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Acknowledgements

The present work represents my initial foray into Theocritean studies, allowing me to indulge an interest in Theocritean bucolic that developed during my graduate career. This intellectual journey, however, was only possible with the help of numerous guides whose invaluable aid must be duly acknowledged. My thanks are due first to David Konstan, to whom I owe my interest in Theocritus and who, I think, dedicated as much time to reading and commenting on drafts as I did to writing (and re-writing) them. His honest, yet encouraging criticism was always welcome and benefited this work greatly. I would like to thank also Pura Nieto and Jeri DeBrohun, whose insightful observations allowed me to make vast improvements and broadened my own perspective on Theocritus’ poetry.

To my friends and family I offer my sincere gratitude. Their continual support and encouragement have been of inestimable value to this project. I would like to recognize my parents, especially, as a source of unending encouragement. I have saved for last the person to whom I owe the most thanks. Without my wife, Jenny, I doubt this work would have been possible. She spent countless hours using her impeccable editorial skills to improve it in addition to providing unending motivation and inspiration. She sacrificed more than I could have reasonably asked for the sake of this work, and so I dedicate it to her with all my love.
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Chapter 1

Of the poems contained within the *corpus Theocriteum*, those termed “bucolic” are at once the most iconic for Theocritean poetry as well as the most esoteric. While many fine studies on the bucolic Idylls have been undertaken, few have resulted in anything resembling a *communis opinio* of how the poems should be understood. Even the most basic questions seem to defy definitive answers. Are the herdsmen in the poems country bumpkins or do they rather enjoy a sort of rustic wisdom? Are they intended to be objects of amusement or serious figures and, most importantly, how do the poems relate to each other? All of these questions have been addressed, yet all nonetheless remain open.

Though much about Theocritus’ bucolic poetry is debatable, new approaches continue to appear and to bring fresh perspectives on Theocritus’ work. In a recent study, Mark Payne has argued that the bucolic world of Theocritus’ Idylls represents “fully fictional” fiction, a term Payne uses to describe a particular method of presentation that he contrasts with “mimetic” fiction. Addressing the difference between fully fictional and mimetic fiction, Payne compares works that employ mimetic fiction such as the *Iliad* and *Oedipus Rex* with the dissimilar fictional presentation found, for example, in tales of chivalry:

> because [the agents of mimetic fiction] are recognizably motivated by factors that determine action in the real world, these narratives quite easily fulfill the function mimetic theory envisages for fiction as a cognitive tool for understanding and reflecting upon real-world behavior. On the other hand, works that contain human agents in real world locations, such as the chivalric romance, may be useless as mimetic fiction because of the kinds of character and behavior these agents exhibit, or because they do not engage in activities that would allow us to recognize patterns of real-world possibility and necessity.¹

A fully fictional world, then, is one that does not allow for an elucidation of the reader’s real-world experience through a comparison with the fictional world. Payne’s distinction between fully fictional and mimetic fiction seems an important point for understanding the Idylls. By designating Theocritus’ *boukolika* as “fully fictional,” the temptation to explicate the poems primarily through mimesis diminishes considerably. This opens the way for new insights into the Theocritean herdsman, whose inhabiting of a fully fictional world deemphasizes the social disparity between reader and character by disjoining their worlds: a sophisticated reader of Theocritus’ time might look down on the typical lower-class herdsman, but because the herdsmen of the Idylls do not act in typical ways, the normal relationship of urban reader to rustic subject is disrupted. Because of this novel situation, viewing Theocritus’ herdsmen solely from the lofty perspective of an urban reader does little to illuminate the intricacies of this bucolic world. Recent scholarship has been moving away from the more extreme views of mimetic interpretation—no longer do the songs of modern shepherds, for instance, seem particularly relevant for Theocritean studies—and, indeed, Payne’s view is in many ways the culmination of this trend.

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3 Cf. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*, 169: “Theocritus’ idylls do not invite the reader to identify immediately with the pangs of the enamored herdsman, to feel his desire for an Amaryllis or that of Polyphemus for his Galatea; rather, the audience for pastoral poetry is a kind of bystander or outsider to the action, observing the passion of the figures within the narrative with a detached, amused, and inevitably condescending gaze. The social disparity between the rustic folk within the poem and the poet and his readers outside of it enables a psychological distance to be maintained toward the lovers and their anguish that admits of fellow feeling but forestalls a sense of direct participation in their experiences.” See also Giangrande, “Theocritus’ Twelfth and Fourth Idylls,” 101-109.
Yet Payne’s promising new perspective can be taken a step further. Not only is Theocritus’ bucolic world “fully fictional,” it is also internally consistent in its presentation. By this I do not mean that the bucolic Idylls, when taken together, form anything resembling a single narrative but rather that the aspects of the bucolic world that diverge from mimetic representation do so in a consistent manner. The departures from practical experience that make Theocritus’ world “fully fictional” are elements that appear in many if not all of the bucolic Idylls. These elements, because they are alternate to reality, serve to demarcate the bounds of the fictional bucolic world. In other words, the world of the bucolic Idylls, failing to conform to realistic expectation, consistently creates its own alternatives to particular aspects of reality and it is those alternatives that define the bucolic world. The bucolic world, then, operates based on its own set of rules and precepts which emerge wherever the fiction consistently departs from recognizable reality. Such consistency is a critical feature because it suggests a close relationship between the Idylls and encourages the reader to take a comparative approach to the bucolic poems. In order to expand the theory of “fully fictional” fiction to serve as an approach for examining Theocritus’ consistently structured bucolic world, one must first identify the basis of the “fully fictional” bucolic world—the main point of disjuncture with reality that pervades throughout the bucolic Idylls.

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5 The close relationship of the bucolic Idylls is not a new observation (cf. Segal, “Thematic Coherence,” 176). My approach proposes that in addition to links such as themes and line repetitions, the poems are united by their location in the same fictional world that is markedly nonmimetic. As a result, the bucolic poems are closely united and may well reach their full potential for interpretation only when taken as a whole. For the intertextual potential within Idylls, see Thomas, “Genre through Intertextuality,” 229-238 and Stanzel, “Selbstzitate,” 205-225.
The means by which the bucolic world operates becomes clearer through a comparison with a related but distinct genre: Roman elegy. This similarity has been noted by Paul Veyne: “L’élégie a beau avoir pour théâtre les rues de Rome, Tivoli, les petits ports du Latium ou la côte napolitaine, elle se passe en réalité hors du monde, tout comme la bucolique. Mais, tandis que la fiction pastorale n’a jamais trompé personne, la fiction élégiaque ne compte plus ses victimes.”6 Veyne’s focus, however, is the elegiac world and the “bergers sans l’habit” who inhabit it, and so he uses the fictionality of bucolic poetry as evidence for the fictionality of the elegiac world. In fact, though, he does more than this. Veyne draws a direct connection between the two fictional worlds “Dans la bucolique, donc, des bergers esclaves deviennent consubstantiellement amoureux poètes; dans l’élégie, des chevaliers romains le deviennent non moins consubstantiellement.”7 Veyne depicts the worlds of Roman elegiac poetry and bucolic poetry as essentially the same, only taking place in different settings.

Because Veyne’s sole concern is to explore Roman elegiac poetry, he does not pursue the significance of his comparison between elegiac and bucolic poetry—especially as nonmimetic representations—nor has such a comparison attracted subsequent scholarly attention. This may be due in part to Veyne himself, whose study diminishes erotic elegy to mere playfulness and attacks positions, such as the autobiographical status

6 Veyne, L’élégie érotique romaine, 114.

7 Veyne, L’élégie érotique romaine, 115.

8 It is unfortunate that Veyne does not specify what he means by “bucolic.” Theocritus, of course, comes to mind first, and, in my opinion, his poetry has the most in common with Roman elegy. My discussion here, therefore, will be limited to the bucolic world created by Theocritus. For the relation of later bucolic poets to the elegiac world, see Fantuzzi “Pastoral love and ‘elegiac’ love,” 1-11.
of the elegiac poems, that were already widely abandoned. Nonetheless, Veyne is correct in observing that erotic elegy and bucolic poetry both take place “hors du monde,” regardless of their ostensible setting.

A few years after Veyne’s book was published, Gian Biagio Conte addressed the issue of elegy as genre. After explaining how literary writing creates a rhetoric that “offre un’ideologia e un linguaggio, cioè un modo di riformulare il mondo cavandone solo certi contenuti (che stanno per tutti quanti) e costruendo un’espressione adeguata a tale parzialità,” Conte turns to elegy in particular:

Se questa riduzione del mondo ad un’ottica parziale è la manifestazione obbligata di ogni genere letterario, è pur vero che il genere elegiaco sembra forse proporsi come la realizzazione più compiuta di tale sistematica codificazione, non foss’altro perché l’elegia practica quest’operazione con dichiarata consapevolezza, ne fa il cardine stesso della sua poetica. Il poeta elegiaco fonda appunto la sua identità come diversità, si dichiara chiuso in parte del mondo (diciamo l’amore, per adesso) che a lui pare autosufficiente, che gli pare contenere come in un microcosmo tutto quel che serve per una vita completa: il ‘modello di mondo’ che così viene proposto, se confrontato con la realtà, risulterà parziale e lascerà apparire nette e visibili le sue ideologiche linee di forza.

This description seems hardly less applicable to Theocritean bucolic than to Roman elegy. The bucolic singers as both slaves and rustics are characterized by difference and are also enclosed within their own apparently complete world. This is not precisely the

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9 Conte offers a brief summary of some of the problems regarding Veyne’s book, including those mentioned above. Cf. Conte, Generi e lettori, 90-91, n. 19.

10 Veyne, L’élégie érotique romaine, 114, see also 122: “La distance qui sépare l’élégie du réel apparaît alors aussi grande que celle qui en sépare la bucolique; dans les milieux littéraires de Rome, on trouvait aussi peu de poètes qui le soient comme Ego qu’on ne trouvait, dans les campagnes italiennes, de bergers qui soient poètes comme on l’est dans les bucoliques. Car la combinaison d’un poète de l’amour et d’un homme amoureux est le produit d’une alchimie de fiction…”

11 Conte, Generi e lettori, 54.

12 Conte, Generi e lettori, 55.
same world as elegy; indeed, the “ideological lines of force” that appear in confrontation with reality are not identical to those of elegy, yet I will argue they are just as apparent.

I do not mean to suggest that Theocritean bucolic poetry and Roman elegy construct the same “ideology” for themselves: that they certainly do not. What I do want to propose is that both genres (to use the term loosely for Theocritus’ poetry) take place in a constructed world that openly selects for itself themes that function as the whole of that constructed (“fictive”) world, and thereby both genres become foreign to the reality of the reader through the unrealistic emphasis on only selected elements of reality. I also propose that these unrealistic elements that serve as the primary values in the literary world of the bucolic poems revolve around the closely connected themes of love and song. 13 For elegy, this alternate reality is now fully accepted, though previous studies had sought biographical information in the poems of authors like Propertius. Theocritus, too, has emerged from a period of biographic focus, with much attention currently centered on generic mixing within the Idylls. 14 Such studies are often valuable and enlightening but they tend to treat the bucolic poems, which are frequently termed the first products of a new genre, as isolated works. 15 I propose that the unifying factor among the poems is the bucolic world, by which I mean not the setting but rather Theocritus’ use of a “fully fictional” fiction that, like Roman elegy, admits only fragments of reality—songs about love—which then constitute the whole of the world.

13 Hubbard, Pipes of Pan, 19-21, also notes the importance of song and love for Theocritus’ bucolic poetry.

14 Recognition of the fictional nature of Theocritus’ poetry is not new. Prior to Merkelbach’s mimetic analysis, Reitzenstein proposed that Theocritus’ herdsmen represented contemporary poets (See Reitzenstein, Epigramm und Skolion, 228-242). This “bucolic masquerade” has rightly been discredited, but the underlying appreciation of the poems as representational deserves reconsideration.

15 I am not suggesting that Theocritus intended his bucolics to form a poetic collection, only that the depth of similarity implied in categorizing the bucolic poems as a genre is not always fully appreciated.
within the bucolic poems. Let us term this approach, based on Payne’s theory of “fully fictional” fiction, “bucolic fiction.” With this term I refer to Theocritus’ creation of a persistent fictional world that treats song—especially erotic song—as the focal point to which all else stands in relation. This definition has the benefit of severing the term “bucolic” from ancillary features such as setting, allowing a poem such as Idyll 2 to be considered “bucolic,” though that issue will be addressed in chapter 5.

By approaching Theocritus’ bucolics from the standpoint of bucolic fiction, the fictional similarity shared by the bucolics and Roman elegy becomes apparent. While the bucolic Idylls are often conceived of as imitative, Roman elegy’s disjuncture with the real world has been widely acknowledged. The very idea of servitium amoris is diametrically opposed to traditional Roman custom, and it also does not represent a desire for an epicurean aloofness from war and politics. Rather, the life of the elegiac lover is unenviable and appropriately set in elegiac couplets, the meter of lament. For the bucolic poems, the division between the real world and the bucolic world is more problematic.

Though scholars no longer locate the origin of the bucolic Idylls in the songs of real shepherds, the question of whether individual aspects of the poems find their source in reality still arises from time to time, and not unreasonably so: Theocritus is quite remarkable in the accuracy of his constructed pastoral world. While one may appreciate such details as lambs feeding on olive branches and the smell of rennet emitted by Lycidas’ goatskin, these and other such points should not obscure the overall artificiality of the world Theocritus creates. Mimetic approaches that attempt to

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17 See Vara, “Sources of Theocritean Bucolic,” 335.
reconstruct social reality from clues in the Idylls, such as speculation that certain elements of form found their inspiration in actual shepherds’ songs,\textsuperscript{18} threaten to overshadow the fictionality of the Theocritean world by limiting the role of its herdsmen to imitations of actual shepherds and by obscuring the literary nature of their songs.\textsuperscript{19} This is particularly true in the case of Idylls 4 and 5, which are often considered especially mimetic or realistic in contradistinction to the other bucolic poems.\textsuperscript{20} Mimesis is an important aspect of the bucolic poems, but the poems are not primarily representations of rustic life\textsuperscript{21} but instead vehicles for songs about love placed in the mouths of fictional herdsmen. Mime may have provided the rural setting and the humble station of the characters, but the world is that of Theocritus’ artistic design.

Closer examination of elements traditionally considered most realistic in the Idylls reveals those elements to be among the most significant for the fiction of Theocritean bucolic. As an example, the syrinx\textsuperscript{22} is without doubt the instrument of a

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. Dover, \textit{Theocritus}, Ixi-Ixii who considers Theocritus’ use of symmetrical repetition as lending some support to the notion that Sicilian herdsmen were a source for the bucolic poems.

\textsuperscript{19} For the literary significance of herdsmen, see Gutzwiller, “Herdsmen in Greek Thought,” 1-23.

\textsuperscript{20} Cf. Lawall, \textit{Coan Pastorals}, 52 “Idylls 4 and 5 are essentially mimes, in that the poet attempts to give the illusion of rustic speech and actuality.” See also Gutzwiller, \textit{Pastoral Analogies}, 134-135; Crane, “Realism in the Fifth Idyll,” 108; Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, 76; and Legrand, \textit{Étude sur Théocrite}, 411.

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. Fantuzzi, “‘Demythologizing’ of Poetry,” 135, “So far as we know, the setting and situations of Theocritus’s bucolic poems had no relevant parallel in the previous literary heritage. The ancients, who eagerly quote Sophron’s mimes as sources of the urban mimetic poems 2 and 15, appear to have acknowledged no precedent for them.” Crane, “Realism in the Fifth Idyll,” 108 offers an excellent example of an attempt to reconcile Theocritus’ occasional mimetic realism with his frequent artificiality. See also Fantuzzi and Hunter, \textit{Tradition and Innovation}, 133-134 for the importance of mime.

\textsuperscript{22} Segal, “Thematic Coherence,” 200, has already noted the role of the syrinx as a unifying symbol for the bucolic world. For him, though, it and other aspects shared by the bucolic poems (which he limits to 1, 3-7, and 11) occur on a sliding scale related to value (“fuller or lesser realization of the possibilities of the pastoral locus”) and of function (how a given motif relates to general bucolic themes like love and song). I argue that though the tone of the Idylls may differ, their unifying elements remain equally fictional and applicable to all the Idylls. For a list of such unifying elements, cf. Segal “Thematic Coherence,” 200-207. See also Lawall, \textit{Coan Pastorals}, 133-138 for a list of verbal parallels that occur within the bucolic Idylls.
shepherd, though in Theocritus’ poetry, it is used exclusively for singing. The practical use of the syrinx, to calm and attract animals, is nowhere found in Theocritus’ bucolics. For Theocritus, the syrinx is a poetic instrument. Nowhere does this become clearer than in Id. 4.26-30: BA. φεῦ φεῦ βασεύνται καί ταί βόες, ὡ τάλαν Αἰγών, / εἰς Αἴδαν ὅκα καὶ τὰ κακὰς ἱμάσασο νίκας, / χα’ σύριγξ εὐρωτί παλύνεται, ἂν ποκ’ ἐπάξω. ΚΟ. οὐ τήνα γ’, οὖ Νύμφας, ἐπεὶ ποτὶ Πίσαι ἄφερπσων / δῶρον ἐμοί νυν ἐλείπεν’ ἐγὼ δὲ τίς εἰμὶ μελικτάς. From Battus’ lament, the syrinx might be construed as having a practical function. The cows’ march into Hades, the result of their master’s absence, is given a comical pathos in the image of the moldy syrinx that, abandoned, cannot be used to summon the cows back from death. This is perhaps as close as Theocritus comes to portraying the syrinx as a practical tool, and yet that possibility is shattered by Corydon, who, on the contrary, claims ownership of the syrinx, a gift appropriate for him not as a herdsman but as a singer.

The syrinx, then, is an important though potentially deceptive symbol. It properly belongs in the countryside and therefore adds a mimetic quality to the rustic setting, but

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24 For the evidence of such uses of the syrinx, see Vara “Sources of Theocritean Bucolic,” 338.

25 Corydon does not sing the type of rustic song one might attribute to a shepherd. Instead he claims to know the songs of Glaucus and Pyrrus and begins to sing a praise of Zacynthus. Regarding this Städtelob, Stanzel, Liebende Hirten, 35, notes “Dies ist sicherlich ungewöhnlich im Mund eines Hirten, aber die Formulierung muss wohl so verstanden werden.” Corydon, then, makes it clear exactly what sort of μελικτάς he is. Cf. Serrao, Problemi, 21-28, where he argues that in Idyll 7, Theocritus distinguishes between Lycidas as συρικτάς (28) and Simichidas as οἰδός (38), the former referring specifically to a “pastore-poeta,” the latter to a poet generally. Serrao’s argument is of interest for Idyll 7, but the distinction he makes seems incompatible with the other Idylls. In Idyll 1, for example, Thyris praises the goatherd’s piping (1-3) and requests that he play his syrinx (12-14). Thyris, though, and not the goatherd, is the featured “pastore-poeta” of the Id., who, by all indications, is an οἰδός and not connected with the syrinx. His song (μέλος 7) is praised rather than his instrument, and he is elsewhere connected specifically with singing, not piping (19, 23, 61-62, 145, 148). On the relevance of Glaucus and Pyrrus, see Stephens, “Ptolemaic Pastoral,” 101-102.
as an instrument in the fictional bucolic world it has only poetic associations and serves none of the practical functions that one finds, for instance, in Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe.*

Instead, Theocritus’ presentation of singing shepherds is taken to such an extreme that his characters are sometimes referred to as “shepherd-poets,” a term emphasizing their fictional relationship with song. One need only look to the famous opening of the programmatic Idyll 1 to see the primacy of song for these shepherd-poets:

\[\text{αδύ τι το ψιθύρισμα και ά πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα / ά ποτί ταῖς παγαίσι μελίσθεται, αδύ δὲ καὶ τύ / συρίσδες} \ (1.1-3). \]

Alternatively, Idyll 5, which Segal distinguishes from most of the other bucolics for its “low-toned realism” and which certainly differs in tone from Idyll 1, uses the syrinx in just the same way as Idylls 4 and 1. After Lacon accuses Comatas of stealing his syrinx, Comatas asks rather incredulously when Lacon ever owned a syrinx. He then implies that Lacon would use it for song rather than for any practical purpose:

\[\text{τί δ’ οὐκέτι σὺν Κορύδωμι / ὁρκεὶ τοι καλόμας αὐλὸν ποπύσδεν ἔχοντι;} \ (5.6-7). \]

Though Idylls 1, 4, and 5 have different tonal registers, ranging from the lofty first Idyll to the coarse fifth Idyll, their fictional worlds remain constant, as does the syrinx’s association with song and poetic composition.

The fictionality of the syrinx can also be asserted in another way. Hunter notes that even at the end of the fifth century, metrical and musical rhythm began to diverge and that “in the fourth and third centuries, the crucial performative context for high

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26 Cf. Longus 1.29.2ff., 2.28.3.

27 Segal, “Thematic Coherence,” 177.

28 Segal, “Thematic Coherence,” 184, sees in Idyll 5 “an implicit poetics by virtue of its very form as a singing contest.” Schmidt, “Der Göttliche Ziegenhirt,” also argues that Theocritus’ poetic technique becomes visible in a comparison of Idylls 5 and 7.

29 Hunter, *Archaeology*, 3-4. See also Bing, *Well-Read Muse*, 16-17 with his n. 14.
poetry was recitation, whether to one’s fellow poets or at the court of a patron or at a public ‘poetry festival.’” The recitative nature of third century performance starkly contrasts with the emphasis not simply on “song” but indeed on music implied by the frequent image of the syrinx in Theocritus’ bucolic world. The syrinx as portrayed in the Idylls neither belongs to the practical (one might say “real”) world of shepherds nor accurately reflects the role of music within the performative context of the third century. This divergence between Theocritus’ syrinx and the historical record is yet another intimation of the fictive nature of the Idylls.

To recall for a moment Conte’s view of elegy as the most complete realization of a system of codification, we can now see how Theocritean bucolic positions itself similarly to elegy in this respect. Just as the elegiac lover isolates himself in a world centered on the concept of love, the bucolic herdsman isolates himself in a world centered on song—especially song about unrequited love—indicated in part by the symbolic value of the syrinx. The realism of the bucolic world and, in particular, the debt it may owe to mime do not negate its role as a constructed literary locus with its own rules and values any more than Propertius addressing contemporary figures in his elegies suggests that his poems operate anywhere other than the love-centered elegiac world. The distinction, then, may seem obvious but must be made when addressing bucolic poetry: realistic elements do not mean that the poet seeks to represent faithfully the real world.

If one looks past the realism of the Idylls, it is possible to see Theocritean bucolic operating in a way similar to Roman elegy, though song, primarily about love—and not

30 Hunter, Archaeology, 4.
love alone—forms the center of the bucolic "ideology." Just as the syrinx, though mimetically appropriate to the poems, becomes part of Theocritus’ bucolic fiction only through its unrealistic, nonfunctional portrayal, so too do the herdsmen of the bucolic Idylls owe their greatest significance to their nonmimetic depiction. The fictionality of Theocritus’ shepherd-poets should not be overlooked because of their apparent realism. Though no evidence exists that ancient herdsmen actually spent time singing as some of their modern counterparts have been shown to do, we need not doubt the plausibility of such performances. What can, and indeed must, be questioned is the notion that a real shepherd who passed the time by singing significantly resembled the presentation of bucolic song as found in Theocritus’ Idylls. Theocritus’ herdsmen, after all, do far more singing than herding. Not only is singing the principal activity in which the herdsmen engage within the poems, but other elements also suggest the primacy of song. In Idyll 7, for instance, Lycidas responds to Simichidas’ exhortation to “bucolize”

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31 Love plays an important role, as will be demonstrated below. For Theocritus’ portrayal of love as unattainable in his bucolic poetry, see Stanzel, Liebende Hirten, 145-148.
33 See Merkelbach, “βουκολικοστοι.” Herzfeld, Poetics of Manhood, 139-148 also offers an interesting parallel. For ancient literary sources of rustic singing contests, see Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 256 n. 6.
34 Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 29-44, provides an excellent discussion of the tradition linking herdsmen with poetic activity. The existence of such a tradition makes the fictionality of the Theocritean herdsmen all the more transparent by associating the shepherd-poet of the Idylls with the already old metaphor linking herding with poetic activity. Theocritus’ shepherd-poets are not themselves metaphors but are clearly created with this tradition in mind, and so represent a type of shepherd who never really existed. To this we may add Vara’s observation that “it is not true, however, that real-life shepherds spent their resting hour having loud singing contests … Likewise, though the shepherds may have sung, they certainly did not bet or exchange livestock…” See Vara, “Sources of Theocritean Bucolic,” 337.
35 Cf. Fantuzzi, “Constructive Interpreters,” 237: “Theocritus’ bucolic poetry is based on the idealizing presupposition that the ‘professional’ requirements of a shepherd’s life, associated with the activity of looking after the flock, are but a minor distraction from the principal pastimes of playing music and singing—mainly about love, and often at singing contests—and this presupposition grants the shepherd’s life a straightforwardly stylized ‘simplicity’.”
boukoliasdesthai (7.36), inviting him to listen to the song that he “worked out” (έξεπόνσασα 7.51) on the mountain. Lycidas’ concern for a polished work suggests a reference to poetic composition underlies his description of the song’s composition. Halperin also notes poetic significance in Idyll 7’s presentation of song as he explains the relevance of βουκολιάσδεσθαι: “Lycidas understands the word to refer to the making of ‘bucolic’ song; and as neither of the two compositions entered in the contest bears the slightest relation to cowherds or to their talk, it is abundantly obvious that boukolasdesthai signifies, at least in this context, the process of creating a bucolic poem—it is the terminus technicus for the poetic activity, just as boukolika is the name of the product.”36 Halperin ultimately finds in Theocritus’ poetry the generic origins of bucolic, which I consider problematic, but his observation also suggests the fictionality of the songs in Idyll 7. The type of song to which Lycidas and Simichidas refer has nothing to do with the songs of real shepherds and everything to do with Theocritus’ own poetic activity. Here again, then, the fiction is not mimetic but rather “bucolic” in that, rather than merely creating shepherds who sing folk songs (characters who could perhaps be part of a mimetic fiction), Theocritus presents characters whose views about song seem more appropriate to discussions of poetry than to discussions of rustic performance.37

The fiction of the shepherd-poet creates a closed world in which song holds center stage as the chief preoccupation of its rustic denizens. Similar to the elegiac lover’s complete focus on love, Theocritus’ herdsmen’s songs are more than performance (such

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36 Halperin, Before Pastoral, 121. For a similar argument, see Van Sickle “Epic and Bucolic,” 57. I do not necessarily agree with Halperin and Van Sickle that Theocritus intended to create a generic terminology with the term boukolasdesthai but I do think that it serves to refer specifically to the type of song found in the fictional bucolic world that Theocritus creates. Against Halperin and Van Sickle, see Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 3-4 and “Theocritean Poetry Books,” 121.

37 Cf. 7.39-41, 45-48.
as Thyrsis’ song in Idyll 1): they are the means by which shepherd-poets interact with other inhabitants of the bucolic world. Idyll 7 again offers an excellent example in the interaction between Simichidas and Lycidas. The cryptic relationship between these two characters is overtly poetic, culminating in Lycidas’ bestowal of his staff—a recollection of Hesiod’s poetic initiation by the Muses—following Simichidas’ song (7.128-129).

The role of song in this Idyll is complicated, but its importance is clear, and as the poem as a whole is widely considered programmatic, little more need be said than that it exemplifies the conception of song as the focal point of the self-contained bucolic world.

Song is also a central feature of Idyll 5, a poem considered among Theocritus’ most mimetic. Idyll 5 opens with mutual accusations of theft between Comatas and Lacon that are quickly and abruptly set aside as Lacon proposes a singing match (5.20-22). It can hardly be a coincidence that the contest ends following Lacon’s assertion that he gave away his syrinx, a claim that contradicts his earlier claim that it was stolen. The syrinx is conspicuously present at the beginning of the Idyll and at the sudden conclusion of the singing match, suggesting a link between the initial conflict and the singing match itself.

Lacon strengthens this potential connection by his sudden shift from addressing Comatas’ claim to innocence to his proposal of a singing contest (α’ τοι πιστεύσαιμι, τά

Δάφνιδος ἄλγε’ ἀροίμαν. / ἀλλ’ οὖν αἱ κα λῆς ἔριφον θέμεν, ἔστι μὲν οὐδέν / ἱερόν, ἀλλά γέ τοι διαείσομαι ἔστε κ’ ἀπείπησ, 5.20-22), leaving the reader to ponder what in the poem’s opening could prompt Lacon’s proposal of an agon, other than that issues in the bucolic world are settled by musical competition. The singing match effectively

38 The question of the criteria by which Comatas is deemed the winner remains an unresolved problem. The fact that Lacon claims to have given his syrinx to Eumedes would seem to have little meaning for Morson, who would not have heard Lacon’s earlier accusation that Comatas stole his syrinx. For a good summary of views on Comatas’ victory, see Crane, “Realism in the Fifth Idyll,” 107 n. 1.
acts as a means of resolving the conflict between Lacon and Comatas. The precise reason for Lacon’s defeat is not specified, but it is noteworthy that his last couplet in the competition is a claim to have given away his syrinx, a symbol of bucolic poetry. The degree to which Lacon’s claimed abandonment of this bucolic symbol affects the outcome of the *agon* is unclear, but his defeat soon after that claim underscores the inappropriateness of such an act.

The Idyll’s initial exchange and singing contest are also linked by their form. The opening lines reflect the contest’s structure, which is characterized by the presentation of a theme that is then taken up and modified by the respondent. The *agon* is not confined to the portion of the Idyll that Morson adjudicates but rather permeates the entire poem. Since the contest is a *singing* competition, the structure of the poem’s opening suggests that the two contestants have not only begun to compete but to sing as well. The entire amoebaean exchange—including both the initial exchange and the *agon* proper—is then framed by the image of the syrinx, which, as representative of Theocritean bucolic song, nicely complements the structural similarity between the *agon* and the poem’s opening lines by including the presence of song from the very beginning of the Idyll. Lacon and Comatas not only resolve their differences through song but structure their entire method of communication in the form of a singing competition.

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40 It is also worth noting that the singing match proper is framed by the theme of love (following the invocation at 5.80-83, erotic themes appear at 5.84-92 and again at 5.132-135). Love, like song, is an important theme for the bucolic world. See below.

41 I shall treat Idyll 5 at length in chapter 2.
Idyll 6, a poem whose challenge to interpreters equals that of Idyll 5, also suggests that song plays a role in the relationship of its shepherd-poets. It is relevant that the characters’ own direct speech occurs only in the songs they sing, giving particular emphasis to their roles as singers. Even more indicative of the critical role of song are the closing remarks provided by the narrator: τόσον εἰπὼν τὸν Δάφνιον ὁ Δαμοίτας ἐφίλησεν. / χωμέν τῷ σύριγγε, ὁ δὲ τῷ καλὸν αὐλὸν ἔδωκεν. / αὖλει Δαμοίτας, σύρισε δὲ Δάφνιος ὁ Βοῦτας (6.42-44). Whether we are to infer from line 42 an erotic relationship between the two characters is unclear, but the exchange of instruments seems to signal an important role for song in the relationship of Damoetas and Daphnis. Indeed, Theocritus presents these two shepherd-poets almost exclusively in terms of song.

Representations of singing aside, the role of song in the bucolic world is more critical than is at first apparent. As I have already suggested for Idylls 5 and 6, the possession or exchange of instruments reflects the primacy of song in the bucolic world. Instances in which instruments change hands are frequent and constitute a motif within the bucolic poems, a motif that contains significance beyond mimetic or musical representation. To take two examples of this motif, in Idyll 1 Daphnis, near death, gives his syrinx to Pan (1.128-129), and in Idyll 4 Corydon tells Battus that he received Aegon’s syrinx as a gift before he left for Pisa (4.29-31). In both cases, the syrinx does more than heighten song’s presence: it functions as a symbol of bucolic song. When characters leave the bucolic world, they pass on their syrinxes to other singers. Not only, then, is the syrinx denied a practical function in Theocritus’ poetry, but its significance as

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42 Bowie, “Frame and Framed,” 93-95, tentatively proposes an erotic relationship between Daphnis and Damoetas.
a symbol of the bucolic world is often tied to its ownership. Passing on and exchanging instruments are other means by which song governs the interaction between bucolic characters, and these actions may symbolically hold a great amount of interpretive meaning, perhaps even representing Theocritus’ poetics. The Daphnis of Idyll 1 and Aegon of Idyll 4 pass on their syrinxes because they are leaving the bucolic world, and, significantly, both pass on their instruments to other singers.

To return to Idyll 5, the inappropriateness of Lacon’s claim to have given away his syrinx becomes more blatant when it is shown that bucolic characters are supposed to entrust their instruments to other singers, not their beloveds. At 5.134-135, Lacon sings, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ Ἕμιῆδες ἔραμαι μέγα· καὶ γὰρ ὅκ’ αὐτῶ / τὰν σύριγγ’ ωρεχα, καλὸν τί με κάρτ’ ἐφίλησεν. Lacon boasts that he received a kiss in exchange for his syrinx, a claim that results in a rebuke from Comatas and, for whatever precise reason, Lacon’s defeat. By contrast, in Idyll 6 Damoetas kisses Daphnis before the two exchange instruments. Regardless of any potential eroticism, the two herdsmen are undeniably singers and appropriate recipients of instruments. In contrast, Lacon’s action likely violated bucolic mores by exchanging an instrument for a kiss from the beloved. His disregard for the symbolic value of the syrinx stands out against Daphnis and Aegon—who entrust their instruments to other bucolic singers before departing from the bucolic realm—and against Daphnis and Damoetas, who exchange instruments, to affirm their mutual regard for each other’s skill.⁴³

⁴³ Cf. Lawall, Coan Pastorals, 71, who says, “although the strife between Galatea and Polyphemus will never be terminated, the initial touch of strife between Daphnis and Damoetas disappears after the songs and is replaced by total conciliation. The songs themselves bring about this reversal.”
The primacy of song, found both in instantiations of song and in its symbols, establishes the foundation of the fictional bucolic world, and those symbols are often polyvalent, serving as signifiers of poetic activity. This consideration, widely recognized in programmatic poems such as Idylls 1 and 7, should not be overlooked in connection with other, more mimetic Idylls. In regard to the motif described above, when one recognizes the value of the syrinx as a signifier of a poetics, the act of transferring that symbol between characters represents a transfer of poetic principles. The issue of poetic principles, most clearly raised in Idyll 7, may actually pervade even the most mimetic of Theocritus’ Idylls, a possibility that only arises when one recognizes the fictionality of the poems.

While Theocritus’ poetry centers itself on song—the small part of reality that, as the whole of the bucolic world, forms the basis of Theocritean bucolic fiction—the consistency of the bucolic world, a feature often acknowledged but not always fully appreciated, is also created by the frequent representation of unattainable love as the subject of the shepherd-poet’s song. The consistency with which shepherd-poets sing about unattainable love—Idylls 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11[44] all contain songs featuring unattainable or unrequited love—creates thematic cohesion. This persistent attitude toward love varies in presentation (for example, Thyrsis sings of Daphnis’ refusal to submit to love, the goatherd of Idyll 3 vainly sings to Amaryllis, and Polyphemus in Idyll 11 sings to cure his lovesickness) but remains consistent enough as a theme to create a sense of unity among the Idylls. Love’s importance equals that of song, though it functions differently. While song offers insight into a specifically poetic experience—

[44] I have categorized as bucolic all the Idylls that I consider to participate in the fictional bucolic world that Theocritus creates.
especially contemporary poetic style—Theocritus presents love as a generalized human experience rather than a narrative account, allowing for broad interpretive possibilities beyond the issue of poetics. The importance of love will be explored further below, but first let us consider how love supports the notion of bucolic fiction.

In addition to providing thematic unity, the manner in which Theocritus portrays frustrated love reinforces the fictive quality of the poems by signaling the distance of the bucolic world from the reality of the reader and poet. As Konstan notes “the isolation, as though under glass, of the pastoral lover from the world of the poet and the reader—the transmitter and the receiver of the poetic message, in the language of semiology—is mirrored within the poem in the lover’s loneliness and frustration and in his or her incapacity to win the beloved and bridge the gap that divides them.” The bucolic fiction of the Idylls departs from reality in the fiction of the shepherd-poet, but the content of the songs also furthers the sense of separation from reality. A reader’s response to the characters of the bucolic world will vary from poem to poem, but a gap always exists between character and reader, if by no other means than the divide between urban reader and rural character. The gap between reader and character is characteristic of Theocritus’ bucolic poetry and has an important effect on the Idylls. The shepherd-poet’s independence from the reader’s expectation allows Theocritus to use his shepherd-poets to convey notions that, coming from a mimetic representation of a herdsman, would destroy the illusion of realism.

Theocritus’ readers are often uncertain where they stand in relation to the shepherd-poet. As herdsmen the characters are clearly of a lower social status than the

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45 Konstan, Sexual Symmetry, 169. For a more detailed discussion, see Isenberg and Konstan “Pastoral Desire,” 302-315.
reader and yet they often seem to possess levels of knowledge belied by their low station. There may be some value in applying to Theocritean poetry Empson’s view of pastoral characters as a combination of the upper and lower classes in which “simple people express strong feelings (felt as the most universal subject, something fundamentally true about everybody) in learned and fashionable language (so that you wrote about the best subject in the best way).” Empson’s observation allows us to reconcile Lycidas’ sentiments about poetry and the goatherd of Idyll 1’s warning of the ephemeral nature of man, both of which contain a learned quality but also attain a degree of purity or innocence through the speaker’s close association with nature. Not all of Theocritus’ herdsmen possess the austerity of Lycidas, and so Empson’s description of pastoral characters cannot be universally applied to Theocritus’ bucolics. Nevertheless, the notion that humble characters may express sophisticated thoughts is important for Theocritus’ bucolic fiction.

Kathryn Gutzwiller proposes an interesting solution to the problem of the herdsmen’s range of respectability by arguing for two separate yet complementary ways of reading the bucolics, the analogical and the mimetic. Gutzwiller defines the mimetic reader as one who “attributes what is said in the poem solely or primarily to the voice of the character, so that the reader’s inability to integrate surface analogies into rationalized meaning is explained as a result of the character’s naïveté.” In contrast, “the analogical reader identifies the voice of the character closely with the voice of the poet, thus associating reconstructed meanings with authorial intention and often deemphasizing the

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46 Empson, Versions of Pastoral, 11.
47 Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 18.
gap between naïve and sophisticated levels of speaking.” The two forms of reading proposed by Gutzwiller broaden the interpretive possibilities of the Idylls by eliminating the need for a single, narrow view of Theocritean herdsmen. Nevertheless, the shepherd-poets of the Idylls are still a confusing picture. While several characters in the Idylls do appear comic and beneath the reader (such as the goatherd of Idyll 3), are Daphnis and Damoetas, for instance, who communicate through song, meant to be conceived of as beneath the reader or perhaps simply at a remove from him? With what degree of certainty can the poet’s voice be isolated from that of the character?

Viewing the characters of the bucolic world as subject to the influence of bucolic fiction—that is, as characters who do not represent herdsmen in reality but only maintain some realistic trappings—greatly eases the tension between sophisticated poetry and rustic naïveté. Though by no means solving the problem of characterization in the Idylls, bucolic fiction offers a new standpoint from which to examine each poem. Because the herdsmen of the bucolic poems do not equate to herdsmen in the real world and so do not represent herdsmen in a purely mimetic sense, the expectation of rustic ignorance diminishes, freeing characters such as the goatherd of Idyll 1 from charges of naïveté.48

In the case of characterization, Roman elegy again offers a helpful comparison. The dominae and Ego of elegy are, like the herdsmen of the bucolics, at a distance from the reader, and much about them is uncertain. Veyne observes that “il faut reconnaître qu’Ego est un faisceau de contradictions: il est de la bonne société et vit dans la mauvais,

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48 I do not mean to suggest that Theocritus’ characters are identical, only that they need not all be viewed as ignorant rustics. Cf. Fantuzzi, “‘Demythologizing’ of Poetry,” 135-136, “[The bucolic character] may range from sublimity (in the case of Daphnis in Thyris’ [sic] song in Id. i), to a sort of idealized normality (compare Id. vii), to a vulgarity and banality typical of the popular mime of the Hellenistic age.”
il est seigneur et esclave."\textsuperscript{49} Elegiac dominae also defy exact identification except for the fact that they are of a lower station than the reader, whatever that station may be, and that they exist at a distance from his social experience.\textsuperscript{50} As Veyne puts it, the details of Propertius’ Cynthis are enveloped in “un flou artistique” while Tibullus prefers for his Delia “l’incohérence négligée.”\textsuperscript{51} Veyne is certainly right in emphasizing the uncertainty in the characterization of dominae. That Cynthia and Delia are active in the realm of low society is clear—a feature necessary to create a separation between the reader and the characters—but by obscuring the exact social position of the dominae, the elegiac poets further emphasize the fiction of their mistresses and create poetry that is about being in love rather than an account of a specific relationship between the poet and his mistress. Just as the precise status of the elegiac domina appears to be in constant flux, or at least never specified, so too does the specific social position of the Theocritean shepherd-poet remain by and large an open question.

Herding is unquestionably a low class occupation, but it is not exclusively the occupation of slaves. Several figures stand out from the literary tradition as shepherds of nonservile status, such as Hesiod,\textsuperscript{52} Paris, Aeneas,\textsuperscript{53} and even the god Apollo. Because Theocritus does not make an issue of the status of his herdsmen, he creates a haziness about them that, as in the case of Roman elegy, serves to generalize rather than particularize the events of the poem, specifically the performance of song and the

\textsuperscript{49} Veyne, L’élégie érotique romaine, 106.

\textsuperscript{50} See Veyne, L’élégie érotique romaine, 98-99.

\textsuperscript{51} Veyne, L’élégie érotique romaine, 101.

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Hes. Theog. 22-23.

\textsuperscript{53} Cf Il. 20.188-189. See also Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 27, on Homeric warriors who shepherd their own flocks.
sentiments about love usually contained therein. The bucolic Idylls are poems about the experience of song and love rather than about a particular song or love affair. This focus on the universal experience rather than the individual act can be felt quite easily by the reader, and it is worth considering briefly some of the elements that convey this sense, beginning with the shepherd-poets.

Social status becomes an issue only in Idyll 5, in which Theocritus makes clear that both Lacon and Comatas are slaves. Aside from this single Idyll, no other shepherd-poet can be clearly identified as holding a particular social position. The relative obscurity of the bucolic herdsman stands out clearly when the bucolic poems are juxtaposed with Idyll 15. In his Adoniasousae, Theocritus presents two women, Gorgo and Praxinoa, whose conversation reveals much about their personal lives. Their predilection for chattering gives the reader a sense of familiarity with the characters. Their fears, wonder, and annoyance are all facets that serve to particularize their journey to the Adonia. By comparison, Lycidas remains enigmatic; his destination is a mystery, as is his precise relationship with Simichidas. Lycidas owes much of his authority to initiate Simichidas as a bucolic poet to his esoteric nature and so offers an extreme example of the effect caused by a lack of specific information, but he demonstrates well the authority implicit in the utterance of a generalized character, whose statements attain a gnomic quality rather than being colored by the character’s motivations and nature.

I do not mean to suggest that the bucolic countryside is a place where status does not exist but rather that Theocritus enhances the effect of his bucolic fiction by restricting

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54 For the significance of the details about Lacon’s and Comatas’ life, see Stephens, “Ptolemaic Pastoral,” 103-104.

55 Some details about Theocritus’ characters are available in the poems. Milo of Idyll 4, for example, is unlikely to be a slave since he leaves the countryside to compete in the Olympic games.
the details he provides about his shepherd-poets. Because their precise status remains uncertain, they become all the more detached from reality and entrenched in the fictional world. Shepherd-poets are certainly beneath the reader by virtue of their occupation as herdsmen, but the reader cannot know for certain how far beneath him they are. By deemphasizing status, Theocritus surrounds his characters with the same ambiguity. That ambiguity is crucial because it strengthens the sense that the bucolic world is a unified place, foreign to the reader’s experience and populated by characters whose status is rendered irrelevant. As readers we may look down on bucolic herdsmen, but we must also admit the aporia that results in attempting to specify their precise relation to us. The issue of generalization is not limited to the shepherd-poets but applies equally to the love objects of Theocritus’ bucolics.

Like their elegiac counterparts, the beloveds of the bucolic Idylls defy clear definition. Elegiac dominae and bucolic love-objects also share another important feature that sets them apart from their would-be lovers: they typically remain silent. The significance of the beloved’s silence can be demonstrated from a brief analysis of Idyll 3, a rustic paraklausithyron in which an unnamed goatherd addresses the reclusive Amaryllis. The entire poem is presented from the perspective of the goatherd, who focuses largely on his own varied efforts to coax Amaryllis from her cave; in so doing he conveys much about his own feelings regarding what it means to be in love, but offers little factual information about the beloved herself. We can, however, infer from the rustic setting and the goatherd’s description of Amaryllis’ humble dwelling that she is of low social status befitting a character of the bucolic world. Otherwise, Amaryllis’ silence and relative anonymity suggests that this is not the story of a mutual relationship, as
found in *Daphnis and Chloe*, but rather a one-sided story about the pain of being in love. Beyond the lover’s one-sided lament is a more subtle, though important point by which Theocritus further obscures the shadowy figure of Amaryllis.

On two occasions in the poem, the goatherd addresses Amaryllis as νύμφα (3.9, 3.19). Dover comments on this vocative, noting that “Amaryllis is not a supernatural ‘nymph’ but a human girl, whom the goatherd addresses as ‘bride.’” Isenberg and Konstan, with an insightful awareness of the poem’s depiction of the universal quality of love, suggest rather that the point of the term νύμφα in Idyll 3 is “the lover’s tendency to what Freud called the inflation of the love-object.” The issue admits of myriad interpretations; the veracity of the few details the poem provides about Amaryllis is rendered doubtful by their source—a lovesick goatherd whose reliability is in some respects questionable, as Isenberg and Konstan’s comment makes clear. Perhaps we are meant to think of Amaryllis as human rather than divine, though the fact that she lives in a cave is more suggestive of a divinity than a human girl. Gutzwiller makes an important observation on this point: “the impreciseness about [Amaryllis’] mode of existence is, in one sense, an indication of the goatherd’s inability to distinguish imagination and reality, the human and the divine, the attainable and the unattainable. But, mimetically, such innocence seems too great, and as a consequence we tend to hear the poet’s sophisticated voice superimposed on the goatherd’s naïve one. Universal meanings emerge from the funny sentimentality of his serenade.”

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56 Dover, *Theocritus*, ad 3.9.


centers on song about love and derives universal meaning from it. The ambiguity of
Amaryllis’ status, whether she is mortal or divine, or even real or imaginary,
deephasizes her as a mimetic character and serves the same function as the ambiguity
surrounding the precise status of the shepherd-poets.

Another example of characterization worth considering occurs in Idyll 6. I have
already proposed that song acts as a critical medium for communication between Daphnis
and Damoetas, and more of the mechanics of bucolic fiction are evident in the structure
and content of the two songs. To begin with structure, it has been noted that the harmony
found in the narrative frame contrasts with the discord that characterizes Polyphemus and
Galatea’s relationship as presented in the songs.60 Certainly a connection exists between
the characters in the frame and those in the songs, but, as often seems the case in
Theocritus’ poetry, the precise analogy between elements is difficult to determine. The
reader is tempted to associate Daphnis with Galatea and Damoetas with Polyphemus, the
former association made all the stronger because in the latter Damoetas takes the role of
Polyphemus. Gutzwiller, noting differences in age and attitudes toward love, remarks
that “Daphnis and Galatea seem soul mates…,”61 while Lawall goes so far as to say that
Daphnis’ song represents Galatea’s point of view.62 This is certainly not the case.
Daphnis’ song does not clarify the identity of the Ego who speaks to Polyphemus. What
is clear, however, is that at no time do we hear the voice of Galatea or ascertain her

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60 Cf. Lawall, *Coan Pastorals*, 70; Gutzwiller, *Pastoral Analogies*, 124-129; and Bowie “Frame and Framed,” 94.


62 Lawall, *Coan Pastorals*, 70.
perspective. Gutzwiller correctly notes that her motives remain uncertain.\textsuperscript{63} As in Idyll 3, the beloved of the poem remains obscured, and though two points of view are present, both are from the perspective of a lover,\textsuperscript{64} not from a lover and beloved. In Theocritean bucolic, as in Roman elegy, the voice of the beloved is not present.\textsuperscript{65} Only the lover speaks, and in doing so presents a view of the beloved that is colored by love, whether by elevating the beloved to an inflated status or by magnifying her cruelty.\textsuperscript{66}

Galatea, then, like Amaryllis, remains outside the spotlight of both songs and thereby allows the focus of the poem to remain on the experience of being in love. Unlike the other Idylls, however, Idyll 6 seemingly presents two perspectives on the same love affair. This accords with the notion that the two songs represent a variation of the typical form of an actual bucolic contest. Instead of an amoeban structure, two uninterrupted songs are sung, though the second still varies in themes from the first, an important feature of such contests. The contest, then, offers two versions of Polyphemus in love and, in a sense, creates an overlap between the two themes of love and song. This overlap is most visible in Damoetas’ song in the guise of Polyphemus. It is possible to accept the Ego of Damoetas’ song as the Cyclops, in which case the song is straightforwardly about love, but another alternative exists. Gutzwiller notes that “because Polyphemus and Damoetas here speak together with a voice that is part Cyclops and part cowherd, not only does Polyphemus lose some of his traditional harshness, but

\textsuperscript{63}Gutzwiller, \textit{Pastoral Analogies}, 127.

\textsuperscript{64}Bowie, “Frame and Framed,” 91, claims Daphnis plays the role of “a friend of Polyphemus, a \textit{praecessor amoris}.” Lawall, \textit{Coan Pastorals}, 66, describes Daphnis as playing the part of an observer.

\textsuperscript{65}Stanzel, \textit{Liebende Hirten}, 147 and Payne, \textit{Invention of Fiction}, 75.

\textsuperscript{66}Cf. the manner in which the goatherd of Idyll 3 elevates Amaryllis to the status of “nymph” and also accuses her of indifference to his pain and death.
Damoetas takes on certain aspects of the Cyclops’ personality.” The theme of love in the Idyll is apparent, but Gutzwiller’s observation raises the questions of how exactly the singer relates to his song and whether the poet’s voice can be completely distinguished from that of his bucolic characters.

A further complication ensues regarding the relationship of song and love. The issue of whether the authorial voice may be distinguished from that of the characters is part of a larger issue, often raised in the Idylls, of how art relates to its subject. The most direct expression of this concern appears in the first Idyll, in which the goatherd’s ecphrastic exposition of his cup is juxtaposed to Thyrsis’ song about Daphnis. The juxtaposition implicitly connects the physical art object with song, and the imaginative narrative that the goatherd creates for the cup’s static depictions causes one to wonder what effect song and poetry have on their subjects. The relationship between art form and art subject persists throughout the Idylls and will be addressed in subsequent chapters, though it is worth noting here as an issue that adds depth to the poems’ meaning and that can only be fully appreciated by approaching the poems as fictional compositions.

Now that I have set out the tenets of bucolic fiction and proposed the potential benefits of utilizing it as an approach to the bucolic Idylls, I would like to address certain qualities of the bucolic poems that fall outside the bounds of what we may term bucolic fiction but that nevertheless contribute to the unity of the bucolic world. The unity found in the Idylls, resulting both from bucolic fiction and general consistency, encourages reading the poems together and will be an important aspect of my approach.

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In reading through the bucolic poems, it is quickly apparent that the same names often appear in multiple Idylls. Theocritus’ use of names often seems to have a purpose.\footnote{See Stanzel, \textit{Liebende Hirten}, 27-36 for a good discussion of several interpretations for repetition of names in the Idylls.} Milo’s name in Idyll 4, for example, evokes athleticism for a character who leaves the countryside for Pisa.\footnote{See Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, ad 4.6.} The significance of a name such as Amaryllis, mentioned in Idylls 3 and 4 as the object of the goatherd’s and Battus’ love, respectively, is more difficult to interpret. Already in the scholia the Amaryllises of Idylls 3 and 4 are considered one and the same and Battus is identified with the goatherd of Idyll 3.\footnote{\textit{Σ} ad loc. 4.38/39 d.} In response to this and Lattimore’s further identification of Battus with Theocritus,\footnote{Lattimore, “Battus,” 319-324, esp. 324.} Stanzel offers an alternative view of Amaryllis’ name: “Doch bevor man zu so weitreichenden Folgerungen kommt, sollte man die These prüfen, ob nicht Amaryllis der Name für die abwesende und sich den Hirten nicht zeigende Geliebte ist.”\footnote{Stanzel, \textit{Liebende Hirten}, 30 with n. 47.} Stanzel’s suggestion is interesting, though it seems problematic because other names in the Idylls do not appear to correspond to a character type.\footnote{For instance, the name Philinus at 2.115 appears to be an allusion to the Coan runner (Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, ad 2.115), while the appearance of the name Philinos at 7.105 is completely devoid of an athletic context and may owe its use to the association that the name Philinus has within new comedy (Stanzel, \textit{Liebende Hirten}, 32). At any rate, it is clear that the name Philinus does not indicate a single character type.} Theocritus’ choice of names, then, can often be interpreted as relevant to the context given other associations (such as the athletes Milo and Philinus), but by reusing those names, Theocritus does not create a single character
or even characterization to associate with that name.\textsuperscript{74} Rather, the implications of name repetition are broader. They encourage comparison between individual characters and entire Idylls.\textsuperscript{75} If we accept for a moment a view of bucolic poetry that includes Idylls 2 and 10, then all of the genuine Idylls 1-7 and 10-11 contain a character who shares a name or is identified with a character in another Idyll. This cannot help but create a sense of a closed bucolic world that encourages comparison and contrast within the bucolic Idylls. The relationship between these poems is complex but does exist, perhaps on a much larger scale than has been considered up to this point.\textsuperscript{76} The bucolic world also admits of influence from other sources, but its unique nature encourages the reader to explore the interaction among the bucolic poems alone as much as with external sources. Stanzel puts it well: “Die Welt des Hirtengesangs, wie sie uns in Theokrits Gedichten entgegentritt, erscheint als eine in gewissem Sinne unanhängige Welt, die in sich funktioniert, aber doch auch einen festen Bezugspunkt gleichsam außerhalb in der Dichtung der Alexandriner hat.”\textsuperscript{77} Names are important as a unifying factor, and though

\textsuperscript{74} Wendel, \textit{De Nominibus}, 2-4. Wendel attributes Theocritus’ \textit{neglegentia} in choosing names to the fact that his poems circulated separately and not as a collection. See also Kossaifi, “L’Onomastique Bucolique,” 349-361, who attempts to explain Theocritus’ reasons for giving the same name to characters with different or even opposite personalities.

\textsuperscript{75} A similar sort of unity may also be found in repeated lines, half lines, and key words. Cf. Lawall, \textit{Coan Pastorals}, 133-138, for a list of verbal repetitions.

\textsuperscript{76} Some correspondence has been found between the programmatic first and seventh Idylls and the other bucolic poems. See for instance Schmidt, “Der Göttliche Ziegenhirt,” who finds a relationship between the poetic contests of the fifth and seventh Idylls.

\textsuperscript{77} Stanzel, \textit{Liebende Hirten}, 34.
their use can be difficult to interpret, they deserve more attention then they are often
given.\textsuperscript{78}

The tool of name repetition can be pursued further in its unifying quality. Instead
of examining the individual names, let us take a broader perspective. As stated all of the
genuine Idylls 1-7 and 10-11 contain at least one name found in another Idyll, and of the
names present in Idyll 7 at least one is also found in 1-6, 10, and 11.\textsuperscript{79} The fact that Idyll
7 can be connected to the other bucolic Idylls in this way is perhaps unsurprising given its
programmatic status, though it is a connection that should not be underestimated,
especially in light of Nita Krevans’ persuasive argument for the care with which
Theocritus uses place names in Idyll 7.\textsuperscript{80} In addition to the name repetitions that link
Idyll 7 with the others, we can further note that Idylls 1-6, 10, and 11 are also linked with
at least one Idyll other than 7. Theocritus effectively creates a complex web of links that
join his bucolic poems, at the center of which stands Idyll 7 as a focal point connecting
them all.\textsuperscript{81}

Another unifying feature of the bucolic Idylls is the role of the Nymphs as
inspirers of bucolic poetry. As Fantuzzi and Hunter put it, “it is as if the Muses can no
longer be up-to-date and effective ‘witnesses’ for the new bucolic world, which is, if

\textsuperscript{78} Susan Stephens’ observation on the Ptolemaic link with the name “Cynisca” in Idyll 14 is an excellent
example of the meaning Theocritus can place in names. See Stephens, “Ptolemaic Pastoral,” 109-110.
Stanzel, “Selbstzitate,” 208, also comments on the importance of names in the Idylls.

\textsuperscript{79} Names in Idyll 7 that correspond to names in other Idylls are Daphnis (Id. 1, 6), Philenus (2), Tityrus (3),
Heracles (4 with the dative form Ἡρακλῆς appearing both at 4.8 and 7.150), Comatas (5), Aratus (6),
Demeter (10), Polyphemus (6, 11), Aphrodite (1, 2, 3 where she is called Κυθέρειαν at line 46), and Pan
(1).

\textsuperscript{80} Krevans, “Geography and the Literary Tradition.”

\textsuperscript{81} Some sense of the abundance of name repetition between the Idylls can be acquired from the list of
names and where they appear provided by Wendel. The list is incomplete in that it does not contain the
names of mythical figures. See Wendel, \textit{De Nominibus}, 28-34.
anything, now the realm of the Nymphs.” In addition to the view that Theocritus’ employment of Nymphs as sources of poetic inspiration indicates the creation of a new type of poetry (which seems likely, especially since it appears to have been an innovation of Theocritus), the consistency with which Theocritus maintains the change from Muses to Nymphs acts as a unifying factor for the fictional world.

Finally, the bucolics are unified by their use of meter. In a study of Theocritus’ hexameter, Marco Fantuzzi notes that the “serious” bucolic poems (specifically Idylls 1, and 3-7) appear to form a metrical set whose similarity sets them apart from the other Idylls, with the exception of Idyll 2, with which the bucolics share many similarities. Despite the value of Fantuzzi’s observations, some caution should be urged here. Fantuzzi himself proposes that Theocritus diversified his hexameters for a mimetic effect according to either the poem’s genre, tone, or both. Due to Theocritus’ metrical creativity, poems, such as Idylls 10 and 11, cannot effectively be excluded from being considered bucolic since their metrical variation may potentially be explained as a particular effect that Theocritus is trying to create. Nevertheless, the metrical

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82 Fantuzzi and Hunter, Tradition and Innovation, 153. Exceptions can be found since the Muses do appear, however rarely, in the bucolic Idylls. Fantuzzi explains these appearances by noting that they occur in conjunction with mythical figures, such as Daphnis in Idyll 1 (τὸν Μοῖσασις Φίλου ἄνδρα, τοῦ ὦ Νάμφαις αὐτῷ ἀσκήτης, 1.141), who remain under the influence of the Muses. See Fantuzzi, “Demythologizing” of Poetry,” 145, “The mythical past appears to be the only field under the control of the Muses in Theocritus’s pastorals.” See also 145-147.

83 As noted by Fantuzzi, “Demythologizing” of Poetry,” 281 n. 61. Fantuzzi also calls attention here to Bowie’s suggestion that the Nymphs may have had an important role in Philetas’ poetry. See Bowie, “Theocritus’ Seventh Idyll,” 79.


85 Fantuzzi, “Variazioni sull’esametro,” 236: “mi pare difficile dubitare che gli idilli bucolici ‘seri’ siano un insieme specificamente caratterizzato anch dal punto di vista metrico rispetto a tutti gli altri carmi (tranne che rispetto a Id. II, a cui sono molto affini).

86 Fantuzzi, “Variazioni sull’esametro,” 234.
characteristics shared by Idylls 1-7 act as a clear unifying element for the majority of the bucolic poems.

The unifying elements that have been mentioned do not comprise an exhaustive list but rather serve to support the notion of unity inherent in bucolic fiction by demonstrating other means by which Theocritus ties together his constructed bucolic world. I would assert that reading Theocritus’ Idylls through the theory of bucolic fiction is a useful approach for understanding the poems, though bucolic fiction must be considered as part of the experimental context of Theocritean poetry, that is, bucolic fiction cannot be taken as anything like a generic requirement but, like Theocritus’ hexameter, should be expected to adjust itself to the needs of the individual poem. Just as the meter may show variation while still remaining a hexameter, bucolic fiction will show some variation from one poem to another while always maintaining its intrinsic qualities.

In the following chapters, I will apply the theory of bucolic fiction to four of Theocritus’ Idylls. Chapter 2 will use bucolic fiction as a starting point for a new interpretation of Idyll 5, considering specifically how the poem mediates between its mimetic and fictional aspects. Chapter 3 will offer an argument that examines the relationship of bucolic fiction to Theocritus’ larger poetic program by analyzing Idyll 1. Chapters 4 and 5 will extend the theory of bucolic fiction to poems not traditionally considered bucolic but that nevertheless hold many important features in common with them. Chapter 4 will expose the bucolic nature that underlies Idyll 10, revealing it to be a bucolic experiment in which Theocritus deconstructs his own fictional world. Finally, chapter 5 will use bucolic fiction as an approach to Idyll 2, a poem securely classified as an urban mime yet whose fictional world operates similarly to the bucolic poems. I
believe that bucolic fiction offers a significant new means for interpreting Theocritus’ poetry, though that can best be ascertained in the actual application of the theory, to which we now turn.
Chapter 2

In the previous chapter, I described generally the qualities of Theocritus’ bucolic fiction. In so doing, I used several examples from multiple poems in an attempt to present the theory as a coherent whole. While Theocritus consistently uses bucolic fiction as the basis for his bucolic poems, one cannot assume that every element encompassed by the term “bucolic fiction” will be equally present in every poem. To return to the example of the syrinx, as I noted above, that instrument, though it appears frequently in the bucolic Idylls, is never portrayed as a practical tool. Instead, the syrinx is exclusively used for performative song. Nevertheless, while both Idylls 1 and 4, for example, contain syrinxes and references to singing, song holds considerably more significance in Idyll 1 than in Idyll 4. In other words, though both poems employ bucolic fiction, they differ greatly in the degree to which they present aspects common to their fictional worlds.

This raises an important point about the concept of bucolic fiction. Though bucolic fiction offers a useful approach to the study of the bucolic poems, it is not meant to function as a generic indicator. In a broad sense, the qualities that characterize bucolic fiction represent a consistent approach that Theocritus appears to have taken in composing his bucolic poems. A closer view of the individual poems reveals that these qualities are present in varying combinations and degrees. This hardly comes as a surprise, however, as even the Roman elegists are known to shift the focus of their poems away from their beloveds despite the poet’s relationship with his beloved forming the core of Roman elegiac poetry. This variation in Theocritus’ poetry provides unique interpretive possibilities for each poem while maintaining a thematic coherence that closely connects the bucolic Idylls.
Theocritus’ tendency to vary a small set of themes in his bucolic poetry is noted by Segal, who focuses mainly on the differences in tone between the individual poems in respect to each poem’s representation of song, friendship, nature, and love. For Segal, the programmatic Idylls 1 and 7 convey the loftiest tone, while the lowest tone can be found in Idylls 4 and 5. Segal’s observation connects the Idylls by their use of common themes while distinguishing the poems according to their variety in presenting those themes—most notably for our purposes song and love. The variation Theocritus uses to differentiate his Idylls can, if one is not careful, overshadow the connections that unite the bucolic poems. The task, then, is to identify those connections and demonstrate the unity that encompasses apparently disparate poems ranging from the coarse Idyll 5 to the more elevated Idylls. Segal offers a starting point by noting the persistence of certain themes, but by using bucolic fiction even stronger ties become visible. In this chapter I shall consider how Theocritus employs both mimetic and bucolic fiction in Idyll 5, often considered the coarsest and most mimetic of the Idylls, to create a unique poem that, despite its mimetic appearance, operates based on the tenets of bucolic fiction. I shall also argue for a new interpretation of the poem that utilizes bucolic fiction and the connections between Idylls that bucolic fiction creates.

Idyll 5 stands out among the other bucolic Idylls as the most realistic of the collection. The illusion of actuality sets Idyll 5 apart from other Idylls whose fictionality is more overt. Although the poem’s realism is a striking feature, Gutzwiller

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87 Segal, “Thematic Coherence,” 199.

88 Segal, “Thematic Coherence,” 184, notes that both programmatic Idylls 1 and 7 “represent the highest poetic and mythic realization of the bucolic world…”

89 Lawall, Coan Pastorals, 52, notes “Idylls 4 and 5 are essentially mimes, in that the poet attempts to give the illusion of rustic speech and actuality.”
rightly observes that “Idyll 5, for all its realism, has certain features that eventually encouraged its exclusion from the developing category of poetic mime (best represented by Herondas’ *Mimiambi*) in favor of inclusion in collections of bucolic poems.”

Though scholars generically classify Idyll 5 as one of Theocritus’ bucolic poems, its mime-like characteristics allow Theocritus to develop two different strategies of presentation, one employing the realism of mime and the other the qualities of bucolic fiction. These two strategies together create a complexity that is belied by the realism of the Idyll.

To begin, it will be useful to make some general observations on the genre of mime and its possible influence on the fifth Idyll. There are several difficulties in such a discussion, not the least of which is the general dearth of information on ancient mime. Also problematic, however, is the fact that the term “mime” encompasses various forms ranging from extemporaneous Sicilian farce to Sophron’s prose works as well as the iambic mimes of Herodas. Mime, though an important influence upon poem 5, is actually difficult to isolate into a single set of characteristics. The present observations on mime will have to remain general given that evidence of early mime, both literary and nonliterary, is too deficient to allow for greater specificity. Despite the necessarily broad nature of any discussion of mime, it may yet be worthwhile to consider how the Idyll incorporates various characteristics of the genre. To that end, I will offer some limited speculation as to certain aspects of mime that may have influenced Theocritus.

In his brief discussion of mime, the late fourth century A.D. Roman grammarian Diomedes provides a definition that he describes as “a Graecis ita definitus” and that is thought by scholars to originate with Theophrastus in the 4th—3rd c. B.C.: μιμούς ἔστι

This definition encompasses the two key elements that tend to characterize the modern conception of mime: the imitation of scenes from everyday life (μίμησις βίου), and a propensity for indecency (ἀσυγχώρητα). Contrary to the other bucolic Idylls, both of these qualities stand out in Idyll 5. It is certainly the most vulgar of the bucolic poems, and as far as the “imitation of life” is concerned, it most easily conveys the sense that it imitates life as a whole rather than simply song—the fragment of life that the other poems take as the center of their constructed fictional world. To put it simply, the fiction of Idyll 5 is more difficult to see relative to the other bucolic Idylls, including Idyll 4 which Lawall named as one of the “pure mimes.”

Diomedes’ definition is an excellent starting point, though it may not completely describe mime as it existed in Alexandria. In an article on Herodas’ fifth mimiamb, David Konstan raises an interesting and relevant point. Konstan notes that the women portrayed in Herodas’ mimes are not of the humble status that scholars have imagined, but rather are no lower in status than the householders of Old or New Comedy.

Konstan goes on to say that:

the ‘everyday life’ of the mime, with its apparent realism and concern with the humbler orders, is in fact no more ordinary than the business of comic lovers or stern fathers. But the change of optic that brings excluded figures—including married women—into the center of the drama creates the effect of a more immediate engagement with real life, over against the conventions of established forms. This shift tends to subject those conventions, and the civic hierarchy they encode, to distortion or inversion.”

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91 Lawall, Coan Pastorals, 52-53.


93 Konstan, “The Tyrant Goddess,” 269. Konstan’s argument for reading Herodas’ mimes as populated specifically with excluded figures rather than humble ones is attractive in that the poems of Theocritus that are regularly considered mimes share the same quality. Idylls 2 and 15, which the scholia tell us are based
Konstan’s assessment, which seems correct for the case of Herodas and easily applicable to his contemporary Theocritus, reveals a point of intersection between mime and bucolic fiction in the form of the fictional representation of excluded figures. I emphasize the “fictional” aspect of this representation because, following Konstan’s insightful observation, mime is not a literary re-creation of everyday life that opposes itself to fiction but rather a fiction that styles itself as reality. While most of the bucolic Idylls quite apparently make use of bucolic fiction, in the fifth Idyll Theocritus uses the façade of realism characteristic of mime to mask, at least in part, the presence of bucolic fiction. I propose that he does so not to hide the bucolic fiction, but to add variation to the fictional world by introducing mime as a new generic influence, just as Idyll 11 incorporates epic elements without ceasing to be bucolic. What is remarkable in the case of Idyll 5 is the degree to which Theocritus succeeds in eliminating the tension between bucolic and mimetic fictions. Indeed, Idyll 5, which most lends itself to interpretation through mimesis, has also found equally plausible interpretations outside of a mimetic reading.94

As mentioned above, with our limited knowledge, it is difficult to determine with certainty to what degree Theocritus plays with traditional mime in Idyll 5. Theocritus was certainly familiar with Sophron’s work; the scholia indicate that Idylls 2 and 15 are each based on one of his mimes. Though no indication is given that Sophron directly
to some extent on works by Sophron, both feature slave-owning women as the central characters. Simaitha, Praxinoa, and Gorgo thus are better described as “excluded” rather than “humble.” As for Idyll 14, Aeschinas represents an excluded figure in that he holds a low-class symposium for foreigners, which he himself may be. See Burton, Urban Mimes, 25.

94 See for instance Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 142-144; Kossaifi, “Le Poète de Pan.”
influenced Idyll 5, some evidence suggests that early elements of mime are at work in this poem. First, it is worth noting that Idyll 5 alone among the bucolic Idylls presents three speaking characters in a dialogue, a formal characteristic it may share with the work of Epicharmus and Sophron.\textsuperscript{95} The poem’s clearest debt to mime, however, is its apparent realism, which is conveyed in part through character descriptions that are unprecedented in the Idylls for their level of detail.\textsuperscript{96} In addition to the realism provided by details, Idyll 5 offers a different view of the bucolic world than is depicted elsewhere in Theocritus’ work. Of the bucolic world as presented in Idyll 5, Ott correctly observes that “hier ist keiner der Einzelzüge, mit denen die kleine Welt der Hirten geschildert wird, idealistische überhöht.”\textsuperscript{97} To what degree the bucolic Idylls represent an ideal is debatable, yet Ott’s point is important. The particular details and characterizations provided in Idyll 5 foster an apparently different sort of bucolic representation, one that is almost antithetical to the bucolic world as presented in other bucolic poems. Idyll 5’s change of optic, to recall Konstan’s words, brings herdsmen, the same excluded figures found in the other bucolic poems, to the fore but presents them differently. They are still at a remove from the reader but are no longer removed from reality; rather, they are deeply entrenched in it, or at least in a perception of it. Idyll 5 does not patently ensconce its characters in a song-centered world as the other Idylls do, but appears to create a more balanced, realistic world. As I will argue, Idyll 5 accepts song as its focus similar to other bucolic Idylls, though the influence of mime, skillfully integrated, can make bucolic fiction appear to be bucolic reality.

\textsuperscript{95} Wiemken, “Der griechische Mimus,” 31-32.

\textsuperscript{96} Ott, \textit{Kunst des Gegensatzes}, 14, with his notes 42 and 43.

\textsuperscript{97} Ott, \textit{Kunst des Gegensatzes}, 20.
While the bucolic representation as depicted in Idyll 5 includes the presence of bucolic fiction, its links with mime are also an important feature of the poem. In addition to the realism of detail provided by the particularization of characters, the crudeness present in the poem (cf. 5.41-42, 116-117, for example), which denies the poem its idealism, accords with Diomedes’ definition identifying mime as portraying both permissible and impermissible aspects of life and, if correctly ascribed to Theophrastus, which may precede Theocritus, possibly influencing his perception of mime. Poem 5 also shows similarities with Herodas’ mimes as evidenced by its presentation of excluded figures. Theocritus’ precise mimetic debt is difficult to trace, but it is clear that mime, especially Sophron’s mime, was an important influence on Theocritus and that Idyll 5 displays a level of mimesis uncharacteristic of the majority of the Idylls. Poem 5 incorporates both mimetic and bucolic fictions, raising the question of how Theocritus succeeded in integrating so seamlessly two apparently opposing styles of presentation.

Some insight into this question may be gleaned by considering the characters of Idyll 5 and comparing them to other mimetic characters. As we are told by the scholiast, Idyll 15, along with Idyll 2, has the distinction of being based on a mime by Sophron. Nevertheless, for all the realism that the poem may exhibit, it is likely to be considerably different from the mimes of Sophron, particularly in the way that Gorgo and Praxinoa seem to rise above their initial depiction as greedy and self-absorbed to appreciate the beauty they find in both art and song. In this respect the two women show an important similarity to the herdsmen in the bucolic poems: “Indeed, as is often the case with Theocritus’ herdsmen, the simplicity of the natures of his city dwellers somewhat

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conceals the complexity of the phenomena which they witness for us.””

I would say rather that, in the case of the herdsmen, simplicity alone does not obscure the complexity. In Idyll 1, for instance, Thyrsis and the goatherd are presented as simple herdsmen, but the complexity of the goatherd’s ecphrasis and Thyrsis’ song are quite clear, even if the characters in the poem do not appear to recognize the depth of their own words. Realism in combination with simplicity, as occurs in a mime such as Idyll 5, effectively conceals complexity, a necessary feature that allows the characters to conform to the reader’s expectation of a herdsman’s actions. The role of mimesis is to ensure that obviously complex thought does not incongruously arise from rustic characters as occurs in those Idylls that do not rely on mimetic fiction.

Previously, I referred to Mark Payne’s distinction between “fully fictional” fiction, which forms the theoretical basis for bucolic fiction, and mimetic fiction. Essentially, mimetic fiction presents characters whose motives and actions are recognizable as real-life experience. That which is considered fully fictional, on the other hand, does not contain patterns that reflect real-world possibilities. In Idyll 5, both these types of fiction are present, but because Idyll 5’s relationship with mime requires that it employ mimetic fiction in addition to “fully fictional” bucolic fiction, the bucolic fiction of the poem, which in most Idylls is immediately apparent, must be structured in such a way as not to spoil the illusion of the mimetic fiction. If the bucolic fiction of the Idyll rises to the surface, the poem’s status as a mime would be placed in jeopardy since fiction that is bucolic is by nature at a remove from the real-world associations upon which mime depends. Thus, mimetic and bucolic fictions can exist in the same poem as

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long as the characteristics of bucolic fiction do not intrude upon the perception of realism fashioned by mimesis. This is possible because, as noted above, mime does not re-create reality but is itself a fictional representation of reality. Because it is fundamentally fictional, mime is able to incorporate elements of bucolic fiction, such as a focus on song and love, while styling them as reality. How Theocritus accomplishes this will be the next subject of discussion.

Now that the means by which the elements of the mimetic and bucolic fictions of Idyll 5 are able to coexist have been broached, it is necessary to step away from the mimetic perspective for a moment and consider the influence of bucolic fiction in the poem. This issue has been discussed briefly above, but it will be appropriate here to consider more fully the points mentioned in the first chapter.

The first indication of bucolic fiction that the reader encounters occurs immediately as the poem begins. From the very first line, Idyll 5 presents an amoebaean form that follows the pattern of a bucolic agon. Aside from formal considerations, Ott, noting the indirect nature of the accusations made by Comatas and Lacon, believes that “das Streitspiel, aus dem das Gedicht besteht, ist so schon im ersten Redewechsel exponiert.” Whether it is reasonable to conclude that factors of both form and tone contribute to making Idyll 5 immediately recognizable as a bucolic agon even before the poem’s actual agon begins is unclear. What can be said with confidence, however, is that the formal links between the pre-agon and the agon are in retrospect exceedingly clear. In contrast to other Idylls in which both the content of the herdsmen’s songs and their

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102 See above, n. 39.
103 Ott, Kunst des Gegensatzes, 18.
attitudes toward song are of a patently nonmimetic nature in accordance with bucolic fiction, Idyll 5 must balance fully fictional and mimetic elements. It is in this regard that the pre-agon’s similarity to the agon represents an excellent integration of mimetic and bucolic fictions. The pre-agon and agon share formal characteristics, a similarity seemingly contrary to mimesis. The pre-agon is in meter, of course, but the characters are not supposed to be singing or competing yet. Because it closely follows the agon in its form, the pre-agon evokes the type of song that it precedes without intruding upon the Idyll’s mimetic fiction, creating an instantiation of bucolic fiction within the poem’s mimesis. The view of the pre-agon as a part of the poem’s bucolic fiction, however, can be taken further.

While it is true that the actual contest and song of Idyll 5 begin at line 80, there is no indication in the text that the agon has officially begun. This, along with Morson’s reticence until the end of the contest despite his role as a judge, as well as the similarity of the pre-agon to the agon itself, causes the pre-agon and the agon to run together into an ambiguous whole. This ambiguity is most apparent in the lines immediately preceding the start of the agon. In the pre-agon, whichever of the two herdsmen is responding to the other generally does so using the same number of hexameters. The interlocutor who initially provides the topic, however, does not restrict himself to couplets as in the agon. At 5.74, six lines before the agon begins, the two herdsmen’s interaction transitions into couplets, the form their dialogue will retain for the entire agon. The poem does not give a strong impression of having two distinct parts, but rather blends together the end of the pre-agon and the beginning of the agon into a single conflict.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{104} Though cf. Crane, “Realism in the Fifth Idyll,” 117, for ways in which the agon is distinct from the rest of the poem.
The pre-agon and agon both operate at the level of bucolic fiction, blurring what ought to be a clear distinction between the spoken pre-agon, which is not mimetically part of the singing contest, and the agon itself. While song is not presented in the same way as in many other Idylls—that is, the characters do not directly speak about the value or beauty of song—its importance can still be felt. Other elements of bucolic fiction exist within the poem and will be discussed as part of a more comprehensive interpretation of Idyll 5 that focuses on the role of bucolic fiction. Before offering such an interpretation, however, let us examine further how Theocritus directs the reader’s attention away from the poem as a mime and toward its use of bucolic fiction.

Though Idyll 5’s mimetic aspects act as a shroud that eclipses other forms of fiction, there is one significant—and I believe intentional—tear in that mimetic cover: Comatas’ inexplicable victory in the agon. Merkelbach’s important study offers compelling evidence that the singing contest of Idyll 5 closely paralleled those of contemporary herdsmen, an idea that had been suggested even before Merkelbach’s work.\(^{105}\) We therefore have some insight into the probable form of a typical bucolic agon. Even so, despite having the complete poem and reasonable knowledge of actual contests, no definitive explanation for Comatas’ victory can be given. The judgment of the agon is the culmination of the poem, yet at this crucial moment the reader finds himself at a loss as to why Morson awards the victory to Comatas. This failure of mimesis occurs at exactly the point where the reader’s interest in the mime is most

\(^{105}\) Legrand, *Bucoliques Grecs* I, 44.
piqued, and encourages the reader to shift his perspective on the poem from a mimetic to a more complex view.\(^\text{106}\)

Many good explanations for Morson’s decision that rely on the rules of actual singing contests have been proposed, though both the large number of explanations and the fact that none has gained general acceptance suggest the insufficiency of mimetic interpretation to offer a final answer to the problem. A reasonable explanation of Comatas’ victory can be put forth, but the fact remains that the poem itself does not actually tell us why Morson judges in favor of Comatas. Additionally, one must consider the poem in light of its aristocratic audience. The rustic charm of the countryside is perhaps universal, but how likely were the members of the royal court to know the details of the singing contests of shepherds well enough to recognize the reason why Comatas wins and Lacon loses, especially if the poem was presented in written form or recited rather than performed dramatically?\(^\text{107}\) The puzzle of the Idyll’s outcome prompts the reader to reconsider the poem as a whole and is in this sense not a failure of clarity but an invitation to explore what complexity may lie beneath the surface of the poem.

The *agon* of Idyll 5, despite its close representation of actual singing contests, shares a lack of clarity regarding its outcome with the bucolic *agon* in Idyll 6. At the end of Idyll 6, the narrator reveals the result of the contest: νίκη μὲν οὐδάλλος, οὖν ἄνησατοι

\(^{106}\) Even if mimesis does not require a clear cause for a contestant’s victory, the reader will still recognize that the author has chosen to make one character the victor over the other and will naturally question why. At this point the reader will need to look beyond a mimetic interpretation.

\(^{107}\) Serrao, “L’idillio V di Teocrito,” 102, explains why some of the rules of the *agon* are unclear by asserting that “…gli eruditi del III secolo, a cui appunto si rivolgeva Teocrito, non avevano certo bisogno di chiarimenti.” This, however, assumes the existence of established rules in the literary tradition regarding bucolic singing contests for which we have no evidence. In addition, the *agon* of Idyll 6 would then completely ignore the traditional rules, as would the *agon* presented by the author of Idyll 8, Theocritus’ first known imitator, whose contest ends with a victory for Daphnis by virtue of the beauty of his voice (cf. 8.81-84).
δ' ἐγένοντο (6.46). The situation here is different from Idyll 5 in that the contest has a completely different structure and thus does not correspond to the rules that apply to the **agon** of Idyll 5. In poem 6, the reader must rely on the characters’ actions and the narrator to know the outcome of the contest, which is only definitively revealed in the last line of the poem. Contrary to Idyll 5, in which the relationship between the **agon** and its result is questioned, in Idyll 6 the narrator’s account does not admit objection. Because Idyll 6 is not conceived of as mimetic, there are no grounds for engaging in careful calculations to determine how the songs of Daphnis and Damoetas are equal, and that equality, once accepted, offers a starting point for interpreting the poem. Because Idyll 6’s fully fictional character is immediately discernible by its unrealistic depiction of a rustic **agon**, its disjuncture from reality is apparent, requiring the reader to look to the poem for answers to problems it poses rather than draw on real-life experience—in this case the rules of rustic singing matches—to explain the poem’s conclusion. The mimetic qualities of Idyll 5, however, give the impression that a single correct explanation external to the text may explain why the contest ends as it does. I believe that this view is a distraction and that, like Idyll 6, the ending is a valuable element for interpretation. The large number of plausible explanations that have been put forth suggests that the “correct” explanation for Comatas’ victory cannot be gleaned from the available information. A more relevant question, perhaps, is whether discovering the “correct” mimetic explanation among so many is possible or necessary for interpreting the poem.\(^{108}\)

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\(^{108}\) Trachsel, “La fin de l’*Idylle 5*,” 348-352, offers a useful summary of arguments on the reasons for Comatas’ victory. Trachsel’s own view is also noteworthy, arguing that Lacon loses because his couplets, when weighed against Comatas’ in a manner akin to the competition between Aeschylus and Euripides in the *Frogs*, are too heavy and do not reflect the contemporary Alexandrian aesthetic favoring “thin” poetry.
An excellent example of this polyvalence in Idyll 5’s ending can be found in Gutzwiller’s interpretation. She begins by offering a mimetic reading of the poem that focuses, unsurprisingly, on determining the reason for Comatas’ victory, ultimately finding that Lacon’s failure to respond properly to Comatas’ self-deprecation in lines 5.132-33 clinches the victory for the latter. Gutzwiller then uses this mimetic interpretation as the basis for one that is “analogical,” arguing that “the ἀλαζονεία of Lacon and the εἰρωνεία of Comatas could represent the opposing stances adopted by those who engaged in the great Hellenistic debate about the viability of writing grand epic, of directly imitating Homer.” Leaving Gutzwiller’s conclusions aside, her general method is correct. As she has seen, the poem is polyvalent and requires analyses on more than a single, mimetic level. Even Gutzwiller, however, is somewhat restrained by the poem’s mimesis in that her analogical interpretation is based upon what she seems to believe to be the single correct mimetic interpretation. On the contrary, as in many other places in Theocritus and Hellenistic poetry in general, the question of Comatas’ victory is a puzzle without solution, or perhaps more accurately, a puzzle with many solutions. That openness invites the reader to transition from the mimetic world to the world of bucolic fiction, and that allows those two diametrically opposed types of fiction to coexist in the same poem without allowing either the mimesis to conceal completely the bucolic fiction or the bucolic fiction to erode the mimesis.

109 Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 139-142.
110 Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 144.
111 Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 142, “Confirmation that we have correctly analyzed Comatas’ strategem for obtaining victory can be found in his similar behavior at the end of the preagon.” Gutzwiller is not alone in claiming to have found the solution to the puzzle of Comatas’ victory. Cf. Serrao, Problemi, 84.
Given that attempts to solve the problem of Comatas’ victory have led to a general *aporia* that forces the reader to abandon mimetic interpretation, it is time to consider what benefit for interpretation the theory of bucolic fiction has to offer. The critical moment of the contest’s conclusion will offer important evidence for examination, though elements of bucolic fiction found throughout the poem will also come into consideration. In no way will bucolic fiction provide a satisfactory answer on a mimetic level, yet, as I have argued above, it need not. The mime and its deeper meaning need not be directly linked—that is, it is unnecessary to assume that whatever underlying interpretation of the poem may be found need be echoed somehow at the mimetic level. As Gutzwiller has aptly shown, such a connection can be possible, but to accept it as a requirement imposes a needless restriction on the reader.

The opening of the *agon* offers an excellent position from which to begin analyzing the poem from the standpoint of bucolic fiction. Once Comatas and Lacon make their respective invocations, the topic immediately shifts to love. After boasting that all but two of his she-goats have borne twins, Comatas says καὶ μ’ ἀ παῖς ποθορέουσα, ‘τάλαν,’ λέγει, ‘αὐτὸς ἀμέλγεις,’ (5.85). In response, Lacon boasts that he fills nearly twenty buckets with cheese and that [Λάκων] καὶ τὸν ἄναβον ἐν ἄνθεσι παῖδα μολύνει (5.87). In mimetic terms Lacon offers his variation on the themes that Comatas has presented, but his representation of love is quite different from Comatas’ both here and elsewhere in the *agon*. Comatas has already boasted of the Muses’ love for him and the fertility of his flock. When he moves the song toward an erotic theme, his comment about his girl is only mildly suggestive. This seems important because Comatas’ modest approach to love contrasts with Lacon’s claim to have had intercourse
with a boy, which is mimetically appropriate—it contains a variation on Comatas’ proposed theme—but it is also considerably more direct and crude.

Lacon’s coarse response at 5.87 seems more like Comatas’ subsequent reference at 5.116-117 to his previous sexual domination of Lacon (ἡ οὗ μέμνασ’ ὁκ’ ἐγὼν τυ κατήλασα, καὶ τὸ σεσαρῶς / εὖ ποτεκιγκλίζευ καὶ τὸς δρυός εἶχεο τήνας; 5.116-117). Comatas’ purpose at 5.116-117, however, is different from Lacon’s at 5.87. Comatas uses a past sexual episode involving Lacon as a way to annoy and to assert control over his opponent. There is no indication of an amorous relationship between the two, only a question of superiority. In contrast, Lacon’s claim to have “defiled” a boy differs considerably from the ambiguous statement to which it responds. An erotic context surrounds both couplets, but Lacon expresses the sort of sexual aggression that is foreign to bucolic love. Comatas, however, describes himself as approached by a girl who asks if he is milking alone, but this need not indicate a sexual encounter in the same vein as Lacon’s statement, a point that becomes clearer in the following set of couplets.

At 5.88-89, Comatas continues the erotic theme from his prior couplet: βάλλει καὶ μάλοισι τὸν αἰπόλον ἄ Κλεαρίστα / τὰς αἰγὰς παρελάντα καὶ ἀθὺ τι ποππυλιάσθει. Because boasting appears to be such an important part of the contest (as demonstrated, for instance, by Comatas’ claim to own a bowl made by Praxiteles), it seems natural to agree with Crane’s view here that “Clearista flirts with the dashing Comatas, as he drives his flock past her…” The same image occurs, however, at 6.6-7,

112 Kossaifi, “Le Poète de Pan,” 89, also comments on Lacon’s sexual aggressiveness, seeing his shift of interest from Cratidas to Eumedes as a sign of his greater sexual activity. This interpretation, however, may require too many assumptions about the identity of unnamed figures in the couplets.

113 Crane, “Realism in the Fifth Idyll,” 117.
the first two lines of Daphnis’ song: βάλλει τοι, Πολύφαμε, τὸ ποίμνιον ἀ Γαλάτεια / μάλοισιν, δυσέρωτα καὶ αἰπόλον ἄνδρα καλεύσα. In Idyll 6, Galatea flirts with Polyphemus, but does not therefore become any more accessible as a beloved. Her flirting amounts to taunting and mockery. Of particular salience is Galatea’s incorrect reference to Polyphemus as a goatherd rather than a shepherd. Comatas, however, is a goatherd, which makes finding a connection between the couplets 5.88-89 and 6.6-7 all the more tempting.¹¹⁴

Even if the passage from Idyll 6 does not instruct the reader on the meaning of Comatas’ assertion at 5.88-89, it does suggest a strong possibility that, as with his previous couplet, Comatas phrases his erotic comments ambiguously. He is walking a fine line between the mimetic need for boasting and his depiction as a character of bucolic fiction—as a singer who pines after an unattainable love. Comatas maintains his position in both mimetic and bucolic fictions as the contest progresses.¹¹⁵ He returns to the theme of love again in lines 96-97 and 104-105. In these lines and those containing Lacon’s responses, the two competitors announce the gifts they will give to their

¹¹⁴ Galatea’s empty flirting appears contrary to other literary examples of characters who toss apples at the objects of their affection as a sign of genuine desire. Cf. A.P. 5.79, 80 and Ar. Nub. 997. We may also compare the τὰς σίγας παρελάντα καὶ αὕτη τι ποστπολισθεὶς of 5.89 with a similar situation presented by the author of Id. 8: ΔΑ. κήμε τώ ἄντρω σύνοφρος κορά ἐχθείς ἱδοῖσα / τὰς δαμάλας παρελάντα καλὸν καλὸν ἤμεν ἔφασκεν’ / οὐ μάν οὐδὲ λόγον ἐκρίθεν ἀπὸ τῶν πυρόν αὐτά, / ἀλλὰ κάτω βλέψας τὰν ἀμετέραν ὀδὸν ἔιρπον (8.72-75). Daphnis’ curious response to the girl may be related to his attitude toward love as depicted in Idyll 1, but there may also be a suggestion that the girl of Idyll 8, like Galatea, is insincere in her flirting.

¹¹⁵ Dover, Theocritus, ad 6.7 notes that no exact parallel exists for calling someone the wrong type of herdsman. Gow, Theocritus II, ad 6.7 notes that Daphnis is also called δύσερως and compared to a goatherd (1.85). He may also be correct that the term αἰπόλος is associated with one who is δύσερως, making it even easier to conceive of Comatas as a δύσερως figure.

¹¹⁶ Schmidt, “Der Göttliche Ziegenhirt,” 222, notes another difference between Comatas and Lacon’s treatment of love: “Bei Komatas bilden in seinem Proömium und seiner ersten Strophe Dichtertum, Hirtenleben, und Liebe eine Einheit, Lakon reiht drei unverbundene Behauptungen aneinander.” The fact that Comatas integrates his love into a bucolic setting in a way that Lacon does not further suggests that Comatas better exemplifies the qualities of the shepherd-poet.
beloveds. There is little in these couplets to distinguish between Comatas and Lacon as bucolic lovers. Both claim to offer gifts that range from plausible to outlandish, while neither gives any further information about the beloved. Love, however, has maintained a prominent place in their songs and is a theme to which Comatas consistently returns. As a theme for song, especially in the bucolic setting, love feels naturally at home, though its frequency is worth noting. Out of the fourteen pairs of couplets that make up the _agon_ (not counting Comatas’ final unanswered couplet), five have an amorous theme. Theocritus’ fictional world is most often centered on specifically erotic song, and so love’s persistent presence in the _agon_ is important for bucolic fiction’s role in the ostensibly mimetic competition.

Though love is a significant theme, it is perhaps not surprising that only one or two themes dominate the _agon_. As Rossi notes, “la tematica di tali agoni doveva essere ristretta, tanto da non rendere il variare un tema proposto piú difficile rispetto all’improvvisare su uno dei non molti temi usuali.” By restricting the themes of his contest, Theocritus serves two purposes: he is able to add a mimetic touch to the _agon_ and, by choosing his themes with care, evoke qualities of bucolic fiction from his mime. The _agon_’s role in the poem’s representation of bucolic fiction comes to a head in the last pair of couplets delivered by Comatas and Lacon. At 5.128-131, Comatas delivers his improvisation and Lacon provides his final response: 

\[
\text{KO. οὐκ ἔραμι Άλκιππας, ὃτι μὲ πρᾶν οὐκ ἐφίλησε / τῶν ὀτῶν καθελοίστι ὥκα οί τὰν φάσσαν ἔδωκα. / ΛΑ. ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ Εὐμήδεις ἔραμαι μέγα καὶ γὰρ ὅκ’ αὐτῷ / τὰν σύριγγ’ ὀρεξα, καλὸν τι μὲ κάρτ’ ἐφίλησεν. Comatas’ admission of a failed love is the only unambiguously self-}
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117 Love and nature are both prominent themes. Cf. the chart provided by Ott, _Kunst des Gegensatzes_, 37.

118 Rossi, “vittoria e sconfitta,” 16.
deprecatory statement in the *agon*. Lacon, however, presents his second unambiguous claim of achieving success in love. Rather than concern ourselves with the reason for Comatas’ victory, a question that by all accounts does not admit a definitive answer, let us consider more broadly the effect Theocritus achieves by deciding the contest based on this particular set of couplets.

The most important implication from the perspective of bucolic fiction is that Comatas, the unsuccessful lover who puts his failure into song, wins the bucolic singing contest. Since the key variation that Lacon provides in his response is his success with Eumedes, it is possible to see Comatas less as the better singer and more as the better bucolic character. Unlike Lacon, he knows how to play the part of a bucolic herdsman, singing of his desire and pain, not boasting of his success.\(^\text{119}\) Lacon not only misses the mark in his characterization as a bucolic lover, he also claims to have given away his syrinx as a means to amatory success. Gift giving is practiced by other Theocritean lovers, but not with positive results. The syrinx’s appearance here is also notable. As observed above, Lacon gives his to his *beloved*, a point contrary to Idylls 1, 4, and 6, in which a syrinx is passed on to another bucolic singer. Rather than making his beloved the subject of a mournful song, he effectively abandons his position as a Theocritean herdsman by giving up his syrinx, a symbol of bucolic song, in order to fulfill his amatory desire. In a single couplet Lacon denies himself the bucolic roles of singer and unsuccessful lover. It is therefore appropriate that Lacon loses, though not *the* reason he loses.

\(^{119}\) Several scholars have taken a similar approach, arguing on various grounds that Comatas is representative of Theocritean poetry. Cf. Kossaifi, “Le Poète de Pan,” 86ff. and Serrao, “L’idillio V di Teocrito,” 89: “Ma mette conto soprattutto rilevare che Comata impersona la *Weltanschaung* su cui si fonda il programma poetico dibattuto da Teocrito nell’idillio VII: obbedire alla propria natura ed essere sempre se stessi; una poetica, cioè, fondata sulla ‘verita.’”
Some support for the influence of bucolic fiction on the outcome of the competition can be found in Vergil’s third *Eclogue*, which he closely models on Idyll 5. In *Eclogue* 3, Menalcas and Damoetas sing of many of the same themes that Comatas and Lacon take as subjects—primarily love and the countryside—though in Vergil’s poem the *agon* ends in a tie. The judge Palaemon explains his decision in lines 3.108-110: *Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites: / et vitula tu dignus et hic et quisquis amores / aut metuet dulcis aut experietur amaros*. As these lines make clear, Palaemon’s verdict rests on the contestants’ attitudes towards love. The tie results because love has been difficult for both; Damoetas has experienced the bitterness of love while Menalcas fears to lose his beloved Amyntas. This is a stark contrast to Lacon, who seems to feel no trepidation about his relationships. It is possible that Vergil is looking back to the *agon* of Idyll 5 and observing through Palaemon that bucolic characters are not supposed to be happy and secure in their love, as Lacon seems to be. In addition to the *Eclogue*’s indebtedness to Idyll 5, that Vergil may be looking back to that poem here gains credibility through Palaemon’s generalization concerning who is worthy of victory in a bucolic *agon* (*quisquis amores aut metuet dulcis aut experietur amaros*). Such a general statement has the effect of an edict on how contestants should broach the theme of love in a bucolic contest, a rule by which Lacon fails to abide. If Vergil is, in fact, offering an interpretation of Idyll 5 in Palaemon’s verdict, then Skutsch may be correct in speculating that Vergil was uncertain of the reason for Comatas’ victory in Theocritus’ Idyll.\(^{120}\) Perhaps Palaemon’s verdict is an indication that even Vergil was directed away from mimesis and toward deeper complexity by the perplexing conclusion of Idyll 5’s *agon*.

\(^{120}\) Skutsch, “Singing Matches,” 28.
To return to Idyll 5, the final dueling couplets also neatly look back to both the beginning of the *agon* and the beginning of the poem. The syrinx that Lacon gives to Eumedes recalls the one he accuses Comatas of stealing in lines 2-4, while his boast of receiving an exceptional kiss (καλὸν τί με κόρτ’ ὑφίλησεν) recalls his crude claim of sexual intercourse made at the beginning of the contest (5.86-87). Though no mimetic conclusions can safely be drawn from these observations, the imagery at these three key points—the beginning of the poem (itself a sort of unofficial contest), the beginning of the *agon*, and the end of the *agon*—suggests an important link between the first and second half of the poem. I believe that that link is the interlocutor’s characterization, though in order to see the connections clearly, one must look outside of Idyll 5.

Lacon’s final couplet draws on themes from both the beginning of the pre-agon and from the beginning of the *agon* proper. The thematic links between these sections of the poem are noteworthy, but the depth of meaning that they convey is not immediately clear. A useful starting point for considering the meaning of Idyll 5’s thematic links is the poem’s evocation of Daphnis. At the official beginning of the *agon*, Comatas boasts of the Muses’ love for him while Lacon claims the favor of Apollo. That the Muses may be considered more bucolic than Apollo and thus suggest an advantage for Comatas is a possibility, though of more immediate interest is Comatas’ mention of Daphnis. At 5.80-81, Comatas claims that the Muses love him more than Daphnis (τοί Μοῖσσι μὲ φιλέυντι πολὺ πλέον ἕ τον ἄοιδόν / Δάφνιν). This is the second time that the bucolic singer *par excellence* has come up in this poem. At 5.20, Lacon expressed his distrust of Comatas by saying αἱ τοι πιστεύσουμι, τὰ Δάφνιδος ἀλγεῖ ἀροίμαιν. Both Comatas and Lacon associate themselves with Daphnis, but Comatas compares himself to the
mythical cowherd and claims even to surpass him. Lacon, on the contrary, by referring to
the sufferings of Daphnis, distances himself from the iconic bucolic singer, considering it
unappealing to imitate Daphnis. Also significant is Lacon’s specific mention of Daphnis’
sufferings. Though the details may vary, Daphnis’ pain is universally caused by love.
Whatever τὰ Δάφνιδος ὀλγεῖα may evoke for the reader—whether it be Thyrsis’
account of Daphnis in Idyll 1 or another Daphnis account, the pains he suffers are caused
by love, exactly the sort of pain that Lacon escapes, according to his own assertions in the
agon. ¹²¹

The significance of Lacon’s and Comatas’ references to Daphnis resonates on
multiple levels. The two references each draw directly upon a theme critical for bucolic
fiction. Lacon refers to Daphnis’ troubles with love while Comatas evokes song by
comparing skill in bucolic song to Daphnis’. Thus the two themes of love and song,
combined in the figure of Daphnis, are individually elicited by Lacon and Comatas.
Additionally, the two references occur in different sections of the poem, Lacon’s in the
pre-agon and Comatas’ in the agon. Daphnis appears in both parts of the poem as a
character to whom the contestants compare themselves and so serves as a connection
between the two halves that further diminishes boundaries between the pre-agon and
agon and suggests a continuity of concepts. In other words, the connection created by the
image of Daphnis encourages a reading based on bucolic fiction. The importance of
Daphnis to Idyll 5, however, can be taken further. My previous remarks about Daphnis
are applicable regardless of the version of the Daphnis myth that one may have in mind.

¹²¹ Stenzel, “Selbstzitate,” 206, notes that an intertext between 5.15-16 and 3.25-26 implies that love is
Lacon’s motivation for his proposed leap from a cliff.
I would like to propose here, however, that Theocritus intends to direct his reader specifically to the Daphnis of Idyll 1.

While it is true that Daphnis appears in several bucolic poems, the manner in which both Lacon and Comatas phrase their references to Daphnis recalls Idyll 1 in particular. Lacon first mentions the cowherd’s name at 5.20 (τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε’ ἀροίμαυ). This same phrasing occurs in 1.19 where the goatherd requests that Thyrsis sing the sufferings of Daphnis: τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε’ ἀείδες. Lacon’s reference to Daphnis’ sufferings calls attention to Idyll 1, though another passage should also be considered in conjunction with 5.20. At 5.149-150, the last two lines of the poem, Comatas threatens a he-goat attempting to mount the she-goats: ἀλλὰ γενοίμαν, ᾧ μὴ τὸ φλοσσαίμι, Ἔλανθιος ἄντί Κομάτα. The construction here is identical to Lacon’s curse at 5.20: αἰ τὸι πιστεύσαίμι, τὰ Δάφνιδος ἄλγε’ ἀροίμαν. In comparing the two passages, a key difference becomes clear: Lacon opposes himself to Daphnis, a key figure for the bucolic world, while Comatas opposes himself to the wicked goatherd of epic. Without reading too much generic significance into this distinction, it is sufficient to observe that in both passages, Lacon and Comatas are citing mythical herdsmen as negative examples. The identical constructions of 5.20 and 5.149-150 create a connection between them that encourages the reader to compare the two statements, resulting in a stark contrast between Lacon’s desire to avoid the fate of Daphnis and Comatas’ fear of emulating Melanthius. Comatas’ use of the same grammatical construction to distance himself from an appropriately negative example, Melanthius, the wicked goatherd of the *Odyssey*, serves to point out the oddity of Lacon’s desire to distance himself from Daphnis, a mythical character iconic as a shepherd-poet. We may
also note that, as with the two evocations of Daphnis, the intratextual reference is divided between the two halves of the poem. Though Comatas’ curse is not actually in the agon but instead follows his victory celebration, the curses the competitors call upon themselves nevertheless span the entire poem and once again create a sense of unity for the poem as a whole. Line 5.20, then, appears to look both to 1.19 and to 5.149-150, as each reference serves to point out the oddity of Lacon’s disregard for Daphnis as a bucolic paradigm, the former by recalling the programmatic first Idyll, which more than any other Idyll portrays Daphnis as a significant bucolic figure, the latter by pointedly presenting a truly negative example of a herdsman, Melanthius, who is both wicked in his characterization and represents epic over the leptos style of Alexandrian poetry.

To return to the significance of Daphnis in Idyll 5, Comatas’ invocation of Daphnis at 5.80-81 (ταί Μοίσαι με φιλεύτι πολύ πλέον ἵ τοῦ ἀοιδόν / Δάφνιν) also recalls Idyll 1, though perhaps not quite as starkly as Lacon’s. At 1.141, Thyrsis refers to Daphnis as τόν Μοίσαι χίλον ἄνδρα. Comatas’ boast seems to show an awareness of Thyris’ assertion that Daphnis was dear to the Muses. Knowledge of Thyris’ claim at 1.141 is, of course, not necessary to understand Comatas’ assertion, though the verbal similarities are suggestive of a reference to Idyll 1. Comatas’ claim to be dear to the Muses rather than the Nymphs, who are the more typical inspirers of bucolic song,¹²² may also add support to a connection between 5.80-81 and 1.141. The relevant passages also occur at notable points in each poem. Line 141 appears at the end of Thyrsis’ song immediately after Daphnis “went to the stream,” while Comatas’ assertion at 5.80-81 marks the beginning of the agon. A nice inversion results: Thyris recalls the Muses as he brings his song to a close, while Comatas invokes the Muses as he begins his song.

¹²² See above, pp. 31-32.
Both occurrences of Daphnis’ name in Idyll 5 recall Idyll 1, as Lacon distances himself from and Comatas likens himself to Daphnis. Also noteworthy, however, is that the references to Daphnis evoke two aspects crucial to bucolic fiction. Comatas brings song to the fore by boasting that he is dearer to the Muses than Daphnis, while Lacon’s reference to Daphnis’ sufferings invariably leads the reader to think of Daphnis’ troubles in love, whatever they may be. The two themes are important because together they provide the grounds on which the reader ought to compare the two Idylls. Let us consider Comatas’ boast first. The theme of bucolic song is self-evident. Comatas claims to surpass Daphnis, the iconic bucolic singer. More subtly, however, Comatas’ boast recalls the theme of bucolic love as well. The full line alluded to in Idyll 1 is ἔκλυσε δίνα / τῶν Μοῖσαις φίλον ἄνδρα, τῶν οὖ Νύμφαισιν ἀπεχθή 1.140-141.

Though both the Muses and the Nymphs favor Daphnis, there is an opposition in the line between the adjectives φίλος and ἀπεχθής. The adjective ἀπεχθής in particular recalls its previous use at 1.101 where Daphnis addresses Aphrodite: Κύπρι βαρεῖα, / Κύπρι νεμεσσατά, Κύπρι θυστοῖσιν ἀπεχθής (1.100-101). As these lines make clear, Aphrodite is the one who is ἀπεχθής. Daphnis’ string of vocatives strikingly disparages the goddess, and love by association. He sets himself against Aphrodite and love throughout his speech to her and eventually succumbs to death. Thus, the collocation of φίλος and ἀπεχθής in the same line appears to look back to Daphnis’ speech by presenting the other side of the coin. If love is hateful to Daphnis, as he tells us, then he seems to find φιλία in song, as exemplified by both the Muses and the Nymphs. By alluding to this passage of Idyll 1, Theocritus also alludes to that opposition between love and song where the shepherd-poet finds the Muses favorably disposed, but not Aphrodite.
Lacon, too, in mentioning Daphnis recalls the erotic song central to the world of bucolic fiction. Most clearly, the “sufferings of Daphnis,” which I am arguing allude specifically to Idyll 1, are sufferings caused by love, regardless of which version of the Daphnis story the reader may think. There is also a suggestion of erotic song by association with 1.19: ἀλλὰ τὰ γὰρ δή, Ὅμηροι, τὰ Δάφνιδος ἀλγε’ ἀείδες. The context is manifestly one of singing, as τὰ Δάφνιδος ἀλγεα appears to be the title of Thrys’s song. Lacon, certainly, is not referring to a song when he mentions “the sufferings of Daphnis,” but song—particularly erotic song—is a critical theme for the first Idyll as Daphnis’ lovesickness forms the subject for Thrys’s song. Because they allude to Idyll 1, the references that Lacon and Comatas make to Daphnis as a prelude to their songs recall Daphnis’ connection to song and love and invite comparison between Daphnis and the two competitors of Idyll 5, only one of whom bears any similarity to the bucolic exemplar of Idyll 1.

Because of the manner in which each character evokes Daphnis, the impression that Comatas embodies the ideals of the bucolic world in a way that Lacon does not is strengthened and suggests a greater potential for bucolic fiction in Idyll 5 than the poem could have without intertextual references. More indications exist, however, that Idyll 1 is an important point of reference for interpreting Idyll 5. These indications also direct the reader toward a reading based on bucolic fiction.

Beginning at line 31, Lacon and Comatas argue over where their singing contest will take place. After a coarse digression on his pedagogical practices, Comatas declines Lacon’s invitation and praises the amenities of his own location: τούτει δρύες, ωδὲ κύπειρος, / ωδὲ καλὸν βομβεύντι ποτὶ σμόνεσι μέλισσαι (5.45-46). As has long
been noted, these lines are nearly identical to Daphnis’ description of Mount Ida at 1.106-107. Unfortunately, manuscript problems at the beginning of 1.107 make Daphnis’ precise meaning unclear.\textsuperscript{123} The codices show 1.107 to be identical to 5.46, though this may be due to interpolation. Based on evidence from a Latin translation of Plutarch’s \textit{Quaestiones Naturales}, Meineke proposed ἦδὲ in place of κόδὲ in 1.106 and αἱ ἀδὲ for ἦδὲ in 1.107. Gow and Hunter, following Meineke, both print τηνεὶ δρύες ἦδὲ κύπειρος / αἱ ἀδὲ καλὸν βομβεύντι ποτὶ σμάνησαι μέλισσαι at 1.106-107. The issue hangs on the location of the κύπειρος and bees and whether they suggest Aphrodite’s sexual proclivities and status as an adulteress rather than simply evoke the purity of the \textit{locus amoenus}. Giangrande has argued against Meineke’s emendation, proposing that Daphnis orders Aphrodite to leave the land of cypress and bees, symbols of sexual purity, and return to the oaks of Ida, which symbolize sexual opportunity.\textsuperscript{124} Despite the uncertainty regarding the precise wording of the beginning of line 107, a clear connection exists between 1.106-107 and 5.45-46.\textsuperscript{125} Let us consider the relevance of this connection to Idyll 5, bearing in mind the textual issues of the passage from Idyll 1.

After asserting that even in death he will be a terrible pain to love, Daphnis mocks Aphrodite by bringing up her affair with Anchises. Daphnis orders Aphrodite to go to Anchises on Mount Ida, in which context lines 1.106-107 are spoken. The broad contexts, then, of the passages from the two poems, 1.106-107 and 5.45-46, are similar. In both passages a character is being directed to a particular location. We may also note


\textsuperscript{124} Giangrande, “Aphrodite and the Oak-Trees,” \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{125} Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, ad 1.106 comments on lines 106f. “There are other echoes of this context in T. … and the repetitions of 1.13 at 5.101 and of 1.138 at 7.90 seem plainly due to the poet, so that the lines need not be suspected on that account…”
that in both cases the relationship between the two sets of characters—Daphnis and
Aphrodite in Idyll 1 and Lacon and Comatas in Idyll 5—is characterized by animosity.
The major difference is thematic. Daphnis and Aphrodite are at odds over love while
Lacon and Comatas are squabbling over a location for their singing. By examining the
passage from Idyll 5 more carefully, however, it is possible to see a subtle erotic context
for Comatas and Lacon’s disagreement over who will gain the home field advantage.

Earlier, I argued that Comatas aligned himself with Daphnis while Lacon
pointedly distanced himself from the iconic cowherd. Their attitudes toward Daphnis
provide another connection with 1.106-107 since Comatas may be considered as again
playing the role of Daphnis. Indeed, Comatas is the one who appropriates Daphnis’
words. But Comatas’ appropriation of Daphnis’ role mirrors only half of the scene in
Idyll 1. If Comatas is playing Daphnis’ part, does the text in any way allow us to
associate Lacon with Aphrodite? I believe that it does.

I have argued that Lacon’s attitude toward love is unbucolic in that he boasts of
his sexual conquests instead of pining over an unattainable love as is typical of a
shepherd-poet’s erotic song. Lacon’s success in obtaining the objects of his desire is a
trait he holds in common with Aphrodite. Daphnis makes Aphrodite’s sexual proclivity
clear by mentioning her affairs with Anchises and Adonis, to which a textual argument
can be added. At 1.109-110, lines separated from the key passage that mentions
Aphrodite’s affair with Anchises only by the refrain, Daphnis recalls Aphrodite’s
relationship with Adonis: ὠραῖος χάρδωνις, ἐπεὶ καὶ μῆλα νομεύει / καὶ πτώκας
βάλλει καὶ θηρία πάντα διώκει. To this we may compare Lacon’s proposed gift to his
beloved: χάμιν ἐστι κύων φιλοποίμινος ὡς λύκος ἀγχει, / ὅν τῷ παιδὶ δίδωμι τὰ
θηρία πάντα διώκειν (5.106-107). The passages are most directly linked by the words θηρία πάντα διώκειν, though that is not the full extent of their similarities. The adjective φιλοποίμινος in line 5.106 modifies κύων but is just as apt for describing Aphrodite and Lacon, each of whom has a shepherd for a beloved.126 This couplet from Idyll 5 places Lacon in a position very similar to that of Aphrodite in Idyll 1. Both are in love with boys who are described as pursuing animals, and the adjective φιλοποίμινος, though applied to the dog, also recalls the erotic context of Idyll 1.109-110.127

In addition to textual references to Idyll 1, Comatas’ invitation to Lacon at 5.45-49 introduces another erotic context through intratextual means. Line 5.49, the last line of Comatas’ five-line response to Lacon’s summons at 5.31-34, creates an erotic context. Before examining the erotic nature of 5.49, a brief discussion of the line will be necessary since it has been the subject of some scholarly attention. The line occurs as Comatas describes the advantages of his location, saying, ὅρνιχες λαλαγεύντι, καὶ ἀ σκιά οὐδὲν ὀμοία / τὰ παρὰ τίν’ βάλλει δὲ καὶ ἀ πίτυς ύψόθε κώνοις (5.48-49). Gow proposes that one may consider the falling pine cones beneficial because their kernels are edible, but goes on to say “even so a shower of pine-cones might be thought a disadvantage.”128

Viewing a pine tree that pelts unwary bystanders as a negative aspect of the locus amoenus gains some support from a passage in Martial: Poma sumus Cybeles: procul

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126 In the case of Lacon, the fact that the dog he plans to give his beloved is φιλοποίμινος suggests the boy is a shepherd.

127 It is also appropriate that Lacon’s gift at 5.106-107 harks back to Idyll 1 since Comatas’ gift of a bowl made by Praxiteles is also linked with Idyll 1 by way of comparison with the goatherd’s bowl. See Schmidt, “Der Göttliche Ziegenhirt,” 226. Stanzel, “Selbstzitate,” 215-216, notes also the similarity of 3.46-48 to 5.106-107 and 1.109-110. Like the passages from Idylls 1 and 5, 3.46-48 depicts Adonis as a dying yet attainable beloved, in contrast to Daphnis whose death is connected to his refusal to submit to love.

128 Gow, Theocritus II, ad loc.
hinc discede viator / ne cadat in miserum nostra ruina caput (Mart. 13.25-26). Gow cites this passage as part of his reservation about how to interpret 5.49. Richard Thomas, however, goes even further, suggesting that falling pine cones eventually became a negative topos of the locus amoenus. Thomas goes on to propose an emendation that would attribute the pelting pine tree to Lacon’s side rather than Comatas: καὶ ἀ σκια ὦδὲν ὦμοία / τὰ παρὰ τίν· βάλλει δὲ τευ ἀ πίτυς ύψόθε κὼνοις (5.48-49).

Gow’s hesitation over line 5.49 is understandable, and Thomas’ arguments for emendation are reasonable and plausible. The only problem, however, is that Gow and Thomas are both approaching the problem from a strictly mimetic viewpoint. On its face, a tree that drops pine cones on whoever happens to pass by would, in fact, be a great annoyance and would do nothing to aid Comatas in persuading Lacon. If, however, we take into account the type of amorous characters that Comatas and Lacon will later demonstrate themselves to be, the image of the pine tree that Comatas presents is more easily explained.

Setting aside for a moment the literal image of a pine tree showering people with pine cones, it is possible to recognize a frequent literary trope, that of the beloved who pelts the object of his or her affection with fruit. While the trope typically employs apples as the projectile of choice, the variation that Theocritus creates at 5.49 offers a perfect analogue in the form of κώνοι, which, as Gow has noted, contain edible fruit. Thus, though the pine cannot pelt with apples, it is able to drop its own pine cones as a reasonable substitute for the more traditional fruit.

129 Thomas, “Two Problems,” 251.
130 Thomas, “Two Problems,” 253.
131 See above n. 119.
The eroticism of the pine tree at 5.49 is heightened by Comatas’ use of the same trope in the *agon* at 5.88-89. Comatas’ assertion at 5.88 that Clearista pelts him with apples calls attention to his variation of the same trope at 5.49 and offers another instance in which a careful reading of the pre-*agon* and *agon* together yields greater insight into the poem as a whole. If 5.88 creates the possibility for an amorous interpretation of 5.49, it does not, however, explicate the purpose of the erotic context. To gain a better understanding of why 5.49 is infused with erotic undertones, we must consider the context in which the line occurs.

Comatas’ personification of the pine tree as making an erotic overture to Lacon is entirely appropriate in the immediate context and is supported by the attitudes toward love that the two contestants demonstrate afterward in the *agon*. To begin with the immediate context, I have already proposed that lines 5.45-46 function as an allusion to Idyll 1 that aligns Lacon with Aphrodite. The relevance of the allusion only becomes clear when evidence from the rest of the poem is taken into account, especially the comparable sexual proclivity of Aphrodite and Lacon. The portrayal of the pine tree as mimicking the actions of a beloved would serve as an enticement for Lacon who, like Aphrodite, has a penchant for sexual encounters. Allusion and personification work together to create an underlying erotic theme in the pre-*agon* that draws upon the erotic theme in the *agon* to create a consistent characterization of Comatas’ and Lacon’s respective attitudes toward love.

While from a mimetic standpoint it is true that the songs of a bucolic singing contest are prone to exaggeration and boasting and so their contents cannot be taken as biographical fact, numerous textual similarities between the pre-*agon* and the *agon*, as I
have argued, encourage comparison between the two halves of the poem. The advantage of bucolic fiction, then, is that it leaves the mimetic fiction undisturbed and yet succeeds in exposing and utilizing an underlying intratextuality that opens up the poem to new interpretations. To return to the role of the pine tree, it is mimetically incomprehensible that Comatas would suggest that the pine entices Lacon by way of an erotic trope. From the standpoint of bucolic fiction, such a personification is consistent with the importance of eroticism in song and, more generally, the fictional world. In addition, through allusions to Idyll 1, Lacon’s sexual aggression and foreignness to the bucolic world are emphasized as he is compared with Aphrodite, a depiction consistent with the attitude toward love that he displays in the *agon*.

The importance of both love and the allusions to Idyll 1 cannot be overstated. While scholars have noted that Idyll 5 comments on Theocritean poetics through connections with Idyll 7, the influence of Idyll 1 has not been sufficiently explored. Lawall’s apt observations offer a beginning. Both begin with a conversation between a shepherd and a goatherd, and the central sections of both are occupied by an extended song. Lawall also notes that both Idylls 1 and 5 begin with a “verbal rivalry” in which the second speaker employs a variation of the first speaker’s words and phrasing. The beginning of Idyll 5 looks not only to its own *agon* but also suggests Idyll 1’s influence on the poem. It seems reasonable, then, that the Theocritean program as established in Idyll 1 is no less influential for Idyll 5 than the poetics set out in Idyll 7. The erotic

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133 Lawall, *Coan Pastorals*, 52.

134 Lawall, *Coan Pastorals*, 52.
themes of Idyll 5, often containing connections to Idyll 1, serve to link Idyll 5 to Idyll 1’s poetic program and underscore its place among the bucolic poems.

The significance of the intertextual relationship between Idylls 1 and 5 will be explored further in the next chapter, which will focus on the role of bucolic fiction in Idyll 1. Idyll 5 has demonstrated well how bucolic fiction can exist within different genres, but Idyll 1 will allow an examination of bucolic fiction that is not hindered by a dominant generic influence.
Chapter 3

Despite comprising only a fraction of the Theocritean corpus, two among the bucolic poems, Idylls 1 and 7, are generally considered programmatic for Theocritus’ poetry, appearing to advocate the “thin” style of poetry commonly referred to as “Callimachean.” Little more can be said with confidence about Theocritus’ poetic program since, as one may expect, several passages that seem to convey Theocritus’ views on poetry remain open questions of the sort that often characterize Theocritean poems. Of course, those tantalizing moments of uncertainty are what make Theocritus’ poetry so polyvalent, a quality that may well be part of his poetic program.

Though bucolic fiction is not itself programmatic, as an approach for analysis it may be of value for interpreting the programmatic Idylls. In this chapter, I shall analyze one of the programmatic Idylls, Idyll 1, from the standpoint of bucolic fiction. This analysis will serve as the basis for a new interpretation of the Idyll that argues for its significance relative to the other bucolic poems, especially through its depiction of the mythical cowherd Daphnis.

Before consideration of Idyll 1 begins, it is important to note that while the Idyll is justly viewed as programmatic in the larger sense of poetics because it frequently refers to artistic work in programmatic terms, especially terms related to sweetness, culminating in the famous vignette in which a young boy weaves a cage for a cricket, an insect whose music is also programmatic—it is not programmatic for bucolic poetry. To suggest as much would be to grant bucolic fiction a structure too narrowly defined. With this caveat in mind, we may proceed to a discussion of Idyll 1’s use of bucolic fiction, which is

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135 The bibliography for Idyll 7 as a programmatic poem is extensive. For Idyll 1, however, see Cairns, “Theocritus’ First Idyll”; Goldhill, Poet’s Voice, 240-246; Stanzel, “Selbstzitate,” 217; and Hubbard, Pipes of Pan, 21-22.
evident from the beginning of the Idyll. Within the first two lines of the poem, Thyrsis compares the goatherd’s piping to the whispering of a pine (1.1-2). From the start Theocritus not only marks the importance of song in a programmatic sense, but also establishes song as the axis upon which the two herdsmen’s world turns. The topic of song persists through the initial exchange between Thyrsis and the goatherd even as other imagery is introduced. In particular, nature (1.1-2, 7-8) and divinities (1.3-6, 9-11) are both subjects of discussion in the opening lines of the poem, though both occur in the context of their relation to song. Gutzwiller has interpreted these lines in terms of their analogical significance,\textsuperscript{136} that is, in terms of the relation between the objects and concepts being compared, in a vein similar to Ott’s earlier comments on the blurring of boundaries between nature and music as well as between human and divine.\textsuperscript{137} Such comparative approaches are valuable, but another approach to these opening lines will be useful.

In the previous chapter I noted that Lawall compares the beginning of Idyll 1 to that of Idyll 5.\textsuperscript{138} Though Lawall refers to the initial exchange in each poem simply as a “verbal rivalry,”\textsuperscript{139} both exchanges are agonistic in structure. The agonistic nature of Idyll 5’s pre-agon has been noted frequently, but the agonistic quality of Idyll 1’s opening lines has received less attention,\textsuperscript{140} an understandable oversight given that

\textsuperscript{136} Gutzwiller, \textit{Pastoral Analogies}, 14-16.

\textsuperscript{137} Ott, \textit{Kunst des Gegensatzes}, 88-89.

\textsuperscript{138} See above p. 66.

\textsuperscript{139} Lawall, \textit{Coan Pastorals}, 52.

\textsuperscript{140} Cairns, “Theocritus’ First Idyll,” 103, mentions this point in passing, and Hunter, \textit{Theocritus}, ad 1.1-11, refers to “the ‘competition’ of compliments” that begins the poem and notes its connection with Idyll 5. Ott, \textit{Kunst des Gegensatzes}, 89, sees in the initial exchange of Idyll 1 a modification of an agonistic
Thyrsis and the goatherd do not engage in an actual agon in the poem. Nevertheless, an agonistic structure is present in the initial eighteen lines of Idyll 1 and is especially visible in lines 1-11.\textsuperscript{141}

The agonistic structure of Idyll 1 is based on the same proposal-response pattern found in Idyll 5. Thyrsis proposes a theme and the goatherd responds by offering a variation based on the language and theme that have been proposed. This proposal-response pattern occurs twice, and though the exchanges are not in couplets, they exhibit all the other characteristics found in the agon and pre-agon of Idyll 5. This agonistic pattern stands in contrast to the contest of Idyll 6 and the songs of Idylls 7 and 10 that occur as diptychs, that is, two separate, complete poems that are juxtaposed.\textsuperscript{142} When compared to the singing contests of other Idylls, the structure of 1.1-18 stands out as agonistic in a manner that connects it specifically to Idyll 5 rather than marking it as part of a motif prevalent throughout the corpus. Setting aside intratextual possibilities with Idyll 5, let us pursue the possible reasons for Idyll 1’s agonistic context.

One consequence of constructing the initial exchange between Thyrsis and the goatherd as part of an agon is the heightened artificiality attributed to the lines. Both the structure and content of the Idyll’s beginning suggest sophistication incongruous with a rustic figure, though the association of music with nature blurs the boundary between the framing motif: “Auch das andere Motiv, dessen sich die Hirten zu ihren Komplimenten bedienen, entstammt der Topik der Wettstreitrahmen und ist ebenso wie die Ortsschilderung, seines üblichen Zweckes entkleidet, dazu verfeinert, die Dialogpartner auf einer höheren Ebene des Empfindens zu zeigen, als sie Hirten normalweise zukommt.

\textsuperscript{141} Ott, Kunst des Gegensatzes, 87-92, provides an excellent discussion of these lines, in which he highlights many agonistic features in the opening of Idyll 1. The most obvious agonistic characteristics of the initial exchange are the goatherd’s repetition with variation of the theme that Thyrsis provides (comparison of song to nature, prize awarded second after divinity) and his use of ὀδύου (1.7), a variation of the key word ὀδύ (1.1), that occurs in the same “sedes” of the line as Thyrsis’ ὀδύ.

\textsuperscript{142} Though not typical in its presentation, the goatherd’s ekphrasis does have a performative aspect to it and forms a diptych with Thyrsis’ song, the significance of which will be discussed below.
two and adds an element of realism to the otherwise noticeably stylized opening.\textsuperscript{143} The dual nature of the lines that are at the same time clearly artificial yet temptingly mimetic—nature seems an apt point of comparison for rustics—is a tribute to Theocritus’ artistic skill and indicative of the influence of bucolic fiction. From its first line, Idyll 1 centers itself on the theme of song, making it the core of Thyrsis and the goatherd’s shared fictional world, to which all else exists only in relation.

Though the agonistic form of lines 1.1-18 enhances the artificial quality of the discussion they contain, one need not recognize their agonistic quality to perceive their artificiality. It simply enhances the impression of stylization that the lines convey. Why then structure the opening of this particular Idyll, one that does not contain an *agon*,\textsuperscript{144} in a manner reminiscent of bucolic singing contests? Part of the answer has already been proposed above. The initial lines of Idylls 1 and 5 contain striking similarities that encourage comparison. It is worth noting that the agonistic form characterized by a quick succession of thematically linked proposals and responses is not common in Theocritus’ bucolic corpus outside of Idyll 5. The terms “competition” and “*agon*” can, for this reason, be misleading in the context of Theocritean bucolic poetry. Certainly Idyll 5’s singing match is a competition resulting in a winner and a loser. This, however, appears to be the only such *agon*. The closest parallel is in Idyll 6, but though the poem describes Daphnis and Damoetas’ singing in competitive terms (ἐρισόδεν, 6.5; νίκη μὲν οὐδέλλος, ἀνήσσατοι δ’ ἐγένετο, 6.46), that *agon* is quite different from the *agon* of Idyll 5. Most notably, Daphnis and Damoetas each sing a single extended song in contrast to the back

\textsuperscript{143} Ott, *Kunst des Gegensatzes*, 88. For a discussion that demonstrates the care with which Theocritus has formed this poem, see Donnet, “Resources Phoniques,” 158-175.

\textsuperscript{144} Though see Frangeskou, “Unusual Bucolic Agon,” who argues that the ecphrasis of the cup and Thyrsis’ song together form the titular unusual bucolic *agon*. 

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and forth exchange of Idyll 5. Other important elements are also absent, most obviously, a wager staked before the singing begins and a judge to decide the outcome. Idyll 6, though presented as a competition, has more in common with the exhibitions of Idylls 7 and 10 than it does with the mimetic agon of Idyll 5. The term “agon” must be taken loosely in the context of Theocritean bucolic, and the form of each “competition” must be considered on its own merits; to speak of a Wettstreitmotiv as Ott does must be done with care. The agones of 1.1-18 and Idyll 5 contain a particular structure that stands apart from the other Idylls. That is not to deny the competitive or quasicompetitive characteristics prevalent in several bucolic Idylls but rather to suggest the importance of connecting Idyll 1’s agon with Idyll 5’s specifically, a point easily obscured by the presence of a competition-motif.

In addition to formal considerations, the content of lines 1.1-18 also suggest the context of a bucolic singing match, though of a different sort from that in Idyll 5. Thyrsis and the goatherd both compliment each other, first through comparisons with nature and then by comparison with a god; the goatherd is second only to Pan, and Thyrsis to the Muses. Because the latter association is made through a description of what prize would fall to the winning divinity and the runner-up herdsman, an agonistic theme is established to complement the structure of the lines. The context, however, is contrary to what one would expect of an agon. Instead of boasting about his own skill, each herdsman exaggerates the skill of the other. This provides the sense of harmony for the Idyll often

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145 Ott, Kunst des Gegensatzes, 89.
noted by scholars\(^{146}\) though it may also provide a subtle programmatic function by proposing a model for poetic interaction.

The harmony between the goatherd and Thyrsis results from their mutual recognition of each other’s musical skill and the necessary limits of that skill. Each admires the other’s talent but also specifically sets his companion beneath a god in terms of musical ability. The measured praise that initiates the poem functions as a subtle approach to a theme that finds more direct reference elsewhere in Theocritus’ poetry: the theme of knowing one’s poetic place. In contrast to the approach in Idyll 1, however, the theme is elsewhere generally broached from a perspective of chastisement for those who fail to know the bounds of their own poetic skill. In Idyll 5, for instance, Comatas mocks Lacon with the taunt σφάξ βομβέων τέττιγος ἐναυτίου (5.29). As in Idyll 1, poetic skill is related to nature, though it becomes clear that not all parts of nature produce songs of equal beauty.

Idyll 7 applies the theme of relationships between poets directly to Theocritus and his contemporaries. Simichidas, despite the assertions of others, finds himself inferior to Aesclepiades and Philitas and refers to himself in this regard as a frog competing against grasshoppers: βάτραχος δὲ ποτ’ ἀκρίδας ὡς τις ἐρίδος (7.41). Lycidas, too, expresses his hatred for those birds of the Muses who warble against Homer (7.47-48). If we set aside the natural imagery, a frequent characteristic found in Theocritus’ descriptions of poetic skill, then Idyls 4 and 6 also engage this issue. In Idyll 4, Corydon briefly asserts that he has some skill as a musician (ἐγὼ δὲ τίς εἰμὶ μελικτάς 4.30), and the outcome of Idyll 6 results in Daphnis’ and Damoetas’ mutual recognition of their equality in musical skill (6.46). In addition to advocating a poetic style, Theocritus

appears highly conscious of how one should relate to one’s own poetic skill as well as to the skill of others.

To return to Idyll 1, then, the opening eighteen lines present a sort of anti-agon in which the contestants compete to assert the other’s skill rather than their own. Neither Thyrsis nor the goatherd denies his own ability—there is no self-deprecation here—but each recognizes the abilities of the other and attempts to elicit a performance from his rival. When a song finally is sung, Thyrsis has no qualms about recognizing his own talent: Θύροσις ὁδὲ ωξὶ Αἰτνος, καὶ Θύριδος ἀδέα φωνά (1.65). Thus, lines 1-18 express more than simply the idealized harmony of the bucolic world—they express an idealized relationship of mutual respect and admiration between two skilled poets, which the harmony of Idyll 1’s initial exchange reflects. Idylls 1 and 5 are drawn into comparison by the structural similarity of their agones, but the competitions they depict are antithetical in nature. Idyll 1’s idealization of the bucolic world—already artificial—becomes even more unreal by comparison with Idyll 5’s mimetic quality. The two agones provide complementary perspectives on the same issue, portraying positive and negative versions of poetic interaction, though their differing levels of mimesis may offer a further comment. Both Idylls employ bucolic fiction, but perhaps Idyll 1’s overt fictionality also contrasts with Idyll 5’s mimesis, suggesting that Idyll 1 presents poetic relationships as they should be, and Idyll 5 as they are.

The notion that Theocritus uses the intertextual relationship between Idylls 1 and 5 as a means of commenting on the contemporary poetic atmosphere gains support from sources outside the Idylls. The importance of relationships between poets in a broad sense is a theme brought to the fore by Callimachus, who famously labels his critics
Telchines (Call. Aet. 1.1), but who treats the issue at greater length in Iambus 4.

Gutzwiller observes points of comparison between the agones in Callimachus’ fourth Iambus and Theocritus’ fifth Idyll, noting especially that both represent an analogy to contemporary literary arguments.\(^\text{147}\) If Theocritus does subscribe to the ideals of Callimachean poetic aesthetics, as seems to be the case, then Callimachus’ incorporation of literary debate into his poetry may support identifying such a theme in Theocritus’ poetry, whether because Theocritus was looking to Callimachus directly or, just as plausibly, because of the theme’s general popularity at the time.

In addition to her discussion of the contemporary literary debate, Gutzwiller observes in passing another relevant point that deserves further exploration: “In the early Hellenistic age poets established their reputations not only through public agones but also in the equally strife-filled arena of scholarly backbiting.”\(^\text{148}\) That Ptolemy Philadelphus funded such agones is a point of praise elsewhere in Theocritus’ poetry: οὐδὲ Διωνύσου τις ἀνήρ ἱερὸς κατ’ ἀγώνας / ἑκτ’ ἐπιστάμενος λιγυρὰν ἀναμέλψαι ἀοιδὰν, / ὥς ὅποι δειτίναν ἀντάξιον ὑπάσε τέχνας (17.112-114). The bucolic agon may therefore be more than a mimetic touch. It may well be a reflection of a competitive atmosphere that found expression in the form of the famous literary debates of the time but also to some extent in actual competitions.\(^\text{149}\) One could in that case read the “‘competition’ of compliments,” as Hunter puts it, of 1.1-18 as an idealization of the interaction between poets of mutually acknowledged skill who may find themselves at odds in both literary

\(^{147}\) Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 146.

\(^{148}\) Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies, 145.

\(^{149}\) Gow, Theocritus II, ad 1.19 and Hunter, Theocritus, 62, both note the possible association of Thyrsis’ name with Dionysus. Hunter interprets this association as pointing to the tragic character of Idyll 1, though in the context of 1.1-18, the name “Thyrsis” may also point to the contests of Dionysus that Theocritus mentions in Idyll 17.
debates and official *agones*. I do not claim that Theocritus intends to refer to any specific event in this regard, though it does seem reasonable for a poem so heavily composed of programmatic imagery to make some reference to poets as well as poetics.

Similarly, Theocritus may subtly hint at the figurative and literal competition of his time in the *agon* of Idyll 6. No wager is staked and no judge presides, but the poem clearly places itself in an agonistic context. Like the “*agon*” of Idyll 1, the contestants show only respect for each others’ skill and represent an idealization of poetic interaction in which two skillful shepherd-poets perform mutually appreciated songs. Idyll 5, in contrast, lacks any such harmony, but here the two performers are clearly not equal as Comatas asserts his authority over Lacon both pedagogically (5.35-38) and sexually (5.41-42), perhaps emphasizing the contrast between idealized and actual relationships between poets. The interaction between shepherd-poets has the potential to be a rich theme that is worth pursuing, though it likely entails a greater complexity than the scope of this chapter will allow. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note for its potential expansion of the poetic program set out in Idyll 1.

Finally, we may note in terms of bucolic fiction that the form of the opening lines of Idyll 1 mirrors the theme being discussed. Thyrsis and the goatherd are talking, of course, about song, and, as noted above, the bucolic singing contest was itself a form of song. Thus, the agonistic structure of the initial exchanges between shepherd and goatherd suggests they are engaging in a song even as they attempt to elicit songs from each other. There is a playfulness to these opening lines as song and poetry are made the subject of comment on multiple levels.
Following the “agon” that begins the Idyll comes the goatherd’s description of the cup that he proposes to give as payment for a song from Thyrsis. The connections between the goatherd’s ecphrasis and Thyrsis’ song have been the subject of much scholarly discussion though, as Goldhill observes, “the cup and the song constitute pastoral fictions within the frame of the pastoral fiction of the locus amoenus, and these representative fictions offer contrasts and similarities that are hard to resolve into a single pastoral scene, a single frame of reference.”

Rather than attempt to reconcile the contents of the ecphrasis and song, I would instead like to consider the contrasts and similarities that the juxtaposition of ecphrasis and song have with other diptych structures in the Idylls.

Among the other bucolic Idylls, poems 5, 6, 7, and 10 each contain two songs sung by different characters. In Idyll 5, these songs are interwoven in imitation of actual rustic singing matches. The other poems, however, present two related songs that are separated from each other by a relatively brief return to the setting of the frame that opens and closes each of the Idylls. This pairing of songs may be viewed in terms of framing or as containing a diptych structure that sets in apposition two related songs. In the case of Idyll 1, however, only one of the “songs” that are juxtaposed is actually a song. The difference in function and essence between the goatherd’s ecphrasis and Thyrsis’ song adds to the difficulty in resolving the relationship between cup and song. This tension is evident in Pretagostini’s assessment of Idyll 1’s structure. While he considers Idylls 6, 7,

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151 Goldhill, Poet’s Voice, 245.

152 Pretagostini, “La struttura compositiva,” 61-64.
and 10 to have an A-B-A-B’-A pattern in which the inset songs (B) are surrounded by a frame (A), in the case of Idyll 1 he regards the ecphrasis as part of the frame (designated as “la descrizione della realtà pastorale”) thus giving the poem an A-B-A pattern in which the song of Thyrsis (B) stands alone between the framing elements (A).\textsuperscript{153} Despite considering the ecphrasis part of the frame rather than part of the diptych, Pretagostini still sees it as a “\textit{pendant}” to Thyris’ song.\textsuperscript{154}

The ecphrasis of Idyll 1 stands out as anomalous. It is not strictly speaking a song as is Thyrsis’ performance, yet it appears to correspond to Thyrsis’ song just as the songs in other diptych structured poems correspond to each other. The ecphrasis can be related to the frame, yet ultimately it stands apart since it does not contain the realism that the natural imagery affords the frame. As Payne notes, “while \textit{Idyll} 1 is in the dramatic mode, the ecphrasis can hardly be construed as a reality effect; it rather strongly marks the poem as fiction.”\textsuperscript{155} The ecphrasis does stand out against the preceding dialogue as particularly fictitious, but the goatherd’s fanciful description of the cup begins in a way consistent with the preceding level of realism. That is, the artificiality conveyed by the imaginative description incongruously placed in the mouth of a goatherd begins with his interpretation of the first vignette. The initial description of the cup in lines 1.26-31, however, contains no less realism than the first 25 lines. That is not to say that the first 25 lines aim at mimesis in the sense that Idyll 5 does, but rather that the artificiality of the poem is initially tempered by comparisons to nature that seem to befit a discussion

\textsuperscript{153} Pretagostini, “La struttura compositiva,” 58.

\textsuperscript{154} Pretagostini, “La struttura compositiva,” 58.

\textsuperscript{155} Payne, \textit{Invention of Fiction}, 38.
carried on by herdsmen.\textsuperscript{156} Lines 1.26-31, which describe the cup as deep, newly made, and two-handed as well as describing its scent and plant motif, do not tax the imagination of one attempting to picture the cup any more than Simichidas’ ecphrastic description of Lycidas in 7.15-20 hinders one’s mental image of the goatherd.

The goatherd’s initial description of the cup, then, is reminiscent of the opening of the Idyll. It tempers programmatic poetic themes (such as sweetness and novelty, 1.27-28) with natural imagery. In this case, however, the natural imagery of the plant motif adds realism through its common use as a decorative pattern.\textsuperscript{157} Pretagostini is correct to associate the ecphrasis with the frame because the two are thematically linked, though the ecphrasis also shares much in common with Thyrsis’ song. The divide in the ecphrasis between association with the frame and association with Thyrsis’ song occurs when the goatherd turns his attention to the first scene on the cup and his imaginative faculty—the same quality required of a shepherd-poet—takes over. The scenes, in effect, demonstrate the qualities of the cup that the goatherd asserted at the beginning of the ecphrasis, not in terms of its physical description, but rather in terms of qualities considered programmatic for poetry. The vignettes are a demonstration of the cup’s sweetness and novelty as the ecphrasis turns from description to performance.\textsuperscript{158}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{156} See above n. 143.
\item \textsuperscript{157} See Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, ad 1.30f. Despite the problems noted by Gow, the plant motif as described by the goatherd does not rely on his imagination as the descriptions of the vignettes do.
\item \textsuperscript{158} As Miles, “Ideal of Innocence,” 149, notes: “we are not actually shown the bowl. We are presented a version of it as seen through the eyes of an inhabitant of the bucolic world.” Payne, “Ecphrasis and Song,” picks up this point, observing aspects of the ecphrasis that suggest the goatherd’s own interpretation rather than a faithful description of the scenes on the bowl. Payne, “Ecphrasis and Song,” 276, also comments on the incongruity of such a sophisticated description being put in the mouth of a goatherd. The stylized language that began the poem thus continues throughout the ecphrasis and is indicative of the presence of bucolic fiction. See also Gutzwiller, \textit{Pastoral Analogies}, 101-102 and Frangeskou, “Unusual Bucolic Agon,” 25.
\end{itemize}
demonstrates the sweetness ascribed to it by the goatherd (1.7-11). This same sort of comparison can be made between the end of the ecphrasis and the end of the song. After the goatherd gives his interpretation of the three scenes on the cup, he returns to the natural imagery of the plant motif (παντα δ’ ἀμφί δέπας περιπέπταται ὑγρός ἀκανθός, 1.55). Vines, mentioned at lines 1.30-31 and 1.55, thus frame the vignettes, which span lines 1.32-54, at the verbal level as well as being part of the cup’s physical description provided by the goatherd. The goatherd then offers more praise of the cup, calling it an αἰτολικὸν θάμα, and claims that τέρας κέ τι θυμὸν ἀτύξαι (1.56). Following Thyrsis’ song, the goatherd reiterates his praise of Thyrsis and his song (1.146-148) and returns to natural imagery (1.151-152) as he did at the conclusion of his ecphrasis. The ecphrasis thus contains elements that correspond to themes and images found throughout the song. Specifically, the initial description of the cup corresponds thematically to the poem’s beginning; the vignettes correspond to Thyrsis’ song, as has often been noted; and the goatherd’s final praise of the cup corresponds to the final praise he gives Thyrsis for his song.

From a structural standpoint, then, Idyll 1 remains complicated, but it is not necessary to choose between associating the ecphrasis with either the frame or the song. On the contrary, it has strong connections with both and cannot be isolated from either without losing nuances critical for interpretation. Song’s thematic presence is deeply embedded in Idyll 1, offering perhaps the most intricate example of bucolic fiction of all the bucolic poems. The ecphrasis and song of Thyrsis offer at first glance a rich juxtaposition of art and song and, from another perspective, of two performances, as both exemplify poetry as set out in the programmatic statements scattered throughout the poem. It is worth noting that the goatherd specifically refers to Thyrsis’ song (τὸ τεὸν μέλος) at line 1.7.
poem. There is, however, another prominent aspect of bucolic fiction at work in Idyll 1: love’s role as a subject for song.

Love appears most clearly in Idyll 1 as the cause of Daphnis’ suffering. Theocritus does suggest love’s importance earlier in the poem as part of the goatherd’s description of the locus amoenus in which Thyrsis sings his song. The statue of Priapus mentioned as part of the locale looks forward to Priapus’ role in Thyrsis’ song, but also subtly associates the locus for bucolic song with sexuality.\textsuperscript{160} Despite the suggestion of love found in the locus amoenus for Thyrsis’ song, however, any discussion of love in Idyll 1 must focus on Daphnis. The precise details of Theocritus’ version of the Daphnis story are famously obscure due to both textual issues and the possibility that important points of the story are assumed knowledge for the reader and so not included in Thyrsis’ song. Segal’s assessment is attractive: “If Theocritus is aware of the traditional version and is referring to it…he has nevertheless so transformed it within his own narrative as to make its familiar content virtually unrecognizable.”\textsuperscript{161} Such a transformation would hardly be uncharacteristic of Theocritus. Indeed, one need only consider the unique elements that Theocritus provides for Polyphemus’ story in Idylls 6 and 11 or that of Castor in Idyll 22.

Though it may not be possible to name the source that Theocritus uses for the Daphnis myth with certainty, the evidence of the poem itself makes clear that Daphnis is suffering because of love. Theocritus’ treatment of the subject, however, is complicated by the hazy nature of the story that he presents and requires further analysis to determine

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\item Edquist, “Theocritean Otium,” 105.
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whether love as presented in this Idyll follows the pattern of unattainable love found in 
bucolic fiction. Before making an attempt to sort out the details of Daphnis’
lovesickness, it may be useful to consider generally some ways in which love’s 
presentation in Idyll 1 diverges from that of other Idyls and from bucolic fiction.

Because Daphnis is considered the mythical founder of bucolic song, it seems a 
natural conclusion that his portrayal in Idyll 1 should reveal something about Theocritus’
own approach to bucolic poetry. This is in some sense true, though this is a point that 
requires careful consideration to distinguish between what is and is not programmatic for 
Theocritus’ poetry. In Thyrsis’ song, Daphnis plays his familiar role of shepherd-poet 
par excellence. Nevertheless, Parry’s comparison, echoed by Lawall, of Daphnis to 
Aeschylus’ Prometheus has some merit. The question of whether Theocritus had 
Aeschylus in mind while composing this poem cannot proceed beyond speculation, but 
the comparison is apt as Daphnis in Aeschylean manner remains silent throughout the 
inquiries of Hermes and Priapus and stirs himself to speak only in response to Aphrodite. 
Daphnis’ silence is a sharp contrast to other figures in the Idylls who make love the 
subject of their song as they pine after the unattainable object of their desire. Two 
figures stand out in this regard: the goatherd of Idyll 3 and Polyphemus. Polyphemus in 
particular offers a pointed contrast since we are told that he sings in order to cure his 
lovesickness (11.17-18). Daphnis not only fails to sing about his love, he refuses even

163 Stanzel, Liebende Hirten, 248; Effe, Die Genese, 22-23.
164 Parry’s assertion about Daphnis in lines 1.106-107 is difficult to see: ‘Daphnis’ contempt still rings in 
the line describing the bees. He seems to be saying that this indulgence is good for Aphrodite: he, as a 
hero, is superior to it. Yet the beauty of the line is of his own making. We feel also in his words, ‘I will 
show you how well I can sing. It is my gift of song that has made me great, and will cause universal nature
to speak until Aphrodite herself comes to visit him. Daphnis’ reticence is surprising
given his status as a paradigm for the shepherd-poet.

Daphnis’ gift to Pan is similarly surprising when compared to the other Idylls. After
summoning Pan from whichever of his haunts he happens to occupy, Daphnis
offers him his syrinx. The syrinx is symbolic of bucolic poetry¹⁶⁵ here as elsewhere and,
like Daphnis’ refusal to speak or sing, represents a departure from the depiction of
shepherd-poets in love encountered elsewhere in the Idylls. The pain that love brings
generally provokes song and certainly does not result in death, only threats of death.
When one considers Daphnis’ recalcitrant reaction to love, especially his abandonment of
the bucolic music of which he is the archegete, one must wonder why Theocritus chose to
present Daphnis in this way. In contrast to Idyll 6, in which the Daphnis in question is
not necessarily the famous cowherd of myth, in Idyll 1 the context of gods and
sympathetic nature makes it difficult to identify Daphnis as any other than the founder of
bucolic song. Why then does Theocritus portray Daphnis the archegete as behaving so
oddly toward love?

Part of the answer may lie in the programmatic elements of the description of the
cup. As the goatherd mentions in line 1.28, the cup is newly made (νεοτευχές), a word
that points to “the standard Hellenistic claim to novelty and originality.”¹⁶⁶ Daphnis, as a
hero of the remote past whose bucolic song has long been a fixture in the countryside,
does not necessarily convey the sense of novelty desired by a Hellenistic poet such as

Theocritus. Perhaps an even more likely explanation is that bucolic song, already long in existence in the form of either folk songs or impromptu singing contests, required adaptation in order to become the literary bucolic of Theocritus’ making. Thus, Daphnis’ death is the death of “old” bucolic. Love, which is to become an important theme in Theocritus’ new bucolic approach, is the cause of Daphnis’ death, at least according to Daphnis (ἦ γὰρ ἔγωγόν υπ’ Ἐρωτος ἐς Αἰδαν ἔλκομαι ἡδη, 1.130). A key element of Theocritus’ “new” bucolic, love, is responsible for the end of “old” bucolic but is also forever associated with it. Bucolic song does not die altogether with Daphnis—here we may recall the warning of the goatherd at 1.62-63, τὰν γὰρ ἀοιδὰν / οὖ τί πα ἐίς Ἀίδαν γε τὸν ἐκλελάθοντα φυλοξεῖς—but rather is transformed into literature by Theocritus. The influence of “old” bucolic is still felt within its “new” incarnation, and thus Daphnis’ prediction at 1.103 that even in Hades he will remain a source of pain to Eros finds some truth in the variable relationship between song and love present throughout the Idylls. Theocritus’ “new” bucolic is founded upon that relationship between original bucolic song represented by Daphnis and the unattainable love inspired by Eros.

167 Hunter, Shadows, 131, makes this same point though goes no further in considering how Theocritus transitions from the “old” bucolic to his own “new” bucolic. I suspect that Callimachus also recognized Theocritus’ attempt to set his new bucolic apart from the old and is playing with that notion in Call. Epigr. 22. Some support for the idea of Idyll 1 as introducing a new form of bucolic may be found in Zimmerman, Pastoral Narcissus, 81-82, who observes of the second scene presented on the cup that the ocean in which the fisherman casts his net may represent Homeric epic. The fisherman casting his net into the ocean, whose description includes youthful features despite his age, would then represent a poet drawing upon select aspects of epic. I believe this argument is compelling and would suggest that the youthful features of the fisherman may well represent the novelty of approach important to Hellenistic authors. Cf. Payne, Invention of Fiction, 46-47, who argues that Idyll 1 “deconstructs its own illusion of primitive, oral song…” The contrast between oral and written forms of bucolic further suggests a divide between “old” and “new” bucolic in Thyrsis’ song.

168 A few different traditions for Daphnis’ death are known to us. If Theocritus is working with a specific tradition in mind, it nevertheless seems safe to conclude that his detailed emphasis on Daphnis’ suffering and death is at least a unique expansion of that tradition.
The death of Daphnis in this sense accords with the programmatic aspects of the poem, not because it sets generic boundaries that define Theocritus’ new type of poetry, but rather because it establishes for Theocritus’ poetry the novelty that has already been associated with the cup by the goatherd. The Daphnis of Idyll 1 is not a singer of love songs. He does not console himself with song as Polyphemus, does nor does he even deign to speak of his condition except to the one who is arguably responsible for inflicting it. We are not given an example of Daphnis’ song by Thyrsis, nor are we told what he took as his subject, but it seems unlikely to have been love given Daphnis’ attitude throughout Thyrsis’ song. Nevertheless, Daphnis, and thus bucolic, becomes inextricably linked with love in Theocritus’ corpus because “the pains of Daphnis” is the only depiction of “Daphnis the archegete” granted us by the poet.

The implication that Theocritus’ poetry is a new incarnation of bucolic is underscored by Daphnis’ surrender of his syrinx (123-130). Daphnis does not explain his reason for choosing Pan as the recipient of his syrinx, though he seems an appropriate choice given his importance as a bucolic deity. Pan can hardly be considered a musical successor to the cowherd, though his role as a bucolic deity suggests his influence upon the shepherd-poets, who are Daphnis’ true successors. By having Daphnis gift his instrument to Pan, Theocritus disrupts a direct line of poetic succession, indicating the break between “old” and “new” bucolic. Daphnis’ importance as a poetic predecessor for

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169 The manner in which nature collectively mourns for Daphnis, along with the power Daphnis claims his death will have over nature (1.132-136), suggests the possibility that Daphnis and the old bucolic that he represents may have taken nature as a more prominent theme than love. It is worth noting that if one reads Aelian’s account (VH 10.18) as meaning that bucolic songs were originally about Daphnis, in particular one by Steisichorus, then Daphnis’ death would remain an appropriate image to mark the beginning of a new bucolic tradition.

170 I exclude the Daphnis of Idyll 6 since his characterization does not securely identify him as the Daphnis of Idyll 1. The brief mention of Daphnis in Idyll 7 is too sketchy to allow any conclusions to be drawn.
“new” bucolic poetry is clear, but because Daphnis surrenders his syrinx to Pan, an immortal, Daphnis’ particular form of bucolic song does not persist in the songs of a new generation but becomes, like the deity to whom the syrinx is entrusted, timeless, elusive, yet influential for the bucolic world. One may also consider that the syrinx itself, described at 1.128-129, provides an apt representation of bucolic poetry, demonstrating several key programmatic characteristics shared by the goatherd’s cup\textsuperscript{171} though with one important omission. While the goatherd emphasizes that the cup was newly made (1.28, 1.149), this quality is notably absent from Daphnis’ description of his syrinx. Daphnis’ syrinx and by extension his song is sweet and beautiful, but as an object belonging to Daphnis in his role as discoverer of bucolic song it and the original form of bucolic that it represents lack the novelty of the cup, which demonstrates the poetic principles that guide “new” bucolic.

The separation from song symbolized by Daphnis’ abandonment of his syrinx finds other more subtle representations as well. Zimmerman has noted two points of contrast between Daphnis’ inaction and characters outside of Thyrsis’ song that point specifically to the cowherd’s failure to sing. The first contrast is with the boy featured in the last vignette of the ecphrasis. The boy takes joy in his weaving and pays no attention to the troublesome foxes lurking about. Weaving, a frequent symbol for poetic composition, suggests the boy’s pleasure in poetry despite the trouble caused by the foxes. Daphnis, however, becomes completely absorbed in his misfortune and does not seek to alleviate his pain in song.\textsuperscript{172} Thus the characters on the “newly made” cup\textsuperscript{173} are

\textsuperscript{171} See Cairns, “Theocritus’ First Idyll,” 101-102.

\textsuperscript{172} Zimmerman, 	extit{Pastoral Narcissus}, 84-85.
set in contrast to Daphnis, who makes no reference at all to song but rather displays a preference for reticence.

Zimmerman also notes the contrast between the approach that Daphnis and the goatherd take toward death. The goatherd encourages Thyrsis to sing because once he dies he will not be able to sing in Hades. Daphnis, by contrast, knows that he is being drawn down to Hades but takes no thought of song and singing while he is still alive.\textsuperscript{174} Daphnis’ end is both physical and musical, and though he will always maintain his association with bucolic song, his song, his bucolic, ends with his death.

Finally, the end of Daphnis’ speech suggests his death marks a transitional point for bucolic. Daphnis concludes his speech with a series of adynata that he calls forth to accompany his death (1.132-136). The impossibility of the events listed by Daphnis strengthens the sense of importance and finality for his death already conveyed when he passed on his syrinx to Pan.\textsuperscript{175} One may further note that all of Daphnis’ adynata seek to overturn the natural order, though the last of the series is of a familiar type: κῆς ὀρέων τοῖς σκῶπες ἄηδόσι γαρύσαιντο (1.136). The description of owls singing against nightingales recalls other occasions in the Idylls in which the image of an inferior animal competing with its musical better is used as an analogy for inferior poets who attempt to vie with those of superior skill (5.29, 5.136-137, 7.41, and 7.47-48). Theocritus thus

\textsuperscript{173} See above n. 171.

\textsuperscript{174} Zimmerman, \textit{Pastoral Narcissus}, 87-88.

\textsuperscript{175} As Dutoit, \textit{l’Adynaton}, 32, notes of lines 1.132-136: “Le premier mot νῦν indique tout de suite qu’à la mort de Daphnis quelque chose doit changer…”
glances back at the “competition” that opened the poem and equates the pretension of inferior poets with an act contrary to the natural order. 176

Paradoxically, the “pains of Daphnis” that form the subject of Thyrsis’ song and signal Theocritus’ creation of a new literary tradition are presented as part (perhaps the origin) of an existing tradition. As the goatherd indicates at 1.23-24, Thyrsis’ song is one that he has performed in competition with Chromis. Daphnis’ death holds significance, then, both for the reader who becomes acquainted with Theocritus’ unique interpretation of bucolic poetry as well as for the characters of Theocritus’ fictional world in whose mouths are placed the songs that form much of that same poetry. It is in this context of tradition that Daphnis’ treatment in Idyll 1 and occasional appearances in other Idylls are particularly significant. Aside from a few brief reminders that Daphnis was dear to the Muses, he is otherwise presented as a lover. Daphnis’ association with bucolic song, however, remains an indelible part of his identity in his capacity as a character of myth, despite the fact that his significance within the Idylls is due only in part to the inventio for which he is famous. In essence, Theocritus’ presentation of Daphnis adds to his previous association with bucolic song the new theme of unrequited love. 177 For the shepherd-poets of Theocritus’ world, as much as for Theocritus’ readers, Daphnis’ death inaugurates unrequited love as a new and dominant subject for the form of poetry that Daphnis himself is credited with discovering. Daphnis’ death paves the way for bucolic fiction by transforming bucolic song into a literature centered on song about love. Out of

176 Dutoit, l’Adynaton, 33, also sees a reference to bucolic competition in 1.136 proposing that it indicates the loss henceforth of “des belles joutes poétiques.”

177 For the likelihood that Daphnis’ lovesickness is caused by unattainable love specifically, see below.
Theocritus’ reinvention of the rustic songs whose origin is attributed to the legendary Daphnis arises the novel approach of bucolic fiction.

In signifying the transition to Theocritus’ new form of bucolic poetry, Thyrsis’ song employs bucolic fiction, which includes taking love as its subject. Having considered Daphnis’ importance as an iconic singer, let us now examine his role in Idyll 1 as a lover. The object of Daphnis’ love is a useful starting point for considering Daphnis’ depiction as a lover. In the Idylls, as in Roman elegy, the beloved’s voice is not heard. Love affairs are always one-sided in presentation, placing the focus on the lover’s perception and experience rather than on the dual perspectives that form an actual relationship. In this regard, Idyll 1’s presentation of love as a theme is precisely what one would expect. Thyrsis’ song offers Daphnis’ perspective on love to the exclusion of the beloved.\footnote{Although see Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan, “Daphnis and Aphrodite” for an interesting alternative to this interpretation.} In fact, Thyrsis’ song is so fixated on Daphnis and his lovesickness that the identity of his beloved is not made clear. Whether or not the beloved’s identity is sought in the tradition is irrelevant; Daphnis’ experience is all that matters for the poem’s treatment of love.

The poem’s focus on Daphnis, the lover, to the exclusion of his beloved suggests that bucolic fiction is at work in the mythical setting in which Daphnis is wasting away. Another defining element of love’s presentation in bucolic fiction is the beloved’s unattainability. The song of the shepherd-poet is not one that celebrates love attained but rather is one of frustration, pain, or even self-delusion caused by the desire for a love that is out of reach. The question then arises whether Daphnis, too, suffers from desire for a beloved who is unattainable and therefore sees no alternative to death. In contrast to this
view, some have seen Daphnis rather as a Hippolytus figure who chooses to reject *eros* in any form, implying that Daphnis dies because he will not succumb to the desire that *eros* has inflamed in him, even if the object of his desire is attainable. Theocritus has left most aspects of Daphnis’ relationship with his beloved vague, though there are indications that suggest Daphnis is not a Hippolytus figure.

The fact of Daphnis’ lovesickness is made clear by the presence of ἐτάκετο in line 1.66 and further emphasized by Hermes’ inquiry at 1.78 (τίνος, ὑγαθέ, τόσον ἔρασας;). Confusion over the nature of Daphnis’ attitude toward love begins when Priapus informs Daphnis that a κώρα is searching for him throughout the countryside. The natural conclusion is that this girl is searching for Daphnis because she is in love with him, though if she is the object of Daphnis’ affection, as Priapus seems to suggest, why is Daphnis wasting away with passion? The simplest solution is that the κώρα mentioned by Priapus is not the object of Daphnis’ passion. Priapus would then be encouraging Daphnis to accept the girl who loves him rather than pine over the one who does not, whoever she may be. Because the focus of the song is centered firmly on Daphnis’ experience, the identity of the beloved who causes him such pain becomes less relevant. What matters most is that Daphnis finds himself desiring a love that is unattainable. This very situation is implied by Priapus’ comparison of Daphnis to a goatherd who watches his she-goats feeding and desires to be a he-goat and by his assertion that Daphnis desires to dance with the maidens (1.84-92). The first is a comic image in which the goatherd pining after she-goats is an exaggeration of Daphnis’ regret that, like the goatherd, he cannot attain the object of his desire. Priapus’ claim that Daphnis wishes to dance with the maidens complements the preceding simile by
broaching the same issue from a different perspective. The desire to dance with the maidens likens Daphnis to a maiden, a girl characterized by innocence and unacquainted with love. Like the goatherd, however, Daphnis is inflicted with a desire that cannot be satiated.

It seems unlikely that Daphnis represents a Hippolytus figure who disdains eros in any form but rather that he recognizes the nature of his love as one that cannot be satisfied and for that reason chooses to rail against it in a distinctly unbucolic fashion. This approach to the text gains some support from Priapus’ description of Daphnis as δύσερως. Ogilvie offers an interesting perspective on Priapus’ speech and in particular the word δύσερως: “On the current interpretation of the song Daphnis having vowed himself to chastity is afflicted with a passion for a girl but steadfastly declines to yield to it. His noble self-abnegation is, on this view, ridiculed by Priapus who maintains that it is not because Daphnis is sworn to chastity that he holds back but because he is backward, bad at loving. This does not seem an attested meaning of δύσερως.” Ogilvie proposes instead that δύσερως originally meant “loving that which one ought not to love.” His evidence for this definition is perhaps not completely compelling, though he is successful in using the weight of earlier and contemporary evidence to demonstrate that the definition “laggard in love” as provided by LSJ is not satisfactory.

The definition “laggard in love” is reserved by LSJ exclusively for δύσερως as it appears in Theocritus’ Idylls. Outside of the Theocritean corpus, δύσερως is accorded the meaning of “madly or disastrously loving.” This definition is in some sense similar to

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179 Ogilvie, “Song of Thyrsis,” 171, in Theokrit und die griechische Bukolik.

180 Ogilvie, “Song of Thyrsis,” 171. See also Fantuzzi and Hunter, Tradition and Innovation, 150 n. 70.

Ogilvie’s proposal, though whereas Ogilvie emphasizes the object of love, LSJ’s primary definition focuses on the subject, which I believe to be the better perspective, both for Theocritus’ use of the word and for his contemporary Callimachus.\textsuperscript{182} In the case of Daphnis, δύσερōς most likely means, as it most often does, “madly or disastrously loving.”\textsuperscript{183} Indeed, it seems appropriate to say too that Daphnis’ love brings disaster upon himself.

Though the details of Daphnis’ lovesickness are subject to debate—in particular to what degree Theocritus relies on one or more Daphnis traditions—the word δύσερως suggests the intensity and destructive nature of his passion.\textsuperscript{184} The familiar theme of unattainable love appears to be the root cause of Daphnis’ illness. The poem as a whole, then, creates its own myth concerning the creation of a new literary bucolic style that prominently features unattainable love as the subject of bucolic song.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, Theocritus uses Idyll 1 as a vehicle to convey his approach to poetry. Scholars have convincingly identified programmatic imagery throughout the poem, and, as I have argued above, Theocritus uses the poem to assert his new literary experiment in bucolic poetry. The importance of Idyll 1 runs even deeper than its significant relation to the other bucolic Idylls and its broad programmatic aspects. Indeed, other important though often overlooked connections exist between the first Idyll,

\textsuperscript{182} See Call. Epigr. 41.6 where the issue is not that Callimachus’ soul finds improper objects of its passion but rather that it seeks to satisfy its passion in a reckless way.

\textsuperscript{183} As accords with meaning implied by the prefix δυ-, cf. Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique, 302. See also Anagnostou-Laoudides and Konstan, “Daphnis and Aphrodite,” who also argue against the definition “laggard in love” as assigned by LSJ.

\textsuperscript{184} For the possibility that δύσερως also implies the unattainability of the object of desire, see Williams, “Theocritus,” 121-123. Williams, however, does not take into account Callimachus’ use of δύσερως at Epigr. 41.6, where the word implies that disaster comes from a failure to restrain one’s passion rather than unavailability of a single object of love.
a paradigm of literary bucolic, and other Idylls with quite different generic associations. Though we shall now briefly venture outside the realm of bucolic fiction, we do so in order to pursue one of the principles that guide the application of bucolic fiction: the concept of thematic unity.

Segal provides an excellent starting point for a unifying approach to the Idylls in his remarks on Theocritus’ employment of a death by water motif.\(^\text{185}\) Segal’s study is of general interest for its argument concerning the powerful and mystical qualities attributed to water that are at times beneficent and at others malevolent. A narrower focus, however, regarding who dies and the circumstances of their death reveals deeper thematic connections between death and water that add significance to the motif. Two episodes in particular that combine death and water contain striking parallels that suggest the opportunity for new interpretive possibilities for the Idylls as a corpus. These important episodes will be addressed below. First, however, a close consideration of Idyll 1 alone is necessary.

Among the curious aspects of the relationship between Daphnis and Aphrodite found in Idyll 1 is Aphrodite’s desire to restore (\(\alpha\nu\omicron\rho\theta\omicron\sigma\sigma\omicron\)) Daphnis immediately after his death. It seems puzzling that Aphrodite, who has just been severely vituperated by an angry Daphnis, would now seek to bring him back to life. Theocritus provides no motivation for Aphrodite’s desire, leaving open two mutually exclusive possibilities. As Dover suggests, Aphrodite may want to bring Daphnis back to force him to submit to love rather than be destroyed by it.\(^\text{186}\) Hunter, on the other hand, proposes that Aphrodite

\(^{185}\) Segal, “Death by Water.”

\(^{186}\) Dover, Theocritus, ad 1.138f.
is subject to “a (?newfound) concern for Daphnis.” The poem itself offers no insight into Aphrodite’s motivation, indicating only her desire to revive Daphnis (τὸν δ’ Ἀφροδίτα / ἡβελ’ ἀνορθέοσαι 1.138-139), and so it falls to the reader to search elsewhere for clues that may shed light on the passage. The best internal evidence is, unfortunately, a notorious textual crux (1.96) and so leaves Aphrodite without a secure characterization as to her attitude toward Daphnis except for Daphnis’ abusive monologue. It is in this absence of evidence that one must look outside of the bucolic poems for textual parallels to Idyll 1.

The first parallel occurs in Idyll 15. After the Syracusan women have entered the palace grounds and admired the festive decorations therein, they stop to listen to the Argive woman’s daughter sing a hymn in honor of Adonis. Several themes that find prominence in Thyrsis’ song are also the focus of the hymn to Adonis, especially death, lament, and the divine figure of Aphrodite.

Before considering the content of the hymn further, a few words should be said about its context. In light of the thematic similarities between the two poems in addition to details in content, it hardly seems irrelevant that the songs about Adonis and Daphnis are both related by singers of exceptional skill and in hymnic fashion. Though Thyrsis’ song is not an actual hymn and may not seem particularly “hymnic” when read on its own, the goatherd notably refers to it as a hymn at 1.61 (αὕτη κάροι τῷ, φίλος, τὸν

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188 Burton, *Urban Mimes*, 108 and 115-116, has already noted the existence of parallels between Idylls 1 and 15, though these parallels are only touched on briefly.

189 Some hymnic features of Thyrsis’ song will be discussed below, though these features, like those in Callimachus’ *Hymns*, will not always strictly correspond to archaic usage. For an analysis of the generic characteristics of *Homeric Hymns*, see Janko, “Structure of the Homeric Hymns.”
In addition to the goatherd’s description, when read in concert with the Adonis hymn of Idyll 15, several similarities in structure and content emerge, particularly as found at the beginning and end of both songs. These similarities by and large correspond to Theocritus’ modification of the form for a traditional hymn as found in Idyll 15. As Burton notes of the Adonis hymn in Idyll 15, “Theocritus does not present a conventional hymnic narrative of the exploits of the gods involved and risk emphasizing aspects of the story of Adonis and Aphrodite unflattering to the Ptolemaic house.” Adonis’ genealogy and divine credentials are noticeably absent from the hymn, leaving the hymnist to sing instead about the beauty of the decoration used in the celebration. Idyll 15’s hymn to Adonis, though still a hymn, as is made clear from the context as well as some preserved traditional elements, has been modified into a form suited to Theocritus’ poetic needs. It is this new form to which Thyrsis’ song should be compared.

The Argive woman’s daughter begins her song by listing places favored by Aphrodite: Δέσποιν’, ἄ Γολγώς τε καὶ Ἰδάλιον ἐφίλησας / αἰπεινάν τ’ Ἐρυκα, χρυσῶ παίζουσ’, Ἀφροδίτα, / οἴν οι τὸν Ἄδωνιν ἀπ’ ἄνάω Ἀχέροντος / μηνὶ δυσδεκάτῳ μαλακί πόδας ἄγαγον Ωρα (15.100-103). This form of invocation resembles the famous question that Thyrsis poses to the Nymphs: πᾶ ποκ’ ἄρ’ ᾧθ’, ὡκα Δάφνις ἔτακετο, πᾶ ποκα, Νύμφαι; / ἤ κατά Πηνειῶ καλὰ τέμπεα, ἤ κατά Πίνδῳ; (1.66-67). Though the absence of the Nymphs is curious, the effect here is the same as in

190 Interestingly, Thyrsis’ song, which seems more like a dirge than a hymn, is called a hymn by the goatherd. By contrast, Gorgo suggests the possibility that the song in Idyll 15 is a dirge when he refers to last year’s song by the same performer as such (ἰαλέμων, 15.98).


192 Burton, Urban Mimes, 136-137. For a succinct description of the problems associated with relating Adonis and Aphrodite too closely to the Ptolemaic house, see Burton, Urban Mimes, 136.
Idyll 15. The list of haunts dear to the Nymphs functions as an invocation that opens the song. Indeed, mention of the Nymphs will occur again near the poem’s end. The song begins, then, with an invocation to the Nymphs, asking where they were at the time of Daphnis’ death, the event from which the song takes its subject. The hymn to Adonis begins similarly. There is no question about where Aphrodite is—she is with the newly returned Adonis—yet the singer also invokes Aphrodite in terms of the places that she favors before identifying the actual subject of her song: Adonis’ return. The question of location is in fact particularly relevant to both poems. The Nymphs’ absence from the bucolic scene will soon be followed by Daphnis’ departure to Hades, while in Idyll 15, the list of places that Aphrodite loves offers a sharp juxtaposition to the place whence Adonis comes for his brief visit. Both Idylls 1 and 15 begin their inset songs with invocations to divinities by listing locations with which those divinities are associated, and in doing so the poems raise the issue of where each character, especially Daphnis and Adonis, belongs.

One final point connects Thyrsis’ song with the hymnic form of Idyll 15’s inset song. As scholars have noted, the endings of both songs contain a farewell consistent with those frequently found in the Homeric Hymns. This quality is perhaps unsurprising for the Adonis hymn, but its presence in Thyrsis’ song is rather striking.

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193 We may note another similarity. Idylls 1 and 15 begin by invoking the Nymphs and Aphrodite, respectively. Both Idylls then change addressees for the traditional farewell as Thyrsis speaks to the Muses and the singer of Idyll 15 to Adonis.

194 Another possible association with hymns exists at lines 1.71-72 (τὴνον μανθανόμενον, τὴνον λύκοι ὀμόσαντο, ἥ τὴνον χώκ δρυμοῦ λέγων ἐκλάσας θανόντα) where the odd collection of wild beasts may allude to Aphrodite’s tryst with Anchises on Ida at h. Ven. 68-72 (‘Ιππην δ᾽ ἔκακαν πολυπόδακα, μητέρα θηρῶν, / βῆ δ᾽ ἰθὺς σταθμοῖο δι᾽ οὐρέος· οἱ δὲ μετ᾽ αὐτήν ἔριοντες πολλοὶ τε λύκοι χαρποί τε λέοντες / ἀρκτοί παρδαλίες τε θοῖοι προκάσαντο ἐκώρητοι / Ἠσαῦν). Daphnis, of course, is not on Ida, but the presence of tamed predators in close connection with Aphrodite’s visit to a mortal suggests a possible connection between the two passages.

195 Cf. Gow, Theocritus II, ad 1.144 and 15.149; Goldhill, Poet’s Voice, 245; and Hunter Theocritus, ad 1.143-5. See Zanker, Realism, 173-174 for Thyris’ song as a hymn with a discussion of Theocritus’ incorporation of multiple genres into the song, also Van Sickle, “Conception of Bucolic Genre,” 21.
Their mutual hymnic qualities serve to associate the songs of Thyrsis and the Argive woman’s daughter, but one should not overlook the possible significance that both songs gain from their identification as hymns. In her analysis of the longer *Homeric Hymns*, Clay observes that “each hymn describes an epoch-making moment in the mythic chronology of Olympus and, as such, inaugurates a new era in the divine and human cosmos.”\(^{196}\) The generic influence of hymn in both poems helps suggest to the reader more than simple praise of divinity, but may imply as well a narrative account describing a fundamental change important for all humans, such as the aetiological significance of Berenice’s apotheosis, as commemorated in Idyll 15, or that of Daphnis’ death, as related in Idyll 1. Whether such implications ought to be attributed to hymn as a genre may be debated, but the appearance of a hymnic form in Idyll 1 does create an important point of correlation with Idyll 15.

By crafting Thyrsis’ song and the hymn to Adonis in a similar fashion, Theocritus adds an additional connection between the two narratives whose central figures leave them naturally ripe for comparison. Identifications of Daphnis as an Adonis figure have already been made,\(^{197}\) but such observations have generally elicited little discussion. If we are correct in believing that Theocritus has deviated from available Daphnis mythology for his own artistic purposes, then perhaps greater significance for Theocritus’ poetry than has previously been acknowledged can be found in the parallels that Theocritus creates between Daphnis—already an Adonis figure—and Aphrodite’s ill-fated lover. Part of the issue preventing such an intertextual approach resides in the past.

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\(^{197}\) For a brief summary on scholarly views on Daphnis’ connection to the near East, see Halperin, “Forebears of Daphnis,” 183-189. See also Hunter, *Theocritus*, 68 and Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan, “Daphnis and Aphrodite.”
interest in determining Theocritus’ source for the death of Daphnis, who was early
connected, and not inappropriately, to near eastern divinities. This created a potential
source for a Daphnis account that has no parallel in the Greek sources. Such an
approach is valuable, but it treats only the source from which Theocritus derived his
account of Daphnis and disregards Theocritus’ creativity in using that source. Regardless
of the origin of his Daphnis narrative, Theocritus certainly saw the connections between
Adonis and Daphnis (Daphnis even mentions Adonis at 1.109-110) and may well have
exploited the similarities of these figures for his own poetic purposes. Assuming an
intertextual relationship between Daphnis and Adonis, it is possible to view death,
lament, and resurrection through the agency of Aphrodite as combining to form a
thematic pattern in Theocritus’ poetry, consideration of which will allow new insight into
the Daphnis narrative of Idyll 1. To that end, I shall compare passages from Idylls 1 and
15 that demonstrate the close connections between Adonis and Daphnis within the
Theocritean corpus. Though parallels between the two figures have often been drawn,
they are generally done in the broader context of myth and near eastern religion. By
limiting the analysis here to the Idylls, the narrative pattern that Theocritus creates will
more clearly emerge through both the contextual similarities already observed and a
careful use of detail that brings Theocritus’ version of Daphnis’ death into close
alignment with his account of the Adonia.

The lines from poem 15 that are particularly relevant are 15.131-137: νῦν μὲν
Κύρης ἔχεισα τὸν αὐτῶς χαιρέτω ἄνδρα / ἁδέθεν δ’ ἀμμες νιν ἀμα δρόσῳ
ἄθροαί ἔξω / οἰσεῦμες ποτὶ κύματ’ ἐπὶ αἰώνι πτύοντα, / λύσασαι δὲ κόμαν καὶ ἐπὶ

199 Krevans, “Urban Pastoral,” 132 also connects the Daphnis of Idyll 1 with the Adonis of Idyll 15.
In these seven lines the poetess describes the ritual by which celebrants bid farewell to Adonis until his return the following year. Like Daphnis, Adonis has perished, though unlike the cowherd, Adonis has returned—temporarily—from Acheron (15.102-103). Though this seems to set Adonis apart from his musical counterpart, Adonis’ brief visit to the mundane world recalls Aphrodite’s sudden desire to restore Daphnis to life (1.138-139). Despite her longing to save him from death, Daphnis dies and renders Adonis ἡμιθέων, ὡς φαντί, μονωτάτος to return from Acheron.

Daphnis’ and Adonis’ deaths are the critical events on which both Thyrsis’ song and the hymn to Adonis are focused. Their deaths reveal another similarity: both characters also elicit grief and lament from others. Thyrsis’ song famously emphasizes nature’s lament for Daphnis through the pathetic fallacy. Lament likewise appears to have been a key component of Adonis worship. Theocritus himself, the source for the majority of our knowledge of the Adonia, suggests this through his description of women carrying Adonis’ body to the shore and singing a dirge (15.134-135). The lament for Daphnis is no less important than that for Adonis, though scholars often focus on Daphnis’ special relationship with nature when discussing the pathetic fallacy found in Thyrsis’ song. Certainly this is a notable aspect of the passage, though more may be culled from it. Unlike Adonis, Daphnis’ death is not attended by worshippers but does garner the attention of many divine and bucolic figures. The assemblage of animals both

200 Though the precise nature of the Alexandrian Adonia is unknown, it is possible that the festival combined elements of celebration and lament. See Atallah, Adonis, 270-271.

201 Cf. also Dioscorides A.P. 5.53 and 5.193 and Callim. frag. 193 Pfeiffer.
wild and tame, herdsmen, and divinities—nearly the whole of the bucolic world—who come to see the ailing Daphnis mimics the cult activity in Idyll 15 in which the city gathers to view depictions of Adonis (perhaps as he is dying) before his return to Acheron. Daphnis’ silence at the beginning of the song bears a similarity to the voiceless statue described by the poetess in Idyll 15. It is also noteworthy that while many visit Daphnis, mourning and lament appear to be the exclusive domain of animals in Idyll 1 (1.71-75) just as they are reserved for women in Idyll 15. Daphnis even says a final goodbye to the animals at 1.115-116 with no mention of the herdsmen or divinities who have come to inquire after him. Pan alone among the human and divine visitors receives something amounting to a farewell when Daphnis entrusts his syrinx to the god who is himself part animal. Daphnis and Adonis both garner much attention from different people (Idyll 15.72-99 makes clear that men are present at the festival), though the important act of lament is for the former exclusively performed by nature and for the latter by women. The pattern that Theocritus employs is thus one of greater complexity than simply death and lament, but rather contains a solemn death felt by the community and met with lament by only a specific part of that community.

Death and lament are not the only similarities between the songs of Idylls 1 and 15. Water also serves as an important image in both poems. In the case of Adonis, there is a notable absence of any mention of the original cause of the boy’s death; instead the song describes his return to death. When the time for his departure back to Acheron has come, the songstress announces that the mourners will carry Adonis “to the waves splashing upon the shore” (15.133). Daphnis’ death likewise involves water, though the precise meaning of χω Δάφνις ἔβα ἄον (1.140) can only be conjectured. This peculiar
phrase in conjunction with the following ἐκλυσε δίνα τὸν Μοίσας φίλον ἄνδρα (1.140-141) suggest, that Daphnis has become submerged in water and perhaps drowned. 202 The manner of Daphnis’ death as presented in Idyll 1 is unlike anything found in the Daphnis tradition, as often occurs in Theocritus’ poetry. This manner of death, however, creates a parallel with Adonis if only through the presence of water that accompanies both deaths. The parallel may run deeper, however, as the scholiast indicates that Adonis’ body was cast into the water. 203 Theocritus’ enigmatic phrasing thus has Daphnis submerged in water, similar to the ritual immersion of Adonis, without clear indication that Daphnis drowns as a result. Indeed, the impression that one receives is that Daphnis simply disappears into the water, as one may imagine happened to the eidolon of Adonis’ corpse. Daphnis’ death is assured by 1.139-140, though its presentation contains the same gentle impression conveyed by the image of women bearing Adonis to the sea.

The Daphnis account of Idyll 1 and Adonis hymn of Idyll 15 contain parallels in presentation that transcend the similarities that may be owed to their mutual derivation from eastern sources. What, then, can be said about these parallels? How should they influence our understanding of the Idylls? While a political reading would be of value given the importance to the Ptolemies of both the Adonia and Aphrodite’s role in the apotheosis of Berenice suggested by Theocritus himself, such an interpretation could only be highly speculative given the sparse nature of secure information about politics and religion in Alexandria. Nevertheless, some limited political speculation may become necessary.


203 Σ ad 133. Helmbold, “Argive Woman’s Daughter,” 18, suggests that the body is carried to the sea for ritual bathing.
The parallels between Daphnis and Adonis are easily observed yet difficult to reconcile. If Daphnis as portrayed in Idyll 1 is, as I have proposed, meant to recall Adonis, then some aid in interpreting the significance of Idyll 1’s Daphnis may lie in the depiction of Adonis and his festival, which Theocritus himself tells us exists in Alexandria because of Aphrodite’s role in Berenice’s apotheosis: Κύπρι Διωναία, τὰ μὲν ἀθανάταν ἀπὸ θνατάς, / ἀνθρώπων ὡς μῦθος, ἐποίησας Βερενίκαν, / ἀμβροσίαν ἐς στήθος ἀποστάξασα γυναικός· / τίν δὲ χαριζομένα, πολυώνυμε καὶ πολύναιε, / ἄ Βερενικεία θυγάτηρ Ἐλένη εἰκῆς / Ἀρσινόα πάντεσσι καλοῖς ἀτιτάλλει Ἀδωνιν (15.106-111). As Zanker notes, these lines form an aition in which the deification of Berenice explains why the Adonia was established in Alexandria.  

Zanker goes on to argue that Berenice’s deification gains credence through its role as the cause for the Adonia in Alexandria, which had been established in recent memory and was still part of life in Alexandria. Zanker’s argument is compelling and may help shed some light on the difficulties of the Daphnis account in Idyll 1.

Theocritus creates a logical connection between Adonis and Berenice in Idyll 15 by focusing his poem on the themes of resurrection and death. Berenice is permanently apotheosized and not temporarily resurrected, as Adonis is, though the parallel remains clear: Aphrodite in both cases has retrieved someone dear to her from Acheron. Within the context of Idyll 15, at least, which establishes Berenice’s apotheosis as the reason for the institution of the Adonis festival, the aspects of Adonis that are

204 Zanker, Realism, 16-17.

205 Zanker, Realism, 17.

206 Cf. 17.45-50, where Aphrodite snatches Berenice away before she crosses Acheron.
celebrated—Aphrodite’s love for him, his resurrection, and the lament for his departure—all stand in relation to the recent death and deification of Berenice.

The Adonis myth contains symbolic importance for the Ptolemies, emphasized by the annual celebration of the Adonia. One could speculate that by casting Daphnis as an Adonis figure, Theocritus inserts a myth closely associated with the royal court into his programmatic Idyll. Indeed, just as Idyll 15 contains an aition that explains the origin of the Adonia, I have argued above that the death of Daphnis is essentially an aition that explains the origin of Theocritus’ bucolic poetry. By representing the Adonis myth as part of his depiction of Daphnis’ death, Theocritus implicitly connects the Ptolemies with the origin of his new poetry. The question remains, however, whether the first Idyll can support the perplexing situation of Daphnis suffering because of eros yet remaining dear to Aphrodite.

Though Daphnis clearly harbors a great deal of resentment toward Aphrodite, she need not necessarily feel the same way toward him. Most of the interaction between the two characters appears acrimonious, yet Aphrodite’s desire to resurrect Daphnis contains no indication of the malice found in his speech. Theocritus gives a description of Aphrodite appearing to Daphnis that is important for her characterization, but due to the questionable meaning of the lines (ἡμέρες γε μὰν ἀδείᾳ κοι ἀ Κύπρις γελάοισα, / λάθη μὲν γελάοισα, βαρὺν δ’ ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἔχοισα, 1.95-96), Aphrodite’s attitude toward the cowherd is famously difficult to determine with certainty. Of the critical discussions of these lines,207 Crane seems to me most persuasive in his interpretation. Crane argues that

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Aphrodite laughs openly and mockingly while restraining her grief. Among his arguments for Aphrodite’s open laughter, Crane defers to the scholiast’s knowledge of Greek as a native speaker, citing a scholion that describes Aphrodite’s laughter as open rather than concealed: ἐναντίως εἶπε. θέλει γὰρ εἰ πεῖν φανερῶς μὲν γελῶσα, λαυθάνει δὲ βαρυνομένη ἐπὶ τῷ Δάφνιδι. Aphrodite’s open laughter and concealed grief create two antithetical characterizations of Aphrodite. Her mocking laughter suggests her pleasure at overcoming Daphnis. There is a sense of triumphant satisfaction as the goddess remarks that Daphnis, who boasted that he would overcome love, has instead been overcome by love. Aphrodite’s grief, however, also becomes apparent through her desire to restore Daphnis. The difficulty of lines 1.95-96 lies not simply in the grammar of the lines but rather in the characterization that they establish for Aphrodite. Setting Daphnis’ anger aside, Aphrodite’s words and actions as portrayed in Thyrsis’ song support interpretations that cast Aphrodite either as favorable toward and infatuated with Daphnis or as triumphant and mocking toward him. We need not choose between these dual aspects, as both are appropriate to the figure of Aphrodite. Idyll 1’s Aphrodite is a point of convergence that melds the unyielding, unattainable love of bucolic fiction with the beneficent love that Aphrodite shows toward Adonis and Berenice in Idyll 15.

The dual nature that I am proposing for Aphrodite is not without precedent. Indeed, a similar, though perhaps less polarized, characterization appears in Sappho fr. 1.


210 Σ ad 95-98 b.

211 For βαρὺς θυμός as grief, see Crane, “Laughter of Aphrodite,” 173-174, 177-180.
In this kletic poem, Sappho suffers from her desire for an unattainable love and therefore calls upon Aphrodite: ποικιλόθρον’ ἀθανάτ’ Αφρόδίτα, / παί Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαι σε’ / μή μ’ ἀσαισι μηδ’ ὄνιαισι δάμνα, / πότνια, θύμων (1-4). Sappho beseeches the goddess not to send grief and reproaches upon her, but instead to come to her aid. Aphrodite appears for Sappho as she does for Daphnis, even bearing the same expression on her face (μεδίασαις ἀθανάτω προσώπῳ, 14), and asks Sappho the cause of her suffering. Sappho, unlike Daphnis, has submitted to love and acknowledged eros’ power over her. With love’s power confirmed, Aphrodite assures Sappho that whoever has spurned her will no longer do so. The object of Sappho’s passion will love her in turn, even though she may be unwilling (ταχέως φιλήσει / κούκ ἐθέλοισα, 23-24). For Sappho, whom Aphrodite seems to favor, submission to love’s power has led the goddess to show mercy—at least temporarily, as Aphrodite’s question at line 15 (Ἦρε’ ὀττι δὴμτε πέπονθα…) suggests an impermanent nature for any relief Sappho finds from her passion. It is only through submission that Sappho has any hope of alleviating her lovesickness. Love’s power is inescapable, as Aphrodite indicates by asserting that the object of Sappho’s passion will love her in turn though she may be unwilling. As was true for Sappho, Aphrodite’s favorable disposition toward Daphnis does not make him immune to the power of eros.212 His refusal to acknowledge eros’ power over him, however, leaves Aphrodite with few options. She does not wish for Daphnis’ death, but neither will she allow her power to be undermined.

212 Similarly, at Il. 3.413-417, Aphrodite claims to favor Helen despite demanding that she submit to Paris against her will. Unlike Aphrodite in Idyll 1, however, the goddess threatens to withdraw her favor after a sharp rebuke from Helen. No such threat is made against Daphnis, though none need be since he is already near death. For Helen as a model for Daphnis, see Zimmerman, “Iliadic Model,” 375-380.
Aphrodite may take joy in the fact that Daphnis has failed to overcome *eros* and so confirmed its power, but one need not assume that she despised Daphnis for his resistance. Her desire to ἀνορθῶσαι him speaks against this notion. One may note further that this unyielding aspect of love also explains Aphrodite’s inability to restore Daphnis. Even if Daphnis could be returned to health, as long as he refuses to submit to love, his lovesickness will remain and he will simply waste away again.

The theme of resurrection connects Berenice, Adonis, and Daphnis with Aphrodite, yet important differences exist between Aphrodite’s relationships with these connected figures. Daphnis’ recalcitrance sets him apart from Berenice and Adonis, yet despite his anger, he, like Adonis, shares a relationship with Aphrodite formed around love. Theocritus’ brief consideration of Berenice’s relationship with Aphrodite differs fundamentally from that of Adonis and Daphnis, aligning Berenice with the goddess rather than representing her as subject to her power. At 17.45, Theocritus relates Berenice’s apotheosis, depicting Aphrodite as sharing her honors with Berenice (ἐς ναόν κατέθηκας, ἑας δ’ ἀπεδάσσαο τιμᾶς, 17.50) and describing both in terms of beauty (17.45-47). Idyll 15 also closely associates Berenice and Aphrodite both through the Adonia’s role in celebrating Berenice’s apotheosis and through Theocritus’ description of Arsinoe as ἀ Βερενικεῖα θυγάτηρ Ἐλένα ἐἰκώια, 15.110), which likens Aphrodite’s role as immortal patron of Helen to Berenice’s role as immortal patron of Arsinoe.

The juxtaposition of Adonis’ resurrection and Berenice’s apotheosis in Idyll 15 and the larger interconnectedness of Berenice, Adonis, and Daphnis serve to underscore the special nature of Berenice’s relationship with Aphrodite. Theocritus elevates Berenice above the two herdsmen by avoiding erotic elements in characterizing her.
interaction with Aphrodite, presenting her instead as simply worthy to share Aphrodite’s honors. The most that Aphrodite offers to Adonis and Daphnis is a return to the mundane world; to Berenice she offers immortality as a divinity.

Aphrodite appears as both the wielder of the irresistible power of eros and as the goddess who cherished Adonis. These two representations of Aphrodite allow Daphnis both to waste away because of an unattainable love and yet to grieve the goddess of love herself by his death, to usher in a new bucolic tradition and to connect that new tradition with the new tradition of the Adonia. Idyll 1 is a poem rich in programmatic elements as well as the use of bucolic fiction. To propose, then, that Theocritus includes a nod to his benefactors in this programmatic poem is credible, though such a hypothesis must remain speculative for lack of firm historical evidence.

The importance of Idyll 1 for Theocritus’ poetry has long been acknowledged, but through the application of bucolic fiction, the poem’s significance for the corpus increases. Daphnis’ death reflects a point of transition from the poetry of the past to the novel poetic approach of the Alexandrian poets, especially Theocritus himself who converts rustic song into a literature about love. Like the programmatic elements in Idyll 1, the new bucolic form may be fruitfully compared to poems other than the traditional bucolics. The next chapter will offer such a comparison and will reevaluate the notion of bucolic poetry.
Chapter 4

The previous chapter offered a discussion of what may well be Theocritus’ most famous poem. In this chapter, we will turn to one of his works that has garnered perhaps the least attention, Idyll 10. Theocritus’ tenth Idyll is unique among the corpus in representing its rustic characters as reapers rather than herdsmen. Because of its shift from meadow to field, scholars often consider the poem as belonging in some way to Theocritus’ bucolic poetry, yet they only infrequently and tangentially refer to it in their discussions of bucolic. In this chapter I shall explore the qualities that make Idyll 10 a bucolic poem and propose reading the poem as a literary experiment that places a typical shepherd-poet within a different form of bucolic fiction, more specifically one that is work based rather than love based. By introducing the shepherd-poet into the world of Milo the “reaper-poet,” Theocritus challenges and to some degree deconstructs his typically love-centered fiction.

Because the main characters of Idyll 10 are reapers instead of the leisurely herdsmen common to traditionally “bucolic” Idylls, scholars frequently relegate Idyll 10 to a subordinate position in their analyses of Theocritus’ bucolic poetry. By applying the tenets of bucolic fiction to a close consideration of Idyll 10, I intend to argue that it remains a true bucolic poem deserving of recognition equal to those poems featuring herdsmen. This often neglected Idyll demonstrates many of bucolic poetry’s most persistent features, which work in concert with its experimental nature, particularly in respect to its setting, to provide a unique perspective on bucolic poetry.

Ott’s view of Idyll 10 pointedly sums up the difficulty in determining how to approach the poem: “Id. X ist weder ein Hirtengedicht, noch enthält es einen Wettstreit,
ja überhaupt keine musisch ausgefüllte ländliche Feierstunde, nicht einmal rudimentär wie Id. IV. Und doch ist das Gedicht den hier behandelten bukolischen Eidyllia verwandt und reizt durchaus zum Vergleich mit ihnen …“

Though not all scholars would agree that Idyll 10 is not a “Hirtengedicht,” Ott’s observations on the nature of Idyll 10, casting the poem as one that simultaneously lacks the trappings of a bucolic poem yet maintains certain formal elements familiar to the genre, raise issues that problematize accepting the Idyll as a fully bucolic poem. Indeed, as Stanzel notes, Idyll 10 finds almost no mention in Gutzwiller’s important work on Theocritus’ bucolic Idylls and is absent from Lawall’s work on Theocritus’ Coan pastoral poetry despite evidence that suggests Cos as a possible location for the poem’s composition. Stanzel himself, however, argues that Theocritus includes Idyll 10 in his concept of bucolic poetry. To support his assertion he cites Idyll 7.27-29, in which Simichidas remarks that Lycidas is an outstanding piper among both herdsmen and reapers. Though Stanzel correctly connects poem 10 with Theocritus’ bucolic poetry, I am hesitant to ascribe such programmatic authority to Simichidas’ words in Idyll 7. The profession of Idyll 10’s characters and the setting in which their interaction takes place are unique in the entire corpus and so not easily explained away. If the poem has a place among the bucolic Idylls, how may we justify its obvious deviation from the familiar depiction of the

213 Ott, Kunst des Gegensatzes, 57.
214 Stanzel, Liebende Hirten, 22 n. 21.
215 Gutzwiller, Pastoral Analogies.
216 Lawall, Coan Pastorals.
217 See Legrand, Bucoliques grecs I, 62. For an argument against Coan origin, see Strano, “Considerazioni sull’idillio X,” 454-460. See also her n. 2 for sources favorable to Cos as the place of composition for Idyll 10.
218 Stanzel, Liebende Hirten, 22-23.
herdsman who sings about love in his *locus amoenus*, and what, if not the setting, makes the poem bucolic?

The reader typically encounters the shepherd-poet resting beside a spring while avoiding the noonday sun; his encounter with a field occupied by reapers at work thus feels immediately foreign to the depiction of the idle shepherd-poet, which all too often becomes a de facto criterion for bucolic poetry. Indeed, Idylls other than 10 deviate from expected bucolic patterns. In Idyll 7, Simichidas and his companions meet Lycidas on the road to the Thalysia. Though the poem does contain references to conventional elements of the *locus amoenus*, such as the Bourina spring and its surrounding grove, the poem’s songs are not set in these locales as one might expect (cf. Idylls 1, 3, 5, 6): instead, Simichidas and Lycidas sing as they make their journey along a road. Simichidas’ travel is also exceptional for his activity at noontime, an hour at which performers typically rest together to escape the midday sun. In addition, Simichidas is not a herdsman but rather resides in the city, meeting Lycidas on a visit into the countryside.

Idyll 7’s divergent elements create an important effect in that Simichidas’ journey represents a transition at once physical and metaphorical that culminates in his encounter with the esoteric Lycidas. In the case of Idyll 10, the setting that Theocritus has chosen deviates more radically from the norm but also creates an important effect, which is discussed below, and should not immediately cause the poem as a whole to be dissociated from the other bucolic Idylls or even relegated to a sub-bucolic position. Let us consider, then, the arguments in favor of Idyll 10’s bucolic status.
Despite elements of presentation contrary to perceived notions of bucolic, many traditional bucolic features are hidden in Idyll 10’s foreign landscape. Indeed, in the first line of the Idyll, Theocritus seems to alert the reader that the poem will in fact be a different sort of bucolic, even going so far as to impose the shepherd-poet’s shadow on the poem as it begins. Interestingly, modern scholars are quick to assert an absence of herdsmen in Idyll 10 despite the scholiast’s identification of the vocative Βουκαῖε as a substantive rather than a proper noun.\footnote{Cf. Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, ad 10.1 and Σ ad arg. 10. Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, 193, notes that failing to recognize Bucaeus as a proper noun, the character Battus was supplied because he and a character named Milo both appear in Idyll 4.} Though the scholiast in this case was in error, his lapse demonstrates the easy association between Bucaeus’ name and the occupation it suggests. Not by accident, then, has Theocritus named his lovesick reaper Bucaeus.

If more evidence is required to prove the intent behind Bucaeus’ moniker, we need only look to the second of the two characters in the poem. The name Milo, though not uncommon, is most famously associated with the athletic feats of Milo of Croton.\footnote{Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, ad 4.6.} Milo is an apt name for one who so rigorously espouses the virtues of physical labor over the love and leisure preferred by Bucaeus. Both Bucaeus’ and Milo’s names suggest their characters even before the reader discovers their attitudes toward love and work. Indeed, names are frequently suggestive in Theocritus’ poetry, as is especially evident here since, as Ott correctly notes, the two characters not only advocate opposing views of love and work but even personify them.\footnote{Ott, \textit{Kunst des Gegensatzes}, 64.} To say that no herdsman inhabits the working world of Idyll 10 is perhaps technically true, but by virtue of his character’s name Theocritus has clearly connected Bucaeus with herding, and in the Idylls herding is the
exclusive domain of the shepherd-poet. Bucaeus’ name carries with it the dual significance of moniker and characterization, but even more complexity underlies Theocritus’ lovesick reaper.

Idyll 10 opens with Milo addressing Bucaeus as Ἐργατίνα Βουκαῖε (10.1). The intrinsic connection of “Bucaeus” with herding is immediately heightened by its juxtaposition with Bucaeus’ current occupation as a reaper. Subsequent lines quickly dispel any confusion about the characters’ roles in the poem, but at the end of the first line the situation is by no means clear. Since the scholiast was able to confuse Bucaeus’ name with his occupation, the uncertainty presented by the first line of the poem should not be underestimated. This striking juxtaposition also anticipates the subsequent tension between Milo and Bucaeus. Bucaeus’ name, able to signify simply “cowherd,” hints that the character being addressed is somehow simultaneously a reaper and a cowherd Ἐργατίνα Βουκαῖε, τί νῦν, ὑζυρέ, πεπόνθεις; 10.1). The reader soon learns that Bucaeus has fallen behind in his reaping duties (10.2-3), but even as Milo comments on his companion’s lack of progress, he compares him to a sheep with an injured foot (10.4). Despite his occupation, Bucaeus is strongly associated with images of herding both by virtue of his name and the context surrounding its appearance in the poem. While the scholiast defended labeling Bucaeus as a herdsman by identifying the lovesick reaper as Idyll 4’s Battus, it is perhaps easier to conceive of Idyll 10’s herding imagery as establishing a link between Bucaeus and the character type of the shepherd-poet found throughout the bucolic Idylls.222 The bucolic associations noted above suggest as much, though another aspect of 10.1 suggests Bucaeus’ similarity to a bucolic shepherd-poet.

222 Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 34, notes of the sheep simile at 10.4 that “though the immediate surroundings may be different, we have not entirely escaped from the landscape of the pastoral.”
Milo’s question in line 1 (τί νῦν, οἰς πεπόνθησι) recalls the question that Aphrodite puts to Sappho at fr. 1.15 (ηρεί ὅτι δημήτρε πέπονθα…). The possibility of a Sapphic intertext here is increased by the presence of other such intertexts in the poem. 223

I believe Theocritus had this same Sapphic poem in mind when crafting his depiction of Aphrodite and that he recalled it again at 10.1 as a means of characterization. Bucaeus, like Sappho, finds himself at the mercy of an unattainable love, while Milo, who seems to enjoy an immunity to love (10.8-11), has the luxury of gently mocking Bucaeus. Theocritus establishes Bucaeus as a bucolic shepherd-poet who finds himself uncharacteristically at work. From its first line, poem 10 thus sets the stage for a conflict between two different subjects for song: unattainable love and the new subject of work. The world is that of the reaper, but the Theocritean shepherd-poet lurks behind the figure of Bucaeus, allowing the two opposing subjects of love and work to clash in the same fictional world. As I argued above, setting alone does not determine a poem’s bucolic quality. Such a change, however, certainly carries with it implications for poetic interpretation.

Let us turn now to the role of bucolic fiction in Idyll 10 and explore the effect Theocritus creates in relocating his lovesick rustic from the flock to the field. The agricultural setting of Idyll 10 is certainly distinct from the locus amoenus typically inhabited by Theocritus’ shepherd-poets, but it is no less successful in placing its rustic inhabitants at a remove from the sophisticated urban reader. The manner in which the reader views the reapers in Idyll 10 need not differ from the manner in which he views the herdsmen more common to bucolic poetry. In both cases, the characters and their

223 Lentini, “amore ‘fuori luogo,’” 903-905, argues for an intertext with Sappho fr. 102, connecting Bucaeus with a girl unable to perform her weaving because she is overcome by love. See also Acosta-Hughes, Bucolic Singers,” 51, for more Sapphic intertexts in Idyll 10.
setting are at a distance from the reader’s own experience and so at a remove from reality. By changing the location and vocation of his shepherd-poet, Theocritus has removed his lovesick rustic from the *otium* of a shady grove and placed him instead in a different fictional world, one characterized instead by *negotium*. Just as the shepherd-poet is the natural inhabitant of the *locus amoenus*, Milo the reaper is the natural inhabitant of this new world of *negotium*. The fiction of Idyll 10 fits the pattern established for bucolic fiction, but differs from other bucolic poems in important respects. Idyll 10, like the other bucolic Idylls, does not reflect real world experience but rather centers itself on a work, as may be easily discerned from Milo’s preoccupation with the subject in conversation with Bucaeus and in his song. The poem, then, sets Bucaeus, who displays all the qualities of a lovesick shepherd-poet, into a fictional world where song is of primary importance, but song that takes work as its subject instead of love, a world appropriate to the pragmatic Milo, not the lovesick Bucaeus. By transferring Bucaeus—whose song focuses on the familiar theme of unattainable love—from the pastoral setting in which he naturally belongs into an agricultural environment, Theocritus playfully experiments with his bucolic poetry.224

Similar types of experimentation, in which a character is placed in a setting to which he does not properly belong, have been argued for in other bucolic Idylls. Lattimore has proposed that Idyll 4’s Battus represents a city poet who has made a visit to the country.225 Simichidas, too, in Idyll 7 is a poet who makes both a physical and poetic journey from the city into the bucolic countryside. In a parallel vein, Idyll 11 offers a

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224 Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 31, also notes the experimental nature of the Idyll.

225 Lattimore, “Battus,” 319-324.
bucolic interpretation of the savage Polyphemus of epic.\textsuperscript{226} Theocritus’ bucolic poetry, whatever generic criteria we may assign to it, shows a great deal of variety and experimentation, often introducing into the bucolic world a character who does not properly or exclusively belong there. That Theocritus would invert this paradigm by taking a bucolic character out of his typical bucolic setting and placing him in a different fictional world should not surprise the reader.

Theocritus’ setting for his bucolic experiment in Idyll 10 polarizes the two subjects present in the songs of Bucaeus and Milo. The field retains the “otherness” inherent in the bucolic setting, a critical element for distancing the characters from the reader’s actual experience, but instead of featuring characters at leisure, the action of the poem centers on Milo’s attempt to spur Bucaeus to work. Song is a vital part of this polarization as its function evolves in a new setting. Milo urges Bucaeus to strike up a song, telling him that \textit{αδιον οὔτως ἔργαξ} (10.22-23). In most bucolic poetry, song is either a leisure activity sung in conjunction with a comrade or competitor or else a personal expression of a lover’s feelings. In the fictional world of Idyll 10, it is neither of these, but rather a tool used to increase productivity.\textsuperscript{227}

Song has considerable thematic importance in the fictional worlds of both the herdsman and the reaper; but despite being a common theme, the relevance of which will be discussed below, song also supports the polarization of the two characters through its different meanings for the herdsman and the reaper. Idyll 10, indeed, presents many

\textsuperscript{226} The most famous example of an unlikely visitor who enters the bucolic landscape occurs, of course, with Gallus’ appearance in Vergil’s Eclogue 10.

\textsuperscript{227} The adverb \textit{αδιον} is also significant in that “sweetness” is a programmatic term typically associated with song, though in Milo’s world work is “sweet.” For the contrast, cf. especially 1.1-8 and 5.31-32 (\textit{αδιον ϑαή / τειδ’ ύπ’ τ`ν κότινιν και τάλσεα ταυ –τα καθίζας}).
antitheses as a result of the juxtaposition of Bucaeus’ bucolic characterization and the work-centered world in which he finds himself. Some of these antitheses are explored by Ott, though his discussion of the poem is by no means exhaustive and reaches few conclusions as to the significance of the antitheses he identifies. In the remainder of this chapter, then, I would like to consider the antitheses presented by the love- and work-centered characterizations of Bucaeus and Milo, respectively, and the significance of moving a shepherd-poet from his own fictional world into that of the reaper-poet.

In Idyll 10, Theocritus presents Bucaeus and Milo as two quite different characters, as even the most cursory reading of the poem will reveal. Though the polarization of the characters and their songs becomes immediately apparent, the reader must consider the poem more carefully to determine its significance. To achieve this end, a close consideration of the literary relationship between love and work both within and outside of the Idylls will be beneficial.

Though in literature love and work are both common themes that would allow myriad approaches to the issue at hand, Theocritus’ own poetry and that of his literary models offer some insight into the conceptions of love and work most likely held by readers of Idyll 10. In light of Cairns’ argument for a symposiastic origin for Idyll 10, some scholars consider this question to have been answered by Cairns, “Theocritus Idyll 10,” who argues that Idyll 10 is derived from a type of symposiastic poetry featuring an amator and an irrisor amoris. Cairns’ observations are valuable, especially for any discussion of the poem’s generic qualities, but even if Theocritus had such a poetic type in mind, this would provide only a framework for the poem. Very little about the poem, in fact, would be determined by Theocritus’ adherence to the form of symposiastic poetry promoted by Cairns, which required only some, not all, of three characteristics: display of symptoms by a lover, interrogation or surmise by another about the lover’s distress or the identity of his beloved, and comment on the beloved by another person, see Cairns, “Idyll 10,” 38. Even following an amator-irrisor amoris scheme for his poem, Theocritus had considerable room for creativity.

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228 Ott, Kunst des Gegensatzes, 57-66.

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230 See above n. 229.
one could note that the symposium, as a social event characterized by idleness and leisure, stands in opposition to the intensity of agricultural labor. The notion that love is the privilege of the idle, however, finds direct expression in the fourth century.

According to Stobaeus, Theophrastus believed that love was the suffering of an idle soul: Θ. ἐρωτηθείς τί ἐστιν ἐρως, πάθος, ἐφή, ψυχής σχολαζούσης (Theophrastus fr.114). Idyll 10 reflects this same notion in Milo’s proverbial response to Bucaeus’ announcement that he has been in love: σχεδον ἐνδεκαταῖος (10.12): ἐκ πίθω ἀντλεῖς δήλου· ἐγὼ δ’ ἔχω οὐδ’ ἀλις ὅξος (10.13). With this proverb, Milo sarcastically portrays Bucaeus’ lovesickness as an indication of wealth, in contrast to his own poverty."  

An even more relevant comment on love comes from Menander’s Dyscolus, to which play Theocritus alludes in Idyll 10. As Gorgias warns of Knemon’s misanthropy and advises Sostratos to abandon his desire for the old farmer’s daughter, Sostratos in turn questions Gorgias: Σω. προς τῶν θεῶν οὐπώποτ’ ἡράσθης τινός, μειράκιον; Γο. οὐδ’ ἔξεστι μοι, βέλτιστε. Σω. πῶς; τίς ἔσθ’ ὁ κωλύων; Γο. ὁ τῶν ὄντων κακῶν λογισμός, ἀνάπαυσιν δίδουσι οὐδ’ ἡμινοῦν. Σω. οὐ μοι δοκείς· ἀπειρότερον γοῦν διαλέγει περὶ ταῦτ’· ἀποστήμαι κελεύεις μ’. οὐκέτι τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν

231 See Gow, Theocritus II, ad loc., Σ ad loc.

232 Cf. Hes. Erg. 303-4 (τά δ’ θεόι νεμεσῶσι καὶ άνέρας, οὐς κεν άργος / ζόη), 298-300, 397-400 and Eur. Elec. 80-81 (ἀργός γὰρ ούδες θεοῦ ἔχων ἀνα στόμα / βίοι δύναιτ’ ἀν εὐλέγειν ἄνευ πόνου). See also Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 31, who, speaking of rustics and their setting, notes “What tradition there was, is exemplified by down-to-earth fellows like Hesiod or the peasant farmer in Euripides’ Electra or Menander’s Dyscolus.”
The goatherd’s ecphrasis in Idyll 1 also reveals something about the relationship between love and work. The first scene on the cup depicts a rivalry among young men for the attention of a beautiful woman. The men quarreling with each other are left hollow eyed (κυλοιδιόωντες, 1.38) by love as they struggle in vain (ἐτωσία μοχθίζωντι, 1.38) to satisfy their passion. An adjacent scene features a fisherman in the process of making a catch. Both representations accurately reflect love and work as subjects of art in the bucolic Idylls, the former depicting the frustrating and unattainable nature of love and the latter presenting a fisherman as a laborer focused entirely on his work. Indeed, the fisherman’s youthful strength suggests his devotion to his task in contrast to the weakness of the hollow-eyed lovers, and recalls Milo’s dedication in

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233 Another possible intertext occurs at 14.7 (Αι. ἔργα τὸ μὰν καὶ τῆνος; Θυ. ἐμίν δοκεῖ, ὧπτῳ ἀλεύρῳ).

234 See also 3.25-26 (τὰν βαίταν ἀποδύς ἐς κύματα τηνῶ ἀλέμαι, / ὀππερ τῶς θύνως ἀκοπιαζῆται ὀλπίς ὀ γριπως) in which the goatherd and fisherman are implicitly compared. The same location has considerably different meanings for Olpis and the goatherd. For the lover it serves as a means to escape love; for the fisherman it presents an opportunity to perform his task.
contrast to Bucaeus’ weakness and inability to work. With its juxtaposition of the enervating effects of love with the strength of the laborer, the representations on the cup directly relate to Theocritus’ presentation of the same topics in Idyll 10. Though a direct connection between Idylls 1 and 10 seems unlikely, Theocritus’ consistent portrayal of lovers and laborers is significant because it further suggest the possibility that his representation of the two concepts of love and work accords to some degree with either a literary tradition or common perception.

Idyll 10 corresponds to notions of love and work in both the Idylls and other literary sources, yet outside of Idyll 10, the two themes are infrequently juxtaposed and seem not to bear any specific connotations in relation to each other. As a result, one literary tradition arises that presents love as a luxury and another arises independently of the first, which presents laborers as working in a continual struggle against poverty. Menander perhaps first articulates the opposition between lover and worker, but Theocritus goes further by merging the two traditions within Bucaeus—a struggling laborer who behaves like an idle lover—the resulting tension of which comes to the fore through Milo’s comments. The predominant literary separation of lover and laborer is an important background to Theocritus’ experiment: because there exists no tradition for the interaction between lover and laborer, Bucaeus and Milo’s relationship stands out as something greater than a poetic trope. Milo’s view of love as a harmful distraction follows naturally from literary representations of laborers, yet his reaction is notably different from Menander’s Gorgias, who appears less hostile to the notion of love. Though Gorgias does not have time for love, he is quite sympathetic to Sostratos’ plight.

\[235 \text{ Though Euripides’ } \text{Antiope} \text{ presented a similar opposition between Amphion favor of a contemplative life and Zethus’ insistence on a life of labor and toil.} \]
after he is convinced of the youth’s good character and intention to marry his beloved. Hesiod, too, offers no comment on love, only approaching the topic in his advice on the appropriate age for marriage. Because so little interaction between love and work exists in the literary tradition, Theocritus is free to determine the outcome of that interaction as he wishes, and the result is influenced by bucolic fiction.

Love and work stand in natural opposition to each other and create a critical contrast between Milo and Bucaeus. The nature of bucolic fiction, however, which takes particular aspect of reality and makes them the focal point of a fictional world, creates a problem in fostering interaction between fictional worlds that employ differing thematic foci. Without an element common to both interlocutors, the characters’ views would simply be incomprehensible to each other and the plethora of antitheses created by their pairing would be meaningless because the two fictional worlds would stand as self-contained units without any points of contact. In the absence of such points of contact, neither character’s view on love or work can inform the other’s resulting in a loss of significance for the poem’s many antitheses. Theocritus, however, has created just such a point of contact between Bucaeus’ and Milo’s fictional worlds.

Song serves a thematic purpose in the Idyll by bridging the love- and work-centered fictional worlds of Bucaeus and Milo, respectively. Indeed, just as the song of the shepherd-poet is a literary piece beneath its mimetic façade, Milo’s work song is unlike any that an actual reaper would have sung. Milo, in the context of his song- and

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236 Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 31. There of course exists the same obvious metrical difference here as in songs sung by Theocritus’ shepherds between the hexameter presentation of the poems and the lyric meter common to popular song, which Theocritus elides by having Milo respond to Bucaeus’ song as though it were in a lyric meter: Pretagostini, “Tracce di poesia orale,” 82-83: Il canto di Buceo (vv. 24-37), che nella trasposizione letteraria operata da Teocrito è tutto in esametri dattilici, in effetti non è che l’imitazione dotta di un canto che nella realtà quotidiana era costituito da cola lirici; il fondamento di questa asserzione poggia sulle parole stesse con le quail Milone commenta la performance dell’amico…oltre a ribadire la
work-centered fiction, may therefore be termed a “reaper-poet” by analogy to the “shepherd-poets” who inhabit the other bucolic poems. Idyll 10, then, pairs unattainable love with work as the foci of the fictional worlds to which Bucaeus and Milo respectively belong and retains song as a theme for both fictional worlds. Song, of course, is used to different effect in Milo’s fictional world, which takes work as its subject rather than love as is typical of most bucolic poetry. For the reaper, song eases the strain of harvesting rather than acting as a remedy for love, but the general principle behind it remains the same. In both cases, song lightens a burden caused by its subject.

Because Idyll 10 employs song as one of its central themes, the poem displays some formal characteristics of bucolic poetry, particularly in its juxtaposition of two songs. Similar juxtapositions occur in Idylls 6 and 7, both of which seem to connect the characters’ songs with their relationships to each other. In Idyll 6, their songs prompt Daphnis and Damoetas to mutual recognition (or reaffirmation) of each other’s skill. In Idyll 7, Lycidas and Simichidas’ relationship is wholly based on song and largely finds expression in the performances of the two characters, culminating in Lycidas gifting his staff to Simichidas. For Milo and Bucaeus, the situation differs: unlike the performers of Idylls 6 and 7, they do not share the same views on what constitutes a proper song. Song as a central theme of the shepherd-poet’s and reaper-poet’s respective fictional world

perizia di Bucaeo, egli ne loda soprattutto la capacità di μετρεῖν τὴν ἰδέαν τῆς ἁρμονίας, un’espressione che non può non essere interpretata come un riferimento al fatto che, nella realtà, il canto doveva essere in metro lirico.” In terms of the content of actual work songs, what clues exists must be culled from rather scanty remains. Page fr. 849 represents the closest analogue to Milo’s song and, brief though the fragment is, the line πλείστων οὗλον ἢει, ἱουλον ἢει bears some resemblance to Milo’s invocation (10.42-43). The occasion for the song is not specified, and its classification (τοὺς τε κοριτσὸς καὶ τοὺς ὁμοῦς τοὺς εἰς τὴν θέου οὗλους καλοῦσι καὶ ἱουλοῦς) raises questions about how it stands in relation to Milo’s το τῶ θέου Ἀιτιέρα. Milo’s song is undoubtedly a literary piece, and, though it has the potential to contain mimetic elements, our general dearth of information about such songs demands extreme caution in asserting the mimetic quality of Idyll 10.

237 See above, 16.
creates a thematic overlap or, to put it in spatial terms, a place where the two fictional worlds meet, joined by a shared focus on song yet kept distinct by antithetical approaches to love and work. It is in this space, within the shared approach to song, that Milo and Bucaeus find a basis for interaction. Milo, in fact, has relatively little to say about Bucaeus’ lovesickness, relying on proverbs and thus eliminating the necessity of addressing the topic directly. He becomes considerably more responsive in his comments about song, sarcastically complimenting Bucaeus’ skill and countering it with his own agricultural song. The Idyll’s larger goal of contrasting work- and love-centered versions of bucolic fiction is realized primarily by couching the discussion in musical terms applicable to both fictions. Song establishes common ground for the interaction of the two reapers, even amidst the contrasts through which the reader gains a new view of bucolic fiction.

Now that we have considered how Theocritus sets the stage for his comparison of disparate fictional worlds, we may analyze the results of the experiment. Bucaeus’ and Milo’s conversation attempts to join two themes incapable of coexisting as focal points of the same fictional world. Indeed, the conflict between love and work is heightened by Theocritus’ depictions of Milo and Bucaeus as near personifications of their respective themes. Because there exists a general balance in the poem’s structure consisting of a love song and a work song of equal length, it is tempting to equate this with a parity between the Idyll’s presentation of its love-work antitheses. The opposition, however, is actually one-sided. The dialogue between Milo and Bucaeus presents Milo as challenging Bucaeus’ bucolic representation of love, but Bucaeus does not challenge

\[238\] Ott, *Kunst des Gegensatzes*, 64.
Milo in turn. To do so would be pointless: Milo does not know what it is to pine after an unattainable love. Rather than structure the Idyll as a debate in which each character challenges the other’s view, \(^{239}\) Bucaeus is at the mercy of Milo’s mockery throughout the Idyll. In return, Bucaeus offers only the apologetic lines 10.19-20, in which he asserts that it is through no fault of his own that he is in love. Milo’s scorn of love goes unchallenged even though Bucaeus finds himself under pressure to defend his lovesickness from the poem’s beginning. This one-sidedness results when Bucaeus enters Milo’s work-centered fiction and finds himself subject to its rules. As Milo with his extreme pragmatism constantly confronts Bucaeus’ love-centered fictional world, the ideological seams that bind that fictional world begin to show.

Perhaps the clearest example of the breakdown of bucolic fiction caused by pressure from Milo’s unique worldview can be found in Milo’s description of Bombyca at 10.17-18. In these difficult lines \(^{240}\) Milo seems to suggest that Bombyca is both unattractive and available. This sort of direct, external challenge to the idealization of the beloved is unprecedented in Theocritus’ poetry. One may, perhaps, think of the Cyclops of Idyll 11 or Simaetha of Idyll 2, but those situations are not quite the same. The Cyclops of Idyll 11 attempts to break love’s hold through song, but his assertion that all the girls laugh when he listens to them and that he is somebody important on land (11.78-79) are full of irony and call into question the effectiveness of his cure. Simaetha similarly has recognized Delphis’ cruelty and so seems torn between wanting him back and letting him go. Polyphemus and Simaetha both wrestle with the realization that their

\(^{239}\) Though see Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 32, who considers the two views of love in the poem “as well balanced as a Platonic dialogue.”

\(^{240}\) See Gow, *Theocritus II*, ad loc.
desire will not find satisfaction from their beloveds, but they continue to idealize them, and their beloveds certainly do not become available. Milo’s claim that Bucaeus will find himself in that “mantis-like girl’s embrace” undermines Bucaeus even before he begins his song, as Bombyca’s idealized nature and unattainability, two defining aspects of the bucolic beloved, are immediately called into question.

Once Bucaeus does begin his song, the praise he lavishes on his beloved reinforces Milo’s observations about Bombyca and exposes the ridiculousness of Bucaeus’ desire. At 10.24-25, Bucaeus asserts that, while others see Bombyca’s imperfections, he sees her beauty:

*Boμβύκα χαρίεσσα, Σύραν καλέωτι τι πάντες, / ἴσχυναν, ἀλιόκαυστον, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον.* The lover’s idealization of his beloved occurs frequently in literature, but the motif that depicts the lover relabeling his beloved’s faults most famously occurs in Plato, to whom Theocritus alludes in this passage. At *Rep. 474d-e*, Socrates explains that an object of love is loved in its entirety, and as an example describes how lovers overlook imperfections in their beloveds by casting them in positive terms:

*ο σιμός, ἐπίχαρις κληθεῖς ἐπαινεθῆσαι ύψ’ ύμῶν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ γρυπὸν βασιλικὸν φατε ἔναι, τὸν δὲ δὴ διὰ μέσου τούτων ἐμμετρῶτα ἔχειν, μέλανας δὲ ἀνδρικοὺς ἰδεῖν, λευκοὺς δὲ θεῶν παῖδας ἔναι· μελιχλώρους δὲ καὶ τούνομα οἰεὶ τινὸς ἄλλου ποίημα ἔναι ἡ ἐραστοῦ ὑποκοριζομένου τε καὶ εὔχερως φέροντος τὴν ὀχρότητα, ἐὰν ἐπὶ ὡρὰ ἧ;* Through this intertext, Theocritus connects Bucaeus’ idealization of his beloved with Socrates’ assertion that such idealization is a common and ridiculous practice of lovers in general, and so imparts a

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241 For more on this passage, see below.

degree of ridiculousness to love in general and to Bucaeus in particular. Theocritus’ allusion to Plato is particularly striking in contrast to 6.18-19 (ἡ γὰρ ἐρωτι / πολλάκις, ἤ Πολύφαμε, τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται). This passage from Idyll 6, like 10.24-25, acknowledges that love causes one to idealize the object of one’s affection, but contains none of the ridicule found in poem 10. On the contrary, Daphnis’ words repackaging the same notion of idealization as a bit of gnomic wisdom. In poem 6, at least, Polyphemus may appear ridiculous but love is taken quite seriously.

The idealization of the beloved is always to a certain extent open to question because the reader usually only learns about the beloved from the lover. Idyll 10, however, dispels any such uncertainty: Milo knows exactly who Bombyca is, thereby lending him credibility that is later supported by Bucaeus’ awkward praise of Bombyca’s beauty (10.26-28; 36-37). As a point of contrast one may consider the goatherd of Idyll 3, whose depiction of his beloved owes much to his lovesickness. Though considerable room exists for skepticism about his beloved’s actual qualities, the reader learns about the beloved only from the goatherd, leaving his interpretation an open question. Milo, an objective observer, or at least one uninfluenced by love, undermines Bucaeus’ assertions about Bombyca’s beauty thereby exposing Bucaeus’ ridiculousness and in a larger sense exposing the ridiculousness of bucolic love.

The characters’ discussion of love and work has provided some opportunity for our examination of bucolic fiction and its themes, yet much more information may be culled from the songs themselves. When taken in isolation the two inset songs offer considerable insight into the characters who perform them; when taken together they
reveal even more about bucolic fiction. Before considering the songs’ relationship, a brief discussion of how Milo characterizes his song is necessary.

At 10.41, Milo announces that he will sing τὰ τῶν θείω Λιτυέρσα. It is unfortunate that our knowledge of Lityerses is as limited as our picture of Daphnis, though some conjectures can be made on the available evidence.\(^{243}\) In the sources, Lityerses is described as the name of a type of song, as the discoverer of farming, and as a student of the Muses. The most detailed account, however, portrays him as the son of Midas, who challenged passers-by to a reaping contest and, when they lost, killed them and bound their bodies in the sheaves. According to the tradition, his misdeeds earned him death at Heracles’ hands. Whitehorne suggests that Milo has this tradition in mind when referring to Lityerses and that for this reason he jokingly reminds Bucaeus of the harsh penalty that awaits laggard reapers.\(^{244}\) This is an amusing possibility, but Lityerses may convey considerably more significance.\(^{245}\) Lityerses as a mythical character associated with reaping songs is a perfect counterpart to bucolic poetry’s Daphnis. Like Daphnis, Lityerses is directly connected with a particular type of song—a work song—that is a defining aspect of the fictional world with which it is associated. Song is an important part of the fictional worlds of both herdsmen and reapers, but while herdsmen look to the sufferings of the cowherd Daphnis as the model of bucolic song, Milo’s song

\(^{243}\) See Gow, *Theocritus II*, ad 10.41 for evidence for Lityerses.

\(^{244}\) Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 40.

\(^{245}\) Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 41, also proposes that a mention of Lityerses in the poem may be a reference to a play by Theocritus’ contemporary Sositheus.
finds inspiration in the reaper Lityerses. The love-work polarization found throughout the poem is maintained in fruitful tension with the common ground of song.\textsuperscript{246}

Another possible source connecting Daphnis and Lityerses exists in the form of a play by Theocritus’ contemporary Sositheus. The play, entitled Δάφνις ἔν Λἰτυέρσῃς, joins Daphnis and Lityerses in the same narrative, raising questions about Lityerses’ role in the Daphnis tradition. Regardless of when Daphnis and Lityerses were first placed in the same narrative, Sositheus’ play demonstrates that such an account was current in Theocritus’ time. The play itself is lost, though according to Servius, Daphnis pursued his beloved, who was kidnapped by pirates, to Phrygia where Lityerses was king. Danger arises from Lityerses, who compels foreigners to compete in a reaping contest and murders them when they are defeated. Daphnis, however, is saved when Heracles learns of the challenge and takes pity on Daphnis by killing king Lityerses (Verg. Buc. 8.68). Servius’ account not only brings together Daphnis and Lityerses but also depicts Daphnis as a lover and Lityerses as a reaper. That Milo takes as the subject of his song τὰ τῶ θέιω Λιτυέρσα is more than a mimetic touch. Lityerses acts as a counterpart to Daphnis. The sufferings of the latter form a model for bucolic song, while the agricultural world looks to the former for its topics. If this notion is correct, then Milo’s closing remarks (ταῦτα χρὴ μοχθεντας ἐν ἀλίῳ ἀνδρας ἀείδειν, 10.56) contain additional significance. The demonstrative ταῦτα encompasses more than just the poem’s content, it refers to the poem in some sense as the work of Lityerses himself, perhaps even recalling the ταῦτα of line 41 (θᾶσαι δὴ καὶ ταῦτα τὰ τῶ θείω

\textsuperscript{246} Daphnis, of course, is not specifically mentioned in the poem, though his role as archegete of bucolic poetry is so well known that he is easily recalled in Milo’s mention of the mythical Lityerses.
The type of song that a man working in the sun ought to sing is specifically the song of Lityerses and not the love song of Daphnis.\textsuperscript{247}

The implicit comparison of Daphnis and Lityerses as representatives of song, encouraged by Milo’s mention of the latter, reinforces the notion that the agricultural world employs bucolic fiction and is based on the structure of the bucolic world’s fiction. Both worlds center themselves on their own particular themes, and both even trace the origin of their songs to a particular mythical figure. The agricultural world amounts to a mirror image of the bucolic world, which has precisely the same form but is centered on a theme diametrically opposed to love as found in the bucolic world. The two songs in Idyll 10 do more than simply show characterization; they act as representative samples of the fictions of the two different worlds. The pairing of songs in other Idylls shows a relationship between them, and one would expect the paired songs of Idyll 10 likewise to contain specific points of correlation. Instead, the two songs appear antithetical in both structure and content, in which case the diptych structure of the songs serves only to emphasize the differences between the two poems in a sort of reciprocal relationship to typical diptychs which highlight similarities. It is unlikely that Theocritus would expend such effort only to convey in a heavy-handed manner that Bucaeus and Milo are complete opposites. Antitheses between the songs are undoubtedly present and prominent, but points of correspondence also exist that create significance for these antitheses and add nuance to the poem’s presentation of love and work.

Because Bucaeus and Milo are near personifications of the bucolic and agricultural worlds, one naturally expects considerable contrast between the characters

\textsuperscript{247} Hunter \textit{Theocritus}, ad 10.41 proposes that Bucaeus “becomes a comically lovesick Daphnis whose ‘bucolic’ sufferings find no pity in Milon’s harsh, Hesiodic conception of the world.”
and their songs. Bucaeus’ song thus focuses on his beloved, while Milo sings in a style reminiscent of Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. The songs support Theocritus’ interest in establishing a polarization between love and work, though the significance they create in being read together, like any of the diptychs Theocritus places in his Idylls, requires careful attention to discern. The following observations are by no means secure, but the patently opposed bucolic and agricultural fictions in the poem justify some speculation in search of greater significance beneath the antithesis that characterizes the entire poem and which, without some added depth, would seem almost clumsy in its starkness.

The songs themselves, despite the antithetical themes that are their subjects, reveal some noteworthy correspondences. Structurally, a line count reveals that each song contains fourteen lines. The inset songs of Idylls 6 and 7, by contrast, are comparable but not identical in length. All the songs from poems 6 and 7, however, concern a single subject, love, and so do not require as many structural clues to invite comparison. Idyll 10 is a bit more complicated in its use of themes and so benefits from such clues. Indeed, it is striking that Idyll 10 is Theocritus’ only poem to contain inset songs of matching length; surely this is owed to Theocritus’ art and not mere coincidence.

Similarities between the two songs do not end at their line counts. As each poem progresses, a similarity of phrasing and imagery emerges that suggests that Milo’s song may reply to specific points in Bucaeus’ song, in a manner akin to other Idylls containing diptych structures. The parallels between the songs of love and work are not as stark as those occurring in other diptychs, but they are nevertheless present. The first point of parallelism may be found in the invocations that begin each song. Bucaeus and Milo
both invoke deities appropriate to their respective songs, with the former calling upon the Pierian Muses (Μοῖσσα Πιερίδες, 10.24) and the latter upon bountiful Demeter (Δαματερ πολύκαρπε, 10.42). Such invocations are not uncommon in the bucolic world, but are not required, making their structural similarity stand out all the more, especially in the context of Idyll 10 where Bucaeus and Milo so often demonstrate differences rather than similarities, as shown by their musical styles. These dual invocations create a clear initial parallel for the reader and, despite their easy dismissal as conventional features, should not be disregarded.

The effect that the two invocations create is perhaps obvious but still worth some consideration. Bucaeus calls upon the Muses to inspire his bucolic love song. These goddesses, along with the Nymphs, often appear in the bucolic world and typically are mentioned in a shepherd-poet’s appeal for inspiration or as deities favorable to those with exceptional poetic skill. The Muses, commonly invoked in a variety of generic contexts, are appropriate to Bucaeus’ bucolic love song and further suggest Bucaeus’ alignment with the bucolic world’s love-centered fiction. Milo, by contrast, calls upon Demeter, a goddess befitting Milo’s song about harvesting. The Muses and Demeter are both apt sources for inspiration given the themes of their respective songs, and so further underscore the thematic difference between Bucaeus’ and Milo’s worldviews. The similarity in structure provided by the invocations may also suggest that Milo’s song corrects Bucaeus’ song. Where Bucaeus calls upon bucolic deities, Milo, in imitation of

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248 Bucaeus’ song, brief though it is, shows a greater complexity than Milo’s song in its use of ring composition and priamel. See Whitehorne, “Reapers,” 38-39; Ott, Kunst des Gegensatzes, 62.

249 Cf. the refrain of Idyll 1, Comatas’ boast at 10.80, and Simichidas’ description of Lycidas at 7.95.
Bucaeus’ structure, instead invokes Demeter, a goddess appropriate to the agricultural fiction in which the poem is set.

Following the vocative addresses that initiate both songs, each singer makes specific requests of the deities. Milo, in pragmatic and perhaps realistic fashion, seeks a bountiful crop (10.42-43), while Bucaeus requests the goddesses’ aid in singing about his beloved (10.24-25). These requests demonstrate different approaches to song that are conditioned by the thematic foci of the two fictional worlds. In calling upon the Muses to aid him in singing of the object of his desire, Bucaeus indicates that his song will be dedicated in bucolic fashion to the idealization of his beloved. By contrast, Milo, corresponding to literary depictions of laborers that establish the foundation for a fiction based on that presentation, sets work as the thematic focus of his song, which amounts to an amalgam of Hesiodic motifs. The invocations, then, contain the same polarization found throughout the poem but also set the songs on different fictional footings, with Bucaeus singing a love song in bucolic fashion and Milo, perhaps lacking an established form for songs set in the agricultural world, crafting a song in Hesiodic style. The songs are more than simply opposites in theme: they, like their composers, operate based on the conventions of different fictional worlds.

A further point concerning Bucaeus’ invocation is worth consideration. After calling upon the Muses, Bucaeus explains that everything the goddesses touch, becomes

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251 I cannot help but wonder whether Theocritus intended for Idyll 10 to be in some way read against Idyll 7. Both poems share strong Hesiodic features, such as the style and content of Milo’s song and Lycidas’ apparent likeness to the Muses who bestow a staff upon Hesiod in the Theogony. Both poems also feature harvesting, which is found throughout Idyll 10 and is implied in Idyll 7 by the cause of Simichidas’ journey, the Thalysia. Finally, Demeter in her role as an agricultural goddess is present in both poems, and the lark, mentioned nowhere else in Theocritus’ corpus, appears in both poems in a similar context. Acosta-Hughes, “Bucolic Singers,” 34, also finds a parallel between the private songs of Bucaeus and Lycidas in contrast to the public performances of Milo and Simichidas.
beautiful (ὦ ν γὰρ χ’ ἀψηθε, θεαί, καλὰ πάντα ποεῖτε, 10.25). This line is significant for what it implies about the relationship between song and beauty. One could perhaps interpret 10.25 to mean that the Muses bestow beauty upon the songs they touch, since poetry and song traditionally fall under their auspices. But the relative pronoun could just as easily refer to the subject of the songs they inspire, so that the Muses (that is, song) grant an artificial beauty to Bombyca, whom Milo has already described in less than flattering terms. Milo’s comments at 10.17-18 and Bucaeus’ assertion at 10.25, when taken together, thus expose the shepherd-poet’s idealization of his beloved. The notion that song lends beauty to its subject might not by itself provoke such an interpretation, but the issue of Bombyca’s beauty is one that appears with noticeable frequency in a relatively short poem. First, the girl is, in Milo’s opinion, available and unattractive (10.17-18). Bucaeus then, far from contradicting this view, appears to confirm it in his song by claiming that not just Milo but everyone finds her unattractive: Σύραν καλέοντι τυ πάντες, / ἵσχυναν, ἀλιόκαυστον, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον (10.26-27). Though he will go on to compliment Bombyca in the course of his song, Bucaeus’ assertion that the Muses bestow beauty stands out sharply as Bombyca’s beauty is repeatedly questioned. One effect of this unique undermining of the beloved is to underscore that Bucaeus is singing a song appropriate to bucolic fiction rather than one intended as a mimetic expression of sincere wonder at the beauty of his beloved. Bucaeus’ assertion of a relationship between song and beauty (10.25), and his concession that he alone finds Bombyca beautiful (10.26-27), make it seem as if he is yielding to the general consensus regarding the object of his love—admitting that her beauty and attractiveness are not innate but exist as part of her function as an object of bucolic love.
and subject of bucolic song. The remainder of Bucaeus’ song goes on to fulfill its obligation to grant beauty to its subject through Bucaeus’ idealized yet awkward compliments. In most bucolic poems, the beloved’s idealization is seamlessly integrated into the bucolic world’s fiction, but in Idyll 10 Theocritus exposes this idealization as part of the experimental deconstruction of the bucolic world.

The two songs diverge in both theme and overall structure following their invocations. Nevertheless, some elements common to both songs remain that encourage the reader to look beyond the veneer of thematic polarization and consider what greater significance may lie in the songs. As discussed above, Bucaeus quickly transitions from addressing the Muses to addressing his beloved. His first words to her are a surprising concession that he alone finds her beautiful—he even lists the unflattering descriptions that everyone else gives of her (10.26-27). Bucaeus sets himself unashamedly against the collective opinion of all the other reapers in proclaiming the beauty of his beloved Bombyca. Milo, too, follows his invocation to Demeter by introducing an external judgment into his song, but he does so in a way opposite to Bucaeus’ approach. Instead of addressing a single person, Milo speaks to the binders ( ámballođeταί) and warns them to bind the sheaves lest someone criticize their idleness: σφίγγετ’, ámballođeταί, τὰ δράγματα, μὴ παρικὼν τὶς / εἶπη, ‘οὐκὶ νοὶ ἄνδρες· ἀπώλετο χοήτος ὁ μισθὸς’ (10.44-45). Whereas Bucaeus disregards popular opinion in asserting his beloved’s beauty, Milo stirs the binders to work through fear of an anonymous rebuke. The preface to Milo’s song suggests that he is responding to Bucaeus’ song (10.40-41), so it is not unlikely that Milo deliberately adopts and inverts Bucaeus’ construction for use in his own song. This inversion does more than highlight the opposed thematic nature of the
songs: it makes Bucaeus’ construction stand out by comparison. By admitting the widely held view of his beloved’s unattractiveness, Bucaeus exposes his song as an idealization of Bombyca. In comparison with Milo’s lines at 10.44-45, a different significance for Bucaeus’ idealization emerges. Unlike Milo, who directs the workers in his song, Bucaeus appears as an isolated figure setting himself against the majority opinion. Shepherd-poets, with whom it is appropriate to associate Bucaeus, are solitary characters, especially in their distance from the reader’s reality, but often in their physical isolation from other characters. The shepherd-poet’s love isolates him both physically and emotionally.\(^{252}\) Here again Theocritus does not allow what may be considered bucolic convention—the isolated nature of the bucolic lover—to pass by without comment, but rather calls attention to it through Bucaeus’ insistence that he alone finds Bombyca attractive. This isolates Bucaeus emotionally in that none of the other workers, especially Milo, are able to understand his lovesickness.

Bucaeus’ own phrasing at 10.27 suggests his isolation as a lover (ἐγώ δὲ μόνος) and his distance from the mindset of everyone else (πάντες, 10.26). The opposition between Bucaeus’ perspective and that of everyone else, of course, continues to set love and work against each other as mutually exclusive fictional foci, yet Bucaeus’ isolation also imitates a feature of bucolic lovers and so reveals more than mere thematic polarization, as a comparison with Milo’s song helps confirm. Milo’s address to the binders and his warning that someone might think them lazy completely overturns

\(^{252}\) For the lover’s physical isolation, see Giangrande, “Aphrodite and the Oak Trees,” 179. For the lover’s emotional isolation, see above p. 19.
Bucaeus’ isolation by emphasizing the collective nature of work. Because Bucaeus is a reaper instead of a herdsman, his idleness and isolation, unremarkable in a bucolic setting, stand in sharp relief against the collective toil that Milo demands. More than just showing a polarization between love and work, in the agricultural world the lover stricken with desire becomes one of the “σύκινοι ἄνδρες” whose wage is wasted. The fiction of the bucolic lover’s idle solitude comes to the fore through his transplantation into the agricultural world’s fiction, and only fully emerges when the songs of the two reapers are directly compared.

Following the initial two couplets, it becomes difficult to discern structural patterns such as those characterizing the songs’ beginnings. Though I will argue that connections between the songs persist, the central couplets of the songs show more contrast than similarity, as Bucaeus defends his beloved’s beauty and Milo continues in didactic fashion. Despite such divergence, beneath the differences that set the songs apart exist subtle thematic connections that serve as points of contact between the songs, the first of which may be found in Bucaeus’ priamel.

After comparing his beloved’s beauty to the violet and hyacinth, famously imitated by Vergil in Eclogue 10, a poem that also concerns itself with interactions between separate fictional worlds, Bucaeus turns to a sort of bucolic priamel: ἀ αἰὲς τὰν κύτισον, ὁ λύκος τὰν αἰγὰ διώκει, ἀ γέρανος τῶροτρον ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπὶ τὴν μεμόρυμαι (10.30-31). Bucaeus has been playing the part of a bucolic character throughout the poem, and just as Milo’s previous comparison of Bucaeus to a wounded sheep reinforced that characterization, here again imagery proper to a bucolic landscape

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253 Acosta-Hughes, “Bucolic Singers,” 32, also notes the contrast between Bucaeus’ song meant for a private audience (Bombyca) and Milo’s song meant for a public one.
underscores the implicit connection between Bucaeus and the bucolic world. Into the parade of bucolic images intrude the crane and the plow—a pair associated with work and agriculture—and an odd climax to the crescendoing description of the bucolic chain. The interruption of bucolic imagery, which constitutes the entirety of line 30, is all the more jarring given the sudden appearance of agricultural imagery in the initial position of the following line.

Theocritus seems to be calling attention to his juxtaposition of bucolic and agricultural imagery. Such juxtapositions, of course, occur throughout the poem, but this one is different from the others. Unlike most comparisons in the poem between the bucolic and agricultural world, this one does not appear to present an antithesis between the two. On the contrary, it attempts to integrate them. Bucaeus compares his desire for Bombyca to the natural desire that drives goats, wolves, and cranes in their pursuits. Though both bucolic and agricultural images are present, the three points of comparison—the goat’s pursuit of clover, the wolf’s pursuit of the goat, and the crane’s pursuit of the plow—all complement each other in indicating the natural and instinctual qualities of Bucaeus’ love. Bucaeus implies that his desire for Bombyca mimics relationships that are natural to the bucolic world (the goat’s desire for clover and the wolf’s desire for the goat) as well as the agricultural world (the crane’s desire for the plow) and so suggests that the desire he feels is common to (or at least may intelligible to) characters in both worlds. The image of the crane pursuing the plow is of interest

254 The image of the wolf desiring the goat has the additional effect of continuing to deconstruct bucolic love by removing it from its idealized position through an intertext with Plato’s Phaedrus. As Socrates concludes his false speech against love he compares the lover to a hungry wolf: ταύτα τε οὖν χρή, οὐ παι, συνοισθεν, καὶ εἶδέν τιν ἔραστον φιλίαν ὅτι οὐ μετ’ εὐνοίας γίνεται, ἀλλὰ αἰτιοῦ τρόπον, χάριν πλησμονῆς, ὥς λύκοι ἀρνας ἀγαπῶσιν, ὡς παιδα φιλοῦσιν ἔρασται (241c-d).
because it combines natural and agricultural associations in an attempt to create a second bridge between Bucaeus’ and Milo’s fictions through their mutual associations with nature. Bucaeus attributes to the crane in its pursuit of the plow the same natural desire that drives the goat and wolf, focusing on the crane’s desire and de-emphasizing the plower’s interest in the crane. 255

Bucaeus’ merging of bucolic and agricultural imagery into a single analogical concept is quite remarkable. The poem patently demonstrates the incompatibility of the fictional worlds of shepherds and reapers, yet Bucaeus’ priamel offers an attempt to bridge that fictional gap by appropriating for his bucolic song an image proper to the agricultural realm. Of course, despite its presence in both worlds, nature, like song, yields different significance depending on its fictional context. Bucaeus’ appropriation of agricultural imagery remains merely that, with no actual integration of the fictional elements of the bucolic and agricultural worlds. The lovesick reaper’s attempt to connect love analogically with Milo’s fictional world, though noteworthy, does little to overturn the antitheses that exist throughout the poem and succeeds even less in garnering sympathy from Milo.

Possibly in response to Bucaeus’ imposition of agricultural imagery in his bucolic priamel, Milo instructs the reapers on their work schedule: ἄρχεσθαι δ’ ἀμωντας ἐγειρομένω κορυδαλλῶ / καὶ λήγειν εὔδοντος, ἐλινύσαι δὲ τὸ καῦμα (10.50-51).

Even apart from its use of imagery, this passage stands out in that it appears out of sequence with the preceding agricultural descriptions. Milo first instructs the binders 256


256 Cf. II. 18.552-555, in which binders appear to begin their work immediately after the corn is cut.
(44-45), then orders that the cut corn be set out to ripen (46-47), then addresses the threshers (48-49), and finally the reapers (50-51). The relative order of events (binding followed by ripening followed by threshing) appears correct except for the misplacement of reaping, which ought to come first but instead appears last. Milo thus highlights the activity of reaping by postponing it until after the other agricultural duties have been addressed.

In addition to its relative placement in the song, the couplet at 10.50-51 is significant for its use of imagery. Using the lark as a measure for the length of the workday bears some resemblance to Bucaeus’ crane image. Though Bucaeus emphasizes the crane’s perspective, the bird is actually significant as a sign of the plowing season. Both the crane and the lark, then, serve as natural indicators of when one ought to work and so by evoking the lark as an indicator of work, Milo recalls and reclaims the crane’s significance as a sign of work. While Bucaeus relates to nature in terms of desire, equating his pursuit of Bombyca with an animal’s pursuit of food, Milo’s use of the lark as a measure of the reaper’s workday shows a different sort of harmony between work and nature and undermines Bucaeus’ attempt to integrate the two fictions by merging their differing treatments of natural imagery into a single bucolic significance. This argument gains some support from the displacement of reaping in the relative order of events that Milo establishes in his song. As a result of postponing the instructions to the reapers, Milo’s lark image and Bucaeus’ crane image fall in nearly the same part of their songs, the lark in the ninth line of Milo’s song and the crane in the eighth line of Bucaeus’.
The connection between the crane and the lark is certainly a subtle one. No obvious structural or verbal cues direct the reader to compare the relevant couplets, and yet a connection nevertheless seems likely. Thus far, Theocritus’ choice to include agricultural imagery in Bucaeus’ bucolic song has garnered little attention. Because Bucaeus is a reaper, it seems natural that he should use an image such as the crane to describe his love. Quite the contrary is true, however. Milo and Bucaeus espouse very different views of love and work, the contrast of which forms the heart of the entire poem. That Bucaeus should attempt to equate love and work is undoubtedly worthy of notice.

One final point of comparison between the songs of Bucaeus and Milo remains: both singers address the topic of wealth in the second half of their songs. Though they portray their desires as unattainable, the mere presence of the theme is striking. Wealth does appear in the Idylls as lovers occasionally attempt to purchase their beloved’s affection, though always employing a specifically rustic notion of wealth. Lacon and Comatas, for instance, both claim to have gifts for their beloveds befitting their status as herdsmen (5.96-99). The Cyclops of Idyll 11 likewise attempts to entice Galatea by listing his rustic possessions (11.34-42). Bucaeus, however, does not desire wealth on a rustic scale and does not treat it as a means of attaining his unattainable beloved. Instead, he wants to dedicate statues of himself and Bombyca to Aphrodite: αὕτη μοι ἦσ’ ὀσσα Κροῖσον ποκα φαντὶ πεπάσθαι / χρύσεοι ἀμφότεροι κ’ ἀνεκείμεθα τὰ Ἀφροδίτα (10.32-33). Though his sentiment is appropriate to the bucolic context, his expression is not. To wish for the wealth of Croesus is to wish for something that is not only
impossible to obtain but also uncharacteristic of a shepherd-poet. Bucaeus’ expression, then, requires some explanation.

Whitehorne has identified part of the purpose behind the expression by proposing that the dedication of golden statues recalls statues dedicated by Ptolemy and a general contemporary Alexandrian practice of statue dedications for loved ones. Whitehorne correctly finds an Alexandrian connection in the image of statue dedication found in Idyll 10. The general dearth of secure information on contemporary Alexandrian society, makes the determination of the full significance of the reference impossible, though there is reason to believe it is directed at the Ptolemies specifically rather than at general Alexandrian practice. As Whitehorne notes, many statues had been dedicated to Arsinoe as well as mistresses of Ptolemy. The Ptolemies may not have been alone in dedicating statues, but they certainly would have been the ones most famous for it.

Additionally, Bucaeus’ desire to have the wealth of Croesus permits one to infer a Ptolemaic reference: not only were they wealthy, but much of their wealth came from the east due to the legacy of Alexander’s campaign and to acquisitions following the First Syrian War, which included several possessions in Asia Minor, though not Lydia. Reading this passage as an acknowledgment of Ptolemy’s practice of dedicating statues, a

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259 Cf. 17.85-94 and Gow, Theocritus II, ad 17.86-90. The notion of Ptolemy’s wealth as eastern is also implied by frequent references to eastern figures and locations in Posidippus’ Lithica, esp. AB 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16. See Thompson, “Poet of the Ptolemies,” 282. Athenaeus’ description of Ptolemy Philadelphus’ elaborate procession attests both the ruler’s wealth and his penchant for statues. See Athen. 196a-203c, esp. 198c-199a and 201f-202b. In this regard see also Theoc. 15.100-144 for Theocritus’ description of the Adonia. Acosta-Hughes, “Bucolic Singers,” 51, noting several Sapphic parallels in Bucaeus’ song, proposes that the mention of Croesus also evokes Sapphic poetry.
practice made possible by his ample resources, sheds some light on the sudden intrusion of extravagant wealth into the Idylls.

Another possible interpretation of this image occurs in conjunction with Milo’s comments on the same subject. As Milo concludes his song, he also turns to the topic of wealth: εὐκτός ὁ τῷ βατράχῳ, παῖδες, βίος: οὐ μελεδώνιει / τὸν τὸ πιεῖν ἐγχεύντα, πάρεστι γὰρ ἀφθονὸν αὐτῷ (10.52-53). Milo, like Bucaeus, offers a conception of wealth, though of a much different sort. In contrast to Croesus, whose name is proverbial for immense wealth, Milo admires the frog, who never wants for a drink because it exists in abundance all around him. Milo’s warning to the greedy bailiff not to cut himself while slicing cumin also sets Milo’s conception of wealth at a far remove from Bucaeus’ fanciful level. These two depictions of wealth reflect the same thematic associations established earlier in the poem, in which love (or lovesickness) is an activity reserved for wealthy idlers and work functions as part of an ongoing attempt to stave off poverty. Both interlocutors desire abundance, but Bucaeus measures that abundance in gold and silver while Milo measures it in the more rustic terms of basic necessities. Milo’s phrasing reinforces this interpretation, since the frog’s happiness is specifically linked to his freedom from care about his livelihood (οὐ μελεδώνιει), a characteristic not enjoyed by laborers whose general depiction in literature presents them as continually working for the means of simple survival.260 Bucaeus, who perhaps should be concerned with how he will feed himself if he does not show greater concern for his own crops (10.14) or those he has been hired to reap, complements his inactivity with an idle wish for wealth that is both unattainable and in direct opposition to Milo. The characters’ respective views on wealth particularly stand out because they share an

260 See above n. 232.
occupation and, presumably, are subject to the same financial concerns. In this respect they differ from Menander’s Sostratos and Gorgias, whose resources and lifestyles are considerably different. Sostratos, who offers to accept Knemon’s daughter without a dowry, takes on the role of a laborer only briefly as a means of closing the gap in status to which Knemon is quite sensitive. Bucaeus’ tenure in Milo’s agricultural world, however, is not temporary, and so his idleness and dreams of wealth seem all the more out of place.

Milo’s final comments provide a coda to the poem’s persistent contrast between work and love, and in particular to their opposed approaches to wealth, by noting that Milo’s song is the one that will sustain those operating in the agricultural world while Bucaeus’ song will leave him hungry (λιμηρόν ἠρωτα, 10.57). These contrary conceptions of wealth reflect the antithetical nature of their speakers’ thematic allegiances and continue Theocritus’ literary experiment of transposing a character from his love-centered fiction into a new work-centered fiction. Though Theocritus allows his readers to draw conclusions from his carefully crafted juxtapositions, Milo’s final lines seem to offer a definitive judgment on what is and is not appropriate in his agricultural fiction.

Among Theocritus’ bucolic poems, Idyll 10 is justly considered unique, a quality indicative of its experimental nature. By juxtaposing Bucaeus, who represents a typical shepherd-poet, with the staunch laborer Milo, Theocritus succeeds in deconstructing the fictional world that he creates in his bucolic poems and reveals the wealth of significance beneath the mimetic façade of his rustic mimes. Idyll 10 aptly demonstrates the limited value of isolating the traditional bucolic poems from the rest of the corpus. The next
chapter, therefore, will look even further beyond the bounds of traditional bucolic to consider the relevance of bucolic fiction for one of Theocritus’ urban mimes: Idyll 2.
Chapter 5

In the preceding chapter, I argued for a broader application of the quasi-generic term “bucolic poetry,” using the theory of bucolic fiction as a basis for extending the term to include Idyll 10, a poem not typically considered part of Theocritus’ bucolic corpus. In this chapter, I will again use bucolic fiction to push the boundaries of what bucolic poetry signifies, this time by applying the theory to Idyll 2. Unlike the previous chapter, in which I proposed that Idyll 10 represents a bucolic experiment, I will argue here that bucolic fiction is not exclusive to poems containing herdsmen but rather appears across generic types, unifying the Idylls to a greater degree and creating new perspectives for viewing the world of bucolic fiction. Following my argument for the bucolic nature of Idyll 2, I will note some of Theocritus’ important deviations from what might be considered standard bucolic form (especially in regard to its aesthetic qualities), which yield new insights into the themes of love and song. Finally, I will offer an interpretation of the poem from the standpoint of bucolic fiction.

Before proceeding with our discussion of Idyll 2, I hope that a few points of clarification will diminish the number of objections that could be raised against my argument. Perhaps most importantly, I emphasize that I am not making a generic claim for Idyll 2, which holds a secure position as an urban mime. Though no precise generic definition exists to describe bucolic, few would find it agreeable to reclassify Idyll 2 as such a poem. Rather than attempt to segregate Theocritus’ poems into generic groups, the importance of which is slight for the corpus as a whole, I am arguing that Idyll 2 is

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261 I concur with Gutzwiller, “Theocritean Poetry Books,” 121-123, and Pastoral Analogies, 3-4, who argues that Theocritus did not conceive of his poetry as a new literary genre. This view at least partially removes the perceived obstacle preventing close association between generically distinct Idylls. See also
bound to the bucolic Idylls by their consistent fictional presentations. Thus the term “bucolic fiction,” which I will apply to Idyll 2, has no generic significance but is so called only because the type of fiction to which it refers is most commonly found in the poems traditionally designated “bucolic.” In reading Idyll 2 in close connection with the bucolic Idylls, my goal is not to establish a new generic definition for bucolic poetry that reaches out to include poems already marked by generic affiliation but rather to pursue the intertextual opportunities that appear, as scholars have noted, when one looks past generic boundaries.

Similarities between Idylls 1 and 2 have long been noted and have even influenced the ordering of poems in the Vatican family of manuscripts. Modern scholars, too, have not been remiss in observing parallels between Idyll 2 and Theocritus’ bucolic poems. Despite this influence, serious discussion of Idyll 2’s relationship to the bucolic Idylls in general or Idyll 1 in particular remains infrequent. Van Sickle describes the matter well, identifying Idyll 2 as “closely linked by stylistic features, theme, and language to the bucolic poems, yet usually segregated from them by critics who expect rustic drama in this group rather than a portrayal of urban characters in an

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Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, 143-146; and Thomas, “Genre through Intertextuality,” 228-229 on this topic.

262 Similarly, Nita Krevans provides an excellent discussion on the grounds for a close association between an urban mime and the bucolic Idylls. See Krevans, “Urban Pastoral,” 119-129.


265 Stanzel, “Selbstzitate,” 212-213, 218 offers a beginning in this regard as he connects Idyll 2 specifically with Idylls 7 and 11 in addition to Idyll 1.
Generic classification has created a significant barrier between Theocritus’ “urban mimes” and his “bucolic poetry”; indeed, despite nearly universal agreement that Idyll 2 demonstrates significant bucolic traits, no scholar has closely and systematically compared the bucolic poems with Idyll 2 except Lawall, whose argument has had little influence on scholarship. Lawall provides the most thoughtful comparison of Idylls 1 and 2, arguing that the two poems form a diptych characterized by difference rather than similarity. Though I disagree with Lawall’s interpretation, he does correctly transcend generic classification in his approach to Theocritus’ poetry. I will also attempt to transcend genre in my argument here, noting first the qualities that allow Idyll 2 to lay claim to being bucolic and then offering a bucolic interpretation of the poem.

Turning now to Idyll 2, I will consider broadly some of its important features that are common to the traditional bucolic poems. Several features of Idyll 2 observed by scholars, including those characterized as “bucolic,” are associated with bucolic fiction. As an example, one may note that Idyll 2 maintains a distance between reader and character similar to that which Theocritus creates in his bucolic poems. The characters of these latter poems are of lower status than the reader and, given the isolated nature of their profession, the reader feels a sense of physical as well as social distance. Idyll 2

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267 Against this see Hommel, “Theokrits Pharmakeutriai,” 188-189.

268 Lawall, Coan Pastorals, 14-33.

269 Lawall, Coan Pastorals, 14.

270 Goldhill, Poet’s Voice, 262: “As the pastoral frame establishes and questions the distance between the world of the city and the world of the country, so in representing desire in this urban poem, there is a gap engendered between the (male) poet and his subject—a gap which helps produce the distance between the poem’s (unreliable) narrator and the readers’ understanding.”
also creates distance between reader and character through Simaetha’s gender, as is often the case in Herodas’ mimes, rather than her profession, though ultimately both qualities function as determinants of social status.\(^\text{271}\) In addition, as he does for most of the herdsmen of the bucolic poems, Theocritus reveals little information about Simaetha beyond her emotional state. One may safely conjecture from the presence of her servant Thestylis that Simaetha is free, though little else about her may be asserted with confidence. Theocritus envelops Simaetha in the same haze that surrounds the herdsmen of the bucolic poems, limiting details that would distract from his primary concern: the emotional state of his characters. In both cases, the reader learns about the character primarily through his or her reaction to love, which foregrounds the common emotional experience of love at the expense of verisimilitude, generalizing rather than particularizing love and its effects.

The contrast between generalization and particularization also relates to another point of contact between Idyll 2 and the bucolic poems. Specifically, the characters of both operate beyond the level of mimesis. Attempts have been made to extract information about daily life in Alexandria from Theocritus’ depiction of Simaetha,\(^\text{272}\) though Griffiths rightly notes the problems inherent in such arguments.\(^\text{273}\) An especially troublesome point has been the absence of Simaetha’s guardians, leading Gow to suggest

\(^{271}\) Simaetha’s apparent inclusion among the lower classes also distances her from the reader, though her precise status remains obscure and perhaps that her character is more a literary construction than mimetic representation.

\(^{272}\) Burton, Urban Mimes, 69; Dover Theocritus, 95-96; Lambert, “Desperate Simaetha,” 85.

that she may be an orphan.\textsuperscript{274} I would argue that such considerations—nowhere addressed in the text—unduly shift attention from the universal emotional experience of love to the experience of a particular character, the details of whose life have variously informed, and been explained by, our limited knowledge of daily life in the Hellenistic world. Griffiths hits upon exactly this notion of generalization in his discussion of Idyll 2, even comparing Simaetha to bucolic herdsmen: “Like [Theocritus’ herdsmen], Simaetha exemplifies human universality in a humble particularity … And though she starts out with the witchcraft that only women use, she finally demonstrates something far more universal about the capacity of the human soul to understand and heal itself.”\textsuperscript{275} Theocritus’ emphasis throughout Idyll 2 remains on Simaetha’s emotional state; only rarely does he dwell on details of her daily life. Issues of gender and social status remain, naturally, important to the poem and play an critical role in its interpretation,\textsuperscript{276} but they should not obscure the fictional nature of the poem and its similarities to Theocritus’ bucolic Idylls.

Much about Simaetha’s characterization recalls the herdsmen of the bucolic Idylls, but textual evidence also encourages the reader to draw comparisons between the city girl and her rustic counterparts. In one passage in particular beginning at 2.94, Theocritus subtly integrates programmatic bucolic terminology into Simaetha’s narrative.

\textsuperscript{274} Gow, \textit{Theocritus II}, 33; Burton, \textit{Urban Mimes}, 63 and 156; Griffiths, “Home Before Lunch,” 263-264. A fragment dated to approximately the second half of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C. offers interesting evidence on this issue. The poem presents a woman performing a \textit{komos} after being abandoned by her former lover. As she approaches the youth’s house with torch in hand, she states “\textit{νῦν δ’ αὖ ὀργισθώμεν, εἴθι δεῖ / καὶ διαλύσθαι. / Οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτο φίλους ἔχομεν / ὁ δὲ κρίνουσι τις ἄδικεῖ;} (37-40). The fragment demonstrates the difficulty in using literature as a source for social custom. Could Simaetha also have performed a traditional \textit{komos}? She instead inverts the typical custom by drawing her reluctant lover to her own house, but then much about Idyll 2 is characterized by inversion. Without additional evidence, any arguments regarding permissible activities for women must remain speculative.

\textsuperscript{275} Griffiths, “Home Before Lunch,” 267.

\textsuperscript{276} See especially Burton, \textit{Urban Mimes}, 63-69.
As Simaetha recounts the events that led to her suffering, she repeats in *oratio recta* (thereby reproducing the typical form of bucolic dialogue) the instructions she had previously given to Thestylis: χοῦτω τὰ δόλα τὸν ἀλαθέα μῦθον ἐλεξα· / Ἐι δ' ἄγε, Θεστυλί, μοι χαλεπᾶς νόσω εὑρέ τι μόχος· / πᾶσον ἔχει με τάλαιναν ὁ Μύνδιος· ἀλλὰ μολοῦσα / τήρησον ποτὶ τὰν Τιμαγήττοιο παλαίστραν· / τηνεὶ γὰρ φοιτή τηνεὶ δὲ οἱ ἄδυ καθῆσαι· / φραξεό μευ τὸν ἔρωθ' ὀθεν ἱκετο, πότνα Σελάνα. / κηπεὶ κά νιν ἕοντα μάθης μόνον, ἀσυχα νεῦσον, / κεῖφ' ὅτι “Σιμαίθα τυ καλεῖ”, καὶ ύφαγεο τείδε·. / ὡς ἐφόμαν, 2.94-102). Simaetha begins her instructions to her slave by confessing her lovesickness. She seeks a remedy for love (χαλεπᾶς νόσω…τι μόχος), a concern familiar from the bucolic Idylls, and thus sends her slave to keep watch for Delphis at the *palaestra*, which he often frequents. Simaetha’s phrasing (τηνεὶ δὲ οἱ ἄδυ καθῆσαι) significantly recalls deictic references that Theocritus’ herdsmen often make to locales deemed fit for singing.277 Her repetition of τηνεὶ, aside from its bucolic associations as a deictic term, draws attention to the *palaestra* as a significant locale. Her claim that Delphis enjoys sitting there evokes a scene of bucolic song that acquires a particularly bucolic character through ὀδυ, a word programmatically linked with song in Idyll 1. The bucolic scene comes together through Simaetha’s portrayal of Delphis as sitting, similar to the description of most shepherd-poets as they begin their songs.278 Deictic terms, sweetness, and sitting are all common features used to depict the place and manner in which a shepherd-poet sings, so that Simaetha’s description of the *palaestra* in effect reproduces the *locus* in which a herdsman sings.

277 Krevans, “Urban Pastoral,” 143, notes the bucolic quality of “emphatic repetitions” of deictic terms. Cf., for example, 1.21, 106; 3.38; 5.31-32.

278 Other rustic characters also sit while they sing. Cf. 3.38-39, 6.3-4, 7.86-89 and 11.17-18. Note also 1.106-107.
The notion of sitting gains significance when one considers that sitting is not the activity one would naturally associate with the *palaestra*. Indeed, that Simaetha attributes Delphis’ pleasure to *sitting* rather than *wrestling* seems initially rather odd, given his apparent enjoyment of physical activity (2.79-80, 114-115). In fact, Simaetha’s description is quite appropriate. The contrast between the physical activity undertaken at the *palaestra* and Delphis’ idleness reinforces the passage’s connection with *loca* for bucolic song, suggested already by τηνεί and ὀδύ, and may also suggest from a mimetic standpoint that Delphis, whose nature is fickle, enjoys the *palaestra* as much for the voyeuristic opportunities that it affords as for the actual activity of wrestling. An incongruity appears in the fact that Simaetha places Delphis, the beloved of the poem, in the role of shepherd-poet in her presentation of the *palaestra*. Simaetha, the lover and singer, ought to be the one to inhabit an urban *locus amoenus*. The transference of the bucolic *locus* to Delphis functions as part of a larger issue concerning the relationship between love and song that will be addressed below.

Following the refrain, Simaetha resumes instructing Thestylis at 2.100. When Thestylis observes that Delphis is alone, she is to nod silently and say that Simaetha summons him (2.100-101). These lines, like the one preceding, encompass several bucolic elements compacted into a small amount of text. That Delphis must be alone when Thestylis approaches him recalls the isolation of lovesick herdsmen as well as Simaetha’s own isolation (2.64). A more precise parallel for Delphis’ solitude may be found in beloveds such as Amaryllis in Idyll 3 or Galatea in Idyll 11, both of whom appear as solitary as their would-be lovers.
Delphis’ isolation would mean little, however, without additional bucolic indicators. The same line in which Simaetha orders Thestyli to find Delphis when he is alone also contains her order to attract his attention with a silent nod (ἀσυχία νεύσον, 2.100). Ἀσυχία, like ἀδύ, is significant for its programmatic use in bucolic contexts. Cairns notes that in Idyll 7, ἀσυχία and ἀλαθεία represent “the two literary ideals put forward as the most significant values of Theocritean poetry.”²⁷⁹ It may be relevant, then, that Simaetha initially describes her instructions to Thestyli as a true account (τὸν ἀλαθέα μῦθον, 2.94), which suggests that ἀσυχία and ἀλαθεία, both signifying programmatic concepts, serve to frame this section of text, highlighting it in conjunction with its presentation in oratio recta.

The final indication of a bucolic context comes at 2.101, where Thestyli is to tell Delphis “Σιμαιθα τυ καλεί.” In their commentaries on this poem, Gow and Dover both observe that the name “Simaetha” resembles in form names given to animals in the bucolic Idylls,²⁸⁰ but they do not elaborate on the significance of that observation, which only becomes apparent when considered with the passage as a whole. Simaetha’s name, like all the other bucolic indicators in 2.94-102, by itself cannot clearly evoke Theocritus’ bucolic poetry, but when added to the preceding evidence, the case for a bucolic context becomes quite strong.

Though the passage at 2.94-102 contains a number of bucolic elements densely set together within a small number of lines, those elements are on the whole not the familiar rustic images that immediately come to mind when one thinks of bucolic poetry.

²⁷⁹ Cairns, “Theocritus’ First Idyll,” 113 with his n. 97; Segal, “Space, Time, and Imagination,” 117 n.37; Serrao, Problemi, 67-68. See also Edquist, “Theocritean Otium.”

²⁸⁰ Gow, Theocritus II, ad 2.101; Dover, Theocritus, 95. See Lambert, “Desperate Simaetha,” 82, for the comic potential of Simaetha’s name.
With the exceptions of Simaetha’s name and intertextual references between 2.98 and the bucolic poems, the bucolic nature of 2.94-102 is owed to words and ideas expressed in the bucolic poems as important or programmatic. Theocritus does not use rustic trappings to merge rural and urban settings, but rather indicates that Idyll 2 will adhere to the same principles of poetry that he establishes for his bucolics. Thus, as critics have noted, Simaetha acts like a shepherd-poet in her lovesickness, and, as I have just argued, the poem employs the bucolics’ programmatic terminology, but the setting remains an urban one with only the briefest glance back toward the countryside where Theocritus set out his poetic approach. Though Idyll 2 is bucolic, as the terminology at 2.94-102 suggests, the poem’s bucolic claim resides in its espousal of the poetic program set out in Idylls 1 and 7 and not in its aesthetic qualities. Below I will consider Idyll 2 from the specific standpoint of bucolic fiction and I will address the significance of the poem’s unique setting and use of gender. First, however, in light of its marked differences from the traditional notion of “bucolic,” let me continue to examine the characteristics that qualify Idyll 2 as a bucolic poem.

Because the theory of bucolic fiction is predicated on the importance of love and song as central themes of Theocritus’ poetry, applying the theory to Idyll 2 requires consideration of the role of song in the poem. On this issue, similar to treatments of Idyll 2’s relationship to the bucolic Idylls, scholars have made important observations but have not pursued their significance. The importance of song is evident as Simaetha announces her intention to sing (2.11), as do many shepherd-poets. Theocritus also implies and instantiates song in several other ways, perhaps most noticeably through the refrain, to which Idyll 2 largely owes its frequent association with Theocritus’ bucolic poetry. The
refrain, however, is only the most noticeable of numerous indications of a musical presence in poem 2.

The importance of song becomes clear from the beginning of the poem, which opens in mediis rebus with Simaetha preparing to conduct her magic spell. Simaetha’s incantation represents an instantiation of song in the Idyll281—as her own words confirm (τίν γὰρ ποταείσομαι ἄσυχα, δαῖμον, 2.11)—though one of a much different nature than the reader usually encounters in the bucolics. The incantation, however, comprises only the first half of the poem; at line 64, Simaetha turns to Selene and presents what appears to be a narrative punctuated by a new refrain. The refrain serves as a specifically musical, not magical, link between Simaetha’s incantation and narrative.282 The two halves of the poem, incantation and narrative, create a diptych structure akin to that found in the majority of the bucolic Idylls.283 Idyll 2’s diptych, however, does not juxtapose the songs of two separate characters, but rather two distinct types of speech—spell and

281 Parry, “Magic and Songstress,” 43, describes Simaetha’s spell as “a form of poiesis.”

282 Dover, Theocritus, 94, observes that “The use of refrains, though not unknown in ancient magic, is not specially characteristic of it, and it is probable that its use by Theokritos here is the artistic equivalent, already favored in his bucolic poetry, of the monotonous repetitions of words and phrases which actually characterize magical spells.” Refrains present a difficult issue. Textual evidence suggests that they were common in dirges and marriage hymns, and scholars have argued for their use in folk songs, no examples of which survive. Accepting the prevalence of refrains in popular song, Theocritus’ use of the device seems artificial. The typical context for songs featuring refrains is communal, and the refrain is sung by a chorus, not by the singer alone (For dirges, cf. Il. 24.746, Eur. Elec. 112-114: 127-129, and Aesch. Pers. 663; 671. For marriage hymns, see Theoc. 18.58 and Cat. 62). Thyrsis, whose song is, in effect, a dirge, acts somewhat oddly as both singer and chorus (though cf. Wilamowitz, Textgeschichte, 148 who views the refrain as representative of a sound from the syrinx). Alexiou, Ritual Lament, 137 suggests that the Alexandrians used refrains nearly as stanzaic dividers, yet this seems insufficient to explain their appearance in Thyrsis’ song. The issue becomes more complicated with Idyll 2. As Dover suggests, refrains are not a common feature of magic and are rarely addressed in scholarship on Theocritus’ depiction of magic in Idyll 2 (on which see especially Teijeiro, “Il secondo Idillio,” and Graf, Magie dans l’Antiquité, 199-216), suggesting the refrain’s musical rather than magical potential. Given the poor state of the evidence, I am reluctant to attribute too specific a significance to the refrains of poems 1 and 2 but rather view them as attributing a performative quality to both of the poems, a result, perhaps, of the transition from oral to written literature.

283 Hutchinson, Hellenistic Poetry, 145.
narrative—from a single character. The two parts of the diptych are well distinguished, yet the refrain acts as a bridge between them, encouraging the reader, as with other diptychs, to compare and contrast the two songs.\textsuperscript{284} Indeed, the two parts of the diptych are frequently compared as scholars attempt to determine the efficacy of the spell,\textsuperscript{285} though the similarity of the Idyll’s structure to that typical of the bucolic poems has garnered less attention.

The narrative portion of Idyll 2’s diptych is highly suggestive of song even if the reader does not imagine Simaetha as singing her tale of woe to Selene. The refrain, of course, implies a musical quality, though its function on a mimetic level remains unclear. More subtly, Simaetha’s words at 2.10-11 (\textNh\alpha\lambda\alpha, \Sigma\epsilon\lambda\alpha\nu\alpha, \phi\alpha\iota\nu\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu\cdot \tau\iota\nu\ \gamma\alpha\rho\ p\omega\tau\alpha\epsilon\iota\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota\alpha\iota\alpha, \delta\alpha\iota\mu\omicron\nu\) indicate the presence of song throughout the entire poem, which persists as a single address to Selene-Hecate. The adverb \alpha\sigma\upsilon\chi\alpha, most likely referring to the murmuring tone with which Simaetha will pronounce her spell, also contains broader implications for the poem as a whole. Given the programmatic nature of \alpha\sigma\upsilon\chi\alpha, the phrase \pi\omicron\tau\alpha\epsilon\iota\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota\alpha\iota\iota\alpha \alpha\sigma\upsilon\chi\alpha conveys more than simply the manner in which Simaetha will cast her spell: it describes the nature of the entire poem, in which she is the only speaker. The poem as a whole thus becomes a song adhering to the poetic principles of Idyll 1, a notion reinforced by the presence of \alpha\sigma\upsilon\chi\alpha in both sections of the diptych (2.11, 2.100). A similar argument combining notions of song and poetry can be made for Theocritus’ use of \alpha\delta\upsilon.

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\textsuperscript{284} Dover, \textit{Theocritus}, 94 “This refrain reflects the formal influence of the spell on the narrative…”; Parry, “Magic and Songstress,” 47.

\textsuperscript{285} See Griffiths, “Poetry as \textit{Pharmakon},” 81-88.
I have already proposed that ἀδύ contains a programmatic force in its appearance at 2.98. The programmatic quality of ἀδύ is also bolstered by a second appearance of the word, though in this instance both occurrences are in the narrative section of the diptych. As Stanzel has observed, the phrase ἐψιθυρίσδομες ἀδύ (2.141) recalls the first line of Idyll 1 (ἀδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα). The latter passage refers to the sweet sound of a pine which is then compared to the sweetness of the goatherd’s piping, ultimately connecting sweetness and song in a passage that continues through the first eleven lines. The former passage serves the similar purpose of connecting sweetness with love and acquires a particularly programmatic force from its intertextual relationship with Idyll 1, specifically complementing it, for a brief moment, by equating and blending song and love—the central themes of bucolic fiction—through the depiction of both as “sweet.” A similar parity between love and song appears in Idyll 1, increasing the intertextual significance of the two passages. At 1.21-23, the goatherd describes the locus for Thyris’s performance, specifically noting the presence of a statue of Priapus, whose sexual association implies an amorous quality to the musical locale. To return to Idyll 2, the word ἐψιθυρίσδομες (2.141) also suggests the musical nature of Simaetha’s narrative by recalling her incantation. If the phrase ποταείσομαι ὁσυχα (2.11) is rightly taken to mean that Simaetha will murmur her spell, then the whispering quality of the verb ψιθυρίσδομαι imparts to the narrative a corresponding notion of song and connects Simaetha’s prior act of love with her present isolation.

Stanzel also connects the sweet whispering of 2.141 with 7.88-89 (τὸ δ’ ὑπὸ δρυσὶν ἦ ὑπὸ πεύκαις / ἀδὺ μελισσομένος κατεκέκλισο, θεῖε Κομάτα).287 Here, however, I believe that he has missed a closer parallel for the passage from Idyll 7, that of 2.98: τηνεὶ γὰρ φοιτῆ, τηνεὶ δὲ οἴ ἀδὺ καθῆσθαι. Above I proposed that 2.98 evokes bucolic poetry by depicting Delphis in terms frequently used to describe shepherd-poets preparing to sing. Just as ἀδὺ at 2.141 puts music and love on a par through its intertextual relationship with 1.1, so too ἀδὺ at 2.98 applies a description usually given to singers to Delphis, whose role is exclusively that of beloved. Theocritus once again merges love and song through intertextual references to his bucolic poetry and connects both themes with the programmatic concept of “sweetness.”

Though both intertexts serve as bridges between Idyll 2 and the bucolics and allow song a greater thematic presence in the Pharmakeutria, the intertext between 2.141 and 1.1 deserves more consideration. When Simaetha mentions her “sweet whisperings,” she is describing something unique in Theocritus’ bucolic poetry: a forlorn lover’s sexual encounter with her desired beloved. Her description of the event is prefaced by regret, yet reflects a brief moment of fulfilled desire: καὶ ταχὺ χρῶς ἐπὶ χρωτὶ πεπαίνετο, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα / θερμότερ’ ἦς ἡ πρόσθε, καὶ ἐφιθυρύσδομες ἀδύ. / ὡς καὶ τοι μὴ μακρὰ φίλα θρυλέοιμι Σελάνα, / ἐπράχθη τὸ μέγιστα καὶ ἐς πόθον ἠνθομες ἅμω (2.140-143). The progression from tactile sensations to increased warmth culminates in sweet whisperings and fulfillment of desire. Given the strong association between sweetness and song at 1.1-11, Theocritus appears to make an important connection between song and love. The friendly competition of 1.1-11 is reflected in the erotic

“competition” that Simaetha describes at 2.140-143. Thyrsis and the goatherd attempt to elicit songs from each other just as Delphis and Simaetha rely on the other to fulfill their mutual desire. The concept of “sweetness” becomes important as qualifying both song and love; “sweet” song and the “sweet” whispers of love fulfill desire. The cause of Simaetha’s despair is not that her love has gone utterly unfulfilled, but that her fulfillment, like Thyrsis’ song (1.61-63), is only ephemeral. Love is the subject of song in bucolic poetry as well as the subject of Simaetha’s spell and narrative in Idyll 2, but through the intertext at 2.141 Theocritus affords the reader a new view of the relationship between the two themes. Simaetha’s description of love indicates a similarity between musical (i.e. poetic) and erotic satisfaction and implies also a similarity between the pain resulting from unfulfilled artistic and erotic desire. Line 2.98 supports this view in that, as I argued above, Simaetha describes Delphis in terms befitting a shepherd-poet, blending erotic and artistic desire into a single figure.

To return to the question of song’s presence in Idyll 2, a final point remains for consideration. In the poem’s final lines, Simaetha bids Selene farewell: χαίρε, Σελαναία λιπαρόθρονε, χαίρετε δ’ ἄλλοι / ἀστέρες, εὐκάλοιο κατ’ ἀντυγα Νυκτος ὑπαδῷ (2.165-166). The Idyll concludes with a hymnic formula that recalls the endings of the Homeric Hymns and Idyll 1. The clearly hymnic quality of lines 165-166 demonstrates once again that song has an important, though perhaps not particularly mimetic, presence in the Idyll. Lambert rightly contrasts the hymnic nature of Idyll 2’s

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288 It is worth noting that Idyll 1 also relates love and song. The poem’s juxtaposition of the goatherd’s cup with Thyrsis’ song contextualizes songs—and poetry—as objects of art, implying the relationship between song and love as one akin to that between object and subject of art.

ending with manner of dismissal typically found in magical formulae. Simaetha’s spell has become a song. Idyll 2 features love as a prominent theme, but song, too, serves an important thematic function, though from a mimetic standpoint it appears almost absent from the poem. Theocritus has nevertheless incorporated numerous references to song throughout the Idyll, giving it close structural and thematic affiliations with his bucolic poetry. Having established Idyll 2’s claim as a bucolic poem, a brief consideration of the significance of the poem’s deviation from typical bucolic practice is in order and will preface our interpretation of the Idyll in light of its bucolic features.

Though I have argued that the entirety of Idyll 2 demonstrates strong bucolic tendencies, its unique aspects cannot go without comment. Two of the primary obstacles to regarding Idyll 2 as a bucolic poem are its clearly urban setting and its depiction of a woman as frustrated lover. Though they do not exclude Idyll 2 from consideration as a bucolic poem, these differences are indicative of the new perspective on love and song that the poem provides through its unique presentation of bucolic form and themes. The principles of bucolic poetry, especially those belonging to bucolic fiction, remain intact—song and love both feature prominently in the poem, a lover seeks an unattainable beloved known only to the reader through the lover’s description, a diptych structure is clearly present in the poem—yet Theocritus has inverted the usual location of the poem and the gender of the lover. Instead of taking place in a *locus amoenus* far from the city, Idyll 2 takes place within the city, most likely in Simaetha’s own house. Simaetha, too, as a woman of unknown status instead of a male herdsman, serves to differentiate Idyll 2

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291 White, *Studies in Theocritus*, 17-20, argues that the entire poem takes place within Simaetha’s house, removing the possibility of even a natural, outdoor setting.
from the rest of the bucolic corpus, though the distance between character and reader typically owed to the shepherd’s rustic milieu is facilitated instead by Simaetha’s gender, as I argued above. That is not to suggest an exclusively practical role for gender in the poem. On the contrary, the changes that Theocritus has made to his bucolic formula are both intentional and significant for any interpretive approach.

Gender and setting together afford opportunities for variation of bucolic norms, particularly in allowing Theocritus to depict song in the form of a magical rite instead of a shepherd’s song. The incantation casts a different light on song, lending it an aggressive, violent quality not found in the countryside even in the hostile context of Idyll 5. Simaetha attempts to bind Delphis and draw him to her house, and, should she fail and her pain continue, threatens that he will knock upon the gate of Hades (2.160). This violent image of her beloved’s death represents another bucolic inversion within the initial gender inversion. Simaetha, as lover, threatens her beloved with physical harm, a striking contrast to the lover’s frequent threats of self-inflicted pain or suicide.

Simaetha’s relationship with her beloved, too, deviates from the normal bucolic paradigm. According to Simaetha, her bid for Delphis’ affection meets with initial success in the form of a previous sexual encounter with her beloved. Nowhere else in the bucolic poems does a lover make such a claim about the beloved, the significance of which I have already touched on. Simaetha’s love affair with Delphis changes the

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292 The issue of gender and magic is a difficult one. While epigraphic and papyrological evidence suggests that magic was the province of men (See Graf, *Magie dans l’Antiquité*, 211), literary representations almost universally depict women as magicians. I believe that Theocritus follows the literary tradition in associating women with magical rites, particularly Sophron whom, according to the scholiast, Theocritus imitated in Idyll 2 (Σ ad arg. A).

293 Cf. 1.138-140; 3.25-26, 52-54; 11.70-71. The invective quality of Simichidas’ song, however, does offer something of a parallel.

294 The closest parallel is at 4.58-61.
reader’s perspective of the unattainable beloved of bucolic poetry from completely unavailable to fickle. Idyll 2 thus shifts its focus from attaining to maintaining love, from amatory fulfillment as an event to a process. Only by crafting a female character can Theocritus effectively explore the impermanence of love, the weight of which becomes apparent at lines 2.40-41: ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τὴν πᾶσα καταίθομαι ὅσ μὲ τάλαιναν ἀντὶ γυναικὸς ἔθηκε κακὰν καὶ ἂπαρθένον ἤμεν. Simaetha loves Delphis as any bucolic lover does his beloved; yet, as scholars often note, her previous sexual encounter and subsequent abandonment have left her in a precarious social position. The social concerns that arise from being neither married nor a virgin function on a mimetic level but also heighten the dangerous side of love portrayed throughout the poem. Should his beloved sleep with and then abandon him, a male shepherd would certainly lament his loss, but his social standing would suffer no ill effects. One might think of the lovers of Roman elegy in this regard. The shift from male poet in the field to female poet in the city is not made idly but provides a means for exploring the dangerous and destructive side of love, a side not easily found in the securitas of the shady spring.

Idyll 2 may be considered unique for its beloved as well as its lover. Delphis plays the role of Simaetha’s beloved but seems better to fit the role of a bucolic lover. He not only accedes to his lover’s desires before abandoning her, he also claims that he would have pursued her, going so far as to perform a komos, had she not summoned him (2.114-128). Delphis does show signs of suffering from love elsewhere, however, when he is reported to have repeatedly toasted the new object of his affection and left garlands

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295 Though Dover, *Theocritus*, 96, may hit upon a breakdown in mimesis in questioning why Simaetha shows no concern about pregnancy.

296 Segal, “Simaetha and the lynx,” 81, describes Delphis’ Eros as “an amoral force heedless of social and moral order, constancy, or tenderness, cruelly shattering lives.”
at his or her door (2.151-153). The bucolic terminology and imagery of 2.98, which placed Delphis in the role of a shepherd-poet preparing to sing, thus seem less jarring, though they point to a general confusion of roles in the poem. Simaetha ought to be the unavailable beloved but has taken on the role of lover. The notion that Idyll 2 effects a social role reversal is not new, though Simaetha and Delphis have not, to my knowledge, been interpreted as enacting a bucolic role reversal. The bucolic role reversal creates the opportunity for the sexual encounter that distinguishes Idyll 2’s presentation of love and allows Theocritus to bridge the themes of love and song by equating the sweetness of their momentary fulfillment. The *Pharmakeutria* follows the principles to which Theocritus’ bucolic poems adhere but takes advantage of its differences—signified most clearly by its urban setting—to explore the bucolic world of song and love in new ways.

Gender and setting are the most apparent inversions of typical bucolic form, but others also exist. Consideration of Idyll 2’s structure will also demonstrate how subtle changes to previously noted bucolic formulae—if such a term may be used—invite changes in the reader’s approach to the poem. The diptych structure of the poem certainly follows a familiar bucolic form, yet it too unfolds in a unique manner. Instead of juxtaposing songs from two separate characters, the diptych of Idyll 2 features two songs from a single character, combining the diptych structure of poems such as 1, 5, 6, 7, and 10 with the solo performances of isolated lovers such as occur in Idylls 3 and 11. Herein lies the key to the impression that Simaetha undergoes a psychological development;\textsuperscript{297} instead of comparing the perspectives of two separate characters, Idyll 2 presents two views of its single character, Simaetha. Thus the juxtaposition of songs that

in the bucolic poems helps define separate characters appears to demonstrate the progression of Simaetha’s psychological state. Whether such a progression actually occurs will be explored below as we consider in detail the two sections of the diptych.

The method of examination that I will employ—comparing the “wings” of the diptych—has been a frequent approach to scholarly considerations of Idyll 2, but my approach will be more expansive. I will look not only at Simaetha herself and her emotional and psychological reactions to love, but also at love and song as bucolic themes—especially in regard to their decidedly darker depiction in the poem—and other terms that either form intertexts with Theocritus’ bucolic poems or have a programmatic function in those poems. This broadened approach will reveal that Idyll 2’s complexity is not limited to its lovelorn protagonist.

Perhaps the best place to begin our analysis of Idyll 2 is with one of its most frequently noted features: ring composition. The considerable number of repeated words and images found at the poem’s end has long been noted, usually as evidence of Simaetha’s psychological state. The issue of whether Simaetha finds some relief at the poem’s conclusion is divided between those who argue that Simaetha regains control of her passion and those who believe she remains ruled by it.\(^{298}\) The scholarly discussion, however, has in general neglected the full extent of the ring.\(^{299}\) Scholars readily note that Simaetha renews her threat of magic against Delphis and even goes so far as to threaten his life, though the significance of her final farewell (χαίρε, Σελαναία λιπαρόθρονε, χαίρετε δ’ ἄλλοι / ἀστέρες, εὐκάλοιο κατ’ ἄντυγα Νυκτός ὀπαδοί, 2.165-166) is

\(^{298}\) For a summary of scholarly views on this issue, see Goldhill, *Poet’s Voice*, 268-269.

\(^{299}\) See Segal, “Time, Space, and Imagination,” 115 n. 33 for a concise list of intratexts between the Idyll’s beginning and end.
only infrequently mentioned as part of the ring composition. Not only do Simaetha’s threats recall her incantation, her farewell to Selene does as well, though differences between the hymnic intratexts point to different interpretive possibilities in terms of Simaetha’s characterization. I agree, then, with Segal that Simaetha’s final words contain an ambiguity that prevents definitive interpretation and that whether she finds some semblance of peace cannot be categorically asserted given the vague nature of her words. I would like, however, to offer a few additional points pertinent to the issue of characterization, but with significance beyond the determination of Simaetha’s emotional state.

To return to Simaetha’s final words, as has been observed, the occurrences of χαὶρε and Σελαναια at 2.165 recall Simaetha’s initial greeting to Selene earlier in the Idyll (Σελάνας, 2.10; χαὶρ 2.14). It is not surprising that Theocritus should close the poem with such a formula after employing it to initiate the magical rite, though the relationship between the two addresses to the goddess runs deeper than a mere formulaic greeting. Following her address to Selene at 2.10, Simaetha calls upon Hecate: χαὶρ’, Ἐκάτα δασπλῆτι, καὶ ἐς τέλος ἁμμιν ὀποδει (2.14). Simaetha asks Hecate to attend her until she attains the desired result of her spell, which she does in fact achieve, though it occurs through her recollection of the event rather than a new visit from Delphis. By the poem’s end, the goddess has shed her identity as Hecate in favor of Selene, but she nevertheless remains present throughout the Idyll. Theocritus seems to

300 Segal, “Time, Space, and Imagination,” 115 n. 33; Hutchinson, Hellenistic Poetry, 153; and Parry, “Magic and Songstress,” 45, note the intratext, though they do not discuss its significance in terms of Simaetha’s emotional progression.

301 Segal, “Time, Space, and Imagination,” 117-118.

302 See Gow, Theocritus II, ad 2.14.
emphasize this connection between the τέλος of the spell and that of the poem through an intratext between 2.14 and the last line of the poem: ἀστέρες, εὐκάλοιο κατ’ ἀντυγα Νυκτὸς ὀπαδοί (2.166). The related words ὀπάδει (2.14) and ὀπαδοί (2.166), which fall in identical line positions, create a specific connection between the two invocations.

In terms of characterization, the ring demonstrates elements of continuity and contrast that confound attempts to assert a single meaning for the poem. The frightful Hecate of 2.14 has yielded to the bright Selene of 2.166, yet the attendants of night remind the reader that Hecate was invited to attend Simaetha throughout her incantation, which seems to include the narrative. Of equal importance, however, is the significance that the intertext holds for the role of song in the poem. Griffiths argues for the efficacy of song as a pharmakon for love,\(^{303}\) and so correctly identifies song’s thematic presence in the poem. Additionally, the intratext observed above between 2.14 and 2.166 implies that the poem’s end brings with it the τέλος of Simaetha’s spell through the similarity between ὀπάδει and ὀπαδοί and the hymnic opening and closing that frames the poem, presenting it as nearly a hymn to Selene. We have already noted the continuity between spell and narrative that occurs despite the poem’s distinctly diptych form. Spell and song thus begin to encroach upon each other, and the question shifts from the efficacy of magic to that of song (and poetry), a notion that will be explored further below as we look beyond ring composition toward a larger comparison of the diptychs.

I have characterized the two sections of Idyll 2’s diptych as a spell followed by a narrative. The spell is in essence a lengthy exposition of Simaetha’s desire, while her narrative, which contains a strong suggestion of song, offers an unexpected fulfillment of

\(^{303}\) Griffiths, “Home Before Lunch,” 82.
that desire. As the refrain indicates, Simaetha wants to draw Delphis back to her house. Her narrative accomplishes this in a metaphorical sense through her memory of Delphis’ first visit—though this is not the manner in which Simaetha desires Delphis’ return, and, on a mimetic level, it is no return at all. Thus Simaetha, still desiring her beloved, returns to magical threats after her narrative. Putting mimesis aside, however, one aspect of the relationship between sections of the diptych is the tension between desire and fulfillment and, in a related sense, the contrast between the power of magic and the power of poetry: Simaetha’s narrative succeeds where her spell fails. Delphis’ return, enacted in Simaetha’s musical narrative rather than her spell, occurs in a manner similar to Adonis’ return in the hymn of Idyll 15 or Daphnis’ ongoing existence in rustic song.

A contrast between magic and poetic memory gains some support from the poem’s numerous references to forgetfulness, which appears to be a significant concept. Simaetha wishes Delphis to forget the most recent object of his affection just as Theseus forgot Ariadne (2.45–46), and she later wonders if Delphis has forgotten her (2.158). Similarly, at 2.5, she states that Delphis does not know whether she is alive or dead. Simaetha’s concerns about Delphis’ forgetfulness are ironic, yet significant in relation to Simaetha’s own memory (i.e. her narrative), which stands out in contrast to Delphis’ forgetfulness and, intertextually, to images of death. In Idyll 1, the goatherd describes Hades as “causing forgetfulness” and warns Thyrsis that he will not be able to sing his song there (1.63). Adonis, too, is brought back from Hades temporarily through the singer’s hymn. Part of the irony of Idyll 2, then, is Simaetha’s misuse of song. She seeks spells to cause Delphis to forget his most recent pursuit, but she does not recognize song’s potential to renew her own passion. Unable to force Delphis’ physical return,
Simaetha focuses on an ineffectual spell and neglects the power of her poetic memory as evidenced by the ring composition. Her return to magical threats before the poem ends recalls her initial enchantment but functions as more than an artistic device. Simaetha’s recollection of Delphis has renewed the events that caused her recourse to magic in the first place, and rather than curing her has inflamed her passion and frustration all over again. Simaetha’s spell and narrative represent two different manifestations of song, though in comparing the two it becomes clear that the narrative and not the spell is the more effective performance.

I do not mean to suggest that song attracts beloveds in bucolic poetry or in Idyll 2, nor would I equate Simaetha’s narrative with an actual, physical return of Delphis. Rather, I believe that through the contrast between the two diptychs, which is effectively a contrast between Simaetha’s unsuccessful attempt to force Delphis’ physical return and her success in eliciting a metaphorical return in her song, Theocritus draws attention to the question of how song relates to its subject. Delphis is not physically present in Simaetha’s narrative, yet her song revives her passion such that she renews her thoughts of violence and magic. Indeed, we may in this context recall the intertext between 1.141 (ἐφιθυρίοδομές ἀδύ) and 1.1, which effects a blending of song and love. This blending equates poetic and erotic fulfillment, as I proposed above, and also suggests the power of Simaetha’s song to enact her previous erotic experience. The relationship between song and love, between art and its subject, is prevalent throughout the bucolics and, as often occurs in the *Idylls*, raises questions rather than provides answers. Let us continue to consider the questions presented by Idyll 2’s diptych.

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304 Segal, “Time, Space, Imagination,” 119, notes that Simaetha’s assertion that she will endure (ὑπέστων) as she had previously may indicate her continued pain and not relief.
The contrast between spell as desire and narrative as temporary fulfillment gains additional support from specific verbal links between the diptychs. As the poem opens, Simaetha instructs Thestylos to set some purple wool around a bowl as part of her binding ritual (στέψων τὰν κελέβαν φοινικέω οἶος ἀώτας / ὡς τὸν ἐμὸν βαρὺν εὖντα φίλου καταδήσομαι ἄνδρα, 2.2-3). The image of the bowl wearing the wool like a garland finds a parallel in Delphis’ claim that he would have performed a komos wearing a garland of poplar bound with purple straps had Simaetha not anticipated him: κρατὶ δ’ ἐχων λεύκαν, Ἡρακλέος ἑρὸν ἔρνος, / πάντοθι πορφυρέασι περὶ ζωστραισιν ἐλικτάν, 2.121-122. The context of the two passages reveals the contrast between the wings of the diptych. The garlanded bowl serves as part of the ritual and immediately precedes the revelation that Simaetha plans to bind Delphis with magic. In the narrative section, Delphis claims that he would have worn a purple garland while voluntarily seeking Simaetha out. Simaetha’s musical narrative, not her incantation, succeeds in eliciting Delphis’ presence. The question of whether Delphis may be trusted in his claim to have sought Simaetha out is certainly valid, though it may be confined to a mimetic interpretation. Simaetha’s poetic memory allows Delphis to speak once more in his own words, confirming the efficacy of her narrative over her incantation. I argued above that Simaetha’s narrative conveys the impression of being musical or poetic, and an intertext between Idyll 1 and the passage currently under discussion strengthens that impression. The phrase πορφυρέασι περὶ ζωστραισιν ἐλικτάν at line 122 recalls Daphnis’ description of his syrinx in Idyll 1: ἐκ κηρῶν σύριγγα καλὸν περὶ χεῖλος ἐλικτάν / ἃ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑπ’ Ἐρωτός ἐσ’ Ἀιδαν ἐλκομαι ἰδη (1.129-130). In the latter passage, Daphnis surrenders his syrinx to Pan because he is being drawn to Hades, implicitly
linking death with an absence of song. Delphis, whose preparations for a would-be komos recall the description of Daphnis’ syrinx and further suggest his potential as a bucolic lover, is drawn back into Simaetha’s life—not physically, but through her song. Thus Theocritus consistently associates death and forgetfulness with an absence of song and implies the importance of song for present and future existence.

Delphis’ proposed komos is suggestive of more than simply Theocritus’ view of song as he also includes references to his patrons, the Ptolemies. Part of the reference coincides with the intertext at 2.121-122, which only emphasizes the issue of song’s portrayal in the Idyll. The references are all of a mythological type. Delphis claims that he would have come to Simaetha bearing the apples of Dionysus and wearing a garland of poplar, Heracles’ tree. Both Dionysus and Heracles hold significant symbolic meaning for Ptolemaic rule as the gods from whom the Ptolemies traced their descent. The phrase Ἡρακλέος ἱερὸν ἔρνος (2.121), applied to the poplar, is particularly noteworthy as it evokes the language of genealogy, reminding the reader of Ptolemy’s descent. The purple bands with which Delphis will bind his garland suggest royalty in addition to recalling the purple wool that Simaetha uses to gird her bowl. Another Ptolemaic reference occurs soon after at 2.130, when Delphis observes that he owes thanks first to Aphrodite, the goddess closely associated with Berenice and, through the Adonia, Arsinoe.

Theocritus has placed in close proximity three deities of considerable symbolic value to the Ptolemies. Heracles, in particular, provides a nuanced reference as the genealogical association implied by Ἡρακλέος ἱερὸν ἔρνος is heightened when compared with the famously esoteric 7.43-44 (ἐσσί / πᾶν ἐπ’ ἀλαθείᾳ πεπλασμένον ἐκ

Anyone who traced their lineage back to Heracles could trace it back even farther to Zeus, suggesting a similar significance for 7.43-44 and 2.121 and connecting Ptolemy with the poetic concept of ὀλλάθεια. Heracles too at 2.121 connects Ptolemy with Theocritus’ poetics by describing the garland made from Heracles’ tree and bound with regal colored straps in a phrase intertextually linked with the programmatic description of Daphnis’ syrinx at 1.129. The importance of the Ptolemies to Theocritus’ poetry becomes more explicit at 2.130 as Delphis thanks Aphrodite, the reason for which becomes clear only in the following line.

Poetry and politics come together at 2.120-122 in a suggestive way. Theocritus offers a nod toward his royal patrons, inserting them into the larger issue of poetry’s influence over its subject. The mythological references to Ptolemy connect him to Delphis’ would-be komos, which he claims he would have performed had he not been anticipated by Simaetha. Delphis would seem a poor character to align with the Ptolemies in light of his disregard for Simaetha, but the context of the komos implies some important similarities. Delphis acts of his own volition and is unable to be charmed by Simaetha’s magic. The Ptolemies, by implication, are just as self-willed, their patronage coming not from charms, but as a reward for poetic skill. Perhaps a suggestion of fickleness may be inferred from their association with Delphis.

Idyll 2 is a masterpiece of psychological complexity that brilliantly incorporates inter- and intratextual references in presenting Simaetha’s confused emotional state. I hope that I have fruitfully demonstrated the wealth of meaning beneath the psychological portrait Theocritus so artfully creates. The characterization of Theocritus’ bucolic and urban poems as mimes emphasizes his skillful representation of human experience, but it
can also mislead inasmuch as the term obscures the depth of contemporary issues that Theocritus addresses, especially the role of the poet. This is the case for the traditional bucolic poems, but it is true too of poems such as Idyll 10 and, as I have argued, Idyll 2.
Conclusion

In the course of this work, I have applied the theory of bucolic fiction to a variety of Idylls, and it is my hope that I have provided a new perspective from which to view the poems. Although my approach has focused on close readings of selected poems, of greater importance than those individual analyses is their collective weight in demonstrating Theocritus’ consistency in crafting his poetry. This quality of Theocritus’ work is of considerable importance for understanding the nuances of his poetry, yet it has not been fully appreciated.

Several issues hinder viewing the Idylls as closely connected poems. One such issue is that no evidence exists to suggest that Theocritus organized his poems into a single collection. If, as many scholars believe, the poems circulated independently, one may naturally assume a minimal amount of interaction between the poems. The question of genre, however, especially in regard to the bucolic poems, has arguably been most instrumental in leading scholars to compartmentalize the Idylls. While understanding of bucolic poetry has benefited greatly from such categorization, Theocritus’ poetry as a whole has suffered, appearing to offer generic set pieces rather than a cohesive poetic outlook. Not even Theocritus’ overt references to a poetic program have had a significant impact beyond analyses of the bucolic poems—instead, they are more often used to show Theocritus’ adherence to Callimachus’ views on poetry.

Theocritus’ poetic program may be dependent upon Callimachean principles, but the consistency of the application of those principles—not only in the bucolic poems, where most overt poetic references are located, but elsewhere as well—connects the Idylls by virtue of the poetic ideals they demonstrate. Bucolic fiction is not a poetic
program, but it too occurs with a consistency that transcends generic boundaries, revealing that Theocritus’ corpus is not as disparate as is often assumed. I have attempted to demonstrate as much in this work, but the modesty of its scope has fallen far short of exhausting bucolic fiction’s full potential as a unifying aspect of Theocritus’ poetry. Although, as noted in earlier discussions, any assertion of an authorially intended unity for the corpus would involve addressing longstanding problems in Theocritean studies, I hope I have at least demonstrated the value of an approach to the Idylls that accepts the possibility of intertextual relationships between the poems and that may guide subsequent studies. In a similar vein, I also hope that the inclusive nature of bucolic fiction may shed light on the generic status of the bucolic poems by providing a new perspective from which to address the problem of what constitutes bucolic poetry.

Many poems have yet to be examined from the standpoint of bucolic fiction or even, more generally, in terms of their relation to other Idylls. My analyses offered new interpretations for some individual poems but neglected a more comprehensive form of unity. In chapter 3, for example, I argued for an intertextual relationship between Idylls 1 and 15, noting the similarity of the narratives involving the two characters. The intertextual complexity of these two poems can be increased, however, to include Idyll 13. As is true of Daphnis and Adonis, death, water, grief, and immortality all feature in Hylas’ death, suggesting their importance in the formation of a complicated motif. Assertion of a motif implies intention, and if a motif, such as the one depicting young beloveds facing the prospect of immortality after a watery death, is present in the Idylls across a variety of generic types, one must consider first the purpose of the motif and what it may represent and then the larger issue of what such a connection across multiple,
generically varied Idyls suggests about the necessity of a comparative approach to the corpus. In regard to the latter issue, a careful, measured approach that *argumenti causa* treats the Idylls as a collection has the potential to open many of the poems to new avenues of interpretation. The former issue, however, raises another point about Theocritean studies that deserves consideration.

Though not every motif need convey hidden significance, a motif of the sort that I proposed above—one that contains a high degree of specificity and appears across poems of varied generic affiliation—may well be more than a mere narrative pattern. The problem that arises is to determine the presence and significance of symbolism in Theocritus’ poetry. The syrinx, widely agreed upon as representing bucolic poetry, offers one example of Theocritus’ use of a symbol in the Idylls, but the potential for symbolic representation exists throughout the corpus, as I have attempted to show by arguing that the Ptolemies often stand behind Theocritus’ presentation of divinities. I do not mean to suggest that scholars have neglected Theocritus’ imagery in their analyses; rather, such analyses are often limited to the confines of the poem that contains the image under consideration.

As I have attempted to demonstrate in this work, I believe future studies of Theocritus’ poetry would benefit greatly from approaches that indulge in some reasonable speculation. Scholarly consideration of Theocritus is inhibited by sizeable gaps in knowledge about contemporary history and society. Because of this lack of information, it is convenient to regard contemporary referents, such as the Ptolemies, in an off-handed manner that acknowledges the importance and likelihood that Theocritus refers to them at particular points in his Idylls but that does not seriously pursue such
referents because of their necessarily speculative nature. The result, I believe, is a view of Theocritus no less artificial than one that engages directly in such speculation.

Griffiths offers a bold exception to the general trend in scholarship, presenting textual emendations based on the type of poet he believes Theocritus to have been. Griffiths’ approach is extreme in that his arguments for emendation are primarily based in his desire to reconcile the text with his own opinion of Theocritus as a poet, but his method nevertheless has value. A more moderate version of such a method would recognize, for instance, the importance of the Ptolemies to Idylls such as 14, 15, and 17 and would reasonably conclude that more subtle political references are likely integrated into other poems, including the apparently apolitical bucolics, and would assert that scholars have a better chance of fully appreciating the Idylls by interpreting them based on the tentative admittance of such references rather than dismissing them altogether for lack of evidence.

Many options are available to the future of Theocritean studies. Theocritus’ Idylls abound in both nuance and difficulty, qualities that together make the Idylls a worthy subject for ongoing examination. As new approaches continue to appear, scholars will gain new insight into Theocritus’ poems, if not into the author himself. I have attempted to present one such approach, the theory of bucolic fiction, in order to shed light on some of Theocritus’ poems and to offer an additional perspective from which to view the Idylls. As with past approaches, however, bucolic fiction can only serve as one lens with which to examine the impressive complexity of Theocritean poetry.

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