should never demand gifts.[30] Although these lines fit neatly with the identification of the second addressee as a *puella*, I suggest that the text encourages us to ask again the questions which first arose at the *misero* in line 23. The first grammatically feminine words which might be read as corresponding to the addressee occur in lines 39-40 (*non lapis hanc gemmaeque iuvant, quae frigore sola/dormiat et nulli sit cupienda viro*, "No stone or gems help the girl who sleeps alone in the cold and is desirable to no man). Even then, if we maintain the skeptical stance encouraged by the first part of the poem, we might still argue that this comparison does not give certain evidence of the addressee's gender, but only of his or her commonalities with female figures. As we recall,

[30] James (2003) 24 and 84-98.

the boy was also compared with a grammatically feminine figure at lines 15-16, before being identified as male.

The progress of the poem into the toilette of an old woman in lines 41-46 continues to suggest that the addressee of lines 27-40 is in fact a *puella*.

> heu sero revocatur amor seroque iuventas
> cum vetus infecit cana senecta caput.
> tunc studium formae est, coma tunc mutatur ut annos
> dissimulet viridi cortice tincta nucis;
> tollere tum cura est albos a stirpe capillos
> et faciem dempta pelle referre novam. (1.8.41-46)

> Alas, love and youth are recalled too late,
> when white old age dyes an old head.
> Then there is an eagerness for beauty: then hair is dyed, so that
> dyed by the green hull of a nut she might dissimulate her years,
> Then there is a concern to remove white hairs from the root
> and to bring back a youthful face with the skin peeled off.

The adjective *tincta* (44) confirms that this toilette belongs to a woman. The most suspicious of readers, however, might argue that the beginning of poem 1.8 has already raised questions about whether toilette scenes are exclusive to women.[31] Perhaps this figure, like the boy in lines 15-16, is being compared to a female figure, although he is male. Even when reading these lines, the reader can still maintain a level of uncertainty.

Shortly after the toilette, a conclusive description of the girl as grammatically feminine, and as a *puella* in particular, appears in line 50:

> neu Marathum torque. puero quae gloria victo est?
> in veteres esto dura, puella, senes. (1.8.49-50)

> Don't torture Marathus: what glory is there in conquering a boy?
> Be hard, girl, on old men.

[31] There is an interesting reference to an old man doing his hair to impress a girl in Tib. 1.2.91-92.

Of course, in the context of ancient Roman culture it was never very plausible that the poem was describing a *puer* attempting to impress another *puer*. Such relationships are certainly not attested anywhere in extant elegy.[32] I am not arguing for the plausibility of this alternate reading so much as emphasizing the way that the text leaves available its possibility. Both the delayed confirmation of the grammatical gender of the addressee and the encouragement of the reader's suspicion of signs allow for that openness. When we read lines 27-46 in the context of the gender confusion of lines 7-24, we see in poem 1.8 two sequential scenarios in which the reader is led to recognize the gender of the addressee. The first scenario defies the expectations of gender identity set up by the description in the text, while the second confirms them.

In the first half of the poem, the text has repeatedly raised questions about the conditions which allow the reader to recognize such basic cultural categories as male and female. There is one person, however, who has not needed the double-take suggested in the text. The possibility of misreading the boy's gender or the *puella*'s gender does not exist within the poem for the lover-poet himself. From the beginning, the lover-poet can see what the reader cannot: the biological sex of each addressee. Here the lover-poet plays with the potential for misreading and with the possibility that accurate representation may lead to misinterpretation, but he does so from the comfortable position of his own sure knowledge. This position echoes his confidence in his ability to read the signs of love in the opening

[32] One might appeal, however, to an intertext with Catullus 50.3, where Catullus and his friend Licinius decide to "be *delicati*," *ut convenerat esse delicati,* exchanging poems and pleasure in a clever play on the intersection of sex and poetry. *Pueri* are most often in relationships with men in elegy, albeit older men. *Pueri* appear earlier in Tibullus' corpus in poem 1.4, where boys are described as objects of desire for older men, such as the lover-poet, his friend Titius, and the god Priapus. A *puer* also appears in poem 1.9 as the beloved both of the lover-poet and of an older male rival.

lines of the poem. I suggest that the lover-poet's insistence on his own self-assurance and authority is an attempt to keep the destabilizing power of the questions of gender and status raised by the poem at a distance from himself.

The ambiguity around the signs of gender identity in the first half of poem 1.8 reveals the reliance that the reader has on the lover-poet's willingness to reveal the grammatical and biological sex of the addressee. Behavior and appearance are shown to be inconclusive in the categorization of biological sex in a way that undermines the reader's powers of understanding in relation to the lover-poet's. The creation of this kind of ambiguity causes a disruption of the distinctions between categories which lingers in the text, calling into question the effectiveness of labels such as *puer* and *puella* in the first place. When the behavior and appearance of the two can be described in such similar ways, what is in fact the difference between them? The distinction between *puer* and *puella* in this poem has lost a considerable part of its meaning if the *praeceptor*'s assertion is the main arbiter of difference.

From *Puer* to *Amator*

In spite of the overlap in the representation of the *puer* and *puella* in the first half of poem 1.8, the second half of the poem suggests one way that they do in fact differ. In lines 51-68, the *puer* turns out to be unlike the *puella* because he is able to grow out of his current role as a beloved.[33] Yet this difference only multiplies the difficulties with categorizing characters in the text. The poem makes reference to the special nature of the boy's youth, when he still has a smooth face and has not yet grown a beard (*carior est auro iuvenis, cui*

[33] James (2003) 11-12 describes this transition from beloved to lover as displayed by *pueri* in Tibullus' corpus.

levia fulgent/ora nec amplexus aspera barba terit, "A young man is worth more than gold, for whom a smooth face shines and a rough beard does not rub against embraces," 31-32). The use of the term *iuvenis* in those lines, however, suggests that the boy may be sixteen years old or older.[34] The meticulousness of the boy's toilette in lines 9-14 may indicate that he already has to cover up some signs that he is growing older by dressing up more carefully.[35] The boy's choice to pursue a *puella* suggests that he is already hoping to exchange his role as a *puer* for one as an *amator*. But it is startling that the poem tries to clear up the difference between a *puer* and *puella* simply by pointing out that the *puer* can grow into the role of the *amator*. Rather than distinguishing the two categories, the attempted clarification suggests that not only the differences between an effeminate male and a woman, but even those between an *amator* and a *puella,* may dissolve as the lover-poet attempts to account for the boy's place in the elegiac world.

The *puer* has the unique ability to play different roles in different erotic relationships, roles which are usually exclusive to the male *amator* or the female beloved in elegy. The *puer* can play the beloved with an older man or play the *amator* with a *puella*.[36] The identification of the boy in line 49 as Marathus, the lover-poet's boyfriend from poem 1.4, confirms that this *puer* does in fact play both roles (*eheu, quam Marathus lento me torque*

[34] Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc.* 1.8.31-32.

[35] Putnam (1973) *ad. loc.* 1.8.9-12 notes the distinctive care exhibited in the boy's toilette.

[36] This emphasis on the interchangeability of amatory roles in the Marathus cycle is especially important to Drinkwater (2012). Drinkwater (2012) 445-46 argues that this is in fact the main difference between the *puer* and the *puella*. Both can play the beloved interchangeably, but only the *puer* can also speak as an *amator*.

amore! "Alas! How Marathus tortures me with slow love!"). In lines 51-68, Marathus appears as the *exclusus amator* of his beloved:

> parce precor tenero: non illi sontica causa est,
>   sed nimius luto corpora tingit amor.
> vel miser absenti maestas quam saepe querellas
>   conicit et lacrimis omnia plena madent!
> 'quid me spernis?' ait. 'poterat custodia vinci:
>   ipse dedit cupidis fallere posse deus.
> nota Venus furtiva mihi est, ut lenis agatur
>   spiritus, ut nec dent oscula rapta sonum;
> et possum media quamvis obrepere nocte
>   et strepitu nullo clam reserare fores.
> quid prosunt artes, miserum si spernit amantem
>   et fugit ex ipso saeva puella toro?
> vel cum promittit, subito sed perfida fallit,
>   est mihi nox multis evigilanda malis.
> dum mihi venturam fingo, quodcumque movetur,
>   illius credo tunc sonuisse pedes.' (1.8.51-68)

> Spare the tender boy, I pray: he has no serious reason,
>   but love has dyed his body with excessive yellow.
> How often, miserable, he hurls grievous complaints at you when you are absent
>   and everything drips, full of his tears!
> 'Why do you reject me?' he says, 'it was possible that the guards be overcome:
>   The god himself grants to eager lovers to be able to deceive.
> Stealthy Venus is known by me, how gentle breath
>   is drawn, how stolen kisses might not give any sound;
> and although I am able to creep up in the middle of the night
>   and to unlock the door in secret without a creak,
> what good are skills, if a cruel girl rejects her miserable lover
>   and flees from his very bed?
> For instance, when she makes a promise, but suddenly she lies treacherously,
>   I have to stay up all night with many troubles,
> While I imagine that she is about to come to me, whatever moves,
>   I believe that at that time her feet have made the sound.'

The *puer* appears as an *amator* in a position strikingly similar to one in which we have seen the lover-poet himself. Repeatedly throughout the corpus, we find the lover-poet pining outside his *puella*'s door.[37] Marathus is described in line 53, just as in line 23, as *miser*, an

[37] Tib. 1.1.55-56, 1.2.5-10, 1.5.67-68, 1.6.31-32, 2.4.21-22 and 39-40, 2.6.13-14 and 47-48.

adjective which almost always appears elsewhere modifying the lover-poet and his feelings of love. The boy is lamenting bitterly with *maestae querellae* (53), the kind of complaints which are also made by the lover-poet.[38] The words of the boy's lament are reminiscent of other *amatores* when he complains that he has been scorned (55) and deceived (65) and when he laments the failure of his *artes* in winning over his beloved (61).[39] Just like the lover-poet, the boy keeps his vigil all night long.[40] While the first third of the poem represented the *puer* with characteristics overwhelmingly associated with a *puella*, he now behaves just as if he were an elegiac *amator*.

Even as the *puer* comes to look more like a male *amator* in this later portion of the poem, he still retains behaviors that are closely linked with *puellae*. Although I have argued that the lover-poet describes the boy as pining outside of his girlfriend's door, there has been debate among scholars over whether or not the *puer* is actually lying awake in bed *inside* the house behind the locked door hoping that his *puella* will come to him.[41] Booth has argued that the boy's lying awake at home betrays his inability to give up his role as a beloved rather than an *amator*.[42] Indeed, the boy's ability to sneak silently past guards and creep through the dark to unlock doors are associated with *puellae* elsewhere in Tibullus' corpus. For example, the lover-poet encourages Delia to sneak out of the house in poem 1.2 (*tu quoque, ne timide custodes, Delia, falle,* "You also, Delia, do not be afraid to deceive the guards,"

[38] Tib. 1.2.9-10 and 1.4.71-72.

[39] Tib. 1.4.81-82.

[40] cf. Tib. 1.2.77-78 and 1.6.31-32

[41] Booth (1996) 233-238 provides the most extensive argument for this position and gives an account of the history of this interpretation.

[42] Booth (1996) 237.

15), and he describes how he taught her to open the door for him soundlessly in poem 1.6 (*cardine tunc tacito vertere posse fores*, "[she learned] at that time how to be able to turn the door on a silent hinge," 11).[43] The difficulty of resolving the question of the boy's position in the *paraclausithyron* reinforces the ambiguity of the boy's gender identity and the problem of distinguishing between the roles of *amator* and *puella* in this poem.

Although others have pointed out the boy's role as an *amator* in poem 1.8, I want to emphasize that when Marathus is portrayed like an *amator*, he looks like a reflection of the Tibullan lover-poet in particular.[44] In addition to the overlapping characteristics we have just discussed, the most convincing indication that we are meant to see a link between Marathus and the Tibullan lover-poet is the reference to his fantasy of his girlfriend coming to him while he lies outside her door (*dum mihi venturam fingo, quodcumque movetur illius credo tunc sonuisse pedes*, "While I imagine that she is about to come to me, whatever moves, I believe that at that time her feet have made the sound," 65).[45] As we have seen, Tibullus'

[43] cf. 1.2.15-24 and 1.6.9-14. See also 2.4.13-20, 51-52. Booth (1996) 234 draws similar connections in service of her argument that the boy "unmanliness" is being emphasized in poem 1.8 and argues that the boy's frustration with Pholoe's rejection is evidence that he is still behaving as the "homosexual passive," expecting her to pursue him. The latter seems to me to be too dependent on accepting the argument that Marathus is an *inclusus amator* and smooths over the implications of the correspondences between Marathus' speech and the lover-poet's own.

[44] These similarities are heightened by the unusualness of the boy's love affair with a girl and his lack of success and suffering on her behalf, see Murgatroyd (1980) 234. Lee-Stecum (1998) 240-41 draws several connections between the content of the boy's speech and the Tibullan lover-poet, as the boy describes his power to deceive granted by the gods, his knowledge of Venus which serves as a source of control, and his helplessness before the will of the *puella.* Drinkwater (2012) 434-36 acknowledges the way that the boy's speech confirms the ideology of the elegiac lover, unlike the women in Propertius and Ovid who speak to express an alternate point of view on elegiac love.

[45] Lee-Stecum also makes a connection between the boy's practice of imagining and the lover-poet's, arguing that both are shown to be powerless to do anything but imagine.

poetry is distinctive for its emphasis on the lover-poet's tendency to fantasize about his beloveds.[46] In poem 1.3, for instance, he imagines Delia weaving and waiting for him to return from his journey overseas, and in poem 1.5 he imagines a scene where Delia works on his farm and serves his patron, Messalla in the countryside.[47] That scene is bracketed by two references to fantasizing, *mihi felicem vitam…fingebam demens* "I was imagining a happy life, out of my mind," and *haec mihi fingebam* "I was imagining these things.[48] In each of these passages the lover-poet uses the same expression that Marathus uses in 1.8.65—*fingo mihi*—to describe his act of imagining.

We can also read the reference to *sonuisse pedes*, "that her feet have made the sound," in 1.8.65 as a meta-poetic moment implying that what Marathus imagines in his fantasies is the same kind of poetry that we associate with the Tibullan lover-poet. Puns on poetic and physical feet are quite common in Tibullus' poetry, making this reading especially plausible.[49] If we read these lines as suggesting that Marathus appears specifically as a lover who fantasizes about material for poetry, then Marathus does not merely seem to be a typical *amator*, but an *amator* who is reminiscent of the Tibullan lover-poet in particular. As the representation of the boy transitions from seeming like a *puella* to seeming

[46] Bright (1978) found the expression "*haec mihi fingebam*" so programmatic for Tibullus' poetic style that he made it the title of his monograph on Tibullus' poetry. These scenes are so prominent in Tibullus' corpus that Miller (2004) 95-129 argues that Tibullus' corpus is best read as a "dream text" in the psychoanalytic sense.

[47] Tib. 1.3.83-92 and 1.5.19-36. See Chapter 3 pg. 141-146 and Chapter 2 pg. 99-106 for my analysis of these scenes in more detail. Miller (2012) 60 suggests that poem 1.2 also has a "hallucinatory quality," cf. Bright (1978) 140-41.

[48] Tib. 1.5.19-20 and 35. At the close of Book 2, the lover-poet again references his imagination running wild as he imagines Nemesis sleeping with a rival, see Tib. 2.6.51-52.

[49] Henkel (2014) writes at length about the way that Tibullus uses foot puns to set forth his poetic program.

like the Tibullan *amator*, consistently intermingling aspects of each, the distinctions between gender categories and gender roles in the poem become even more blurred. The lover-poet's tendency to represent himself as an effeminate male character adds even more layers to our reading of Marathus' role in this poem.

The interpretation of Marathus' character becomes more complex in light of the gender play that is part of the generic conventions of elegy. Although the elegiac *amator* is an elite, Roman man in historical terms, he consistently poses as an effeminate man in literary terms.[50] Although the Tibullan lover-poet still participates at times in the army as a soldier, he does so reluctantly and is always hindered in doing so by his love-sickness.[51] He repeatedly refuses to seek the kind of public honor that others such as Messalla seek through their aspirations to become generals and politicians.[52] The lover-poet's lack of self-control with respect to his emotions and his single-minded devotion to the life of love also depart from Roman norms for men's self-discipline.[53] His interest in magic, a common motif in

[50] Oliensis (1997), Wyke (2002) 1-191, Fear (2005), and Gardner (2013) present varying interpretations of the lover-poet's self-representation as feminine and/or effeminate in elegiac poetry. Janan (2001) and Miller (2004) 130-159 argue that the Propertian speaker takes on the persona of Woman in Lacanian terms. Nikoloutsos (2011b) suggests that the lover-poet's persona defies the gender binary in a way that is best understood using queer theory.

[51] Tib. 1.3.11-32 and 2.6.1-14.

[52] The lover-poet contrasts his own role with Messalla's in Tib. 1.1, esp. 53-56. In Tib. 1.3.11-32 the lover-poet tries to get out of his military assignment. He considers being a soldier before being drawn back in by the power of love in 2.6.1-14.

[53] Tib. 1.2.77-78, 1.4.71-72, 1.5.37-38, 1.9.29-30, and 2.4.21-23. Edwards (1997) 83-85 argues that a lack of self-discipline in the pursuit of sex and pleasure is what defined prostitutes, actors, and gladiators as *infames*.

elegy, is an interest connected closely with women in Greco-Roman culture.[54] The Tibullan lover-poet even describes his own dress as effeminate, describing his clothing in a way reminiscent of his description of the young, rich rivals who are competing for his beloveds' attention.[55] Even though the lover-poet can always appeal to his status as an elite, Roman man, he often describes himself as rejecting behaviors that would be expected of a Roman man and adopting behaviors that are considered effeminate by his community. In this way, the contradictory nature of the boy's feminine appearance and behavior and his role as an *amator* is reminiscent of the complex self-representation of the lover-poet himself.

Even when Marathus appears in a man's role, he appears in the position of the effeminate *amator*, taking on the attributes, behavior, and language of an effeminate male character. It is noteworthy that the *puer* embodies literally what the lover-poet claims to be metaphorically: he is a male figure who behaves in many ways like a woman. The ability of the *puer* to look like a *puella* or *amator*, however, reveals a breakdown in the opposition between these terms, a breakdown which goes deeper than merely questioning the possibility of using labels such as masculine and feminine in a consistent way. The breakdown of the opposition between *amator* and *puella* undermines the terms according to which the lover-poet has created his own fundamental self-definitions.

---

[54] See Dickie (2001) 156-194 for more on magic and magicians in the late Republic and Early Empire. The lover-poet claims to have a particularly close connection with the witch in poem 1.2 and the priestess of Bellona in poem 1.6. He is especially interested in the double-meaning of *carmina* as either "poems" or "spells."

[55] Rivals' clothing: Tib. 1.6.39-40. Lover-poet's clothing: 2.3.77-78. Olson (2014) describes to this kind of effeminate dress as distinctive of a group of young men of fashion she calls "dandies."

Servus Amoris

Just as the representation of the boy complicates the opposition between male and female, it also problematizes the opposition between slave and freeborn. From one perspective, Marathus is most plausibly identified as a slave. *Pueri delicati* are of slave status elsewhere in Latin literature,[56] and there was widespread criticism in Roman culture of freeborn males who took a passive role in sexual behavior or were objects of desire for other freeborn men.[57] The lover-poet describes Marathus as experiencing torture at the hands of Amor, treatment which is strictly reserved for those of slave status—or *amatores* claiming a metaphorical slave status—in Roman society (7-8).[58] Later in the poem, the language of torture comes up again with reference to the treatment that Marathus receives from Pholoe (49).[59] The poem makes it obvious that the lover-poet believes that he has the power to tell Marathus what to do, which suggests that Marathus is not free to make his own decisions.

And yet we first met Marathus as one of the *pueri* of poem 1.4, who engage in activities that are more appropriate for freeborn boys than for slaves. They ride horseback

[56] References to using slave boys for sex are particularly prevalent in Plautus' comedies, but Williams (2010) 31-38 also gives many other examples of such relationships.

[57] See Walters (1997) and Williams (2010) 18-19. In Rome, for an adult male citizen to have a publicly acknowledged relationship with a freeborn adolescent male (i.e. a future citizen) was considered *stuprum*, a disgrace comparable to adultery or having an affair with a freeborn woman to whom one was not married. See also Williams (2010) 103ff. For primary sources mentioning this kind of slander, see Cicero *Against Catiline* 2.8 slandering Catiline, Cicero *Pro Caelio* 6b-11 defending Caelius, and Tacitus *Annals* 4.1 slandering Sejanus. In invective passages of Roman rhetoric, accusing someone of having been sexually penetrated as a boy was analogous to the accusation that he had taken the role of a slave. See Cicero, *Second Philippic* 86.

[58] See Bradley (1994) esp. 28-29 and 166 for examples of slave punishments.

[59] Lee-Stecum (1998) 239 points out the irony in Pholoe treating Marathus as he treated the lover-poet at 1.4.81 and argues that she is described both as his master and as a conquering general with him as her captive.

and learn to swim, they go on journeys on foot and by boat, and they practice hunting and fencing.[60] The boys' access to considerable leisure time, as well as their participation in customarily aristocratic activities, implies that they are young men of means who are preparing for lives as politicians and soldiers. When the lover-poet introduces Marathus, then, he seems to be most closely associated with young boys of free status.[61] Poem 1.8 never mentions that Marathus has a literal *dominus* or *domina*, and neither the lover-poet nor the boy seem concerned about needing a master's permission for their activities or needing to avoid detection by him or her. Although the evidence is ambiguous, the boy seems to have considerable flexibility with the affairs that he chooses to pursue with women and with men. This flexibility calls into question whether or not the boy's literal status is relevant to the poem's events at all.

Considering the boy's name cannot help to confirm his status either way. "Marathus" is most likely a Greek name, because it includes a *theta* sound. In Augustan Rome a Greek name would customarily be a slave name, and the etymology of the name reinforces the suggestion that it is in fact a slave's nickname. The name "Marathus" most likely means "fennel," a plant considered in this period to have aphrodisiac qualities, which was closely associated with the cult of Adonis.[62] Such a name would be appropriate to a *puer delicatus*. A link between Marathus and Adonis may even be alluded to in lines 35-38, where we see Venus having sex with an unspecified boy, who could be identified with either of them. Yet all of the female beloveds in elegy are also given Greek-inspired names (Cynthia, Corinna,

---

[60] Tib. 1.4.11-12, 41-42, and 45-52.

[61] Williams (2010) 207-208.

[62] Detienne (1979) 201-202.

Delia, Nemesis), and their status is notoriously difficult to define.[63] Giving such a name to the boy could be considered a poetic convention, rather than an indication of status. While we can debate the boy's status, we can never quite resolve it.

The play with status distinctions that occurs in elegy through the metaphor of *servitium amoris* adds another layer to the complexity of determining Marathus' status. *Servitium amoris* is a recurring motif elsewhere in elegy, but in Tibullus' corpus it is especially prevalent and takes on a particularly sinister tone, often including references to torture and abuse.[64] The tendency to include graphic descriptions of the abuse involved in *servitium* is evident in poem 1.8 itself (*multis non sine verberibus,* "not without many blows of the whip" 6, *deus crudelius urit quos…*, "the god burns more cruelly those whom…," 7, *neu Marathum torque,* "and do not torture Marathus," 49). The Tibullan lover-poet often manipulates his descriptions of the physical torment he experiences as a slave to love in order to justify the threats he makes to his beloved.[65] As a result, describing himself in an inferior status position is often an attempt by the *amator* to manipulate and control his beloved.[66]

Poem 1.8 describes Marathus as a *servus* subject to Amor (7-8), and perhaps also as a *servus* of Venus' desires in lines 35-38. Marathus's role as a *servus amoris* is different from

---

[63] Williams (2010) 207-208. For an argument that the *puella* is a *meretrix*, see James (2003). For an argument that this ambiguous status is in part a result of the *puella*'s status as poetic *materia*, see Wyke (2002) 11-46.

[64] Tib. 1.1.55-56, 1.4.81, 1.5.5-6, 1.6.37-38 and 69-74, 1.9.21-22, 2.3.79-80, 2.4.1-6, and 2.6.5-6, 17-18, and 25-26.

[65] Such accounts of *servitium amoris* occur alongside threats in Tib. 1.6.69-86, 1.9.11-24, 77-81, and 2.4.1-14, 34-44, and 51-60.

[66] Kennedy (1993) 72-73 argues for the manipulation of the beloved inherent in the discourse of love and in the metaphor of *servitium amoris* in particular.

the lover-poet's, however, since Marathus also has an ambiguous status in a more literal sense. As we noted, the lover-poet's hidden status as an elite man makes his description of his *servitium* inherently manipulative of his beloved. In contrast, Marathus never uses his status as a slave, literal or metaphorical, as a play for power over his *puella* in poem 1.8. In fact, only the lover-poet describes Marathus in the position of a *servus amoris* in the first place (7-8, 49). The lover-poet fits Marathus into the model of *servitium amoris* that he has established elsewhere for himself. Just as he did with respect to the boy's gender, the lover-poet represents the boy in such a way that he may literally be what the lover-poet claims to be metaphorically. The reader can complicate Marathus' status even further, if she remembers that the boy also appeared in poem 1.4 as the *dominus* of the lover-poet (*quam Marathus…me torquet…*, "how Marathus tortures me…!" 81).[67] Whether we approach the question of the boy's status in terms of socio-historical expectations or literary context, we are left without clear answers. Is the boy a slave or free? Is he a *servus* or a *dominus*? I argue that the reader's uncertainty about these questions is precisely what the lover-poet wants to draw attention toward.

Imaginary Object Relations and Symbolic Failure

After exploring the way that the representation of the boy disrupts the use of terms such as male and female and slave and free, we can now consider the relationship between the boy and the lover-poet itself. In other chapters, we have primarily used Lacan's account of *objet a,* the Real object of desire or cause of desire, to explain the complexities of the lover-poet's fantasies. In this case, we can best articulate the dynamics of the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus by using Lacan's model of Imaginary object relations.

[67] Tib. 1.4.81.

We have discussed Lacan's three registers of psychological experience, the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, several times throughout this project.[68] For Lacan, the subject's primary Imaginary object is the ego,[69] consisting of the compilation of the self-images which the subject has formed of his or her own body in addition to the self-images which have been reflected back to him or her by others.[70] Because the three registers are intertwined in the subject's lived experience, the Imaginary ego is always overwritten with Symbolic codes, denoting personal characteristics, familial relationships, and social connections.[71]

Relationships between egos within the Imaginary register are called "Imaginary object relations."[72] Within the Imaginary, these relationships are structured around "sameness" and "difference," but the interweaving of the three registers means that the recognition of similarity and difference always involves the incorporation of Symbolic components. For example, two siblings may recognize that they are the same in terms of their relationship to their parents, a similarity which becomes the foundation for the comparisons and contrasts that create "sibling rivalry." The primary Imaginary opposition of "same" and "different" means that there are two primary expressions of Imaginary

---

[68] See esp. Chapter 1 pg. 81-82.

[69] See esp. Lacan *SII* 44.

[70] Lacan *Écrits* 93-100/75-81 and 520/432-33.

[71] Lacan develops the theoretical notion of the Symbolic's intersection with the Imaginary register at *Écrits* 53/40, *SI* 140-142, 176-182, and *SII* 168-170, 244.

[72] Fink (1995) 84-86. Lacan *Écrits* 58-59/43-44 and *SII* 245-47.

relationships: love/identification and hate/rivalry.[73] To the extent to which the subject sees the other as like him or herself, he or she loves and identifies with the other.[74]

I have pointed out several ways that the lover-poet's description of Marathus corresponds with the image he presents of himself elsewhere. The *puer* is the site of an inexplicable paradox of gender and status which is reminiscent of the lover-poet's portrayal of himself as an effeminate man and a free-born aristocrat serving as a slave to love. Although the text does not suggest that the lover-poet is aware of the way his love for the boy is inspired by the similarities he sees between himself and the *puer*, the priority of these ambiguities in the characterization of the *puer* speaks to their importance for the lover-poet's construction of his beloved. The model of Imaginary relations accounts well for this phenomenon of feelings of "love" that result from a recognition of "sameness" from one ego to another. The *puer* is desirable at least in part because the lover-poet recognizes in him the same paradoxical qualities that he sees in himself.

The possibility of recognizing the *puer* as the "same" as the lover-poet, however, raises the possibility that the problems which the reader faces in categorizing the *puer* will reflect back onto the lover-poet himself. The boy is an object of desire[75] in part because of

---

[73] Lacan *Écrits* 111-115/90-94, 427-31/355-429, 808-810/634-686 and *SI* 170-172, 176-179, 276-277, 282 and *SIII* 107.

[74] Fink (1995) 84-86.

[75] Although the boy is not explicitly described as an object of the lover-poet's desire in this poem, he is clearly recognized as such in poems 1.4 and 1.9. The boy is mentioned as a love interest in poem 1.4 (*eheu, quam Marathus lento me torquet amore!* "Alas, how Marathus tortures me with slow love!" Tib. 1.4.81) and described more explicitly as part of an ongoing erotic relationship with the lover-poet in poem 1.9 (*quid mihi, si fueras miseros laesurus amores,/foedera per divos clam violanda dabas?* "Why, if you were going to wound my wretched love, did you make treaties by the gods with me in secret which were going to be violated?" Tib. 1.9.1-2). In poem 1.8, the lover-poet's emphasis on criticizing the boy and distancing himself from him coincides with the representation of the boy as

his resemblance to the lover-poet's self-image, but admitting that resemblance comes with certain risks for the lover-poet's self-conception in terms of gender and status. The lover-poet is a man who plays at being effeminate, but the recognition of the existence of a "truly" effeminate male figure weakens the confidence with which the lover-poet can play this game. When we look at the boy and the lover-poet, how do we know who is the "truly" effeminate male and who is merely pretending? How could we tell the difference? By raising these questions the presence of the boy destabilizes any sense in which the lover-poet can rest on his "true" identity as a man. In a similar way, the lover-poet is a free-born, elite man who poses as a slave to his beloved, and the existence of a figure who plays the role of *servus amoris* and may in fact be a "real" slave lessens any comfort that the lover-poet can otherwise find in knowing that his persona is a façade. The line between being a slave, being free, and pretending to be either of the two becomes disturbingly blurred.

In poem 1.8, we see the stability of basic Symbolic categories such as "male" and "female" and "slave" and "free" break down in a way that goes even further than other poems in elegy. The gender play that we expect from the elegists consists of representing male and female characters with non-traditional traits, while still setting them up in opposition to one another. In poem 1.8, the introduction of another term, the *puer*, complicates the suggested binary in a way that causes the categories to disintegrate. The representation of the *puer* dissolves the boundaries between a woman and an effeminate man and the distinctions between a *servus amoris* and a common *servus*. Poem 1.8 exposes

---

particularly feminized in this poem. This connection reinforces my argument that the lover-poet's attraction to the boy is complicated when his gender ambiguous identity is brought to light.

traditional Roman categories as unable to make sense of the role that the boy is playing in Tibullus' poetic world.

The poem also reveals the limitations of the literary terms that attempt to compensate for the typical gender role inversions in elegy. As we have seen, the attempt to distinguish the boy from a *puella* in the second half of the poem causes the categories of *puer, puella,* and *amator* to disintegrate even more. Appealing to the boy's ability to play the *amator* only highlights the extent to which the *amator* is an effeminate male. The lover-poet's attempt to clarify his terms brings the crisis of categories into the world of Tibullan elegiac vocabulary itself.

Even further, the figure of the *puer* points to the precariousness of the distinction between the *amator* and *puella* in elegy more generally. *Amatores* in elegiac poetry frequently reveal their power over others by admitting their access to resources, their physical strength, or their mastery of speech and writing.[76] Of these indications of underlying control, Marathus can only appeal to the ability to speak and write for himself. He speaks as an *exclusus amator* outside his *puella*'s door at lines 55-68, and he fantasizes about the sounds of *pedes* in line 65 in a way that suggests his ability to write poetry. Even this power to speak and to write, however, is undercut by the fact that he is under the power of the lover-poet's poetic control. The lover-poet controls his speech and immediately cuts off his brief foray into the role of poet. In addition, Marathus is never shown to be empowered by

[76] The *amator* reveals control in poems such as Ovid *Am.* 1.7, where the lover-poet attacks his *puella*. It is evident that the Tibullan lover-poet has considerable resources in the way that he describes his farm in poems 1.1 and 1.5. The *amatores* friendships with important politicians such as Messalla (see Tib. 1.5 and 1.7) or Maecenas (see Prop. 2.1) also suggest considerable influence. The role of a *praeceptor* with superior knowledge is adopted by Tibullus in poems 1.4, 1.5, and 1.8 in particular. Above all, the lover-poet is always the one who retains the power of writing. Others who speak are always ventriloquized by the lover-poet.

money, status, or physical ability. Instead, the boy reveals the instability of category of *amator*, by suggesting that an *amator* without money, without strength, and without poetic control is a man who looks like a woman. He is an *amator* who looks like a *puella*. The boy reveals just how risky the lover-poet's position self-representation is, since the attributes that supposedly distinguish him from others are surprisingly easy for any lover-poet to lose.

To avoid the explicit acknowledgement of these problems, however, the lover-poet adopts two strategies, one which can be explained on the level of the Imaginary and another which is better explained on the level of the Symbolic. First of all, in order to ward off the potentially threatening results of recognizing the similarities between himself and the boy, the lover-poet takes refuge in the opposite side of Imaginary relations: rivalry. On Lacan's model, the closer the relationship between one ego and another, the greater the anger of the one will be as it notices even tiny differences between itself and the other.[77]

We can see this distancing from the other quite clearly in poem 1.8, as the lover-poet repeatedly defines his relationship with the boy in terms of the differences that he points out between them. From the beginning, the lover-poet corrects the *puer*, telling him to "stop pretending" and criticizing his excessive beauty routine. He paints him as pathetic and soft, not only *miser* (23) and *tener* (51) like the lover-poet, but pale and jaundiced with love-sickness and weeping excessively (52-54). Most telling, however, is the rebuke of the boy in the last section of the poem:

> desistas lacrimare, puer. non frangitur illa,
>   et tua iam fletu lumina fessa tument.
> oderunt, Pholoe, moneo, fastidia divi,
>   nec prodest sanctis tura dedisse focis.
> hic Marathus quondam miseros ludebat amantes,
>   nescius ultorem post caput esse deum.

[77] Fink (1995) 85.

saepe etiam lacrimas fertur risisse dolentis
    et cupidum ficta detinuisse mora.
nunc omnes odit fastus, nunc displicet illi
    quaecumque opposita est ianua dura sera. (1.8.67-76)

Stop crying, boy: she is unbroken,
    and your eyes are now swollen, exhausted from weeping.
Pholoe, I'm warning you, the gods hate haughtiness,
    and it is no good to have given incense at sacred hearths.
This Marathus once mocked pitiful lovers,
    not knowing that the avenger god was behind him.
It is said that he also laughed at the tears of a grieving man
    and that he hindered an eager lover with a made-up delay.
Now he hates all haughtiness, now whatever hard and locked door is
    set up against him is displeasing to him.

Just after the boy has finished his lament—or perhaps while he is still in the midst of it—the lover-poet breaks in to put a stop to his crying. It is interesting that this break happens just after the couplet where the boy describes himself lying outside and fantasizing about his girl coming to him, an image which we have seen is especially reminiscent of the Tibullan lover-poet.[78] Just after the most obvious allusion of similarity between the boy and the lover-poet, the lover-poet resumes scolding the boy and sets him back in his proper place.[79] As he did near the beginning of the poem, the lover-poet orders him to stop what he is doing. He gives two reasons: first, that the boy has been unsuccessful at convincing Pholoe to come to him, and second, that he is marring the beauty which made him an object of desire in the past (67-68). In this brief couplet, the lover-poet describes the boy as failing both in his role as a lover and as a beloved. The lover-poet also adds a rationale for the boy's

[78] See Miller (2004) 94-129, esp. 104-105, and the choice of title by Bright (1978).

[79] Murgatroyd (1993) 115 sees evidence here of Tibullus' amusement at the boy, so sure of his sophistication early on in the poem, but reduced to tears in his failure to gain Pholoe's affection.

misery.[80] The boy used to make fun of others who were in the place that he is now (*miserum…amantem* 61, *miseros…amantes* 71) and he often mocked lovers who desired him by playing hard-to-get (73-74).[81] In the lover-poet's narrative, the boy is getting just what he deserves from the avenger god (*ultorem…deum* 72) in light of the arrogance with which he treated other lovers. By contrast, the lover-poet insists elsewhere that he himself is innocent of such wrong-doing and that his suffering in love is unjustified.[82] This desire to humiliate and punish the boy is explicable in Lacanian terms, as the lover-poet seeks to establish a difference between his self-image and the image that he has created for the boy.

I suggest that the lover-poet's rejection of the boy as a failure as an *amator* at the end of poem 1.8 may be read as a projection of the lover-poet's frustration over his own failure to seduce Delia and Nemesis, and even Marathus himself, onto the boy. But of course, the lover-poet cannot admit that what he hates in the boy may be his own failures, which he has projected onto his beloved. As the lover-poet condemns the boy for failing as an *amator*, he also criticizes him for failing to be desirable as a *puer delicatus*. The boy has failed in the same pursuit as the lover-poet has, but this failure is rationalized as resulting from the boy's difference from the lover-poet in terms of his gender identity, his status, and his role in an erotic relationship. The ambiguity of the boy's identity allows him to be aligned with the

[80] On this point, I differ from Drinkwater (2013) 335-338, who argues that the *praeceptor's* advice that the boy give up on persuading Pholoe is an endorsement of the young boy's initiation into the world of elegiac suffering. I acknowledge the similarity between the failures of both lovers to win over their beloveds, but I interpret that similarity differently in light of the way that the lover-poet goes on to describe the boy's rejection as a punishment for his past actions.

[81] Murgatroyd (1993) 116 draws out the irony in the fact that the lover-poet himself is one of these rejected lovers, as evidenced by 1.4.8ff, 1.9.1 and 45f.

[82] Tib. 1.2.85-88, 99-100, and 1.3.51-52

lover-poet or distanced from him, depending on what seems convenient to the lover-poet at the time. The similarity that provoked a comparison between the lover-poet and the boy is broken in this passage, reasserting the superiority of the lover-poet's identity as an elite man and attempting to restore the hierarchy that was unsettled by the boy's assumption of the role of *amator* in lines 55-66.

The lover-poet also uses defensive strategies which operate more explicitly in the Symbolic, repeatedly asserting a power over language which slips away again and again as the poem progresses. These strategies are apparent from the beginning of the poem, when the lover-poet asserts his superiority in reading the signs between lovers. These tactics appear again throughout the middle sections of the poem as the lover-poet manipulates the representation of the *puer* and *puella* in order to sabotage the reader's confidence in her reading of the signs of gender identity.[83] The final lines of the poem include a telling resurgence of the poet's role as *praeceptor* in general, as the poet reasserts his authority to give orders to the other characters in his poetic world. In the end the lover-poet clings onto his identity as a *praeceptor*, insisting on a superiority that comes from greater knowledge. I suggest that the lover-poet's self-presentation in these passages is not at all coincidental, but rather an attempt to forestall the effects of the disintegration of meaning that recurs throughout the poem. Unfortunately for the lover-poet, his assertions can only paper over the cracks that emerge in his self-representation as an effeminate *amator* and a *servus amoris*, and they provide only empty appeals to authority in a system that is falling apart.

The lover-poet's attempted solutions to his crisis of self-identity in this poem fall short in several ways. His insistence on his role as *praeceptor* has its own complexities,

[83] cf. Lee-Stecum (1998) 232-34 and 245.

since from the beginning of the poem the lover-poet has argued that it is the result of prior and even continuing slavery (5-6). To reassert his dominance in this way reaffirms the paradoxical nature of his own self-representation and reasserts his susceptibility to the breakdown of the categories of master and slave. In addition, even as the lover-poet distances himself from the boy at the end of the poem, he cannot erase his admission that this kind of effeminate male character with an ambiguous social status exists in his poetic world. As a result, he cannot escape the implications of a potential comparison between himself and the boy, however he might seek to suppress it. Finally, the damage done by the breakdown of such crucial terms of the elegiac world as *puella* and *amator* lingers in the text. The poem cannot provide an answer to this disintegration of meaning that does not trap the lover-poet in problems of inconsistent categorization or force him to rely on his own empty appeals to authority. As I have argued, any attempts to categorize the *puer* as inferior because of his effeminacy, his weakness (*non frangitur illa*, "she is unbroken" 1.8.67), or his lack of understanding (*nescius*, 1.8.72), simply draw attention to the lover-poet's own vulnerability to these same states. The lover-poet's self-image and the language he uses to describe it have passed beyond his control.

Poem 1.8 serves as a negotiation of the lover-poet's contradictory sense of self and an example of his unsatisfactory experience with the limited power of language. In the end, we have lost the boy in the midst of what he represents to the lover-poet. The boy is loved for his similarities to the lover-poet and hated for the ways that he represents what is troublesome to the lover-poet in his own self-image. The set of categories that the lover-poet uses to describe the boy ultimately fall short. Because he cannot reestablish the difference between himself and the boy through the use of the terms available to him, he has no choice but to conclude the poem with threats that remind the reader of his slipping authority and

control. The rationale behind the punishment of the *puer* provides the lover-poet with reason to believe that he is in fact different from the boy. Unfortunately, since both the traditional Roman categories and the categories set up by the lover-poet himself have disintegrated in the course of the poem, this rationale cannot fully compensate for the anxieties that have arisen about the possibilities of such distinctions. The anxiety of failure results in the lover-poet lashing out at the *puer*. But the poem does not end there.

The poem concludes with another threat, but this time it is a threat to the *puella*, Pholoe:

> at te poena manet, ni desinis esse superba.
> quam cupies votis hunc revocare diem! (1.8.77-78)
>
> But punishment remains for you, if you do not stop being proud.
> How you will long to call back this day with your prayers!

Why at this moment does the lover-poet appeal to the power of the gods and attack the *puella*? I propose that in the face of the unresolvable problems that he encounters in his relationship with the boy, the lover-poet grabs desperately for the most secure of assertion of difference and power he can muster in this final couplet. In poem 1.8, the character over whom he can assert the most obvious difference and dominance is the young *puella*, and the greatest power he can appeal to is the power of the gods. This concluding shift betrays the lover-poet's inability to resolve the problems of self-identity raised by the representation of himself and the boy. The lover-poet's loss of control in the face of his relationship to the boy becomes so great that he abandons any reference to the boy in the final couplet of the poem and addresses his final threats to the boy's girlfriend, Pholoe. The lover-poet's desperate appeal to the power of the gods and the sudden reassertion of his power over a woman suggests the depth of the anxieties which the encounter between the lover-poet and the boy has evoked.

Looking closely at the lover-poet's descriptions of Marathus in poem 1.8 reveals that there is more to the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus than we may notice at first glance. I have shown how the lover-poet confronts in the boy a figure who reflects the image of an effeminate male and slave of love back to him, as the boy embodies the contradictions that the lover-poet has acknowledged reside in his own self-image. The lover-poet's relationship to the boy becomes a complex negotiation of the lover-poet's relationship to this self-image, as the lover-poet finds himself simultaneously drawn to a beloved whom he has fashioned like himself and repulsed by the ways that that beloved represents identities that he wants desperately to reject. The boy's ability to serve as this kind of mirror image is what makes him such a compelling object of desire for the lover-poet, but it also makes him a figure who exposes the precarious nature of the lover-poet's self-identity. The similarities between himself and the boy become something the lover-poet reacts against, as the lover-poet tries to protect his self-image as a freeborn Roman man and realizes the inconsistencies inherent in the paradoxical image of himself that he has fashioned.

As poem 1.8 unfolds, we see the lover-poet's appeals to a sense of wholeness and coherence through the use of Imaginary images and Symbolic codes fall apart. While the lover-poet's fantasy of the countryside and his relationship with Delia exposed the crisis of the split subject and its recurring fantasies around *objet a,* the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus reveals the problems inherent in the Imaginary identifications and Symbolic self-descriptions with which the lover-poet tries to cover over that split. The poem's ending in threats and appeals for divine intervention shows just how unresolvable these difficulties have become for the lover-poet.

Conclusion

Tibullus often seems like the exception to the rules that we write about elegy. At first glance, Tibullus' poetry seems different from Propertius' and Ovid's in several important ways. For example, Tibullus emphasizes the significance of the countryside in his vision of a happy life, departing from Propertius and Ovid's focus on life in the city. He devotes relatively few poems to his relationship with his *puella*, Delia, and she is only one of the *three* named beloveds in his corpus. Tibullus includes a boy, Marathus, as one of his beloveds, and he even includes a complicated storyline around his relationship with the boy. His patron Messalla appears again and again, not only for the lover-poet to express gratitude or to make a *recusatio*, but as a character in the narrative who interacts both with the lover-poet and with Delia herself.

As we saw in the Introduction, scholars on elegy have devoted relatively few articles and book chapters to Tibullus' poems in the past several decades. This shortage of scholarly productivity may stem in part from the ways that Tibullus seems to be different from Propertius and Ovid. Because the balance of scholarly work falls on the side of the other two extant elegists, we often come to Tibullus after drawing our expectations from Propertius, Ovid, and Augustan literature in general. As a result, we are frequently tempted to look for the bits and pieces of Tibullus' poems that reflect the ideas of Augustan poetry that we already have. For instance, scholars of Latin poetry use examples from Tibullus to support their arguments about elegiac poetry in general. Maria Wyke uses excerpts from Tibullus where they reinforce her arguments about the *puella* as the personification of elegiac poetics

in Propertius and Ovid.[1] Sharon James includes passages from the Delia poems to support her arguments about the importance of New Comedy's *meretrices* for understanding elegiac *puellae*, while drawing most of her examples from Propertian and Ovidian elegy.[2] Scholars of Augustan society and history search through Tibullus' text for evidence of poetic engagement with Augustus' program of social and cultural reforms. Lowell Bowditch emphasizes Messalla's triumph in poem 1.7 as an example of how Tibullus' poems interact with the expansion of the empire under Augustus' rule,[3] while Konstantinos Nikoloutsos explores the Marathus poems as an example of pederastic relationships in Augustan Rome, both historical and literary.[4] All of these scholars cast light on the particular selections which they highlight from Tibullus' poetry. Yet, by cutting up his text into pieces, they give us the impression that these approaches do not offer a way to read Tibullus' poems together, in relationship to one another. Without a comprehensive understanding of Tibullus' poetry itself, we run the risk of taking our examples out of context, or at least of missing their resonance in light of their place in Tibullus' poetic project as a whole.

This dissertation began as an attempt to discover what happens when we read the first book of Tibullus' *Elegies* separately from the more-often-studied texts of Propertius and Ovid. What happens when we concentrate entirely on Tibullus' poems and on their intersections with one another? Is there a unifying framework through which we might interpret Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1? One of my goals for this project, by "reading Tibullus

[1] Wyke (2002).

[2] James (2003).

[3] Bowditch (2011).

[4] Nikoloutsos (2007) and (2011).

first," was to see whether we could find a way to read Tibullus' *Elegies* all together. I wanted to know whether we could see the disparate topics of Book 1 (the country fantasy, the relationship with Delia, and the affair with Marathus—features traditionally seen as markers of difference from the other elegists) as integrated in some meaningful way.

In the preceding chapters, I have turned to Lacan's theory of subjectivity to provide a way of interweaving the various aspects of Tibullus Book 1. I have suggested that Lacanian psychoanalytic theory can provide the structuring principles that are necessary to bring the many layers of meaning in Tibullus' poems in dialogue with one another. From this perspective, I have argued that Tibullus' poetry creates an incisive examination of the subject's experience of desire and his struggle to construct a sense of self.

In chapter 1, I proposed that the lover-poet's country fantasy in poems 1.1, 1.10, and 2.1 foregrounds the lover-poet's theory of Amor and the experience of the desiring subject. The lover-poet's country fantasy focuses around his desire for a sense of "having enough," which he repeatedly portrays as susceptible to lack, excess, and even violence. At the same time, the lover-poet engages with the limits of language, both with regard to his construction of a sense of self (opposite the *alius*), and his articulation of what he *really* wants (what is "enough"?). I offered Lacan's theory of the split subject to articulate the lover-poet's representation of his longing for a sense of fulfillment through his country fantasy. Beginning with these poems, we built a structure within which to understand the rest of Book 1. As we have seen, the lover-poet's relationships with Delia, Marathus, and Messalla all play a role in filling out the picture of the desiring subject which first appears in the context of his country fantasy.

Chapter 2 suggested that the lover-poet represents his desire to "be with Delia" as parallel to his fantasy of "having enough" in the countryside. Lacan's concept of *objet a* provides a way to make sense both of the inherent ambiguities of each of these fantasies and the potential confusion that arises from aligning these two visions so closely together. Reading the two fantasies alongside one another allows us to fit the lover-poet's relationship with Delia into his larger investigation of the subject's experience of desire. At the same time, it invites us to examine what distinguishes his relationship with Delia as a woman from his fantasy of sufficiency on his farm and his desire for the boy Marathus. This topic became the main focus of the following chapter.

In chapter 3, we looked at the lover-poet's construction of Delia more closely to see what we might say about her role as a beloved Woman. I suggested that the lover-poet's (lack of) representation of Delia in poem 1.2 can be articulated in terms of Lacan's theory of feminine subjectivity. Through a Lacanian lens we see that the lover-poet's visions of Delia's chastity and loyalty in poem 1.3 point to the subject's need to construct fantasies to justify his pursuit of *objet a.* From this analysis of poems 1.2 and 1.3, we learn far more about the way the lover-poet imagines Delia than we ever can about Delia herself. We see more of how Man constructs his fantasies about Woman than about the specific woman he says he wants.

Chapter 4 explored how the lover-poet represents himself in relation to Delia. In the few instances when the lover-poet might be said to "be with" Delia while he is living, he always portrays himself in a position of radical restriction with regard to his access to her (as her *ianitor* in 1.1*,* her slave-like attendant in 1.5). These constraints prevent him from ever "being with" her in the way he desires. The only times he imagines deriving a sense of fulfilment from his closeness to Delia, he is dying or is already dead. Again Lacan's

framework provides a way to explain this complex representation of the dynamics of the lover-poet's desire. As we have discussed, the Lacanian subject experiences a split from his entrance into language. This split only ever allows him fleeting moments of satisfaction from his pursuit of *objet a*, moments which never provide the perfect fulfillment which the cause of desire suggests he must once have enjoyed. Again and again the lover-poet's exploration of his relationship with Delia brings us back to his position as a desiring subject and the subject's fraught relationship with *objet a*. For both Tibullus and Lacan, the only escape from the constraints that surround the subject, the only way to envisage the lasting fulfillment of desire, is by imagining death.

The lover-poet's account of the limitations which trap the subject in chapter 4 also integrates his patron, Messalla, into his investigation of the movements of desire. Unlike the lover-poet, and instead similar to the Lacanian Father, Messalla is immune to the restrictions and the longings that plague the lover-poet with respect to Delia. Messalla can embrace the expectations placed upon a traditional Roman *vir* without complication, contradiction, or excess, and he can enjoy Delia's presence without restriction or self-sabotage. Meanwhile the lover-poet is trapped by the social norms and expectations that set the limits within which he must negotiate his pursuit of the objects of his desire.

Chapter 5 offers one more way that the lover-poet approaches the subject's experience of desire (his relationship with the boy Marathus). In the lover-poet's relationship with Marathus, the Imaginary identifications and Symbolic categories that define the lover-poet and the boy come to the forefront. Throughout Book 1, the lover-poet repeatedly (re)constructs his sense of self as he struggles with his experience of subjectivity. Poem 1.8 becomes a reflection on the limits of the Imaginary self-images and Symbolic terms that the

lover-poet uses to try to paper over the split at the center of his experience of desire. The lover-poet struggles to fit the boy into either traditional or literary categories, and the paradoxes of the boy's ambiguous gender and status only draw attention to the inconsistencies in the lover-poet's own self-construction as an effeminate man and a slave of love. The lover-poet's attempt to define a place for himself as a desiring subject in his elegiac world ultimately fails, and his encounter with Marathus hints at his dissatisfaction with the implications of the identity that he has constructed.

Taken together, the poems of Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1 examine the experience of the desiring subject on several levels. The lover-poet's representation of his country fantasy emphasizes the ambiguity of the subject's Real cause of desire, and the many ways that desire undermines his pursuit of a sense of wholeness and happiness. The parallels between the lover-poet's country fantasy and his relationship with Delia highlight the importance of the desiring subject in Tibullus' larger project, as he traces the similarity of the dynamics of desire from his fantasy of the countryside to his dreams of being with Delia. The lover-poet's representation of Delia as a Woman reveals the limitations of Man's relationship with Woman in particular and his inability to find a sense of fulfillment through it. His hyperbolic fantasies about Delia show the lengths to which the subject must go to justify his desire for *objet a*, as well as the primacy of such fantasies in the subject's relationship with the objects of his desire. As Book 1 unfolds, the lover-poet repeatedly tries to articulate his position as a subject, resorting again and again to paradoxical self-images such as the *exclusus ianitor,* the effeminate *amator,* and the voluntary slave of love. His relationship to Delia is defined by prohibitions that both prevent a sense of lasting fulfillment and set the conditions within which he can negotiate any limited access to the object of his desire. The lover-poet seems

unable to imagine an escape from the dynamics of desire that does not also coincide with his death. His repeated attempts at self-construction, however internally inconsistent, temporarily cover over the split that defines his experience as a subject. Yet his relationship with Marathus dismantles these as well. The lover-poet's relationship with the boy reveals the weaknesses inherent in his ideas of himself and the impossibility of appealing to Imaginary images or Symbolic codes to find the sense of coherence for which he longs.

Again and again, the lover-poet fails to obtain the sense of fulfillment he seeks. He is left riven by his desire for a sense of wholeness he cannot attain, adrift with an Imaginary self-identity that he is anxious to reject, and frustrated by the inability of the Symbolic to account for his experience. Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1 shows us that Tibullus' elegy is fundamentally about the experience of the desiring subject. It shows us just how deep the subject's crisis goes.

If we take the structure of desire and the construction of self to be the primary focus of Tibullus' *Elegies*, his poems begin to remind us of the other elegists far more than we may have expected. Recent work on Propertius' and Ovid's poetry has increasingly emphasized how their poems develop constructions of masculinity and negotiate relationships between men in the Roman world. For example, Trevor Fear and Hunter Gardner have argued that the elegists create coming-of-age narratives for themselves through their affairs with elegiac women.[5] Maria Wyke, Alison Keith, and Ellen Greene have shown how Cynthia becomes a means of poetic, social, and political exchange between Propertius and his friends and rivals.[6] Micaela Janan has shown how Propertius Book 4 engages with the problem of defining the

[5] Fear (2005) and Gardner (2013).

[6] Wyke (2002), Keith (2008), and Greene (2012).

meaning of "Rome" and the subject's political and social relationship to it.[7] Finally, Allen Miller has argued that all elegiac poetry shares an interest in plight of the elite, male subject in the shift from Republic to Principate.[8] All of these studies suggest that underneath the love affairs and fraught friendships in Propertian and Ovidian elegy lies a deeper interest in the experience of subjectivity and the role of desire in the subject's construction of a sense of self.

Scholars may have unpacked these themes first in Propertius and Ovid's poems, but this project suggests that they are most clearly presented in Tibullus' poetry. What at first seemed so unusual about Tibullus's poems (the importance of fantasy, the inclusion of several beloveds) now instead suggests the extent to which the desiring subject and his process of self-construction is at the center of Tibullus' project, rather than any particular love affair or storyline. When we read Tibullus' poems through a Lacanian lens we see how his poetry provides an especially concise and effective look at the role of desire in the experience of the subject. Tibullus does not provide us with all of the extras that Propertius and Ovid include in their poems, with their intricate narratives of their love affairs, their mythological excurses, and their digressions on the foibles of their friends and rivals. These additions are admittedly entertaining, but perhaps ultimately distracting, when we are looking more closely for what the elegists are doing in their poetry. Tibullus presents us instead with an unflinching look into the heart of the crisis of subjectivity and the incessant frustration that our repeated attempts at self-construction must ultimately bring.

[7] Janan (2001).

[8] Miller (2004).

When we take desire and self-construction to be the focus of Tibullus' poetry, Propertius' and Ovid's poetry books also begin to make more sense as integrated wholes. The elements that seem to be exceptional in their collections (the political poems at the close of Propertius Book 1, or Ovid's decision to hold off naming Corinna until *Amores* 1.5) can also fit into the larger project of exploring the experience of the elite, male desiring subject in Augustan Rome. We might ask why we have taken so long to spend more time on Tibullus' poetry, when this is the case. But in some ways, a Lacanian reading already provides our answer. As split subjects, we thrive on narratives, stories that seems to hold together, tales with distracting details which keep us from ever dwelling too long on the inevitable disintegration of meaning and the failure of language to explain our experience. Propertius and Ovid offer us many such engaging excurses and interesting storylines. It is anxiety-inducing and ultimately overwhelming to examine the crisis of subjectivity for what it really is. Yet if we allow ourselves to be distracted by the digressions, to look away from what lies underneath, we run the risk of missing what elegiac poetry is doing. We run the risk of finding all the linguistic tricks and mythological allusions and creative minutiae, but missing the core of the elegiac project. Ironically, the poet whose work at first seemed so much more disjointed than the others, so much more difficult to understand as an integrated whole, turns out to be the most intricately interwoven and the most directly engaged with the problem of desire and self-construction. When we read Tibullus first, we find that his investigation was at the center of the elegiac project all along.

Works Cited

Ball, Robert J. (1983) *Tibullus the Elegist: A Critical Survey*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttigen.

Barker, Duncan (1996) " 'The Golden Age Is Proclaimed'? The *Carmen Saeculare* and the Renascence of the Golden Race." *CQ* 46.2: 434-446.

Bassi, Karen (1994) "Desired Silence: *Amor* and *Mors* in Tibullus 1.1." *Syllecta Classica* 5: 53-61.

Booth, Joan (1996) "Tibullus 1.8 and 9: A Tale in Two Poems?" *Museum Helveticum* 53.3: 232-47.

Bowditch, P. Lowell (2006) "Propertius and the Gendered Rhetoric of Luxury and Empire: A Reading of 2.16." *Comparative Literature Studies* 43.3: 306-25.

________ (2011) "Tibullus and Egypt: A Post-colonial Reading of Elegy 1.7." *Arethusa* 44.1: 89-122.

Boyd, Barbara Weiden (1984) "*Parva Satis Est:* The Landscape of Tibullan Elegy in 1.1 and 1.10." *TAPA* 114: 273-280.

Bradley, Keith (1994) *Slavery and Society at Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

Bright, David F. (1978) *Haec Mihi Fingebam: Tibullus in His World*. Brill: Leiden.

Brink, C. O. (1971) *Horace on Poetry: The* 'Ars Poetica.' Cambridge: Cambridge.

Cairns, Francis (1979) *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

________ (1998) "Tibullus 2.1.57-8: Problems of Text and Interpretation." *Candide Iudex: Festschrift für Walter Wimmel zum 75 Geburtstag*. Anna Elissa Radke, ed. Stuttgart: Steiner.

________ (1999) "Tibullus, Messalla, and the *Spica*: I 1.16; I 5.28; I 10.22, 67; II 1.4; II 5.84." *Emerita* 67: 219-230.

Caston, Ruth (2012) *The Elegiac Passion*. Oxford: Oxford.

Clausen, Wendell (1994) *A Commentary on Virgil Eclogues*. Clarendon: Oxford.

Comotti, G. (1989) *Music in Greek and Roman Culture*. Trans. R. V. Munson. Johns Hopkins: Baltimore.

Copley, F. O. (1956) *Exclusus Amator: A Study in Latin Love Poetry.* American Philological Association Monograph 17. APA: Baltimore.

Dennis, Rodney G. and Michael C. J. Putnam (2012) *The Complete Poems of Tibullus: an En Face Bilingual Edition*. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Dickie, Matthew W. (2001) *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World.* Routledge: London.

Drinkwater, Megan (2012) "'His Turn to Cry:' Tibullus' Marathus Cycle (1.4, 1.8 and 1.9) and Roman Elegy." *Classical Journal* 107.4: 423-448.

________ (2013) "The Woman's Part: The Speaking Beloved in Roman Elegy." *Classical Quarterly* 63.1: 329-338.

Duckworth, G. E. (1952) *The Nature of Roman Comedy*. Princeton: Princeton.

Dufallo, Basil (2000) " 'Satis/Satura': Reconsidering the 'Programmatic Intent' of Horace's 'Satires 1.1.'" *Classical World* 93.6: 579-90.

Edwards, Catharine (1997) "Unspeakable Professions: Public Performance and Prostitution in Ancient Rome." *Roman Sexualities*. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds. Princeton: Princeton. 66-95.

Eisenberger, H. (1960) "Der innere Zusammenhang der Motive in Tibulls Gedicht 1,3." *Hermes* 88: 188-97.

Fear, Trevor (2005) "Propertian Closure: The Elegiac Inscription of the Liminal Male and Ideological Contestation in Augustan Rome." *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry.* Ronnie Ancona and Ellen Greene, eds. Johns Hopkins: Baltimore. 13–40.

Feldstein, Richard, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. (1995) *Reading Seminar XI*. SUNY Press: Albany.

Fineberg, Brenda Haack (1991) *Configurations of Desire in the Elegies of Tibullus*. diss. University of Chicago.

Fink, Bruce (1995) *The Lacanian Subject*. Princeton: Princeton.

________ (1995b) "Preface." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. ix-xv.

________ (1995c) "The Real Cause of Repetition." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 223-229.

________ (1997) *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. Harvard: Cambridge.

________ (2002) “Knowledge and Jouissance. *Reading Seminar XX*. Suzanne Barnard and Bruce Fink, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 21-46.

Fordyce, C. J. (1961) *Catullus*. Clarendon: Oxford.

Gaisser, Julia Haig (1977) “Tibullus 2.3 and Vergil’s Tenth Eclogue.” *TAPA* 107: 131-146.

________ (1983) “ ‘*Amor*, *rura*,’ and ‘*militia*’ in Three Elegies of Tibullus: 1.1, 1.5 and 1.10.” *Latomus* 42.1: 58-72.

Galinsky, Karl (1996) *Augustan Culture*. Princeton: Princeton.

Garber, Marjorie (1992) *Vested Interests*. Routledge: New York.

Gardner, Hunter (2010) “The Elegiac ‘*Domus*’ in the Early Augustan Principate.” *American Journal of Philology*. 131.3: 453-493.

________ (2013) *Gendering Time in Augustan Love Elegy*. Oxford: Oxford.

Gatz, Bodo (1967) *Weltalter, goldene Zeit und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen*. Olms: Hildesheim.

Gibson, Roy (2008) “Love Elegy.” *A Companion to Latin Literature*. S. Harrison, ed. Blackwell: Malden. 149-173

Greene, Ellen (1998) *The Erotics of Domination*. Johns Hopkins: Baltimore.

________ (2012) “Gender and Elegy.” *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*. Barbara K. Gold, ed. Blackwell: Malden. 357-71.

Griffiths, J. Gwyn (1975) *Apuleius of Madauros: the Isis-Book (Metamorphoses Book XI).* Brill: Leiden.

Haupt, Moritz (1876) “Über Joseph Scaliger und die von Haase vorgeschlagene Umstellung Tibullischer Versreihen.” *Opuscula* 3: 30-41.

Henderson, A. A. R. (1969) “Tibullus, Elysium and Tartarus.” *Latomus* 28.3: 649-653.

Henkel, John (2014) “Metrical Feet on the Road of Poetry: Foot Puns and Literary Polemic in Tibullus.” *Classical World* 107: 4. 451-475

Hollis, A. S. (1977) *Ovid: Ars Amatoria Book I.* Oxford: Oxford.

Houghton, L. B. T. (2007) “Tibullus’ Elegiac Underworld.” *Classical Quarterly*. 57.1: 153-165.

James, Sharon (2003) *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion*. University of California: Berkeley.

Janan, Micaela (1994) *"When the Lamp is Shattered": Desire and Narrative in Catullus*. Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale.

________ (2001) *The Politics of Desire: Propertius IV*. University of California: Berkeley.

________ (2012) "Lacanian Psychoanalytic Theory and Roman Love Elegy." *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*. Barbara K. Gold, ed. Blackwell: Malden. 375-389

Johnson, W. R. (1990) "Messalla's Birthday: The Politics of Pastoral." *Arethusa* 23.1: 95-113.

Johnston, Patricia A. (1977) "Vergil's Conception of Saturnus." *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 10: 57-70.

________ (1980) *Vergil's Agricultural Golden Age.* Brill: Leiden.

Keith, Alison (2008) *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*. Duckworth: London.

Kennedy, Duncan (1993) *The Arts of Love*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

________ (2017) "What's in a Name? Delia in Tibullus 1.1." *Classical Quarterly* 67.1: 193-98.

Kenney, E. J. (1990) *Apuleius: Cupid and Psyche.* Cambridge: Cambridge.

Knox, Peter (2005) "Milestones in the Career of Tibullus." *Classical Quarterly* 55.1: 204-216.

Koenen, Ludwig (1976) "Egyptian Influence in Tibullus." *Illinois Classical Studies*. Vol. 1: 127-159.

Lacan, Jacques (1977) *Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. W. W. Norton: New York.

________ (1988) *Seminar I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-54*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. John Forrester. W. W. Norton: New York.

________ (1988) *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis.* Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Sylvana Tomaselli. W. W. Norton: New York.

________ (1993) *Seminar III: The Psychoses*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Russell Grigg. W. W. Norton: New York.

________ (1998) *Seminar XX: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge.* Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Bruce Fink. W. W. Norton: New York.

________ (2006) *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. W. W. Norton: New York.

________ (2014) *Seminar X: Anxiety*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. A. R. Price. Polity: Cambridge.

Laurent, Éric (1995) "Alienation and Separation (I)." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 19-28.

________ (1995b) "Alienation and Separation (II)." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 29-38.

Lee, Benjamin Todd (2008) "The Potentials of Narrative: The Rhetoric of the Subjective in Tibullus." *Latin Elegy and Narratology: Fragments of Story*. Genevieve Liveley, Patricia Salzman-Mitchell, eds. Ohio State: Columbus. 196-222.

Lee, Guy (1974) "*Otium cum indignitate:* Tibullus 1.1." *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry.* Tony Woodman and David West, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge. 94-114.

________ (1990) *Tibullus: Elegies: Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes*. Francis Cairns: Leeds.

Lee-Stecum, Parshia (1998) *Powerplay in Tibullus: Reading* Elegies *Book One*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

________ (2000) "Poet/Reader, Authority Deferred: Re-Reading Tibullan Elegy." *Arethusa* 33.2: 177-215.

Lindheim, Sara (1998) "I Am Dressed, Therefore I Am?: Vertumnus in Propertius 4.2 and in *Metamorphoses* 14.622-771." *Ramus* 27.1: 27-38.

Littlewood, R. J. (1970) "The Symbolic Structure of Tibullus Book I." *Latomus* 29.3: 661-669.

Lyne, R. O. A. M. (1980) *The Latin Love Poets.* Clarendon: Oxford.

________ (1998) "Propertius and Tibullus: Early Exchanges." *Classical Quarterly* 48.2:519-44.

Maltby, Robert (1991) *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies*. Francis Cairns: Leeds.

________ (1993) "The Limits of Etymologizing." *Aevum Antiquum* 6: 257-75.

________ (2002) *Tibullus: Elegies: Text, Introduction and Commentary*. Francis Cairns: Cambridge.

Mankin, David (1995) *Horace: Epodes*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

McKeown, J. C. (1989) *Ovid: Amores: Text, Prolegomena and Commentary.* Vol. 2. Francis Cairns: Leeds.

Miller, Jacques-Alain (1995) "Context and Concepts." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 3-15.

Miller, P. Allen (1999) "The Tibullan Dream Text." *TAPA* 129: 181-224.

________ (2004) *Subjecting Verses: Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real*. Princeton: Princeton.

________ (2012) "Tibullus." *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*. Barbara K. Gold, ed. Blackwell: Malden. 53-69.

Miller, P. Allen and Charles Platter (1999) "Crux as Symptom: Augustan Elegy and Beyond." *Classical World* 92.5: 445-454.

Moore, Timothy (2012) *Music in Roman Comedy.* Cambridge: Cambridge.

Murgatroyd, Paul (1975) "'*Militia Amoris*' and the Roman Elegists." *Latomus* 34.1: 59-79.

________ (1980) *Tibullus I.* Bristol: Bristol.

________ (1992) "Tibullus and the *Puer Delicatus*." *Homosexuality in the Ancient World*. Walter Dynes and Stephen Donaldson, eds. Garland: New York. 105-109.

________ (1994) *Tibullus Elegies II*. Clarendon: Oxford.

Mynors, R. A. B. (1990) *Virgil: Georgics.* Clarendon: Oxford.

Navarro Antolin, Fernando (1996) *Lygdamus: Corpus Tibullianum III.1-6 Lygdami Elegiarum Liber*. Trans. J. J. Zoltowski. Brill: Leiden.

Newman, J. K. (1998) "*Saturno Rege:* Themes of the Golden Age in Tibullus and Other Augustan Poets." *Candide Iudex*: *Festschrift für Walter Wimmel zum 75. Geburtstag*. Stuttgart: Steiner.

Nikoloutsos, Konstantinos P. (2007) "Beyond Sex: the Poetics and Politics of Pederasty in Tibullus 1.4." *Phoenix* 61:1/2 55-82.

________ (2011) "The Boy as Metaphor: the Hermeneutics of Homoerotic Desire in Tibullus 1.9." *Helios* 38.1: 27-57.

________ (2011b) "From Tomb the Womb: Tibullus 1.1 and the Discourse of Masculinity in Post-Civil War Rome." *Scholia* 20: 52-71.

Nisbet, R. G. M. and Margaret Hubbard (1970) *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I*. Clarendon: Oxford.

________ (1978) *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book II*. Clarendon: Oxford.

Oliensis, Ellen (1997) "The Erotics of *Amicitia*: Readings in Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace." *Roman Sexualities*. Ed. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner. Princeton: Princeton.

________ (2009) *Freud's Rome: Psychoanalysis and Latin Poetry.* Cambridge: Cambridge.

Olson, Kelly (2014) "Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality: Dandies in Roman Antiquity." *Arethusa* 23.2: 182-205.

Papanghelis, Theodore (1987) *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death.* Cambridge: Cambridge.

Pease, Arthur Stanley (1967) *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos: Liber Quartus*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge.

Perkell, Christina (2002) "The Golden Age and Its Contradictions in the Poetry of Vergil" *Vergilius* 48: 3-39.

Postgate, J. P. (1912) "Albius and Tibullus." *AJP* 33.4: 450-455.

________ (2010) *Tibulli Aliorumque Carminum Libri Tres*. Oxford: Oxford.

Pöstgens, Paul (1940) *Tibulls Ambarvalgedicht 2.1*. K. Triltsch: Würzburg.

Putnam, Michael C. J. (1973) *Tibullus: A Commentary.* University of Oklahoma: Norman.

________ (2005) "Virgil and Tibullus 1.1." *Classical Philology* 100.2: 123-141.

Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie (1986) *Jacque Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis*. University of Illinois: Urbana.

Ramsby, Teresa R. (2007) *Textual Permanence.* Duckworth: London.

Reckford, K. J. (1958) "Some Appearances of the Golden Age," *CJ* 54: 79-87.

Regnault, François (1995) "The Name-of-the-Father." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 65-74.

Schiebe, Marianne Wifstrand (1986) "The Saturn of the *Aeneid*—Tradition or Innovation?" *Vergilius* 32: 43-60.

Scioli, Emma (2015) *Dream, Fantasy, and Visual Art in Roman Elegy*. University of Wisconsin: Madison.

Sharrock, Alison (1991) "Womanufacture." *Journal of Roman Studies* 81: 36-49.

________ (2000) "Constructing Characters in Propertius." *Arethusa* 33.2: 263-284.

Smolenaars, J. J. L. (1987) "Labour in the Golden Age: A Unifying Theme in Vergil's Poems." *Mnemosyne* 40: 391-405.

Soler, Colette (1995) "The Subject and the Other (I)." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 39-44.

________ (1995b) "The Subject and the Other (II)." *Reading Seminar XI*. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus, eds. SUNY Press: Albany. 45-54.

Solmsen, Friedrich (1961) "Propertius in His Literary Relations with Tibullus and Vergil." *Philologus* 105.3: 273-289.

________ (1962) "Tibullus as an Augustan Poet." *Hermes* 90.3: 295-325.

Spaeth, Barbette Stanley (1996) *The Roman Goddess Ceres*. University of Texas: Austin.

Stehle, Eva (1996) "Sappho's Gaze: Fantasies of a Goddess and a Young Man." *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches*. Ellen Greene, ed. University of California: Berkeley.

Szemerenyi, O. (1975) "The Origins of Roman Drama and Greek Tragedy." *Hermes* 103: 300-32.

Taylor, L. R. (1937) "The Opportunities for Dramatic Performances in the Time of Terence and Plautus," *TAPA* 68: 284-304.

________ (1968) "Republican and Augustan Writers Enrolled in the Equestrian Centuries." *TAPA* 99: 469-86.

Tupet, Anne-Marie (1976) *La Magie Dans La Poésie Latine*. Société D'Édition "Les Belles Lettres": Paris.

Ullman, B. L. (1912) "Horace and Tibullus." *AJP* 33.2: 149-167.

________ (1912b) "Rejoinder to Mr. Postgate." *AJP* 33.4: 456-460.

Van Nortwick, Thomas (1990) "*Huc Veniet Messalla Meus:* Commentary on Johnson." *Arethusa* 23.1.115-123.

Vretska, K. (1955) "Tibulls Paraklausithyron." *Wiener Studien* 68: 20-46.

Walters, Jonathan (1997) "Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought." *Roman Sexualities*. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner eds. Princeton: Princeton.

Wageningen, J. van (1913) "Tibulls sogennante Traumereien." *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 31: 350-55.

Whitaker, Richard (1983) *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy*. Vandenhoeck and Rupprecht: Göttigen.

White, K. D. (1970) *Roman Farming*. Cornell: Ithaca.

Wille, Günther (1967) *Musica Romana*. Schippers: Amsterdam.

Wills, Jeffrey (1996) *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Illusion.* Clarendon: Oxford.

Williams, Craig (2010) *Roman Homosexuality*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford.

Williams, G. (1968) *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford.

Wimmel, Walter (1968) *Der Frühe Tibull*. Wilhem Fink Verlag: Munich.

Witt, R. E. (1971) *Isis in the Ancient World.* Johns Hopkins: Baltimore.

Wray, David (2003) "What Poets Do: Tibullus on 'Easy' Hands." *Classical Philology* 98.3: 217-50.

Wyke, Maria (2002) *The Roman Mistress*. Oxford: Oxford.

Zanker, Andreas (2010) "Late Horatian Lyric and the Virgilian Golden Age." *AJP* 131.3: 495-516.

Zanker, Paul (1988) *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Trans. Alan Shapiro. University of Michigan: Ann Arbor.

Zimmerman Damer, Erika (2014) "Gender Reversals and Intertextuality in Tibullus." *Classical World* 107.4: 493-514.