Servitium Amoris

R. O. A. M. Lyne

The Classical Quarterly, New Series, Vol. 29, No. 1. (1979), pp. 117-130.

Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0009-8388%281979%292%3A29%3A1%3C117%3ASA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-D

The Classical Quarterly is currently published by The Classical Association.

*SERVITIUM AMORIS**

In this paper I shall be examining the nature and provenance of what many people state or imply to be a traditional, conventional, even trite figure of speech: the Augustan Elegists' figure of the 'seruitium amoris'. It is indeed a very frequent image (so to call it for the moment) in the Elegists. As. F. O. Copley says:[1] 'Of all the figures used by the Roman elegists, probably none is quite so familiar as that of the lover as slave.' But frequency does not equal triteness nor traditionality. Copley himself argues that the frequency of 'seruitium amoris' and the way it was used in the Elegists was novel. It is my intention to confirm that conclusion and to argue further that the Elegiac image was effectively an Elegiac invention—more particularly probably Propertius'. It was also I think far more potentially earnest, immediate, and relaistic in impact than Copley (or indeed most scholars) would allow,[2] and this too will be demonstrated. First a word of background is necessary.

It is important to realize that the poetry of Propertius and Tibullus, whose first books were published in the late 30s and early 20s B.C.[3], contains, indeed proclaims, a radically unconventional philosophy of life. In several carefully organized poems[4] they argue for a serious devotion to the arts and pleasure of 'otium', in particular to love and love poetry, to the exclusion of conventional and honourable 'negotium' and achievement. This philosophy was quite earnestly intended or at least earnestly intended to provoke. Much of it had in fact been implicit in the life and works of the Elegists' most important predecessor, Catullus; and Cicero for one had identified an idle society of pleasure, often alluding to it in his letters and on one famous occasion publicly attacking it.[5] But with the early Elegists the implicit is made explicit and a veritable 'alternative society' now emblazons itself. Propertius and Tibullus provocatively codify a way of life whose dishonourableness they are the first to avow: we may call it the 'life of love.'[6] This is the context in which the efflorescence of the 'seruitium amoris' image occurs, and the context helps to explain that efflorescence.

At the outset we ought to establish what, broadly, was the function of the figure of 'seruitium amoris' in the early Elegists. It expressed often quite subtly the lover's state or sense of degradation. The lover-poet who called himself or implied

* Jasper Griffin kindly read a draft of this paper and offered many acute and helpful suggestions. I owe the Plautine references on p.123 to Mrs. N. Zagagi.

[1] F. O. Copley, '*Seruitium amoris* in the Roman Elegists', *TAPA* 78 (1947), 285.

[2] 'By its very nature, therefore, the figure is romantic-sentimental, for it idealizes love out of all relation to reality, and . . . transports the poets into a phantasy-world created out of their own imagination.' Copley, loc. cit.

[3] Cf. P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber I, Pars Prior* (Leiden, 1946), pp.16–19; *Liber Secundus, Pars Prior* (Leiden 1962), pp.34–45.

[4] Cf. in particular Prop. 1.6 and 14, Tib. 1.1 and 10.

[5] Cic. *Pro Sestio* 136 ff. (56 B.C.).

[6] For what I call the 'life of love' cf. J. P. Boucher, *Études sur Properce* (Paris, 1965), Ch. I 'La Génération Elégiaque'; P. Grimal, *L'Amour à Rome* (Hachette, 1963) Ch. VI; J. Griffin, 'Augustan Poetry and the Life of Luxury', *JRS* 66 (1976), 87–105.

himself to be the slave of his beloved communicated thereby the humiliation and abasement to which, as subject-lover of that person, he was or felt himself exposed. Propertius and Tibullus may stress different aspects and have different attitudes to their situation. But both imply through the image that their love for the person in question involves *degradation*—and degradation, be it noted, for the party whom we should in fact expect to be the dominant one.[1] The crucially relevant aspect of slavery for the image is (to put it briefly) the *servility* of the slave as a social institution.[2]

If we look at the surviving occurrences of 'slavery of love' imagery in Greek literature we note at once not only its rarity, but also the comparatively simple function it usually performs. It tends to illustrate the power of love rather than the state or feelings of the lover: the overwhelming or miraculous power of love to enthrall or to keep in thrall. It is closely associable with, indeed not always separable from, another and common idea, the idea of love capturing or making prisoner—prisoners being *ipso facto* slaves. The *servility*, degradation, of the lover-slave is *not* usually at issue.

In Greek poetry Copley[3] refers us first of all to the Alexandrians' erotic versions of god-slave myths: Apollo and Admetus, Hercules and Omphale. The only example from these that substantially survives is Callimachus' account of Apollo's servitude to his beloved Admetus (*Hymn* 2.47–54; cf. Rhianus fr. 10 Powell). Here we are presented with the miraculous spectacle of Apollo as a herdsman—a great tribute to the power of love and an amusing but very far from humiliating picture of Apollo.[4] An anonymous epigram (*A.P.* 5.100) of uncertain date is also cited by Copley but is of doubtful relevance. A lover talks of himself as the slave of Love (λάτρις Ἔρωτος) *not* of another lover, and claims as excuse for his conduct the precedents of Zeus and Hades each of whom was the 'slave of violent desires' (μαλερῶν δοῦλον . . . πόθων). In effect the image here is of slavery to *emotions*—something very different in possible implications from an image of slavery to *people* and in its essence of course well paralleled.[5] There are in fact a couple of other more colourful, and definitely Hellenistic, epigrams to be cited which are based on the idea of slavery to *love* rather than a lover.[6]

I can make some few further additions to Copley's examples from Greek poetry. Most follow the simple 'power of love' pattern. At Menander fr. 568 (Sandbach) it is asked 'by what are lovers enslaved (τίνι δεδούλωνται <sc. οἱ ἐρῶντες> ποτέ;)'—to which it is answered that lovers are not enslaved by their faculty of sight nor by desire: the decisive factor is νόσος ψυχῆς. The image

[1] That of course is a key aspect of the Elegiac figure: the fact that the man is enslaved to the woman (or boy). It was a comparatively common idea for a woman either to appear as a 'slave in love' or to express willingness to be the literal slave of a beloved man. Cf. Nisbet–Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 1.33.14, with Catull. 64.160 ff., Prop. 4.4.33 f., Ov. *Her.* 3.69 ff.

[2] Cf. Copley, loc. cit. 288.

[3] Copley, 286 f.

[4] The slave-god, like the child-god, appeals to Alexandria because of the piquant incongruity (cf. H. Herter, 'Kallimachos und Homer', *Kleine Schriften* (Munich, 1975), pp.371 ff. on Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*, especially pp.377 ff.).

[5] Cf. Plat. *Phaedr.* 238 e (ἡδονή) etc., LSJ s.v. δοῦλος and δουλεύω 2, Hor. *Serm.* 2.7, etc. A willing or at least unconquered (but not 'natural') slavery to a person, especially a man's to a woman or boy, has implications of actual and literal degradation and also, possibly, of masochism and sexual reversal which the quasi-philosophical metaphor cannot have.

[6] *A.P.* 12.80 and 81 (Meleager).

simply describes the catastrophic process of falling in love not the state (humiliating or otherwise) of being in love. At *Misumenus* fr. 2 the soldier Thrasonides exclaims 'the paltry little girl has enslaved me, a feat never achieved by any one of my foes in war.' From the allusion to foes and from the fact that we know the girl in question was Thrasonides' prisoner of war, we deduce that he is drawing attention to an ironic reversal. He who has always been victorious has been vanquished, vanquished and captivated by his defeated and female captive. The image of slavery is here not distinguishable from the image of capture and again denotes just the catastrophic (but here ironically catastrophic) action of falling in love. With this latter we may compare quite interestingly an epigram of Paulus Silentiarius[1] (*A.P.* 5.230):

> χρυσῆς εἰρύσσασα μίαν τρίχα Δωρὶς ἐθείρης,
> οἷα δορικτήτους δῆσεν ἐμεῦ παλάμας . . .

Cf. too the epitaph of Lais (*ap.* Athen. *Deipn.* 589b):

> τῆσδέ ποθ' ἡ μεγάλαυχος ἀνίκητός τε πρὸς ἀλκὴν
> Ἑλλὰς ἐδουλώθη κάλλεος ἰσοθέου,
> Λαίδος . . .

Here ἐδουλώθη has wider range but the same sort of colouring as in *Misumenus* fr. 2 above. Cf. finally *A.P.* 5.302.15 f. (Agathias Scholasticus):

> ἦν δὲ μιγῇς ἰδίῃ θεραπαινίδι, τλῆθι καὶ αὐτὸς
> δοῦλος ἐναλλάγδην δμωίδι γωόμενος

Ironic reversal again.

Not many examples remain to be cited from extant Greek literature. But in considering what do remain we must also consider an important area which is probably under-represented: colloquial speech. Copley remarks:[2] 'it is altogether likely that the popular mind, in Greek times, had seized on the similarity between the lover's fawning conduct, his humility and abasement, and the demeanour of the slave'; so that the image of the lover as slave, and the lover's degradation as slavery, i.e. something like the Elegiac 'seruitium', might well have been part of Greek *colloquial* speech.

There is of course one famous place in Greek (cited by Copley) where lovers' degradation is thus described. In Plato's *Symposium* (183 A) lovers who are prepared even to sleep on the beloved's doorstep are said to be willing δουλείας δουλεύειν οἵας οὐδ' ἂν δοῦλος οὐδεὶς and the idea is taken up again in the dialogue (184 b–c, 219 e). The occasion and style of the *Symposium* might suggest that the image was colloquial; and Copley remarks: 'since there is little, if anything, in Greek literature that would have suggested the idea to Plato, then, unless Plato himself conceived it, it must have been derived from the speech of the people.' And it certainly would have been a comprehensible and natural idiom. Athenian society like any other society with slaves saw slavish acts as demeaning

[1] It seems, incidentally, unlikely that Paulus, or Agathias (see below), was familiar with the Augustan Elegists, though they did of course draw on Hellenistic and other earlier Greek epigram: cf. P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum, Pars Altera* (Leiden, 1946), p.32 with bibliography; and on Agathias see Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970), especially pp.12–29.

[2] Copley, loc. cit. 289.

for free men and used 'slavish' instinctively to describe inappropriate or undignified actions. Demosthenes for example (57.45) talks of 'poverty compelling free men to do many slavish (δουλικά) and lowly things'; and there are a great number of occasions (unnecessary to illustrate here) when other undignified behaviour is described in similar terms, obviously idiomatically. So it would be very surprising if Plato had been the only person to depict lovers' indignities in this way and we should probably infer a wider currency of the 'slavery of love' (used in the manner of the Roman 'seruitium' image) in Greek *popular* language than our sources suggest. There is in fact the implication of Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1157 [a]7 to digest; talking of the different aims of ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος he says: οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἥδονται οὗτοι, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ὁρῶν ἐκεῖνον, ὁ δὲ θεραπευόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐραστοῦ. And I can cite one Hellenistic (and one Imperial) epigram which certainly seems to reflect such a usage. *A.P.* 12.169 (Dioscorides 8 Gow–Page):

ἐξέφυγον, Θεόδωρε, τὸ σὸν βάρος. ἀλλ' ὅσον εἶπας
'ἐξέφυγον τοὐμὸν δαίμονα πικρότατον'
πικρότερός με κατέσχεν, Ἀριστοκράτει δὲ λατρεύων
μυρία δεσπόσυνον καὶ τρίτον ἐκδέχομαι.

Cf. too *A.P.* 5.22 (Rufinus).

So: an image of 'slavery of love' in the mould of the Roman *seruitium* probably had some currency in *colloquial* Greek. But this is *not* to say that it was ever actually a cliché in classical or Hellenistic speech, or even particularly common. For if it had been, we should expect to see some substantial reflection of it in the popular comedies—which we do not. Even in the Roman comedy which adapted Greek middle and new comedy there are very few signs.[1] As for Greek *literature*, slavery to illustrate the demeaning behaviour of lovers simply never caught on; it was never a topos. Writers seem to have found it unappealing or not to have considered it. This may sound a rash statement given the loss (in particular) of so much Alexandrian Greek. But if a slavery image of this type had been a popular literary topos we should expect to see some considerable sign of it in erotic epigram or idyll, quite a lot of which (after all) survives. We see almost none. And the absence in comedy should again be noted; it is in fact a remarkable statistic. In comedy astute slaves are forever counselling dotty, amorous young masters—and offering, one might have thought, nice ironic opportunities for the use of the motif. No such use or virtually no such use is made. We must infer from this silence that it was not prevalent—either in literature or speech.

Let us now survey the scene in Latin. Examples are in fact again very rare—until the Elegists. In Terence there is only *Eunuchus* 1026–7 to cite, where the Alexandrian erotic version of Hercules and Omphale is simply adduced as a comic *exemplum* with no elaboration, nor concentration on humiliation and degradation. A couple of instances in Plautus I shall come to soon. The image does not feature in Lutatius Catulus and the other Roman epigrammatists. In Catullus there is only (I think) 68.136 to reckon with: 'rara uerecundae furta

[1] See below. It should of course be noted that the comic idea of a *husband* as slave to his *wife* (cf. Caecilius *ap.* Gell. 2.23.10) carries very different implications from those of either 'power of love' slave imagery or imagery in the mould of the Roman *seruitium*; and it is really irrelevant to this discussion.

feremus erae'. But the main intention here is to anticipate the reversal of sexual roles implied in the following lines (Catullus will play Juno to Lesbia's Jupiter), and the effect is pathetic rather than shocking—Catullus is stressing forebearance not humiliation. And in general of course Catullus' ideals of love excluded acquiescence (let along glorying) in degradation; his was a very different romanticism from the Elegists'.[1] It begins to look therefore as if it is *only* in the Augustan Elegy that the 'seruitium amoris' is developed into an elaborate image to illustrate the humiliation, the *servile* state of the lover. It begins to look indeed as if it is only in the Elegists that the image becomes frequent in any form. The picture in Latin *previous to the Elegists* is therefore looking, on the face of it, much like the picture in Greek. And this is corroborated by some further considerations: arguments from silence.

It is relevant to recall Lucr. 4.1121 ff., where Lucretius satirizes the romantic lover. His scorn for such a lover's abject subjection and humiliation is complete and clear: 'alterius sub nutu degitur aetas . . . languent officia atque aegrotat fama uacillans'. But Lucretius does *not* liken such subjection to a slave's. And that I think has clear implications. If the picture of the lover as slave had been a familiar one to Lucretius—if the comparison had been common or fashionable in current literature or speech—surely Lucretius would have introduced it (particularly, we might note, if people had been more or less gladly confessing 'slavery', as the Elegists were to do). It is the purpose or effect of the 'seruitium' image to give concrete expression to despicable aspects of love; as such it offers a superb handle for the satirist and, if it had been available and tempting, Lucretius is unlikely to have passed it up.

Two other such arguments are worth consideration. An obvious candidate for the popularization or utilization of the 'seruitium' is the 'founder of Elegy', Cornelius Gallus. I doubt that he had any of it. Virgil's picture of Gallus in the tenth *Eclogue* seems in many respects a fun-poking parody—the pastoral poet, advocate of ordered Epicurean emotions, rallying the Elegiac tool of passion. It is for example part of Virgil's parody that Gallus, who no doubt many times represented himself as 'dying of love' ('pereo') in the emotional, colloquial (and Elegiac sense), is depicted in the *Eclogue* as *literally* dying: 'indigno cum Gallus amore peribat'. If Gallus had represented himself as the slave of a woman, I doubt whether Virgil could have resisted comparably parodying it. I would draw the same sort of conclusion from Hor. *Serm.* 1.2, the satire on the ridiculous behaviour of romantic adulterers (and others), which is 'probably the earliest . . . of Horace's satires' (Fraenkel): say, early 30s B.C. If it had been fashionable or even common in colloquial parlance or erotic literature to talk of lovers as slaves, if Horace had *thought* of the image at the time of writing *Serm.* 1.2, it is hard to imagine that he (any more than Lucretius) would have missed its satirical potential. But it does not feature at all in that satire.

At this point someone might well object that *Epod.* 11 vitiates my arguments from silence. Here in an erotic poem dating from approximately the same time as the *Sermones* Horace *does* allude to the slavery of lovers—in his own case.

[1] Witness for example the hoped-for *foedus amicitiae* (109.6). At 68.68 *isque domum nobis isque dedit dominae* (*dominae* Fröhlich), *domina* must, in conjunction with *domum* and in the context of an expanding fantasy of marriage, be referring to 'mistress *of the house*' (i.e. effectively *wife*) not 'mistress from the point of view of a slave'. (The transmitted *dominam* cannot I think work, but this is of course a notorious crux; *dominam* is defended by, among others, L. P. Wilkinson at *CR* N.S. 20 (1970), 290.)

quodsi meis inaestuet praecordiis
libera bilis . . .

he had protested, at the time of his love-affair with Inachia (15 f.). And

nunc gloriantis quamlibet mulierculam
uincere mollitie amor Lycisci me tenet,
unde expedire non *amicorum* queant
libera consilia nec contumeliae graues,
sed alius ardor . . . (23–7)

The implication that his state was and is servile is clear; and there are, actually, obvious similarities in language to Propertius himself, especially to the first poem of the *monobiblos*.[1] So (the objection would run) *Epod.* 11 shows that, at the approximate time of writing *Serm.* 1.2, Horace was able to think of and use the image of love's degrading slavery—but simply, for his own reasons, did not choose to in that satire.

I respond as follows. The inference from *Serm.* 1.2 seems too plausible to be hastily discarded; *Epod.* 11 is rather a special poem; and 40–30 B.C., the 'approximate' period of composition of the *Sermones* and *Epodes*, is a long and eventful time.

F. Leo called *Epod.* 11 'plane elegia iambis concepta' and showed that it has many resemblances to Hellenistic epigram—and to Propertius and Tibullus.[2] I would stress that there is a lot of humour to it; it seems in fact something of a *parody* of the attitudes and actions of Augustan Elegy. That is clear in Horace's treatment of the 'exclusus amator' (20 ff.), a crudely funny version in which the excluded lover exhausts himself in masturbation in the doorway instead of romantically singing a serenade.[3] And Horace, once upon a time in thrall to Inachia, now in thrall to Lyciscus and only able to be freed by 'alius ardor', is a slave to love in a very different way from the slaves of Elegy. Elegiac 'seruitium' implies (in amongst everything else) that the poet-lover's love is *inseparable* from the particular beloved: he must be in love all the time because he must be in love with one irresistible person.[4] Horace must be in love all the time because he must be in love all the time—and it does not much matter with whom. His 'slavery of love' placed side by side with the Elegists' is amusing and cynical. It was meant to be. I think *Epod.* 11 was written in the *late* 30s in humorous response to (most probably) the early elegies of Propertius himself. That is the simplest and most satisfactory explanation of the uniambic tone of the poem, the impression of parody, and the close parallels with, specifically, Propertius.[5]

[1] Cf. especially Prop. 1.1.25–8:
'et uos, qui sero lapsum reuocatis, amici,
quaerite non sani pectoris auxilia.
fortiter et ferrum saeuos patiemur et ignis,
sit modo libertas quae uelit ira loqui.'

[2] F. Leo, *De Horatio et Archilocho* (Göttingen, 1900), pp.9 ff.

[3] Cf. Aristoph. *Eccl.* 707–9; V. Grassmann, *Die erotischen Epoden des Horaz* (Munich, 1966), pp.112–15.

[4] Cf. e.g. Prop. 1.12.18–20:
'sunt quoque translato gaudia seruitio.
mi neque amare aliam neque ab hac desistere fas est:
Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit.'
Tib. 1.1.55–60, 5.39–40, etc. (Propertius' and Tibullus' inalienable beloved may of course from time to time change—but that is an eventuality they will not normally at any given time foresee. Prop. 2.22 incidentally is a very uncharacteristic poem.)

[5] Elegiac romanticism demonstrably provokes Horace's amused criticism and parody in the *Odes*—and in ways which

My conclusion therefore remains that the image of 'seruitium amoris' was *not* a literary *topos* in Latin any more than it was in Greek—until the Elegists, until (it seems) Propertius himself, in the late 30s. But neither was it, so far as we can tell, a very common or fashionable *colloquial* idiom. That is also implied by the *argumenta ex silentio* based on Lucretius and Horace. Even in the early 30s (i.e. the time of Horace's second satire) the association of lovers' humiliation with slavery still appears not to have been an immediately obvious one to make.

However, in Rome just as much as in Athens, the comparison was *potentially* a natural one to make in colloquial speech. Latin was strongly inclined in principle to refer generally to abject or dishonourable behaviour as 'servile' in the same way and for the same reasons as Greek—as I shall be exemplifying shortly. We must assume therefore that the comparison between abject lover and slave *was*, from time to time, colloquially drawn. We do not just have to assume. We have two incidental examples in Plautus and one very interesting one in Cicero.

At Plautus, *Bacchides* 92, Pistoclerus expresses the fact that he has become willing putty in the hands of a courtesan by saying 'mulier tibi me emancupo', 'I make myself over to you'—implying as a slave.[1] In the *Pseudolus* (14) Calidorus, desperately miserable in love, informs us that 'sub Veneris regno uapulo': he is taking a beating—a servile punishment[2]—under the jurisdiction of Venus. Here we see Plautus applying a colloquially metaphorical use of servile language—which elsewhere he applies to other people who have patently become the tools of others or are cruelly suffering[3]—for once particularly to lovers. But he does not suggest by it any very serious degradation, nor does it occur to him to develop what could be called a regular 'seruitium amoris' figure.

Cicero's example, occurring in his *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, is very striking but usually unremarked, and I quote it in full in a note.[4] In the *Paradoxa*, written in 46 B.C., Cicero set out explicitly to *popularize* famous Stoic paradoxes;[5] and seeking popular *exempla* to illustrate the paradox ὅτι μόνος ὁ σοφὸς ἐλεύθερος καὶ πᾶς ἄφρων δοῦλος hit on the idea of instancing the *lover* (conventionally regarded as a fool) as a slave; he was (in effect) the humiliated slave of his beloved.[6] Cicero also therefore applied Latin's natural mode of designating a

support the above interpretation of *Epod.* 11. In 3.10 for example we find Horace as an unexpectedly acute, even cynical 'exclusus amator', and the poem depends for its effect on our recollection of woeful Elegiac 'exclusi'. In 1.33 when Horace reads a lesson in love and life to Albius (Tibullus) he uses servile (Elegiac) terms (*me . . . grata detinuit compede Myrtale/libertina*, 14–16) to make his unelegiac message the more pointed.

[1] Cf. F. Schulz, *Classical Roman Law* (Oxford, 1951), pp.344 ff. on *mancipatio*.

[2] Cf. Ch. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome* (Cambridge, 1950), p.25.

[3] e.g. *Bacch.* 1205, *Poen.* 720.

[4] Cic. *Paradoxa* 36: 'si seruitus sit, sicut est, obedientia fracti animi et abiecti et arbitrio carentis suo, quis neget omnes leues omnes cupidos omnes denique improbos esse seruos? An ille mihi liber cui mulier imperat, cui leges imponit, praescribit iubet vetat quod videtur, qui nihil imperanti negare potest, nihil recusare audet? poscit, dandum est; uocat, ueniendum; eiicit, abeundum; minatur, extimescendum. Ego vero istum non modo seruum sed nequissimum seruum, etiam si in amplissima familia natus sit, appellandum puto.'

[5] *Paradoxa praef.* 3–4 'ego tibi illa ipsa quae uix in gymnasiis et in otio Stoici probant ludens conieci in communes locos. quae quia sunt admirabilia contraque opinionem omnium . . . tentare uolui possentne proferri in lucem, id est in forum, et ita dici ut probarentur . . . *etc*' (the whole preface is interesting).

[6] Cicero's passage can be interestingly contrasted with Hor. *Serm.* 2.7 which argues (humorously) the same Stoic paradox and similarly instances the behaviour of the

degraded state and conduct to a *lover's* state and conduct; and the passage is a highly remarkable example of an obvious colloquial *potential* being actually realized—much more remarkable indeed than Plautus'. But its isolation suggests that it is precisely a remarkable example; it is not a reflection of a colloquial cliché. This conclusion is confirmed by consideration of Cicero's purpose. He clearly selected the comparison as a potentially popular, vivid, and available one—but also as a striking and therefore *novel* one. And there is no sign that the comparison became popular subsequently—until the Elegists.

We conclude therefore that the Elegiac 'seruitium amoris' developed out of Latin colloquial speech—not out of Latin literary tradition, not out of Greek literary tradition. But equally it was not a Latin colloquial cliché. The evidence is firmly against any widespread habit of alluding to particularly *lovers'* behaviour (*vis-à-vis* the beloved) as servile—Plautus' examples are isolated and incidental, and Cicero's exceptional. The *general* idiom of labelling all sorts of abject behaviour 'servile' is the source of the Elegiac 'seruitium amoris'. The 'seruitium amoris' is a particular application of this general idiom, a particular application which was at most rare, even in speech—until the late 30s, until (it seems) Propertius.

We must now look more closely at this underlying general idiom. We must acquire some idea of its frequency, its emotive power, the sort of ways in which it was used. Armed with this knowledge we shall be better placed to see the Elegiac 'seruitium amoris' in context, to understand its efflorescence and to feel the kind of immediacy and relevance that a contemporary reader might have felt in it.

It had for instance been common practice to depict the loss (real or apparent) of political freedom in the state, the subjection of the state to dynasts, as 'slavery'. This sort of language is something we are familiar enough with today. It was habitual in the Graeco-Roman world (issues were continually thus described in the Peloponnesian war). But whereas in the modern world 'slavery' tends to be a fairly vacuous propaganda term, in the ancient world where slaves and their condition were an ever present reality, when free populations *were* enslaved in war, it was much more emotive. 'agitur autem liberine uiuamus an mortem obeamus, quae seruituti anteponenda est', says Cicero in the *Philippics* (44 B.C.: *Phil.* 11.24). The measure of hyperbole should not obscure from us that to an extent he means what he says and had some justification for it; and his audience would certainly not have considered this empty, bombastic propaganda.

More interestingly we find the loss of very personal freedoms similarly described. When Cicero's liberty of speech was effectively curbed by the 'Triumvirs', he can find no more emotive and real way to describe his situation than to call it slavery. He writes to Atticus thus (*Att.* 4.6.1–2; 56 B.C.): 'nam tu quidem . . . nullam habes propriam seruitutem . . . ego uero, qui si loquor de republica quod oportet, insanus, si quod opus est, seruus, existimor . . . quo dolore esse debeo.' In 54 B.C. he writes even more painfully to his brother (*Q.Fr.* 3.5.4) about how he has been constrained to defend his enemies: 'angor

romantic (adulterous) lover. But it is the lover's slavery to his passion that is castigated in Horace, not his slavery to a person. The satire draws, like the epigram mentioned above, p.118, on the old idiom of slavery to emotions and the picture presented is one very different in impact and implications from the 'seruitium amoris' of the Elegists—and Cicero; cf. n5, p.123.

mi suauissime frater . . . meum non modo animum sed ne odium quidem esse liberum'. And Matius writes (*Fam.* 11.28.3) to Cicero in 44 B.C. along the same lines but more emphatically and in more detail—he regards his condition as in crucial respects even worse than a slave's: 'o superbiam inauditam alios in facinore [i.e. the death of Julius Caesar] gloriari, aliis ne dolere quidem impunite licere! at haec etiam seruis semper libera fuerunt, ut timerent, gauderent, dolerent suo potius quam alterius arbitrio; quae nunc, ut quidem isti dictitant "libertatis auctores" metu nobis extorquere conantur.'

Many more examples like this could be adduced. But these are striking and typical enough and I shall now simply stress certain points. First, they are all from private and intimate correspondence. Therefore there is no question that the feelings of servility expressed are empty rhetorical hyperbole. On the contrary, Cicero to Atticus and Matius to Cicero are making heartfelt and specific use of a natural mode of speech. This conclusion is reinforced by my second point. The items that Cicero and Matius describe as servile *are* in a way servile. To be unable to speak one's mind, to be compelled to order one's emotions to the whims of others *was* arguably not the condition of a free man—arguably was the condition of a slave, in part even worse than a slave's. Not only therefore do we not have to do with rhetorical hyperbole. We should perhaps not even talk of imagery. Cicero in a way *means* (at the time of writing) that in certain vital respects he was the *seruus* of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus; Matius *means* that he was the super-*seruus* of the liberators. And to an extent—in certain respects—they were.

Now let me turn to Propertius, the first surviving proclaimer of the developed 'seruitium amoris' and very possibly the first of all. Actually Propertius does not really 'proclaim' the 'seruitium amoris'; he never actually presents or expounds it as a complete or general idea. Rather he cites *instances* of servility forced by love; or in *particular* circumstances, with a *particular* motivation, he will refer to his love as a 'seruitium'. I do not in fact get the impression that Propertius in the *monobiblos* sees himself as either manipulating or creating a self-contained *topos*. Significantly in his opening and more or less programmatic poem he pictures his initial subjection in terms of capture rather than slavery (1.1.1–3). The two ideas are as we have seen closely related. But it might seem surprising that Propertius does not take the opportunity to set in unequivocal and programmatic prominence what is arguably his most dramatic image. I return to this point.

The most obvious signs of 'seruitium' in the *monobiblos* are as follows. There are several references to Cynthia as 'domina' in which Propertius (unlike Catullus at 68.68)[1] clearly does intend *slave*-mistress.[2] On three special occasions he refers with particular contextual motivation to his love as 'seruitium' (1.4.4, 5.19, 12.18).[3] Then there are the following.

[1] See above, p.121 n.1.

[2] Prop. 1.1.21, 3.17, 4.2, 7.6, etc.

[3] In the fourth poem Propertius talks of 'seruitium' in connection with his love, but is making neither a programmatic nor a general statement. Love with Cynthia at this time is humiliating and unpleasant as well as superb; Bassus (his addressee) suggests he try other girls; Propertius in these circumstances both does and does not want to quit. Bassus' advice is therefore at once both compelling and impossible. Hence 'quid *cogis*?' on the one hand and terms of *slavery* on the other. The paradox and ambivalence of Propertius' immediate situation and attitude is vividly and concretely caught. In the twelfth poem Propertius, despised by Cynthia who is (we take it) raving it up at Baiae, reflects on the possibilities open to some despised

In poem 1 (after the opening allusion to capture) we find Propertius referring dramatically to a symptom of servile state. He will undergo drastic surgery (27 f),[1] 'sit modo libertas quae uelit ira loqui': provided he gains the *liberty* to speak what his anger wants. He feels therefore a servile lack of 'libertas loquendi'. It is a topic to which he returns repeatedly. It seems in fact in Propertius' eyes to be the most characteristic part of love's degrading effect. In S. Lilja's words[2] 'The most difficult thing about the slavery of love, for Propertius, is the impossibility of speaking like a free man. His wish *sit modo libertas, quae uelit ira, loqui* (I, 1, 28) is only fulfilled when, alone in a forest, he is able to give vent to his grief—*hic licet occultos proferre impune dolores*, I, 18, 3.' As Propertius admits later in that poem (lines 25 f.), in Cynthia's presence 'omnia consueui timidus perferre superbae/iussa neque arguto facta dolore queri'.

The substance of his taunt to the proud Ponticus fallen into servile love follows the same lines (1.9.1–4):

> dicebam tibi uenturos irrisor amores
> nec tibi perpetuo *libera uerba* fore.
> ecce iaces supplexque uenis ad *iura* puellae,
> et tibi nunc quouis *imperat* empta modo.

As a slave Ponticus' speech is not his own and he himself is now in the legal control and under the orders of his girl. Note too Propertius' instructions to the newly fallen Gallus (1.10.21 ff.) which include 'neue <cupias> superba loqui' and conclude:

> at quo sis humilis magis et subiectus amori,
> hoc magis effectu saepe fruare bono.
> is poterit felix una remanere puella
> qui numquam uacuo pectore liber erit.

Propertius enjoins the surrender of free speech—and more. Only the lover who surrenders the freedom even of his heart, his emotions ('pectus'), is going to be happy in the Propertian type of love.

These are the most striking instances of love's slavery in the *monobiblos* (there are one or two more signs, to be mentioned below). The Propertian emphasis is on love's degrading effect on liberty of expression. That is clear. Something else should also be clear. *Propertius is drawing attention to feelings or manifestations of servility almost identical to those complained of by Cicero and Matius.* Cicero complained 'si loquor . . . quod opus est, seruus existimor' i.e. that he might be forced to a servile line of speech; even his spirit and hate were unfree: 'meum non modo animum sed ne odium quidem esse liberum'. Now hear Propertius again: 'sit modo libertas quae uelit ira loqui'; 'nec tibi

lovers to transfer their affections: 'felix . . . si despectus potuit mutare calores,/sunt quoque translato gaudia . . .' But even as he speaks he realizes and acknowledges the impossibility of such a course in *his* case: 'translato gaudia *seruitio*.' It is scarcely easy for a slave 'transferre' his '*seruitium*'. The impossible dilemma that Cynthia has cast him into *at this time* (loyalty to a faithless and absent girl) is—again—concretely and vividly conveyed by paradoxical use of servile terminology. Finally at 1.5. very singular inflictions in very singular circumstances are graphically summed up as 'tam graue seruitium': cf. *Mnemosyne* 27 (1974), 262 ff.

[1] On line 27 see too below, p.129.

[2] S. Lilja, *The Roman Elegists' Attitude to Women* (Helsinki, 1965), p.83.

perpetuo libera uerba fore'. Matius complained 'o superbiam inauditam . . . aliis ne dolere quidem impunite licere'—a privilege which, he says, even slaves should have. Listen to Propertius: 'hic licet occultos proferre impune dolores' ('here, i.e. in desolate woods and *not* in Cynthia's presence, I may utter my hidden grievances with impunity'); in Cynthia's presence 'omnia consueui timidus perferre superbae/iussa neque arguto facta dolore queri'. The lover, Propertius says, is to be 'numquam uacuo pectore liber': never free, with his emotions his own: that is what Matius complained (in effect) *was* his situation. The similarities are almost uncanny, and more parallels between my quotations from Propertius and those from Cicero and Matius will be noticed. And actually the similarities are quite natural. That really is my point.

The conclusions I draw are clear and straightforward. Cicero and Matius were making heartfelt particular use of a general and natural colloquial idiom. What suggests that Propertius is in essence doing anything else? Cicero felt himself in painful respects to be the 'seruus' of the 'Triumvirs' and Matius felt the 'seruus' of the 'Liberators'. Propertius is implying that he feels *in those same respects* the 'seruus' of Cynthia. He is using a natural Latin mode of expression to describe particular conditions just as Cicero and Matius had done—albeit in different circumstances.

So we should not (after all) use the term imagery or metaphor of Propertius' 'seruitium amoris' without some thought. It seemed not quite appropriate to describe Cicero's and Matius' talk of servile constraint as imagery, for they complained of real conditions that *were*, in a sense, servile. Propertius complains of the same conditions. They are obviously just as potentially servile. Who is to say they are not just as real? His text certainly implies they are. Now of course the circumstances *are* different and it is shameful, shocking, outrageous, even unbelievable, that a mere woman should be able to exercise the same sort of power as autocrats. But that is precisely Propertius' point. That is the sort of paradox we are supposed to confront.[1]

Here is the reason why the 'image' of the 'seruitium amoris' is not programmatically proclaimed or expounded in the *monobiblos*. It is scarcely an image and does not need to be explained; and its programmatic significance is still developing. Propertius talks for the most part in specific terms that everyone would immediately understand, of specific conditions that everyone would understand, indeed would in the years during and after the civil wars rather painfully understand. His language connects directly with natural Latin modes of speech and evokes circumscriptions and humiliations that were to many only too familiar. What was *not* familiar of course was the avowal of such humiliations being imposed by a woman. That was appalling. Propertius meant to appal. He *therefore* chose this most real and concrete language to describe his humiliation—and not only pictured himself submitting to it but advocating it (ultimately) as part of a way of life.

My thesis is thus that the Elegiac *topos* of 'seruitium amoris' is still evolving in the *monobiblos*[2] and is basically the invention of Propertius. To view lovers' conduct as servile was, until Propertius, potentially natural enough but simply not commonly done. It required a stimulus. Cicero in the *Paradoxa* had one:

[1] One of my main disagreements with Copley (see above, p.117 n.1) is now clear.

[2] This is another point upon which I radically disagree with Copley, loc. cit. 290.

he needed popularly to illustrate the Stoic slavery paradox and the risibly abject behaviour of lovers came happily to mind. And Propertius? His stimulus was partly or mainly his wish for concretely provocative terms to evoke the 'life of love'. The strategy of the Elegiac 'alternative philosophy' was openly to avow its dishonourable nature. Emotional and intellectual subjection to a woman was something that Lucretius and others had derided ('sub nutu degitur aetas'; above, p.121); it was something that Propertius and the Elegists were prepared to proclaim. But Propertius hit upon the idea of proclaiming it in a particularly concrete and provocative way: as something servile. From this it was a natural step to express other aspects of the lover's life as servile and indeed love as servility. And so 'seruitium amoris' soon (and very naturally) developed a virtually programmatic function. The lover an avowed slave! Here was a focus for the appalled attentions of conventional sensibilities and a delightfully awful programme for the unconventional to rally to.

The formalization of 'seruitium amoris' happened quickly. By the time of Prop. Book II and certainly by Tib. Book II it seems a convention, albeit a fresh and challenging one.[1] In Ovid's *Amores* it is a conceit.[2] Even in Tib. Book I servile language is used (arguably) more systematically and conventionally than in the *monobiblos*. However, the concentration there is still on a *particular* aspect of 'seruitium', as it had been in the *monobiblos* (though it is a different one); it is not until Book II that Tibullus talks of his love generally as 'seruitium'.[3]

It is interesting (incidentally) to notice what this particular emphasis of Tibullus' was in Book I, and how it works. We can see how he has probably taken up and developed a hint from Propertius; more interestingly, we can note the *difference* between the two poets' attitudes to love, neatly exemplified in their attitude to 'seruitium'.

Propertius at 1.18.8 describes or rather alludes to a specific experience in love in servile terms which we have not yet noted: 'nunc in amore tuo cogor habere notam'. What he is doing is assimilating the humiliating punishment to which Cynthia is subjecting him (and which he *must*, not wants to, accept) to the stigma ('nota') branded on and marking out offending slaves. This sort of mode of speech is actually a favourite one with Cicero,[4] and though much more rhetorical, more plainly metaphorical than the use of servile terms to evoke curtailed liberty of speech, it was still clearly an acute way of expressing an ignominious condition or disgrace. Hence Cicero uses it. Hence too Propertius uses it (also, allusively, at 1.5.16;[5] and cf. too 1.1.27 discussed below). But he utters the idea only incidentally and does not develop it. It appealed however very much to Tibullus (this is the aspect of 'seruitium' he stresses in Book I),

[1] Cf. e.g Propertius' epitaph for himself at 2.13.35 f. 'qui nunc iacet horrida puluis/ unius hic quondam seruus amoris erat'; at 2.3.11–32 Tibullus retells the story of Apollo's slavery to Admetus (above, p.118) as an elaborately *humiliating* slavery; and in 2.4 he talks explicitly, elaborately, and generally of his love affair with Nemesis as 'seruitium':

'hic mihi seruitium uideo dominamque paratam; iam mihi, libertas illa paterna, uale . . .' etc.

[2] Note e.g. *Amores* 1.6 where Ovid plays with the idea of *seruitium* in an amusingly literal way; cf. too Lilja, op. cit., pp.86–9.

[3] In Book I he does not in fact use the word 'seruitium' or any of its cognates in contexts strictly of Elegiac 'seruitium amoris'. (1.2.99 'at mihi parce Venus: semper tibi dedita seruit / mens mea' is in line with other expressions of devotion to other gods (cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 366, *Or.* 418, *Ion.* 152, Plat. *Apol.* 23 c, *Phaedr.* 244 e) and very different in effect from an expression of servility to a beloved human woman.)

[4] Cf. *Sull.* 88, *Phil.* 13.40, etc.

[5] Cf. *Mnemosyne* 27 (1974), 265 f.

and in his hands the idea of the lover subject to servile punishments at the hands of love or the mistress is extensively exploited and embellished—and given a very different function from the Propertian one.

In general Tibullus projects an acquiescent, at times effectively masochistic attitude to the degradation of love as a whole, quite unlike Propertius'.[1] And he found this particular motif of servile punishment (possibly taken from Propertius) useful in communicating his unpropertian emphasis. Note for example his words to Marathus 1.9.19–22:

> diuitiis captus si quis uiolauit amorem,
> asperaque est illi difficilisque Venus.
> ure meum potius flamma caput et pete ferro
> corpus et intorto uerbere terga seca.

Perverse complaisance! Propertius rarely if ever *invites* humiliation. Note too Tib. 1.5.5 f.:

> ure ferum et torque, libeat ne dicere quicquam
> magnificum post haec: horrida uerba doma,

which is patently to be contrasted with Propertius' continual complainings about loss of liberty of speech (above, p.126). But it is here especially interesting to recall Prop. 1.1.27 f.:

> fortiter et ferrum saeuos patiemur et ignis,
> sit modo libertas quae uelit ira loqui.

Propertius writes with calculated ambiguity. On one level line 27 refers to healing surgery. On another it suggests—I think—servile punishment.[2] Propertius therefore implies his willingness to submit even to servile torture if it would restore his ability to speak freely (a nice, and expressive, paradox). Tibullus invites servile torture to *prevent* such license, indulged and now deeply regretted. The two lover-poets, though so close in their final message, can indeed be neatly contrasted.

Ultimately, we take it, neither has liberty of tongue, nor any other liberty; and ultimately of course Propertius himself far from unequivocally wants any such thing. He, like Tibullus, ends up advocating the 'life of love', servility and all. But whereas Tibullus proclaims the philosophy with a bland acceptance, Propertius represents himself as arriving at it against the strenuous strivings of his own better inclinations. His more muscular method of coming to the same conclusion makes for a subtler and even perhaps more provocative statement.

A final point. I have said that the inventor of the Elegiac 'seruitium amoris' is probably Propertius himself and that his stimulus towards it lay (basically) in his desire concretely to codify aspects of the life of love. There is another possible stimulus. In the years preceding the publication of Propertius' *monobiblos* a very great and very romantic figure had been, perhaps, publicly arraigned as the slave of his own beloved woman. He had even possibly at times rather gloried in that role. It seems very possible that Propertius and other elegists were attracted

[1] Tibullus' programmatic poem 1.1 and Propertius' programmatic 1.6 and 14 afford an immediate and interesting comparison.

[2] Cf. Tib. 1.9.21 quoted above.

to this romantically degraded figure and via the 'seruitium' mutely identified with him. Certainly the propaganda campaign against this figure's erotic 'seruitium' (if it took place) would have helped the 'seruitium amoris' to crystallize; and the memory of the campaign would have maintained the immediacy of the developing literary topos. The romantic figure in mind is Marcus Antonius, slave of Cleopatra—and the main source which might suggest that he was thus known and labelled is the history of Cassius Dio.[1]

Balliol College, Oxford R. O. A. M. LYNE

[1] Dio 48.24.1, 49.33.4–34.1, 50.5.1 *οὕτω γάρ που αὐτὸν ἐδεδούλωτο ὥστε . . . βασιλίς τε αὐτὴ καὶ δέσποινα ὑπ' ἐκείνου καλεῖσθαι.* On this question cf. J. Griffin, 'Propertius and Antony', *JRS* 67 (1977), 17–26. This theory has of course to assume (plausibly in fact) that such shrill propaganda was considered otiose or inappropriate or even self-defeating in the post-Actium period. Note how Horace in *Epod.* 9 will go as far as but no further than talking of the Roman soldiery as 'emancipatus feminae' (12); while Antony is the unromantically anonymous 'hostis' of line 27.