A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO SONG OF SONGS SCHOLARSHIP[1]

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This article welcomes M. Fox's, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*; but it also critically reviews his initial assumptions regarding the relationship between Hebrew and Egyptian love poetry. It then proceeds to suggest alternate ways of understanding a number of cruxes in canticles.

THIS VERY WELCOME ADDITION to the studies of the Song of Songs features a bonus that should attract Egyptologists as well as specialists in Near Eastern and comparative literature: an elaborate analysis of the Egyptian love lyrics, available to us mostly from the Empire period. The book divides into two major segments, the first of which philologically treats the four disparate collections of love songs from Egypt, then lightly annotates the Hebrew Song. The second segment itself divides into six chapters which discuss a date for the documents, interpret their contexts, analyze their major themes, and examine the way lovers are depicted within them. Fox writes elegantly and tastefully; his arguments are clearly charted, his opinions are sensible and his analysis is sensitive to the manifold shadings of love's language. His style sometimes achieves a lyrical quality that is rare in academic publishing. Occasionally, Fox makes quality judgments that are surprisingly parochial (e.g., on the superiority of the Hebrew Song, p. xxvii; 330–31); but these are neither obstrusive nor dogmatic. For the above reasons, and for the many excellent features of this book (valuable appendices, good bibliography, elaborate indexes, nice plates), readers should be very pleased with this volume and I expect to find it frequently cited in future studies on the Song. The book is nicely produced and reasonably priced, given its size and the complexity of its typesetting.

Yet, Fox holds a number of initial positions (Introduction, pp. xix-xxvii) which are neither self-evident nor convincingly demonstrated in his pages. Because Fox argues so nicely throughout his book, it is important to underscore their fragility.

Fox presumes that when studied contiguously and in parallel, the Egyptian and Hebrew love poems will prove mutually illuminating because they explore the same subjects and because they come from a nearly contemporaneous ancient Near Eastern past.[2] These assumptions are the glue which bind the various sections of Fox's volume. They may seem sensible positions to hold; but they are far from being cogent.

First of all, it seems to me that *time* is not at all a relevant factor in this genre of literature. Love, the emotion, and sexuality, the physical attraction that occurs between two individuals (gender distinction not being particularly important), are commonly shared among human beings. The way these feelings are literally expressed can vary, of course; but during one distinct period, it is possible for a culture (homogeneous or otherwise) to know and enjoy a wide variety within the genre: Its poets can persist on the physical and become erotic or even obscene; they can dwell on the psychological, and thereby stimulate the interpreter to illumination and empathy. The form, tone, and conventions an individual poem adopts can heavily influence an audience's reaction; but each person can react differently to the same composition. For these reasons, those (like Fox) who follow a descriptive, analytic, and comparative approach to understanding the Song—as contrasted to those who follow a personal, emotive, and heavily psychoanalytic interpretation, such as found in Francis Landy's recent (1983) *Paradoxes of Paradise*—have found it equally possible to bring into comparison examples culled from the literatures of Sumer, Akkad, Greece, Rome, India, Medieval and Renaissance Europe, as well as from sundry modern cultures. Thus, I find it

[1] This is a review-article of Michael V. Fox's *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1986. $32.50.

[2] "... we can use Egyptian art to clarify the meaning of some of the metaphors in the Song because they seem to reflect an ideal of feminine beauty that resembles the Egyptian ideal. Societies, or at least their upper classes, often borrow tastes in fashion and beauty from foreign cultures that they consider more prestigious" (p. 274).

very difficult to sympathize with Fox's much too facile dismissal of the Mesopotamian (so-called) Sacred Marriage as not proper for useful comparison on the ground that they partook of fertility ritual (239–43). Fox himself admits to similarities on many crucial themes and motifs, albeit the lovers are given divine or royal names; he even has a sentence (p. 242) in which he recognizes that divine and human sexuality cannot be differentiated. If so, what difference do the origin and purpose of love poems make if we are seeking to understand how eroticism is expressed? Why would it matter if one cannot prove that in Israel kings entertained priestesses?

To my mind those who have cast the widest nets in their search for comparisons can be just as successful in clarifying the Hebrew Song as is Fox; for the requisite ingredient in such an enterprise is not the proper choice of parallel, but the inventiveness and the taste with which comparisons are pursued. Therefore, while we should be pleased that Fox has given us a nice edition of the Egyptian love poetry, there is no reason to stop searching other literature for comparative material.

I want next to treat two other issues raised by Fox: the context in which love poems are produced and the mode by which they reach us. These two concerns are closely linked in our case because of the peculiar circumstances by which Egyptian and Hebrew love poetry, both anonymous and lacking designated audiences, came to be preserved. I betray my own feelings here by claiming that contemporary biblical scholarship has always been better at analyzing how narratives are structured and assessing how they work as pieces of literature than in locating plausible contexts for them. Thus, while in more recent days we have had occasions to read brilliant dissections of Hebrew tales, we have also learned not to confuse narratological consideration with historical reconstruction.

Fox commonly speaks of "secular love poetry," and argues for a "secular" purpose for these collections, that is, that they are meant for entertainment and in praise of the sensuous. Only later, mostly because its recitation coincided with a religious festival such as Passover, did the Hebrew Song acquire a sacral character (see his Chapter 5.) This may well be so, but while I can check my dictionary for the meaning of "secular" ("not overtly religious or theological") and can find an application for it in our own culture, I do not know how to define this word in connection with ancient Near Eastern cultures, and even less so in connection with ancient Israel. Scripture, we need to remember, is not encyclopedic about Hebrew civilization; it deems itself to be so only about the relationship between God and a specific people. Therefore, for all the recent published speculation about humanistic channels among the intellectuals of Israel and about secular activities among its common folk, I cannot see how we can evaluate such circles and activities (which no doubt existed) as long as the Bible is practically the only source of our information.

Moreover, a love poem, we all realize, evokes radically different reactions when published singly or when placed within a collection. In the case of Israel, we have so little of the amorous individual poem outside of Scriptures, that someone as knowledgeable as Fox can make of them only passing reference (xxii n. 4; 247–50). Others, of course, have made more of the connections between the Song and, say, Psalm 45.[3] Fox borrows the term *Zersingen* from troubadour research to explain why the collection is a unified work albeit many participated in its creation. What I learn from his brief remarks on this score (pp. 222–24), is that he really has nothing but painful speculations here, and I have to enter a plea that we avoid importing clever notions from other fields, even when they give testimony to one's erudition.

I think it best to admit that we really know nothing of the Song's fate before it secured a place as Scripture. However it originated and whatever its earliest shape, therefore, it could have found its place within Scriptures only after it was heavily theologized, and possibly radically altered, certainly long before the Hellenistic period. In fact, I can offer parallels from other cultures to suggest that the Song may have had no previous history before it was fashioned by highly refined theologians and my arguments, I think, will be deemed neither more nor less persuasive than what Fox advances to support the above mentioned theses. I can then go on and speculate that this theologizing and reshaping may have taken place as early as the return from Exile (if not slightly before), when it was perfectly reasonable to use allegory as a interpretive mode. *Caveat emptor.*

The issues of origin and transmission, however, are more arresting when we turn to the Egyptian love poems. We note that the scribe of Harris 500 copied serially at least three different cycles of songs and included them among other writings (tales, poems) within a single papyrus. Because of its motley content, it is easy to recognize the collection as a compilation of works by different authors. Further, because none of the other pieces betrays any theological or religious

[3] Bibliography on the debate in J. Mulder, *Studies on Psalm 45* (1945), pp. 154–115.

intents, we may even decide that the Harris love poems were destined for a "courtly" audience. Another collection, however, sharpens the discussion. Chester Beatty I is also a large papyrus which contains a variety of texts beyond the love songs. Here, we find the famous "Struggles of Horus and Seth," as well as hymns. Within this context, it becomes possible to invest some of the love poems with theological meaning and to locate their propagation within theological circles. That it is rarely done is no doubt because so rich and variegated a documentation as that from Egypt invites us to recognize sharp separation between the secular and the religious in ancient Egypt (see pp. 233–36).

RANDOM REMARKS, MOSTLY TO FOX'S COMMENTARY TO CANTICLES

-xxiii. "Egyptian and Israelite poets alike seem to accept premarital sex with no hesitation." Erotic poetry is hardly concerned with marriage bonds, and one should not draw social conclusions on this basis.
-p. xxv. Agreeing with another scholar's opinion, Fox states that "in the private paradise of the lovers in the Song, as in Eden, there is no male dominance, no female subordination, no stereotyping of either sex." I would argue that love poetry ordinarily ignores *gender* differences, focusing instead on *sexual* equality and that, written mostly by males, erotic poetry indulges a male's fantasy, wherein females are made to seek out lovers with the determination that is supposed to be stereotypical of the male. Think here of another male fantasy, the medieval notion of Chivalry, wherein adulterous high-born ladies are always there to minister to the needs, not always spiritual, of errant and gallant knights.
-p. 95 (at 1.1). I think that Fox is pushing analysis too far when he refers to the *šîr*, a noun in the singular, to gauge the ancients' evaluation of the Song as a unit. To begin with, if a Hebrew poet is aiming to create a superlative (as Fox admits), he could hardly have used a plural form as *nomen regens*. Too, whether the Song was made up of individual units or was a unified whole is not likely to bother the ancients in the same way that it does us. *We*, on the other hand, do debate with gusto the unity (or lack thereof) of texts whether they carry labels given in the plural or when they bear no labels at all.

Not everyone in the past attributed the Song to Solomon; Hezekiah (and his circles) were also suspect. (On the whole issue see D. J. Halperin, *JQR* 72 [1982], 276–85.) On the attribution and the use of *'ašer*, see my remarks on the same verse in "On Pope's *Song of Songs* [AB 7C], *Maarav* 1 (1979), 190–91.[4]
-p. 100 (at 1.5). The widely adopted emendation, MT *šelōmōh* to *śalmâ*, has merits of course; but if the parallelism is "I am black//like the tents of Kedar," "but lovely//like the curtains of Solomon," then we may leave the text as it is, and take full advantage of a pun between *kyryᶜwt*, "curtains of," and *ryᶜh*, "female companion."
-p. 107 (at 2.3) My own recent review of the scientific literature on the fruits which were available to the ancients has led me to despair about the botanists' knowledge of ancient flora. Hence I urge caution before accepting Fox's assurances that *tappuaḥ* is the apricot rather than the apple.
-p. 112 (at 2.8) It is interpretatively unnecessary (and grammatically difficult) to split *qôl* from the construct and to regard it as an exclamation. (So, too, Pope in his commentary, p. 389.) What is gained?
-pp. 119–20 (at 3.6). Fox proposes emending MT *ketîmerôt*, to *betîmerôt*, as far I can tell mostly to satisfy a lead from TaMaKh. His own reason is given as a query: "... for how can columns of (incense) smoke be 'coming from the wilderness'?." They can't of course; but only because Fox, who is almost always very well attuned to the subtlety of the Song, has missed a major contribution here. The poet is devising means by which the scene with Solomon's canopy comes to increasingly sharper focus: The column is first seen, *as if* a column of smoke. Directly comes the *smell* of incense which requires closer proximity. "Smoke" plays here a Janus role, linking the seeing of these columns, with the smell that smoke usually carries. Then comes the merchant's powder, a product which must be *touched*—and hence an image which brings the scene within tactile range. When Solomon's procession finally captures the poet's (and the reader's) undivided attention, the movements of sixty warriors will be heard, hence achieving almost a full range of sensual perception.[5] One must agree, therefore, with the majority and not with Fox, on the relationship between the 3.6 and 3.7.[6]
-p. 124 (at 3.7). As I noted in *Maarav* (p. 195), the

[4] Fox's otherwise thorough bibliographic search does not include this paper whose positions are similar to Fox's in a number of instances.

[5] On the poetic use of verbs which zooms the attention, I can refer to the famous Neo-Assyrian introduction to Gilgamesh, where the audience is brought into progressively closer proximity to Eanna, Ishtar's temple.

[6] See also R. Alter's analysis, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, pp. 187–89.

reference to sixty warriors protecting Solomon may have belonged to oracular vocabulary, see ANET³, 450, "Fear not Esarhaddon! . . . The god Sin is on your right, the god Shamash at your left; sixty great gods stand round about you, ranged for battle."

-pp. 126–27 (at 3.10–11). Fox would emend MT's consonants *ʾhbh mbnwt* into *ʾbnm bnwt*, mostly because he finds the first word to convey a "pointless metaphor" and the second because "the girls of Jerusalem are an unlikely source of either stones or love for inlays." The emendation is really wholesale, and Fox's criteria are not very forceful. Moreover, his reorganization leaves "girls of Zion" pretty forlorn since the phrase can in no way balance "Girls of Jerusalem." (Try scanning it as Fox has it arranged!)

I realize that MT's *ʾahābâ* is not easy; but taking my cue from the preponderance of two-word descriptions in this passage, I would pull the *zaqeph qaton* back one word (as other scholars have), to offer the following, "A canopied bed for his own use did king Solomon make, with timber of Lebanon . . . its cushion of purple, its interior is inlaid: a love object from the girls of Jerusalem."

-p. 127 (at 4.1ff. See further pages 147ff., 151 and 154ff.; at 5.10, 6.4, and 7.2). At a recent SBL symposium (1985) in which Fox and I participated (along with R. Alter, D. Christensen, R. Murphy, and M. Pope), I offered some remarks on the series of elaborate and sequenced anatomical similes, now commonly known by the Arabic *waṣf*, which begin here; that is right after we are all invited to Solomon's wedding (3.7–11).[7] Since Fox devotes a number of pages to this topic (pp. 271ff. and see his index p. 450), and since the colloquium raised issues germane to Fox's handling of this type of poetry, I offer here a revised version of these remarks.

In the first of these similes, located at 4.1–5, a man faces a woman and proceeds to describe her from head to breast before declaring his intent to partake of her beauty. In the second, found at 5.10–16, it is a woman who now describes the man whom she also faces. She follows his shape from head all the way down to the knees; then, probably in a merismus, she singles out his outward presence and his inward bounties.

The third sequence of similes occurs at 6.4–8. Here a man describes his beloved's face in vocabulary that is highly reminiscent of the first simile. The context switches rather radically from the beloved's description to Solomon's harem. As such, this *waṣf* may bracket the last three series within one unit.

The fourth of these sequenced anatomical similes occurs outside of this bracket and is itself the most unusual of the series. It is found at 7.2–7 and details a woman's whole figure. But this series reverses the order of inspection and, proceeding from the toes, it features the thighs, the navel, the belly, the breasts, the neck, the eyes, the nose, and finally, the head with its crimson hair, the color which of course best suits royalty.[8] Note here that the poet avoids invoking two tower similes in a row. For this reason, he reverses a more natural order and sandwiches a hyperbole about the eyes between those regarding a neck and nose.

Now, in my opinion this series itself really argues against a frequently stated contention (see Pope's commentary, e.g., at p. 627) that superhuman size means we are dealing with divinities; for if we are to take this logic and apply it consistently, we will find it difficult to establish a plausible canon for this particular deity. In fact, with huge eyes, nose and neck, but with comparatively minuscule breasts and belly, this goddess actually reverses the bounties associated with female figures.

For me at least, it is obvious that *if* the similes are hyperbolic of anything, it is not of size; rather it is of the perfection that is established by the second clause in each of the similes. Here is how e.e. cummings similarly sings of the woman whom he adores, albeit

[7] *waṣf* has come to be the accepted term for the anatomical sequences in the Song, even when scholarship has long ago advanced good reasons for doubting its relevance (for which see H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord* [2nd ed., 1952], pp. 218–23). However, a less contextually dependent term can be had from French (via Italian) renaissance literature: the *blasons anatomiques*, which featured detailed and wonderfully inventive descriptions of the female body. On the term and its usage, see the French literary encyclopedias and dictionaries or any good work on Clement Marot and Maurice Scève. A sumptuous recent edition of the examples produced during a relatively brief period of time is P. Laîné and P. Quignard, *Les Blasons anatomiques du corps féminin*, (1982).

[8] The ascending (toe to head) mode for the anatomically descriptive poetry is not common to literature. It is, however, a feature of Indian poetry, and if we want to recognize how it functions as a literary device, we may have to turn to it for examples and contexts. See R. A. Hueckstedt, *The Style of Bāṇa: An Introduction to Sanskrit Prose Poetry*, (1984), pp. 85ff. (Reference, courtesy L. Harlan.) This observation is yet another reason for not limiting our comparative search to material that is contemporaneous to the Song.

the worship takes place in the bedchamber rather than the temple:[9]

my love
thy hair is one kingdom
  the king whereof is darkness
thy forehead is a flight of flowers

thy head is a quick forest
  filled with sleeping birds
thy breasts are swarms of white bees
  upon the bough of thy body
thy body to me is April
in whose armpits is the approach of spring

thy thighs are white horses yoked to a chariot
  of kings
they are the striking of a good minstrel
between them is always a pleasant song

my love
thy head is a casket
  of the cool jewel of thy mind
the hair of thy head is one warrior
  innocent of defeat
thy hair upon thy shoulders is an army
  with victory and with trumpets

thy legs are the trees of dreaming
whose fruit is the very eatage of forgetfulness

thy lips are satraps in scarlet
  in whose kiss is the combining of kings
thy wrists
are holy
  which are the keepers of the keys of thy blood
thy feet upon thy ankles are flowers in vases
  of silver

in thy beauty is the dilemma of flutes

  thy eyes are the betrayal
of bells comprehended through incense

Notice how useless it would be to concretize cummings' imagery by brandishing measuring sticks (Pope), by appealing to twentieth-century iconographic remains (Keel, supported by R. Murphy's symposium remarks) or, for that matter, by taking refuge in clever terminology (Fox).[10] Provocative similes in the Song—such as the one about the nose being tower-like (7.5)—, are no cause for wonder about the poet's aesthetic sense. Rather, we should accept the fact that in ancient Israel the nose was a locus for the erotic, and stifle our bemusement (from some scholars, even disapproval) over what a culture deems to be erotic and how it expresses its feelings about it. Could our civilization, obsessed as it is by "tits and ass," really understand another society's erotic passions? Are Americans likely to share the Japanese' arousal at the turn of a woman's ankle or at the glimpse of a milky white nape? Will they be as stimulated as are Indians when they spy the approach of an elephant-gaited maiden or when they hear the tinkling of ankle bracelets?

In conjuring the woman of the last, and arguably the finest *waṣf* in the Song (at 7.1-7), we are all, of course, permitted to have eccentric eyes. We may permit them, too, multiple vantage points by which to inspect kaleiodoscopically the sensuous and the sensual. What if our mind's eyes follow the beauty of the Song as she returns from her exhausting dance? What if these eyes watch her lie on a couch and then take up a position at her feet. What if they begin gazing toward her head, from a position level with her sandaled feet?

Staring at these sandals, the eyes will first discover that the woman has not cast away the tools of her trade. They will then admire her thigh, not for its power and firmness, but its jeweled roundness, perfect

[9] This poem is one of six under the common label "Orientale." I quote it from e.e. cummings, *Complete Poems 1910-1962*, Volume One, (edited by George James Firmage), Granada Publishing House, 1968, p. 33. It has been reprinted often.

[10] Fox appropriates (from C. Martindale's 1975 *Romantic Progression*, pp. 23ff.; 119ff.) the term "metaphorical distance" to explain the "unexpected incongruity between the juxtaposed elements and the magnitude of dissonance or surprise it produces" (p. 276). "Distance" by itself refers to the degree of passion or interest the reading of certain expressions arouses, and I do not understand what "distance" means when "metaphor" is used for adjective. I can't begin to evaluate Fox's notion that "greater metaphoric distance produces psychological arousal" (p. 276). However, I should rather imagine that such a condition encourages disinterest or even boredom.

"Hyperbole" has always suited such conscious exaggeration, and Fox's *léger de plume* is not necessary; it only manages to shift the discussion from the analysis of the Song to the inventions of the literary critics. The whole enterprise reminds me of the dadaesque comment: "Les réverbères, qui n'avaient pas encore été inventés, rendaient les rues très obscures" (Quoted from E. Reiner, in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 121 [1971], 341 n. 2).

in its confection. They will catch the circular edge of the navel, the raised heap of the belly and the velvety browns of the nipples. Of the neck, they will perceive only its ivory hue, but because the head appears so distant, they will imagine that a tower stretches to separate it from the torso. The proportion for each feature is, so far, just perfect.

Inspecting the head, our sight will notice that the woman's own eyes are yet to be seen for, like sunken pools, they are decidedly not the most prominent feature of that imposing head. From the angle and direction of our gaze, however, the nose now looms tower-like, far above the surrounding features. Its nostrils seem cavernous, like huge orifices that stare into far away distances. This vision, in turn, overwhelms all that lay behind it and forces our imagined eyes to leave the body in search of remaining shapes. They peer at the pillow; and there, reaching out like tentacles, are the shocks of the indigo hair, ready to entangle the finest among Israel.

The eyes have reached the end of their journey, and the poet can then turn to the wishful possession of the beloved body (7.8–9).

-p. 134 (at 4.8). I have offered objections to the emendation Fox supports (*ʾētî* for MT *ʾittî*) in *Maarav* (p. 195).

-p. 135 (at 4.8). It is not that easy to emend MT's *hrry* into *ḥry*. Fox should have resisted NJPS's suggestion here since he is much too appreciative of the poet's originality and inventiveness to try bettering him "for the sake of tighter [whatever this means] parallelism."

-p. 137 (at 4.12). The remarks just made can be repeated in connection with Fox's emendation of MT's *gal* for *gan*. Why force the poet into dull repetition, when he is offering a nice way to progress from a "locked garden" to a "sealed spring" through a "locked pond"? Notice how spare of means is he, achieving his purpose by simply exchanging one consonant for another (*nun* and *lamed*). This exchange, moreover, is arresting to the ear, for unlike *gn nᶜwl* wherein two words run into each other as they end and begin with the same sound, *gl nᶜwl* forces a slight break in pronunciation and allows the hearer to savor the poet's cleverness.

-p. 145 (at 5.6). Fox follows NJPS in emending *bedabberô* into *bidbarô*. This is plausible; but not because Fox offers a good reason, ". . . it is her lover's disappearance that causes her longing, rather than his speech quoted three verses earlier." Why not both, his invitation as well as his disappearance? Lovers are not beyond fixation on amatory pronouncements well beyond three verses worth of time.

-p. 152 (at 6.7). To restore a whole couplet either to better duplicate a parallel passage or because other versions have done so, is to distrust versatility. Papa Haydn would introduce clever variations and shortenings in the repeat of a musical line, if only to keep the players and the discerning listeners *à la qui vive.*

-p. 152 (at 6.9). For similar sentiments, compare Gilgamesh II.vi.30f (OB; *ANET*³, 78), where, however, the notion of "selection" is clear. But Fox may be right.

-p. 156 (at 6.12). Once more, wholesale emendations here; Fox is too free with lopping off semi-consonants (on authority of the Peshitta!); but in this case, something has to be done to make sense. Fox's attempt yields a pretty lame phrase. Moreover, I think his conjectured line will need a preposition.

-pp. 159–60 (at 7.5). Ditto of my criticism at 6.7.

-p. 161 (at 7.7). The emendation Fox proposes here follows Pope (p. 632) who, however, arrives at a much less diluted meaning.

-p. 163 (at 7.10). I would not expect a construct phrase to yield the sense Fox gives for "scarlet lips." The original text yields such a wonderfully evocative image (that of wine dripping down a sleeper's lips), that we should resist fixing it. R. Alter (pp. 195–96) catches the exhuberant and luxuriant flow of "images contiguous with the initial one but not identical with it," and I add here that the "sleepers" may also be the lovers, so intoxicated with kisses and so engorged with wine, that their lovemaking need go no further.

-p. 166 (at 8.2). Fox is no longer emending here; Like others before him (e.g., Pope, p. 659), he is simply purchasing LXX's reading. LXX does have its integrity, I agree; but so does the MT, and we do full service to neither when we try to homogenize them. In fact, the poet here has chosen a verb which shifts the focus from the world of siblings, wherein brothers and sisters mingle without dishonor, to one in which lovers teach each other the ways of love. Fox (and others) can only end a unit with their emendation, whereas what we have here is a strong linkage between two units.

-p. 173 (at 8.10). Again Fox indulges in facile consonantal manipulation (not so "minor"); this time in order to have the beloved address a group rather than a lover. I agree that the antecedent for "his eyes" of the MT is difficult; but given the sentiments expressed in the preceding verses, "their" is not very appropriate.

I rather think that the "his" in *beᶜenāyw*" actually *anticipates* what follows in the next verses, and this is heightened by the peculiar mention of *šālôm*, "peace" found in the same phrase. By this suggestion, I do not mean to subscribe to the sentimental elaborations on this verse as made by the "Song as drama" readers

(see Pope, p. 685f.); but I find in it another example of "linkage" by which the Song was sewn into a unit (see my remarks on the same in *Maarav*, pp. 192–94).

It is obvious by now that I have dwelled on the contexts where Fox chose to offer emendations to the Song. Because its lines contain many difficulties, philological interference sometimes beckons powerfully as the only avenue to full sense. I have given reasons for disagreeing with some of Fox's solutions. I hope, however, that I have also offered enough justification why his book is such a wonderful contribution to the biblical scholar, to the sensitive reader of ancient literature, and to all those who would probe into love and its many mysteries.