

CHAPTER 4

Theocritus and the bucolic genre

I THEOCRITUS AND THE 'REALISM' OF EVERYDAY LIFE: IN
SEARCH OF NEW WORLDS FOR POETRY

Within the panorama of Hellenistic literature, Theocritus of Syracuse reflects, as much or more than any other author of his period, the taste for *polyeideia* 'writing in many literary genres'. Like his contemporary, Callimachus of Cyrene, he is a courtly encomiastic poet (*Idylls* 15, 16 and 17) and also a poet of 'epyllia' (*Idylls* 13, 22, 24);¹ there is also a group of short poems in the Aeolic metre and dialect (*Idylls* 28–31), the last three of which are paederastic in character and clearly imitate Aeolic lyric of the archaic period, rather as Callimachus composed both *Iambi*, which partly recall the spirit, metre and dialect of the poetry of Hipponax, and also other poems in lyric metres, which probably reflected models drawn from archaic lyric poetry.² Furthermore, Theocritus also wrote a significant number of poems with 'realistic' urban (*Idylls* 2, 14, 15) or rural (*Idylls* 1, 3–7, 10–11) settings, which describe scenes of daily life, for the most part in dialogue form.

It is very likely that the roots of Theocritus' description of and opposition between urban and rural environments³ lie in the Sicilian mime, to which, as the scholia inform us, Theocritus was indebted for two urban mimes, *Idylls* 2 and 15.⁴ Through the representation of typical humble characters and their daily occupations, rather than strikingly defined individuals, the Sicilian mime gave the countryside and those who lived in it a literary prominence which they had not enjoyed before. Epicharmus wrote a comedy entitled

¹ Cf. above, Chapter 2.

² On the question whether Callimachus's Μῆλη were included in the book of *Iambi*, cf. above, p. 29 n. 115.

³ Cf. Th. Reinhardt, *Die Darstellung der Bereiche Stadt und Land bei Theokrit* (Bonn 1988).

⁴ Two introductory scholia on *Idyll* 2, which are probably the remains of an ancient *hypothesis*, state that 'Theocritus derived the character of Thestylis crudely (ἀπειροκόλως, cf. Wendel (1920) 70) from the *Mimes* by Sophron' and that '(the author) derives the plot (ὑπόθεσις) of the spell from the *Mimes* by Sophron' (cf. pp. 269–70 Wendel); the first scholium on *Idyll* 15 states: '(the author) has formed the poem by analogy with Sophron's *Women Attending the Isthmian Games*' (p. 305 Wendel).

Land and Sea (PCG 20–9, see also frs. 158 and 162), where he probably imagined a competition for supremacy between the two elements, in which each boasted of the different products for which they were responsible. This contrast between different types of environment was probably no less significant in Sophron's mime entitled *The fisherman to the farmer* (PCG 42–44, see also fr. 96).⁵ An analogous interest in the humble members of the town population was shown in roughly the same period as Theocritus by Herondas, and the taste for the description of the countryside and its characters also finds parallels in other poetry of the period, particularly the epigrams of Leonidas and Anyte.⁶ However, what most sets the bucolic poems of Theocritus apart is the detail and consistency of the new world for 'high' poetry in hexameters which he creates; this new world is principally based in an emphasis on bucolic music and song, which, on the contrary, remain a wholly marginal element in, for example, the 'bucolic' epigram.⁷

The relative prominence of bucolic poems within the extant Theocritean corpus does not say much, in itself, in favour of a specific preference by Theocritus for this type of poetry; this prominence may have been the result, at least partly, of the popularity that pastoral poetry subsequently enjoyed and which saw what for Theocritus may have been still only one of the possibilities of mimic poetry transformed into a separate literary genre. It is rather the image that Theocritus chooses to give in *Idyll* 7 of his own personality as a poet that tells us something more certain about his own bucolic poetics.

Idyll 7 is a first-person narration by 'Simichidas'. Even if this is not the name of the author (Theocritus), and even if, at times, especially in the early stages of their encounter, the other protagonist of the poem, Lycidas, seems to regard Simichidas with a certain superior detachment and humour (cf. esp. vv. 21–6),⁸ it is clear that Simichidas represents, in many respects,

⁵ It cannot be a coincidence that this type of Sicilian mime plot reappears in Moschus and Bion. Moschus fr. 1 concerns the relative merits of sea and land (cf. the comedy of Epicharmus), and Bion fr. 2 the relative value of the seasons.

⁶ The accepted chronology of both Leonidas and Anyte has recently been questioned by Bernsdorff (2001) 104–26. Anyte's bucolic epigrams are, in any case, not many (two dedications to Pan, *APlan.* 231 = *HE* 738ff. and 291 = *HE* 672ff., and two invitations to take refuge from the heat under a tree, *AP* 9.313 = *HE* 726ff., *APlan.* 228 = *HE* 734ff.); as for Leonidas, there are a dozen epigrams which have shepherds or farmers as their protagonists, or contain descriptions of the countryside, but these should be considered alongside the large group of epigrams whose subjects are other humble workers (fishermen, carpenters, musicians, spinning-women, hunters, woodcutters, etc.), which are at least as numerous.

⁷ Cf. Bernsdorff (2001) 139–54.

⁸ The irony applied at times to the figure of Simichidas (cf. Hunter (2003a)) is, however, not such as to suggest that the author does not identify with him at all, as has been claimed by B. Effe, 'Das poetologische Programm des Simichidas: Theokrit. Id. 7, 37–41' *WJA* 14 (1988) 87–91; see also Simon (1991) 77–82.

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the author himself. Simichidas presents himself as a 'town poet' (cf. vv. 2, 24), who appears to be invested as a bucolic poet by the expert, perhaps semi-divine, poet Lycidas; he undoubtedly demonstrates that he has thoroughly mastered the magic of the countryside when he enthusiastically describes the *locus amoenus* at the end of the poem.⁹ The implicit self-reference in the first-person narration led many ancient scholars into fanciful biography – some went so far as to imagine that Theocritus was a native of Cos, the island where the *Idyll* is set,¹⁰ in spite of the fact that elsewhere he makes two distinct references to his Syracusan origins.¹¹ Be that as it may, if the 'I' of *Idyll* 7 is interpreted as an 'ideal image' of the poet (and one which at least evokes Theocritus himself), we discover that Simichidas/Theocritus chooses to present himself (vv. 39–41) as one who was previously a 'town poet', and as such owed a poetic debt to, or was at least full of admiration for, Asclepiades of Samos, who is most famous for erotic epigrams, and the scholar-poet Philetas of Cos; the setting of the idyll on Cos is probably an act of homage to Philetas' native island, and it is important that Philetas too wrote love poetry. Furthermore, the example of song that Lycidas offers to Simichidas appropriates for the bucolic world the motifs of sympotic love poetry:

ἔσεται Ἀγεάνακτι καλὸς πλόος ἐς Μιτυλήναν,
χῶταν ἐφ' ἔσπερίοις Ἐρίφοις νότος ὑγρὰ διώκη
κύματα, χῶρίων ὅτ' ἐπ' ὠκεανῷ πόδας ἴσχει,
αἶ κα τὸν Λυκίδαν ὀπτεύμενον ἐξ Ἀφροδίτας
ρύσηται· θερμὸς γὰρ ἔρωσ αὐτῷ με καταίθει. 55
χάλκονες στορεσεῦντι τὰ κύματα τάν τε θάλασσαν
τόν τε νότον τόν τ' εὔρον, ὃς ἔσχατα φυκία κινεῖ,
άλκονες, γλαυκαῖς Νηρηῖσι ταί τε μάλιστα
ὀρνίχων ἐφίληθεν, ὅσοις τέ περ ἐξ ἄλὸς ἄγρα. 60
Ἀγεάνακτι πλόον διζημένῳ ἐς Μιτυλήναν
ᾧρια πάντα γένοιτο, καὶ εὐπλοος ὄρμον ἴκοιτο.
κῆγῶ τῆνο κατ' ἄμαρ ἀνήτινον ἢ ῥοδόεντα
ἢ καὶ λευκοῖων στέφανον περὶ κρατὶ φυλάσσω
τὸν Πτελεατικὸν οἶνον ἀπὸ κρατῆρος ἀφυξῶ 65
πὰρ πυρὶ κεκλιμένος, κύαμον δέ τις ἐν πυρὶ φρυξεῖ.
χὰ στιβάς ἐσσεῖται πεπυκασμένα ἔστ' ἐπὶ πᾶχυν
κνύζα τ' ἀσφοδέλω τε πολυγνάμπτω τε σελίνῳ.
καὶ πίσομαι μαλακῶς μεμναμένος Ἀγεάνακτος
αὐταῖς ἐν κυλίκεσσι καὶ ἐς τρύγα χεῖλος ἐρείδων. 70

⁹ Cf. further below.

¹⁰ Cf. *Suda* θ 166 (II p. 687.18–9 Adler) Συρακούσιος, οἱ δὲ φασὶ Κῶνον 'from Syracuse; but some say from Cos'.

¹¹ In *Idyll* 28 Theocritus uses the term 'compatriot' for the Syracusan wife of his friend Nicias (cf. vv. 16–18), and he jokingly calls Polyphemus 'the Cyclops from our area' (11.7).

αὐλησεῦντι δέ μοι δύο ποιμένες, εἷς μὲν Ἀχαρνεύς,
 εἷς δὲ Λυκωπίτας· ὁ δὲ Τίτυρος ἐγγύθεν ἄσει
 ὥς ποκα τᾶς Ξενέας ἠράσσατο Δάφνις ὁ βούτας,
 χῶς ὄρος ἀμφεπονεῖτο καὶ ὡς δρύες αὐτὸν ἐθήνηεν, κτλ.

Ageanax will have a good sea-crossing to Mytilene, even if the south wind drives the moist waves, while the Kids are in the west, and if Orion places his feet on the Ocean – if he frees Lycidas, burnt by the fire of Aphrodite, for I am consumed by a hot love for him. The halcyons will calm the waves and the sea, and the south and south-east wind, which ruffles even the deepest sea weeds, the halcyons, favourites of the sea-green Nereids and of all who catch their food in the sea. May every moment be propitious for Ageanax in his navigation to Mytilene, and may he arrive at the port after a good voyage. On that day, I will wear a garland of anise and roses and white stocks around my head, and lying beside the fire, I will draw some wine of Ptelea from the bowl, while someone toasts the broadbeans over the fire. I will have a bed padded with fleabane and asphodel and curly celery, one cubit high, and with the memory of Ageanax, I will drink the wine longingly to the dregs, pressing my lips to the cups. Two shepherds will pipe for me, one from Acharnae and the other from Lycope, and close by, Tityrus will sing of the time when the cowherd Daphnis fell in love with Xenea, and the mountain suffered for him, and the oak-trees lamented him, etc. (Theocritus 7.52–74)

Lycidas' song begins with what appears to be a *propemptikon* to his beloved Ageanax, but already in the fourth line we discover that this *propemptikon* is subject to a rather unusual condition: Ageanax is to arrive safe and sound at Mytilene only if he 'frees' (ῥύσηται) Lycidas from Aphrodite (vv. 55–6). The meaning of this condition has been much discussed: does Ageanax have to free Lycidas from his passion by gratifying him, or by leaving him for ever (perhaps the likeliest alternative),¹² or at least for a long enough period for his love to die down? Even if, however, ῥύσηται is taken to mean 'satisfies', it is a fact that the song that Lycidas looks forward to is no longer dedicated to Ageanax: once the latter has gone, Lycidas will be able to devote himself to the serene joy of a symposium in the countryside, where the sweet memory of his beloved will undoubtedly remain in his cups (vv. 69–70), but the beloved, or Lycidas' passion for him (whether still burning or now finished), will no longer be the theme of the song. To the accompaniment of two shepherds' pipes, Tityrus will sing of Daphnis and Comatas, semi-mythical heroes who were the founders of bucolic poetry; he will sing a song somewhat similar to the one that Thyrsis sings in *Idyll* 1 about the fate of Daphnis, and then he will evoke the happy lot of Comatas, a mythical

¹² So Y. Furusawa, *Eros und Seelenruhe in den Thalysien Theokrits* (Würzburg 1980) 36–40; in this case, the chronological details of vv. 53–4 would communicate the idea that Ageanax should leave as soon as possible. *Contra*, with equal vigour, Stanzel (1995) 270–75, for whom vv. 53–4 offer Ageanax the possibility of delaying his departure as long as possible, without any consequent problems.

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shepherd who had been saved from death by poetry, because the Muses had arranged for him to be nourished with honey by bees when his cruel master had closed him inside a chest to die of hunger. The stories of Daphnis and Comatas take the place of the amorous discourse on the beloved which the first section of Lycidas' poem had led the reader to expect. Thus, after starting as a love poem – a *propemptikon* for his beloved, rich in allusions to the atmosphere of archaic poetry¹³ – Lycidas' song puts aside the theme of love as a subjective experience,¹⁴ even if it subsequently resumes the traditional sympotic framework of archaic love poetry and describes it with a skill and a wealth of detail worthy of Xenophanes' descriptions of the symposium.¹⁵

Simichidas' song, which is characterised by a looser structure and the use of 'lower' iambic models than the poetry to which Lycidas alluded,¹⁶ moves in the same direction: the opening proclaims his happy and contented love for Myrto, and contrasts it with that of his friend Aratus, to whose unhappy love the rest of his song appears to be dedicated. Simichidas, however, does not appear to be very interested in the question of love itself: he does not even know who the object of Aratus' desire is: 'whether it is the delicate Philinus or someone else', v. 105. What Simichidas wants, right from the beginning, is to release Aratus from his situation of erotic distress: consequently, instead of the love poem that we might have expected, we find a 'magic prayer' to the god Pan, in an attempt to obtain the love of Philinus for Aratus.¹⁷ After trying to eliminate Aratus' sufferings by using magic, the simple mention of Philinus (vv. 118–121) leads Simichidas to solve his friend's suffering in a different, more radical way. The traditional appeal to the beloved to yield, because youth is not eternal (vv. 120–1) becomes in Simichidas' song the starting-point for the final refusal of *eros* and the poetry associated with it: Philinus is passing his prime, it is no longer worthwhile courting him, and it is time to stop freezing in the cold in order to offer him *paraklausithyra*; instead we should only seek *ἀσυχία* 'tranquillity' (vv. 122–27).¹⁸ At the end of the poem, Simichidas describes, in terms of an idealised *locus amoenus*, the natural riches of the symposium organised by Phrasidamus, which seem to exemplify this same need for 'serenity', materialised in a rustic form, and to be the first real performance of the new bucolic poet.¹⁹

¹³ Halcyons are a favourite theme of archaic erotic poetry, cf. Krevans (1983) 215.

¹⁴ As Stanzel (1995) 275 also admits (for his interpretation see above n. 12).

¹⁵ See vv. 63–70; cf. e.g. Xenophanes fr. 13 Gent.–Prato.

¹⁶ Cf. Hunter (2003a) 225–9. ¹⁷ On this point, see below, pp. 158–60.

¹⁸ The pastoral element in Lycidas' song is seriously underestimated by Halperin (1983) 120–25. Both Lycidas and (more superficially) Simichidas appropriate erotic motifs for their 'bucolic' poetry.

¹⁹ Cf. below, pp. 145–8.

The poetic choices of Simichidas/Theocritus and his bucolic ‘master’ Lycidas enact some of the choices by which Theocritus constructs his bucolic poetics in other idylls. Thus, the whole of *Idyll* 3, for example, is made up of a parodic adaptation of a *paraklausithyron*,²⁰ while the song of the Cyclops in *Idyll* 11 and the song of Bucaeus in *Idyll* 10 (vv. 24–37) are parodies of serenades; a more serious dramatisation of love – in the manner of the ‘subjective’ love poetry of archaic lyric and elegiac poetry – is to be found in the urban poems 2 and 14.²¹ Moreover, the celebration of a semi-mythical singer who is the example and prototype of the bucolic poet, analogous to the song of Lycidas, is the theme of *Idyll* 1, and the ideal of *hasychia* and rural beauty as prerequisites for bucolic poetry are among the most basic and pervasive themes of Theocritus’ bucolic works.²² This is not, of course, to say that when Theocritus elaborated the possibility of hexameter bucolic mime, taking off from the pre-existing literary mime, he realised that he was ‘inventing’ a ‘new’ literary genre; nevertheless, he was bound to be aware that few, if any, precedents existed for his combination of rustic contents and epic metre, and thus some of his poems do indeed inaugurate the pastoral genre.²³

In the second chapter of the *Poetics*, Aristotle distinguishes three possible levels at which the objects of artistic imitation are situated, in terms of moral worth, with respect to our daily experience: such objects are ‘better, or worse, or exactly the same’. Hexameter poetry offered him both subjects which are more serious than daily life (the heroic epics of Homer) and subjects ‘worse’ than daily life, such as the parodies of Hegemon and the Δειλιός of a certain Nicochares. The little that we know of Nicochares depicts him as a comic poet; almost nothing is known of the Δειλιός (the ‘Viliad?’), but

²⁰ Both ancient and some modern scholars have wished to link the σιμός protagonist of *Idyll* 3 to Simichidas in *Idyll* 7; cf. e.g. C. Meillier, ‘Théocrite, Idylle VII et autour de l’Idylle VII’, in Arrighetti–Montanari (1993) 108–10.

²¹ The characters of *Idyll* 14 are plainly townspeople, even if their party is held ‘in the country’, cf. Stanzel (1995) 19–21.

²² Cf. below, pp. 145–7.

²³ Ancient scholarship identified pre-Theocritean bucolic in the popular song which characterised rustic rituals for country divinities (above all, Artemis, cf. schol. Theocritus, *Proleg.*, pp. 2 and 7–9 Wendel); mythical bucolic poets were also found: Daphnis (cf. Diodorus Siculus 4.84, who may have been influenced by Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566F83; Hermesianax, *CA* fr. 2; Diomedes, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, 487.8–10 Keil); Diomus (cf. Athen. 14.619a–b), a character already mentioned by Epicharmus (*PCG* 4 and 104), and Menalcas, for whom Eriphanis, a lyric poetess who was in love with him, is supposed to have written poems (Athen. 14.619c–d). Aelian (*Var. hist.* 10.18) suggests that the initiator of bucolic μέλοποιία was the Sicilian poet Stesichorus, to whom Crates of Mallos had already ascribed a short poem about Daphnis: *PMGF* 279–80. Whether or not this attribution is reliable (cf. L. Lehnus, *SCO* 24 (1975) 191–6, O. Vox, *Belfagor* 41 (1986) 311–17), the very fragility of this tradition shows how widespread the reputation of Theocritus was as the initiator of the genre.

the title itself, with its pun on ἴλιός, suggests a parodic contrast between grand Homeric language and low subject-matter: we may perhaps compare the gastronomic poetry of Matron of Athens. As an example of poetic works which represent objects 'exactly the same as us', Aristotle is only able to name a single author, Cleophon, a tragedian who inappropriately lowered the level of his works by using words and/or characters that were too humble and common, thus obtaining an effect bordering on comedy (*Poetics* 1458a18–20, *Rhetoric* 3.1408a10–15). The representation of daily life is thus reduced, in the Aristotelian system of literary genres, to little more than a *faux pas* of tragedy, consisting in the use of the wrong lexical register by a single author. Any suspicion that this Cleophon might have gone considerably beyond the well-known 'bourgeoisification' of language and of certain tragic situations, initiated by Euripides, is quashed by a consideration of the titles that are listed in the *Suda*, which are almost all of a mythological nature (*TrGF* 77T1). Aristotle himself does not seem to pay much attention to this apparent one-off: at the end of the second chapter of the *Poetics*, when he moves from theoretical discussion to the subject of drama, which is of course his principal preoccupation, he completely ignores the middle term of his trichotomy and limits himself to speaking about tragedy (with subjects that are 'higher' than everyday life) and comedy (with subjects that are 'lower' than everyday life).²⁴

Poetry in hexameters, on the other hand, even in the time of Aristotle, had never witnessed 'accidents' of this kind: there was epic poetry, which represented characters and situations of the utmost seriousness, the glorious deeds (κλέα) of heroes or the acts (ἔργα) of heroes and gods (cf. *Iliad* 9.189 and *Odyssey* 1.337–8, 8.73),²⁵ and there was parody which used heroic language for non-serious subjects, such as the gastronomic poetry of Matron and the pseudo-Homeric *Margites*, with its buffoonish anti-hero. Poetic contents could be related to the real world in a variety of ways (τρόποι), and some Hellenistic thinking on the matter is probably available in a scholium to *Iliad* 14.342–51. According to this text, one possibility is that poetic subject-matter 'imitates reality' (ὁ μιμητικὸς τοῦ ἀληθοῦς) another

²⁴ It is a great pity that we cannot be sure of the origin of the definition of mime as an 'imitation of life which includes both lawful and unlawful things' (schol. Aristophanes, *Proleg.* xxiv.3.16–7 Koster). If it really goes back to Theophrastus, as is often claimed, this would have important consequences for the scholastic background to Theocritus' mimes.

²⁵ One of the specific aims of epic poetry, according to scholars, was ἐκπληξις 'astonishment', and the relations between gods and men were crucial to this effect; cf. scholia on Homer, *Il.* 15.695, 16.459, 20.61–2, and Feeney (1991) 42–56. On the hexameter as a particularly suitable verse-form for mythical-heroic, or at least sublime, material, cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 1449a26–7, 1459b34–37, *Rhet.* 1404a34–5, Demetrius, *Eloc.* 5 and 42.

is that subject-matter derives 'from imagination based on reality' (κατὰ φαντασίαν τῆς ἀληθείας), and a third one is achieved 'by going beyond reality and by imagination' (καθ' ὑπέρθεσιν ἀληθείας καὶ φαντασίαν); this last is exemplified in the scholium by means of characters like the Cyclopes or the Laestrygones and 'facts about the gods' (τὰ περὶ θεῶν). There are undoubtedly traces of all three categories in Homer (as the scholium to *Iliad* 2.478–9 reminds us), but the extraordinary world of heroes and gods remains by far the most dominant in epic poetry, and this separates it radically both from the imitation of daily life which we find, for example, in New Comedy, and from fiction, in the sense of φαντασία based on the real world. Epic remained the vehicle for the transmission of the stable, structural truths to be found in the mythical deeds of gods and heroes, truths which transcended the precarious, non-permanent truths of everyday life.²⁶ The everyday world of humble people, very largely excluded from epic, had found expression almost exclusively in the mime and in Sicilian comedy. Moreover, the mimes of Sophron, who, as we have seen,²⁷ supplied Theocritus with models for two of his urban mimes, were composed in a kind of rhythmic prose which was so marginal in the system of literary genres that it did not even deserve a name to distinguish it from prose.²⁸

If Theocritus did not specialise in any particular genre, his poetry as a whole in some ways challenged the traditional system of genres, in which the hexameter had regularly been combined with 'high' subjects and heroic-divine protagonists (or, for parodic purposes, with their exact opposite). It has, for example, long been noted that Theocritus' mythological 'epyllia' tend to humanise or 'normalise' the mythical heroes who are their protagonists.²⁹ Moreover, the two poems dedicated to encomium (*Idylls* 16 and 17) both begin with forceful proems, in which the traditional gesture of mythological *recusatio* in the face of the limitations of human knowledge (cf. Ibycus, *PMGF* S151.10–31, Simonides, *IEG* 11.15–22) is reshaped with a new pride in the dignity of hexameter poetry about human subjects. *Idyll* 16.1–4 is particularly striking:³⁰

αἰεὶ τοῦτο Διὸς κούραις μέλει, αἰὲν ἀοιδοῖς,
ὑμνεῖν ἀθανάτους, ὑμνεῖν ἀγαθῶν κλέα ἀνδρῶν.
Μοῖσαι μὲν θεαὶ ἐντί, θεοὺς θεαὶ αἰείδοντι·
ἄμμες δὲ βροτοὶ οἶδε, βροτοὺς βροτοὶ αἰείδωμεν.

²⁶ For the kind of 'truth' to be sought in myth cf. Diodorus Siculus 4.8. Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1174–80 is enlightening here.

²⁷ Cf. above, n. 4. ²⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 1447a28–b13.

²⁹ Cf. e.g. Horstmann (1976) 57–79, Effe (1978) 64–76. Cf. also below, pp. 201–10, 255–66.

³⁰ Cf. Fantuzzi (2000b) and (2001b).

It is always dear to the heart of the daughters of Zeus and always to poets to celebrate the immortal ones, to celebrate the deeds of valiant men – but the Muses are goddesses, and goddesses sing of gods; we who are here are mortals, and as such let us mortals sing of mortals!

This proud confidence in a ‘division of domains’ between the Muses and the poets who are inspired by them, on the one hand, and the class of poets in which Theocritus includes himself, on the other, is in perfect, and perhaps programmatic, harmony with the spirit of his bucolic and urban poems, which take the hexameter in quite new directions.

In creating a new kind of hexameter poetry as an alternative or complement to ‘high epos’,³¹ Theocritus succeeded in creating an organic, coherent structure, a ‘possible world’, for the characters and the settings of his poetry, which stand halfway between the ‘imitation of the real’ and ‘imagination based on the real world’ (cf. above), and are therefore inevitably more precarious and unstable than those of the mythical world, which were traditionally seen as offering paradigmatic models for the understanding of the real world.³² This new and coherent world which his poetry creates, a world which, for all its differences, is no less coherent than the heroic-mythological world of epic, is Theocritean bucolic’s most noticeable difference both from the mime, which was based, in all probability, on the more or less direct mirroring (and of course distortion) of the real world, and from the simple ‘imagination based on the real world’ of comedy, with its paradoxical internal logic which changed from play to play.

2 VERISIMILITUDE AND COHERENCE

The search for internal coherence is most obvious in the bucolic poems, perhaps because the urban mimes already had well-developed models in the long para-literary tradition of the Sicilian and other contemporary mimes (cf. above pp. 133–4). Theocritus’ bucolic poetry is based on the unrealistic presupposition that the ‘professional’ requirements of a shepherd’s life, connected with the activity of looking after the flock, are but a minor distraction from the principal pastimes of music and singing, particularly song contests.³³ This same selective stylisation³⁴ is enshrined in the use of the verb βουκολιάσδομαι, which never means ‘I am a cowherd (or a shepherd)’,³⁵ but always and only ‘I sing bucolic songs’, mainly in the

³¹ Cf. Halperin (1983) 217–48.

³² On this difference between the world of mythology and the possible worlds of fiction cf. Th. G. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, MA 1986) 39–42.

³³ Cf. e.g. Griffin (1992) 198–9. ³⁴ Cf. Stanzel (1995) 115–18.

³⁵ Properly speaking, the term βουκόλος designated the cowherd, but the broader meaning is already presupposed in Homer (*Il.* 20.221).

context of an agonistic or friendly exchange of songs (5.44 and 60, 7.36);³⁶ so too, the adjective βουκολικός is found in Theocritus only as an attribute of the words ᾠοιδά 'song' and Μοῖσα 'Muse'.³⁷ This stylisation has its roots in a traditional vision of the shepherd and of rustic life, familiar in literature as early as the archaic age;³⁸ besides the shepherds on Achilles' shield, who already delight in playing the syrinx (cf. below), in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, the Chorus says of someone who has been heard making a noise, but whose identity they do not know: 'He does not have the melody (μολπή) of a syrinx, like the shepherd wandering through the fields' (ll. 213–14). The modern suggestion that βουκολιασμός was a term going back before Theocritus, and one which specifically indicated a form of popular singing said to have been invented by a certain Diomus, a Sicilian shepherd already referred to by Epicharmus (see above, n. 23³⁹), is therefore not unreasonable.

This same transference is seen in the description of the boy guarding the vine in the *ekphrasis* of the cup in *Idyll* 1 (ll. 45–54). The boy is regularly seen as an image of the bucolic poet:⁴⁰ he is so taken up with 'weaving' reed-cages (or traps) for grasshoppers that he neglects both the vine and his own lunch, in an ideal opposition to the psychological and physical suffering of the protagonists of the other two scenes depicted on the cup (the lovesick men and the toiling fisherman):⁴¹

τυτθὸν δ' ὅσσον ἄπωθεν ἀλιτρώτοιο γέροντος
περκναῖσι σταφυλαῖσι καλὸν βέβριθεν ἄλωά,
τὰν ὀλίγος τις κῶρος ἐφ' αἵμασιαῖσι φυλάσσει
ἦμενος· ἀμφὶ δέ νιν δύ' ἄλώπεκες, ἃ μὲν ἂν' ὄρχως
φοιτῆ σινομένα τὰν τρώξιμον, ἃ δ' ἐπὶ πήρῃ
πάντα δόλον τεύχοισα τὸ παιδίον οὐ πρὶν ἀνησεῖν

³⁶ Even the song of Thyrsis in *Idyll* 1 is presented as a re-performance of a song already sung by Thyrsis himself in a competition with Chromis of Libya (vv. 23–4).

³⁷ Cf. 1.20, 7.49, and the refrains of Thyrsis' song.

³⁸ For the status of the shepherd in Greek culture before Theocritus, cf. Griffin (1992) 194–5 and Gutzwiller (1991) 23–79.

³⁹ Cf. Nauta (1990) 126–29 (for a different view cf. Halperin (1983) 78–84).

⁴⁰ As Hunter (1999) 82 notes, the boy is the image of the bucolic poet because, just like the latter, he 'constructs something beautiful from "natural materials"'. It should not come as a surprise that the boy is a guardian of a vineyard, and not a shepherd: 'the cup is not a simple representation of the bucolic world – there are, e.g., no flocks – because the *ekphrastic* relation here constructed between a described object and the poem in which it occurs is not that of "original" and "copy"' (Hunter (1999) 77). This image is taken up by Longus in *Daphnis and Chloe*, where, on the contrary, its pastoral value is made explicit: 'Chloe was gathering some branches of asphodel and was weaving some cages, and as she was wholly taken up by this work, she lost sight of her lambs' (1.10.2).

⁴¹ The three scenes on the cup are presented in such a way as to form a priamel that brings out the superiority of the life of the pastoral poet, as a life concentrated on a πόνος, which is at the same time the greatest delight; cf. F. Cairns, 'Theocritus' First *Idyll*: the Literary Programme' *WS* 18 (1984) 103–5.

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φατὶ πρὶν ἴῃ ἀκράτιστον ἐπὶ ξηροῖσι καθίξῃ.⁴²
 αὐτὰρ ὄγ' ἀνθερίκοισι καλὰν πλέκει ἀκριδοθήραν (*v.l.* ἀκριδοθήκαν)
 σχοίνῳ ἐφαρμόσδων· μέλειται δέ οἱ οὔτε τι πῆρας
 οὔτε φυτῶν τοσσῆνον ὅσον περὶ πλέγματι γασθεῖ.

A little further on from the old man worn by the sea, there is a vineyard laden with dark bunches of grapes, guarded by a boy sitting on a little wall; beside him there are two foxes, one of which is prowling between the rows of vines to steal the ripe grapes, while the other is plotting all kinds of attacks against the boy's lunch-bag, thinking that he will not leave the boy without (?) stealing his lunch from him (?). But the boy is weaving a pretty trap (*var. lect.* cage) for crickets, using asphodels combined with reeds, and he has less care for the lunch-bag or the vines, than the joy he takes in his weaving. (Theocritus 1.45–54)

Like the bucolic poet who weaves a web of words and sounds,⁴³ the boy is totally dedicated to his task, capable even of disregarding the most basic need for food. Theocritus may here have been borrowing from a famous passage in Plato's *Phaedrus*, the dialogue which foreshadows so many bucolic motifs;⁴⁴ the passage in question is the aetiology for the love for singing and the peculiar diet (i.e. dew) of cicadas, whose chirping characterises the natural music of the countryside, in the *Phaedrus* no less than in Theocritus and the poetic tradition.⁴⁵ At a certain point of their conversation beside the Ilissos, Socrates and Phaedrus start discussing how people write well, or otherwise, both in poetry and in prose (cf. 258d), and Socrates finds it particularly suitable that they are dealing with this difficult subject under the auspices, and also the protection, of the cicadas. The cicadas would mock them if they let themselves fall asleep in the afternoon heat, like sheep or slaves seduced (κηλουμένους) by the insects' song; on the contrary, if the cicadas saw that they were wide awake and ready (like them) for a discussion, they would 'be pleased to give them what it is their prerogative to give to men' (258e–259b), in other words the inspiration of the Muses (259b–c):⁴⁶

⁴² The text of this verse is quite uncertain, but the sense seems to be that the fox will not stop its attacks until it has eaten the boy's food.

⁴³ As Hunter (1999) 77 has already noted, 'that the art of poetry is expressed through an image ("a boy weaving a cage") is itself a manifestation of how poetry works'. On the metaphor of weaving for poetic creation cf. e.g. J. M. Snyder, 'The Web of Song: Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets' *CJ* 76 (1981) 193–96 and chapter 5 of J. Scheid and J. Svenbro, *The Craft of Zeus: Myths of Weaving and Fabric* (Cambridge, MA–London 1996).

⁴⁴ Cf. C. Murley, 'Plato's *Phaedrus* and Theocritean Pastoral' *TAPhA* 71 (1940) 281–95, Hunter (1999) 145.

⁴⁵ Cf. Davies–Kathirithamby (1986) 116–19.

⁴⁶ For understanding Theocritus' use of Plato, the attitude of the Platonic Socrates to the cicadas is of secondary interest; for different views, cf. G. R. F. Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas: a Study of Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge 1987) 25–30 and A. Capra, 'Il mito delle cicale e il motivo della bellezza sensibile nel *Fedro*' *Maia* 52 (2000) 225–47, pp. 227–9.

It is narrated that the cicadas were once men, in a period when the Muses had not yet been born; when the Muses were born, and singing was invented, some men of that time were so overwhelmed by the pleasure that derived from it, that they started to sing, disregarding food and drink, and thus without realising it, brought about their own death. The race of the cicadas was thus born from them, and they received this gift from the Muses: from their birth, they do not need to feed themselves, but immediately start singing, without eating or drinking until they die; afterwards, they go and tell the Muses which of the men down here venerate each of them.

In Theocritus too, ἀκρίδες ‘crickets/grasshoppers’, which are traditionally connected with music no less than were cicadas,⁴⁷ and τέττιγες ‘cicadas’ are the habitual accompaniment of the shepherds’ song, and also the standard term of comparison both for the song itself and, in general, for the sounds of the world of nature.⁴⁸ If the boy guarding the vine is an image of the bucolic poet, then there might be a particular significance also in the imminent loss of his lunch, due to his lack of attention for the material necessities of life, compared with the pleasure (γαθῆϊ, v. 54) that he derives from weaving cages; we might compare, on one hand, the little attention for the external world shown by the shepherds depicted on Achilles’ shield in Homer, *Iliad* 18.525–6 (‘. . . they were followed by two shepherds who were taking their delight in the syrinx, without suspecting an attack’) and, on the other, the shepherds accused by Hesiod’s Muses (*Theogony* 26) of being γαστέρες οἴον ‘pure stomachs’, that is to say, oblivious to anything apart from their simple need for food. Theocritus’ boy is an example of the total dedication to singing which Plato had used as an aetiological explanation for the frugal diet of the cicada,⁴⁹ a diet known to the poetic tradition at least since the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield* (vv. 393–95) and one which appears to have been extended at times also to crickets (ἀκρίδες).⁵⁰

The Platonic link between the cicadas’ love for singing and their special diet has another importance for Theocritus’ image. The habit of catching crickets and keeping them in a cage in order to listen to their singing is well attested in Hellenistic epigram,⁵¹ but in light of the fact that it was not rare

⁴⁷ Cf. e.g. Anyte, *AP* 7.190.1 = *HE* 742, Leonidas, *AP* 7.198.3–4 = *HE* 2086–7, Meleager, *AP* 7.195.1–2 = *HE* 4058–9. [Aristotle], *audib.* 804a had already linked ἀκρίδες with cicadas and nightingales as animals that were endowed with a λιγυρός ‘resonant’ voice.

⁴⁸ Cf. 1.148, 5.28–9, 7.41, 7.138. In this last passage, Theocritus speaks of the cicada’s song as a πόνος ‘toil’, a word resonant in Theocritean and Hellenistic poetics, cf. above, p. 5 n. 15, Berger (1984) 18–20.

⁴⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Hist. anim.* 532b11–14, Theocritus 4.15–16 etc.

⁵⁰ As the unfortunately corrupt text of Meleager, *AP* 7.195.7–8 = *HE* 4064–5 suggests, cf. E. K. Borthwick, ‘A Grasshopper’s Diet’ *CQ* 16 (1966) 105–6.

⁵¹ Cf. Davies–Kathirithamby (1986) 137–8.

for the origins of poetry to be traced to the imitation of bird song,⁵² and in particular in the light of Plato's comment that the cicadas had received from the Muses the prerogative of mediating between men and the Muses themselves, it is tempting to imagine that this complete absorption in catching crickets is a sort of metaphor for the birth of bucolic poetry itself. The myth of the *Phaedrus* and the *Iliad*'s shepherds, who pay no attention to their surroundings but concentrate on their musical activity,⁵³ lead us into this image and help us to interpret it.

Equally idealised is the Theocritean countryside. It is never a really wild countryside, a place of dangers and hardships, one quite inhospitable to humans; on the contrary, the Theocritean countryside is always peacefully under human control.⁵⁴ Furthermore, there is, for the most part, sympathetic harmony between the countryside and the shepherds. The beauty of the countryside reflects and guarantees the sweetness of the music of the syrinx⁵⁵ and of the context in which the shepherds listen.⁵⁶ The opening of the first *Idyll* has a particular importance,

ἄδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἅ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα,
ἅ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι μελίσδεταί, ἄδύ δὲ καὶ τύ
συρίσδες, κτλ.

O goatherd, sweet is the murmuring created by that pine-tree over there, near the springs, and sweetly do you play the pipe . . .

Note also the rival places for singing suggested by Lacon and Comatas in *Idyll* 5, vv. 31–4 and 45–9 (respectively):

ἄδιον ἄσῃ
τεῖδ' ὑπὸ τὰν κότινον καὶ τᾶλσεα ταῦτα καθίξας.
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ τουτεῖ καταλείβεται· ὦδε πεφύκει
ποῖα, χά στιβάς ἄδε, καὶ ἀκρίδες ὦδε λαεῦντι
. . .
οὐχ ἔρψῳ τηνεῖ. τουτεῖ δρύες, ὦδε κύπειρος,
ὦδε καλὸν βομβεῦντι ποτὶ σμάνεσσι μέλισσαι,
ἔνθ' ὕδατος ψυχρῶ κράναι δύο, ταὶ δ' ἐπὶ δένδρει
ῥοιχες λαλαγεῦντι, καὶ ἅ σκιά οὐδὲν ὁμοία
τᾶ παρὰ τίν· βάλλει δὲ καὶ ἅ πίτυς ὑπόθε κώνοις, κτλ.

You will sing more sweetly here, sitting under the oleaster and these trees: here the water gushes cool, here the grass grows, and there is this place to lie down, and here

⁵² Cf. e.g. Alcman, *PMGF* 39, Democritus, *VS* 68B154; Gentili (1988) chapter 4.

⁵³ For the history of this cultural paradigm cf. Gutzwiller (1991) 23–79.

⁵⁴ Cf. A. Perutelli, 'Natura selvatica e genere bucolico' *ASNP* 5 (1976) 763–75. A dangerously wild countryside would obviously not be conducive to bucolic ἀσυχία 'tranquillity' (cf. 7.126); cf. further Segal (1981) 215–27, H. Edquist, 'Aspects of Theocritean otium' *Ramus* 4 (1975) 101–14.

⁵⁵ Traditionally ἡδύθορος: cf. e.g. Euripides, *El.* 703. ⁵⁶ Cf. Schmidt (1987) 29–36.

the crickets are chirruping [. . .] I will not come there. Here there are oak-trees, here there is galingale, here the bees buzz sweetly round the hives, here there are two springs of fresh water, the birds are twittering on the tree, and the shade is totally different from what you have got around you; the pine-tree sheds its cones from on high, as well . . .

Theocritus will certainly have found more than one parallel in previous literary tradition for the sympathetic sweetness of the countryside as a premise for song, and he undoubtedly found at least one in another passage from Plato's *Phaedrus* (230b–c):

A lovely place for us to stop! This plane-tree is very leafy and tall; the height and the shade of the agnus are ideal, and fully blossomed as it is, it fills the place with fragrant scents. And then under the plane-tree flows a beautiful spring, with very cool water, as you can feel with your foot. From the images and the statues, it looks like a place sacred to certain Nymphs and to Achelous. And, if you like, feel how pleasant and gentle the breeze is in this place. A summer murmur answers the chorus of the cicadas. But the sweetest thing of all is this grass, which slopes gently down, and is made for one to lie down on, resting the head very comfortably.

In Theocritus, however, descriptions of the pleasures of the countryside normally remain within the bounds of the plausible. In only one case do we find an extensive description of a *locus amoenus* which culminates in a radically idealised, and therefore unrealistic, representation of the sympathetic participation of the world of nature; the passage comes at the end of *Idyll* 7:

πολλὰ δ' ἄμμιν ὕπερθε κατὰ κρατὸς δονέοντο 135
αἴγιοιροί πετελέαι τε· τὸ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἱερὸν ὕδωρ
Νυμφῶν ἐξ ἄντροιο κατειβόμενον κελάρυζε.
τοὶ δὲ ποτὶ σκιαραῖς ὀροδαμνίσιν αἰθαλίωνες
τέττιγες λαλαγεῦντες ἔχον πόνον· ἅ δ' ὀλολυγῶν
τηλόθεν ἐν πυκιναῖσι βάτων τρύζεσκεν ἀκάνθαις· 140
ἄειδον κόρυδοι καὶ ἀκανθίδες, ἔστνε τερυγῶν,
πρωτῶντο ξουθαὶ περὶ πίδακας ἀμφὶ μέλισσαι.
πάντ' ὥσδε θερεὸς μάλα πίονος, ὥσδε δ' ὀπώρας.
ὄχνοι μὲν πὰρ ποσσὶ, παρὰ πλευραῖσι δὲ μάλα
δαφιλέως ἀμῖν ἐκυλίνδετο, τοὶ δ' ἐκέχυντο 145
ὄρπακες βραβίλοισι καταβρίθοντες ἔραζε.

Many poplars and elm-trees were swaying over our heads, and nearby, there was the babble of the sacred stream, which flows down from the grotto of the Nymphs. On the shady branches, the smoky-coloured cicadas toiled at their chirping; the tree-frog could be heard in the distance among the close-packed briar thorns; larks and finches were singing, the turtle-dove was moaning, and the bees were buzzing around the springs. Everything smelled of a rich harvest and ripe fruits: pears at

our feet, apples rolled plenteously alongside us, and boughs laden with sloes hung down to the ground. (Theocritus 7.135–46)

In this single case, a primitivistic idealisation suggestive of the Golden Age, in which the fruit automatically dropped off the trees for the men, is achieved in the ritualised atmosphere of a rural harvest festival. The idealising imagination grows from rural reality – there is indeed a superabundance of fruit in the season of the harvest – and from the logic of religious thought. Phrasidamus and Antigenes were descendants of the noble family of Merops, the legendary king of Cos, who were said to have given hospitality to Demeter, while she was wandering in search of her lost daughter; the story is reported by one scholiast on vv. 5–9, and had probably already featured before Theocritus in Philetas' *Demeter*.⁵⁷ The exceptional nature of this setting is emphasised by the narrating Simichidas, who in all probability wants to present the setting created by Phrasidamus for the Thalysiae as equal to the one where Phrasidamus' forefather, Chalcon, had performed the natural miracle of opening up the Bourina spring with a kick (ll. 4–7), in a sort of parallel to Hesiod's *Hippocrene*.⁵⁸ Theocritus' intention, then, would be to contrast a modern 'miracle' of the bucolic world, of which Simichidas has just been appointed the singer, with a true miracle of the mythological past; the countryside, which Phrasidamus has organised into an idealised *locus amoenus*, then enters into competition with the mythical deeds of his forefathers.⁵⁹ Moreover, the enthusiastic interpretation that the 'town poet' Simichidas gives of the closing *locus amoenus* is a demonstration of the positive influences exerted on Simichidas, both by his meeting with Lycidas and, more generally, by the landscape and the presence of the Nymphs.⁶⁰ the place celebrated by Simichidas appears to be consecrated to the Nymphs, and Simichidas had acknowledged their inspiration (vv. 91–93), in offering himself as a new Hesiod, but one taught by Nymphs, not Muses (see below, p. 154).

In the *Phaedrus*, too, the spot on the banks of the Ilissos, where the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus took place, was sacred to the

⁵⁷ Cf. Sbardella (2000) 176–8.

⁵⁸ Cf. Krevans (1983) 209–12. The Bourina spring may be identical with the spring of the Nymphs at the end of the poem, cf. Puelma (1960) 162 n. 58, Sbardella (2000) Appendix I. Nevertheless, there is no clear indication of this, and the different symbolic values connected with the two springs (mythological characters versus living figures; Hesiodic influences versus bucolic poetry; Muses versus Nymphs) suggest rather that they embody an opposition between two different atmospheres.

⁵⁹ Cf. Berger (1984) 28–9 and Hunter (1999) 192, for whom 'the technique is similar to that whereby Pindar suggests that the achievements of his victor-patrons recall and replay the achievements of their ancestors [...] the legendary past is not merely replayed in the near past of Simichidas' memory, but that near past is already itself mythic'.

⁶⁰ Cf. Pearce (1988) 209–304.

Nymphs (230b), as was the spring overlooking that *locus amoenus*; Socrates himself stated several times that he was inspired by the Nymphs (cf. below, pp. 151–2). Moreover, Phaedrus put down the naivety of Socrates' description of the *locus amoenus* to the sense of initial 'discovery' of the countryside by the town-dwelling philosopher (230c–d):

'O most excellent Socrates, you seem to me to be a truly odd man. As you say, you are like a stranger led by a guide, and not like a native of this place. It seems to me that you never go beyond the limits of the town, or even outside the walls.'

The *Phaedrus* allows us to understand that Simichidas' unrealistic idealisation of the *locus amoenus* is motivated by the *enthousiasmos* conferred by the Nymphs of the spring on the first performance of this new bucolic poet, or, in more prosaic terms, by the enthusiasm of the 'town poet' on first discovering the countryside as a theme of poetry.

Selective, rather than complete, idealisation, is then Theocritus' preferred mode, even in the *locus amoenus* of *Idyll* 7. Not uncommonly, however, this is combined with more realistic elements drawn from the bucolic world of the shepherds, often indeed to make the artifice of selection and partiality, the 'fictional' character of his bucolic world, less evident. Thus, for example, there are exchanges between pairs of shepherds, in which the one who is about to sing or play is careful to ask the other one to look after his flock in the meantime, or sometimes the companion who declares his readiness to do so in advance, or again, before singing, both shepherds take care to leave their animals in a safe place, so as to have more freedom for their song.⁶¹ So too, when the song is over, the shepherds may remember their flocks and their individual duties, and sometimes they start to speak again in crude, concrete language.⁶² It is this selective mixture of idealisation and reality that distinguishes Theocritean 'realism' from the idealised and/or imprecise description⁶³ of the countryside and pastoral life that we find in the poems of his Greek imitators and in Virgil's *Eclogues*: for them, the world of shepherds is merely an apparatus of objects, images and forms of expression, codified, for the Greek poets, in a now recognisable literary genre, and, for Virgil, as a sentimental alternative to town life.

⁶¹ Cf. 1.12–14, 3.1–5. On the contrary, the Cyclops, a parody of the shepherd, entirely forgot his flock while he serenaded Galatea (11.12–13).

⁶² Cf. e.g. 1.151–2, recalling the crude naturalness of animal sex, immediately after the conclusion of the drama of Daphnis, 4.44–49, and 5.141–50, where the allusion to the Homeric Melanthius reminds us that these shepherds are *Theocritus'* shepherds, who know their Homer; for such mixed effects in Theocritus, cf. W. G. Arnott, 'Lycidas and Double Perspectives' *Eclás* 26 (1984) 333–46.

⁶³ On imprecision and scarce attention to realism in the spurious works of the corpus, cf. Rossi (1971b), and in general W. Elliger, *Die Darstellung der Landschaft in der griechischen Dichtung* (Berlin–New York 1975) 319–64.

Just as there is at least one case in which Theocritus describes an idealised *locus amoenus* – for the ritualised, mythologised atmosphere of the Thalyssiae – so there are some exceptional cases in which he suspends the selective ‘realism’ with which he habitually presents his characters, and allows the world of nature and the world of human activity and suffering to flow into each other. The exceptions are Daphnis (7.72–7 and 1.64–145) and the ‘divine’ Comatas of 7.78–85,⁶⁴ both of whom are figures belonging to the mythical past of bucolic poetry, and are in a certain sense its hero-founders. They therefore have a special claim to the highly mythologised atmosphere which Theocritus creates for them. Nature is humanised by the ‘pathetic fallacy’ which attributes to it a sentimental participation and interaction with human affairs: the bees feed Comatas, who is closed inside a chest; all nature mourns for Daphnis,⁶⁵ both tame animals and wild ones, including a highly improbable Sicilian lion, in a scene which breaks down the otherwise habitual separation between wild nature and domesticated herding (cf. 1.71–5 and 115–17). Moreover, as in heroic epic, in the story of Daphnis a direct participation in human affairs is imagined for the gods, both Olympian (Hermes, Aphrodite) and other (Pan, Priapus). The gods seem to have been part of the legend of Daphnis before Theocritus (according to Diodorus Siculus 4.84.3–4, Daphnis was a member of the musical entourage of Artemis), but otherwise they have no interaction with his herdsmen, who are imagined as Theocritus’ living contemporaries.

The coherence of Theocritus’ bucolic world can also be seen in the different characterisation of the ‘contemporary’ Daphnis of *Idyll* 6 and the mythical Daphnis of *Idylls* 1 and 7. The relationship between the Daphnis of *Idyll* 6 and the mythical figure has been much debated, but whether or not he is a different character, called ‘Daphnis’ as a tribute to his poetic ability,⁶⁶ the Daphnis of *Idyll* 6 is undoubtedly presented in a ‘realistic’ environment, in which the everyday needs of pastoral life make themselves felt.⁶⁷ He engages in a singing competition (ἔρισθεν, v. 5) with a shepherd friend of his, in terms that are perhaps more amicable, but otherwise not very different from those of the ‘realistic’ shepherds of *Idyll* 5.⁶⁸ In both

⁶⁴ It is not clear whether these verses all refer to the goatherd Comatas, or first to a goatherd who suffered the same fate as Comatas and then to Comatas himself; cf. Hunter (1999) 175–6.

⁶⁵ Diodorus Siculus 4.84.1 describes the region of Sicily where Daphnis lived (the Heraean mountains) as a lush *locus amoenus*, in terms which may themselves be influenced by the myth of Daphnis.

⁶⁶ Cf. Legrand (1898) 151.

⁶⁷ Verses 1–2 ‘they gathered the herd together in a single place’ allude to the harmony of the two shepherds (cf. Bernsdorff (1994) 41), but also has an obvious effect of realism for two shepherds about to engage in a song contest; cf. 1.13, where Thyrsis asks the goatherd to play his syrinx, assuring him that he will pasture his goats in the meantime.

⁶⁸ On the parallelism between the *boukoliasmoi* of *Idylls* 5 and 6, cf. Serrao (1977) 189–94.

poems, there is ‘sally and riposte’, though these are multiple in *Idyll* 5, whereas there is only a single exchange of lengthier songs in *Idyll* 6; in this latter poem, Daphnis imagines that he is the friend and advisor of the Cyclops, and Damoitas, Daphnis’s companion, assumes the rôle of the Cyclops to answer Daphnis. Much of the irony of *Idyll* 6 derives from the fact that this living Daphnis⁶⁹ warns Polyphemus not to be too difficult with Galatea by ignoring her, because in that way he would be destined to be unhappy in love (δύσερω⁷⁰); in other words, Daphnis warns him about the very unhappiness of which Priapus accused the mythical Daphnis in 1.82–88⁷¹. However, the Cyclops, as interpreted by Damoitas, seems to adopt the stubbornness of the mythical Daphnis, although he interprets this in his own way: he pretends to ignore her, so he claims, as part of a strategy to win Galatea as his wife (cf. vv. 32–3).

Idyll 6 is thus an interpretation in a facetious key of the tragic story of the Daphnis of *Idyll* 1, and at the same time an interpretation in a more or less serious key of the comic clumsiness of the Cyclops of *Idyll* 11; it is as if the representation of the stories by two living, contemporary shepherds, and the assimilation of those stories to their own rustic scheme of logic, could moderate the tragic or parodic dimensions implicit in the two ‘heroes’ of the bucolic world *par excellence*, Daphnis and Polyphemus. How far Theocritus (and his Damoitas) took the Cyclops’ marriage strategy seriously, or whether the whole of the Cyclops’ song in *Idyll* 6 is a cruel manifestation of the self-deception suggested at the end of *Idyll* 11 (ll. 76–9), depends, in part, on the question of whether Theocritus knew and expected his audience to know the version of the myth which included the birth of a son to the Cyclops and Galatea, and thus the consummation of the Cyclops’ dream of love.⁷² Be that as it may, the bucolic mask of the lovesick Cyclops in *Idyll* 6 has none of the parodic features which characterise the versification of *Idyll* 11; the hexameters of the Cyclops’s love song in *Idyll* 11 are as clumsy as the song itself, but the hexameters of *Idyll* 6 are fully in keeping with the

⁶⁹ As the introductory scholium b to *Idyll* 1 already calls him, to distinguish him from the mythical character.

⁷⁰ In 1.85 and 6.7 this term, whose precise meaning is controversial, probably implies an inability to love the persons who could actually reciprocate the love, cf. R. M. Ogilvie, *JHS* 82 (1962) 106–10 and F. W. Williams, *JHS* 89 (1969) 122–3. For a different view, i.e. ‘deeply affected by the bitterness of love’, cf. Schmidt (1987) 57–66.

⁷¹ Alternatively, the Daphnis of *Idyll* 1 falls into the error of which the Daphnis of *Idyll* 6 invites him to beware, cf. Bernsdorff (1994) 45. On the Cyclops of *Idyll* 6 as ‘another Daphnis’, cf. Stanzel (1995) 186–90.

⁷² The version was known already to Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566F69). For later references cf. Propertius 3.2.9–10 and Nonnus 39.257–64, 40.553–57.

principles of harmony to which Theocritus' other bucolic poems, like the hexameters of Callimachus, aspire.⁷³ Analogously, the Daphnis of *Idyll* 6, the pragmatic advisor in questions of love, whose advice is not to play hard to get but rather to seize the opportunity and who lives in perfect (perhaps even erotic⁷⁴) harmony with his shepherd friend Damoitas in a natural 'realistic' setting, is to be seen as an exemplary contrast to the Daphnis of *Idyll* 1, who was the victim of his tragically δούσερος character and who was in contact with the gods in an unreal, mythologised setting.

Theocritus' bucolic world not only has its specific natural setting and its specific heroes, but it also has its specific gods. One of the important ways in which Theocritus gives coherence and credibility to the setting and to the bucolic characters is through the specialisation of their pantheon. For the Greeks, there was of course a real division in the areas of responsibility and competence among the various gods, and this was true of rustic deities, no less than any others. In his *Cynegeticus* (chap. 35), Arrian explicitly notes that different activities require the attention of different gods:

those who sail the seas commence from the gods whose concern is human safety, and when they are rescued, they offer thanksgiving sacrifices to the sea gods, Poseidon, Amphitrite and the Nereids; those who till the land offer sacrifices to Demeter and her daughter and to Dionysus; those who practise crafts, to Athena and Hephaestus . . . so also keen hunters must be sure not to neglect Artemis the Hunter, and Apollo, and Pan, and the Nymphs, and Hermes, god of journeys, and Hermes the Guide, and all the other divinities of the mountains.

Long before Arrian, and before Theocritus, this specialisation of the rustic pantheon is clearly seen not only in the two writers of epigrams who pay the greatest attention to the rustic world of humble people, Leonidas and Anyte,⁷⁵ but also in Plato's *Phaedrus* and Menander's *Dyskolos*, in which the rural setting plays a prominent role. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates explains his choice to hold the discussion in the first real *locus amoenus* of Greek literature (230b–c, cf. above) by pointing out that the place is sacred to the Nymphs and to Achelous (230b8–9) and that Pan and the Nymphs, the daughters of Achelous, are the divinities who will inspire the discussion⁷⁶

⁷³ Cf. Fantuzzi (1995b), and above, pp. 34–7.

⁷⁴ Cf. E. L. Bowie, 'Frame and Framed in Theocritus Poems 6 and 7' in Harder–Regtuit–Wakker (1996) 91–100.

⁷⁵ For Leonidas, the recipients of the veneration of farmers, shepherds, etc. are Pan, the Nymphs and Hermes. Cf. *AP* 6.334 = *HE* 1966ff., Nymphs, Hermes, Pan; 6.188 = *HE* 1972ff., Pan; 9.326 = *HE* 1979ff., Nymphs; 9.329 = *HE* 1984ff., Nymphs; 6.13 = *HE* 2249ff. and 6.35 = *HE* 2255ff., Pan; *POxy.* 662 = *HE* 2277ff., Pan and Nymphs. For Anyte cf. *APlan.* 291 = *HE* 672ff. (dedication of a shepherd to Pan and the Nymphs), and *APlan.* 231 = *HE* 738ff. (Pan presented as a shepherd).

⁷⁶ Cf. Gutzwiller (1991) 76–7.

(cf. 238d, 241e, 263d). At the end of the dialogue, Socrates addresses his salutation and final prayer to Pan and the other ‘gods of the place’ (279b). A few decades later, in the *Dyskolos*, a comedy by Menander which is, most unusually, not set in town but in the countryside, the god who presents the prologue is Pan and the chorus might be composed of ‘followers of Pan’.⁷⁷ At the centre of the stage, moreover, there is the door of the temple of Pan and the Nymphs;⁷⁸ the action will come to a head during a sacrifice at this temple, and Pan plays a very important rôle throughout the whole drama. It is Pan who causes Sostratus to fall in love with the daughter of Cnemon while she is paying honour to the Nymphs (vv. 39–52), and he also causes the mother of Sostratus to have a dream, in which he reveals indirectly to her what he had already told the spectators in the prologue (vv. 407–18).

Theocritus’ bucolic mimes carry the specialised narrowing of the rustic pantheon even further, but in other poems too he pays particular attention to the specialisation of the divinities that inspire poetry. The Muses had been the most common divine inspirers of poetry in all literary genres, but for the archaic hexameter epos of Homer and Hesiod they have a particular importance; as divinities, they can function as particularly trustworthy ‘witnesses’ of stories about the deeds of gods or heroes in a remote past (cf. e.g. *Iliad* 2.484–86 and *Odyssey* 8.487–91) and as guarantors of the ethical and theological truths presented by Hesiod.⁷⁹ In his two encomiastic poems, Theocritus too appears to make a distinction between the Muses and other divinities who inspire song, based on the status of the protagonist of the song. In the case of the semi-divine *laudandus* of *Idyll* 17, Ptolemy II Philadelphus – a βροτός ‘mortal’ (v. 4), who is also a contemporary ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθός, namely a contemporary ‘hero’⁸⁰ – Theocritus contrasts his personal choice of this theme with the habitual thematic choice of the Muses (the gods) and the habitual choice of the ancient bards inspired by the Muses (the heroes); he thus adopts as a term of comparison – both for similarity and difference – archaic hymnody and epic. In the course of the poem he explicitly presents encomiastic poetry for Ptolemy as a new possibility for inspiration by the Muses: ‘the spokesmen (ὑποφῆται) of the Muses celebrate Ptolemy for his benefactions’ (vv. 115–16). In *Idyll* 16, however, which is a promise of an encomium for a *laudandus* whose

⁷⁷ If we accept the emendation of παιανιστός, which is metrically difficult, to πανιστός, v. 230.

⁷⁸ The combined worship of Pan and the Nymphs was widespread, cf. above n. 75, Ch. M. Edwards, *Greek Votive Reliefs to Pan and the Nymphs* (Diss. New York 1985) 20–7.

⁷⁹ Cf. e.g. Finkelberg (1998) 71–3.

⁸⁰ Cf. O. Vox, ‘ἀγαθὸν κλέος: poeta e committente nelle Cariti’ *Kleos* 7 (2002) 193–209, pp. 196–8.

virtues fall entirely within the field of human characteristics and capacities (Hieron II of Syracuse), Theocritus at times evokes the Muses (vv. 1–3, (for the polemical tone here, see above, p. 140–1), 29, 58, 69, 107), and at times the Graces (vv. 6–12, 108–9); in this way, he continues a tradition typical of epinician poetry, which saw the Muses and the Graces united as guarantors of the beauty which enhances the deeds of the *laudandus* and attracts the favour of the public for the song, thus ensuring a lasting continuity for the latter and glory for the *laudandus* himself.⁸¹

In *Idylls* 1 and 3–7 by Theocritus, which we may call the ‘serious’ bucolic idylls (in opposition to the agricultural *Idyll* 10 and the bucolic-parodic *Idyll* 11),⁸² we find that the Muses play an utterly marginal rôle. Rather, it is the Nymphs who, as the inspirers of pastoral poetry, very often occupy the place which in poetic tradition had always been occupied exclusively by the Muses; it is as if the Muses can no longer be up-to-date and effective ‘witnesses’ for the new bucolic world, which is, if anything, now the realm of the Nymphs. Thus, for example, the Muses are almost completely absent from the perspective of the two herdsmen of *Idyll* 5, the most ‘realistic’ of Theocritus’ song competitions; on the contrary, they believe that they owe their inspiration to the Nymphs, to whom they gratefully offer sacrifice at the end of their songs (cf. vv. 140, 149). The opposition between the Muses and the Nymphs is also very clear in *Idyll* 7. At the beginning of the poem, the protagonist, Simichidas, presents himself as a town-dweller (v. 2) and as an ἀοιδός whom public opinion considers to be a ‘resonant mouth of the Muses’ (v. 37); unlike Simichidas, Theocritus’ shepherds never call themselves ἀοιδοί, though Komatas in *Idyll* 5 applies the term to the mythical Daphnis (5.80–1, cf. below, p. 154–6), nor do they ever describe their singing as ἀείδειν, a verb perhaps a little too closely associated with heroic epic, the poetry of the Muses *par excellence*. In his first speech, Lycidas speaks of Simichidas as a person tied to the urban world and its habits (vv. 24–5: ‘are you hurrying off to a dinner without being invited, or are you racing to some townsman’s winepress?’), though Simichidas explains that he considers himself currently to be ‘on loan’ to the pastoral world, on the occasion of the journey which he is making to take part in the rural celebration of the Thalsysiae for Demeter (vv. 31–36); this authorises him to think that he can vie with Lycidas in singing (v. 30) and, specifically, in pastoral song (vv. 35–6). Later, however, in the spirit of

⁸¹ For the combination of the Muses and Graces in a poetic context cf. e.g. Pindar, *Nem.* 9.53–5; Bacchylides 5.3–14, 9.1–5; Euripides, *HF* 673–86; B. MacLachlan, *The Age of Grace* (Princeton 1993) 87–123.

⁸² Further evidence for considering *Idylls* 1 and 3–7 as a ‘group’ is metrical, cf. Fantuzzi (1995a).

the rustic song that Lycidas had introduced in vv. 50–1 ('see, my friend, if you like this little song that I composed recently on the mountainside'), it is to the Nymphs that Simichidas makes reference as his teachers (vv. 91–3) in an obvious rewriting of Hesiod's inspiration (*Theogony* 22–3) by the Muses:

. . . Λυκίδα φίλε, πολλὰ μὲν ἄλλα
Νύμφαι κῆμὲ δίδαξαν ἀν' ὄρεα βουκολέοντα
ἔσθλά, κτλ.

My dear Lycidas, the Nymphs have also taught me many other good songs, while I was herding on the mountains . . .

The turn to Hesiod perhaps suggests the tradition in which Simichidas places not only his own poetry, but bucolic poetry as a whole.⁸³ Finally, when at the culmination of the description of the *locus amoenus*, which sets the seal on the idealisation of the pastoral world, he seeks inspiration in order to magnify by means of mythological paradigms the excellence of Phrasidamus's wine, Simichidas does not invoke the Muses, even on a mythological subject; rather, he invokes the Nymphs – 'Nymphs of Castalia, you who inhabit the cliffs of Parnassus' (v. 148) – where it is not by chance that he chooses to name, as the home of the Nymphs, a mountain and a spring which were already (or were in the process of becoming) closely connected with the Muses. Moreover, he also chooses to imitate the Iliadic epithet with which Homer had regularly invoked the Muses, Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι 'whose habitation is on Mount Olympus', whenever he had to ask for their help at points of particular difficulty.⁸⁴

The Muses resume the full exercise of their function as 'witnesses' of a remote past, unattainable for men of the present, and as goddesses with the task of singing of the gods (cf. *Idyll* 16.3), when the scene does not present shepherd-singers imagined as living, contemporary figures, but rather when the singer or the theme of the song is one of the semi-mythical hero-founders of bucolic poetry, or at least one of its leading exponents, who is therefore in a certain sense mythologised (like Lycidas). For this reason, both the 'divine' Comatas, whose feats as a bucolic hero are sung by Lycidas in *Idyll* 7 (cf. v. 82: 'the Muse poured sweet nectar on to his lips'), and Daphnis, who appears to have been celebrated as a hero-founder of bucolic poetry at least

⁸³ Cf. Hunter (1999) 178–9.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Il.* 2.484, 11.218, 14.508, 16.112. The first certain reference to a connection between the Muses and Parnassus is in a fragment of one of the epigraphic *Hymns* from Delphi (p. 71 Crusius); cf. further J. Schmidt, *RE* 18.1654–8.

as early as Stesichorus⁸⁵ and thus already had a place in literary tradition and mythology before Theocritus, are connected with the Muses. This is consistent with the fact that, unlike Theocritus' 'ordinary' herdsmen, these two 'heroes' of bucolic poetry are placed in a fable-like setting outside time, characterised by the 'pathetic fallacy' (cf. above, p. 149) and by the participation of the gods in human affairs. The Daphnis of *Idyll* 6, however, remains untouched by the inspiration of the Muses, and his world has not the slightest trace of the mythologised or the unreal; so too, the Comatas of *Idyll* 5 is not the mythical hero of bucolic poetry, but rather is presented in a low, 'hyper-realistic' manner, and it is only momentary hyperbole that leads him to claim that 'the Muses love me much more than Daphnis, the singer' (vv. 80–1), for he too has the Nymphs and Pan as leading figures in his pantheon (vv. 17, 58, 70, 149). By way of contrast, the Muses are at the heart of Thyrsis' song about the mythical Daphnis in *Idyll* 1: the goatherd states in his opening encomium of Thyrsis that Thyrsis' song will be second only to that of the Muses (v. 9), though on the contrary Thyrsis himself compares the goatherd to Pan, in view of his ability at playing the syrinx (v. 3); so too, the refrains that punctuate Thyrsis' song are addressed to the Muses, as are the envoi and promise of libations which close the song (vv. 144–5).⁸⁶ As for Lycidas, he is a semi-divine singer, who has the authority to invest Simichidas as a pastoral poet, or perhaps even a god in disguise: Pan, a satyr, and Apollo Lykios have all been suggested.⁸⁷ Simichidas introduces his song by calling Lycidas 'dear to the Muses' (v. 95), and subsequently he says that the stick given to him by Lycidas was a 'gift of friendship from the Muses' (v. 129), just as the encounter with Lycidas was, as he tells us, 'with the Muses' (v. 12); these details are recognitions of the higher nature of Lycidas himself and reinforce the idea that we are witnessing a poetic investiture of a Hesiodic kind.⁸⁸ This counterpoint between the Nymphs and the Muses finds expression also in the description of Daphnis in *Idyll* 1.141 as 'the man dear to the Muses, and not hateful to the Nymphs': the semi-divine Lycidas is 'dear to the Muses' (7.95),

⁸⁵ Cf. above n. 23.

⁸⁶ Myrinus, *AP* 7.703 = *GPh* 2574ff. has Thyrsis asleep and besieged by Eros; the epigram attributes to the Nymphs, not to the Muses, the task of taking care of Thyrsis' safety, presumably as a result of the importance of the Nymphs in Theocritus' bucolic poems, cf. Bernsdorff (2001) pp. 152–3.

⁸⁷ For the divine characteristics of the 'epiphany' of Lycidas cf. Puelma (1960), Archibald Cameron, 'The Form of the Thalsysia' in *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di A. Rostagni* (Turin 1963) 291–307, Hunter (1999) 147 with further bibliography. Among the very few voices who dissent from this interpretative *koine* are B. M. Palumbo Stracca, 'L'ironia di Teocrito nella polemica letteraria delle Talisie' *Boll. Class. Lincei* 27 (1979) 69–78 and Horstmann (1976) 159–60; for the position of Effe, see also above, n. 8.

⁸⁸ Cf. Pearce (1988) 290–1.

but Daphnis is a mythical hero-poet of the past (and, as such, a follower of the Muses), but also one in whose story the Nymphs played a major rôle.⁸⁹

The internal coherence of the Theocritean system is not only revealed in his choice of the divinities that haunt the landscape and inspire pastoral poems, but there is also a more general specialisation of the bucolic pantheon. Apart from the omnipresent Nymphs, the pastoral idylls feature almost exclusively Pan⁹⁰, Apollo Paean⁹¹, and Priapus⁹², and this 'specialisation' is in fact dramatised by Theocritus in *Idyll* 1. Whatever might have been Daphnis' behaviour towards Aphrodite, about which Theocritus is notoriously elusive, the opposition between the two is an essential element in the heroic stature given to Daphnis in this poem that celebrates him; nevertheless, Thyrsis creates a sharp contrast between the, at least initially, hostile Aphrodite and the series of rustic gods – Pan, Hermes, Priapus – who come to offer advice and mourn for Daphnis. Hermes even echoes the famous words of Aphrodite (!) to Sappho in a scene (fr. 1 Voigt) of epiphany and consolation: Aphrodite had appeared to Sappho with her usual divine smile, *μειδισί' ἀθανάτω προσώπῳ* 'with a smile on her immortal face' (l. 14), whereas she comes to Daphnis *ἀδεῖα . . . γελάοισα, | λάθρη μὲν γελάοισα, βαρὺν δ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἔχοισα* 'smiling sweetly, rejoicing internally, but displaying anger' (ll. 95–6).⁹³ Sappho's Aphrodite (vv. 18–20) had asked *τίνα δηῦτε πείθω | ἄψ σ' ἄγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ' ὦ | Ψάπφ' ἀδικήει;* 'who shall I persuade to lead you back to her love? Who is wronging you, O Sappho?' In Theocritus, on the contrary, it is Hermes who proves to be a *σύμμαχος* of Daphnis (cf. Sappho vv. 27–8), and asks him, in the reverse order, *Δάφνι, | τίς τυ κατατρύχει; τίνος, ὦγαθέ, τόσσον ἔρασαι;* 'Who is tormenting you, Daphnis? With whom are you so in love?' (vv. 77–8). Thus, Theocritus inverts the rôle of Aphrodite, and Hermes plays for Daphnis the rôle that the benevolent Aphrodite had played for Sappho.

Theocritus' shepherds are equally coherent in swearing only by Pan⁹⁴, the Nymphs⁹⁵, or Apollo Paean⁹⁶; there is hardly a place for the traditional guarantors of oaths in Greek literature, such as Zeus and Heracles.

⁸⁹ According to the best-known version of the legend, both Daphnis' mother and lover were Nymphs; Diodorus Siculus 4.84 has him also brought up by the Nymphs.

⁹⁰ 1.3, 1.16, 4.63, 5.58, 7.103, 7.106.

⁹¹ 5.79, 6.27. ⁹² 1.21, 1.81.

⁹³ For this passage, whose meaning is much disputed (cf. G. Tarditi, 'Il sorriso di Afrodite' in *Filologia e forme letterarie: studi offerti a F. Della Corte* (Urbino 1987) 1.347–53), I follow the interpretation offered by G. Zuntz, 'Theocritus I, 95f.', *CQ* 10 (1960) 37–8.

⁹⁴ 4.47, 5.14 and 141, 6.21. ⁹⁵ 1.12, 4.29, 5.17 and 70. ⁹⁶ Cf. above, n. 91.

The few exceptions are placed in the mouth of rather dubious characters. In *Idyll* 4.50, the character who utters an oath by Zeus is Battus, who throughout that poem is repeatedly ridiculed for his pathetic excesses, and who is also characterised linguistically by exaggerated, para-tragic forms of expression:⁹⁷ his interlocutor Corydon, the example of the good shepherd who possesses a clear sense of reality, swears by the Nymphs (v. 29) and Pan (v. 47). When Lacon swears by Zeus at 5.74, this must be read against Comatas' immediately preceding oath by the Nymphs (v. 70) and immediately following exclamation: 'O Paean!' (v. 79); Comatas will win the song contest, and it is easy to understand whose form of oath is the more 'correct'. So, too, the parodic Cyclops swears by Zeus (11.29), but by Pan and Paean in 6.21 and 6.27, in a scene in which he is being represented by the shepherd Damoitas and thus now conforms to bucolic norms (cf. above, pp. 150–1).

A certain specialisation, aimed in this case at an effect of realism, can be observed also in the way in which religious celebrations are presented. The great traditional celebrations for Demeter and Adonis which dominate respectively the final parts of the bucolic *Idyll* 7 and the urban *Idyll* 15 become central to and emblematic of the poetic contexts in which they are presented. Thus, the Thalsysiae of *Idyll* 7 become the opportunity for a *mise en abîme* of the broader, idealised *locus amoenus* of Theocritus' bucolic poetry, and the Adonia raises to its highest peak of magnificence the urban setting which had been presented at the beginning of the poem in the parodic tones of mime. Prayer is another area in which traditional practice involving the Olympian gods gives way to expressions invoking good luck and forms of popular superstition – like the apotropaic spitting of 6.39 and 7.126–7⁹⁸ or the 'sieve-divining' of the κοσκινόμαντις Agroio in 3.31–2.⁹⁹ It is magic, not – with few exceptions, such as the Thalsysiae – the traditional Olympian religion, which now dominates, whether it be the song of Simaitha in the urban *Idyll* 2, or that of Simichidas in the bucolic *Idyll* 7. Magical practice had, of course, featured occasionally in high literature before – the ὕμνος δέσμιος 'binding song' of Aeschylus' Erinyes (*Eumenides* 307–96)¹⁰⁰ is an obvious example – but it is in Sicilian mime and Menander that we should look for Theocritus' immediate forebears. Sophron is claimed by the ancient scholiasts as the model both for the magical rite of *Idyll* 2 and, specifically,

⁹⁷ Cf. Segal (1981) 95–106.

⁹⁸ Cf. D. E. Gershenson, 'Averting βλασφημία in Theocritus: a Compliment' *CSCA* 2 (1969) 145–55.

⁹⁹ Cf. W. G. Arnott, 'Coscinomancy in Theocritus and Kazantzakis' *Mnemosyne* 31 (1978) 27–32.

¹⁰⁰ On which cf. Ch. A. Faraone, 'Aeschylus' ὕμνος δέσμιος (*Eum.* 306) and Attic Judicial Curse Tablets' *JHS* 105 (1985) 150–4.

for the character of Thestylis (cf. above, n. 4); the reference may be to the mime *The women who say that they are driving out the goddess* (Ταὶ γυναικες αἱ τὰν θεόν φαντι ἐξελαῖν, *PCG* frs. 3–*9),¹⁰¹ and this same rite also occurred in the Θεττάλη, *Thessalian Witch*, of Menander (*PCG* 170–5). Sophron and Menander show how magic was represented as an integral part of daily life, as indeed it was: the large corpus of ‘curse tablets’, *tabellae defixionis*, suggests that the prominence of magic was in fact increasing, and this importance finds clear expression in Theocritus.

Idyll 2 is a magical ἀγωγή, a spell to ‘draw’ the beloved one into one’s arms.¹⁰² So, too, though of a rather different kind, is the request to help Aratus which Simichidas addresses to Pan in *Idyll* 7:

τόν μοι, Πάν, Ὀμόλας ἔρατόν πέδον ὅστε λέλογχας,
ἀκλητον τήνοιο φίλας ἐς χεῖρας ἐρείσαις
εἴτ’ ἔστ’ ἄρα Φιλῖνος ὁ μαλθακὸς εἴτε τις ἄλλος. 105
κεῖ μὲν ταῦτ’ ἔρδοις, ὃ Πάν φίλε, μήτι τυ παῖδες
Ἄρκαδιοὶ σκίλλαισιν ὑπὸ πλευράς τε καὶ ὤμωσ
τανίκα μαστίζοιεν, ὅτε κρέα τυτθὰ παρείη·
εἰ δ’ ἄλλωσ νεύσαις κατὰ μὲν χροά πάντ’ ὀνύχεσσι
δακνόμενος κνάσαιο καὶ ἐν κνίδαισι καθεύδοις, 110
εἴησ δ’ Ἡδωνῶν μὲν ἐν ὄρεσι χεῖματι μέσσω, κτλ.

O Pan, you who have received by lot the lovely plain of Homole, press him [the beloved], without the need for any invitation, into the loving arms of that man [his friend Aratus] – whether it is really the delicate Philinus or another. If you do this, dear Pan, may the boys of Arcadia never scourge you with squills on your sides and your shoulders, when there is insufficient meat. But if you do not give your consent, may you scratch the bites all over your body with your nails, and sleep among stinging nettles and stay out on the mountains of the Edonians in mid-winter . . . (Theocritus 7.103–11)

The combination of prayer and threats is typical of the prayers found in magical texts;¹⁰³ particularly close to Simichidas’ poem is the following magical text, in which the practitioner threatens to throw the demons that he invokes into the flames, if they do not bring his beloved into his arms: ‘If you bring Euphemia to me [. . .] I will give you Osiris Nophriôt

¹⁰¹ For this magical practice: Hipp., *Morb. Sacr.* 4, Plato, *Gorg.* 513a, Ar. *Clouds* 749–50, Lucian, *Dial. Mer.* 1 and *Philops.* 14, *PGM* 34 Preisendanz. For discussion cf. C. Préaux, *La lune dans la pensée grecque* (Brussels 1970) 121–2, R. van Compernelle, ‘Faire descendre la lune’ in *Grec et latin 1982: Études et documents dédiés à la mémoire de G. Cambier*, (Brussels 1982) 53–7, and the note of P. Fedeli on Prop. 1.1.19, p. 79.

¹⁰² Cf. Ch. A. Faraone, ‘The “Performative Future” in Three Hellenistic Incantations and Theocritus’ *Second Idyll’ CPh* 90 (1995) 1–15.

¹⁰³ Cf. R. W. Daniel–F. Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum*, I (Opladen 1990) 169 on 45.14, and Fantuzzi–Maltomini (1996).

[. . .] and he will revive your spirits. But if you do not do what I am asking you, Eðnebyðth will burn you. I swear it to you, demons that are here present' (*Suppl. mag.* I, 45.11–15 Daniel–Maltomini). It is obvious that Egyptian traditions had an important influence on the practice and spread of magical prayers, but there was, in all probability, already an example of a threatening prayer in an erotic situation in Greek literary tradition. In a fragment of Anacreon (*PMG* 445), the poet apostrophises the naughty Eros ('insolent and irresponsible, you who do not know who you will strike with your arrows'), and Himerius (*Or.* 48.4) introduces his quotation of this fragment as follows:

Now I would have needed the songs from Teos [Anacreon's birthplace], now I would have needed the lyre of Anacreon, which he knew how to use even against the Eroses themselves, when he was spurned by pretty boys . . . Perhaps I, too, would have pronounced the threat (ἠπειλήσῃ τὴν ἀπειλήν) that Anacreon uttered against the Eroses: once when he had fallen in love with a beautiful youth and saw that the youth was not interested in him, he tuned his lyre and threatened (ἠπειλεί) the Eroses that if they did not strike the youth at once, he would never again sing a song in their praise (μηκέτι μέλος εὐφημον εἰς αὐτοὺς ἀνακρούσασθαι).

Himerius might, of course, have exaggerated a merely playful gesture by Anacreon, under the influence of the magical practice of the Hellenistic and late antique worlds.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, in Poem 11 of the *Anacreontea*, which expands or varies Anacreon's themes and language, the poet has bought a wax statue of Eros from a boy in the street and therefore imagines that he has the god under his control ('Now light the fire of love for me immediately! If you do not obey, you will melt amid the flames'); it is therefore reasonable to suppose that the song from which Himerius quotes, or some other song by Anacreon, really was a magical prayer, or at least could be interpreted as such, and not only by Himerius.

One echo of Anacreon may be heard in Simichidas' request to the Eroses to strike (βάλλειν) the boy that Aratus loves (vv. 117–19): this invitation might recall the exhortation to the Eroses to τιτρώσκειν 'wound' the unwilling youth with love, which Himerius leads us to suppose was present in Anacreon. If so, the literary operation is of a particularly sophisticated kind. Theocritus writes for Simichidas a 'realistic' prayer-threat, but 'bucolicises' it by having him apostrophise one of the most important gods of the bucolic 'pantheon', Pan, and by describing him as a shepherd (cf. v. 113: 'and in spring may you pasture your flocks among the Aethiopes') who sleeps in

¹⁰⁴ On possible affinities between the fragment of Anacreon and the magical prayer, cf. G. Azzarello, ΚΑΙ ΣΚΟΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΑΙ: *la minaccia nella preghiera magica* (Diss. University of Pisa 1996).

the open air (v. 110). Pan is also the homosexual god *par excellence*, and he is therefore the ideal recipient for this homosexual prayer;¹⁰⁵ the two aspects of the god, the bucolic and the sexual, are thus seen as mutually complementary, just as Callimachus (fr. 689) united the two specialisations of the god by calling Pan Maleietes τρύπωνον αἰπολικόν ‘goatherd screwer’.¹⁰⁶ By referring to the Eros immediately afterwards, Theocritus may cap the magical prayer with an allusion to one of the very few literary precedents for such a prayer; moreover, as this precedent comes from the world of sympotic lyric, it appropriately matches Lycidas’ song and his ‘bucolicisation’ of the symposium.¹⁰⁷

Mythology, too, plays its part in Theocritus’ creation of a coherent bucolic world. Mythological *exempla*, the stories of gods and heroes, were the vehicle of positive and negative paradigms for human behaviour in archaic and classical literature of all levels, and Theocritus wrote against the background of the popularity in the fourth and third centuries of mythological ‘catalogue’ poetry. In such poems, episodes from the stories of gods or heroes were presented as exemplary portraits with an application to the real world and the situation of the poet; we know of such poems on love, both heterosexual (*Lyde* by Antimachus, *Leontion* by Hermesianax, and perhaps *Apollo* by Alexander Aetolus) and homosexual (*Eroses or the Beautiful Ones* by Phanocles), for which the principal (real or claimed) archaic models were Mimnermus’ *Nanno* and the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, and also ‘curse poems’, catalogues of exemplary sufferings and terrible fates, to be used as paradigms with which to curse one’s enemies (the *Arai* ‘Curses’ by Moiro, the ‘tattoo poem’ (cf. Huys (1991)), the *Ibis* by Callimachus, and the ‘Thracian’, the ‘Cup stealer’ and the ‘Chiliads’ by Euphorion).¹⁰⁸ For the characters of Theocritus, however, paradigms of comprehensibility and truth are to be found rather in everyday, rustic proverbs. In *Idyll* 5 alone, where the effect of pastoral realism is perhaps strongest, we find five proverbs which are identified as such by the scholia;¹⁰⁹ at least three also occur in the opening dialogue of *Idyll* 10 (‘The harvesters’), which is the other poem where realistic effects are most strongly felt.¹¹⁰ In this second case, all the proverbs are in the mouth of Milon, the hard-working labourer whose ‘Hesiodic’ perspective leaves little space for erotic fantasy; the lovesick Bucaeus, poet of a very clumsy serenade

¹⁰⁵ As the schol. on v. 103a already noted.

¹⁰⁶ It is possible that the ritual mentioned by Theocritus was connected with hunting, as some ancient scholars thought, cf. schol. on vv. 106–8a.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. above, pp. 135–7. ¹⁰⁸ Cf. Fantuzzi (1995b) 29, 35 and Cameron (1995) 380–6.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. scholia on vv. 23, 26–7, 31, 38, 65. ¹¹⁰ Cf. scholia on vv. 11, 13, 17; also vv. 54–5.

(cf. Milon's ironic comment, vv. 38–40), can no more utter rustic proverbs than he can concentrate upon his work: his proverbial truth, one which he himself should heed, is rather about the unpredictability and injustice of Eros: 'Wealth is not the only blind god, blind also is reckless Eros' (vv. 19–20).¹¹¹

The use of proverbs is mimetic of the illiterate simplicity typical of the logic and language of bucolic characters,¹¹² and is thus a technique of rustic realism. Aristotle, perhaps the first thinker to give serious attention to proverbs, considered them as 'residues of ancient philosophy which had been lost in the great catastrophes of humanity, saved thanks to their brevity and acuteness' (fr. 463 Gigon),¹¹³ – a very noble origin, and one analogous to the one offered for the traditional belief of ancient thinkers in the divine character of nature (cf. *Metaph.* 12.1074b1–14).¹¹⁴ Aristotle designated farmers as the social group most inclined to use proverbs (they are γνωμοτύπιοι: *Rhet.* 2.1395a6–7); so too, the use of proverbs was suitable for the old, but not for the young or those lacking in experience, for whom proverbial speech revealed a lack of culture (ἀπαιδέυτων).¹¹⁵ It is thus significant that proverbs are wholly naturalised in the language of the characters of the bucolic or rustic idylls, without ever being signalled by the context, whereas they are often introduced by expressions which mark them as proverbs ('as the saying goes' etc.) in the urban mimes, *Idylls* 14 and 15.¹¹⁶

Theocritus' humble characters, whether bucolic or urban, employ mythological paradigms only sparingly. The only mythological passage of any extent – the *exempla* in the song of the goatherd of *Idyll* 3 (vv. 40–51) – is marked by 'errors', which betray both the limited familiarity of this character with the world of mythology, and a certain lack of faith on the part of the

¹¹¹ Cf. V. Buchheit 'Amor Caecus' *C&M* 25 (1964) 130–1.

¹¹² Cf. the use of proverbs by the characters of Herondas, discussed by W. G. Arnott, *G&R* 18 (1971) 130–1.

¹¹³ Aristotle's attention to proverbs was an attitude which aroused perplexities in some quarters (cf. Aristotle fr. 464 Gigon) – which may perhaps suggest its novelty.

¹¹⁴ 'One must regard this as an inspired utterance, and reflect that, while probably each art and science has often been developed as far as possible and has again perished, these opinions, with others, have been preserved until the present like relics of the ancient treasure' (*Metaph.* 12.1074b 9–13, trans. Ross).

¹¹⁵ On proverbs as an element of popular (δημοτικόν) knowledge, cf. also Demetrius, *Eloc.* 232. There was a lively interest in paroemiography in the fourth and third centuries, in the wake of Aristotle's collection Παροιμίαι (frs. 463–4 Gigon), on the part of both the peripatetic school (Theophrastus, Dicaearchus, Clearchus) and Chrysippus (*SVF* III p. 202). The scholia show that the identification of proverbial expressions was one of the subjects that received most attention from the ancient commentators of Theocritus, cf. Wendel (1920) 142–7.

¹¹⁶ Cf. 14.43, 14.51, 15.77. In *Idylls* 11, 13, and 29 an opening proverbial maxim is presented as an opinion shared by the author, which motivates the following narration.

author in the security of meaning of mythological paradigms (cf. below). In *Idyll* 7 Simichidas, a character with whom Theocritus at least partly identifies, cites a couple of mythological paradigms when he magnifies the sublime nature of the *locus amoenus* at the end of the poem (vv. 148–55). The song of the lovesick Cyclops in *Idyll* 11 is presented as an exemplum for the truth that ‘singing brings healing from love’ (vv. 1–2), and the alleged love of Galatea for the Cyclops is said by the cowherd Daphnis in *Idyll* 6 to illustrate the truth that ‘love often considers beautiful that which is not so’ (vv. 18–19). In all of these paradigms, there is a kind of ‘breakdown of exemplarity’: the stories offer an excess of meanings, some of which are far from exemplary, and which therefore subvert the univocal paradigmatic value for which the story itself is quoted. This phenomenon was, of course, already known to fifth-century tragedy, which made a serious, genuinely paradigmatic use of mythological *exempla*,¹¹⁷ but in Theocritus this ‘breakdown’ represents the form in which mythological paradigms are *regularly* presented: mythological–heroic material is radically foreign to the literary world created by bucolic poetry, even when it is apparently functioning as *exempla*.

In the course of the *paraklausithyron* of *Idyll* 3, the goatherd believes at a certain point, on the basis of a rustic omen, that Amaryllis is about to yield to him; he thus tries to facilitate her surrender to love by listing a series of mythical stories in which a period of courting finally led to marriage. However, in virtually every case the ‘happy end’ was followed by wretched fates for one or both partners (Atalanta and Hippomenes, Adonis and Aphrodite, Endymion and Selene, Jason and Demeter), and in the case of Bias-Melampus-Pero (vv. 43–7), the love relationship was sealed, *not* in favour of the one who had carried out the courting (Melampus), but rather a third party (Bias) who enjoyed the fruits of the sacrifices that the courting had involved.¹¹⁸ The validity of these *exempla* therefore depends on whether we share the limited perspective of the goatherd and are prepared to forget a large part of the meaning that the *exempla* would have had as complete stories, or not to consider alternative versions which did not have a happy ending. Neither ancient nor modern readers will, however, ignore the gap between the story as a whole and the specific narrative segment (or the specific version) which the goatherd chooses; this gap might underline the clumsiness of the goatherd in his inability to master the polysemy of

¹¹⁷ Cf. S. Goldhill, ‘The Failure of Exemplarity’ in I. J. F. de Jong and J. P. Sullivan (eds.), *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature* (Leiden 1994) 51–73, G. Nagy, ‘Mythological Exemplum in Homer’ in R. Hexter and D. Selden (eds.), *Innovations of Antiquity* (New York 1992) 326.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Fantuzzi (1995b).

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mythical stories,¹¹⁹ or it might suggest an (unconscious) pessimism about his hopes of success, for his *exempla* are overshadowed by an aura of death.¹²⁰ We may also wish to fall back on the explanation of authorial irony at the expense of the characters;¹²¹ but it may rather be that mythological paradigms and the secure interpretations which classical poetry had offered for them are simply foreign to the new world of bucolic poetry.

A similar conclusion may be drawn for *Idyll* 7, not as a result of the rustic clumsiness of any character, but rather from the astute rhetorical questions of Simichidas himself, which explicitly raise the issue of the relevance of mythological paradigms. The *locus amoenus* of vv. 135–46, which, as we have seen (cf. above pp. 137–8), represents the idealisation of bucolic ἀσυχία and, partly by means of the extreme refinement of the figures of speech used in it, emblematises how the poetics of Theocritus superimposes itself on the real world of shepherds and the countryside to create a new poetic world,¹²² leads to a sublime finale of almost Pindaric grandeur:

τετράενης δὲ πίθων ἀπελύετο κρατὸς ἄλειφαρ.
 Νύμφαι Κασταλίδες Παρνάσιον αἶπος ἔχοισαι,
 ἄρα γέ πᾶ τοιόνδε Φόλω κατὰ λάινον ἄντρον
 κρατῆρ' Ἡρακλῆι γέρων ἐστάσατο Χίρων; 150
 ἄρα γέ πᾶ τῆνον τὸν ποιμένα τὸν ποτ' Ἀνάπῳ,
 τὸν κρατερὸν Πολύφαμον, ὃς ὤρεσι νᾶας ἔβαλλε,
 τοῖον νέκταρ ἔπεισε κατ' αὔλια ποσσὶ χορεῦσαι,
 οἷον δὴ τόκα πῶμα διεκρανάσατε, Νύμφαι,
 βωμῶ πᾶρ Δάματρος ἀλωίδος;

He took the four-year-old seal off the top of the wine-jars. O Nymphs of Castalia, who inhabit the peak of Parnassus, did ever old Chiron offer Heracles such a cup in the rocky cave of Pholus? Was ever that shepherd who lived close to the Anapus, the mighty Polyphemus who flung mountains at ships, persuaded to dance in his sheepfolds by a nectar like the drink that you mixed for us, O Nymphs, beside the altar of Demeter of the Threshing-Floor? (Theocritus 7.147–55)

Simichidas apparently calls on the testimony of goddesses who inspire and preserve the memory of mythic material, as if exhuming the traditional

¹¹⁹ Cf. e.g. G. Lawall, *Theocritus' Coan Pastorals* (Cambridge, MA 1967) 40–1 and Dover (1971) 118.

¹²⁰ For detailed analyses cf. R. Whitaker, *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy* (Göttingen 1983) 49–52, Stanzel (1995) 131–7, M. P. Pattoni, 'Il III Idillio di Teocrito' *AevAnt* 10 (1997) 187–99, though all appear to take too positive a view of the goatherd's first pair of *exempla*.

¹²¹ Against a pan-ironic interpretation of Theocritean poetry cf. Stanzel (1995) 104–44, who, however, goes too far in the other direction.

¹²² Cf. Hunter (1999) 193: 'the overt artifice of the passage matches the artifice of the *locus* which Phrasidamus and his family have created; both pleasures are man-made [. . .] this passage thus establishes the dialectic of art and nature which was to dominate all subsequent "pastoral" literature, which claims to describe the "natural", but does so in overtly artificial ways'.

gesture of calling the Muses to one's aid at the beginning of a particularly taxing mythological telling (cf. *Iliad* 2.484–6, Ibycus, *PMGF* S151, Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.* 1.20–2 etc.). Here, however, we have not the Muses, but the pastoral Nymphs, and the myths that follow have settings and characters that are clearly pastoral; the Nymphs, therefore, here offer a guarantee of reliability equal to that which the Muses traditionally offered. Elated by the excellent wine served during the rustic symposium, Simichidas-Theocritus seeks, in the finest Pindaric manner, a parallel in myth for this wine, and so he asks the Nymphs if the wine mixed with the water that poured from their spring (v. 154; cf. also v. 137) was the same as the wine of two famous episodes of the mythical past. This passage raises this rustic symposium to the sublime level of myth.¹²³ Every ancient and modern reader, however, also knows what it meant for Polyphemus to drink the extraordinary wine¹²⁴ that Odysseus offered him, and the reference to the Cyclops who 'flung mountains at ships' (v. 152) skilfully evokes the whole Homeric episode, including the monster's blinding. Chiron too got no joy from offering the marvellous wine of the Centaurs to Heracles:¹²⁵ in this story, the Centaurs swarmed towards the bouquet; in the following skirmish, poor Chiron was wounded (accidentally) by Heracles' poisoned arrows and died a horrible death. Thus, whereas the traditional use of mythological paradigms would have suggested an affirmative answer to Simichidas' questions, knowledge of the *whole* story of the Cyclops and of Heracles and Chiron suggests a quite different answer: 'Let's hope not, for the sake of Phrasidamus' guests . . .' The contrast between the bloody consequences of these two mythical symposia and the peaceful atmosphere of Phrasidamus' celebration emphasises once again the ideal of bucolic ἄστυχία.

As for *Idylls* 6 and 11, the very existence of the two poems undermines any alleged univocality of meaning in the story of the Cyclops' love. Parallel to the inversion of Daphnis in this poem (cf. above p. 149), *Idyll* 6 presents a sort of overturning of the tragicomic Cyclops of *Idyll* 11 with his delirious, passionate love. Leaving aside questions of the relative chronology of the two poems, it is clear that each casts humorous light on the paradigmatic nature of the other. In *Idyll* 11 the song of Polyphemus is supposed to

¹²³ Cf. G. B. Miles, *Ramus* 6 (1977) 158: '[the rhetorical questions of vv. 148–55] express the narrator's heady exaltation, his feeling on this occasion of being something more than his normal self – a feeling which is in keeping with the Golden Age setting'.

¹²⁴ Cf. *Odyssey* 9.357–9.

¹²⁵ The story was familiar in Sicilian literature before Theocritus, in the *Geryoneis* of Stesichorus (*PMGF*S19), a comedy of Epicharmus (*Heracles*, *PCG* 67), and another Sicilian comedy of uncertain authorship, the *Chiron* ([Epich.] *PCG* 289–*95); Aristophanes dramatised the myth in *Dramata or the Centaur*, *PCG* 278–88.

illustrate the maxim that singing is the medicine for love (vv. 1–3), but was it really in the Cyclops’ best interests to cure himself? Might it not have been better for him to wait for a while, particularly if we remember the version of the myth already described by Timaeus,¹²⁶ according to which Polyphemus succeeded in making Galatea fall in love with and marry him? Was he, in any case, really cured (cf. vv. 75–79)? As for *Idyll* 6, are we really to believe that Polyphemus is an example of the fact that even the ugliest person may appear desirable to someone in love (vv. 18–19)? Did Galatea really consider the Cyclops handsome? Is this statement not rather in tune with the Cyclops’ self-deception (vv. 34–8, cf. 11.75–9)?¹²⁷ The Cyclops is used as a paradigm in so many different ways that any attempt to impose univocality of meaning is doomed to failure. Moreover, the whole of *Idyll* 11 is coloured by an irony arising from the ambiguous definition of the Cyclops’s song as a φάρμακον for his love (v. 1); the apparent ‘therapeutic’ effect of the song, visible when the Cyclops realises that he had better take up his work again (vv. 72–4),¹²⁸ is immediately dimmed by the final self-deception in which he claims himself the centre of the attentions of *many* girls (vv. 76–8). The song was in fact a kind of ‘poison’ or ‘love philtre’ working on the Cyclops’ psychology, rather than a real ‘medicine’ against love itself;¹²⁹ φάρμακον notoriously had both meanings.

Moreover, φάρμακον also meant ‘spell’ (cf. e.g. Pindar, *Ol.* 13.85), and Callimachus explicitly calls the Cyclops’ therapeutic song an ἐπωδὴ ‘magical charm’ (*AP* 12.150 = *HE* 1047ff., below pp. 343–4), probably with reference to the Cyclops of Theocritus rather than that of Philoxenus (*PMG* 822).¹³⁰ Thus, this song-spell of the Cyclops may truly have dispelled love, but it may also have propelled him towards the far more terrible drama of his blinding, which is clearly evoked by vv. 30–3, 50–3, and 60–2:

γινώσκω, χαρίεσσα κόρα, τίνος οὔνεκα φεύγεις
οὔνεκά μοι λασία μὲν ὄφρυς ἐπὶ παντὶ μετώπῳ
ἔξ ὧτὸς τέταται ποτὶ θώτερον ὥς μία μακρά,
εἷς δ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ὕππεστι, πλατείᾳ δὲ ῥίς ἐπὶ χεῖλει

¹²⁶ See above, p. 150 and n. 72.

¹²⁷ The schol. on 11.78 already commented that ‘perhaps the girls laugh at him’.

¹²⁸ Cf. Stanzel (1995) 162–9.

¹²⁹ On the ambiguity of ποιμαίνειν in v. 80 cf. e.g. Goldhill (1991) 254–5. The suggestion that the performance of the Cyclops is a serious demonstration of the idea that love poetry is a do-it-yourself catharsis of love (cf. A.-T. Cozzoli, ‘Dalla catarsi mimetica aristotelica all’autocatarsi dei poeti ellenistici’ *QUCC* 48 (1994) 95–110) finds little support in the ambiguities of the last part of the poem: cf. Hunter (1999) 220–1.

¹³⁰ Cf. G. Pasquali, ‘Epigrammi callimachei’ (1919) = id., *Scritti filologici*, I (Florence 1986) 314–16, *HE* II 157. On the motif of magic in Philoxenus and Theocritus 11 cf. M. Fantuzzi, ‘Philodemus *AP* 5.107 (*GPh* 3188ff.; 23 Sider) *HSCP* 102 (2004).

. . . αἱ δὲ τοὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼν δοκέω λασιώτερος ἤμεν,
 ἐντὶ δρυὸς ξύλα μοι καὶ ὑπὸ σποδῶ ἀκάματον πῦρ·
 καιόμενος δ' ὑπὸ τεύς καὶ τὰν ψυχὰν ἀνεχοίμαν
 καὶ τὸν ἐν' ὀφθαλμόν, τῷ μοι γλυκερώτερον οὐδέν
 νῦν μάν, ὦ κόριον, νῦν αὐτίκα νεῖν γε μαθεῦμαι,
 αἶ κά τις σὺν ναῖ πλέων ξένος ὧδ' ἀφίκηται,
 ὡς εἶδῶ τί ποχ' ἀδὺ κατοικεῖν τὸν βυθὸν ὕμμιν.

Fair maiden, I know why you flee from me: because along my forehead there is one long shaggy eyebrow, which stretches from one ear to the other, and beneath this there is only one eye, and the nose above my lip is broad [. . .] If you think that I am too hairy, I have got oak logs and ever-burning fire under the ashes: I would put up with being burnt by you, even in my soul, even in my single eye, which is the most precious thing I have . . . But now straightaway, my girl, I want to learn how to swim, if some stranger arrives here with his ship, so that I can understand what pleasure you take in living in the depths of the sea.

No reader will be unaware that the Cyclops' desire for the arrival of seafaring ξένοι was indeed satisfied (cf. *Odyssey* 9.252–5, 273), as was his claim that he could endure having his eyebrow thinned by 'undying fire beneath the ashes', for it was indeed in his own fire in the cave that Odysseus hardened the stake to put out the Cyclops' eye (cf. *Odyssey* 9.375–6 and 389–90).

Polyphemus' song was thus not only a dubious protection against love, but also a disturbing anticipation of, and thus in magical terms, a dangerous invitation to, the far more dramatic mishaps described in the *Odyssey*. The use of Homeric expressions as formulas for spells is in fact well attested in the Roman imperial period: for example, to combat gout, *Iliad* 2.95 τετρήχει δ' ἀγορή, ὑπὸ δὲ στεναχίζετο γαῖα (sc. λαῶν ἰζόντων) 'the assembly was astir and the earth resounded beneath them (as the people sat down)¹³¹ had to be written on a tablet made of gold; as a θυμοκάτοχον 'spell against anger', Empedocles is said to have recited, to the accompaniment of a relaxing piece of music, *Odyssey* 4.221: (εἰς οἶνον βάλε φάρμακον) νηπενθές τ' ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἀπάντων ' (he served the wine, a medicine) which puts pain and anger to flight, and causes all troubles to be forgotten',¹³² and so forth. The danger for the Cyclops in even mentioning his eye was understood by those who praised the Cyclops of Philoxenus for the skill with which, in singing of the beauty of Galatea, he had praised various parts of her (a pretty head, golden locks, a graceful voice), but had avoided mentioning her eyes: speaking of the eyes of the loved one,

¹³¹ Cf. Alexander of Tralles, II p. 581 Puschmann.

¹³² Cf. Iamblichus, *Vita Pythag.* 25 (113). For other examples, cf. Fantuzzi (1995b).

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comments a character in Athenaeus (13.564e–f = *PMG* 821), is normal, but for the Cyclops this would have meant ‘a premonition of his blinding’.

3 BUCOLIC POETRY AFTER THEOCRITUS: BETWEEN IMITATION AND STYLISATION

The distinction between the ‘real’ contemporary herdsmen called Daphnis and Comatas of *Idylls* 5 and 6 and the mythical Daphnis and Comatas of *Idylls* 1 and 7 is, as we have seen, central to the nature of Theocritus’ bucolic poetry. It seems, however, that this distinction was not always fully appreciated, and we can see in the post-Theocritean *Idyll* 8¹³³ a move towards a more radically sentimental idealisation of the bucolic countryside.¹³⁴ The clearest sign of this is the long elegiac ‘pathetic fallacy’ of vv. 33–52:

- (ME) ἄγρεα καὶ ποταμοί, θεῖον γένος, αἴ τι Μενάλκας
πήποχ' ὁ συρικτὰς προσφιλὲς ᾄσε μέλος,
βόσκοιτ' ἐκ ψυχᾶς τὰς ἀμνάδας· ἦν δέ ποκ' ἐνθη
Δάφνις ἔχων δαμάλας, μηδὲν ἔλασσον ἔχοι.
(ΔΑ) κρᾶναι καὶ βοτάναι, γλυκερὸν φυτόν, αἴπερ ὁμοῖον
μουσίσδει Δάφνις ταῖσιν ἀηδονίσι,
τοῦτο τὸ βουκόλιον πιαίνετε· κῆν τι Μενάλκας
τεῖδ' ἀγάγη, χαίρων ἄφθονα πάντα νέμοι.
(ME) ἐνθ' οἷς, ἐνθ' αἴγες διδυματόκοι, ἐνθα μέλισσαι
σμήνεα πληροῦσιν, καὶ δρύες ὑψίτεραι,
ἐνθ' ὁ καλὸς Μίλων βαίνει ποσίν· αἴ δ' ἂν ἀφέρπη,
χῶ ποιμὴν ξηρὸς τηνόθι χαὶ βοτάναι.
(ΔΑ) παντᾶ ἔαρ, παντᾶ δὲ νομοί, παντᾶ δὲ γάλακτος
οὔθατα πιδῶσιν, καὶ τὰ νέα τράφεται,
ἐνθα καλὰ Ναῖς ἐπινίσσεται· αἴ δ' ἂν ἀφέρπη,
χῶ τὰς βῶς βόσκων χαὶ βόες αὐότεραι.
(ME) ὦ τράγε, τᾶν λευκᾶν αἰγῶν ἄνερ, ὦ βάθος ὕλας
μυρίον – αἴ σιμαὶ δεῦτ' ἐφ' ὕδωρ ἔριφοι –
ἐν τήνω γὰρ τῆνος· ἴθ', ὦ κόλε, καὶ λέγε, “Μίλων,
ὁ Πρωτεύς φώκας καὶ θεὸς ὦν ἐνεμεν”.

(*Menalcas*) Valleys and rivers, O divine race, if ever the syrinx-player Menalcas played a melody that you appreciated, give sustenance graciously to his lambs; and should Daphnis come here with his heifers, may he find no worse a welcome.
(*Daphnis*) Springs and pastures, sweet plants, if Daphnis is equal to the nightingales

¹³³ Against the poem’s authenticity cf. esp. G. Perrotta, ‘Teocrito e il poeta dell’*Idillio* VIII’ (1925) = Perrotta (1978) 9–32 and Rossi (1971b); the only recent dissenting voice is F. Scheidweiler, ‘Theokrits achtens *Idyll* und die zeitliche Folge seiner Gedichte’ *AIPH* 11 (1951) 341–60. Metrical arguments may be added to those of Perrotta and Rossi, cf. Fantuzzi (1995a) 229–32.

¹³⁴ Cf. Schmidt (1987) 112–23.

in music, fatten this herd; and if Menalcas should drive a flock of animals here, may he pasture them joyfully in all plentifulness. (*Me.*) There do sheep, there do goats bear twins, there are bees that fill their hives and the oak-trees are tallest there where the handsome Milo passes. But if he goes away, both the shepherd and his flock are parched. (*Da.*) It is spring everywhere, there are pastures everywhere, the udders are bursting with milk and the young animals grow fat, where the beautiful Nais moves; but if she goes away, both the cowherd and his cows are wasted. (*Me.*) Billy-goat, husband of the white goats, go where the forest is thickest – here, flat-nosed kids, to the water – for he’s in there: go in, broken horns, and say: ‘Milon, Proteus, who was also a god, pastured seals!’

It is difficult to say whether the author of the poem is aware that he is altering the balance of ‘realism’ implied in the distinction that Theocritus maintains between his two Daphnises, or whether he (wrongly) felt authorised by the identity of name to synthesise the countryside and the animals that take part in the mourning for Daphnis in *Idyll* 1 with those that surround the contemporary herdsman Daphnis in *Idyll* 6.¹³⁵ Certainly, the extensive pathos of the participation of nature in the mourning and love life of the two shepherd-singers sounds a new, non-Theocritean note, even if the passage could indeed be considered little more than a light-hearted and positive version of the participation of nature in the tragic mourning for Daphnis in *Idyll* 1 (cf. esp. vv. 71–5, 115–18), perhaps filtered through a sentimental reading of the end of *Idyll* 6 (vv. 44–5):

αὔλει Δαμοίτας, σύρισδε δὲ Δάφνις ὁ βούτας,
ὠρχεῦντ’ ἐν μαλακᾷ ταῖ πόρτιες αὐτίκα ποία

Damoitas played the *aulos*, Daphnis the oxherd played the syrinx, and immediately the heifers jumped on the soft grass.

Athenaeus explicitly observed (1.21a) that ‘the word ὠρχεῖσθαι was used for any kind of movement, whether physical or of the mind’,¹³⁶ and Theocritus’ ὠρχεῦντο may simply have meant ‘jumped’, in a sense not very different from σκιρτᾶν in 1.152 (οὐ μὴ σκιρτασῆτε ‘stop jumping around’);¹³⁷ the heifers jump around happily while Damoitas and Daphnis play, not necessarily *because* they are playing. Nevertheless, taking his cue from αὐτίκα ‘at once’, the author of *Idyll* 8 may have read the end of *Idyll* 6 as meaning that

¹³⁵ The present chapter borrows various points from Fantuzzi (1998). The poet of *Idyll* 8 also misunderstands, or bends, the ‘rules of the game’ of Theocritean song contests, with important consequences for Virgil, *Eclogue* 7, cf. Serrao (1977) 195–6.

¹³⁶ As confirmation, Athenaeus quotes a passage from the tragedian Ion (*TrGF* 19F50), where the verb refers to movements of the heart.

¹³⁷ The two verbs are found together to describe dancing movements in Aristophanes, *Pl.* 761: ὠρχεῖσθε καὶ σκιρτᾶτε καὶ χορεύετε ‘dance, jump and form choruses’.

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the heifers literally ‘danced’ to the sound of the music, just as Longus in *Daphnis and Chloe* imagines that Daphnis’ goats ἐσκίρτων φριμασσόμενοι ‘danced around snorting’ when they joyfully celebrated their owner’s safe return (1.32.3); for Longus as well, these animals are, after all, μουσικαί (4.14.3). Thus the requests to nature which Menalcas and Daphnis make in *Idyll* 8 may be based on a ‘sentimental’ reading of the end of *Idyll* 6 as showing how readily nature responds with joy to the sound of music; the precedent of Theocritus would be made to offer a textual guarantee for the plausibility of this appeal to nature to share human emotion.

The poet of *Idyll* 8 would have found a further legitimisation for the sympathy of nature with man in *Idyll* 4. In this poem, the departure of Aegon to follow the famous athlete Milon is seen as the cause of the demoralisation and decline of Aegon’s herd: ‘these heifers that are bellowing here miss him [. . .] poor things, and they don’t want to eat any more’ (vv. 12–14). That *Idyll* 4 was well known to the author of *Idyll* 8 is clear from the use that he makes of the character of Milon, which is the name he gives to Menalcas’ lover in *Idyll* 8. The choice of name opposes Menalcas, a paradigm of a good herdsman, to the Aegon of *Idyll* 4, presented as the wicked, wretched herdsman (τάλας, v. 26), who abandons his animals and his syrinx in order to follow Milon to the athletic games; Menalcas’ Milon, on the contrary, seems in the past to have come to him, rather than *vice versa*, and now Menalcas tries to repeat Milon’s entry into the bucolic world through the agency of the billy-goat (vv. 47–52). The historical figure of the athlete Milon also connects *Idylls* 4 and 8 in another way.

The scholiast on *Idyll* 4.6 had already identified the Milon of that poem as the famous athlete from Croton (a town within the setting of the idyll), who had been victorious some thirty times in the Panhellenic games of the sixth century. In fact, it would be more precise to speak of a historical allusion to, rather than an identification with, the athlete, because *Idyll* 4 is set in the Hellenistic present, as witness the mention of Glauce, a female *aulos*-player loved by Ptolemy II (v. 31). Nevertheless, after a series of observations about the shameless malice with which Milon has convinced Aegon that he possessed athletic talent, Battus sarcastically comments (v. 11): πείσσαι καὶ (Ahrens: τοι codd.) Μίλων καὶ τῶς λύκος αὐτίκα λυσοῆν ‘Milo would even convince wolves to go rabid in a moment’. The verse and its relevance to the context have been very variously explained,¹³⁸ but we should probably see here a sarcastic allusion to a detail in the life of the

¹³⁸ As (respectively) by Ameis, Ahrens, Gow and Dover: ‘this is the moment when Milo should unleash rabid wolves on the herd (because now there is no-one to protect it)’; ‘now Milo would cause the wolves to become rabid (for hunger, because the herd is reduced to nothing)’; ‘Aegon’s athletic

historical Milon, recorded as early as Aristotle: Milon is said to have been savaged to death by dogs or wolves in a wood when, in a demonstration of his strength, he used his hand as a wedge in a split tree-trunk and was trapped fast.¹³⁹ Battus is thus wishing that as a punishment for the harm he has done to Aegon's herd 'his' Milon as well may end up savaged by rabid wolves αὐτίκα 'there and then'. As for *Idyll* 8, in vv. 49–51 Menalcas asks the billy-goat to carry his message of love for Milon ὧ βόθος ὕλας μυρίον 'where the forest is thickest' [. . .], ἐν τήνῳ γὰρ τῆνος 'for he's in there'. The verses are puzzling,¹⁴⁰ but perhaps the poet of *Idyll* 8 understood Battus' allusion to the fate of the historical Milon, and was not to be outdone. All the sources for Milon's death place it in the woods, and one source (Strabo 6.1.12) notes explicitly that the idea for his fatal act of bravado came to him while he was walking δι' ὕλης βοθείας 'through the thick of the wood'. With a kind of intertextual foresight, therefore, Menalcas is anxious to attract his Milon to the peaceful world of shepherds, which is not to be disdained (cf. vv. 51–2), and away from the heart of the forest, which Milon loves, but which carries terrible dangers for a person with his name . . .

4 BUCOLIC AND NON-BUCOLIC LOVE

For the writers of bucolic who came after him, the text of Theocritus offered a philological 'pretext', that is to say, a repository of ideas which could be codified into substantially new patterns. Of particular interest is the development of the Theocritean pattern¹⁴¹ of bucolic song in its function as mythological paradigm in the erotic poetry of Moschus and Bion.

The mythological songs of *Idylls* 6, 11, and 13, the last two both addressed to Nicias, are introduced by brief frames, which both provide the poems with the fiction of a 'real' performative context and introduce the songs as illustrations of maxims exchanged between friends; this pattern places

ambitions are madness, and have incidentally inflicted as much damage on his father's flocks (namely the loss of twenty sheep) as if the wolves in the neighbourhood had been seized with rabies and run among them'; 'if Aegon has been persuaded by Milon to go off in pursuit of a useless ambition, taking twenty sheep, Milon might as persuade wolves well. . . .'

¹³⁹ Cf. Aristotle, fr. 523.1 Gigon, Strabo 6.1.12, Pausanias 6.14.8, Aulus Gellius 15.16.3–4, Valerius Maximus 9. 12.9, schol. on Ovid, *Ibis* 609, *Suda* μ 1066 Adler.

¹⁴⁰ Gow on 51–2, for instance, sceptically commented: 'Milon . . . is not a goatherd; what he is doing in the wood we are left to conjecture'. For a recent but unconvincing explanation cf. White (1981).

¹⁴¹ As Zanker (1987) 14 noted, 'the basic rationale of some of the Alexandrian poets in their deployment of love seems to have been that love is the emotion which everybody can experience – and wants to – and that the judicious use of it will interest people and help them to relate to the world of poetry from their own experience of life'.

Theocritus in the tradition of archaic lyric, iambic and elegiac poetry, which then continues in Hellenistic epigram.¹⁴² As we have seen, the clumsy love song of the Cyclops illustrated the maxim that poetry heals the sufferings of love; Heracles' loss of Hylas, on the other hand, illustrated the idea that it is not only mortals who are struck by love for the beautiful. In both cases, the initial statement of the maxim in v. 1 (repeated at the end of *Idyll* 11) and the apostrophe to the friend in v. 2 suggest an informal setting, which emphasises the occasional nature of the composition. This pretence of an occasional character could not be created by the statement of the maxim itself, and so it is the apostrophe, not the maxim, which was the basic element of Theocritus' compositional structure. This is confirmed by *Idyll* 6, where a variation of this strategy isolates the apostrophe by itself in the narrative frame at the beginning of the poem (v. 2), which is addressed to one Aratus, possibly the same person mentioned by Simichidas in *Idyll* 7 (v. 102). It is then not the author in the frame, but rather one of the shepherd-singers, Daphnis, who at the end of his song pronounces what is, in effect, the maxim-theme of the poem: 'O Polyphemus, love often considers the not beautiful beautiful' (vv. 18–19).

The extant fragments of Moschus and Bion develop this Theocritean pattern in non-Theocritean directions. Gone is the critical-ironic approach to the very use of a mythological paradigm, replaced now by a straightforward emphasis on the positive correspondence between opening maxim and mythological illustration, as in *Idyll* 13, a poem which certainly has bucolic touches, but which does not adopt the attitude of distance from myth which we have seen to be central to Theocritus' bucolic poems.¹⁴³ Neither Moschus nor Bion use Theocritean apostrophe, and thus they do not present their poems as stories told 'by chance' to a friend. Furthermore, while Moschus does make use of two short mythological stories as illustrations of aspects of love, and Bion too does something similar at least once, both of them promote Eros (generally in company with Aphrodite) to the protagonist of short 'epyllia' about the nature of love. Theocritus shows nothing comparable, and the new form is to be connected with erotic epigram (cf. below, pp. 173–4). Moreover, Bion reflects an approach to love and love poetry, which is at least partly in opposition to bucolic poetry and is substantially different from what we find in both Theocritus and third-century epigram.

¹⁴² For a different interpretation of *Idylls* 11 and 13, as contaminations between the poetic epistle and, respectively, the bucolic genre and the epyllion, cf. L. E. Rossi, 'L' *Illa* di Teocrito: epistola poetica ed epyllion' in *Studi classici in onore di Q. Cataudella* (Catania 1972) II 279–93.

¹⁴³ Cf. Hunter (1999) 262.

Moschus fr. 2 lists a series of unrequited and painful loves between mythical-bucolic figures (Pan loved Echo, Echo loved a satyr, the satyr loved Lyde) and then concludes: 'This is the lesson that I expound to all those who are resistant to love: love those who love you, so that, when you fall in love, your love will be requited.' Fragment 3 tells how, for love of Arethusa, the river Alpheus opened up a pathway through the sea to bring his gifts to his beloved spring; the poet's final comment is 'that rascal of a boy, the wicked teacher of terrible actions, Eros, even used his charms to teach a river how to swim'. Bion fr. 12 is analogous to Moschus fr. 2, though its ambitions are much greater. The maxim ὀλβιοὶ οἱ φιλέοντες ἐπὴν ἴσον ἀντεράωνται, 'Fortunate are those who love, when their love is returned in the same measure', introduces *exempla* of three reciprocated homosexual loves, in which the mythical lovers were 'fortunate', even in the most painful situations: Theseus was 'fortunate' because Pirithous 'stood beside him', even when he descended into Hades; Orestes was 'fortunate', even among the savage Taurians, because Pylades 'had chosen to share his journey with him'; Achilles was 'fortunate' because he died shortly after Patroclus, as he desired. Bion's maxim appears to overturn the exclamation σχέτλιοι οἱ φιλέοντες, 'wretched are those who love', with which the poet's voice had sentimentiously intervened during the description of the sad wanderings of Heracles in search of the lost Hylas (Theocritus 13.66). With a more idealised and romantic conception of love, Bion not only overturns Theocritus' specific exclamation at the beginning of the fragment, but at its end he overturns Theocritus' *exemplum* (Heracles) by three (probably already topical)¹⁴⁴ mythological *exempla* appropriate to this more positive view. What Bion stresses, the perfect mutuality and inseparability of lovers,¹⁴⁵ had also been applied by Theocritus to the original happiness of Heracles and Hylas (13.10–15). In actual fact, however, Bion corrects Theocritus radically, for his point is that anyone who is requited in his love is happy *in any situation*, because not even death can destroy the 'good fortune' of a pair of lovers who are really united: Achilles, who had been μάκαρ 'happy' when Patroclus was alive (v. 6), continued to be 'fortunate', even after his friend's death, because he was able to satisfy the desire for death that he had famously expressed in the *Iliad*. Indeed v. 7 ὀλβιος ἦν θνάσκων ὃ οἱ οὐ μόνον αἰὸν ἄμυνεν 'he was fortunate to die, because he had not averted

¹⁴⁴ The same triad was already present in Xenophon, *Symp.* 8.31.

¹⁴⁵ Bion's *exempla* are found several times in Ovid – once the same three as in Bion (in *Pont.* 2.3.41–6), more often with the Latinising addition of the further couple, Euryalus and Nisus (*Tr.* 1.5.19–24, 1.9.27–34), and always with a certain emphasis on the element of inseparability. See also the simplified versions of *Tr.* 5.4.23–6 and *Pont.* 2.6.25–6.

the sad fate from him¹⁴⁶ is to be interpreted in the light of *Iliad* 18.98–9: ἀϋτίκα τεθναίην, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἄρ' ἔμελλον ἑταίρω | κτεινομένω ἐπαμῦναι 'may I die immediately, because I was not destined to defend my companion when he was killed'. It is, of course, possible that, in the complete poem from which this fragment comes, this romantic position was sarcastically overturned by an interlocutor who reverted to the traditional unhappiness of lovers, as expressed in *Idyll* 13.66. Nevertheless, we will see that fr. 12 is in harmony with idealising attitudes that Bion also expresses elsewhere, whereas nowhere does Bion seem to express ironic or negative comments about love.

One important novelty of Moschus and Bion are 'micro-epyllia' about Eros, which seem to combine the Theocritean custom of talking about love by means of *exempla* with the ever more common technique of dramatising the unforeseeable and irresistible quality of love through its personifications, Eros and the Erotes; these powerful, but capricious little boys both confirm the power of love, and also partly exorcise it by miniaturising and reducing it to small fragments.¹⁴⁷ This practice of speaking about love by speaking of Eros and the Erotes had been widespread ever since the lyric poets, and in particular Anacreon, though it is above all in Hellenistic epigram and the *Anacreontea* where these figures triumph.

The pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll* 19 and Moschus 1 fit comfortably into this tradition. *Idyll* 19, 'The honeycomb thief', describes the reactions of Eros to being stung by a bee while stealing honey; he protests to his mother that even if it is a tiny insect, the bee still produces painful stings, whereupon Aphrodite answers that he himself is tiny, but he provokes terrible sufferings. This poem of only eight verses finds a fairly precise parallel in *Anacreontea* 35,¹⁴⁸ but the topos of the arrows and wounds of Eros occurs throughout Greek epigram. In Poem 1 by Moschus, 'Eros the fugitive', Aphrodite announces a reward on the head on Eros, who continues to be naughty and disobedient; she now cannot find him, and so she must give a detailed identikit of the boy's physical appearance and character. The poem can be considered a compilation of the best-known *cahiers de doléances* of

¹⁴⁶ Meineke's correction of ὄτι οἱ μόρον to ὅ οἱ οὐ μόρον is unavoidable, despite the rather clumsy sound and prosody which result. Reed (1997) 179 defends the transmitted text by interpreting ἄμυνεν as 'avenged', but when ἄμυνεν is constructed with the accusative and dative, it means idiomatically 'to avert something from someone', whereas in the meaning of 'to avenge'/'to punish' (for which the middle voice is almost always used), the verb takes the accusative of the person and the genitive of the thing.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Rosenmeyer (1992) 184.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Rosenmeyer (1992) 173–7. The comparison of Eros and his arrows to the bee and its sting might go back to archaic lyric poetry, as suggested by B. MacLachlan, *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 95–9.

Aphrodite about Eros,¹⁴⁹ and in particular it is perhaps to be understood as presenting the facts preceding the scene of ‘Eros in chains’, a well-known epigrammatic (cf. *APlan.* 195–99), Anacreontic, and iconographic topos (cf. *LIMC* III.1, 88f.).¹⁵⁰ Another work which is close to the tradition of poems in which the description of the behaviour of Eros leads to reflections about the peculiar nature of love is Bion’s ‘micro-epyllion’ fr. 13. As he is wandering through the wood, a young fowler finds Eros perching on the branch of a tree and sets to work with his birdlime, thinking that his prey is a large bird; as he does not succeed, he runs to the old ploughman (ἄροτροῦς πρέσβυς) who had taught him the *techne* of bird-catching to ask for help; the old man tells him to stop hunting the bird and not to chase after it any more, but rather to keep at a distance from it: ‘You will be lucky, as long as you do not catch it; but if you arrive at adulthood (ἦν δ’ ἀνέρος ἐς μέτρον ἔλθῃς), this same bird that now flees and hops away will come to you of his own initiative, and will settle on your head.’ The emphasis is clearly on love as a fact of life, but a term like τέχνη, with all its metaliterary significance, or the figure of the old master-ploughman may suggest that the opposition between the different occupations of the two periods of the boy’s life may also be interpreted as a statement of poetics: love poetry belongs to maturity, and it follows a phase of bucolic poetry which is alien to the theme of love. Be that as it may, both in this fragment and in the apostrophe to ‘kind Aphrodite’ in fr. 14, another passage in which Bion inveighs against the reprobate, dangerous child Eros, Bion’s main emphasis is on the idea of the inevitability of Eros, and this is the idea, as we shall see, which is the keystone of reflections about love poetry in his poetry.

More original and ambitious is the metaliterary ‘micro-epyllion’ of Bion fr. 10:

ἀ μέγала μοι Κύπρις ἔθ’ ὑπνώοντι παρέστα
 νηπίαχον τὸν Ἔρωτα καλᾶς ἐκ χειρὸς ἄγοισα
 ἐς χθόνα νευστάζοντα, τόσον δέ μοι ἔφρασε μῦθον·
 “μέλπειν μοι, φίλε βοῦτα, λαβὼν τὸν Ἔρωτα δίδασκε”.
 ὡς λέγε· χᾶ μὲν ἀπῆλθεν, ἐγὼ δ’ ὄσα βουκολίασδον,
 νήπιος ὡς ἔθέλοντα μαθεῖν, τὸν Ἔρωτα δίδασκον, 5

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.* 3.91–99, Meleager, *AP* 5.177–8 = *HE* 419off.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. F. Lasserre, *La Figure d’Eros dans la poésie grecque* (Lausanne 1946) 192–4, Rosenmeyer (1992) 184–5, W. Fauth, ‘Cupido cruciatur’ *GB* 2 (1974) 39–60. It is impossible to establish whether the idea of Aphrodite’s proclamation or the scene of the imprisonment took shape first; one of the epigrams that present Eros in chains is attributed by the Planudean Anthology (196) to Alcaeus of Messene (second century BC), but Cameron (1993) 42 n. 37 points out that the epigrams *APlan.* 195–97 all begin with the same letter (τ), and may thus correspond to the alphabetical criterion of anthologisation followed in Philip’s *Garland*; he therefore emends the attribution ‘of Alcaeus’ to ‘of Alphaeus’ (Alphaeus of Mytilene, first century AD; however, cf. *HE* 11 7).

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ὡς εὔρεν πλαγίαυλον ὁ Πάν, ὡς αὐλὸν Ἀθάνα,
 ὡς χέλυν Ἑρμάων, κίθαριν ὡς ἄδυς Ἀπόλλων.
 ταῦτά νιν ἐξεδίδασκον· ὁ δ' οὐκ ἐμπάζετο μύθων,
 ἀλλά μοι αὐτὸς ἀειδεν ἔρωτύλα, καί με δίδασκε 10
 θνατῶν ἀθανάτων τε πόθως καὶ ματέρος ἔργα.
 κήγῶν ἐκλαθόμεν μὲν ὄσων τὸν Ἔρωτα δίδασκον,
 ὄσσα δ' Ἔρωσ με δίδαξεν ἔρωτύλα πάντα διδάχθην.

The great Cypris came close to me while I was still sleeping, leading with her beautiful hand the little child Eros, whose head was hanging down, and said to me: 'Take my Eros, dear herdsman, and teach him to sing.' Thus she spoke. She went away and I taught all my bucolic songs to Eros, foolish as I was, thinking that he wanted to learn them: how Pan invented the flute, Athena the *aulos*, Hermes the lyre, and sweet Apollo the cithara. These things I taught him, but he paid no attention to what I said, but he was the one who sang love songs to me, and taught me the passions of mortals and immortals and the deeds of his mother. So I forgot what I was teaching Eros, and learnt all the poems of love that Eros taught me.

This fragment belongs to the Hesiodic tradition of divine initiation into poetry, and may be compared to the dreams of Callimachus at the head of the *Aitia* (frs. 3–4 Massimilla, cf. above pp. 6–7) and of Ennius at the head of the *Annales* (frs. 2–10 Skutsch, cf. below, pp. 462–3). Aphrodite, leading the child Eros by the hand, appeared to the narrator 'while he was still sleeping', and she asked him to teach Eros how to sing. Eros is described as νηπίαχος 'a little child' or 'an infant' (v. 2), whereas it was in fact the narrator, as he himself admits in v. 6, who was νήπιος 'naive', the same epithet which Hesiod had repeatedly applied to Perses, the addressee of the oldest and best-known Greek didactic poem, Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The narrator tries to teach Eros how to compose the bucolic songs that he himself usually composed, starting *ab ovo* from aetiological stories about the relevant musical instruments, as Hesiod had started from myths about the origin of pain, good and evil, and so forth in order to teach Perses about proper behaviour and social morality. Eros does not, however, pay the slightest attention, but rather himself starts to instruct his supposed teacher all about love, with the result that the narrator forgets what he had tried to teach Eros, i.e. bucolic poetry, and allows himself to be instructed in ἔρωτύλα 'love poems'.

We cannot, of course, assume that this fragment is to be interpreted autobiographically, as marking Bion's passage from bucolic to erotic (or, rather, erotic-pastoral)¹⁵¹; nor can it be established with certainty to what kind

¹⁵¹ As I argued in 'Bion, fr. 10 Gow' *MusCrit* 15–7 (1980–2) 159–60; also cf. e.g. E. A. Schmidt, *Poetische Reflexion: Vergils Bukolik* (Munich 1972) 87–9 and Nauta (1990) 134.

of erotic poetry Bion refers, whether perhaps bucolic-erotic poetry with pastoral protagonists (as in Bion frs. 9 and 11 and the pseudo-Theocritean *Idylls* 20 and 27), or erotic-mythological epyllia with an extremely limited pastoral frame, like the *Epithalamion of Achilles and Deidameia* (= [Bion] 2).¹⁵² What is clear, however, is the opposition between poetry concerning 'bucolic' inventions (cf. fr. 5) and poetry with an erotic-bucolic content (cf. fr. 9); for the 'short poem with erotic content', for which no previous generic definition is attested, Bion uses the term ἔρωτύλον, and his witness to the overwhelming, irresistible nature of love poetry also finds very few parallels in Greek literary tradition; we may, however, compare *Anacreontea* I, which opens with a visit of Anacreon and Eros to the poet in a dream, and terminates with a declaration of faithfulness to love and to love poetry (καὶ δῆθεν ἄχρι καὶ νῦν ἔρωτος οὐπέπαυμαι 'and truly until now I have never abandoned love').

Love is one of the themes that Theocritus' shepherds discuss most frequently,¹⁵³ and the contrasting opposition between unhappy, tormented love (and love poetry) on the one hand and bucolic life (and poetry) on the other could be read as already present in his poetry. Thus, the *ekphrasis* of the cup in *Idyll* 1 had contrasted the restless distraction of a woman's two lovers with the peacefulness of rustic life,¹⁵⁴ and in *Idyll* 7, the invitation of Simichidas to Aratus to abandon for ever his desperate passion and opt for ἄσυχία (vv. 122–27) is immediately followed by Simichidas' description of the *locus amoenus* (above pp. 137–8), with the implicit effect of contrasting the song of unhappy love with the bucolic serenity which involves the abandonment of love. Moreover, Bucaeus' clumsily parodic song of love in *Idyll* 10 (vv. 24–37) is contrasted with Milon's work song, and the opposition between love and rustic life is made explicit in the concluding verses¹⁵⁵ (vv. 56–8):

ταῦτα χρὴ μοχθεῦντας ἐν ἀλίῳ ἄνδρας αἰεῖδεν,
τὸν δὲ τεόν, Βουκαῖε, πρέπει λιμηρὸν ἔρωτα
μυθίσδεν τᾶ ματρὶ κατ' εὐνὰν ὄρθρευοίσα.

Men who toil in the sun should sing songs like this. As regards your starveling love, Bucaeus, you should tell it to your mother when she gets up at dawn.

¹⁵² The *Epithalamion* takes off from *Idyll* 11: the shepherd Myrson exhorts Lycidas to sing a 'sweet, melodious love song' (μέλος [. . .] ἡμερόεν γλυκύθυμον ἔρωτικόν), like the one the Cyclops Polyphemus sang on the beach to Galatea, but then Lycidas sings of the attempt by Achilles to seduce Deidamia – a story with mythological characters and an urban setting. For the *Epithalamion* and *Idyll* 11 cf. E. Sistakou, *Ἡ ἀρνηση τοῦ ἔπους* (Athens 2004) Γ4.

¹⁵³ Stanzel (1995) offers an innovative analysis of the idea of sexuality and love in Theocritus' pastoral poetry.

¹⁵⁴ See above.

¹⁵⁵ The ancients were uncertain about the attribution of the last three verses: cf. schol. on vv. 56–8.

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The opposition between the 'pastoral' life and the life of love was explicitly thematised in a fragment of the (? fourth-century) lyric poet Lycophronides (*PMG* 844), where a shepherd dedicates his work tools to a god because his mind is now utterly given over to love; it can also be found in various later epigrams which either contrast love with the rudely elementary nature of the world of shepherds and their flocks¹⁵⁶ (familiar, of course, from Theocritus)¹⁵⁷ or assert, as Theocritus had never clearly done, a separation between pastoral life and love. In *AP* 7.196 (= *HE* 4066ff.), Meleager revives the old topos of poetry and music as a medicine for love, but specifies bucolic music in this rôle:

ἀχῆεις τέττιξ, δροσεραῖς σταγόνεσσι μεθυσθεῖς
ἀγρονόμαν μέλπεις μοῦσαν ἔρημολάλον·
ἄκρα δ' ἐφεζόμενος πετάλοις πριονώδεσι κώλοις
αἰθίοπι κλάζεις χρωτὶ μέλισμα λύρας.
ἀλλά, φίλος, φθέγγου τι νέον δενδρώδεσι Νύμφαις
παίγνιον, ἀντωδὸν Πανὶ κρέκων κέλαδον,
ὄφρα φυγῶν τὸν Ἔρωτα μεσημβρινὸν ὕπνον ἀγρεύσω
ἐνθάδ' ὑπὸ σκιερῇ κεκλιμένος πλατάνῳ.

O chirping cicada, you who get intoxicated by the dewdrops, you sing the rustic Muse of those who dwell in solitary places, and sitting high amidst the leaves with your rough-edged legs you produce from your sun-baked body a music like that of the lyre. But now, my dear, sing a new song for the Nymphs of the trees, playing a music which will act as a counterpoint to that of Pan so that, having escaped from Eros, I may come and seek my rest at midday, lying here under a shady plane-tree.

Relevant also is the matching epigram *AP* 7.195 = *HE* 4058 ff.:

ἄκρις, ἐμῶν ἀπάτημα πόθων, παραμύθιον ὕπνου,
ἄκρις, ἀρουραῖη Μοῦσα λιγυπτέρυγε,
αὐτοφυῆς μίμημα λύρας, κρέκε μοί τι ποθεινὸν
ἐγκρούουσα φίλοις ποσσὶ λάλους πτέρυγας,
ὥς με πόνων ῥύσαιο παναγρύπνοιο μερίμνης,
ἄκρι, μιτωσαμένη φθόγγον ἐρωτοπλάνον κτλ.

O cricket, you who beguile my passions and lead me to sleep; O cricket, rustic Muse with your resonant wings, a natural imitation of the lyre, sing me a song of desire, striking your chattering wings with your legs, so as to drive away from me the anxiety of sleepless nights, O cricket, creating a tune that will turn love away . . .

In these poems, there is a clear opposition between the song of the cicada and the cricket (ἀγρονόμαν μοῦσαν ἔρημολάλον, a clear metaphor for

¹⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. Mnasalca, *AP* 9.324 = *HE* 2663ff. and Myrinus, *AP* 7.703 = *GPh* 2568ff.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. e.g. 1.151-2, 4.62-3, 5.41-43, 116-17, Bernsdorff (2001) 155-71.

pastoral poetry) and the love that this music allows the poet to escape (φυγών τὸν Ἔρωτα), and between the rest that this same music allows for those who 'escape from' Love and the tormented vigils (παναγρύπνιο μερίμνης) which were traditionally, and often in Meleager himself, the lot of those in love.¹⁵⁸

These passages of Bion and Meleager, who were probably contemporaries and lived not long before Virgil wrote the *Eclogues*,¹⁵⁹ demonstrate the poetic currency in the first century BC of an opposition between the bucolic and the erotic, and it may be that we should also interpret in the light of Greek precedents the recurrent concern with the relationship between love (poetry) and bucolic poetry and life, which runs through Latin poetry of this period. Virgil attributed considerable importance to the precedent of Meleager, *AP* 7.196 (cited above), for he echoes this epigram twice in the opening verses of *Eclogue* 1, *patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi* <ὕπὸ σκιερῆ κεκλιμένος πλατάνω . . . *siluestrem tenui musam meditaris auena* <ἀγρονόμον μέλπεις μοῦσσαν.¹⁶⁰ The contrast in Bion and Meleager between bucolic poetry and love also helps us understand why in *Eclogue* 10 Virgil imagines that his friend, the elegiac poet Gallus, sees the possibility of pastoral life (and poetry) as the only alternative to his love for Lycoris, as well as to his previous mythological or erotic poetry. The wreck of his love (cf. vv. 22f.) leads Gallus to regret that he had not joined the shepherds previously, to find in their world the love of some Phyllis or Amyntas who would have yielded without the dramatic rejections and unfaithfulness of elegiac loves, or that he had not enjoyed the love of Lycoris herself in those pleasant rustic places (vv. 35–43). Gallus seems to be going to decide to change his life and his poetry, or rather to rework in Theocritean style his previous poetry (written in the 'verse of Chalcis', vv. 50–1),¹⁶¹ and to reformulate the idea of love and love poetry in a bucolic manner (*teneris* [. . .] *meos incidere amores arboribus – crescent illae, crescetis, amores* 'to carve my loves on the tender trees: the trees will grow, and you loves will grow', vv. 53–4).¹⁶² In the meantime, Gallus dreams of distracting himself by hunting in the mountains and thus finding the *medicina* for his *furor*

¹⁵⁸ Cf. e.g. Plato, *Phaedrus* 251e; Theocritus 10.10, 30.6; Crinagoras, *AP* 5.119 = *GPh* 1773ff. etc.

¹⁵⁹ Although the relative chronology remains uncertain, it appears probable that Virgil alluded explicitly, at least once, to a 'bucolic' epigram: see *Ecl.* 7.4 and Erycius, *AP* 6.96.2 = *GPh* 2201, on which cf., most recently, Bernsdorff (2001) 93f., with references.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Gutzwiller (1998) 320–1.

¹⁶¹ It cannot be established whether *Chalcidico* . . . *uersu* evoked Gallus' love elegy (from Theokles of Naxos or Eretria, a town close to Chalcis, who was credited with the invention of elegy) or his mythological-erudite poetry in the manner of Euphorion of Chalcis; cf. Citroni (1995) 267.

¹⁶² See also *o mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant, | vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores* 'Oh, how sweetly my bones could rest, if one day your pipes sang of my loves', vv. 33–4; *amores* indicates

(vv. 55–61).¹⁶³ Subsequently, however, the dream collapses: the new idea of a pastoral life (and love) gives way in the face of the inescapable *labores* of ‘elegiac’ love (and elegiac poetry), to which in the end Gallus is forced to surrender (‘Love triumphs over everything: we, too, must surrender to Love’),¹⁶⁴ as Propertius was later to yield to the *servitium amoris*.¹⁶⁵ It is not that ‘bucolic love’ is weaker than ‘elegiac love’, but that Gallus fails to understand the rhetoric of pastoral erotic discourse;¹⁶⁶ so, too, in *Eclogue* 2, Corydon tries to transform the beloved in accordance with the vision of the bucolic world, but the radical separation between love and pastoral life makes this impossible.¹⁶⁷

For the motif of bucolic love in Latin elegiac poetry, Ovid, *Heroides* 5 is particularly important. In this poem the Nymph Oenone remembers the tender moments of love spent in the countryside with Paris before his departure for Greece and Helen;¹⁶⁸ she contrasts Paris’s new and dangerous love for the adulterous Helen with the alternative possibility of a ‘love without risks (*tutus amor*)’ (v. 89) with her, who had only ever belonged to him. The connection of *Eclogue* 10 with *Heroides* 5 is clear, though both also look back to the lovesick Acontius’ rustic roamings in Callimachus’ ‘Acontius and Cydippe’ (above pp. 60–6)¹⁶⁹ and both reflect also the idealising and escapist longings for rural *ἀσυχία* and tranquil reciprocated love which are a prominent feature of late Hellenistic thought. Oenone unsuccessfully begs the ex-shepherd Paris to go back to doing what the Virgilian Gallus had briefly dreamed of doing, but Ovid appears to suggest that the erotic and bucolic worlds are reconcilable only in a past that is now forever gone, or in the unachievable Utopia of Oenone’s imagination, and so he attributes to his female character a despair not very different from the final situation of Gallus. For the possibility of a satisfied bucolic love in which erotic pathos is regulated and controlled, we must look rather to Tibullus, though even here this optimism concerns the future, not the present (see in particular 1.1 *passim* and 1.5.19–36).

The relative optimism of the Roman poets that a happy pastoral love was possible may have had precedents in post-Theocritean bucolic. Greek

primarily Gallus’ love elegies rather than his experiences of love, cf. F. Skutsch, *Aus Vergils Frühzeit* (Leipzig 1901) 23–4 and Ross (1975) 89.

¹⁶³ Phaedra in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* (vv. 215–22) is here an important model, cf. G. B. Conte, *Virgilio: il genere e i suoi confini* (2nd ed., Milan 1984) 32–3.

¹⁶⁴ For the contrast between Theocritus’ Daphnis and Virgil’s Gallus, cf. Citroni (1995) 237.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Ross (1975) 102–3. ¹⁶⁶ Cf. Papanghelis (1999) 59.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. esp. Papanghelis (1999). ¹⁶⁸ Cf. esp. vv. 13–24.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. fr. 73 Pfeiffer; in Propertius 1.18 the poet identifies with both Callimachus’ Acontius and the Gallus of *Eclogue* 10. Tree-carving also occurs at the close of *Idyll* 18, but the context is there not erotic.

erotic poetry is regularly about love that is unhappy because not (yet) reciprocated, but the pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll* 27 represents an exception, in that it seems to marry the sentimental approach to the countryside typical of post-Theocritean bucolic with the long poetic tradition of the rustic *locus amoenus* as the ideal setting for scenes of seduction and sexual satisfaction.¹⁷⁰ The poem takes the form of an amoebean exchange, in which Daphnis seeks to seduce a country girl, who does eventually consent to their mutual pleasure; it is in fact a literary version of a form of popular literature which was later to lead to the Provençal *pastourelles* and the Italian *villanelle*.¹⁷¹ Features of language and versification, however, lead the majority of scholars to consider the poem a very late work, quite possibly from the imperial period, and so we must suspend judgement about the possibility that it was known to Augustan poets. More promising signs, however, may perhaps be found in Bion's poetry. There seems to be, for example, an obvious joyfulness in the way in which Bion speaks about his composition of love poetry for Lycidas in fr. 9, and the name of the beloved leaves no doubts that this must have been bucolic-erotic poetry. This fragment includes an explicit generic choice in favour of love poetry, but there were at least two contemporary traditions of love poetry familiar to Bion – erotic epigram and the *Anacreontea* – which had taken very different positions on the possibility of a peaceful relationship between the Muses and Eros. Bion appears to distance himself clearly from the former of these two positions, and to be rather in agreement with the optimism of the *Anacreontea*.

Hellenistic erotic epigram shared with many contemporary philosophers an intellectualising condemnation of the passion of love (cf. below, pp. 341–9); poets composed erotic poetry, in which they also declared that love was a sort of illness, a fall into the irrational. In particular, Posidippus and Callimachus explored, with a new intensity and frequency, the paradoxical fact that intellectuals, such as themselves and their friends, could fall prey to the irrational passion of love, thus suggesting that they shared the view that the intellectual could or should be less exposed than others to the risks of love. They were thus forced to confront the contradiction that they were both poet-intellectuals and love poets who were in love, and to seek ways around this double bind. Among the most obvious was the plea that poetry cures love, most familiar from Theocritus's *Idyll* 11 (above pp. 164–7) and Callimachus, *AP* 12.150 = *HE* 1047ff.:

¹⁷⁰ 'Seduction' in such scenes usually, of course, means what we would call 'rape', cf. A. Motte, *Prairies et jardins de la Grèce antique* (Brussels 1973) 208–11, and J. M. Bremer, 'The Meadow of Love and Two Passages in Euripides' *Hippolytus Mnemosyne* 28 (1975) 268–80.

¹⁷¹ Cf. W. Theiler, *Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur* (Berlin 1970) 442–6.

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ὡς ἀγαθὸν Πολύφαιμος ἀνεύρατο τὰν ἑπαιδῶν
 τῶρα μὲν ἔναι Γᾶν, οὐκ ἀμαθῆς ὁ Κύκλωψ.
 αἱ Μοῖσαι τὸν ἔρωτα κατισχναίνοντι, Φίλιππε·
 ἢ πανακὲς πάντων φάρμακον ἂ σοφία, κτλ.

What a fine charm Polyphemos found for people in love: yes, by the Earth, the Cyclops was not stupid. The Muses, O Philippus, reduce love to size: poetry is a medicine which cures all evils . . .

This ideology of love as something to be cured (and which is cured by talking about it) continues to dominate the erotic epigram of the first century BC, and so it may be this from which Bion wishes to distance himself, by an allusion at the head of fr. 9 to the ‘manifesto’ in v. 3 of this epigram of Callimachus:¹⁷²

ταῖ Μοῖσαι τὸν ἔρωτα τὸν ἄγριον οὐ φοβέονται,
 ἐκ θυμῶ δὲ φιλεῦντι καὶ ἐκ ποδῶς αὐτῶ ἔπονται.
 κῆν μὲν ἄρα ψυχὰν τις ἔχων ἀνέραστος αἰεῖδι,
 τῆνον ὑπεκφεύγοντι καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλοντι διδάσκειν·
 ἦν δὲ νόον τις ἔρωτι δονεῦμενος ἀδὺ μελίσδι,
 ἐς τῆνον μάλα πᾶσαι ἐπειγόμεναι προρέοντι.
 μάρτυς ἐγὼν ὅτι μῦθος ὄδ’ ἔπλετο πᾶσιν ἀλαθῆς·
 ἦν μὲν γὰρ βροτὸν ἄλλον ἢ ἀθανάτων τινὰ μέλπω,
 βαμβραίνει μοι γλῶσσα καὶ ὡς πάρος οὐκέτ’ αἰεῖδι·
 ἦν δ’ αὖτ’ ἐς τὸν ἔρωτα καὶ ἐς Λυκίδαν τι μελίσδω,
 καὶ τόκα μοι χαίροισα διὰ στόματος ῥέει αὐδᾶ.

The Muses are not afraid of the wild Eros, but love him with all their heart and follow him closely. And if someone sings with a soul that knows not love, they flee away, and refuse to act as teachers for him. If, on the contrary, someone sings sweet songs with his mind set awlirl by Eros, lo, they all hurry towards him in great haste. I am a witness of the fact that this affirmation is true for everybody: if I sing of another mortal or one of the immortal gods, my tongue stutters and does not sing like before; but if I sing a song for Eros or for Lycidas, then my voice runs joyously through my mouth. (Bion fr. 9)

By this same opening, Bion may also have taken a position against another text, Moschus’ *Eros the Fugitive* (above pp. 173–4) which began ἂ Κύπρις τὸν ἔρωτα, and which offered a compendium of topical motifs of invective against Eros; however that may be, another defence of Eros, *Anacreontea* 19 (below p. 183), certainly begins with another variation on this formula.

The Muses ‘weaken’ love, Callimachus had said, and both he and Theocritus had followed Philoxenus in presenting poetry as a φάρμακον

¹⁷² Reed (1997) 159 recognises the parallel with Callimachus, but denies that it carries programmatic force in the debate about the relation between poetry and love.

‘medicine’ against love. The relationship between the Muses and Eros as presented by Bion is different: if we accept, as all modern editors do, the emendation of ἢ φοβέονται to οὐ φοβέονται in v. 1, Bion would be claiming that the Muses ‘are not afraid’ of Eros, not because they are like a drug that weakens love (as Callimachus had said) or because the soul of a person who has endured the labours of the Muses is better prepared to face Eros courageously (as Posidippus had said, cf. below, pp. 342–3), but because, on the contrary, they love Eros and always accompany him everywhere. If, however, we keep the transmitted text,¹⁷³ the Muses would always be close to Eros, either because they have a reverential fear of him, or because they love him. The remainder of the poem stresses the positive influence of love on poetry, and does so by revisiting two of the most famous passages in Greek poetry which had placed the emphasis, rather, on the disturbing power of love. In v. 5 νόον . . . Ἐρωτι δονεύμενος ‘his mind set awirl by Eros’ recalls, though with a positive connotation, Sappho’s destructive Eros: Ἐρος δηῦτέ μ’ ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει ‘Eros who relaxes the limbs sets me whirling again’ (fr. 130.1 Voigt). On the other hand, βαμβαίνει μοι γλώσσα καὶ ὡς πάρος οὐκέτ’ αἶδει ‘my tongue stutters and does not sing like before’ (v. 9) attributes to the absence of erotic inspiration that inability to speak which Sappho (fr. 31.7–9) had described as the effect rather of the presence of the beloved, ὡς γὰρ <ἔς> σ’ ἴδω βρόχε’, ὡς με φώναι- | σ’ οὐδὲν ἔτ’ εἶκει, | ἀλλὰ †κάμ† μὲν γλώσσα †ἔαγε† ‘as soon as I look at you for a moment, I can no longer speak, but my tongue is broken (?)’. Bion’s positive evaluation of love is also strengthened by an echo of Theognis: μάρτυς ἐγὼν ὅτι μῦθος ὄδ’ ἐπλετο πᾶσιν ἀλαθής ‘I am a witness that this story is true for everybody’ (v. 7) derives from Theognis 1225–6, οὐδὲν, Κύρν’, ἀγαθῆς γλυκερώτερον ἐστι γυναικός. | μάρτυς ἐγώ, σὺ δ’ ἐμοὶ γίνου ἀληθοσύνης ‘there is nothing sweeter than a good woman: I am a witness, and you acknowledge this truth’.

Bion’s poem concludes with a *recusatio* of any poetry in praise of any man or god except the beloved Lycidas or Eros himself, because it is only in these cases that μοι χαίροισα διὰ στόματος ῥέει αὐδὰ ‘my voice runs joyfully through my mouth’. In the *Theogony* Hesiod had stated that in the case of those who were loved by the Muses, γλυκερή οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδή ‘his voice runs sweetly from his mouth’ (v. 97), and Hesiod’s Muses inspired their protégés to sing of κλεῖα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων [. . .] μάκαράς τε θεούς ‘the glorious deeds of the men of the past . . . and the blessed gods’ (vv. 100–1), that is to say, roughly the themes that the Bion of

¹⁷³ Cf. Reed (1997) 159.

fr. 9 rejects.¹⁷⁴ Bion's affirmation of the impossibility of composing poetry which is not erotic becomes, as is well known, a very common motif in Latin elegiac poetry of the first century BC,¹⁷⁵ but it is not at all widespread in Greek poetry. Perhaps the only real parallel is *Anacreontea* 23:

θέλω λέγειν Ἀτρείδης,
θέλω δὲ Κάδμον ᾄδειν,
ὁ βάρβιτος δὲ χορδαῖς
ἔρωτα μοῦνον ἤχεϊ.
ἦμειψα νεῦρα πρώην
καὶ τὴν λύρην ἄπασαν·
κἀγὼ μὲν ἦδον ἄθλους
Ἡρακλέους, λύρη δὲ
ἔρωτας ἀντεφώνει.
χαίροιτε λοιπὸν ἡμῖν,
ἦρωες· ἡ λύρη γάρ
μόνους ἔρωτας ᾄδει.

I want to sing of the Atreidai, I want to sing of Cadmus, but the barbitos with its strings only plays love for me. Yesterday I changed the strings, and even the whole lyre, and I started to sing of the deeds of Heracles, but as answer the lyre gave back love. So, farewell, heroes. My lyre sings only of love.

Relative chronology cannot be established, as very few of the *Anacreontea* are datable, but we may surmise that the *Anacreontea* poets recognised a kindred spirit in Bion. Bion's programmatic opening to fr. 9, *ταὶ Μοῦσαι τὸν Ἔρωτα*, reappears as the introduction to *Anacreontea* 19, another text which defends the compatibility of Eros and the Muses: the Muses have chained Eros and handed him over to the custody of Beauty, and even when Aphrodite goes to free him with a ransom, Eros does not want to leave, because he has learnt how to become a slave (*δουλεύειν δεδίδακται*) of the Muses themselves and of Beauty. For the poet of this poem, the Callimachean (and Bionean?) tag was already a crucial programmatic marker, which has been decisive on the very shape of the poem. Rhythmically, the phrase, which occupies the opening of a hexameter up to the feminine caesura, is very rare in the hemiambs or anacastic Ionic dimeters of the *Anacreontea*, but here it conditions the versification of the whole poem, which is entirely composed of such stichic lengths and therefore in clear contrast with the polymorphous metrics of most of the *Anacreontea*.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Fantuzzi (1980b).

¹⁷⁵ It is sufficient to refer to the opening lines of 1.1 or to 2.18.1–18 of Ovid's *Amores*. For a recent discussion cf. J. P. Sullivan, 'Form Opposed: Elegy, Epigram, Satire', in A. J. Boyle (ed.), *Roman Epic* (London–New York 1993) 145–61.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Fantuzzi (1994).

Another passage of Bion also seems to look forward to Latin elegy. Fr. 16 picks up the Theocritean theme of the love of the Cyclops for Galatea, but it presents a new kind of behaviour and a new psychology. Here, the Cyclops declares:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν βασεῦμαι ἐμὰν ὁδὸν ἐς τὸ κάταντες
τῆνο ποτὶ ψάμαθόν τε καὶ αἰόνα ψιθυρίσδων,
λισσόμενος Γαλάτειαν ἀπηνέα· τὰς δὲ γλυκείας
ἐλπίδας ὑστατίω μέχρι γήραος οὐκ ἀπολειψῶ.

But I will go along my way towards the slope down there to the sandy beach, murmuring a song and pleading with cruel Galatea: I will not abandon my sweet hopes until extreme old age. (Bion fr. 16)

This short fragment presents incurable passion in an innovatory way: the Cyclops proposes to go down to the seashore and to whisper his love song for Galatea to the sea; here, the lover never abandons hope, and love poetry nourishes, rather than extinguishes, that hope.¹⁷⁷ What followed this fragment we do not, of course, know – another Cyclopean serenade and more self-deception perhaps –¹⁷⁸ but, in itself, this declaration of eternal faithfulness to hope and to the courting of only one woman finds very few parallels in Greek poetry. Of irony there is no obvious sign,¹⁷⁹ and this Cyclops appears very different from the grotesquely parodic monster of Theocritus; if anything, Bion's Cyclops seems closer to the earnest Corydon of *Eclogue* 2, whose principal model is, of course, the Cyclops of *Idyll* 11. Indeed, Bion's Cyclops, at least in this fragment, is even more earnest than Corydon, because Corydon, far from expressing undying faithfulness, echoes the Theocritean model with an attitude that is anything but elegiac: *inuenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexin* 'you will find another Alexis, if this one does not accept you' (v. 73).

The attitude towards love of fr. 16 finds a parallel at the level of poetics in fr. 3, which has sometimes been thought to belong to the song of the Cyclops and Galatea:¹⁸⁰

Μοῖσας Ἔρωσ καλέοι, Μοῖσαι τὸν Ἔρωτα φέροισιν·
μολπὰν ταῖ Μοῖσαι μοι αἰεὶ ποθέοντι διδοῖεν,
τὰν γλυκερὰν μολπὰν, τᾶς φάρμακον ἄδιον οὐδέν.

¹⁷⁷ Reed (1997) 190–1 detects a connection between the last line of our fragment and Theocritus 2.164 ἐγὼ δ' οἰσῶ τὸν ἐμὸν πόθον ὡσπερ ὑπέσταν 'but I will endure my passion, just as it has come upon me'. If Bion did have this passage in mind, then he has substituted the positive idea of eternal hope for the 'endurance' of a burdensome passion.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Reed (1997) 191.

¹⁷⁹ W. Arland, *Nachtheokritische Bukolik bis an die Schwelle der lateinischen Bukolik* (Leipzig 1937) 46–7 already insisted on the greater 'seriousness' of Bion's Cyclops.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. G. R. Holland, 'De Polyphemo et Galatea', *Leipziger Studien zur klass. Philologie* 7 (1884) 250.

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Let Eros call the Muses, and may the Muses bring Eros. May the Muses give me – to me, always in love¹⁸¹ – the sweet song, than which there is no more pleasant medicine. (Bion fr. 3)

Here, Bion combines two traditional topoi, Eros the teacher of poetry (cf. Euripides, fr. 663 etc.) and poetry as a cure for love (Philoxenus, *PMG* 822, Theocritus, *Idyll* 11 etc). The two motifs had probably already been combined by Nicias in the verses (*SH* 566) which, according to the Theocritean scholia, he wrote ‘as an answer to’ the *Cyclops* of Theocritus:

ἦν ἄρ' ἀληθὲς τοῦτο, Θεόκριτε· οἱ γὰρ Ἔρωτες
ποιητὰς πολλοὺς ἐδίδαξαν τοὺς πρὶν ἁμούσους.

This then was true, Theocritus: the Erotes have taught many to be poets, who knew not the Muses before.

Bion's declaration is not only more resolutely serious than Nicias', but also more explicit in its opposition to the motif of poetry as a φάρμακον against love: Bion wants both love poetry and love – both the ‘medicine’ and the ‘illness’ – and thus he establishes the causal (and reversible) nexus between poetry and love which is at the basis of Latin elegiac poetry, but which is quite new in Greek tradition.¹⁸²

One significant parallel to the attitudes of Bion's love poetry in foreshadowing Latin elegy may come from a pseudo-Theocritean poem, *Idyll* 23 ‘The Lover’, which is generally considered to be the work of an author belonging to the ‘school of Bion’.¹⁸³ In the face of the beloved's cruel refusal, a lover kills himself at the beloved's door, but before committing suicide he asks his lover to write on his tomb the epitaph:

τοῦτον ἔρωσ ἔκτεινεν· ὀδοιπόρε, μὴ παροδεύσῃς,
ἀλλὰ στὰς τόδε λέξον· “ἀπηνέα εἶχεν ἑταῖρον”.

Eros killed this man. Traveller, do not pass-by, but stop and say: ‘He had a cruel friend’. ([Theocritus] 23.47–8)

This passage, which is related to, though different from, the epigrammatic motif of the inscription left on the door of the beloved at the end of the *paraklausithyron* (e.g. Meleager, *AP* 5.191.7f. = *HE* 4384f.,

¹⁸¹ This seems the most likely meaning of ἀεὶ ποθέοντι (cf. Theocr. 12.2); some understand ‘always desiring (to receive the song)’.

¹⁸² Given the absence of context, other interpretations can, of course, be imagined: Reed (1997) 146, notes sceptically the possibility that φέροιεν might mean ‘to bring (love) to my beloved’, and not to the poet.

¹⁸³ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Bukoliker* (Berlin 1906) 81–2; P. Radici Colace, ‘La tecnica compositiva dell’ Ἔραστῆς pseudoteocriteo’ *GIF* 23 (1971) 325–46; R. Hunter, ‘The Sense of an Author: Theocritus and [Theocritus]’ in R. K. Gibson and C. S. Kraus, *The Classical Commentary* (Leiden 2002) 89–108.

AP 12.23.3f. = *HE* 4526ff.),¹⁸⁴ is a very rare Greek example (however, cf. Meleager, *AP* 5.215.5f. = *HE* 4276ff.) of the elegiac motif of the lover who asks for his tomb to have a tombstone immortalising his commitment to love (e.g., Ovid, *Trist.* 3.3.71–6, [Tibullus] 3.2.27–30, Propertius 2.13.31–6). With the hoped-for epitaph we may also compare Propertius 2.1, another dream of death, where Propertius imagines that Maecenas, as he passes the poet's tomb, plays the traditional epigrammatic rôle of the wayfarer who comments on the dead man's fate (v. 78):

huic misero fatum *dura puella* fuit.

It is, of course, difficult to say to what extent Bion's poetry – for example, the love poems for Lycidas – and that of his 'school' were really forerunners of, or parallels to, Latin elegy. Bion and the poets of the *Anacreontea* do share a conception of love quite different from the tormenting illness which the intellectualism of Theocritus and the epigrammatists had seen in passion and the poetry devoted to it, and from which not even Meleager could free himself completely. This liberation comes from defining themselves in terms which are not in fact very different from those subsequently used by the Latin elegists: love poetry is an 'inevitable' choice which excludes all other kinds of poetry, and there is a clear and inevitable connection between this choice and the actual experience of love in one's own life. Furthermore, as we have seen, Bion's Cyclops appears to dedicate his life to courting his beloved with song, and he declares that he will never abandon hope: both ideas are very common in Latin elegy. Nevertheless, we must be very cautious here. Stobaeus, the anthologist to whom we are indebted for almost all the fragments of Bion, is mainly interested in collecting gnomistic maxims, and thus most of the passages by Bion that we have are programmatic verses about love or love poetry; apart from frs. 11 and 16, we have very little that can be considered to put those programmes into practice. The protagonists who use 'I' in frs. 11 and 16 are not the poet, but, respectively, a shepherd and the Cyclops, and the majority of the speculations about love that we find in Bion's fragments may be supposed to have a bucolic setting and to have been spoken by pastoral 'masks' (just as all the authors of the *Anacreontea* were masked as Anacreons at a symposium). It would thus appear that the subjectivity – whether real or literary – which had been at the basis of lyric poetry, of some archaic elegy, and of the erotic epigram, and which was to become the basic perspective of Latin elegiac poetry,¹⁸⁵ remained foreign to Bion's poetry, just as it did to Hellenistic erotic-mythological elegy.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. F. O. Copley, *TAPhA* 71 (1940) 61.

¹⁸⁵ For this distinction, cf. the first chapter of A. A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love Elegy* (Oxford 1938), and the last chapter of Cairns (1979).

An important demonstration of both this difference and of the importance of Bion as a model for the elegiac poets is offered by Propertius 2.13, which in the past was regularly considered a conflation of two distinct poems, though its unity has been asserted by most modern critics.¹⁸⁶ The poet presents himself as a man who has been wounded several times by love and is dedicated to the love poetry which will please his beloved Cynthia; his hope is that she may come to love him until (and even after) death and weep for him in a funeral ceremony, which the poet wishes to be without any pomp, but marked by Cynthia's most sincere grief and followed by a constant veneration of his tomb (vv. 17–42); the poet has suffered greatly, and it would have been better for him to have died at birth, above all because Cynthia will not be able to call him back to life, even if she invokes him after death (vv. 43–58). The description of the poet's funeral and the mourning for him have an important debt to Bion's *Epitaph for Adonis*,¹⁸⁷ a poem which describes the mourning of Aphrodite for her beloved Adonis, who has just been killed by a wild boar. It is Propertius himself who announces the relationship with this mythological and textual paradigm at the close of the poem (vv. 51–8):

tu tamen amisso non numquam flebis amico:
fas est praeteritos semper amare uiros.
testis, cui niueum quondam percussit Adonem
uenantem Idalio uertice durus aper;
illis formosus iacuisse paludibus, illic
diceris effusa te, Venus isse coma.
sed frustra mutos reuocabis, Cynthia, manis:
nam mea qui poterunt ossa minuta loqui?

But you will weep many a time for your lost friend: it is right always to love men who have died. She is a witness of this, who suffered when the snow-white Adonis was killed by a cruel boar, while he was hunting on Mount Idalium: they say that the handsome youth lay in those marshes, and that you, O Venus, arrived there with your hair trailing. But you, O Cynthia, will call back in vain my mute spirit: how will my bones, reduced to dust, be able to speak?

The description of Adonis as *niueus* 'snow-white' points specifically to Bion's telling of the myth. This is a rare poetical term, and here it seems to pick up χιόνεος, which itself is very rarely used in Greek to describe the colour of the skin, but which is used twice in this way in Bion's *Epitaphios*: χιονέας κατὰ σαρκός 'through his snow-white skin' (v. 10) and μαζοῖ | χιόνεοι 'snow-white breasts' (vv. 26–7). The detail of Venus wandering with

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Papanghelis (1987) 50–79, L. P. Wilkinson, 'The Continuity of Propertius 2.13' *CR* 16 (1966) 141–44, W. A. Camps, *Propertius. Elegies, Book II* (Cambridge 1967) 115.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Papanghelis (1987) 64–70.

her hair unbound (v. 56), a typical gesture of grief, perhaps recalls specifically vv. 19–20. of Bion's poem, ἅ δ' Ἀφροδίτα | λυσαμένα πλοκαμίδης ἀνὰ δρυμῶς ἀλλάγηται 'and Aphrodite wanders through the woods with her hair unbound'¹⁸⁸; *diceris* 'they say that you' (v. 56), with which the detail is introduced, is a very familiar kind of 'Alexandrian footnote' denoting the existence of poetic sources.¹⁸⁹ So, too, some of the details of the funeral rites and Cynthia's imagined mourning (vv. 21–2, 27–30) find striking parallels in Aphrodite's mourning for Adonis (vv. 24,¹⁹⁰ 77, 11–14¹⁹¹).

Relevant also is Propertius 2.19. Here, as in 2.13, there is a kind of dream, this time about a possible stay of Cynthia in the countryside; the poet too will dedicate himself to the worship of Diana, putting aside that of Venus (*me sacra Dianae / suscipere et Veneris ponere uota iuvat*), and he will hunt, directing the dogs himself (*audaces ipse monere canis*), but with all due caution:

non tamen ut uastos ausim temptare leones
aut celer agrestis comminus ire sues.
haec igitur mihi sit lepores audacia mollis
excipere et structo figere auem calamo.

Not, however, to the point of having the courage to challenge powerful lions, or, with a rapid movement to close with wild boars. May this, then, be my courage, to catch timid hares with a net, and to hit birds with arrows. (Propertius 2.19.21–4)

Here, we may be reminded of the rebuke that Aphrodite pronounces over the corpse of Adonis in vv. 60–1 of the *Epitaphios*, τί γάρ, τολμηρέ, κυνάγεις; | καλὸς ἐὼν τί τοσοῦτον ἐμήναο θηρὶ παλαίειν; 'but why do you recklessly give orders to the dogs? You who are handsome, why did you long to fight against a wild beast?' Perhaps, too, there is also an anticipation of the more detailed warning which Ovid, in the wake of both Bion and Propertius, attributes to the goddess when, in *Metamorphoses* 10.533–52 at

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Papanghelis (1987) 66, following J. André, *Étude sur les termes de couleur dans la langue latine* (Paris 1949) 375. The word *reuocabis* may also recall the Greek ἀνακλείουσι (v. 94); Adonis wishes to reply to the mourners (οὐ μὲν οὐκ ἐθέλει, v. 96), but Kore does not let him go, and the tone of the rhetorical question in v. 58 in Propertius may suggest an analogous impossible desire to answer Cynthia.

¹⁸⁹ On the use of this kind of 'allusive footnote' cf., most recently, Hinds (1998) 1–5.

¹⁹⁰ The adverbial neuter πολλά is an emendation of Hermann, for the transmitted παῖδα or πόδα. If we accept the variant παῖδα, the meaning will be 'shouting in the Oriental manner, and calling her husband and her son', cf. Reed (1997) 208.

¹⁹¹ The last kiss is repeated also in vv. 45–9, acted out in Aphrodite's appeal to Adonis, rather than narrated: she believes that he is still alive and can therefore transmit his last breath to her. As such, this second passage of Bion appears less close to the perspective of Propertius' v. 29: *osculaque in gelidis ponens suprema labellis*, where the coldness of the lover's lips is a fact that is perceived without any illusions, as in *Ad. ep.* 13–14.

the height of her love for Adonis, she, like Propertius, submits to hunting as a kind of *seruitium amoris*; she dresses like Diana and gives orders to the dogs, but she hunts only animals that can be hunted without danger, such as hares (also mentioned by Propertius), and *a fortibus abstinet apris | raptosque lupos armatosque unguibus ursos | uitat [. . .] te quoque, ut hos timeas [. . .], Adoni, monet fortis' que 'fugacibus esto' | inquit, 'in audaces non est audacia tuta. | parce meo, iuuenis, temerarius esse periclo, | neue feras, quibus arma dedit natura, lacesse . . .'* she refrains from facing up to sturdy boars, rapacious wolves, bears with their dangerous claws [. . .] and she exhorts you, too, Adonis, to be prudent with them [. . .], and she says: "Demonstrate your strength against those animals which easily run away, but with those that are aggressive, courage is dangerous! Avoid being reckless (cf. Bion's $\tau\omicron\lambda\mu\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}$), and running a risk that is mine, and do not provoke beasts which nature has supplied with arms", etc.¹⁹² Ovid thus correctly reads Propertius as having presented himself as a prudent Adonis, who does not commit the sin of recklessness, of which Bion's Aphrodite had accused her beloved.

Certain of Bion's images, like that of the last kiss for the beloved who is already dead, or that of Adonis who is to be placed, even if disfigured by death, on the bed where he had spent his nights of love with Aphrodite (cf. vv. 72–3), are extremely rare in Greek erotic poetry and mythology, but are in tune with the dominant atmosphere of Latin elegiac poetry. Such an extreme manifestation of the ideal of eternal faithfulness is certainly not far from a poem like Propertius 2.13, where the motif of eternal commitment to a single love is intertwined with the thought of death and, in particular, with the changes that death imposes upon eternal love.¹⁹³ Propertius may have seen in Bion not just a precedent for a particular kind of romantic *Stimmung* which combined love and death in highly sensual terms,¹⁹⁴ but also a precedent for his ideal of an eternal singer of a single love and his utopian dream of a pastoral love. Be that as it may, Bion's mythological material is subsumed by Propertius into a serious first-person reflection on life and death,¹⁹⁵ with a transformation of the 'objective' mythological

¹⁹² Theocritus' Daphnis too taunted Aphrodite with Adonis' rashness (1.109–10): cf. Fantuzzi (1995b). What unites the texts of Bion, Propertius and Ovid is their emphasis on the distinction between animals that are not dangerous and those animals to be avoided.

¹⁹³ This poem is not an isolated episode in elegiac poetry: cf. Propertius 1.17.19–24, 3.16.21–30, Tibullus 1.1.61–8, 1.3, Ovid, *Am.* 3.9.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Papanghelis (1987) 65–70. Another demonstration of the influence of Bion's *Epitaph for Adonis* and the pseudo-Moschean *Epitaph for Bion* (which imitates the former) in Latin elegiac reflections on death can be seen in the fact that Ovid, *Amores* 3.9 alludes to these two poems: cf. J. D. Reed, 'Ovid's Elegy on Tibullus and its Models' *CPh* 92 (1997) 260–69.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Papanghelis (1987) 78.

into the 'subjective', which is analogous to, though perhaps more radical than, the transformations of, say, Propertius 1.18¹⁹⁶ and Catullus 68.¹⁹⁷ The extant poetry of Bion thus suggests that the gap between the ideology of love found in Latin elegiac poetry and that found commonly in Hellenistic Greek poetry, particularly the epigram, was considerably reduced in the second and first centuries BC. The combination of Bion's erotic values and the coincidence between *persona loquens* and author, which had existed in archaic lyric poetry and in epigram, would render more credible and immediate the exclusive, eternal faithfulness to the beloved and to love poetry which is claimed by Latin elegists.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. F. Cairns, 'Propertius 1.18 and Callimachus, Acontius and Cydippe' *CR* 20 (1969) 131–4.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. C. W. Macleod, 'A Use of Myth in Ancient Poetry' *CQ* 24 (1974) 82–8.