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Gender Reversals and Intertextuality in Tibullus*

ERIKA ZIMMERMANN DAMER

ABSTRACT: This paper argues that Tibullus' practice of altering the gender of his intertextual references destabilizes gender as a biological, social, and even grammatical category in his elegies. In 1.8, Tibullus draws on images of women's adornment from Callimachus, Philitas, and Propertius to create the opening image of the *puer* Marathus. In 2.6, Tibullus draws from Catullus' lament for his brother in *carmen* 101 as he describes Nemesis' dead young sister and demonstrates his technical skill in manipulating the flexibility of grammatical gender in Latin.

I. Introduction

Beginning as early as Ovid's elegies on Tibullus' death (*Am.* 3.9) and on his own poetic fame (*Am.* 1.15.27–28), poets and critics have charted Tibullus' influence on Augustan poetry, ranging from Horace's teasing discussions of a certain elegist, Albius, at *Odes* 1.33.1–4 and *Epistles* 1.4,¹ to the influence that Vergilian bucolic and agricultural poetry had

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¹ The Albius of these poems has traditionally been identified with Albius Tibullus. See R. J. Ball, "Albi ne doleas: Horace and Tibullus," *CW* 87 (1994) 409–14; R. Maltby and J. Booth, "Light and Dark: Play on *candidus* and Related Concepts in the Elegies of Tibullus," *Mnemosyne* 58 [2005] 125–26; A. Keith, "Slender Verse: Roman Elegy and Ancient Rhetorical Theory," *Mnemosyne* 52 (1999) 41–62. On Tibullus' impact on Ovid in *Amores* 3.9, see J. Reed, "Ovid's Elegy on Tibullus and Its Models," *CPh* 92 (1997)

on Tibullus.² Few critics, however, have examined how Tibullus himself is an allusive poet engaged with his Latin Neoteric and Greek antecedents.³ Tibullus' elegies, in two books of ten and six poems published between 30–27 B.C.E. and (posthumously) in 19 B.C.E., show a deep relationship with the poet's Augustan milieu and particularly with his elegiac antecedents and contemporaries. Through intertextual connections with Hellenistic, Neoteric, and contemporary authors, Tibullus demonstrates his learned and subtle version of elegiac Callimacheanism. Tibullan intertextuality, furthermore, offers a new avenue for examining elegiac gender play. Issues of sexuality and gender have been identified as a central problematic of Roman love elegy, and recent criticism has begun to interrogate how Tibullus' elegies engage with Roman gender ideologies (especially of masculinity).⁴ I offer two test cases of Tibullus' practice of altering the gender of his intertextual references (1.8, 2.6) to explore his

260–69; S. Huskey, "In Memory of Tibullus: Ovid's Remembrance of Tibullus 1.3 in *Amores* 3.9 and *Tristia* 3.3," *Arethusa* 38 (2005) 367–86.

² W. R. Johnson ("Messalla's Birthday: The Politics of Pastoral," *Arethusa* 23 [1990] 95–113), D. Wray ("What Poets Do: Tibullus on 'Easy' Hands," *CPh* 98 [2003] 217–50), and M. Putnam ("Virgil and Tibullus 1.1," *CPh* 100 [2005] 123–41) offer sensitive treatments of Tibullus' response to Vergilian poetics. Prior examinations of Tibullan intertextuality have remarked how Tibullus imports and updates Vergilian pastoral into the elegiac mode. See for example J. H. Gaisser, *Catullus*, Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World (Malden, Mass., 2009); E. W. Leach, "Vergil, Horace and Tibullus: Three Collections of Ten," *Ramus* 7 (1978) 79–105; R. Maltby, *Tibullus: Elegies. Text and Commentary*. ARCA 41 (Cambridge 2002).

³ A. Bulloch ("Tibullus and the Alexandrians," *PCPS* 19 [1973] 71–89); F. Cairns (*Tibullus, A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* [Cambridge 1979]; "Tibullus 2.6.27–40: Nemesis' Dead Sister," *Eranos* 98 [2000] 65–74); and the commentaries of M. Putnam (*Tibullus. A Commentary* [Norman, Okla. 1973]), P. Murgatroyd (*Tibullus I. A Commentary on the First Book of the Elegies of Albius Tibullus* [London 1980]; *Tibullus, Elegies II* [Oxford 1994]), and R. Maltby (*Tibullus: Elegies. Text and Commentary*, ARCA 41 [Cambridge 2002]) offer notable exceptions.

⁴ M. Wyke (*The Roman Mistress* [Oxford 2002]) offers a synthetic overview of research on sex/gender in Ovidian and Propertian elegy through the 1990s. Masculinity in Tibullus has recently received scholarly attention in the works of B. Fineberg ("Repetition and the Poetics of Desire in Tibullus 1.4," *CW* 92 [1999] 419–28) and P. A. Miller (*Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real* [Princeton 2004]), who both read the fragmented subjectivity and the anaphoric, dreamlike narratives of the Tibullan speaker as indicative of a fundamental instability of Roman manhood in the early years of the Principate. D. Wray (above, n.2) 217–50 contrasts the masculinity of the Tibullan speaker, who chooses the *vita iners*, with traditional Roman military masculinity, characterized by *labor*. In a series of two articles, K. P. Nikoloutsos ("Beyond Sex: The Poetics and Politics of Pederasty in Tibullus 1.4," *Phoenix* 61 [2007] 55–82; "The Boy as Metaphor: The Hermeneutics of Homoerotic Desire in Tibullus 1.9," *Helios* 38 [2011] 27–57) examines masculinity

own rich play with gender as a biological, social, and even grammatical category in the Roman world. Discussion of 1.8 demonstrates that references to Callimachus' *Hymn* 5 and to Propertius 1.2 create suspense and surprise when the gender of the character envisioned through the intertextuality is altered. Examination of 2.6, in turn, demonstrates how Tibullus reacts to Catullus 101 in the striking image of the dead little sister and points to Tibullus' technical skill in manipulating the flexibility of grammatical gender in Latin.⁵ Tibullus' practice in these poems constitutes a system of gender inversion through intertextual references. It is my hope that this discussion will bring renewed attention to Tibullus' important contribution to elegiac practices and enrich critical understanding of Tibullus' play with elegiac gender.⁶

II. Tibullus 1.8, Philitas, Callimachus, and Propertius

Tibullus 1.8 playfully incorporates the Propertian *topos* of the beloved's *cultus* alongside a reference to Callimachus' hymn to Athena, that poet's sole hymn composed in the elegiac meter, and to an epigram of Philitas of Cos. Tibullus' second poem to Marathus establishes, and then foils, expectations through his intertextual web of references. Tibullus'

in the Marathus cycle and argues that Tibullus' presentation of Marathus as a *scriptus puer* reveals the instability of available masculine roles of man and boy in post-civil-war Rome.

⁵ Tibullus is not the only Latin poet to alter the grammatical gender of nouns. A. Corbeill ("*Genus quid est?* Roman Scholars on Grammatical Gender and Biological Sex," *TAPA* 138 [2008] 75–105) has demonstrated how Vergil's transformations of grammatical gender had canonical status in the work of late-Latin grammarians. R. Renehan ("On Gender Switching as a Literary Device in Latin Poetry," in P. E. Knox and C. Foss, eds., *Style and Tradition: Studies in Honor of Wendell Clausen* [Stuttgart 1998] 213–14) provides further instances of nouns of flexible gender in Latin poetry.

⁶ P. E. Knox ("Milestones in the Career of Tibullus," *CQ* 55 [2005] 204–16), on the basis of internal dating evidence in Tibullus 1.7 and Ovid's catalogue of elegiac poets (*Tr.* 4.10.51–54), offers a reevaluation of the relative chronology of Tibullus book 1 and Propertius' *Monobiblos* and argues for the priority of Tibullus book 1. R. O. A. M. Lyne ("Propertius and Tibullus: Early Exchanges," *CQ* 48 [1998] 519–44) reinforces the traditional chronology that gives the *Monobiblos* priority. I adopt the position that Tibullus must have been aware of Propertius 1.2 before the publication of his own book 1. Yet, as Lyne has demonstrated, these poets were deeply aware of each other's poetry, and it is probable that each heard the other's poetry in performance even before it appeared in print. In this case, it seems impossible to determine the absolute priority of publication. As a result, I prefer to look at the exchanges between the two poets without presuming priority of publication.

innovation is to cross sex and gender boundaries by altering the biological sex of the characters described in these intertexts.⁷

Poem 1.8 has received infrequent critical attention in scholarship; most studies have examined the poem, along with 1.4 and 1.9, for evidence of male-male relationships and desire in antiquity. Nikoloutsos has demonstrated that Marathus is as tightly linked to Tibullan elegy's central concerns of "gender, poetry, economics, and the state" as the elegiac mistress.⁸ Like the *puella*, Marathus is a literary creation and the poems that feature him cannot be considered autobiographical exemplars of contemporary same-sex love and desire in Rome. Booth looks at Tibullus 1.8 and 1.9 as a continuous narrative and argues that Marathus' salient feature is his lack of manliness.⁹ Drinkwater has complicated studies of male-male love in Tibullan elegy by demonstrating that the Marathus series resists the claim that male-male relationships in elegy are different when she shows how closely the homoerotic experience parallels that of elegy's well-known heteroerotic one and how Tibullus has populated these elegies (1.4, 1.8, 1.9) with characters who both typify and reinforce the norms of Latin love elegy.¹⁰ Verstraete places the Marathus elegies into their archaic, Hellenistic, and Roman background of same-sex love poetry in order to single out the "qualities of irony, dramatic engagement, and psychological finesse" of the love triangle formed by the poet-speaker, Marathus, and Pholoe in 1.8.¹¹ His thorough discussion of 1.8 allows me to concentrate here only on the introductory scene. My study demonstrates the instability of gender and sex roles in the poem by highlighting the complexity of Marathus' first appearance in

⁷ In this practice, Tibullus builds on the precedent of Catullus, whose own gender-bending play in poems 51, 63, and 64 is well explored by M. Skinner ("Ego Mulier: The Construction of Male Sexuality in Catullus," in J. Hallett and M. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* [Princeton 1997] 129–50) and V. Panoussi ("Ego Maenas: Maenadism, Marriage, and the Construction of Female Identity in Catullus 63 and 64," *Helios* 30 [2003] 101–26).

⁸ Nikoloutsos (above, n.4) 55.

⁹ J. Booth, "Tibullus 1.8 and 1.9: A Tale in Two Poems?" *MH* 53 (1996) 232–47.

¹⁰ M. Drinkwater, "His Turn to Cry: Tibullus' Marathus Cycle (1.4, 1.8 and 1.9) and Roman Elegy," *CJ* 107 (2012) 423–50.

¹¹ B. Verstraete, "The Originality of Tibullus' Marathus Elegies," *J Homosex.* 49 (2005) 299–313.

the poem, where it is far from clear whom the poet is addressing and to what purpose.¹²

Examinations of narrative technique in Tibullus 1.8 have demonstrated how long it takes to determine whether the addressee of lines 9–16 is male or female. The elegy thus works on the principle of surprise. Tibullus only gradually reveals that the narrative situation of this poem is a love triangle rather than the more typical address to the beloved or to a differently named addressee.¹³ He directs the opening advice to an unknown addressee, whom he does not name until line 49, or define with a gendered pronoun until line 24. Up to this point, it is unclear whether the speaker's beloved is Delia (named most recently in poem 6), the boy Marathus (the beloved of poem 4, and the subject of poems 8 and 9), or some third party. Tibullus' use of previous elegiac antecedents helps maintain the suspense. The identity of the addressee is so unclear, I argue, not only because of Tibullus' narrative technique, but also because of the intertextual references present in the poem.

In 1.8, Tibullus' poet-speaker plays the role of *praeceptor amoris*. After stating his credentials as an advisor in love—because his own amorous failures have taught him how others can love successfully (1–8)—the speaker turns to his addressee and begins an elegiac complaint against excessive attention to personal appearance and cosmetics:

Quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos
 saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas,
 quid fuco splendente genas ornare, quid unguis
 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.

(Tib.1.8.9–16)

What good does it do now to have adorned your soft locks and to have arranged your oft-changed hair? What good does it do you to adorn your cheeks with bright rouge, what good to have your nails cut by

¹² Following W. Wimmel's observation (*Der frühe Tibull* [Munich 1968] 56) that it is unclear whom Tibullus is addressing, beloved *puella* or *puer*, P. Murgatroyd 1980 (above, n.3) 235 and R. Maltby (above, n.3) 301–302, have followed suit.

¹³ See F. Cairns 1979 (above, n.3) 147–51; P. Lee-Stecum, *Powerplay in Tibullus: Reading Elegies Book One* (Cambridge 1998) 227–32; R. Maltby (above, n.3) 301.

an artist's learned hand? In vain now your clothes, now your cloaks, are changed, and your narrow sandal cramps your feet. She pleases, although she has come with unadorned face, and she has not dressed her shining hair with time-taking art.¹⁴

Tibullus' description of the unnamed addressee above relies on a complex set of intertextual references to prior elegiac descriptions from Callimachus' hymn on the bath of Athena, from an epigram attributed to Philitas, and from Propertius' criticism of Cynthia's adornment in the second poem of the *Monobiblos*.

Callimachus' hymn invites celebrants to come worship Athena, but instructs them not to bring perfumes, scented oils, or mirrors to adorn the goddess' natural beauty (5.13–15). Athena's unadorned beauty contrasts with Aphrodite's, who takes up a mirror to fussily arrange and rearrange the same strand of hair: Κύπρις δὲ διαυγέα χαλκὸν ἐλοῖσα / πολλαίκι τὰν αὐτὰν δις μετέθηκε κόμαν ("the Cyprian took up her shining bronze [mirror], and often altered the same strand twice," 21–22).

Tibullus' intertextuality highlights several unusual features of Callimachus' couplet. We are alerted to the reference through translation, punning, and correction of the Callimachean original.¹⁵ Compare line 10 of Tib. 1.8 (*saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas*) with Callimachus' πολλαίκι τὰν αὐτὰν δις μετέθηκε κόμαν. Tibullus precisely imitates the rhythm of Callimachus' pentameter and translates the Greek πολλαίκι with the Latin *saepeque*. After the caesura, the practice changes, as the Latin incorporates the sound of the Greek original (δις) into the Latin *disposuisse* rather than offering a translation of the meaning. Callimachus' usage of the singular κόμαν for a single strand of hair is unparalleled,¹⁶ and Tibullus changes this usage back to the plural and more standard one when he uses the Latin cognate *comas*. Tibullus thus engages in correction as well as emulation of the Callimachean original.

Bulloch notes that Callimachus' text itself looks back to earlier models; his use of διαυγέα χαλκὸν (22), a shining bronze mirror, cites an epigram of Philitas in which a *hetaira* dedicates her equipment to Aphrodite. Here Bulloch concludes that Callimachus "may be slightly

¹⁴ The text of Tibullus throughout is from R. Maltby (above, n.3); all translations are my own.

¹⁵ For the term "intertextual correction," see R. Thomas, *Reading Virgil and His Texts: Studies in Intertextuality* (Ann Arbor 1999) 127.

¹⁶ See A. Bulloch, *Callimachus: The Fifth Hymn* (Cambridge 1985) 131.

comparing Aphrodite to a human *hetaira*.¹⁷ Tibullus corrects his Callimachean source by returning his toilette scene to the human sphere of Philitas' epigram.¹⁸ Marathus adorns his hair, his face, his nails, changes his clothing, and tightens his sandals (1.8.9–16). Only this final detail is not to be found in dressing scenes of the *puella* in Augustan love elegy. Murgatroyd and Maltby comment on the rarity of the image of Marathus' footwear at 1.8.14, noting that the terminology appears elsewhere only in Pliny's *Natural History* 35.85.¹⁹ While the primary allusion in the passage of 1.8 is to Callimachus' Aphrodite through the phonemic reference,²⁰ the elaboration of details over Callimachus' one-line image suggests that Tibullus may well have been aware of Philitas' epigram and that the description of Marathus' *cultus* stems from it. If so, Philitas' epigram on the *hetaira*'s retirement of her erotic accoutrements contributes an image of sandals that is noticeably absent from other elegiac dressing scenes.²¹ Nikias' dedication to Aphrodite contains sandals, a window reference which may, I suggest, have provided the inspiration for Tibullus' image of Marathus' sandals in 1.8.²²

¹⁷ A. Bulloch (above, n.16) 131. For the source text, see *Anthologia Graeca* 6.210.2–4 (Philitas of Samos): Νικιάς εἰς νηὸν Κύπριδος ἐκρέμασεν / σάνδαλα καὶ χαίτης ἀνελίγματα, τὸν δὲ διαυγῆ / χαλκὸν . . . , (“In the temple of Kypris Nikias hung her sandals and a ringlet of her hair, and her shining bronze”). A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page (*The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* [Cambridge 1965] 2: 476) attribute this poem to Philitas of Cos, although the attribution in the *Anthologia Graeca* is to a Philitas of Samos. Gow argues that there is not sufficient evidence to distinguish two Hellenistic poets named Philitas, and Bulloch (above, n.16) 130 follows in attributing the epigram to Coan Philitas, pace J. L. Lightfoot (*Hellenistic Collection. Philitas, Alexander of Aetolia, Hermesianax, Euphorion, Parthenius* [Boston 2009]).

¹⁸ J. C. McKeown (*Ovid: Amores. Text, Prolegomena and Commentary in Four Volumes. Vol. 1: Text and Prolegomena* [Liverpool 1987] 40) demonstrates that Ovid, at *Am.* 1.14.35–36, has recognized Tibullus' reference back to Callimachus and thus offers an ancient agreement with our modern identification of the reference.

¹⁹ Maltby (above, n.3) 306.

²⁰ For a definition of sound allusions as repetition across Greek poetry into Latin, including phonemic and phonological references, see J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion* (Oxford 1996) 18–19. See also discussion of Louis Zukofsky's blending of phonetic homonymy with lexical synonymy, or “sonic approximation,” at D. Wray, *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood* (Cambridge 2001) 41, 50.

²¹ While elegy offers many metapoetic references to feet—on which see J. Henkel in this volume (*CW* 107.4)—descriptions of elegiac *cultus* at Prop. 1.2.1–6, 2.1.1–12, 2.3a.9–22, Tib. 2.3. 51–58, 2.4.29–30 do not contain images of the *puella*'s adorned feet or of her footwear.

²² For the definition of “window reference,” see Thomas (above, n.15) 130. Marathus' sandals have been read as metapoetic. Their compressed feet represent an

Next to Callimachus, the Augustan elegists venerate Philitas as their most important generic forebear in Greek, so it is not surprising to find a reference to Philitas' erotic elegiac epigrams in a poem that contains an unmarked reference to Callimachus' elegiacs. Propertius and Ovid both explicitly name Philitas and Callimachus as important Hellenistic antecedents to Augustan love elegy.²⁵ In four passages of literary-critical homage, Propertius links Philitas with Callimachus. At 2.34.29–32, he proposes Philitas and Callimachus as better aids for capturing Cynthia's love than Socratic writings or scientific didactic poetry. Propertius opens the programmatic poem of his third book with an invocation of the deified spirits of Callimachus and of Coan Philitas and asks to be allowed membership in their poetic cult (*Callimachi manes et Coi sacra Philitae / in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus*, 3.1.1). He closes his Callimachean *recusatio* of epic by drinking from Philitean water (*Philitea aqua*, 3.3.51–52). In a further refusal to write the epic poetry that Maecenas has requested, Propertius asserts that it will suffice for him to be numbered among the books of Callimachus and to have sung in the elegiac meter of Philitas (3.9.43–44). Ovid continues to link Philitas with Callimachus: in *Ars* 3, the *praeceptor* exhorts women who wish to capture a man through their literary erudition to learn Callimachus and Philitas (329–330) before reading Propertius, Gallus, Tibullus, and his own *Amores* and *Heroides* (329–346). Later, in the *Remedia*, he urges lovers to flee Callimachus and the Coan poet when they wish to fall out of love (759–760). Apart from the elegists, Quintilian too links the two authors when he finds Callimachus to be the finest Greek elegist and grants Philitas second place (10.1.58). While Propertius and Ovid explicitly align themselves and their poetic practice with their Greek predecessors in

elegiac foot-pun on the shortened pentameter line of the elegiac couplet, and point to the refinement of Tibullus' verses in the Neoteric and Callimachean tradition. See Nikoloutsos 2011 (above, n.4) 35–36; B. Fineberg, "From a Sure Foot to Faltering Meters: The Dark Ladies of Tibullan Elegy," in M. DeForest, ed., *Woman's Power, Man's Game: Essays on Classical Antiquity in Honor of Joy K. King* (Wauconda, Ill., 1993) 249–56. These readings do not however foreclose the possibility that the source of this unusual shoe image is the sandal from Philitas' epigram on the retirement of a *hetaira*.

²⁵ For discussion of these references, see P. E. Knox ("Philitas and Roman Poetry," *PLILS* 7 [1993] 61–83, who argues that Propertius and Ovid look specifically back to Philitas' *Demeter*. P. Bing ("The Unruly Tongue. Philitas of Cos as Scholar and Poet," *CPh* 98 [2003] 330–48) remarks on the Roman reception of Philitas. See also R. K. Gibson (*Ovid, Ars Amatoria Book III* [Cambridge 2003] 231–32), who observes the Roman tendency to link Callimachus and Philitas as the greatest Greek elegists.

erotic elegy, Tibullus marks his allegiance through subtle, unmarked references, such as the window reference to Philitas' epigram in 1.8.

Critics following Wimmel have long looked to a Propertian parallel for the opening line of this passage. Propertius 1.9, addressed to the epic poet Ponticus, now in love, has been the touchstone for comparisons to Tibullus 1.8, on the basis of the similarity between the pose of the *magister amoris* in both poems, and the apparently precise recall of Propertius 1.9.9 (*quid tibi nunc misero prodest grave dicere carmen*) by Tibullus 1.8.9.²⁴ Nonetheless, as I will argue, the structure and theme of Propertius 1.2, the rejection of Cynthia's *cultus*, offers a closer parallel.²⁵ Tibullus draws on Propertius' poem alongside Callimachus' and Philitas' elegiacs on feminine *cultus*.

Tibullus' passage alludes to Propertius' critique of Cynthia's *cultus* at Propertius 1.2, where the speaker criticizes Cynthia for her ostentatious display of wealth and for her overly affected look. She has styled and perfumed her hair, she wears Coan silks, and she goes out to be seen by other prospective lovers. Next he sums up his critique: her natural beauty is more appealing than anything she could put on:

Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo
 et tenuis Coa veste mouere sinus,
 aut quid Orontea crines perfundere murra,
 teque peregrinis vendere muneribus,
 naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu,
 nec sinere in propriis membra nitere bonis?
 crede mihi, non ulla tuae est medicina figurae:
 nudus Amor formam non amat artificem.

(Prop. 1.2.1–8)²⁶

²⁴ W. Wimmel (above, n.12) 58–59 establishes that the turn of phrase is characteristically Propertian, appearing both at Prop. 1.9.9 and 2.34.27–29. P. Murgatroyd 1980 (above, n.3) 252–58 adduces similarities between the openings of the two poems, the concept of nemesis, and the mocking tone of the *praeceptor amoris* in both poems. See also R. Maltby (above, n.3) 302, 305.

²⁵ P. Lee-Stecum's reading of 1.8 (above, n.13) 227–31, 244–45, in which the text prevents any attempt to gain a stable reading by continually eluding the poet-speaker's attempts to gain mastery over himself, Marathus, and Pholoe, and thus destabilizes even the reader's relationship to the texts, allows for both intertexts to be acknowledged in the Tibullan text.

²⁶ All Propertius texts are from P. Fedeli, ed., *Elegiarum Libri IV*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart 1994).

Why does it please you to walk out, my life, with arranged hair, and to move your slender bosom in a Coan dress, or why does it please to perfume your locks with Orontean myrrh, and to sell yourself for foreign goods, and to spoil nature's beauty with purchased adornment, and not to allow your limbs to shine in their own goods? Trust me, there are no cosmetics for your figure; naked Love does not love confected beauty.

Tibullus' addressee engages in *cultus* in a manner similar to that of Propertius' Cynthia, but the catalogue is more extensive, and the adornment is unsuccessful in attracting Pholoe. Marathus adorns and arranges his soft hair, he rouges his cheeks, manicures his nails, changes clothes multiple times, and binds his feet tightly in sandals (1.8.9–14). The unnamed *illa*, by contrast, is attractive although she wears no makeup (*inculto ore*) and has left her hair unstyled (15–16). While the Propertian speaker notes the efficacy of *cultus* in attracting other lovers and as a result asks Cynthia to put away her adornment, Marathus' attempts at *cultus* fail to persuade Pholoe to allow him in (1.8.27, 61–62).

The differences between Propertius' argument and Tibullus' are illustrative. Propertius' elegy is a tightly focused exercise in the anti-cosmetic tradition.²⁷ The opening image of Cynthia's *cultus* is rejected in favor of a moralizing connection between her use of cosmetics and adornment and her pursuit of other lovers. Propertius' speaker uses language characteristic of this trope when he links beauty, *forma*, with *pu-dicitia*, the Roman womanly virtue of sexual exclusivity: *illis ampla satis forma pudicitia* ("there was full enough beauty in them from their chastity," 1.2.24).²⁸ A Cynthia who promises to be exclusive to her lover is sufficiently adorned (*culta sat est*, Prop. 1.2.25). Tibullus' catalogue, by contrast, comes as part of a richly developed erotic-triangle poem. The speaker as *magister amoris* attempts to understand why the addressee has engaged in this fruitless *cultus* (1.8.9–16). The catalogue is not the subject of the poem but rather serves to introduce a warning to Pholoe to be generous with youths and not to seek out gifts (1.8.27–32). By line 27, the speaker has shifted his advice toward the haughty Pholoe, and Marathus, whom he once pursued, is the overly adorned youth in the opening passage who has now become the locked-out lover. The

²⁷ R. K. Gibson (above, n. 23) 21–25 charts the moralizing strand of the anti-cosmetic tradition from Plautus to Ovid.

²⁸ S. J. Heyworth (*Cynthia. A Companion to the Text of Propertius*. [Oxford 2007] 14) further illuminates this difficult line and emends *pudicitia* to *pudicitiae*.

complexity of Tibullus' narrative suggests that he writes in response to Propertius' more tightly constructed anti-cosmetic poem.

Tibullus 1.8, furthermore, responds to Propertius 1.2 in structural ways that suggest Propertius' priority: namely, its structured anaphora and repetition of a verbal connection. Each poet-speaker asks the same question—what is the utility of *cultus* in love—and the two poems structure the descriptions that follow in remarkably similar ways. Propertius 1.2 offers anaphora and parallel questions: *quid iuvat . . . aut quid* (1, 3); Tibullus 1.8 responds with a triple repetition and parallel questions: *quid tibi . . . prodest . . . quid . . . quid* (11–13). The third and most extensive parallel between Tibullus 1.8 and Propertius' poem comes in the traditional tagline to the warning against *cultus* in Tibullus: a lover delights even when she is unadorned (*illa placet, quamvis inculto venerit ore*, 15). By yoking *placet* with *cultus* (or its lack), Tibullus' ending looks to Propertius' reevaluation of *cultus* as *puđicitia* (*uni si qua placet, culta puella sat est*, 26).

This image from Tibullus 1.8 is an example of an ecphrasis wherein the human body's adornment becomes the objet d'art that is visualized. This scene, moreover, is an example of what we could term an elegiac type-scene of the beloved's toilette, used to attract would-be suitors.²⁹ In the rhetorical tradition, in which the elegists were well steeped,³⁰ this form of description looks like *effictio*, the vivid description of a person from head to toe.³¹ *Effictio* is a subset of *enargeia* or *descriptio*, a description so vivid that the poem's auditor can see the scene as if it were before his own eyes.³² This type of vivid description creates an

²⁹ See above, n.21.

³⁰ For a discussion of Propertius' training in rhetoric, see A. Keith, *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure* (London 2008) 19–44. See also T. Rheinhardt, "Propertius and Rhetoric," in H.-C. Günther, ed., *Brill's Companion to Propertius* (Leiden 2006) 199–216. Keith (above, n.1) demonstrates Tibullus' use of rhetorical features.

³¹ The pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* defines *effictio* thus: *Effictio est, cum exprimitur atque effingitur verbis corporis cuiuspiam forma, quoad satis sit ad intellegendum, hoc modo: 'hunc, iudices, dico, rubrum, brevem, incurvom, canum, subcrispum, caesium, cui sane magna est in 'mento cicatrix, si quo modo potest vobis in memoriam redire.'* ("Portrayal is when the physical appearance of somebody is described and represented such that it is sufficient to recognize him, like this: 'that man, judges, I say, the ruddy, short, bent, white and a little curly haired, the grey-eyed one who has a very large scar on his chin, if perhaps you can recall him into your memory,'" 4.63.1).

³² G. Zanker ("Enargeia in the Ancient Criticism of Poetry," *RhM* 124 [1981] 297–99) demonstrates that *enargeia* caused the auditor to imagine himself as an eyewitness to the events described and to feel himself in the presence of the characters he hears described. This is also the stylistic effect of *descriptio*, the Latin translation of *enargeia*

immediacy whereby we can visualize for ourselves the person described and sense that we are experiencing reality rather than reading poetry. The simulation of this reality is the aim of ancient *enargeia*. The effect of an obvious intertextuality, by contrast, pulls in an opposite direction—the conspicuousness of the allusions to Hellenistic and Propertian antecedents pulls the reader back to an awareness of the textuality and of the created artificiality of the poem's description. This image is as much an amalgamation and reformulation of prior dressing scenes as it is a vivid description. The text thus performs Marathus' *cultus* as an immediate moment, as if drawn from life, while at the same time calling attention to the referential, literary origins for the scene of his adornment.

Through intertextuality, Tibullus 1.8 engages in a dynamic and complex fashion with the reader's expectations about gender in elegy. The force of recognition of these prior references leads the reader or auditor to expect a female object of description. Poem 1.8's description combines the images of Philitas' retired *hetaira*, Callimachus' Aphrodite at her toilette, and Propertius' Cynthia. The accoutrements described in the ecphrasis, and more compellingly created through its obvious reference to an Alexandrian–Augustan type-scene, look back to the description of a *female* beloved. Yet poem 1.8's *cultus* turns out to be that of Marathus, the *puer delicatus* of 1.4, 1.8, and 1.9, who adorns himself in a vain attempt to attract the haughty Pholoe.

Thus, Tibullus makes use of a tendentious corrective reference, in which the reference clearly looks back to Callimachean and Propertian models but offers details that are shown to contradict the sources.³³ Here, that contradiction emerges only when the identity of the addressee is revealed as that of Marathus, not Delia, Pholoe, or another unnamed woman. Lyne, exploring exchanges between Tibullus and Propertius, has characterized Tibullus as a comic, clever, and amusing poet who invokes Propertian *topoi* parodically and in competition with his peer.³⁴ Lyne sees the figured descriptions of the *puella*, and especially of her *facies*,

(Zanker 298), defined as follows in the *ad Herennium*: *demonstratio est cum ita verbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur*, (“demonstration is when a thing is so expressed in words that the business seems to be carried out and the matter seems to appear before the eyes,” 4.68.14). On the tension between intertextuality and ecphrasis, see D. Fowler, “Narrate and Describe: The Problem of *Ekphrasis*,” *JRS* 81 (1991) 25–35.

³³ Thomas (above, n.15) 128.

³⁴ Lyne (above, n.6) 524–33.

as one arena of such competition.³⁵ Tibullus' transfer of a programmatically Propertian image of *cultus* to his boy-beloved can be seen in this light as well. Tibullus' first exploration of *cultus* engages a complex set of intertextual references that create an expectation of gender that the poet later corrects. A similar intertextual gender reversal also appears in the image of Nemesis' dead sister in Tibullus' final poem, 2.6.

Tibullus has often frustrated critics who wish to generalize about elegy's love relationships. While the Propertian speaker is almost exclusively interested in Cynthia for four books of poetry, and the Ovidian speaker of the *Amores* settles on Corinna for his love object, the Tibullan speaker has three different, named beloveds: Delia, Marathus, and Nemesis. Marathus, though a boy, performs many of the same behaviors that the elegiac speaker laments in his *puella*: he is greedy for presents, he spends too much time adorning himself, and he is unfaithful. Nikoloutsos has recently argued that Marathus is also, like the elegiac *puella*, a poetic creation shaped to fit the parameters of the Alexandrian elegiac aesthetic.³⁶ Furthermore, elegy is not exclusively devoted to male-female love relationships. In the opening poem of the *Amores*, the *amator* allows that either a boy or a long-haired girl is an appropriate subject for love elegy (*Am.* 1.1.20). Given that Marathus engages in behaviors similar to those of the elegiac *puella*, and given the equivalence the Ovidian *amator* speaks of between the *puer delicatus* and the *puella*, it is perhaps unsurprising that Tibullus characterizes Marathus in language that elsewhere applies to a female character. But it may be that this common-sense explanation gives Tibullus less credit than he deserves. In the second half of this paper, I will explore Tibullan allusion and gender reversal in his final poem and suggest that gender reversal, whether as a biological or grammatical category, is a central aspect of Tibullus' incorporation of prior elegiac verse into his own poetry.

III. Tibullus 2.6 and Catullus 101: Gender, Siblings, and Transgendered Allusion

The episode of Nemesis' sister in Tibullus 2.6.29–44 has received limited critical attention, and critics have chiefly demonstrated the literary

³⁵ Lyne (above, n.6) 538–44.

³⁶ Nikoloutsos 2007 (above, n.4).

heritage of this scene in early Greek epigram and Latin inscriptions.³⁷ In Tibullus' final poem, the speaker agrees to follow Macer off to camp, but love brings him back to Nemesis' door where no amount of prayers, supplications, or curses against the *lena* grants him entry to see her. The speaker's anger at her repeated refusals drives him to supplicate Nemesis by the ghost of her dead little sister. My discussion will explore how the elegiac heritage of 2.6 creates expectations about the biological gender of the sibling, especially when one views the opening lines of the passage in the context of Catullus' poems to his deceased brother. I argue that, through the use of similar images as well as precise lexical responses to Catullus 101, Tibullus 2.6.29–35 offers a second instantiation of the kind of intertextual engagement and transgendered characterization we have already seen in Tibullus' intertextual gender reversal in 1.8.

Commentators on this passage have noted allusion to Catullus 101, already well known in Augustan poetry by 19 B.C.E., in the image of the tomb of a sibling who has died too soon.³⁸ I argue for a deeper connection between the two poems and will discuss how Tibullus reacts to the images of Catullus' grief at the death of his brother in terms of word choice, phrasing, and tone:³⁹

parce, per immatura tuae precor ossa sororis:
 sic bene sub tenera parva quiescat humo.
 illa mihi sancta est, illius dona sepulcro
 et madefacta meis sarta feram lacrimis,
 illius ad tumulum fugiam supplexque sedebo
 et mea cum muto fata querar cinere.

(Tib. 2.6.29–34)

Spare me, I beg you, by the immature bones of your sister: thus let the little girl rest well under soft earth. She is holy to me; I shall bring gifts

³⁷ F. Cairns 2000 (above, n.3) has detailed Tibullus' relation to earlier Greek epigram and Latin inscriptions. See too M. Reeve, "Tibullus 2.6," *Phoenix* 38 (1984) 235–39.

³⁸ C. Nappa ("Catullus and Virgil," in M. Skinner, ed., *A Companion to Catullus* [Malden, Mass., 2007] 392) shows that citations of Catullus 101 appear at least eleven times in Vergil's *Aeneid*, whose publication after Vergil's death in 19 B.C.E. was nearly contemporary with the publication of Tibullus book 2. M. Putnam (above, n. 3) 198 and R. Maltby (above, n.3) 475 limit the connection to Tibullus 2.6.35. P. Murgatroyd 1994 (above, n.3) 137–39 allows a broader connection between Tibullus' image and Catullus 101.

³⁹ My discussion expands upon M. Putnam's brief observation (above, n.3) 198 on Tibullus 2.6.34 that "phraseology and tone may be borrowed from Catullus 101."

to her tomb and garlands dripping with my tears. I shall flee to her tomb and I shall sit as a suppliant there and I will lament my fate with her mute ashes.

Tibullus' lines show a suppliant lamenting his misfortunes before silent ashes and bringing garlands to the tomb of a sibling who has died too young. This image has been famously represented in Catullus 101, the epigrammatic poem that serves as the final farewell to Catullus' brother, dead near Troy. The image looks pointedly to the epigram's second couplet—*ut te postremo donarem munere mortis / et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem* ("that I might bestow on you a final gift of death and address in vain your silent ashes," 101.3–4)—although Tibullus draws out elements from the entire poem. Tibullus' allusion operates by transforming both the biological and the grammatical gender of the sibling.

In each of Catullus' references to his brother's death, he addresses the deceased explicitly as "brother" (*frater*).⁴⁰ Tibullus' implicit addressee, by contrast, is Nemesis' sister (*tua soror* 2.6.29; *maesta soror* 38), referred to throughout the passage by the third-person feminine pronoun *illa*. Tibullus' evocation of the Catullan model thus transforms the biological gender of the sibling from male to female, from brother to sister. Brotherly language is most marked in Catullus 101, where *frater* or an adjectival form appears four times (lines 2, 6, 9, 10).⁴¹ Tibullus emulates that triple repetition of *frater* with the anaphora of *illa*, *illius*, *illius* at lines 31, 32, and 33.⁴²

There is a productive tension between the source and the target texts at work here: emulation of the Catullan model is used to create the effect of distance rather than closeness, and the gender of the sibling is

⁴⁰ Note for example *frater amabilior* (65.10); *fraterna mors, o misero frater adempte mihi, frater* (68a.19, 20, 21); *ei misero frater adempte mihi* (68b.91–93); *frater, heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi, accipe frater* (101.2, 6, 10).

⁴¹ See discussion of this repetition, and how sound effects in Catullus 101 work with the poetic architecture at Gaisser (above, n.2) 118–21. Critics have long seen the apostrophe, *frater*, in 101, with its precisely placed appearance three times in the poem as a poetic illustration of Roman *conclamatio*, the ritual naming of the deceased three times during the last rites. On this feature, see D. F. S. Thomson, *Catullus* (Toronto 2005) 537.

⁴² R. Maltby ("Tibullus and the Language of Latin Elegy," *PBA* 93 [1999] 377–98) finds this pleonasm characteristic of Tibullus, and identifies it as a feature later taken up in Ovidian elegiacs. Wills (above, n.20) 400–403 has demonstrated that triple anaphora is characteristically elegiac and that Vergil, Lucan, Silius, and Valerius Flaccus completely avoid the practice.

changed from male to female.⁴³ In Catullus' famous epigram, he speaks to his brother, and the poetic audience is privy to an intense and direct exchange marked out by the vocatives and imperatives of the poem.⁴⁴ The poem emphasizes the immediate juxtaposition of first- and second-person pronouns (*quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum*, 5), and there are no intermediary connections between the two brothers except death.⁴⁵ Tibullus, though he quite precisely evokes this Catullan passage, considerably alters the interpersonal dynamic by addressing the beloved indirectly while speaking of, and not directly to, a third person. The emotional intensity of Tibullus' pleading, which does not affect Nemesis, is redirected at her sister. Tibullus' allusion has borrowed Catullus' sublime statement of immediate grief and folded it into a triangulation, a typically elegiac deflection of affective energy.⁴⁶

Tibullus makes his closest response to Catullus at line 34, where he transforms the feminine gender of Catullus' *mutam cinerem* into the masculine-gendered *muto cinere* (*et mea cum muto fata querar cinere*, 2.6.34; compare Catullus 101.4, *et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem*).⁴⁷ This line, I argue, points to Tibullus' technical skill in manipulating the gender of ash (*cinis*) in order to make an allusion to Catullan practice in 101. The correction of the gender of *cinis* from the rare feminine to the more typical masculine gender suggests that Tibullus' gender reversal operates on the grammatical as well as the biological level.

⁴³ Pace Murgatroyd (above, n.3) 138, for whom the speaker brings up his affection for the sister in order to arouse tenderness and pity in Nemesis.

⁴⁴ See Thomson (above, n.41) 537; Gaisser (above, n.2) 118–21.

⁴⁵ A. Feldherr ("Non inter nota sepulcra: Catullus 101 and Roman Funerary Ritual," CA 19 [2000] 209–31) shows that the performative aspects of the poem further strengthen the connection between the living and the dead.

⁴⁶ On the workings of emotional deflection from *puella* to others in Propertius book 4, see M. Janan, *The Politics of Desire: Propertius IV* (Berkeley 2001) 85–99. See also E. Oliensis ("The Erotics of *Amicitia*: Readings in Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace," in J. Hallett and M. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* [Princeton 1997] 151–71), who observes that it is characteristic of elegiac style to create erotic triangles and triangulate relationships.

⁴⁷ The reference to Catullus 101 is additionally marked by phonemic allusion, or imitation of sounds of the source text. Tibullus not only draws from the image of the mute ash, but he also imitates the sound of Catullus' *alloquerer* with his own *querar*. On phonemic allusion, see Wills (above, n.20) 18–19. See also J. J. O'Hara (*True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* [Ann Arbor 1996]), who remarks that Latin poets typically made use of phonemic allusion when responding to Greek originals. Tibullus 1.8's incorporation of the sounds of Callimachus' hymn is comparable to his phonemic allusion to a Latin source text.

As with his earlier intertextual practice in 1.8, Tibullus again exploits a richly referential line of poetry in crafting the gender of the person described. Catullus' own poem, Wills has argued, participates in the Roman poetic tradition of marking allusion through gender-flexible nouns.⁴⁸ The Catullan line, through its use of the feminine *muta cinis* (101.4), looks back to Calvus' *fulva cinis* (*cum iam fulva cinis fuero*, fr. 27 Hollis).⁴⁹ *Cinis* shows flexibility of grammatical gender in Latin: though the word is typically masculine, Nonius, the fourth-century CE Roman grammarian, remarks that *cinis* takes the feminine gender in Caesar, Catullus, and Calvus (Non. 198, TLL iii, 1070.8).⁵⁰ Calvus' fragment comes from the *epicedion* of Quintilia, and the ash, *fulva cinis*, refers back to the deceased Quintilia. When Catullus uses the feminine-gendered *cinis* at 101.4 and 68.90, however, the gender of the deceased brother is masculine. Thus, Wills argues, the gender of the ash in Catullus' poem cannot be feminine in order to match the gender of the dead brother. It can, however, be seen as an imitation of Calvus' rare, feminine-gendered *cinis*.⁵¹ Catullus' Latin maintains Calvus' play on the flexibility of the grammatical gender of *cinis* in Latin.

Tibullus, in his evocation of Catullus 101.4, returns the gender of *cinis* to the grammatically masculine form. This change is emphatic: Tibullus' Latin is very close in sound as well as in lexical and semantic content to the Catullan source. The meter would even allow maintenance

⁴⁸ See Wills (above, n.20) 20–21.

⁴⁹ Gellius, in a conversation on the flexibility of the grammatical gender of nouns in Vergil and Ennius, recalls Ennius' use of the feminine *aera fulva* as an alternative for the usually masculine *aer* in the *Annales* (see *Noct. Att.* 13.21.14.1). Gellius' speaker argues that Ennius chose the feminine gender for *aer* both on the authority of Homer, who uses the feminine form ἥερα βαθεΐαν (*Il.* 20.446) and because it seems more lovely and more sonorous. Similarly, Ennius' choice of the rare, feminine-gendered *pulvis fulva* (*Ann.* 9.315) may be formed on analogy with Greek usage (κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν, *Il.* 18.23, *Od.* 24.316). This epic tradition of gendering dust feminine in Latin may have influenced Calvus' decision to give *cinis* a feminine gender. See Wills (above, n.20) 21.

⁵⁰ E. Courtney (*The Fragmentary Latin Poets* [Oxford 1995] 207) offers a fuller discussion of this fragment.

⁵¹ Wills (above, n.20) 21. Wills' argument is strengthened by the fact that Catullus shows familiarity with these fragments of the *epicedion* in c. 96, where the *certe* of line 5 (*certe non tanto mors immatura dolori est*) amplifies Calvus' line, *forsitan hoc etiam gaudeat ipsa cinis* (fr. 28 Hollis). On Catullus' friendship with Calvus and familiarity with his poetry, see also c. 14, 50, and 53.

of a grammatically feminine *muta cinere* in Tibullus' poem.⁵² Nevertheless, Tibullus transforms *mutam cinerem* to *muto cinere* and rejects the rarer feminine form in favor of the more typical masculine grammatical gender. In Tibullus' poem, the ashes are those of Nemesis' little sister, not of Catullus' dead brother. Thus Tibullus not only rejects a precedent established in Ennius, Calvus, and Catullus, but he also assigns masculine gender to the ashes of a girl. This switch of grammatical gender is, I argue, a mark of allusion and a corrective nod to Catullus' own gender reversal that itself signals an allusion to Calvus' *epicedion*.

My reading of the gender switching in 2.6 foregrounds the elegist's tendency to make tendentious correction in his allusive practice, as we have already seen in the case of Tibullus 1.8. This technical demonstration of altering the gender of allusive references should be seen as part of the larger Tibullan intertextual practice of playing with gender in his transformation of brother into sister in 2.6. In poem 1.8, Tibullus used female-gendered poetic antecedents to create suspense about the addressee and narrative structure of his poem. Here, Tibullus manipulates the flexibility of grammatical gender in order to make a corrective reference back to his Catullan original that highlights a typically elegiac triangulation of affection. This second reference illustrates, in a precise and technical fashion, the gender-bending that is central to Tibullan allusive practice.

IV. Conclusion

Thus in 2.6, as in 1.8, Tibullus evokes well-known antecedents to arouse specific expectations about the gender of his referents. In each instance, he foils these expectations by changing the gender of his allusive targets. How do these gender reversals affect our understanding of elegy?

Critics have demonstrated that elegy is a genre built on subverting and questioning Roman expectations about gendered behavior: each elegist refers to his mistress by the term for a Roman "master"; she is a *domina*, while the normally masterful, elite Roman male plays the role of the "slave of love" (*servus amoris*), abandons military life or a political career, and

⁵² While it is true that Tibullus may have chosen to use the more standard, masculine-gendered *muto cinere* simply to avoid a rhyme between *muta* and *fata*, the thematic implications suggest a deeper motive.

refuses to write epic poetry.⁵⁵ The genre itself is programmatically characterized as “soft” (*mollis versus*, Prop. 1.7.19), a term that serves both as a literary-critical allusion to the aesthetic polish and delicacy of Callimachean poetics and as a signal of the elegist’s refusal to write epic with its masculine values, which are figured as “hard” (*durus*).⁵⁴ *Mollitia*, furthermore, characterizes an effeminate male who fails to perform Roman masculinity correctly.⁵⁵ Although the elegiac speaker aligns himself and his poetry with an aesthetics of *mollitia*, feminist critics have demonstrated that the elegiac lover-poet’s perspective cannot silence the aspects of male dominance, female economic dependence, and the exploitation of the Roman lower classes that underpin the elegant poetic world.⁵⁶

The psychoanalytic readings of Fineberg, Janan, and Miller have gone further to demonstrate the instability of gendered identities in Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid. Elegy’s discursive gender instability reflects the crisis in elite masculinity brought about by the emergence of the Principate in the late first century B.C.E. Augustus’ consolidation of

⁵³ Readings of elegy that see power reversals and play with gender dynamics as central to the elegiac genre have their origins in J. Hallett’s argument (“The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter-cultural Feminism,” *Arethusa* 6 [1973] 103–24) that elegy expresses an early counter-cultural feminism. While many scholars have disagreed with her thesis, Hallett’s article continues to be a foundational exploration of the ways that elegy plays with Roman gender structures. D. Kennedy (*The Arts of Love. Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy* [Cambridge 1993]) responds by demonstrating elegy’s resistance to any consistent or stable discourse. These two strains of criticism have been further developed in respect to the instability of gendered positions by B. Gold (“But Ariadne Was Never There in the First Place’: Finding the Female in Roman Poetry,” in N. Rabinowitz and A. Richlin, eds., *Feminist Theory and the Classics* [New York 1993] 75–101); E. Greene (*The Erotics of Domination: Male Desire and the Mistress in Latin Love Poetry* [Baltimore 1998]); Janan (above, n.46); Wyke 2002 (above, n.4); Miller 2004 (above, n.4); S. L. James (*Learned Girls and Male Persuasion* [Berkeley 2003]); Keith (above, n.1); Nikoloutsos 2007 and 2011 (above, n.4).

⁵⁴ On *mollis* and *durus* in elegy, see the representative discussions at Kennedy (above, n.53) 31–33; Wyke (above, n. 4) 168–69; Miller (above, n.4) 137–43; Nikoloutsos 2007 (above, n.4) 60.

⁵⁵ See C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality* (Cambridge 1993) 63–97; G. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality. Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford 1999) 125–32.

⁵⁶ On the tension between masculine domination over text and *puella* and the elegiac aesthetics of *mollitia* in Propertius, see E. Greene, “Gender Identity and the Elegiac Hero in Propertius 2.1,” in E. Greene and R. Ancona, eds., *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry* (Baltimore 2005) 61–78. See S. L. James (above, n.53) on elegy’s erasure of the *puella*’s economic needs in favor of masculine persuasion-poetry, and Janan (above, n.46) on Propertius’ exposure of the exploitation of the Roman subaltern (slaves, prostitutes, bawds) in Propertius book 4.

power eroded traditional political methods for gaining status and for defining identity. The Tibullan lover has been seen as a subject divided, whose shifting roles (poet-lover, farmer, soldier, vituperative social critic, *exclusus amator*, country squire, *praeceptor amoris*) and shifting love relationships (Delia, Marathus, Nemesis) clearly represent the breakdown of elite identity.⁵⁷ Lee-Stecum furthers these readings when he argues that love elegy's "paradigmatic destabilizing force," causes the Tibullan text to acquire its characteristic instability.⁵⁸

Tibullus' transformations of gender in poems 1.8 and 2.6 suggest that elegiac gender is established, however transiently, through intertextual performance. Mary Kay Gamel has demonstrated that the performance of Roman love elegy dramatizes the assumption of masculine, feminine, and effeminate gendered statuses in Roman culture.⁵⁹ The audience of Roman love elegy thus watched the performance of shifting gendered positions embodied through gesture, voice, and pose. Like Gamel, Maria Wyke, in her synoptic overview of critical work on love elegy, has argued that elegy's generic problematic is the performance of gender.⁶⁰ I wish to extend her discussion, as well as Gamel's, into the fields of poetic style and allusion.

Allusion and gender reversals are one way in which Tibullus contributes to the instability of gendered positions in Augustan elegy. Critical examinations of gender in elegy have often taken Propertius as the exemplar of elegiac gender play. Yet this essay points to Tibullus' own unique mechanism of engagement with elegiac sex and gender systems through the intertextual performance of gender reversal. Propertius presents his poet-lover as programmatically devoted to Cynthia alone in much of the first three books of his elegies. It is not until the fourth book that Propertius begins to experiment with staging different voices in a new form of aetiological Roman elegy. Tibullus, by contrast, in a much smaller

⁵⁷ See Fineberg (above, n.4) 423; Miller (above, n.4) 94–104. Janan (above, n.46), through a Lacanian reading, finds a similar incoherence within Propertius book 4 and demonstrates that women's voices become a lever to reveal failures within Roman ideological structures of male and female, pro- or anti-Augustan, Roman and non-Roman, and epic and elegiac.

⁵⁸ P. Lee-Stecum "Poet/reader, Authority Deferred: Re-reading Tibullan elegy," *Arethusa* 33 (2000) 212–13.

⁵⁹ M. K. Gamel "Reading as a Man: Performance and Gender in Roman Elegy." *Helios* 25 (1998) 79–95.

⁶⁰ See Wyke (above, n.4) 166–85.

corpus of sixteen poems, assigns his poet-lover three different beloveds: he alternates seamlessly between Delia (1.3, 1.5, 1.6) and Marathus (1.4, 1.8, 1.9) in the first book; assigns his poet-lover a third beloved, Nemesis, in his second book; and introduces elegy's only sustained relationship with a male beloved in the Marathus poems. Thus it is not surprising that play around reversals of biological and even grammatical gender emerges as a central aspect of Tibullan poetics.

By way of conclusion, Tibullus' intertextual performance in his alterations of biological and grammatical sex and gender categories in 1.8 and 2.6 highlights an unexpected connection between ancient rhetorical and contemporary critical theory. For the ancient rhetor, the assumption of another character *in propria persona*, through *ethopoeia*, was judged most effective when the orator persuasively assumed the ethos of the character staged. The orator's great skill lies in convincingly assuming the role of, for example, Medea before her murdered children (Libanius, *Ethopoeia* 11) or Appius Claudius Caecus before Clodia (Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 33–34), to name two disparate examples. Contemporary feminist and critical theory, meanwhile, stresses the performativity of gender. For Judith Butler, in her influential formulation of gender as a naturalized cultural construction, gender is a “repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.”⁶¹ These two forms of gender performativity differ insofar as the ancient orator consciously attempts to stage a persuasive and plausible performance of sexuality and gender. Rather, however, than seeing it as a temporary masquerade, Butler's definition of gender performativity explains the long-term process whereby a member of a given society repeatedly, and unconsciously, performs actions his or her society read as the effects of “natural” gender within a broader social and cultural matrix.⁶² Yet ancient and contemporary theory both point to gender as a process and as a construction created through speech, gesture, action, and behaviors that become meaningful and intelligible as the performance of gender for their audiences. To understand Tibullus' gender play in light of these theories points to the deliberate way that his reversals of gender (as biological and grammatical signifier) unseat stable

⁶¹ J. Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York 1990) 45.

⁶² Butler (above, n.61) 185–193.

gendered positions, and it highlights the radical instability of male and female gendered roles within his elegiac corpus.

In the preceding analysis, I have examined two small slices from Tibullus' corpus of sixteen poems in an effort to describe Tibullus' intertextual practices. His art of reference alludes to prior elegiac moments in a way that alters the gender of the source texts. In 1.8, Tibullus fashions Marathus to appear like an elegiac *puella*, overly devoted to his own appearance and contrasted with the woman who pays no attention to *cultus*. In this respect, the passage looks back to Propertius 1.2, a poem exemplary in the Roman elegiac tradition for its attention to the anti-cosmetic tradition.⁶³ Tibullus also boldly incorporates the elegiac Callimachus, as he transforms Callimachus' mirror-gazing Aphrodite into the well-coiffed Marathus, thus transsexing as well as translating the gender of his intertextual referent. In 2.6, Tibullus looks back to Roman love elegy's first poet⁶⁴ as he evokes Catullus' lost brother of 101 in his own image of Nemesis' dead sister. These two passages not only reveal Tibullus' complex method of overlaying his own poetics onto the existing tradition of elegiac poetry, but also demonstrate how he uses allusion to play with gendered roles in Roman love elegy. Throughout, I have highlighted Tibullan allusivity and have shown how an awareness of his poetic practice further muddies attempts to distinguish between a poet's style and the poetic text's substance. Tibullus participates in elegy's performance of gender by exposing the mutability of his referents' genders. Marathus plays the woman's part and Nemesis' unnamed sister becomes a more richly detailed character through her textual family tree. Tibullus' sophisticated intertextual practice of gender reversal thus gives added justification to Quintilian's famous praise of Tibullus as the premier Roman elegist: *elegia quoque Graecos provocamus, cuius mihi tersus atque elegans maxime videtur auctor Tibullus* ("we also rival the Greeks in elegy, among whom Tibullus seems to be the most polished and elegant," *Inst. Orat.* 10.1.93).

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⁶³ See R. K. Gibson. *Ovid, Ars Amatoria Book III* (Cambridge 2003) 21–23.

⁶⁴ While Quintilian does not categorize Catullus as one of the Roman elegists in his list of Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid (*Inst. Orat.* 10.1.93), H. Gardner ("Ariadne's Lament: The Semiotic Impulse of Catullus 64," *TAPA* 137 [2007] 147–79) persuasively demonstrates how the elegists included Catullus as one of their own forebears.