Introduction

In this thesis, I focus on three aspects of the "Lesbia poems"[1] in the Catullan *libellus*. Firstly, I use the poems to show that the narrator is comprised of a satirical authorial persona and a sincere character, whom I call "the lover." The authorial persona is aware of the lover character and comments on his actions, behaviors, and emotions with satire. Secondly, I argue that the authorial persona satirizes the sympathetic lover character to present love as entrapment. The authorial persona reveals how love limits the lover's perspective and keeps him loving beyond reason. The main theme in the poems is love as entrapment. Thirdly, I argue that all the poems can reasonably be, and ought to be, read in order to best exemplify this main theme. If the "Lesbia poems" are read chronologically, they begin and end with the lover character in the same position, entrapped in his emotions. The theme of the *libellus* overall, then, matches the theme of love as entrapment in the individual poems. I first show how each poem presents this theme and then the corpus as a whole.

The first aspect of my argument requires us to distinguish between three voices in the poems. First there is the narrator, a term I use interchangeably with "the poems" and "the text." The narrator relates the love story to us.[2] The narrator can be divided into two voices, the lover and the authorial persona. The lover exists

[1] Not all the poems I look at name the beloved as "Lesbia," but I will show how the shared characteristics of the beloved in each poem identify her as one person.

[2] OED defines "narrator" as "The voice or persona (whether explicitly identified or merely implicit) by which are related the events in a plot, esp. that of a novel or narrative poem." In this thesis, "narrator," "the poems," and "the text" are interchangeable.

on a surface level.[3] He is helplessly in love with Lesbia and his perspective prevents him from seeing his own flaws or that he and his beloved are a bad match. While the lover cannot see that he is entrapped in his love, the authorial persona is aware of the lover's state of entrapment and informs the reader of that state with satirical elements. The authorial persona often presents satire through structural elements, innuendo, hyperbole, and situational irony. This voice has more perspective than the lover character and thus has authorial qualities, which is why I call it the authorial persona. The authorial persona allows the reader to see the lover in a humorous light. Therefore, I argue that the authorial persona provides a satirical tone. Together, the lover character and the authorial persona make up the poems' ambivalent narrator.

Other scholars have tried to understand the *liber Catulli* by splitting the narrator into Catullus the poet and Catullus the lover.[4] But I think to divide Catullus into poet and character is a flawed approach. There is little known about Catullus the historical figure and I cannot know his motivations.[5] Since I cannot know the

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[3] Lyne's analysis of the poems in his book, *The Latin Love Poets*, considers only this literal interpretation. My analysis encompasses Lyne's interpretation of a sincere man in love and builds on it by considering an ironic tone juxtaposed with the sincere tone.

[4] Wiseman (1985) 175 thinks the poet used personal experiences in love to create an erotic drama; Ross 1 examines "such problems as the split personality attributed for so long to Catullus, learned Alexandrian and subjective lyricist, *doctus poeta* and the passionate poet of love, elegant versifier and rough improvisor."; Gaisser 373; Skinner (1981) 30 "The view that there are *two* Catulluses, a simple lyric poet and an artificial bookish poet, has long been a familiar one."; Some scholars see Catullus strictly as an Alexandrian poet who uses love and Lesbia as devices to create powerful poetry. Grimaldi totally eschews the idea of a lover character, saying Catullus' ability to view the affair critically means he does not really love Lesbia. His is an extreme view, but he is not a foremost scholar on the subject. The split between the "romantic" Catullus and the "Alexandrian" poet is more forceful and less nuanced than my analysis of the narrator.

[5] Luck (1974) 15-7 "So often, readers ask whether the poet is sincere, whether he really means what he says, whether he is talking of a true experience… How *can* we know? ... Hence, the question of sincerity—so fashionable today—is unanswerable."; Havelock 79 "To enlarge our understanding of what Catullus wrote, scholarship has spent considerable pains upon the task of reconstructing the events of his short life. Nothing in the present fashion seems more natural." It was natural for

thoughts of the poet, I am focused on the narrator, who is at times a sincere lover and at other times makes fun of himself as the authorial persona. The boundaries between the two voices that make up the narrator are not absolute, but ever shifting. In some poems, the pathos dominates and in others, the satirist is louder, so that both the passionate lover character and the wry authorial persona are two aspects of one narrator.

My second goal in this thesis is to show how the narrator's dissonant voices yield a theme of love as entrapment. When the lover's voice dominates the poem, the reader identifies and agonizes with him. When the authorial persona makes itself known with satirical elements, the reader is forced to examine the lover character critically. The authorial persona reveals how the lover character's obsession with his beloved compels him to fall further in love. His emotions entrap him and the prevailing theme in this set of poems is love as entrapment.[6]

Others have examined these poems and found themes of love as marriage, love as contract (*foedus*), love as disease, love as friendship (*amicitia*), and so on.[7] I think this categorization of themes needs reconsideration. Marriage, *foedus*, disease, and *amicitia* are motifs[8], concepts that reappear throughout the corpus, that contribute to one overall theme: love as entrapment. In this thesis, I group the

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scholars of the 19th century to try to create a biography for the poet based on his poems. I see the poems as literature, divorced from the historical, except for cultural context.

[6] OED: Entrapment is "the condition of being entrapped or caught by artifice." I use this term to emphasize the inescapable quality of love in these poems.

[7] Dyson (2008) 13 lists what she finds to be the main themes of this poetry: love as slavery, love as war, love as military service, love as disease, love as *foedus*, and love as *amicitia*. I am focused on one main theme: love as entrapment.

[8] OED: a motif is "A particular subject for imaginative treatment… embodying a central idea that informs a work; a recurrent theme, subject, or image." In this thesis, the motifs in the poems I discuss are marriage, Jupiter, silence, political agreement, piety and disease. I explain the structure of my chapters below.

epigrams by motif to show how the lover character progresses through various unsuccessful strategies, such as comparing love to a *foedus* or a disease, to regain his beloved, having lost her at the end of the opening sequence of "Lesbia poems." As poem 72 says, such *iniuria* as unrequited love, *amantem cogit amare magis,* "compels the lover to love more" (72.7-8). His constant strategizing to regain lost love presents love as entrapment.

My third goal is to show that the poems tell a coherent story in the order they are arranged. The coherent story becomes apparent as I inspect the poems and locate places where the combination of sincerity and satire produce the theme of love as entrapment. For it is not just the individual poems that present a character trapped by his emotions, but the narrative in its entirety.[9] Although Marilyn Skinner and others present a compelling argument that the opening sequence of love poems, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 11, shows the love affair from beginning to end and the subsequent poems are out of order, I think it is just as logical to suppose that the story is linear.[10] After poem 11, the story continues chronologically to portray the entrapping nature of obsessive love. The poems after 11 are not episodes from a story that began and ended in the first 11 poems, but a continuation of it. If the story is linear, then the love affair ends in poem 11 and the lover character dwells

[9] Wiseman (1985) 64: The epigrams are "a coherent drama featuring Catullus the lover, his mistress, and his rivals." I argue that the "coherent drama" encompasses the entire corpus, not just the epigrams.

[10] Skinner (1981) explains that scholars embraced the idea of the introductory Lesbia cycle as a narrative prologue making the succeeding Lesbia poems references to it as a prior event; Miller 403 "Thus it is now well established that the opening of the polymetrics gives an encapsulated form of the narrative of the Lesbia affair as a whole."; Throughout his commentary, Ellis tries to place each "Lesbia poem" sequentially among the opening sequence. I argue that it is unnecessary to reorganize the Lesbia poems, they are in a coherent order as they are. See also Wiseman (1985) 137-46; Wray 53-5; Skinner (2005) 220; Ellis lxiv-lxv; Quinn (1980) 241; Ross (1979) 89.

on the memory of the relationship and agonizes over what went wrong in the subsequent "Lesbia poems." In the last "Lesbia poem," 109, Lesbia wants to resume the affair. The lover accepts, but is doubtful the relationship will last. This way, the story ends with their relationship uncertain and the lover in the midst of his characteristic turmoil.

My reflections on the arrangement of the *libellus* require a brief summary of its organization. One of the primary controversies debated among Catullan scholars concerns the unusual structure of the corpus and whether the poet or a posthumous editor organized it.[11] The *libellus* contains three segments. Book One is made up of 60 polymetra. These are poems of varying meter, length, subject and tone. They are ostensibly biographical, written in the first person and addressed to friends, enemies, and lovers. Book Two of the *libellus* contains poems 61-68, the *epyllia*, or "little epics." The *epyllia* also vary in meter but are much longer and concern not only themes introduced in the polymetra, (love, friendship, and politics), but also myths. Book Three comprises poems 69-116, the epigrams, which are short poems in elegiac couplets. The epigrams also range in subject, featuring love, politics and friendship. The epigrams written to the beloved, I argue, follow the other two books sequentially. I cannot say whether the poet himself organized the *libellus*, but through textual analysis, I show that the "Lesbia poems" when taken in order better exemplify the themes of the individual poems.

To best evaluate the complex narration in these poems and how it produces a theme of love as entrapment that progresses throughout the corpus, I examine parts

[11] Skinner (1981, 2003, 2005, 2007); Dettmer; Lyne; Ellis xiv-l; Havelock 74-5

of several "Lesbia poems," starting with the polymetra, which are programmatic[12] and establish the dynamics of the narrator's relationship with love and Lesbia. Then I move through the elegiac poems grouped by theme. In my first chapter, I provide close readings of poems 2, 5 and 7, which are programmatic and essential to understanding the relationship between the lover character and the beloved. These poems introduce the relationship as a battle for control, which the lover is perpetually losing. In poem 2, the authorial persona provides satirical elements in the form of sexual humor, which comment on the lover's obsessive nature to show that he is trapped in love. The power struggle between the lover character and beloved presented in poem 2 leads to the lover's strategizing to counter her dominance in poems 5 and 7. The connection between the power imbalance established in poems 2 and the lover character's strategizing in 5 and 7 connects these poems as a narrative. This narrative has a dominant theme of love as entrapment.

In chapter two, I show how poem 8 exemplifies the split between a sincere and a satirical voice in the text. Then I show how in poems 11, 37, and 58, the lover uses vulgar vocabulary to exaggerate his own worth and vilify Lesbia's. While on the one hand, the lover character's self-aggrandizement is a sincere attempt to counter his beloved's control over his emotions, on the other hand, the authorial persona satirically exposes the symptoms and effects of obsessive love. This

[12] OED defines "programmatic" as that which "sets out a programme." I mean poems 2, 5, and 7 establish the precedent for the way the lover and beloved interact and the characteristics of the layered narrator.

combination of pathos and irony establishes the theme of love as entrapment as we see that love compels the lover to insult Lesbia.

In chapter three, I examine epigrams 70 and 72, which combine the motifs of fidelity, Jupiter, and father-child relationships. These motifs maintain the power imbalance between the lover and beloved as was established in the programmatic "Lesbia poems," 2, 5, and 7. This imbalance of power compels the lover character to try innovative ways to requisition control over the relationship, whether aggrandizing his own worth or belittling Lesbia's. Meanwhile, the authorial persona reveals that the lover character is guided by his emotions to expect fidelity in an extramarital affair and compare himself absurdly to Jupiter and a father figure. The authorial persona reveals how each of these attempts by the lover character to restart the relationship are ineffective because they actually detract from the erotic tone. I also argue that we should not underestimate the effects of epigram as a structural component. The structure sets these poems apart from those examined in chapter one. Moving away from Lyne's assertion that the epigrams lack the poeticism of the polymetra because of their unromantic, analytical tone, I argue that the epigrammatic suits the overall narrative by characterizing the lover as analytical while satirically commenting on his logical, but ineffective methods of rekindling passion.

Next, in chapter four, I examine the theme of speaking vs. silence, focusing on epigrams 83 and 92. In these poems the authorial persona comments on the lover's eagerness to believe the beloved requites him. The lover tries to prove she loves him based on evidence that she talks about him, but the fallible logic shows that love

has entrapped him and compelled him to try increasingly futile ways to regain his lost beloved. The lover's argument develops from poem 83 to 92, suggesting that the poems are best read chronologically.

In chapter five, I look at poems 75, 87, and 109, to examine the use of technical vocabulary, memorably described by David Ross as "the vocabulary of political alliance."[13] I show how the political vocabulary satirizes the lover's sincerity. The lover character uses political vocabulary as a strategy to make the love affair resume. With words like *foedus*, he tries to impress Lesbia on the one hand and on the other hand, convince her she is obligated to love him. Since the words lack eroticism, however, the authorial persona comically reveals that the lover character is foolish, compelled by his love to try yet another unsuccessful strategy to win Lesbia back. The series of unsuccessful strategies I discuss in these chapters shows that the lover cannot stop trying and underscores the theme of love as entrapment. Poem 109 is the last poem on Lesbia and I show how it is a better ending for the story of the affair than poem 11, the last of the introductory sequence.

In my sixth chapter, I present one last analysis of the nuanced narrator in the "Lesbia poems" by focusing on poem 76. This poem uses themes of love as disease, love as piety, and love as "contract" (*foedus*), to create evocative, innovative poetry. Poem 76 combines sincerity and satire, but is more sympathetic and profound than other poems where the wry authorial persona dominates the sympathetic lover character. 76 therefore presents the fluidity of the moods relatable to a person in love. Through a close reading of this poem, I argue that the narrator in the "Lesbia

[13] Ross 80-95

poems" who sometimes seems to be two different people, the self-pitying and the self-aware, cannot be so easily split into two. The narrator is not a matter of a poet discrete from his character, but a nuanced presentation of the emotion love and its complexities. Finally, my conclusion reflects on the methods the poems use to present the love affair and create a memorable record of one great love story.

In this study I limit my scope[14] to poems that specifically mention "Lesbia" or a representative epithet. However, through intratextual references, I consider many other poems with applicable themes. I owe a great debt to Marilyn Skinner, without whose many books on Catullus I would not understand this *libellus* nearly as well. My thesis complements her analyses of the poems by viewing the entire Lesbia affair as chronological, while Skinner sees its chronological progression restricted to the opening sequence.

[14] Skinner (2003) 61 and Dettmer 171-226 both say that the Lesbia poems ought not be separated out from the rest. Although I have gone against their advice, I consider many other poems through intratextual reference. However, I feel further insight could be gained in applying my conclusions to the narration in rest of the corpus.

Chapter 1: The Establishment of a Power Struggle and the Theme of Love as Entrapment in Poems 2, 5, and 7

Book One opens with a dedication poem and introduces the beloved in poem 2. The beloved's appearance so early in the corpus speaks to her importance. Poem 2 is programmatic for the relationship between the lover and the beloved that extends throughout the *libellus* in that it founds the relationship on imbalance. This imbalance is shown through the symbolism of sparrows, antithetical vocabulary, and reversal of gender roles. The lover is emotionally subservient to the *puella* and his inferior position is sympathetic. At the same time, the authorial persona introduces sexual humor that adds a satirical tone to show how the lover takes the relationship too seriously. Poem 2 is programmatic, since the imbalance established here causes the lover character to be entrapped by his love, and he strategizes to counter the *puella*'s dominance in later "Lesbia poems."

I first discuss how the interaction between the lover character and the *puella* establishes a power imbalance between them. This imbalance leads to the lover needing to counter her dominance. His love brings him into the relationship and traps him in it. Then I discuss the sexual connotations of the poem and how they enhance the theme of love as entrapment by showing that the lover character is led by love to take the situation more seriously than would be wise.

Poem 2 describes a scene where the *puella* happily plays with her pet sparrow. The lover character grows frustrated as she plays with it because it lightens her mind but makes him stressed. Establishing the scene as erotic, the poem opens with the word *passer*:

Passer, deliciae meae puellae,

Sparrow, delight of my darling

Sparrows are associated with Venus.[15] The poem has *passer* as the first word and thereby establishes that this poem concerns love. Venus is an important figure in Roman literature. She is the goddess of love and the mother of Aeneas, the founder of Rome. Since Venus and love are so important to Roman culture, the association between the sparrow and Venus underscores the importance of the love story in this *libellus*.

In the next three lines, the *puella* is in the nominative case, showing that she is in control of the relationship. While the poem addresses the sparrow, the *puella* is the agent of the main verb *solet*:

Passer, deliciae meae puellae

Quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,

Cui primum digitum dare appetenti

Et acris solet incitare morsus.

Sparrow, delight of my darling,

With whom she likes to play, to hold in her lap,

To whom, hungry, she likes to give

The tip of her finger to incite sharp bites.

The *passer* is a symbol representing the lover character's devotion to his beloved. Just as the nominative subject is in control of the sentence, the *puella* is in control of the sparrow and thus the lover's feelings. The pronoun representing the

[15] Wiseman (1985) 138

sparrow is in the ablative, *quicum*, the accusative, *quem*, and the dative, *cui,* as a reflection of the *puella* controlling the lover. He changes form syntactically in response to her, which suggests he literally acts in response to her control as well. The authorial persona thus shows us her control of the sparrow, a symbol associated with love, and through syntax suggests she is in control of the lover's passionate emotion as well.

That the sparrow represents the lover character's emotions is evidenced by the progression of interactions between the *puella* and the sparrow, which portrays the sparrow responding emotionally to the playful *puella*. First, in line 2, she plays with it, *quicum ludere.* Then, she holds it in her lap, *quem in sinu tenere*. Being held in her lap puts sparrow in an emotional state, for at that point it can no longer respond to her playfulness lightly. It becomes aggressive. As a representation of the lover's emotions, the sparrow's aggression shows that the lover wants more from the *puella* than playfulness. When the *puella* gives the sparrow a little bit of herself, "the tip of her finger," she unveils the small extent to which she is invested in the relationship. In lines 3-4, the sparrow is aggressive, giving *acris morsus,* "sharp bites" in response to her playfulness. The sparrow's inability to be playful indicates it is experiencing the pain of love. The sparrow bites the *puella* because by being playful, she does not give it the love that it wants.

As the poem progresses, the *puella*'s mind becomes eased and the lover character becomes stressed. The next six lines support the assessment of the sparrow as a symbol representing the lover's emotions. For as the *puella* teases the sparrow, the lover becomes agitated and upset along with the bird.

Cum desiderio meo calenti[16]

Carum nescio quid lubet iocari

Et solaciolum sui doloris,

Credo ut tum gravis acquiescat ardor.

Tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem

Et tristis animi levare curas!

Burning with desire for me,

It pleases her to joke about some concern

And get a little solace from her pain.

I believe that then her heavy passion yields.

Would that I could play with you like she does,

And relieve the sad tortures of my mind! (2.5-10)

The vocabulary is frequently antithetical. The words *deliciae, ludere* (twice)*, iocari,* and *solaciolum,* (2.1, 2, 6, 7, 10) have light or playful meanings. Contrastingly, the words *appetenti, acris morsus, doloris, gravis ardor,* and *tristis curas* (2.3, 4, 7, 8, 10) have severe or sad meanings. In most cases, the lighter, happier words describe the *puella*. The serious words describe the sparrow or the lover, enforcing the idea that the sparrow stands in for the lover. The sparrow, giving sharp bites, and the lover, bearing sad tortures, are both more serious about the relationship than the *puella*, who is only playing.

However, the poem does not say simply that the *puella* is a playful person becuase the *dolor* in line 7 and the *gravis ardor* in line 8 belong to her. Rather she is

[16]Trappes-Lomax 38, as opposed to *nitenti* in Mynors manuscipt and Quinn's commentary.

playful in the way she interacts with the lover. Their interaction suggests that their relationship is a struggle for emotional control from the lover's perspective. They play together and it eases her mind (*gravis acquiescat ardor*), but the lover feels anguish, which he expresses by saying he cannot be rid of the "the sad tortures of my mind" (2.10).[17] Her ability to devastate the lover shows that he is in love with her and she is in control of him. He wishes he could be playful and lighthearted like the *puella*, saying to the sparrow, "Would that I could play with you like she does!" (2.9). He desires her emotional lightness, because it gives her the power to hurt him. Their relationship is thus emotionally imbalanced, with the lover in a subservient position.

The theme of love as a power struggle relates to the theme of love as entrapment. The relationship between lover and beloved is not founded on desire alone, but also on the lover character's need to respond to his beloved's dominance. The lighter her mind, (*gravis acquiescat ardor*), the heavier his mind, (*tristis animi curas*). The more they interact, the more frustrated he is that she does not feel as seriously about the relationship as he does. And the more they interact, the less serious she is. Their interaction is an endless cycle that traps the lover in an ever-increasing emotional state. The imbalance between them emotionally causes love to entrap the lover.

We see that the *puella* is dominant over the lover character, reflected in her depiction in the nominative case and her manipulation of the sparrow representing the lover's feelings. She therefore upsets Roman gender roles, in which the man is

[17] Quinn (1970) 94 gives us "tortures" for *curas*.

supposed to be dominant.[18] The original readers of this *libellus* would likely have taken offense to the male lover's emasculation by the *puella*. Her masculinity increases the intensity of the power imbalance and compels the lover, a Roman man with Roman ideas about masculinity, to try and counter her dominance.

As there would be no gain in supposing the lover character is in fact "Catullus," there is similarly no benefit in looking at this affair as a real historical event. Nevertheless, scholars have done extensive research to associate the *puella*, "Lesbia," with a real figure. Historical records suggest Catullus may have had an affair with Clodia Metelli, the politically influential, morally corrupt, upper-class, married *mulier.*[19] If so, their affair would have been comparable to that between a patron and client, with Catullus subservient to Clodia because he was of a slightly lower social class.[20] This is irrelevant to my discussion of the lover character and his beloved*, unless* contemporary readers associated this *puella* with Clodia.[21] If the poem implied Clodia for contemporary readers, the power imbalance between her and the lover character gains intensity, since Clodia notoriously did not let the subservient position of women in Rome keep her from having social and political influence.[22] Her social superiority and notorious unfeminine personality underscore her position of control and intensify the power imbalance.[23]

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[18] Skinner (1997, 2005); Faucault; Wiseman (1985); Manwell; Luck (1972)
[19] Skinner 1983, 2011; Hejduk 2008; Wiseman (1985) 15-90; Lyne 4; Quinn (1970), Ellis
[20] Skinner (1997) 144, "their affair is tantamount to a client relationship."
[21] Wiseman (1985) 130-7. It is conceivable that readers associated Lesbia with Clodia because of the way texts were published during the late Republic. Catullus, writing in the 50s BC, would have circulated his poetry among his friends, who might have known about his affair with Clodia and connected it with "Lesbia."
[22] Skinner (1983) 280; Skinner 2011; Wiseman (1985) 75-90; Cicero *Pro Caelio*; Clodia was active in the political careers of her brother and husband, probably had extramarital affairs, and after her

The *puella* is more dominant over the lover character in poem 2 if the sparrow represents not only the lover's emotions, but also his penis.[24] This is conceivable because sex is common subject matter in this *libellus*.[25] If we interpret the sparrow sexually, the *puella*, when she puts it into every different position syntactically, appears sexually skilled.[26] The sexual interpretation of the sparrow is scandalous[27] and humorous and it satirizes the obsessed lover's seriousness with a layer of humor. Humor dominates in lines 2.9-10, when the lover wishes that his mind could be as eased as Lesbia's is by playing with the sparrow. *Tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem/et tristis animi levare curas!* On the one hand, this line is sincere. The lover longs for independence because being with his *puella* keeps him in emotional turmoil and he wishes to be without the tortures of his mind. On the other hand, the authorial persona satirizes the lover character's pained longing with sexual humor. By wishing he could satisfy himself sexually without the *puella* being involved, the lover character wishes he could masturbate instead of having sex with his *puella*.[28] The lover wishes for independence from his *puella*, but in the same

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husband's death was independent and wealthy. Sources are scant, but suggest she was not passive or docile like the ideal Roman woman.

[23] Skinner (1997) 135 "Greco-Roman sexual relations are organized as patterns of dominance-submission behaviors that ideally replicate and even confirm social superiority or inferiority"; Lyne 15 "[Clodia's] political influence was remarkable. Her social and sexual success was outstanding";

[24] Gaisser 377; Dyson (2007) 257; Skinner (1981) 12

[25] Tatum 337

[26] Skinner (1997) 135 "the status of citizen male is predicated upon control."; Skinner (2005) 196 "Roman social and sexual hierarchies are two interrelated systems that 'can hardly be understood independently of each other.'"; Greene 144 "It was not uncommon for Romans of Catullus' era to consider a woman who expresses and acts upon such desire as masculine, and therefore as monstrous to some degree."; The *puella*'s sexual superiority would not please the original audience, men of the late republic.

[27] Gaisser 377-381; over the centuries, more conservative eras have tried to erase this interpretation from scholarship, while more sexually liberated eras like the Renaissance in Italy have celebrated it. This speaks the poem's controversial nature; it is meant to both incite and amuse.

[28] Dyson (2007) 257

statement wishes to masturbate, apparently incidentally, with comical effect. So, in tandem with sincere misery (*tristis animi curas*) in poem 2, there is an undercurrent of comedy. The narrator is layered; the serious lover exists on the surface, then the authorial persona makes fun of his seriousness by providing sexual humor.

In poem 2b[29], the lover identifies with a woman enforcing the gender role reversal that makes the *puella* dominant:

Tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae

Pernici aureolum fuisse malum,

Quod zonam soluit diu ligatam

This would be as pleasing to me as they say

That swift girl was pleased when a golden apple

Loosened her belt, so long tied tight. (2.11-3)

The lover identifies here with Atalanta[30], a character from myth. As told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Atalanta longs to be married, but Apollo's prophecy reveals that she can only marry the man who outruns her in a footrace and all the men who lose to her must die. A young man named Hippomenes falls in love with her and Venus instructs him to strike Atalanta with golden apples during the race. He does this, wins the race, and the two, thrilled, retire to a holy temple to have sex. But the temple belongs to Cybele, who is offended by their desecrating act and turns them into lions.[31]

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[29] Quinn (1970) 95 explains that these lines were considered a separate poem for many years, hence the number "2b," but recent scholars have reattached them to poem 2.

[30] T. P. Wiseman (1985) 176 recognizes that "it came naturally to [the lover character] to compare himself with a woman." I argue that this comparison reinforces the struggle for control in the relationship.

[31] Ovid *Met.* X.560-739; OCD 191

The lover identifies with Atalanta in the sense that both long to be sexually fulfilled. The identification enforces the lover character's femininity and correspondingly his feminine role in the relationship, which he hereafter strategizes to undo. Moreover, if he is Atalanta, that makes the *puella* Hippomenes. When Hippomenes outruns Atalanta, he proves his masculine strength. Poem 2 therefore ascribes masculine strength to the *puella*. The mythological allusion enforces the reversal of gender roles that causes the power imbalance in the relationship.

The lover character wishes he could get the relief from the *passer,* saying at 2.9, "Would that I could play with you like she does!" like the relief the golden apple gave Atalanta when it loosened her belt. Put another way, the apple gave way to Atalanta's sexual satisfaction.[32] The lover compares playing with the sparrow to Atalanta being hit with the apple. The sparrow is thus the means for the lover to achieve sexual satisfaction, as the apple was for Atalanta. If the lover character can play with the sparrow, he will be sexually satisfied, reinforcing the masturbatory connotations of his exhortation at 2.9. The allusion to myth thus enforces the sexual connotations of the sparrow and underscores the humorous tone of the poem.

The satirical element of the poem, its sexual humor, shows that the *puella* is sexually dominant over the lover. Her dominance upsets proper gender roles and underscores the power imbalance. The power imbalance enforced by the *puella*'s masculinity and the lover character's femininity contributes to the theme of love as entrapment because it compels the lover character to try and outdo the *puella* in masculinity. In poem 2, the sparrow, representing the lover, bites her, which only

[32] Panoussi 279 "The image of the loosening of the maiden's girdle [is] an image symbolic of the consummation of marriage."

makes her less interested in loving him (*gravis acquiescat ardor*) and therefore more emotionally in control. Poem 2 thus uses syntax, antithesis, symbolism, and gender role reversal to establish imbalanced love between the narrator and the *puella*, while the presence of humor suggests that the narrator is somewhat self-aware. I show in the remainder of this thesis how the lover constantly strategizes to gain dominance over his *puella* because of the way their relationship starts in poem 2.

The love poems in the polymetra continue to advance the main theme. Poem 5 presents the narrator and Lesbia apparently in love and uses exaggerations to satirize the lover character when he tries to counter the power imbalance established in poem 2 in foolish ways. Love compels him to strategize to impress her and thereby entraps him in the relationship even when evidence suggests he is more invested in it than she is.

Poem 5 opens with the famous exhortation and apostrophe:

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus

Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love (5.1)

The poem parallels living and loving, *vivamus atque amemus*, syntactically to show how seriously the lover character takes the relationship. To him, love is as important as life itself. But the poem does not mention Lesbia's response to this exhortation. The lover either ignores or fails to consider her feelings or thoughts.[33] I suggest that the authorial persona speaks here in Lesbia's conspicuous silence. If so, the lover character appears to be naïve, assuming that his love is requited. We

[33] Havelock 11 "We do not see her, but only feel her as a power over him, for love and hate and anger and grief." In this poem, she is a power over him for love. In poem 2, there was also anger and grief. Hate will come in later poems.

are therefore meant to interpret this poem ironically, in part. It is the sincere exhortation of a lover and a satirical critique of the solipsism love induces.

The lover then uses a hyperbole, which further demonstrates his solipsism:

Da mi basia mille, deinde centum,

Dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,

Deinde utque altera mille, deinde centum.

Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,

Then another thousand, then a second hundred,

Then even another thousand, then a hundred. (5.7-9)

The lover appears prone to exaggeration. His infinite desire, evidenced in the infinite kisses he requests, is sweet, but the monotonous listing of numbers sounds like accounting and is actually unerotic.[34] The lover thinks he is being enchanting. As the poem goes on to say, his counting is a way of casting spells to prevent anyone from "bewitching" the lover and beloved (5.12). However, the unromantic connotations of the numeric vocabulary satirize his sincerity. Moreover, there is still no response from Lesbia. Though all appears well in the relationship, her silence shows how love causes solipsism. The poem only tells us that the lover is happy in love; the perspective is limited to him.

In poem 7, the kisses remain, but the passion has distinctly cooled.[35] The lover is not as eager as in poem 5, where all he can do is ask for kisses from his

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[34] Wiseman (1985) identifies "the language of accountancy" (104); Dyson (2007) 258

[35] Wiseman (1985) 141; Dettmer 24-5; Ellis' commentary supports the notion of passion cooling from poem 5 to 7, saying that in poem 5 the kisses were from Lesbia and in poem 7 they are given to her. He translates the genitive in 7.2 as "'kissings of you' not 'from you.'" When the relationship was passionate in poem 5, Lesbia kissed the lover character. That she is not kissing him in poem 7 supports the notion that passion has diminished. However, Quinn's commentary says that the kisses

puella. In poem 7 he takes its time describing how many kisses he wants. Like poem 5, poem 7 uses exaggerations to characterize the lover as an extremist. He demands infinite kisses, which is sweet, naïve, and unrealistic. Also like poem 5, Lesbia's silence makes the character's extreme love for her suspect. It begins:

Quaeris quot mihi basiationes

Tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque?

You ask me how many kissifications[36]

From you, Lesbia are enough and more? (7.1-2)

The word *basiationes* is an invention. The lover adds to *basia*, "kisses," an eloquent and formal suffix. Since their passion is dwindling, the lover wants rekindle it by speaking grandly and dramatically. He elevates his language to something more upper class, as if trying to impress Lesbia.[37] His eagerness to impress her recalls the precedent established by their interaction in poem 2, where she was the dominant half of the relationship, to the lover's frustration. He wants her to think more of him than she did then, when he was in love and she was only playing. He does this by inventing the word *basiationes*.

There is sincerity in the lover wanting to impress Lesbia, but the authorial persona presents a satirical tone at the same time because making the word "kisses" fancy has ironic effects. "Kissifications" lacks the sweetness and passion of "kisses." Kisses between lovers do not have sophistication; they are not highbrow. We saw

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in 7 *are* from Lesbia in response to *da mi basia mille* at 5.7. I agree with Quinn, but both arguments make sense.

[36] Quinn (1970) 112

[37] Lyne 45 calls *basiationes* "a colloquial word got up in over-formal clothes"; Dyson 258 calls it "pseudo-intellectual jargon"; Nisbet 488 "Basiationes" is "humorously pretentious."

how poem 5 negates the sweetness of kisses with language of accountancy. Now, poem 7 does the same thing with the lover's eagerness to seem educated and impressive to Lesbia. Thus, poem 7 uses sincerity and satire to reveal the lover's youth and naivety in love and the way his love guides his actions.

Although the relationship is losing its momentum in poem 7, love keeps the main character trying to make it work, as we see when he strives to appear educated and upper class. His inability to let the affair end despite its cooling passion shows that he is trapped. Meanwhile, Lesbia's level of interest remains unknown to us.

The lover continues to try to impress Lesbia in poem 7 with elaborate imagery, but his didactic tone undermines the attempted eroticism. In the next lines of the poem, he estimates that he needs as many "kissifications" as there are grains of sand on the Libyan shore near the temple of Jupiter and as many as the number of stars when night is silent (7.3-8). Again the hyperbole is like a magic spell so "no evil tongue can bewitch" their love (7.12). However, the hyperbolic imagery comes across as somewhat ludicrous.[38] The tone is erotic and magical, but also erudite, as if the lover is trying to sound educated for Lesbia's benefit. The mention of Jupiter in 7.5 supplements the farfetchedness of what the lover says by evoking extravagant ideas of *optimus* and *maximus*. These embellished lines are so unrealistic that we may consider them a satirical look at the effects of love.

The image of grains of sand and stars to represent infinity recurs in poem 61, a marriage hymn. There, the joys of the groom on his wedding night are

[38] Lyne 45 "the allusive details of 3-6 are so thick-laid as to border on caricature… He is striking a pose, to flatter and amuse Lesbia."

enumerated with the same comparison to sand and stars (61.199-203). This intratextual reference suggests that the lover feels as though his relationship with Lesbia is comparable to a marriage in poem 7. The authorial persona shows us the folly of this assumption when, in the next poem, the lover and Lesbia have unhappily split. Lesbia, it seems, does not view the affair on so serious a level.

The eagerness of the lover to impress Lesbia in poem 7 is an instance of his strategizing to undo her emotional dominance and make her see him as an equal. Later on, he tries methods of insulting her (poems 11, 37, 58), comparing himself to an authoritative father-figure (70, 72), and claiming they had a legal contract to love one another (75, 87, 109), as I discuss later in this thesis. Therefore, poem 7 is programmatic and leads us to interpret the forthcoming poems as a similar combination of the lover's sincerity and the authorial persona's satirical voice.

Chapter 2: Sincerity and Satire in Poems 8, 11, 37, and 58

Poems 8, 11, 37 and 58 are a blend of solipsistic lover and self-aware authorial persona like the previous poems. At this point in the narrative, the lover character and the beloved have broken up and the lover's inability to let go of her shows that love has entrapped him. Poem 8 in particular presents the entrapping nature of love, with the authorial persona instructing the lover to rid himself of his love without success. The lover ends poem 8 where he began, having made no progress toward escaping his emotions.

After I discuss poem 8, I show how poems 11, 37, and 58 portray the lover's sincere desperation to win back his beloved, while the authorial persona mocks his ineffective methods to implement a satirical tone. The lover character evolves, developing innovative methods to win back his beloved, while the authorial persona exposes the futility of his methods. At the same time, the fact that the lover needs to strategize to get Lesbia back shows how love rules his actions.

Poem 8 uses structure, apostrophe, repetition, symbolism of the sun, and intratextual reference to portray the lover's devotion to Lesbia. These same devices allow the authorial persona to satirize the lover's inability to move on from the relationship. The satirical tone exposes how love has entrapped the lover. First I explain an overview of the structure of poem 8, then discuss how specific devices portray sincerity and satire.

The poem is structured so that the authorial persona and the lover alternate speaking. However, since the two voices are not entirely separable, it may be more appropriate to say they alternate in whose tone dominates. In the opening

apostrophe, the authorial persona speaks, instructing the lover.[39] He tells the lover, *miser Catulle*, to "stop being useless" and to let go of the relationship that has died. The apostrophe creates a triangulation between the authorial persona, the apostrophized lover, and the audience.[40] Then in lines 3-8, the emotional lover dominates the tone, reflecting on when he was happy with his *puella*, showing that he cannot heed the authorial persona's advice and let Lesbia go. Then, the authorial persona repeats the apostrophe of lines 1-2, further exposing the lover's stagnancy. He implores the lover not to chase what flees, but *obdura*, "stand strong" (8.9-11). Then lines 12-18 have the lover emotionally apostrophizing Lesbia, telling her she will no longer be loved. The end of the poem is especially satirical, when the authorial persona repeats his apostrophe to the lover and tells him to let his love go. By the end of the poem, the authorial persona has shown that the lover is incapable of overcoming his emotions, so the repetition of the apostrophe has a mocking and satirical tone.

When the authorial persona apostrophizes the lover and tells him to stop being emotional, he uses the verb *obdurare* in lines 11, 12, and 19. The repetition of the imploration to stand strong reveals that the lover is unable to do so. The word *obduare* itself possesses irony in this context. The root of the word is the *durus*, meaning "hard." From this root we get the English word "endure." The prefix *ob*, though, gives the verb a different directional sense than "endure." *Ob* means "against" when it is a preposition, and it suggests aggression in response to something. The authorial persona uses *obdura* to tell the lover to be independent,

[39] Dettmer 27 "the struggle between intellect and emotion informs the shape of c. 8."
[40] Asso 162 on apostrophe creating a triangulation between speaker, addressed party, and audience.

but the act of being obdurate can only happen in response to something and therefore precludes independence. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* gives the synonym *durum reddere*, "to give back hardness." This supports my interpretation of the word as an action that precludes independence because it requires further interaction with the source of the original *durum*. The lover character's strength depends on the thing he must be strong against: Lesbia. The lover is not capable of separating himself from his *puella*; he cannot be independent, but only acts in response to her.

The lover's inability to act outside of Lesbia's influence recalls poem 2. Then, in response to her teasing, the sparrow, representing the lover, bit Lesbia. The lover's emotions compel him to respond and prevent him from liberating himself from the girl who induced his emotions. He is consumed by love and cannot act except in response to her even when the more rational authorial persona tells him to, as he does in poem 8.

After the first apostrophe in lines 1-2, the lover succumbs to emotional memories of Lesbia. Lines 3-8 are a memory of their happy time together. This section of the poem is in the past tense to show that the happy relationship has passed. The lover laments that the relationship is over because it once made him happy. He portrays his extreme emotions using the sun as a symbol of happiness.

Fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,

Cum uentitabas quo puella ducebat

Amata tantum[41] quantum amabitur nulla.

Ibi illa multa tum[42] iocosa fiebant,

Quae tu uolebas nec puella nolebat,

Fulsere uere candidi tibi soles.

Once the days shone bright for you,

When you were going where she was leading

The girl loved as no one will ever be loved,

There and then, many fun things happened,

Which you were desiring and she wasn't refusing,

Truly the days shone bright for you. (8.3-8)

Lines 3 and 8 open and close the memory of the *puella* and are almost identical: *fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles* and *fulsere vere candidi tibi soles*. The use of sun imagery makes the scene in the past tense seem bright. Line 3 represents the sun rising, illuminating the lines describing the happy relationship. Then 8.8 repeats *fulsere candidi tibi soles* and represents the setting sun. The lover character's life after the end of the relationship is dark and dreary like night. The symbolism of the sun shows the intensity of the lover's emotions, able to make life seem like constant day or night.

[41] The Mynors manuscript and Quinn's text have *nobis* here. Trappes-Lomax gives sufficient evidence that this is a mistake (Trappes-Lomax 50)

[42] Quinn has *cum*. Trappes-Lomax makes the case for *tum* (Trappes-Lomax 50).

The *soles* are a cross-reference to poem 5, which also uses the sun as a symbol. Poem 5 shows the lover happy with Lesbia, but the authorial persona interrupts the lover's rejoicing to say this warning:

Soles occidere et redire possunt.

Nobis cum semel occidit breuis lux,

Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

Suns can set and rise again.

When brief light has fallen once for us,

One eternal night must be slept through (5.3-5)

The authorial persona in poem 5 warns the lover character that the sun will set on the relationship. In poem 8, the lover is enduring the eternal night predicted in poem 5. An "eternal night" that "must be slept through" is a metaphor for death. The lover feels that without Lesbia as his *puella*, he is dead. The authorial persona warned us that this would happen in poem 5, which shows that he has more perspective and awareness than the lover. The authorial persona informs us that love is the force that narrows the lover's perspective to see only two options: life with Lesbia and death without her.

The relationship in the memory is ideal in the lover's mind, because in lines 8.3-8, love between him and the *puella* is balanced and requited. In 8.4 Lesbia is leading, *puella ducebat,* and in 8.7, the lover leads her, *tu uolebas*. The lover desires this balance to counter the imbalance poem 2 established when the *puella* was in control, portrayed there by her association with the nominative case. In poem 8, both the lover and beloved get a turn as the agent of the sentence. The lover's

recollection of the relationship, therefore, is not accurate. He remembers a requited love, when there is no evidence that Lesbia loves him in the poems before this.

The authorial persona adds a humorous element to the lover's pining over the relationship described in 8.3-8. The memory is comical because it is bland and makes the reader question why the lover is so pained over end of the relationship. The requited love described is pleasant, but its depiction is not detailed. The actions are not vivid, amounting to following and leading, *ventitabas… ducebat* (8.4) and wanting and allowing, *volebas… nec…nolebas* (8.7). The most vivid part of the memory is in 8.6, *iocosa fiebant*, "fun things were happening," which is not very descriptive.[43] Other poems in this *libellus*, however, possess astounding imagery and many have graphic descriptions of sex.[44] The absence of detailed imagery or intimacy in poem 8 is conspicuous. The lover is agonized, *miser*, over lost love described in 8.3-8, but the authorial persona reveals that love to have been mild. The lover sees life without her as death, but the authorial persona shows us that life *with* her was uninteresting. The lover is stuck on this lackluster love and the authorial persona gives us the tools to see this as humorous. When we recognize this, the tone becomes satirical, as well as sincere.

The "Lesbia poems" are not as much about the lover's relationship with Lesbia as his relationship with love. The lack of detail about Lesbia in the memory makes it seem as though she could have been any *puella*. She is a means for the text

[43] Ellis 27 "The word is euphemistic for *res venerea*." The poem hints mildly at sex, but is never explicit.
[44] Quinn (1970) xxxii on Catullus "striking imagery"; Catullus poems with imagery or sex: 6, 7, 11, 15, 21, 32, 37, 48, 61, etc.

to show how love limits the perspective of the lover. Through Lesbia, the narrator shows us how love is an entrapping emotion and a humorous circumstance.

Returning to the text, after the authorial persona apostrophizes the lover for a second time, the lover attempts to listen to the authorial persona and stop loving. At line 12, the apostrophe is no longer the authorial persona addressing the lover, but the lover addressing Lesbia:

Vale puella! Iam Catullus obdurat.

Nec te requiret nec rogabit inuitam.

At tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.

Goodbye, darling! Now Catullus stands strong.

And he will neither seek you out nor ask for you, resistant.

And you will be hurt when you are sought by no one. (8.12-14).

The lover's anger in these lines is a sincere response to being unrequited in love, but the authorial persona presents a satirical tone at the same time. Love has limited the lover's perspective so that he thinks Lesbia will be "sought by no one," but there is no logical basis for this. Why should the *puella* be sought be no one? There is no evidence that she has become less desirable. There is only evidence that she no longer requites the lover character, that she is *invitam* "resistant." In the lover's narrow mind, then, if he does not love her, no one does. The authorial persona presents satire in the lover character's fallacious logic and solipsistic perspective to expose how love has negatively affected the lover.

Lines 15-8 present a series of rhetorical questions. The lover continues to apostrophize Lesbia. The reader is addressed as well as the third party in the triangulation that apostrophe creates, so we hear the full force of the lover's anger.

Scelesta, uae te, quae tibi manet uita?

Quis nunc te adibit? cui uideberis bella?

Quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?

Quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?

Wicked girl, damn you, what life remains for you?

Who will be with you now? Who will call you beautiful?

Whom will you love now? To whom will they say you belong?

Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite? (8.15-18)

Lines 8.13-18 recall lines 2-4 of poem 2, when the *puella* manipulated the sparrow into every different case syntactically. Poem 8 brings back the idea that she is manipulative and controlling through case use. In poem 2, the *puella* is the grammatical subject. She plays with the sparrow and causes the pronoun representing the sparrow into several different cases: *Passer…/**qui**cum ludere, **quem** in sinu tenere/**cui** primum digitum dare appetenti* (2.2-4). This shows her control over the sparrow, a symbol of love that stands in for the lover's feelings. 8.15-8 also have the *puella* as the nominative agent. The lover has asserted that Lesbia "will be sought by no one," so the pronoun that represents the sparrow in poem 2 here stands for "no one." When Lesbia, the agent of the sentence, puts the pronoun representing the future lover she will not have into the dative, ***cui** videberis bella?* and ***cui** labella mordebis?,* the accusative, ***quem** nunc amabis?* and ***quem** basiabis?*,

and the genitive, ***cuius*** *esse diceris?* (8.16-8), the lover is asking Lesbia whom she will abuse as she abused him in poem 2 if he does not love her. The connection between poems 2 and 8 enforce the narrative continuity.

While the lover's anger is sincere, the authorial persona provides a complementary satirical tone. He shows that how love has narrowed the lover's perspective to see only his own emotions. His emotions blind him to the likelihood that Lesbia *will* go on to be loved, *will* continue to be considered beautiful, and the man she will kiss will *not* be him.[45]

The lover has two goals in these threatening questions. First, he wants to stop loving the *puella*, as the poem says, "don't chase what flees." Second, he wants to win her back. Both goals are evident because the questions in 8.15-8 are aimed to demean her. 8.15 asks, *quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?* These questions make Lesbia seem worthless and undesirable. If the lover character can think of her as worthless, he will be able to stop loving her. Moreover, if *she* thinks she is worthless, she will no longer be superior to him, as she was in their interaction in poem 2. If the lover can reduce his beloved's self-worth, she will no longer be in control of the relationship and they can resume their love, but as equals.

The lover's ambivalent goals reveal what he really wants. He wants to be disengaged from the relationship, but he wants the relationship to resume. In poem 2, the *puella* was emotionally disengaged, only playing, *ludere*. At the same time, the two were involved amorously. Then, Lesbia had both of the things the lover desires

[45] Ellis 27 suggests the question *cuius esse diceris?* (8.17) means she will no longer be called *Lesbia Catulli*. This is an odd note because she and the lover character were never married, so she never would have been called *Lesbia Catulli*. If the lover character is implying this as Ellis says, then the lover is seriously exaggerating the level of commitment in their relationship.

in poem 8. She was emotionally uninterested and she had a lover. In poem 8, when the lover apparently desires to be over Lesbia and be with her at the same time, he desires to hold the position of power that Lesbia held in poem 2. Poem 2 is therefore especially important as a programmatic poem. The power imbalance established there extends to poem 8 and affects the lover's actions here. The two poems are thus connected as a chronological narrative.

Poem 8 ends, significantly, back in the present tense. The authorial persona repeats the verb *obdurare* to reveal that the lover character has *not* become obdurate. Enforcing the idea that the lover has not progressed in getting past his love for his *puella*, the word *destinatus* in the last line echoes *desinas* in 8.1, and the two lines have similar meanings. The lover makes no progress in overcoming his feelings in the end. Poem 8 thus exemplifies the entrapping nature of love. Though the authorial persona tells the lover character to stop loving, he cannot be rid of his obsessive love.

Although I split poem 8 neatly into authorial persona during the moments in the present tense and the lover character in the scene in the past and projection of the future, the narrator cannot be absolutely split. There are traces of both voices in every line of poem 8, but one or the other tends to dominate. The narrator is an inconstant blend of sincere and satirical voices that is an effective and compelling portrayal of love.

Poem 8 tells us that even though the affair has ended, love keeps the lover thinking about Lesbia. Poems 11, 37, and 58 attack Lesbia's reputation, which is the lover's new strategy in reaching for his two primary goals: getting over Lesbia and

winning her back. He vilifies Lesbia's worth by likening her to a prostitute so that he will think less of her and be rid of his painful love. At the same time, he calls Lesbia a prostitute to gain social control over her so that their relationship might resume in a more balanced way. The lover's desire for balance is in response to the imbalance established in poem 2. In poems 11, 37, and 58, the lover shows that he is innovative in strategizing to win back his beloved.[46] His strategizing shows the powerful hold his emotions have over his actions.

First among these is poem 11. After addressing his *comites* Furius and Aurelius for three stanzas, the lover asks them to talk to the *puella*. The following two stanzas depict the fluidity of the narrator, for the first has a more satirical tone that allows us to criticize the lover and the second has a more sincere tone that allows us to sympathize with him. I discuss the more satirical stanza first:

Pauca nuntiate meae puellae
    Non bona dicta.
Cum suis uiuat ualeatque moechis,
Quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,
Nullum amans uere, sed identidem omnium
    Ilia rumpens.
Tell a few things to my girl,
    And not kind words.
May she live and thrive with her lovers,
Whom she holds, embracing three hundred at a time

[46] The characteristic of the lover to be strategic carries over to the epigrams. I discuss his other strategies in chapters 3-5.

Truly loving no one but again and again

Breaking the groins of all of them. (11.15-20)

The lover is hostile and angry here because he was sure in poem 8 that no one would ever love Lesbia again, saying, "But you will hurt when you are sought by no one" (8.14). In poem 11, Lesbia has other sexual partners, which hurts the lover and compels him to attack her reputation.[47] The suggestion of three hundred lovers in 11.13 is hyperbolic and shows that since the *puella* was not faithful to the lover character, he can only see her as an archetype of a promiscuous woman.

The description "breaking the groins of all them" is a euphemism for sexual activity between Lesbia and her lovers. It also restates her masculine dominance, suggesting she is "breaking" their manhood. The strong word "breaking" likens her to Cybele, the mother of the gods featured in the *epyllion* poem 63. Cybele bewitches the boy Attis and makes him castrate himself, thus, in a sense, breaking his manhood.[48] The parallel between Lesbia and Cybele shows how the lover sees her as a caricature of a woman, a superhuman sexual predator. The authorial persona shows that the lover is acting emotionally, not logically, because he uses hyperbole when he compares Lesbia to a mythical character. Thus the authorial persona leads us to interpret this poem as a satirical critique of the effects of love rather than take the lover's accusations seriously.

Moreover, before poem 11, the lover only discusses the beloved with mild sexual details, like the vague *iocosa* in poem 8, kisses in poems 5 and 7, or innuendo

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[47] Ellis 131 "The present poem is… prompted by jealousy." Ellis actually says this about poem 37, discussed below, but I think it applies equally well to 11.
[48] Greene 144 Cybele is, "quite literally, a 'ball-buster.'"

in poem 2. When the lover and beloved were sexually involved in poem 2, the lover says she plays with a sparrow, a coy depiction of sex. Now she is *identidem omnium/ilia rumpens.* The lover switches from modest to vulgar when discussing Lesbia's sexuality. This does not suggest that she has gone from chaste to promiscuous. There is no evidence her behavior has changed at all, for she is sexually audacious in poem 2, manipulating the lover's "sparrow," and in poem 11, *simul complexa tenet trecentos*. What has changed is not Lesbia's behavior, but the lover's opinion of her sexuality. If she is with him, he adores her. If she is with others, he thinks she is a whore. We are not so much meant to hate Lesbia for her promiscuity as see the flaws of the character reporting her promiscuity. His need to insult Lesbia shows how his love has limited his perspective.

Poem 11 is in Sapphic stanzas, a meter the poet Sappho invented, which calls attention to the connotations of Lesbia's name. "Lesbia" means woman from Lesbos and refers to Sappho, the Greek poet from the island Lesbos. Sappho was a woman who wrote love poetry six hundred years before this *libellus* was written and had a great influence on it. For example, poem 51 is a translation of Sappho poem 31, with a few alterations.[49] The name implies a similarity between Sappho and Lesbia, which is an honor, for Sappho was considered a great poet when this *libellus* was written. Poem 11 uses the Sapphic meter against Lesbia, to show that in her lack of fidelity she contrasts loving Sappho and so did not live up to expectations for her.[50]

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[49] Greene 136-41; O'Higgins 156

[50] Greene 136 "It is highly ironic that the name 'Lesbia' should call Sappho to mind, given Catullus' mostly negative depiction of his mistress throughout the corpus. Even in poems 5 and 7 Lesbia seems more like a catalyst for, rather than a mutual participant in, his unbounded desire."

Lesbia is a construction, created by the poetry. As a connected story, the poems design Lesbia to fail to honor her name and thus give us a negative message about love. Lesbia causes the lover to fall in love then disappoints him to show that love is harmful to the lover. Her association with Sappho enhances the lover's disappointment that she does not requite his love and thus, enhances the sincere tone of the poems.

The next stanza of poem 11 shows the fluidity of the narrator because although it combines sincerity and satire like the previous stanza, the sincerity is more dominant and the reader feels more sympathetic than critical of the lover's inability to move on. This stanza is more sympathetic because the lover is not so much attacking Lesbia as lamenting what he lost when she broke his heart. He defines his loss beautifully as *flos*, a flower. The flower represents his innocence, now lost.

Nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem
Qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati
Ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
Tactus aratro est.
Let her not look for my love as before,
Which died because of her crime,
Like a flower on the edge of a field,
Cut down by a passing plow. (11.21-4)

The lover compares his feelings to a flower cut down, meaning he feels vulnerable and delicate like a flower.[51] The comparison is a sincere expression of heartache. Moreover, the word *flos* likens the lover to two other victims of lost innocence in the *libellus* to underscore sadness as an effect of love. Firstly, in poem 63, the youth Attis castrates himself in a frenzy induced by Cybele, the mother of the Olympian gods. Attis reflects on how he used to be "the flower of the gymnasium" before he castrated himself (63.64). This expression means he was a beloved young boy where he lived. When Attis castrates himself he loses his identity as a *flos*. When Lesbia cut down the lover's *flos*, she emasculated him as Cybele causes Attis to lose his masculinity.[52] Secondly, poem 62, a marriage hymn, describes the bride-to-be as a *flos*. Once she is plucked, a metaphor for losing her virginity, the girl is no longer desirable and her body is polluted (62.39-48). The lover allies himself with the castrated youth of poem 63 and the deflowered maiden of poem 62 to express the significance of his loss as a result of his unrequited love. He has lost his *flos*, which through intratextual reference we see represents his youth, virginity, and manhood.

The flower in poem 11 references a poem by Sappho that presents a similar tragic image and the cross-reference increases pathos for the lover. Sappho's fragment says a young girl is "like the hyacinth in the mountains the

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[51] Quinn (1970) 129; Wiseman (1985) 146, 178; Skinner (2005) 221 "the poignant Greek nuptial image of a flower plucked in the meadow, symbolizing the bride's loss of virginity"; Panoussi 280 "[Poem 61] associates female beauty and vulnerability with virginity through an array of floral images."; Greene 145 "Catullus here implicitly puts himself in the feminine position, where he is vulnerable to external forces that threaten his autonomy as both lover and love poet."

[52] Manwell 117, poem 11 has a "poorly masculine (i.e. castrated) Catullus"

shepherds/trample with their feet, and its purple flower falling to the ground…"[53] Sappho's hyacinth is comparable to the flower of poem 11. Both are images of innocence and beauty destroyed by a masculine force.[54] The shepherds are comparable to the plow in poem 11 as representations of industry conquering nature. Poem 11 thus states not only the lover's sadness over Lesbia snatching his innocence, but also the triumph of civilization over beauty.[55] The sad tone of poem 11 is enhanced by the theme of duty over leisure. It is not only the lover's feelings that have been cut down, but all beauty.

Poem 11 presents the lover as the deflowered party and makes him sympathetic in comparison with his deflowerer, Lesbia. The reader is compelled to sympathize with the lover because of the intratextual references and reference to Sappho that emphasize the sadness of lost innocence. Where 11.15-20 is more satirical than sincere, 11.21-4 is more heartfelt. Poem 11 therefore shows the ever-shifting nature of the narrator that reflects the inconstancy of love.

There are a few other moments in the polymetra that use aggressive accusations to degrade Lesbia, as she made the lover feel degraded in poem 2. Poems 37 and 58 also describe Lesbia's promiscuity. However, the authorial persona shows that the accusations reveal the lover's overly emotional state more than they indicate any truth about Lesbia. Poem 37 accuses her of spending time in

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[53] Quinn (1970) 280; Panoussi 281-2 "Female virginity is intensely sensual and thus precarious and fragile, subject to violence on the part of the male."; Greene 143-6

[54] Greene 145 "On the basis of references to flowers and fruit in Greek archaic poetry, scholars generally interpret the flower, the hyacinth, in Sappho's fragment as representing youth, beauty, innocence, and virginity."

[55] Greene 145 "Both the shepherd and the plow exploit nature for 'civilized' purposes" and 146 "In poem 11 Catullus implicitly acknowledges Sappho's understanding of the difficulties of pursuing a life of passion and imagination within the practical constraints of the world."

a tavern loving men both "good and prosperous," and "what is more undignified, all you trifling alley-dwelling adulterers" (37.14-16). Poem 58 similarly says "Now on street corners and in alleyways/she jerks off the great descendents of Remus" (58.3-4). The lover paints Lesbia as a sexual caricature in response to her holding power over him.[56] Ultimately, the slander is satirical, revealing the foolishness of an obsessed lover.

Although these three poems, 11, 37, and 58, are accusatory, none is explicit by Catullan standards.[57] Wiseman sees the poems' unwillingness to reach for the most vulgar vocabulary as continuity in the lover's character; he cannot speak too badly about Lesbia because he still loves her.[58] I argue that the lover bridles his vulgarity because he wants to keep open the possibility of reconciliation. He is strategizing to win her back. Anger compels him to speak ill of her, but only cautiously, because he wants to get back together.

In poem 2, the beloved's dominance in the relationship incited the sparrow/lover to bite her. The slanderous accusations in poems 11, 37, and 58 are another way for him to bite her. This form of biting is advantageous for the lover because it lowers Lesbia's worth to that of a prostitute. The lover vilifies his beloved because he feels inferior to her. If he can reduce her self-worth, perhaps she will find him a worthy suitor instead of treating him like an inferior and their love can

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[56] Skinner (1983) 287: men of the time "subliminally associated female power with rampant female sexuality." Since Lesbia has the power to devastate the lover character, he views her as sexually voracious.

[57] The height of the lover character's vulgarity is in poem 16, which says, *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo/Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi*. That insult has much more bite than the ones directed at Lesbia.

[58] Wiseman (1985) 134 "even at the bitterest moments 'Lesbia' was kept separate in his mind from the victims of his invective."

resume without her being in control. He is also trying to reduce her worth in his own eyes, so he might stop loving her and make true the declaration that he does not love her in poem 8, "now Catullus stands strong" and in poem 11, "Let her not look for my love as before" (8.12; 11.21). But the two motives of the lover contradict each other; he cannot both win her back and get over her. It is an unreasonable hope and the poems show that the lover is trapped in ambivalence by his love.

The exaggerated insults also enforce the innovative aspect of the lover's personality. His feigned dispassion in poem 8 was ineffective both in forgetting Lesbia and winning her back, so he tries something new in these poems, insults. Unable to simply break free of his love for Lesbia, the lover character embodies the theme of inescapable love that colors this corpus.

Poems 2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 37, and 58 present a sympathetic story of a man falling in love, losing his beloved, and lashing out at her in anger. The authorial persona characterizes the lover as obsessive, childish, and lacking perspective through symbolism, apostrophe and vulgar vocabulary. In the next chapter, I look at the sincere and satirical aspects of the epigrams, grouped by motif, and appraise the *libellus*' continuity.

Chapter 3: Hyperbole in Epigrams 70 and 72

In the polymetra, the lover feels sincerely wounded by Lesbia, while the authorial persona shows how love limits the lover's perspective. In the next three chapters, I consider the strategies the lover uses in the epigrams to counter the dominance his beloved possesses in their relationship and the control his emotions have over him. These strategies are frequently comical, and through them the authorial persona adds a satirical tone to the sincerity conveyed by the lover. However, before I begin, it is important to note that there is a large section of poetry between the polymetra and the epigrams that do not directly concern the Lesbia narrative.

The *epyllia* are several long poems that concern love, friendship, death, and myths. Although these poems do not explicitly mention Lesbia, they connect to the love story by presenting the theme of ambivalence about love. Particularly the poems that concern marriage, 61, 62, and 64, present the theme of ambivalence that is fitting with the complex narrator in the "Lesbia poems," who oscillates between heartbroken and critical of love. After a brief synopsis of these poems, I return to the epigrams.

Poems 61 and 62 are marriage hymns. Both poems present the narrator's ambivalent attitude about marriage. Their tones are joyful at times, presenting the happiness of marriage rituals and the usefulness of marriage in society. At other times, 61 and 62 are critical of marriage as scary and violent for the new bride and

as more of a social obligation than an institution of love.[59] 62 in particular presents the theme of disillusionment with marriage as an institution by portraying it as perfunctory, a matter of obligation rather than love.[60] 62 explains that in marriage, the bride-to-be's virginity belongs to her only in part. One third belongs to her father and one third belongs to her mother (62.62-6). Losing her virginity has nothing to do with love, but is rather a family matter.[61]

Poem 64 further exemplifies the narrator's ambivalence about love and marriage and unites the *epyllia* under this theme. Poem 64 tells the happy love story of the wedding between Peleus and Thetis, but the joyful tone is negated by a long digression on the tragic love story of Ariadne and Theseus. Ariadne's lament detracts from the happiness in Peleus and Thetis' marriage by showing the tragic effects of love. The inclusion of the tragic love story adds a warning tone to the otherwise cheerful love story.

Poem 68 is the only *epyllion* that explicitly mentions Lesbia. The poem reflects briefly on a happy night of love with Lesbia, but specifies that it was outside of the bonds of marriage, and Lesbia gave "gifts taken from the very lap of her

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[59] Panoussi 276 "Both poems celebrate marriage and its blessings for the couple, their families, and society in general… these poems constitute a counterpoint to the disillusioned image of love expressed in the remainder of the corpus, the result of the poet's failed relationship with Lesbia"; Panoussi 289 Poem 62 "fit[s] neatly with the theme of the failure of marriage in the other long poems."

[60] Panoussi 285-7

[61] Panoussi 288; OCD entry on marriage law (Roman); Lyne 17 "It was often simply a cynical maneuver for money, power, or position" and "in no case was it likely to be, nor was it traditionally expected to be, an institution of love in all love's aspects combining reciprocated passion and affection, and the rest"; Lyne's examples: Antony to Octavian's sister; Tiberius Gracchus to Appius Claudius' daughter, etc.; Miller (2002) 5 "Marriage, while nominally consensual between the two parties, was in fact a political and economic transaction between families in which emotional ties played little if any role."

husband" (68.145-6).[62] This poem too presents an ambivalent view of love. The love between Lesbia and her husband is corrupted by infidelity, and the love between Lesbia and the narrator is corrupted by the existence of her husband.

The theme of ambivalence about love syncs with the poems we looked at in chapters 1 and 2. In the Lesbia narrative, the lover is both captivated by love and critical of its effects. The *epyllia*, therefore, support the notion of a connected *libellus*, unified under one narrator. The epigrams, too, present a mix of sincere and satirical tones that portray ambivalence over love, further enforcing the notion of a continuous, connected *libellus*.

In this chapter, I discuss poems 70 and 72, which deviate from the poems discussed in chapter 1 and 2 because they are in elegiac meter. Other scholars have taken issue with the epigrams based on the analytical tone aided by the elegiac structure.[63] I argue that the epigrams are indeed analytical, but this supports the notion of a chronological *libellus*. The analytical tone is a logical progression of the lover, since he distanced himself from the affair in the middle section of the *libellus*. Except for poem 68, the *epyllia* do not mention Lesbia. The narrator's break from discussing the affair does not rid the lover of his obsessive love, but gives him enough distance to approach the affair again in the epigrams in a more reasoned, analytical way.

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[62] Theodorakopoulis 328 "the poet shows that he is aware of the imperfection of the occasion and the relationship."

[63] Lyne 22 "It is *only* in the epigrams that we find such analyses. The typical Lesbia epigram is therefore analytical, endeavouring to isolate what it was that was in the lovers' grasp, what it was that went wrong, what were the feelings that were then in consequence generated"; Lyne 51-61; Ross 22

Poem 70 posesses this analytical tone, as the lover reasons that Lesbia's untrustworthiness is responsible for the end of the relationship. While the lover wants to identify what went wrong in the relationship, the authorial persona satirizes his efforts by revealing that the lover is still ruled by his emotions. The authorial persona shows how love rules the lover by presenting him as a hypocrite in his attitudes about women and by showing that the lover is still strategizing to get Lesbia to come back to him.

Poem 70 exemplifies the quality of the epigrams to juxtapose careful reason with emotional volatility.

Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle

Quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.

Dicit, sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,

In uento et rapida scribere oportet aqua

My mistress said there is no one she would rather marry

Than me, not even if Jupiter himself should ask her.

So she said, but what a woman says to an eager lover

Is fit to be written on wind and swift water.

Other scholars have noted a "marriage vocabulary" in poem 70 and its near-twin, poem 72, which opens, "You used to say you knew Catullus alone/Lesbia, and you would not hold Jupiter over me." (72.1-2).[64] I argue that the word *nubere* in poem 70 and the phrase "knew Catullus alone" in 72 do not merit a "marriage vocabulary." Rather is the focus on fidelity and Lesbia's untrustworthiness. The

[64] Dettmer 177 on "language of marriage"; Lyne 1-18; Wiseman (1985) 165

lover looks back on his relationship with Lesbia and identifies her inability to keep to her word as the cause of its end. He repeats *dicit* three times in lines 1 and 3 to emphasize that Lesbia did not keep her word.[65]

Moreover, the wording in poem 72 does not say the lover wanted marriage from Lesbia, but that he wanted fidelity. "You used to say you knew Catullus alone." It is stated that Lesbia is already married in poems 58 and 83. Therefore, the lover's wish for fidelity is ironic. He wants a monogamous extramarital affair, which is an oxymoron. The irony of the lover's bitterness that Lesbia was not faithful to him effects a satirical tone. The authorial persona exposes this irony to allow the reader perspective to criticize the way love causes gullibility.

The tone of poem 70 is bitter as the lover attacks all womankind, attributing Lesbia's untrustworthiness to her gender. The subject of 70.1 is *mea mulier*, which becomes *mulier* in the proverbial second couplet.[66] "What a woman says is fit to be written on wind and swift water." The lover generalizes Lesbia's crime of untrustworthiness to a flaw all women have.[67] Meanwhile, the authorial persona reveals irony in the lover's sexism. On the one hand, the lover sees women like the virgin bride in poem 62 as his companions, fellow victims of love. On the other hand, he sees them as his enemies, associated with Lesbia. The authorial persona

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[65] Dettmer 177 "Catullus makes quite clear that 'Lesbia's commitment' to him was 'essentially *verbal*.'"

[66] OED defines proverb as **"**A short, traditional, and pithy saying; a concise sentence, typically metaphorical or alliterative in form, stating a general truth or piece of advice; an adage or maxim." Poem 70 states that women are flaky and it sounds like a proverb, as if this characteristic of women is a general truth and indisputable.

[67] Skinner (2005) 192-238 commentates on fear of feminine dominance in the late Republic/early Empire and its association with Greek decadence, both viewed as responsible for deteriorating society. Loose morals were considered by Romans to be part of the Republic's collapse and the result was codified sexism, e.g. *Lex Julia* in the early Empire.

shows that the lover is not aware of his contradictory attitudes about women. Love thus makes him insult Lesbia in poem 70, while his choice of insult makes him hypocritical.

It is ironic that the narrator would use Lesbia's gender against her, since the lover character frequently identifies with mythological women. In poem 2, he compares himself to Atalanta being relieved to lose her virginity (2.11-4). Poem 11 uses the word *flos* to parallel the lover with the young bride in poem 62. Poem 70 now enhances the irony of the lover lashing out against women by associating him with Ariadne through a cross-reference to poem 64. Poem 64 describes the mythical marriage of the nymph Thetis to the mortal Peleus with a long digression on the myth of Ariadne and Theseus. In myth, Ariadne is a princess, left to die on a desolate island by the hero Theseus after she helps him kill her half-brother, the monstrous Minotaur. In poem 64, Ariadne apostrophizes an absent Theseus, angrily saying he promised to marry her, but did not keep his word (64.139-42). The circumstances resemble poem 70, when the lover says Lesbia once said she would marry him, *nubere*, but did not keep her word. Moreover, Ariadne describes herself as *miser* at 64.140, recalling 8.1, *miser Catulle*. The similarity between Ariadne's situation in poem 64 and the lover's situation in poem 70 suggests that the lover identifies with Ariadne.

There are two ironic effects of the lover identifying with Ariadne. Firstly, the lover contradicts himself by talking badly about women in poem 70 while identifying with a famous mythical woman. Secondly, the comparison between the lover and Ariadne magnifies the lover's plight to an absurd level. Ariadne was left

on a desolate island and she thought, with good reason, she was going to die (64.191). The lover, in no such dire straights, greatly exaggerates the wrong done to him by comparing himself to Ariadne. The authorial persona reveals the exaggeration through intratextual reference to present the effects of love with a satirical tone.

Although the lover uses reasoned argument to attack Lesbia in this poem, the cross-reference to poem 64 reveals that beneath his analytical tone, the lover is still as emotional as in the polymetra. He compares his life without Lesbia to that of Ariadne when she was facing death. Similarly, the lover equates loving and life in poem 5, *Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus*, to express that loving is as important as living to him. Moreover, poem 5 equates the end of love with death, saying "when our brief light has fallen once,/one eternal night must be slept through" (5.5-6). We see that the analytical tone of poem 70 only masks the emotional lover, who still views love as a matter of life and death.

Poem 70 is carefully structured to reflect the broken relationship it describes. The dynamic between the first and second couplets in poem 70 portrays an unhappy relationship because of the change in tone from happy to sad.[68] In the first couplet, 70.1-2, we see a happy relationship, where the lover considers Lesbia his woman, *mea mulier*, and she thinks a great deal of him too, and would not choose Jupiter over him. It is only in the second couplet that we realize this scene took place in the past and Lesbia does not love him anymore. The bitterness of the second couplet shatters the pleasantness of the first just as Lesbia's betrayal

[68] Lyne 35 "the second couplet is formally opposed to the first, and the contrast between protestation and reality thereby highlighted."

shattered the lover's happiness. The antithetical moods of the couplets present a ruined relationship.

Poem 70 uses another structural element, elision, to present the content of the poem with its form. Poem 70 says, *mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,/in uento et rapida scribere oportet aqua*, "what a woman says to an eager lover/is fit to be written on wind and swift water" (70.3-4). The elision occurs in the 70.4, between the word sets *vento et* and *scribere oportet*. The elision makes the words flow into each other, imitating like the object described, "wind and swift water." Lesbia's promises seem all the more vaporous.[69]

The opposing couplets of poem 70 possess an intratextual reference that enforces the narrative unity of the *libellus*. The first couplet reflects on when Lesbia apparently requited lover character. It recalls lines 3-8 of poem 8, the happy memory. Then, between the rise and set of a shining sun, *fulsere soles* (8.3, 8), the beloved requited the lover, *ventitabas quo puella ducebat* (8.4) and he was happy. The first couplet of poem 70 and the past tense section of poem 8 thus match in tone. Then, in poem 70, the second couplet reveals that love is not requited and the narrator uses a proverbial statement and a generalization about women to distance himself from the situation. This couplet is like the second half of poem 8 where the lover tries to stop caring about Lesbia and asserts that she will be alone without him, "*Quis nunc te adibit*?" (8.16). Both poems can be split into the happiness before

[69] The poems in the *libellus* expertly fit of form to content. As another example, Martindale discusses the ecphrasis of poem 64, a lengthy, ornate description of a scene on a coverlet, saying, "Catullus 64 is (over-)loaded with art, each line exquisitely shaped, keeping us in mind that the poem is a manufactured object, like a costly casket (or coverlet)." This is comparable to the elision imitating wind and swift water.

the heartbreak and the attempted stoicism after it. The two poems therefore tell the same story, evoking similar emotions of sympathy and wry pity from the reader. Both poem 8 and poem 70 are part of the greater narrative, the story starring the lover character.

The similarity between poem 8 and poem 70 connects them as part of one story, but that does not prove my claim that the *libellus* progresses chronologically. The *differences* between poems 8 and 70 offer evidence for this claim. The lover was passionate in poem 8, imploring himself to stop loving Lesbia, *desinas ineptire…obdura*, and insulting her, *scelesta, vae te, quae tibi manet vita?* (8.1, 11, 15). The lover in poem 8 was overtly emotional. By poem 70, his love has evolved. He is still obsessed with his beloved, dwelling on things she said, but his emotions have cooled enough for him to approach the problem logically. Poem 70 is not out of place chronologically; it actually occurs well after the breakup in poem 8. It portrays the lover character experiencing the same emotions, but expressing them differently, analytically.[70] The progression from heated and passionate to collected and logical is a reasonable evolution of the character. Poems 8 and 70, therefore, provide evidence for the assertion that the love story is chronological.

However, even though the lover in the epigrams is analytical, his overly emotional nature is still present and the authorial persona exposes it with satire. In poems 70 and 72, the lover attempts to wrest masculine control of the relationship

[70] Lyne 51-61 on the analytical tone of the epigrams; Quinn (1970) xxviii "The style of the elegiac fragments is drier; the main tool here is logic rather than imagery; the dominant mood, a characteristically Roman determination to get things straight."

back from Lesbia by comparing himself to Jupiter.[71] This comparison is hyperbolic and shows how even though time has passed, love still skews the lover character's logic. Poem 70 says, "my woman would rather marry no one/than me even if Jupiter himself sought her." Poem 72 says "You used to say you loved Catullus alone, /Lesbia, and would not hold Jupiter over me." The lover character claims to be preferable to Jupiter, the literal best and greatest man. The absurdity of the statement has the same effect as the extreme accusations of promiscuity and amorality in poems 11, 37, 58, and 79[72]: it makes the lover character derisible. His attempt to aggrandize himself is transparent.

This characteristic of the lover recalls poem 7. There, when the passion of the relationship began to ebb, the lover elevated his language in order to impress Lesbia, inventing the word *basiationes* as a fancy way to say "kisses"(7.1). In 70 and 72, the lover tries to appear impressive by comparing himself to Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Lesbia's departure undermined his self-worth, so he exaggerates to convince himself of his greatness. The authorial persona makes us aware of the lover's silliness and thus effects a satirical tone.

In the polymetra, the lover strived for two goals: to stop loving Lesbia and win her back. His self-aggrandizement in poems 70 and 72 reaches toward the same goals. If he can convince himself he is preferable to Jupiter, he will not need Lesbia's love. And if he can convince *her* he is preferable to Jupiter, by telling her she used to think he was, he might convince her to come back.

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[71] Skinner (2005) 222 "[his] struggle to salvage his own personal identity is evident throughout the cycle of epigrams in which he protests his ill-treatment."

[72] In poem 79, he suggests Lesbia is incestuously involved with her own brother. It is an elegiac eoigram with all the same sympathetic and ironic effects as the slanderous polymetra.

But when the poem says the lover character is preferable to Jupiter, it is a delusion of grandeur. Moreover, the lover character's two aims are contradictory, for he wants both to stand independent and to be with Lesbia. And he seems more absurd now than he did in the polymetra, since he is dwelling on a relationship that has been over since poem 8. The authorial persona caricaturizes the lover with the exaggeration and critiques the lengths he goes to in the name of unrequited love.

The combination of sincerity and satire in the epigrams further connects them to the "Lesbia poems" of the polymetra and enforces the notion of a continuous narrative. In poems 2 and 8, the case use was significant in establishing the *puella* as the controlling half of the relationship, always depicted in the nominative. Poem 70 also puts Lesbia and not the lover in the nominative case. This is the authorial persona showing that although the lover is calm and analytical relative to the emotion he showed of the polymetra, Lesbia is still in control of his emotions.

Poem 70 has Lesbia, not the lover, as nominative agent. Although, 70.1-2 sets up a comparison between the lover character and Jupiter, the authorial persona uses syntax to suggest a connection between Lesbia and Jupiter instead. The three nominative nouns in the poem, *mea mulier* (70.1), *Iuppiter ipse* (70.2), and *mulier* (70.3) create a syntactic parallel between Lesbia and Jupiter. The parallel is enforced by the *si*-clause in line 2, *si se Iuppiter ipse petat,* "even if Jupiter himself sought her." Jupiter is the subject of *petat*, and *se*, a reflexive pronoun, grammatically should refer back to him, but actually stands in for Lesbia. Poem 70 thus restates Lesbia's masculine domination over the lover character, for she is

syntactically equated with Jupiter, the most masculine, dominant character in all of antiquity.

Conversely, poem 70 only has the lover character in the dative case, with *mihi* and *cupido amanti* in lines 2 and 3. He is the indirect object of her actions. This suggests that Lesbia, the subject, is acting in a way that affects the lover character, but *indirectly*. The authorial persona reveals that the lover character is still ruled by love for Lesbia and she still does not requite him. As the agent acting on an indirect object, she interacts with him obliquely, incidentally. This exemplifies the unrequited nature of their love. While the lover dwells on his memory of Lesbia, the authorial persona uses syntax to show that Lesbia only incidentally exerts her influence on him. He is still more serious and invested in the relationship than she is.

The other word poem 70 puts in the dative is *nulli*, "nothing," which opens the poem. In so short a poem, the reader associates the few nouns in the dative case, here, *mihi, cupido amanti*, and *nulli*. Therefore, in this poem, if the beloved is parallel with Jupiter, the lover is parallel with nothing. The syntax shows that Lesbia still has control of the lover character's emotions, a god compared to him. The lover scoffs at the flaky nature of women in 70.3-4, even while the authorial persona reveals through syntax that he is being controlled by one.

The connection between Lesbia and Jupiter is both sincere and satirical. The lover character feels so belittled by Lesbia's disinterest that she is like Jupiter to him, and he thinks nothing (*nulli*) of himself, which is sincere. At the same time, the

association between Lesbia and Jupiter is an exaggeration and the authorial persona shows that the lover has little perspective.

The equation of Lesbia and Jupiter in the epigrams references poem 68, which makes the same comparison. Poem 68 is long, at 160 lines and touches on the myth of Laodamia and Protesileus, the narrator's grief over his brother's death, and his gratitude to his friend Allius for once offering his house as place where he and his beloved could meet. The lover says he endures occasional cheating from Lesbia because he does not want to bother her like a fool. "Often even Juno, greatest of the goddesses,/stomached her seething wrath at her husband's wrongs,/knowing all-lustful Jupiter's rampant cheating" (68.135-40).

The lover again identifies with the female half of a famous pair, Juno, to relate how he feels victimized by Lesbia, as Juno was repeatedly victimized by Jupiter's cheating.[73] The lover feels that Lesbia's transgression was as great as Jupiter's many extramarital affairs. The authorial persona reveals the irony in this, though, for the lover and beloved are neither married like Juno and Jupiter, nor are they gods. Poem 68 states plainly, *nec divis homines componier aequum est*, "it is not fair to compare men to gods." Poem 68 recognizes the absurdity of comparing the relationship of the lover and beloved to Juno and Jupiter, but poem 70 compares them anyway, with satirical effect.

Through case use associating Lesbia and Jupiter, the lover overstates the seriousness of the relationship by comparing it to a marriage between gods, despite elsewhere attesting that such a comparison is not *aequum*. The authorial persona

[73] Dyson (2007) 268; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tell stories of Jupiter's affairs with multiple girls and boys.

highlights the absurdity of these exaggerations and thus reveals how love has limited the lover's perspective.

Arguing that the poem associates Lesbia and Jupiter may seem contradictory since I also argue that the lover character compares *himself* to Jupiter. It is logical, however, if we identify the two aspects of the narrator. The lover character claims he is preferable to Jupiter to impress Lesbia. Meanwhile, the authorial persona associates Lesbia and Jupiter to expose the lover character's delusion.

There is one last satirical element to be noted in poem 72 in the reference to father-son relationships. When the poems say Lesbia preferred the lover to Jupiter, the lover is strategizing to get her to come back to him. Since Jupiter is the father of gods and men, he suggests she ought not only to love him more than Jupiter, but also revere him more than a father. Poem 72 states this idea more explicitly:

Dilexi tum te non tantum ut uulgus amicam,

Sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos.

I loved you then not only like common people love a popular girl

But also like a father loves his sons and sons-in-law (72.3-4).

Scholars have questioned this line's meaning since it is decidedly unerotic and there is no passionate love in the relationship between a father and his sons.[74] How are the lover character's feelings for Lesbia like a father's love for his sons? Overtly, they are not, but before likening himself to a father, the lover compares

[74]Dyson (2007) 270; Lyne found 72.3-4 so troublesome he concluded that the poem tried something that did not work. "It is unique and it is brilliant and it does not quite come off" (40). I think it does work, it just does not do what Lyne expected it to do because Lyne only considers a sincere interpretation of the poem. He does not consider that it communicates satire. He considers a satirical tone in the polymetra, but limits himself by looking at the epigrams as a separate body of poetry.

himself to Jupiter. That comparison is hyperbolic, and so too is this statement. If the lover can convince Lesbia he is superior to Jupiter, or that she once thought he was, she would respect him as a man.[75] Jupiter is the father of men and gods, so he also wants her to respect him as she would a father.

Since a father's love for his children is not romantic, the lover's attempt to win Lesbia's respect as a romantic partner at 72.3-4 falls flat. He wants her to love him as passionately as he loves her, but solicits her respect in a way that would prevent passion. If she loved him as a father, it would not be the erotic love he wants. There is therefore sincerity in the lover character's helplessness, as love drives him to unusual methods to lure his beloved back, but the futility of his methods is obvious. The authorial persona makes the lover character look absurd with this ineffective strategy.

When poem 72 says the lover character loves Lesbia like a son, it builds on the other fruitless strategies used in poems before this one, ever since poems 2 and 11 when Lesbia emasculated and symbolically castrated the lover. Since then, the lover has tried to wrest control back from her and the progression of failed attempts to do so suggests the poems are chronological. Previously, Lesbia does not come back to the lover character after poems 37 or 58, where he tries to bully her into loving him with malignant accusations of promiscuity. Nor does she come back after poem 70, when he repeats *dicit* to remind her that she once said she would be faithful to him. The strategy in poem 72 of demanding respect, as a child would respect a father, is just as fruitless, and consistent with the innovative main

[75] Skinner (1997) 35 "the status of citizen male is predicated upon control—control of wife and children, of slaves, of one's external circumstances, and, above all, of self."

character. Love compels him to keep trying, trapping him in his pursuit of Lesbia. Looking at the poems as a narrative exemplifies the theme of love as entrapment, for the lover character keeps trying innovative methods of winning Lesbia back.

Poem 72 exemplifies the theme of love as entrapment by stating plainly that Lesbia's lack of interest lures the lover to her.

Nunc te cognovi. Quare etsi impensius uror,

Multo mi tamen es vilior et levior.

Qui potis est, inquis? Quod amantem iniuria talis

Cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus.

Now I've known you. Therefore, even if burn more powerfully,

You are nevertheless more trifling and light to me by a lot.

How is this possible, you ask? Because such insult compels a lover

To love more, but wish you less well. (72.5-8).

The poem explains that Lesbia's *iniuria* make the lover love her more. *Iniuria* could refer to her untrustworthiness, expounded upon in poem 70, or her affairs with other men described in poems 11, 37, and 58. Her *iniuria* may simply refer to the fact that she does not love him back. Poem 72 clarifies that the less Lesbia loves him, the more he loves her. The authorial persona is aware that the lover is trapped in an endless cycle. His emotions dominate him and entrap him and we recognize that the dominant theme of the "Lesbia poems" is love as entrapment.

Poems 70 and 72 use structure, syntax, and self-aggrandizement with vocabulary related to Jupiter and fatherhood to present a relationship that has trapped and grieved the lover. There are sincere and satirical elements in both

poems, but the satire tends to outweigh the sincerity. The lover character is dramatic and the authorial persona exposes him as obsessed with an affair long ended. The lover ruminates on Lesbia's wrongs, her *iniuria*, which "compel the lover to love more," (72.7-8). And the more he loves, the more he strategizes to win her back as the *libellus* progresses. The poems therefore tell a cohesive, chronological love story. Because the lover and the authorial persona are parts of one narrator, these poems present a narrator who makes fun of himself.

Chapter 4: Speaking vs. Silence in Epigrams 83 and 92

In chapter 3, we saw how the epigrams continued the theme of love as entrapment from the polymetra. Poems 70 and 72 satirize the emotional main character to develop this theme using structure, syntax, and the theme of the supremacy of Jupiter and fathers. In this chapter, I look at poems 83 and 92, which use the theme of speaking vs. silence to expound further the theme of love as entrapment.

As we have seen, the "Lesbia poems" show us the relationship from the lover's narrow perspective. In poems 5 and 7, the lover thinks he and Lesbia are in love, but the authorial persona gives us cause to doubt this because we never hear Lesbia's thoughts or feelings. In poem 83, conversely the narrator tries to gauge Lesbia's thoughts. Poem 83 presents the lover thrilled to hear that Lesbia complains about him because it allows him to deduce that she cares about him. However, we see that the lover remains solipsistic when he makes the hasty and unfounded conclusion that Lesbia's complaining about him implies she cares for him. The authorial persona reveals him to be all the more solipsistic because he ignores the fact that Lesbia is not speaking to him, but *is* speaking to her husband.

Poem 83 highlights the significance of Lesbia talking with six verbs related to speaking (bolded):

Lesbia mi praesente uiro mala plurima **dicit**

Haec illi fatuo maxima laetitia est.

Mule, nihil **sentis**? Si nostri oblita **taceret**,

Sana esset. Nunc quod **gannit** et **obloquitur**,

Non solum meminit, sed, quae multo acrior est res,

Irata est. Hoc est, uritur et **loquitur**.

*Lesbia **says** many bad things about me in front of her husband,*

And these are the happiest words to that fool,

*Idiot, do you know nothing? If she were **silent**, having forgotten me,*

*She would be calm. Now because she **snarls** and **speaks***

She not only remembers me, but what is a sharper thing by a lot,

*She is angry. This is so, she burns and she **speaks**.*

Poem 83 puts the word *mi* between *Lesbia* and *viro* in 83.1, indicating the lover character has broken apart the marriage.[76] This suggests the lover believes Lesbia loves him and not her husband. The speaking words are numerous because they are the lover character's best evidence that Lesbia cares about him.[77] The poem thus conveys sincerity; the lover wants Lesbia to love him.

However, the lover ignores the substance of what she says. She says *plurima mala*, "many bad things" about him. There is no basis for believing her anger is concealing love. The lover character takes care of this discrepancy between what is and what he wants to be with the word *uritur*. This word implies feelings of anger, but it could also suggest Lesbia is burning with love. The lover character bends logic to suit him with the word *uritur*, while the authorial persona satirizes obsessive love by showing how it makes the lover ignore that she is angry.

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[76] Dettmer 194 "In c. 83 Catullus reinforces the notion of a love triangle by quite literally placing himself between Lesbia and her man: *Lesbia mi praesente viro* (1) and *mule,…nostri oblita* (3)."
[77] Dettmer 194

The poem is sincere in its hopefulness.[78] The lover wants to believe Lesbia cares about him. Meanwhile, his eagerness to prove it satirizes the hopeful sincerity by showing that love has made him illogical. The poem shows how the lover is willing to manipulate reality to believe she loves him. He is compelled to keep loving despite being evidentially unrequited.

Poem 92 repeats the flawed logic in 83, but with more intensity, as if to justify the claim that she loves him in poem 83.[79] Poem 92 parallels the lover and beloved syntactically to argue that speaking, *dicere*, is comparable to loving, *amare*. However, the authorial persona shows that the argument is fallacious and the flawed logic undermines the poem's sincerity.

Lesbia mi dicit semper male nec tacet umquam

De me. Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat.

Quo signo? Quia sunt totidem mea. Deprecor illam

Assidue, uerum dispeream nisi amo.

Lesbia always curses me and is never quiet

About me. May I die if Lesbia does not love me.

How do I know she does? Because I say the same things. I debase her

Constantly, but may I die if I do not love her.

The poem parallels lines 1 and 3 syntactically to equate the lover and the beloved. The beloved and the lover perform reciprocal actions in lines 1 and 3; they each verbally abuse the other. In 92.1, *Lesbia mi dicit semper male*. In 92.3, the lover

[78] Dyson (2007) 272 says concisely that poem 83 has "a sense of hope and humor."
[79] Skinner (2003) 67

character commits a reciprocal act, *deprecor illam*.[80] The parallel between the lover and beloved in lines 1 and 3 allows the claim that anything one half of the pair feels, the other half requites. The lover character loves Lesbia, *dispeream nisi amo*, which makes line 2 logical, *Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat*. The lover can believe Lesbia requites him.

The logical flaw in poem 92's argument is apparent: Lesbia talks *badly* about the lover character, *Lesbia mi dicit semper male*. Poem 83 failed to prove that speaking badly, (*mala plurima dicit*), implies love. As if to make up for the weak logic of poem 83, poem 92 manipulates the syntax to parallel the lover with the beloved to force the conclusion that love is requited and the lover can say with certainty, *Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat*. Neither poem considers that Lesbia could be saying bad things out of sincere disdain.

Poem 92 is a logical progression from 83.[81] First, in 83, the lover character becomes aware that Lesbia is complaining about him to her husband and claims her speaking is proof he is on her mind. Then, he finds a logical way to defend this assertion, which he explains in poem 92. The lover evolves and develops his argument between 83 and 92, which supports the notion of a chronological *libellus*.

The syntax also allows the lover to counter the dominance Lesbia has over him. The lover and beloved are paralleled syntactically, both speaking badly about the other in lines 1 and 3, then both loving the other in lines 2 and 4. This presents

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[80] Quinn (1970) 429: "*deprecor*: literally, 'entreat relief from'… but *deprecor* is used in an unusual way… *'deprecor' a Catullo dictum est quasi 'detestor', vel 'exsecror', vel 'depello' vel 'abominor.'*"; Skinner (2003) 68; I think the word is pejorative and refers to poems 11, 37 and 58, when he said vicious things about her promiscuity.
[81] Skinner (2003) 67

them as equals unlike we have seen in other poems. The lover uses the syntax as a strategy to negate Lesbia's masculine dominance by presenting them as equals. The fallacy of the argument in poem 92, however, makes the reality of this equality dubious. The lover's argument that Lesbia loves him is fallacious, so it is doubtful that Lesbia no longer has control over the lover character like the parallelism implies.

Lesbia's silence outside of poems 83 and 92 indicates her disinterest in the lover character and connects the epigrams to the story begun in the polymetra. As poem 83 says, if she is silent, she has forgotten him, *nostri oblita,* and her disinterest gives her emotional dominance over him. Her emotional dominance was first introduced in poem 2 when the lover character agonized, unable to *tristis animi levare curas*, "alleviate the sad tortures of my mind" and the beloved was merely *ludere solet*, "accustomed to play" (2.10, 4-5). Her continued silence in the poems since poem 2 indicates a continued lack of interest and so extends her emotional control throughout the *libellus*. Poem 92 presents Lesbia ceding control because she *nec tacet umquam*, "is never silent" (92.1). The lover feels he has requisitioned some control over the relationship Lesbia has dominated since the beginning.

The theme of silence recalls poem 51, except where 83 and 92 gloat ironically, 51 laments sincerely. Comparing them clarifies that the narrator is neither wholly satirical nor wholly sincere, but an ever shifting mix of both tones and a compelling portrayal of ambivalent human emotion.

Poem 51 is a translation of Sappho's poem 31. Sappho's poem is directed at a woman she loves who sits talking with her husband. Sappho's poem is a

breathtaking portrayal of unrequited love that is still read today. The Catullan version is likewise beautiful. He apostrophizes not an unnamed beauty, but Lesbia[82], after they have broken up and he sees her with her husband.

ILLE mi par esse deo uidetur,

Ille, si fas est, superare diuos,

Qui sedens aduersus identidem te

Spectat et audit

He seems to me to be equal to a god,

That man, if I may say, even surpasses the gods,

Who, sitting facing you, again and again

Sees you and hears you. (51.1-4)

The tone of poem 51 is more sincere than satirical poem 83, which portrays a similar scene. In poem 51, the lover is jealous that Lesbia's husband gets to hear her and the tone is bleak and sad. The poem recognizes that the man permitted to hear and see her must be *par…deo*, "equal to a god," tacitly and humbly admitting that the lover is not. The narrator in poem 51 meekly admires the man who holds his mistress' heart. Contrastingly, the tone in poem 83 is cruelly joyful as the lover derides the beloved's husband, calling him *fatuus* and *mule*. The comparative pettiness of poem 83 is meant for satire, as we cannot sympathize with the lover as we can in 51. Poems 83 and 51 therefore present the fluid nature of the poems, sometimes more sincere in love and sometimes more wryly self-aware.

[82] I only quote the first stanza of poem 51. Lesbia is addressed by name at 51.7.

Ironically, although the lover character focuses on Lesbia speaking in poems 83, 92 and 51, none of these poems quotes her. She is never the first person speaker. This is notable because the *libellus* quotes other people with some frequency, including characters far less important than Lesbia.[83] If the lover is obsessed with what Lesbia says, then why does he never quote her? This is because love prevents the lover character from seeing Lesbia as a real person, rather than an ideal.[84] Without ever taking her voice into consideration, the authorial persona reveals how limited the lover character's perspective is. With her silence, the authorial persona complements the lover's sincerity with a satirical view of love. Because the lover is in love, he is obsessed with the relationship only as far as it makes *him* feel.

Poems 92 and 83 use the theme of speaking vs. silence to reveal that the lover character is blinded by love. The intratextual reference to poem 51 shows how the lover is petty when he is not trying to emulate Sappho, presenting the fluidity of the poems' tone. Meanwhile, the lack of quotations from Lesbia exposes the lover character as guilty of caricaturizing Lesbia, which is an effect of the love that consumes him. These epigrams show that love makes the lover unable to move on from Lesbia, ready to believe the affair will resume in view of the least evidence.

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[83] Hallet identifies "'heard' female voices" in poems 10, 34, 45, 55, 62, 63, 64, and 66, including some characters that only appear once.

[84] Hallet 423 "…a central clue to the failure of the relationship in which Catullus represents himself as engaged with Lesbia is 'Lesbia's silence and the lover's inability to imagine what she feels and why she does what she does.'"

Chapter 5: Socio-Political Vocabulary in Epigrams 75, 87 and 109

In this chapter, I look at another satirical strategy the lover uses to gain emotional dominance over Lesbia and thus make her requite his love. The last line of poem 72 introduces this strategy in the couplet, *amantem iniuria talis/cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus*, "such injury compels a lover to love more, but wish you less well" (72.8). The term *bene velle* is uncommon in elegy and more common in contexts concerning *amicitia*, social or political alliances.[85] Thus, when he says he wishes Lesbia less well with the term *bene velle,* the lover suggests he cannot think of her as a political ally.[86] But the vocabulary of political alliance brings in connotations too severe for discussing a brief love affair. The lover imposes the seriousness of political *amicitia* on Lesbia as a strategy to get her to take the relationship seriously. Since the vocabulary is formal and governmental, it detracts from the erotic tone, and so the authorial persona of poem 72 satirizes the lover's naivety. The tone is humorous, as the authorial persona shows us how the lover's attempts to make Lesbia come back to him are increasingly ineffective.

The political terminology is only present in the epigrams[87] because it is a new strategy by the lover character to counter the power imbalance between him and his beloved. In this chapter, I discuss how the lover in poems 75, 87, and 109 uses terms of *amicitia* to impose formal obligation on Lesbia to coerce her into

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[85] OCD defines *amicitia* as "friendship in Roman political terminology" and explains, "ideally *amicitia* involved genuine trust and affection, in practice it might only be an alliance to pursue common interests… their making and breaking were formal."
[86] Skinner (1997) 143: *bene velle* and like words are "disconcertingly redolent of pragmatic Roman power alliances"; Lyne 28 "And *bene velle* is one of the characteristic terms to express the generous feelings that underlie the relationship of *amicus* to *amicus*"; Ross 86 "*benevolentia* (with the verb *bene velle*) has an important place in the dialogue between political *amici.*"
[87] Ross 91

requiting him. That lover creates new strategies as the *libellus* progresses supports the idea of a chronological narrative with an evolving main character.

Poem 75 uses socio-political terms and parallels them syntactically with more familiar elegiac vocabulary to create an ironic juxtaposition. The contrast between the sincere terms of loving and political terms has a comical effect. However, poem 75 maintains sincerity with the lover character's sympathetic self-deprecation. Moreover, the poem shows the lover still dwelling on how his relationship with Lesbia ended, which reveals how love has entrapped the lover to make him unable to move on from the affair.

Huc est mens deducta tua mea, Lesbia, culpa
    Atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,
Ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optima fias,
    Nec desistere amare, omnia si facias.
By now my mind has been ground down, Lesbia, by your crime
    And it has destroyed itself with its own dutifulness,
So that now it cannot wish you well if you become the best woman,
    Nor can it stop loving you if you commit every evil.

Poem 75 pairs the lover and beloved syntactically. In the first line, *mea mens* contrasts *tua culpa*. The meter tells us that *mea* modifies *mens* and *tua* modifies *culpa*. If it were not for the meter, it would be unclear to whom the *mens* and *culpa* belong, the lover or the beloved, since the word order is chiastic. The placement of *tua* suggests that the beloved is in the lover's mind, literally between the words "my" and "mind," and the lover, represented by *mea*, is bound, wrapped up by the

beloved's crime, with *mea* between *tua* and *culpa*. The sense is that the lover and Lesbia are involved inextricably.

Ita in 75.2 results in *ut* in 75.3 and connects the two couplets smoothly. The second couplet explains the lover's ambivalence with two contradictory statements: he both *nec bene velle queat tibi*, cannot wish her well, and *nec desistere amare*, cannot stop loving her. His love entraps him in an ambivalent state, able neither to like Lesbia or stop loving her.

The theme of poem 75 is ambivalence. The lover is ambivalent about what has caused his emotional state, Lesbia's *culpa* or his own *officium*. He is also ambivalent about whether he loves Lesbia, *amare*, or dislikes her, *nec bene velle queat*. The verb in 75.1, *deducta est*, is in the passive voice and the verb in 75.2, *perdidit*, is in the active voice to show that the lover is unhappy both because of what has been done to him and what he has done to himself. The note of self-deprecation in his blaming himself is sincere and sympathetic, but there are ironic consequences to him blaming Lesbia's *culpa* for his ambivalence because it makes him hypocritical and to his blaming his own *officium*, because this word envokes the ill fitting seriousness of a political alliance.[88] First I discuss the satirical tone lended by the lover faulting Lesbia's *culpa*, then I discuss the use of political terminology in 75.

[88] Lyne 27 "It should be stressed that both of these items have contributed to both aspects of the ambivalence; that is the implication of the syntax."

Lesbia's *culpa* was her infidelity.[89] She slept with a man named Rufus in poem 77, and the lover sees this as betrayal. Her cheating is responsible for his state of ambivalence, as now he is unable to wish Lesbia well, *bene velle queat,* nor stop loving her, *nec desistere amare*. Although the poem discredits Lesbia for her infidelity, the reader knows that she is not married to the narrator. She owes fidelity to her husband, not him.[90] It is comical that the lover expects fidelity from a married woman. Moreover, he expresses in poem 68 that he is willing to accept that she is not faithful, saying "Even if she's not content with Catullus alone,/I'll bear occasional cheating by my chaste mistress,/lest I bother her too much like a fool" (68.135-7). It is therefore hypocritical of him to be upset about her *culpa*.

The tone is satirical when the authorial persona reveals the lover's hypocrisy. Lesbia's *culpa* has trapped the lover in a state of ambivalence, but the lover has committed the same *culpa* as Lesbia, he too has had affairs.[91] Poem 32 has the lover character invite a woman named Ipsitilla to have sex with him and he carries on an affair with a boy named Juventius in several poems between "Lesbia poems." The lover character's hypocrisy thus undercuts his sincerity and provides poem 75's satirical tone.

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[89] Quinn (1970) 405 "a euphemism for *furtivus amor*"; Dettmer 181 "Lesbia's culpa of c. 75 must surely be her relation with Rufus of c. 77."

[90] Skinner (2005) 220 "Yet his claim to virtue as a lover, and his righteous anger at her perfidy, were of course already undercut by his disregard for the inviolability of marriage, an institution even more fundamental to an ordered community than friendship."

[91] Skinner (2005) 210 "[Roman society] laid the blame for adultery on the errant wife, not her lover, defining it as a matter of civic concern more than family honor." Society supports the lover's claim to *officium* by viewing Lesbia's *culpa* as more severe than his because she is a woman. The lover's relying on this double standard and embedding it among other satirical elements like political terminology is perhaps a feminist commentary on the time period.

It is important to note that in the late Republic, conventions were not the same for men and women. It was socially acceptable for a man to have sex with slaves or prostitutes, while a woman could have sex only with her husband.[92] Therefore, the lover would not have viewed his affairs with Ipsitilla and Juventius as hypocrisy. I argue, however, that the authorial persona, with his wider perspective on the lover's flaws, uses the lover's hypocrisy to expose the double standard in society. The authorial persona lets us see the lover as foolish for expecting fidelity from a married woman and considering himself faithful to her when he too has had affairs. While contemporary readers might have sympathized with the lover against Lesbia because of her *culpa*, it is also possible that readers would see the lover as derisible and the double standard on which he relies as a symptom of a flawed society.

The lover's view of his mistress' infidelity is further satirized by an intratextual reference to poem 68, which refers to Jupiter's *plurima furta*, "rampant cheating" as *culpa* (68.139-40). The lover uses the same word to describe Lesbia's cheating on him that was used to describe Jupiter cheating on Juno, suggesting he thinks the two crimes match in severity. The authorial persona reveals that Jupiter's frequent indiscretions are not comparable to Lesbia's crime because unlike Jupiter and Juno, the lover and Lesbia are not married. In fact, their affair was brief, and for Lesbia, it was frivolous. She only ever gave him *iocosa*, not love (8.6). The authorial persona shows how the lover is unable to see the absurdity of comparing a frivolous affair to the marriage between the king and queen of heaven.

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[92] Faucault; Skinner 2005

In addition to Lesbia's *culpa*, the lover's *officium*, his devotion to Lesbia, is also responsible for his ambivalence in poem 75. His *officium*, a term indicating commitment to a political ally, makes it so he cannot wish Lesbia well, *nec bene velle queat,* because he resents her. By performing his *officium* he fulfilled his duties as an *amicus*. By cheating on him, she did not. His *officium* also makes it so he cannot stop loving her, *nec desistere amare*, because it compels him to obey their agreement as *amicitia*.

Officium carries irony because it is a political term meaning the duty two men undertake for one another when they are political allies.[93] To the obsessed lover character, infidelity is as catastrophic as breaking a political alliance. The effect of *officium* is satirical. The seriousness of the term exposes the grip love has on the lover and shows how love makes him more serious about Lesbia than the situation warrants.

Others who have analyzed the epigrams have offered varied explanations for this incongruity between tones of love and politics. Lyne stresses the social, not political connotations of words like *officium*, saying there was no other vocabulary at the time to describe a passionate love affair because such affairs had only recently become acceptable in Roman society. He says the poems use these terms *despite* the severity of their associations with politics.[94] My argument supposes the severity of the words is satirical, not incidental.

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[93] Ross 87 "In the language of political alliance, he is *pius* who has fulfilled his obligations by *officia* and *benevolentia*, who is guilty of no *iniuria* against his political *amici*."; Lyne 28 "*officium* covers the duty, the service that one undertakes for *amici*—that one delights to undertake for them… It also carries with it a clear implication of reciprocity."; Dettmer 180 "Through their romantic involvement they betrayed Catullus and thereby violated an *amicitia.*"

[94] Lyne 22-7

Unlike Lyne, Ross believes the Lesbia affair is a metaphor or an allegory to explain contentions among Roman politicians of the time.[95] Many poems in the *libellus* that do not concern Lesbia present the theme of corruption in politics. I think there is overlap between the poems aimed at politicians and those on Lesbia with the theme of the untrustworthiness of people, but to say the "Lesbia poems" are a metaphor to support the political poems makes Lesbia too insignificant. In fact, the "Lesbia poems" were foundational for Latin love elegy.[96] Propertius asserts that "Lesbia is better known than Helen herself," suggesting the Catullan elegies were more influential and popular even than Homer's epics.[97] Therefore, it would not be wise to understate the importance of Lesbia and love in the Catullan *libellus*, as Ross does. I think poems like 75 use political terms to define love, not the other way around.

I argue that the political vocabulary is a strategy of the lover to comfort himself in losing Lesbia and to get her to come back to him. At the same time, the narrator laughs at himself by absurdly applying politics to love. The tone mixes sincerity and satire and thus is in keeping with the rest of the "Lesbia poems." The lover progresses through several strategies to requisition the control she took from him when she carelessly played with him in the programmatic poem 2. He tried invective in poems 11, 37, and 58, accusing her of promiscuity. That did not work, so he tried aggrandizing himself by comparing himself to Jupiter and a father-figure in poems 70 and 72. That too did not work, so now he insists that his devotion to

[95] Ross 80-94
[96] Lyne; Luck 1959
[97] Propertius 2.34; Miller 400

her was as serious as *officium*, as a political obligation. But since politics are unerotic, poem 75 presents the lover's devotion satirically. The series of strategies the lover uses in the epigrams allow us to view them all in a comical light.

The political vocabulary in poem 75 also includes *bene velle* for satirical effect. *Bene velle* refers to the way two allied politicians felt about each other.[98] 75.3 says the lover *nec bene velle queat tibi*, "cannot wish you well," meaning he cannot think of Lesbia as an ally. The tone is not erotic and incongruous with the next line, where he whimsically states that he cannot stop loving her with the more appropriate word, *amare*, "to love."[99] This juxtaposition of tones exemplifies the fluidity of the narrator, who is both sincere and insincere, blinded by love yet satirical about his state of entrapment.

Poem 87 also uses terms from socio-political vocabulary. This poem shows how the lover character is made to act foolish by his obsessive love and in it the satire outweighs the sincerity more so than in poem 75. First, I discuss the structure, syntax, and intratextual references in poem 87 to show how they maintain the satirical tone of the *libellus* and connect it as a narrative. Then I discuss the irony in the political vocabulary.

Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam
    Vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea est.
Nulla fides ullo fuit umquam foedere tanta,
    Quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est.

[98] Lyne 28 "*bene velle* is one of the characteristic terms to express the generous feelings that underlie the relationship of *amicus* to *amicus*"; Ross 86 "*benevolentia* (with the verb *bene velle*) has an important place in the dialogue between political *amici*."
[99] Such an appropriate word that Ovid named his elegiac collection after its noun *Amores.*

No woman can say that she was as loved,

Truly, as my Lesbia was loved by me.

There was never so much faith in any contract

As that found on my part in love for you.

The poem is structured in distich pairs, reflecting the pairing of the lover and the beloved, two signers of a "contract" of love. In this way, the structure imitates the relationship it describes. Poem 87 contains several sets of pairs in its vocabulary to enforce the idea that the lover and beloved are paired in an amorous way. In the first couplet, *tantum…quantum* mirrors *tanta…quanta* in the second couplet. Both couplets begin with *nulla* and end with a perfect passive periphrastic split by *mea*. The two couplets even resemble each other and look like a pair. These pairs are the lover promoting the assertion that he loves Lesbia and they are a pair.

However, the authorial persona reminds us that Lesbia is not a part of this relationship. The lover can only claim *he* loves *her*, saying *a me Lesbia amata est*. There is no evidence she loves him back. Moreover, 87.4 uses prepositional phrases to clarify that the effort in the relationship flows from the lover, *ex parte…mea*, to Lesbia *in amore tuo,* and not necessarily the other way around.[100] The authorial persona reveals that the lover is unrequited through Lesbia's silence and the syntax in poem 87. Thus the narrator makes fun of his own overly devotedness.

Poem 87 typifies the epigrams in that it is analytical and logical. The lover reasons that he and Lesbia have a "contract of love." However, the first couplet uses hyperbole to expose that lover is not logical. It is hyperbolic to suggest that "no

[100] Skinner (2005) 220 "his appropriation of a vocabulary of social obligation to shore up his irregular union would have been futile in any case, since its imposition was arbitrary and unilateral."

woman can say she is as loved/truly, as my Lesbia is loved by me." The exaggeration belies the lover character's rationality and guides us to view him more critically than sympathetically. The tone is satirical here because the juxtaposition of the analytical and emotional has a comic effect.

87.1-2, *Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam/vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea est*, occurs three more times in the *libellus* with slight variations in word order and variations in meter. There are near replicas of this line in poem 8.5, 37.12-3, and 58.3-4. The repetition heightens the absurdity of the claim and shows that love keeps the lover character from reflecting on his absurdity, since he repeats it. Moreover, the repeated line exposes the lover character's solipsism. The sentiment sounds sweet on the surface, but it is not so much affectionate as it is self-aggrandizing. The line does not praise Lesbia's loveableness, but rather the lover character's ability to love. With this line, the authorial persona critiques passionate love by showing how the lover lacks perspective. Meanwhile, its repetition throughout the corpus connects the affair as a narrative with the same flawed main character.

Poem 87 also uses the vocabulary of political alliance. The words *fides*, "faith" and *foedus*, "contract" at 87.3 have political connotations that make them ill suited to love elegy.[101] Poem 87 parallels *fides* and *foedus* to romantic terminology,

[101] Ross 85 "*Fides...* is continually applied to political *amicitiae* between equals, and is indeed the only real basis for constancy and stability in such relationships"; Ross 84 "*Foedus* is often used to mark the formal necessity of obligations inherent in a political *amicitia*"; OCD "*foedus* means a treaty, solemnly enacted, which established friendship, peace and alliance between Roma and another state in perpetuity"; Skinner (2005) 219 "This strategy desexualizes the liaison, converting it into a contractual bond (*foedus*) between two gentlemen."

juxtaposing the official with the sentimental. Lines 1-2 use *tantum…quantum* to quantify the lover character's love for Lesbia:

Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam

Vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea est.

Lines 3-4 use *tanta…quanta* to quantify the lover character's *fides*, faith, in the *foedus*, contract, between them:

Nulla fides ullo fuit umquam foedere tanta

Quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est.

Love for Lesbia is therefore paralleled with trust in a contract of love between them. He thinks his love for her implies an agreement of mutual love. But this logic misses an essential part of a *foedus*: Lesbia's agreement to it. The political terms impose the gravity of political obligation on Lesbia, which is the lover character's strategy to get her to requite his love. The political term has an ironic effect because their love affair, which has ended, does not amount to a political contract. The terminology allows us to recognize and critique the love that makes the lover resort to such an ineffective strategy.

Poem 87 chooses the terms *fides* and *foedus* because in a political context, such trust and contracts existed between *amici*, two people of *equal* political standing.[102] The lover uses these words to claim that he and his beloved are equals, undoing the power struggle that has been present throughout the narrative. If the two are equals as the lover character desires, they might resume their affair in the

[102] Ross 85 *foedus* "always refers to a relationship of *amicitia* between equals" and "*Fides*… is continually applied to political *amicitiae* between equals, and is indeed the only real basis for constancy and stability in such relationships."

way described idyllically in poem 8, with her leading sometimes and him leading sometimes (8.3-8). Trying to take control of the relationship from Lesbia by asserting the existence of a *foedus* is comical because the political vocabulary denotes politics, not love.

Fides and *foedus* recall the word *basiationes* from poem 7 in that both poems use elevated language to try and impress Lesbia. The lover uses a fancy word for kisses to raise Lesbia's opinion of him and reinvigorate the cooling passion. This was satirical because it is silly to make the word "kisses" sound educated. The political words in poem 87 are aimed at the same goals that *basiationes* was. The lover is trying to sound politically knowledgeable by referencing a *foedus* in hopes of impressing Lesbia and restarting their relationship.[103] However, the tone is erudite and only reveals that the lover character is *not* knowledgeable about love, or he would not use political terms to discuss it.

Poem 87 also satirizes the lover character's intensity with the shift in addressee between the first and second couplets. The first couplet refers to Lesbia in the third person, and says she is loved. The second couplet intensifies the love proposed in the first couplet with the admonitory apostrophe, as well as with its invocation of weighty political terms. The lover character tries to restart an affair long over by grasping at the idea that love is comparable to a political alliance and threatening Lesbia with it, and we see that the poem is making fun of him.

[103] If contemporary readers associated Lesbia with Clodia, then they would note that Clodia was a political figure. When the poems use political terms, they are aiming to speak to Lesbia on her level, a political level. However, though Clodia was a political figure, there is no evidence that Lesbia is.

The satirical tone aided by the political vocabulary reveals that the lover character is entrapped by love. The lover continually develops strategies to restart the affair with Lesbia, each more absurd and desperate than the last. The claim to a *foedus* is as ridiculous as poem 92's claim that Lesbia cursing the lover meant she still loves him or poem 72's claim that their relationship was like that between a father and his sons.

Moreover, it is not only absurd to impose political obligation on a lover, as poems 75 and 87 do, but also illogical to claim that one partner's agreement assures the agreement of the other. Poem 87 makes this claim when it says Lesbia is loved and there is therefore a pact of love between them. The authorial persona uses political vocabulary to give the reader perspective to see the lover as overly serious. The juxtaposition of politics and *amor* is comical in its incongruity and so the tone is satirical, making fun of love.

Poems 75 and 87 are similar in that both use political vocabulary to try and restart the love affair and both satirize love, but there is a slight difference of tone between them. Poem 75 portrays the lover admitting that his lovesick condition is, in part, his own fault, saying "my mind has destroyed itself with its own dutifulness" (75.2). Poem 87 has no such hint at sincerity, but begins with a hyperbole and concludes with an unfounded claim to a *foedus*, and a satirical view of love dominates. The poems are similar, but the slight difference in tone attests to the complexity of the presentation of love in this *libellus*. There are not two different men talking, a poet and a character, but two aspects of one narrator, the division

between them blurred and inconstant. The narrator sometimes lets his emotions rule him and sometimes makes fun of himself.

Poem 109 also uses political vocabulary to satirize obsessive love and is significant because it is the last "Lesbia poem" in the *libellus*. Sincerity and satire are present to convey the theme of love as entrapment and the plot of the story contributes to the theme as well. For in poem 109, the lover character and Lesbia get back together, but it is not a happy ending. The poem suggests that the lover is still more serious about the relationship than Lesbia. And even though he is skeptical about her honesty, his love compels him to resume the affair.

Iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem

Hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuum fore.

Di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit,

Atque id sincere dicat et ex animo,

Ut liceat nobis tota perducere vita

Aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.

My life, you propose to me that this pleasant love

Of ours be between us and be eternal.

Gods above, make it so she can promise honestly,

And she speaks truthfully from her heart,

So that it is granted to us to extend for our whole life

This eternal contract of sacred friendship.

Poem 109 conveys how important the love affair is to the lover, as he implores the gods to make Lesbia truly love him. The tone is sincere and his

emotions are sympathetic, but also satirical because he is much more serious than his mistress. The poem asserts the lover's seriousness in line 1, when he calls Lesbia *mea vita*, "my life." His beloved is as important to him as life itself. This recalls 5.1, which couples living and loving when it says, "Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love." Over the course of the *libellus*, then, the lover character has not outgrown his obsessive love. Then, 109.3-6 invoke the gods, conveying the lover's desperation. He pleads for Lesbia's honest love, dramatically beseeching heaven, *Di magni*. Words relating to eternity occur at 109.2, *perpetuum*, 109.5, *tota vita*, and 109.6, *aeternam*. The poem accentuates eternity to convey the lover's extreme way of thinking. The love he wants is not *iucundum*, like the first word of the poem, but binding and permanent. This contrasts Lesbia's attitude, since she is the one who proposes the *iucundum amorem* in 109.1.

The lover's seriousness is enforced by a parallel between the first and last couplets. The first couplet describes *amor* with the adjective *perpetuum*. The last couplet, similarly, describes *foedus* as *aeternum*, creating a parallel between *amor* and *foedus*. The affair is as important as a political contract to the lover, which is the authorial persona satirizing his exaggeration of a *iucundus amor*.

Lesbia does not feel as strongly as the lover character according to the text. She promises a pleasant love, *iucundum amorem*, will be eternal*, perpetuum fore*. However, this promise is suspect because *iucundum* has a light, frivolous sense that

precludes perpetuity.[104] How can love be frivolous and permanent at the same time?

Iucundum from 109.1 recalls poem 2 with its happy tone. Poem 2 showed the *puella* similarly lighthearted, *gravis acquiescat ardor*, "her heavy passion goes away," and playful, *ludere…solet*, "accustomed to play." By proposing to make their *iucundus amor* eternal in 109, the *puella* proposes drawing out the scene in poem 2, where she teased the sparrow, forever.

The last line uses three words of political vocabulary, *sanctae foedus amicitiae*. The words are modified by the adjective *aeternum*, amplifying their serious tone with the idea of permanence. This weighty vocabulary describes the relationship as a serious matter to the lover, but applying political terminology to a love affair is a comical juxtaposition.

109 is the last poem on Lesbia. As such, it provides the final message on the affair.[105] The poems are not organized so that the story ends when the main characters break up, but when they get back together, the seriousness of their relationship uncertain.[106] She offers a *iucundus amor*, but the lover hopes they have an *aeternam sanctae foedus amicitiae*. It seems that the lover will forever desire requited love from Lesbia, while she seems incapable of anything but frivolous love.

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[104] TLL gives the synonym for *iucundus*: *eo quod sit semper iocis aptus* "that which is always fit for jokes"; Ross 89, the poem "answers her proposition of a pleasant little affair (*iucundum…amorem*, 109.1) with an emphatic expression of something very different, *aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae* (the last line, 6)." Contrasting my argument, though, Ross says poem 109 "must be an early poem to Lesbia."

[105] Skinner (1981); Miller 403; Wiseman (1985) 137-46

[106] Dettmer 212 "C. 109 forms the perfect close to the story of Catullus' on-again off-again relation with Lesbia. This is how we are meant to remember Catullus the lover—passionately in love (*cupido*), hopeful, yet skeptical that Lesbia can be true to him."

This ending fits better than poem 11, the traditionally accepted end of the "Lesbia cycle," because it exemplifies the theme of love as entrapment present in every "Lesbia poem." The lover's overly serious response to Lesbia recalls poem 2, the first "Lesbia poem," where she was similarly playful and he was incongruously agonized. The lover tries to rid himself of love and forget the affair in poem 8, but is unsuccessful and his love keeps him trying to win Lesbia back for the remainder of the *libellus*. Finally, in poem 109, she does come back, but there is no indication that the lover will be happy now. Rather, it seems, his love will keep him wanting more from Lesbia than she wants to give forever.

The *libellus* progresses from the polymetra to the epigrams with the satirical tone tending to outweigh the sincere tone as the lover fails repeatedly to win back his beloved, despite multiple and varied attempts, evidenced by the brevity of poems like 75, 87 and 109. The epigrams, being short, satirize the lover's belief that he can overcome his ambivalence by stating it pithily.[107] Since he needs to keep creating these tiny masterpieces, he admits that each logical revelation does not help him at all.

For example, poem 85 states the lover's ambivalence plainly:

I hate and I love. Why would I do this, you may ask?

I don't know, but I feel it happen and I am tortured.

However sympathetic and beautiful poem 85 is, its brevity promotes the theme of love as entrapment. The frequency of epigrams with this ambivalent

[107] Miller (2002) 2 "One of the ways elegy differs from epigram is length. An epigram is a short poem of roughly two to ten lines. Its brevity demands rigorous concision on the part of the poet and allows little scope for narrative development."; Skinner (2005) 219 "All his efforts to redeem her are in vain, though, as he sinks further and further into degradation."

sentiment reveals that one of the reasons the character is caught in his ambivalence is because he ruminates on it. The brevity of the epigrams therefore presents the vicious cycle of loving and ruminating that has entrapped the lover character.

Chapter 6: Sincerity Over Satire in Poem 76

In the last three chapters, we have considered how the epigrams possess sincerity in the lover character's desperation and present a satirical view of his tendency toward hyperbole, language inappropriate for elegy, and the ironic juxtaposition of careful reasoning and excessive emotion. All of the epigrams examined were no more than 8 lines. Poem 76 is the longest epigram at 26 lines, and its comparative length makes it stand out.[108] With more lines, poem 76 gives the lover more room to explore his feelings. The result is satirical, for 76 uses the language of political alliance and intratextual references that dramatize the lover's agony to levels incongruous with the end of a frivolous love affair. However, the dominant tone of 76 is sincere. This is because the lover is not trying to win Lesbia back in this poem, but only trying to rid himself of love for her.

76 applies logical analysis to passionate feelings, an ironic juxtaposition, and uses ill-fitting political vocabulary, yet the progression from forced calm at the beginning of the poem to pleading desperation by the end is sympathetic and allows the lover's sincere tone to speak louder than the authorial persona's satirical tone. This poem mixes sincerity and satire like all the other poems we have seen, but poem 76 is more heartfelt and emotional than wry. Therefore, although the *libellus* progresses chronologically, with an increasingly innovative and absurd lover, the *libellus* does not progress in tone from strictly sincere to strictly satirical. Rather, it presents a realistic depiction of love throughout, both comical and painful due to its all-consuming nature.

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[108] Skinner (1997) 131 "poem 76, the pivotal text in this sequence [of epigrams]"; Quinn (1970) 406 "Regarded by many as the prototype for Latin love elegy."

I look at the poem in sections to see how desperation builds and finally erupts to evoke pathos reflecting the oppressive and overwhelming nature of heartache. This poem also outdoes all the other epigrams in its intratextual references.[109] This contextualizes poem 76 and embeds it in the wider narrative of the Lesbia story. As I go through the poem, I consider the effects of these intratextual references.

The first four lines invoke the themes of *amicitia* and self-aggrandizement that we have already seen (*amicitia* terms bolded). The use of political terms to describe a love affair is a comical juxtaposition of tone, as we saw in the poems in chapter 5.

SIQVA recordanti **benefacta** priora uoluptas
Est homini, cum se cogitat esse **pium**,
Nec sanctam uiolasse **fidem**, nec **foedere** nullo
Diuum ad fallendos numine abusum homines,
*If there is any pleasure in remembering past **good deeds***
*For a man when he thinks he has been **devout**,*
*And has not violated any sacred **promise**, nor abused the divinity*
*Of the gods in any **contract** for the purpose of deceiving men, (76.1-4).*

The poem has not mentioned Lesbia, but because of the precedent set in poems before this, we connect the political vocabulary with their relationship.[110] The *benefacta*, "favors" or "good deeds," in 76.1 recall poem 75, which says the

[109] Quinn (1970) 407 "If at each echo we ask, 'Does this sound like a conscious echo (a cross-reference)?', usually we feel we want to answer 'Yes'; if we ask, 'Which in that case must come first?', nearly always we feel we must answer 'Not Poem 76.'"
[110] Ross 90 "From the very beginning of the poem Catullus is speaking directly about Lesbia and his love, not about a general sort of piety or a vague application of it to his own situation."

character can no longer *bene velle*, treat Lesbia as an ally (75.3). In both cases, the terminology sounds like favors done to cement an alliance, undermining the amorous nature of the relationship.

There is a difference in tone between poems 75 and 76, though both use political vocabulary. In poem 75, the political terms paralleled words concerning the relationship. *Meo officio*, the political term, paralleled *tua culpa*, meaning infidelity, and *bene velle* similarly paralled *amare*, "to love," to enforce the ironic juxtaposition of love and politics. 76, conversely, has political vocabulary alongside religious terms. A man who has been a good *amicus*, performing *benefacta* is *pius*, meaning religiously devout.[111] Moreover, the *fides* the lover has honored at 76.3 is *sanctam* and the *foedus* he has not abused is *divum*, "of the gods."[112] In Rome, the worlds of religion and politics are not as distinct as the worlds of politics and passionate love, so the ironic tone is not as apparent as in 75. The tone of these lines is more sincere than the satirical political vocabulary in poem 75.

The next four lines similarly present an element used elsewhere for satire, self-aggrandizement, but here the self-aggrandizement conveys sincerity.

Multa parata manent in longa aetate, Catulle,
Ex hoc ingrato gaudia amore tibi.
Nam quaecumque homines bene cuiquam aut dicere possunt
Aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt.

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[111] OCD "*pietas* is the typical Roman attitude of dutiful respect toward gods fatherland, and parents and other kinsmen. " The term belongs both to politics and religion; Lyne 24, in *amicitia* "one conducted oneself in accordance with *pietas* ('sense of loyalty', 'conscientiousness'); Ross 90 identifies it as inappropriate in this context: "What in fact does a man's piety, in his relations with others have to do with Catullus' own love affair? Is it not, poetically, an ineffective and almost preposterous introduction to what is obviously an important, and sincere, personal poem?"
[112] OCD "*numen*, the 'expressed will of a divinity,'"

Then many joys remain for you in your long life, Catullus,

Because of your thankless love.

For whatever men can say or do well for anyone else,

These things have been said and done by you. (76.5-8)

Lines 4-8 show the lover's characteristic self-aggrandizement and exaggeration, saying he has done and said "whatever men can do and say well." This assertion is false. The lover character has behaved badly many times in the *libellus*. By his own confession, *illam deprecor assidue*, "I curse Lesbia constantly" (92.3-4).[113] The lover's emotions keep him from being aware of his hypocrisy. However, the satire does not dominate the tone as much as elsewhere because the lover does not seem to be trying to impress Lesbia this time, whereas the self-aggrandizement of *basiationes* in poem 7 and the political terms in poems 75, 87, and 109 were for her benefit. Indeed, the text in poem 76 so far has not mentioned Lesbia at all, as though the lover wants to forget about her. Although the lover displays characteristic self-aggrandizement and hypocrisy, the authorial persona does not mock him for it with a satirical tone.

The satire in poems we have looked at before this exposed that the problem in the relationship was not Lesbia's cruelty, but her *perceived* cruelty. The lover character is solipsistic; the relationship is all in his head. By holding off mentioning her name in 76, the lover character concedes that the enemy tormenting him is not

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[113] Quinn (1970) 429: "*deprecor*: literally, 'entreat relief from'… but *deprecor* is used in an unusual way… *'deprecor' a Catullo dictum est quasi 'detestor', vel 'exsecror', vel 'depello' vel 'abominor.'*"; Skinner (2003) 68

Lesbia or her *culpa*, but his love for her. So although the lover shows characteristic vanity in 76, he also shows uncharacteristic perspective on his situation.

The next four lines recall poem 8 and heighten the contrast between that poem and this.[114] The tone of poem 8 was more satirical where poem 76 is more sincere:

Omnia quae ingratae perierunt credita menti.

Quare iam te cur amplius excrucies?

Quin tu animo offirmas atque istinc teque reducis,

Et dis inuitis desinis esse miser?

Everything that was entrusted to a thankless heart has died,

So why do you keep torturing yourself?

Why don't you make your heart strong and lead yourself away from there,

And, in spite of the gods, stop being miserable? (76.9-12)

Poem 8 begins, *Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire, et quod uides perisse perditum ducas*. Poem 76 reflects this sentiment in lines 9-10 with a similar apostrophe telling the lover to stop loving. In poem 8, the narrator also begs himself to affirm his mind, *obstinata mente perfer*, like 76.11 says *tu animo offirmas*. The term *invitus* also appears in both poems. In poem 8, Lesbia is unwilling and here the gods are unwilling. Without Lesbia's love, the lover character feels that everything, even the gods, is against him.

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[114] Quinn (1970) 406 "Close comparison with poem 8 is instructive"; Lyne 29 "There is (on more than one account) an interesting comparison to be made between 76 and 8." Lyne 33 also calls poem 76 "a poetic failure" in contrast to poem 8, which I think is ludicrous.

Poems 8 and 76 both implore the lover to let go of his love. However, poem 8 surrounds this notion with satirical elements, the absence of which in 76 makes it sincere. The circular logic of poem 8 contributes to its insincerity by allowing us to criticize the lover's inability to stop loving. Moreover, the lover in poem 8 has little perspective, thinking that if he does not love Lesbia, no one does (8.13-8). He also demeans her to try to get her to come back to him, but it is unsuccessful and belies his claim to want to get over the affair. Poem 8 is more of an ironic critique of love than an engaging glimpse into the mind of a lover. In poem 76, however, the desperation of the lover overshadows the satirical elements.

Unlike poem 8, poem 76 does not dwell on lost happiness, back when *fulsere candidi soles* (8.3, 8), or bully Lesbia into loving him back, *robageris nulla* (8.14). Instead, the lover in 76 admits that love was unrequited, *ex hoc ingrato… amore* (76.6), and focuses on moving on, saying, *quin tu animo offirmas atque istinc teque reducis,/et dis inuitis desinis esse miser?* (76.11-2). In 76, the lover has perspective to see that he is controlled by his emotions and the emphasis is on the pathos and not the irony.

Lyne protests that 76 is without context, but I argue that it is part of the chronological narrative.[115] Poem 8 is set after the kissing poems, 5 and 7, and before the invective poem 11. There is a narrative progression from love, to disappointment, to bitterness. Poem 76, conversely, is not part of drama chronicled in the opening sequence. Rather, poem 76 is an eruption of emotion. However,

[115] Lyne 51: poem 8 constructs "a rich verbal texture—a poetic texture. That is something that an analytical epigram with its lack of context and its pursuit of precision cannot (by definition) do." I disagree.

poem 76 fits in its context. This poem occurs during the long, arduous period where the lover and Lesbia have broken up, after she sleeps with someone else and before she comes back and promises to be faithful in poem 109. There is context if we realize that the "Lesbia poems" are not so much the story of a love affair as the story of what a person feels as a result of loving. If we realize this, the epigrams, and poem 76, describe the time in the relationship while the lover character is not with Lesbia, but alone with his feelings.

The argument that the entire affair begins and ends in the opening sequence, making the subsequent "Lesbia poems" out of order[116], hinges on the belief that the lover cannot keep having emotions about the relationship after he says goodbye to Lesbia in poem 11. The opening sequence certainly tells a story, but there is no reason to suppose poem 11 is the end of that story. The lover never stops loving Lesbia, but dwells on the memory of her and devises ways to get her to come back. Therefore, 76 belongs where it is. For a brief moment, the lover gains the perspective of the authorial persona, but without the comedic tone, and panics over his state of entrapment.

Poem 76 explicitly states that love is entrapment in the next lines. The lover here is more honest, stating openly what we inferred from satire elsewhere: the lover is trapped by love.

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[116] Skinner (1981) explains that scholars embraced the idea of the introductory Lesbia cycle as a narrative prologue making the succeeding Lesbia poems references to it as a prior event; Quinn (1980) 241; Ross 89; Miller 403 "Thus it is now well established that the opening of the polymetrics gives an encapsulated form of the narrative of the Lesbia affair as a whole."; Wiseman (1985) 137-46; Wray 53-5; Skinner (2005) 220 "he finally breaks with her in poem 11."; Ellis lxiv-lxv; Throughout his commentary, Ellis tries to place each "Lesbia poem" sequentially among the opening sequence.

Difficile est longum subito deponere amorem,

Difficile est, uerum hoc qua lubet efficias.

Una salus haec est. Hoc est tibi peruincendum,

Hoc facias, siue id non pote siue pote.

It is difficult to put aside, suddenly, long-lasting love,

It is difficult, but you must do it as best as you can.

This is your only salvation. You must overcome this.

Do it, whether you feel you are unable or able. (76.13-6)

The anaphora of the first two lines heightens the tone of fear and misery. *Difficile est* is repeated to accentuate how hard it is to put aside old love. *Longum*, here meaning "long lasting," is pointedly juxtaposed with its antithesis *subito*, "suddenly," to underscore the difficulty of what must be done.

The two couplets progress in urgency. In the first couplet, what he should do if he is able, *qua lubet efficias*, becomes in the second couplet what he must do, stated with an urgent gerundive *pervincendum*. In the second couplet it is not only *difficile*, but *non pote.* The increasingly panicked tone tells us the lover is trapped by his love, scared of the way it makes him feel and act and afraid he will never be rid of it.

The lover cannot do what he must; he cannot stop loving. In the next section of six lines, he collapses at the feet of the gods and gives up his fate to them. His desperation is palpable, sincere, and not derisible despite the seriousness of some of the vocabulary choices:

O di, si uestrum est misereri, aut si quibus umquam
Extremam iam ipsa in morte tulistis opem,
Me miserum aspicite et, si uitam puriter egi,
Eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi,
O gods, if you feel pity or if you've ever brought one last hope
To anyone in his dying moments
Look at wretched me and if I have lived my life purely,
Release me from this disease and ruin. (76.17-20)

The antithesis between the words *morte* in 76.18 and *vitam* in 76.19 heightens the tension that has been building throughout the poem. It also enforces the lover's desperation; being rid of his love is a matter of life or death. This is in direct contrast to his comparison of loving and living at 5.1, "Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love." Now, he needs to be rid of his love to live, comparing it to a disease and ruin, *pestem perniciemque* in 76.20. Poem 76 therefore states openly and honestly the entrapping nature of love. Moreover, poem 76 is a logical progression from poem 5. As the lover has endured the pain of unrequited love for the entire *libellus*, his opinion on love has changed from positive to negative.

76.18 recalls Ariadne's speech in poem 64. She says, "I beg the mercy of the gods in my dying hour" (64.191). It is appropriate for Ariadne to make the claim of a "dying hour" since she is stranded alone on a desolate island. The lover in poem 76, conversely, is in no such life-threatening circumstances, though he too claims to be *ipsa in morte*, "in his dying moments." Love blinds the lover and makes him lose perspective, leading him to think his situation is as severe as Ariadne's. This is more

sympathetic than satirical, though, because love's oppression is not making him cruelly attack Lesbia's reputation, or use fallacious logic as he does in other poems. Instead, he identifies with Ariadne as a fellow wounded lover and her grief enhances his.

There is irony in the phrase *si vitam puriter egi,* "if I have lived my life purely," in 76.19, for we have seen the lover act possessive, derisive, promiscuous and malicious before now. Lyne rightly asks, "In what sense has Catullus lived a spotless life?"[117] When the poems use inappropriate vocabulary, like *puriter* here, it often comes across as satirical. Here, though, in the context of a prayer to the gods, it is more sincere. Although the language is perhaps inappropriate, perhaps hypocritical, the honesty in poem 76 compared to other poems promotes its sincere tone. Instead of trying to manipulate Lesbia into returning or dwelling on her *culpa*, the lover admits that his love, and not her lack of love, has hurt him.

The next two lines go into more detail about the *pestem perniciemque* mentioned at 76.20:

Quae mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus

Expulit ex omni pectore laetitias.

It sneaks like a stupor into my innermost bones and

Expels all happiness from my heart. (76.20-2)

What exactly is the *pestem perniciemque,* "pestilence and ruin" from 76.20? Lines 21-2 illuminate the answer when they say "it sneaks like a stupor into my

[117] Lyne 32

innermost bones," a reference to poem 51. There, when the lover hears Lesbia talk, he experiences physical discomfort:

Lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
Flamma demanat, sonitu suopte
Tintinant aures geminae, teguntur
Lumina nocte
My tongue swells, a thin flame spreads
Through my bones, my two ears ring
With the sound of her, and my eyes
Are covered by night (51.9-12)

76's *torpor* recalls *torpet* from 51.9. The *torpor* that sneaks into the lover's bones and makes him sick in poem 76 recalls the love that sneaked into his bones and made him blind, deaf, and dumb in poem 51. These poems also have similarly sincere tones. The evocation of poem 51 enforces the sincerity in poem 76.

Both 76 and 51 describe the love that plagues him like a disease. The theme of love as a disease presents love as something separate from the lover, inflicted from without. Love is caught, like a virus. In reality, though, it comes from within and is inseparable from him. The theme love as disease enforces the theme of love as entrapment by depicting love as an entity separate from the lover and in control of him.

The next two lines admit the fruitlessness of wanting fidelity from Lesbia, which the lover has not acknowledged before. He has referred to her infidelity as

the reason for his pain in poem 75, but here he admits his expectation of fidelity is at fault instead.

Non iam illud quaero, contra me ut diligat illa,

Aut, quod non potis est, esse pudica uelit.

Now I don't ask that she love me back,

Or, what is impossible, that she be faithful. (76.23-4)

When the lover attacks Lesbia on the basis of her infidelity in poems 11, 37, and 58 (with salacious accusations), poems 70 and 72 (with betrayed promises), and poem 87 (lamenting her *culpa*), it seemed to be the authorial persona critiquing the lover's blindness. He expected fidelity from a married woman, who evidentially does not love him. Poem 76 admits how pointless it is to expect her fidelity and its sincerity is not masked with humor.

Poem 76 ends with one last desperate invocation of the gods, showing sincerity with its honest depiction of love as entrapment:

Ipse ualere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum.

O di, reddite mi hoc pro pietate mea!

I myself hope to thrive and be free of this hideous sickness.

O, gods, grant me this for my piety! (76.25-6)

Line 25 begs the gods to remove the *taetrum morbum*, using the verb *deponere*. This is the same word used at 76.13, which said it is difficult to suddenly be rid of long love, *difficile est longum subito deponere amorem*. The poem thus parallels *longum amorem* and *taetrum morbum* to show that love feels like a disease. The poem ends with a combination of desperation and hopefulness. The reader,

though, will find that the narrator never manages to stop loving, and his hope to thrive and be free in 76.23 goes unfulfilled by the end of the *libellus*.

This poem is a mix of pathos and irony like the other epigrams, but unlike the other epigrams, the pathos dominates the irony. Although there are familiar elements of self-aggrandizement and inappropriate political vocabulary, poem 76 captures desperation and misery so well that we remember this is the tragic story of unrequited love, not just a satirical caricature of a young lover. Poem 76 is a poetic masterpiece that, more than any other in this corpus, captures the pain of love. For these reasons, poem 76 became the prototype for Latin love elegy.[118]

[118] Quinn (1970) 406

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have tried to argue three things. First, the poems combine sincere and satirical tones to reflect the complexity of emotion. The poems are never wholly sincere or wholly satirical, but present a blending of both tones. At times, the narrator is dominated by the lover's voice and we sympathize with him. At other times, the authorial persona's satirical voice dominates and we see that the narrator is making fun of himself. The first "Lesbia poem," poem 2, is programmatic in its establishing a tone as a mix of comical and dejected. Poem 2 also establishes that the relationship between lover and beloved is unequal, with the lover feeling inferior. This compels him to try several strategies to gain control that satirize his sincerity in successive poems.

My second goal has been to show that the satirical elements comment on the lover's sincerity to show how love limits one's perspective. Moreover, love traps the lover in a vicious cycle where loving compels him to ruminate on the relationship and what went wrong, which induces more love. Poem 8 exemplifies this when the authorial persona tells the lover to stop dwelling on lost love, *desinas ineptire,* and the command immediately drives the lover to reflect on the relationship (8.1-8). The poems convey this prevailing theme of love as entrapment throughout the *libellus*. In the last section of the corpus, the epigrams show how love keeps the lover trying to win Lesbia back with many innovative strategies. Some epigrams even state blatantly that love is entrapment, like poem 76, which says, "it is difficult to rid oneself of long-lasting love" (76.13).

The theme of love as entrapment supports my third argument that the "Lesbia poems" progress chronologically. As we read the *libellus*, we get the impression of a chronological sequence. The lover moves away from the affair that ends in poem 8, but, entrapped by love, he feeds his obsession by dwelling on the relationship. The poems use several different motifs to progress the main theme of love as entrapment: the gods, father-child relationships, silence vs. speaking, political and religious vocabulary, and disease. As we read, we see the character evolve, becoming increasingly obsessed as he continually fails to be rid of his love. Poem 109 is the last "Lesbia poem" and it exemplifies the theme of love as entrapment, since it presents the lover as being in the same situation as in poem 2. The first and last "Lesbia poems," 2 and 109, match in the sense that both show Lesbia offering a frivolous affair to the lover, who takes the offer too seriously. Since the progressing narrative has consistently portrayed him as trapped by love, this is a fitting ending. Our last impression of the lover is a man consumed by love, whom the text simultaneously portrays in sincere as well as parodic terms.

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