

## DRAMATIC DIALOGUE IN THEOCRITUS

The *Idylls* of Theocritus are not mini-dramas, tiny examples of theatrical art. Surely Rosenmeyer is correct when he argues that „pastoral lyric involves little action, no development, no dramatic peripety“<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless it can be shown that Theocritus manipulates his vocabulary according to the requirements of theme and character. This paper examines Theocritus' use of dialogue in the conversational *Idylls*, wherein his use of proverbs, his selection of vocabulary, his quality of humor create distinct pastoral characters. Herein I direct my attention to *Idylls* IV, V, X, and XIV.

In *Idyll* IV we meet Battus the goatherd and the cowherd Corydon who is tending the herd of Aegon. Goatherds are usually the bottom of the social structure of pastoral<sup>2</sup> and Battus is no exception. His speech is filled with colloquial expressions, pithy sayings are sprinkled liberally among his lines.<sup>3</sup> He taunts and mocks every subject introduced<sup>4</sup>. Battus is not purely a „wag“, however, nor is he „sentimental“ in contrast to a „realistic“ Corydon<sup>5</sup>. The goatherd's seeming scorn and extravagant phrases mask a perceptive mind. It is he who is the realist behind the banter, he knows what are the true values of the pastoral life<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric*, (University of California Press, 1969), p. 11 (Henceforth G. C.).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. A. Van Groningen, „Quelques Problèmes de la Poésie Bucolique Grecque“, *Mnemosyne* ser. 4, XI, (1958) p. 313, „La pastorale connaît plusieurs espèces de gardiens de troupeaux... Il existe une véritable hiérarchie. En gradation descendante nous rencontrons successivement le bouvier, le berger, le chevrier.“ In *Idyll* V, however, Lacon the shepherd is of lower stature and is also a pedersat.

<sup>3</sup> Rosenmeyer, G. C. pp. 28—29 calls this use of maxims, etc., „Hesiodic“ and not part of true pastoral poetry. But in *Idylls* IV, V, and X proverbs are very common. In XIV, a mime, they also appear, but are identified as such, *v. infra*, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Ulrich Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes in Theokrits Hiertengedichten*, Spudasmata, XXII (1969), p. 46, „Er widerspricht, spottet, streitet, er will seine Überlegenheit über Korydon zur Schau stellen.“ (Henceforth *Kunst*).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. R. Lattimore, „Battus in Theocritus' Fourth *Idyll*“, *Greek-Roman-Byzantine Studies* XIV (1973) pp. 320—21. (Henceforth „Battus“)

<sup>6</sup> While Lattimore's question („Battus“, 321)<sup>7</sup>, „Is Battus a herdman?“ and his reasons for doubting the fact force one to take another look at the problem, I think we can assume he is to be considered a goatherd. Surely T. is putting forth his own artistic views in the character of Battus, but the goatherd has been created as a genuine rustic.

From his opening line Battus uses the more colorful speech. He addresses Corydon with the familiar *ὦ*. He endows the ordinary situation — the meeting of two herdsmen in a pleasant pasture — with the diction of the tragic stage: While the herdsman has gone off and disappeared (5),<sup>8</sup> the cows will surely go to Hades, φεῦ, φεῦ (26). At once he suggests that Corydon is cheating on the master by milking the herd on the sly. He reacts to Corydon's report that Aegon has gone off to Olympia with three successive phrases we can consider colloquial. καὶ πόνα τῆνος ἔλαιον ἐν δρυλαμοῖσιν δπάπει: (7) he asks. While rubbing down with olive oil was a constant practice, the use of ἔλαιον for gymnastic events becomes common only after Theocritus<sup>9</sup>. To Corydon's statement that Aegon is said to rival Heracles in strength, Battus replies with scorn. „And my mother used to say I am as strong as Polydeuces (9)“<sup>10</sup>. Battus' final sally remains obscure, „Milon might as well persuade the wolves to run wild (11).“ Apparently this is an insinuation that the sheep Aegon has taken as rations will achieve little more for the athlete than if devoured by wolves<sup>11</sup>.

When the cowherd complains that the herd misses its master, Battus agrees that it looks terrible. To describe the calf he puts forth the old adage that it must feed on dewdrops like the cicada (16)<sup>12</sup>. He next turns his barbed tongue against the sons of Lamprides, whom he hopes may sacrifice a similary scrawny bull to Hera at the local festival: bad times will thus result for the foolish deme<sup>13</sup>.

His moods are as variable as his language. When Corydon's „song“ mentions Amaryllis, the goatherd laments her demise, but with the colorful comparison that the maid was as dear to him as his goats<sup>14</sup>. In pain when he gets a thorn in his foot, he can soon make a joke of the event; his phrase becomes proverbial, δοσίχον ἔστι τὸ τύμπα, καὶ ἀλίκον ἄνδρα δημάσθει (55).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>7</sup> On the use of *ὦ* in Theocritus, cf. Frederick Williams, „Ω in Theocritus“<sup>16</sup>. *Eranos* LXXXI (1973) 52–67, esp. here 62–63.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. C. Segal, „Theocritean Criticism and the Interpretation of the Fourth Idyll“, *Ramus* I (1972) p. 6. (Henceforth „TCIFI“).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge, 1950), II, p. 78, and *LSJ* s.v. ἔλαιον

<sup>10</sup> Although Polydeuces, as a boxer, is a logical choice here, neither Heracles nor Polydeuces are part of the pastoral world. Perhaps T. is here, in the guise of these rustics, mocking his own „heroic“ poems, XXII (Polydeuces) and XXIV and XXV (Heracles).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. Holden, *Greek Pastoral* (Penguin, 1974), p. 204 n. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Segal, „TCIFI“ p. 8, „The cicada is not only a favorite *topos* of Hellenistic poetry but is also a self-consciously „fine phrase“, a literary conceit. In n. 24 S. collects other cicada references.

<sup>13</sup> I read here κακορροήσματον cf. Gow, *ad loc.*

<sup>14</sup> The comparison with his goats (why does Lattimore, „Battus“, p. 322, think this is an impossible statement for a real goatherd?) emphasizes that B. is not in bitter despair over the lost Amaryllis; Segal, „TCIFI“, p. 13, is correct to discount Bignone's „documentary fallacy“ here. It is exactly the type of remark we have come to expect from B.: a tragic lament for his fate but with a local comparison. Buceaeus uses the same type of language in *Idyll X*, v. *infra*. p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> I cannot agree with those who compare the thorn with the shaft of Eros, „The way in which the thorn motif is handled suggests a kind of rustic counterpart to Eros' shafts, „writes G. Lawall, *Theocritus Coan Pastorals: A Poetry Book* (The Center for Hellenic Studies, 1967) p. 49. (Henceforth *TCP*).

Corydon on the other hand is an earnest fellow, who takes his job seriously. He replies to all of Battus' taunts and sallies in a straightforward and prosaic manner.<sup>16</sup> Battus suggests the calf feeds on dewdrops and the bull is starved: Corydon protests that he pastures them in the finest grasses (17—19, 23—25). Corydon's language is practical throughout, echoing the daily life of the cowherd. There is „no confusion of cows and cicadas here.“<sup>17</sup> When Battus dramatically laments his destiny after the loss of Amaryllis, Corydon counters with commonplace comforts: „Tomorrow's another day,“ „while there's life there's hope,“ „weather is as Zeus wills it.“ He removes the thorn from his friend's foot and gives practical advice: „Now don't go barefoot on the hill (56).“

Battus has suggested that as Aegon neglects his herd, so he neglects his musical duties as well. But Corydon, in addition to tending his friend's herd also tends his pipe. For the cowherd is the musician here. He is not of the first rank, however, for he sings mainly the songs of others — Glauca's tunes or Pyrrha's, or „Καλλά πόλις ἡ τε Ζάχυνθος“ (32)<sup>18</sup>. If lines 33—37 be regarded as a song, Corydon is adding luster to the local hero. But there is typical undercutting as well: Aegon devoured 80 loaves, and then for his girlfriend led a bull down the hill<sup>19</sup>. This is the type of athletic contest in which Aegon really excels, not boxing at Olympia.

Finally, as a result of Corydon's piping, the herd suddenly takes a interest in eating the olive shoots. Rosenmeyer says that at this point „the hubris motif, brute energy winning out over gentler feelings, comes into its own“<sup>20</sup>. It seems that rather than the „hubris motif“ we see here the revelation of the true situation: singing and music are the proper activities of the herdsman, the duties which Aegon is neglecting while seeking renown beyond the „pleasance.“ The herds are not tempted by fine grasses, but when Corydon plays the pipe they return to normal<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Ott, *Kunst*, pp. 46—47, „*Id.* V. ist vom Streit beherrscht, *Id.* IV vom Spott: der Agon entfaltet sich nicht zwischen gleichen Partnern, sondern ist ein Spiel zwischen Provokation und ruhiger Antwort.“

<sup>17</sup> Segal, „TCIFI“, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> „Corydon supports his claim to musical proficiency merely by mentioning composers whose works he knows and by claiming to be able to praise Croton, Zacythus, and the Lacinian shrine. . . This is not a song learned from Glauca or Pyrrhus but one of his own invention, involving people and places from his own personal experience“, Lawall *TCP* p. 46. It seems rather that the Zacythus tune is also a well-known song; Corydon's inventiveness appears in 11, 33—37, wherein he praises in song the friend he has been defending in his dialogue.

<sup>19</sup> Segal, „TCIFI“, p. 6 claims that „C. shows Aegon in the full swing of action, a Heracles-like figure performing acts of strength and flattery, full of laughter and exuberance“. While this is true, S. seems to miss the point here: Aegon performed these Heraclean acts in the *pastoral locale*; now he is trying to be Heracles in Olympia and this is overstepping the proper limit. Later, on p. 10, S. appears to come closer to this view: „Aegon's ration of 20 sheep as he trains for the Olympic games might appear as a perversion of a rustic's proper function as a guardian of his flock“.

<sup>20</sup> Rosenmeyer, *G. C.* p. 138.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. B. Van Sickle, „The Fourth Pastoral Poems of Virgil and Theocritus“, *Atti e Memoriae dell'Arcadio* ser. 3 vol. 5 fasc. 1 (Rome, 1969) p. 10, cited by Segal, „TCIFI“, n. 37 p. 23, The climax of the first two sections of the poem thus

For both man and beast art in the form of music is what gives value to life.

Battus, repeating his opening formula, εἰπέ μοι (1, 58), introduces a new theme. At least one thing is still as usual during Aegon's absence: the old man is still grinding the dark-browed maid. As Van Sickle neatly states, „The old man's in his barton, all's right on the hill“<sup>22</sup>. The poem closes with a truly rustic comparison. Corydon had suggested that Aegon rivaled (ἐρισθεῖν) Heracles; Battus notes that the family rivals (ἐρισθεῖ) Pan and the scrawny-satyrs (63—64).

The greater part of the fifth *Idyll* is devoted to the singing contest between Lacon the chepherd and Comatas the goatherd. Neither character is appealing. The entire poem takes an *agon* form: the opening accusations, the rivalry of oaths and insults, a dispute over the prize, an argument over the location for the contest<sup>23</sup>. Here the goatherd is the better man: he is older, the flock he tends belongs to a more powerful person, his taunts are slightly more refined, and his singing is preferable. Lacon, also a hired hand, does not like the ownership of his flock revealed (74—75). He is generally surly throughout: *iactantior, stultior, animique impotentior* as Wernsdorf said.<sup>24</sup>

It is he who issues the challenge for the match and evidently he has grounds for a belief in his superiority, for in the first half of the contest he follows the „rules“ competently. But she does make some errors, as we shall see, and the third party Morson awards the prize to Comatas. Finally it remains to be noted that the goatherd is heterosexual in his affairs whereas the shepherd is homosexual, and in this poem at least heterosexual love wins<sup>25</sup>.

Even after the prize has been determined, the two cannot begin without further bickering.<sup>26</sup> Lacon insists his position beneath the olive tree is

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touches a motif which is the key to the implicit and perennial subject of pastoral art itself. All the questions of property, responsibility, place, are hints and preparation for the poetic question. While this seems to be placing excessive weight on the mouldering pipe, I think it can be said that the pipe and the song are symbolic of the proper pastoral life.

<sup>22</sup> Van Sickle p. 18, cited Segal, „TICIF“ p. 17 n. 56.

<sup>23</sup> Lawall, *TCP* p. 54 points out that the match is on from the opening lines when „Lacon improvises a charge in response to that of Comatas and phrases it in corresponding terms“. Perhaps L. issues the challenge for the singing match as a result of the opening insult C. had given in place of a greeting.

<sup>24</sup> Wernsdorf, cited A. S. F. Gow, „Notes on the Fifth *Idyll* of Theocritus *Classical Quarterly* XXIX (1959) pp. 65—71. In this poem also it has been pointed out by Williams, *op. cit.* p. 14, that „the use and non-use of ϖ is being employed as a stylistic device to help differentiate the characters“ p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> While it is obvious that sexual hostility is at play here, Lawall's conclusions as to which lover is wounded remain obscure (p. 57): „In the past C. was L.'s lover and the goatherd's present behavoir reveals a continuing attraction toward the unwilling and teasing shepherd. C.'s desire is countered and frustrated by a stubborn L.; consequently instead of love and harmony there is enmity and strife“. Surely the reverse is true: L. the shepherd is being misused by C. the goatherd.

<sup>26</sup> As Rosenmeyer points out, *G. C.* p. 101, „They wager animals without compunction and quarrel over imaginary stakes.“ Clearly neither C. nor L. own the animals they intend to wager.

more conducive to song; Comatas prefers his grove of pine and oak. Neither will yield, and the contest must take place from separate bowers. This rejection of a common locale seems to imply that the match will be of lower quality than had an agreement been reached. Comatas suggests that the challenge itself is shameful: pupil to master. Lacon retorts that he never learned anything from the goatherd. When Comatas reminds him of what he *did* get from him, Lacon can only curse: μή βάθιον τήνω πυγίσματος ὑβέ, ταφείης (43).

Without becoming involved at this point in the complex question of the rules for bucolic singing contests<sup>27</sup>, let us examine what characteristics of the contestants are revealed in the song.<sup>28</sup>

Comatas sings competently and with metrical variety about his daily life. He attributes his musical ability to the Muses love for him, and in thanks he has already sacrificed two goats for them<sup>29</sup>. He is an object of desire to all the girls: the milkmaid accosts him (85) and Clearista tries to seduce him (88—89). To the goatherd she is as pretty as a rose (93): he sees her beauty and likens it to another beautiful visual image. His gifts to his ladylove are also chosen with taste. First he offers a dove, certainly symbolic of love, to his girl<sup>30</sup>. His next present is a cypress pail and bowl, which he describes as the work of Praxiteles. While this is surely an exaggeration, it does reveal these are works of art. From *Idyll I* we know that such a bowl would be an appropriate pastoral gift.

However Comatas is not a perfect gentleman. When Lacon begins to err in subject matching, the goatherd taunts him with what he had received sexually from him, and in this way he gains his victory over Lacon.

In his execution of the song Comatas is the more skillful. As the first singer he has the advantage of being able to select the subject matter, but he displays his ingenuity in his choice of metrical patterns. His only apparent error is at lines 108—09, where his meaning is obscure and he permits an unusual spondee in the fourth foot. Lacon jumps on this pattern at once (110), but when Comatas repeats it at line 120 he is quickly silenced. Finally, at lines 136—37 the goatherd introduces, with a proverbial priamel, the subject of poetry and Lacon is at a loss<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gow, *Theocritus II*, *ad loc.*, Rosenmeyer, G. C. ch. 7, LOTT, *Kunst* pp. 14—42, Lawall, *TCP* pp. 54—56 and notes thereon.

<sup>28</sup> Rosenmeyer G. C. p. 137 points out that λέγειν means the contest is not sung but spoken. This is being too literal. At 1. 31 L. says C. will sing (ἀση) more pleasantly where he is, at 1. 44 he urges C. to come to him to sing the match (βουκολικέσσι), at 1. 60 L. agrees C. can stay in his oaks and contend (βουκολικόσδεν), and at 1. 68 Morison is asked to decide which is the better βουκολικαστάς.

<sup>29</sup> While neither contestant owns the flock he guards, presumably each has some property of his own. It is L. who seems to be the more willing to dispose of property that is not his own, the fleece and the sheepdog.

<sup>30</sup> Is the girl really πάρθενος (96)? If so, this is a properly conducted affair.

<sup>31</sup> The comparison of noble birds with screeching birds for good and bad poetry is as old as Pindar, cf. *Ol. II*. 87—88.

In his own song Lacon does well in metrically matching second lines previous to line 116. Lacon states that he also owes his musical ability to a divinity, Apollo. (It is interesting to note that even in the contrast of favored deities the rivals select their patrons on the basis of sexual preference). However the shepherd's thanksgiving is yet to come: he will sacrifice a special ram to his god. While Comatas is attractive to the ladies, Lacon's relationships are of a different character. He is maddened, driven wild, ἐκμάλψει (91) by the sight of Cratidas' hair, and he μολύνει his boy among the flowers (87).<sup>32</sup> The verb tells us that this is not an affair conducted with sensitivity between willing partners.

To answer Comatas' description of his rose-like girl, Lacon employs an obscure image based on touch and taste: the thick-husked acorn does not match the honey-sweet wild apple. Lacon's gifts are also of a less aesthetic nature. To Cratidas he will first give a practical gift, a black fleece for a cloak. But in response to the well-carved pail he offers a sheepdog which kills wolves, so his boy can hunt all wild beasts. Lacon's gifts are as brutish as his romances. Not only is the selection of gifts in poorer taste, but the subject match is also poor. At lines 114—15 he fails in the contest when he matches insects with foxes. After this error Comatas reminds him of their past sexual encounters. This so provoked Lacon to anger that his singing goes totally out of control. He matches the charge of sexual mastery with an example of another's physical abuse of Comatas, and fails to match second lines metrically for the remainder of the contest. Finally at 134—35, in his eagerness to protect his reputation he counts a love defeat with a love victory.

Some have found it difficult to see that Comatas' victory is clear-cut, suggesting that Morson got tired of listening, or maybe even that Theocritus did<sup>33</sup>. But it can be shown that Comatas deserved the prize. Not only does he display greater metrical dexterity in his song. His selection of subjects and his presentation of them reveal him to be a more sensitive person. He apparently keeps his obligations to the gods, conducts his courtship in a respectable way, and is appreciative of art and song. But Theocritus does not leave us cheering for Comatas either. Just as we are beginning to believe he may be better, he vaunts his victory with a great laugh and a sky-high jump, and closes the poem with a threat to castrate the billygoat if he touches the nannies too soon. Sexual abuse has been a constant subject in this *Idyll*. The art of the *agon* has merely been a cover for another side of the pastoral life. But the veil is thin, and we cannot dismiss the fact that Comatas and Lacon lack the artistic sensibilities of their rustic companions of other *Idylls*.

In *Idyll X* we see another presentation of the art of song. The tenth *Idyll* is unique in the Theocritean corpus in that its setting is agri-

<sup>32</sup> After admitting that the verb means „smears“ or „sullies“ Lawall, *TCP* p. 62, continues that L. s choice of a location „amidst the flowers“ points up „a delicacy of sentiment alien to the crudely physical Comatas“!

<sup>33</sup> So Rosenmeyer, *G. C.* pp. 160—61.

cultural not pastoral. The characters are individuals: Bucaeus in his lovesick plight is a comic figure, while Milon is delightfully practical<sup>34</sup>.

Because of his love for Bombyca the flute-girl Bucaeus is lagging in his work. Milon suggests that he'll work better if he sings his love: as Cyclops shepherded his love with music and was comforted (XI, 80—81), so Bucaeus can harvest the crop and be happier if he strikes up a song for his girl.

The reaper's song is truly a delight. The Pierian Muses are invoked but they must have remained far away. Their aid is sought because they make all things seem beautiful. The words echo Daphnis' song of Polyphemus in *Idyll VI*: ἔρωτι... τὰ μῆ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται (19). For surely Bombyca is not καλῆ. Bucaeus alone praises her dark skin: hyacinths and violets are desired for garlands — one of the few plant similes in the idylls<sup>35</sup>. Immediately follows the famous priamel: „Goat follows after clover, wolf after goat, crane after plough, and I burn for you“<sup>36</sup>. The change from pastoral image to agricultural metaphor makes the comparaison even more comic. But the encomium is not yet finished. Bucaeus wishes for the wealth of Coresus so that he and his girl can be modeled in gold for the goddess of love. Bombyca will be fashioned with her special attribute the flute, while he will appear with shoes on *both* feet. This thought carries Bucaeus off to a flight of incomparable similes, where the analogies are marvelously absurd:

Charming Bombyca, your feet are like knucklebones, your voice like a poppy, your ways I am unable to say. (36—37).

Milon is totally unromantic. Unconcerned with anything beyond his work, his dialogue is filled with maxims, proverbs, and colloquial expressions. He too draws his analogies from the animal world.<sup>37</sup> In this agricultural idyll the pastoral world appears in the animal comparisons the characters use to describe their activities: the limping sheep, the hungry goat, the happy frog.

Milon's colorful proverbs include, „its ill to teach a dog the taste of leather (11),“ „you draw from the *pithos* (13),“ „God finds the sinner (17).“ He comments further that Bucaeus can't get is teeth into his row, τᾶς αὐλοκος οὐκ ἀποτρώγεις (6), all he has in *his* cask is a little vinegar, ἔχω οὐδ' ἄλις δέσος (13), and that Bucaeus' penalty for loving

<sup>34</sup> Gow, *Theocritus*, II, p. 193, remarks that he is „the most realistically drawn of all T. s rustic characters“.

<sup>35</sup> Rosenmeyer, *G. C.* pp. 256—257, „Besides the Cyclops' comparison of Galatea with a grape, plant comparisons occur in only two genuine *Idylls* and interestingly enough they are the least musical, *Idylls* 5 and 6. Surely this example could be added to his list.

<sup>36</sup> For a longer discussion of this priamel, cf. Rosenmeyer, *G. C.* pp. 260—61.

<sup>37</sup> These are some of the few animal comparisons in the *Idylls*. As Rosenmeyer remarks, *G. C.*, p. 254, „[the reaper,] the crusty calculating man of the soil, the amused critic of pastoral love, is just the sort of person to turn a deaf ear to animal autonomy.“

Bombyca is as he deserves: a *καλαμαία μάντις* will clasp him all night.<sup>38</sup>

Milon's own song consists of seven couplets of rustic maxims and mocking exhortations. Beginning with an appropriate invocation to Demeter he encourages the binders to hurry lest a passerby comment on the „fig-wood men, „σύκινοι ξυδόες (45), a traditional description of weak and useless men<sup>39</sup>. He sings elaborate instructions for the cutting and reaping, and closes with a final proverbial admonition to the bailiff: „Don't cut your hand splitting cumin (55).“

After a proper working song Milon offers the reaper some final and unsympathetic advice: „Go tell your love to your Mother when she wakes up in the morning.“ Only his mother would be sympathetic to his sufferings and his romance is in the realm of dreams. In the field work must take precedence to love. The foreman has no belief in anything but the reality of the job. Love can be cured by work and song: no true man should let emotion overcome him. Bucaeus has been unable to work since the seed of his love was sown.<sup>40</sup> His attempt to cure his love with song, however, only reveals he is as helpless in the face of poetry as in the trials of love. Out of the pastoral bower poetry is a difficult art.

*Idyll XIV* is a city mime. Here also we have the unhappy lover, here also we have the practical friend. But how different is the situation, how different the characters, how different is the cure for love. A city romance is a more complex affair. A symposium at a country estate has replaced the grove and stream, where loves are revealed in toasts of neat wine, not on the oaten flute.

Beyond the difference in locale and the type of food<sup>41</sup>, the characters' mode of expression is also different. In recounting his unhappy affair Aeschinas uses more figures of speech than in all the previously discussed idylls. First is the longer animal simile: his girl fled him more quickly than „the swallow who gives food to her young under the roof and swiftly flies off to gather another supply (39—42).“ It is the speed of the flight which is compared here. But there is also the underlying idea of a departure from nest and shelter to the wild unknown. There is further contrast as well, the swallow swoops in and out with a purpose, but the flute girl is running to wherever her feet may take her.

<sup>38</sup> Presumably M. is likening the skinny girl to a skinny mantis, a logical agrarian comparison. But it should be noted that the female mantis will often devour the male, and that *γατζώ*, „embrace“ can also mean „stain“ or „defile“, and, according to Gow, *Theocritus II ad loc.*, is used when the embrace involves death.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Gow, *Theocritus II, ad loc.*

<sup>40</sup> Line 14 has caused critical problems. If we read *ἀπὸ σπόρῳ* as referring to the seed of passion, from the beginning of his love, the line makes good sense: he has not been able to hoe even the weeds before his door since he fell in love with Bombyca.

<sup>41</sup> Rosenmeyer, G. C. p. 141 states that food is a topic never mentioned in true pastoral. But Segal, „TCIFI“, p. 9, finds food the major organizing motif for *Idyll 4*, wherein food is in contrast to love.

Cynisca's consternation previous to her flight is also described figuratively. When teased about having seen a wolf, her blush was such that you could have caught a light from her cheeks (23).<sup>42</sup> As the fellow from Larissa sang the Thessalian song τὸν ἔμδον Λύκον Cynisca began to weep like a 6-year old on her mother's lap. „So then,“ cried the betrayed lover, „let your tears flow as big as apples, μᾶλα ρέσντω (38).“ Aeschinias concludes by citing the familiar oracle: like the Megarians, his position is now of no account.

Also unique to this characterization is that Aeschinias, a refined city dweller, identifies the proverbes he uses as such. A rustic transplanted to the city he has become self-conscious about his manner of speaking. In a cryptic phrase he describes Cypisca's flight „the bull once went to the wood,“ as the saying is, αἴνος λέγεται (43)<sup>43</sup>. Without his girl he is as helpless as the „mouse in the pitchpot,“ as they say φυγή (51). For the pastoral figure the proverbes are a part of his daily life, but the city gent must qualify his use of them<sup>44</sup>.

How can one overcome love? Cyclops sang his love, so also Buceaus was advised to do. For Aeschinias the cure is to join the army and go away. Thus the poem closes with an exposition of the virtues of serving in the forces of Ptolemy.

To what conclusions can we come then from this cursory examination of four idylls? Each poem is distinct. By his selection of dialogue Theocritus has created unique individuals. Battus is the lively cynic whose colorful and dramatic language makes perceptive comments on the true values of the pastoral world. In contrast Corydon, the would-be musician, is quietly prosaic. He is part of the pleasant bower, who finds his world beautiful: he is the archetype of the pastoral figure. The other side of the bucolic world is portrayed in the language of Co-matas and Lacon. Earlier ages have wished these two had never spoken<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> The entire *Idyll* turns upon a pun on the proverb λύκον λίθεῖν. Whoever saw a wolf, or was seen by a wolf first, would be struck dumb.

<sup>43</sup> Gow, *Theocritus II ad loc.*, likens the phrase to O.T. 477, but how a bull deserting his herd is like a girl fleeing to a new lover is not at once clear. Probably the phrase refers to one who leaves the familiar (the pasture) and seeks new adventure (the wood).

<sup>44</sup> *Idyll IV* (according to Segal, *v. supra* n. 41) is organized around the motif of food, *Idyll VI* plays off the idea of reflections, XI on Impossibility. The recurring image in XIV seems to be hair. In this short poem there are no less than seven references to hair. Aeschinias is questioned about his strange appearance with a large mustache, μάσταξ πολύς (4) and unkempt locks, ωστάλειν κίτιννοι (4). He claims he is only a hair's breadth from going mad, ορείξ ἀνὰ μέσσον (9). Foolishly he had neglected rumors of Cynisca and Lycon: in vain he had come of shaving age, μάταν εἰς ἄνδρα γενεύον (28). It's been two months since the girl left; she wouldn't know if he gotten a Thracian haircut, Θράκιστι κέκαρμαι (46). Thyonichus suggests that his friend should act now as well as later; we're all getting gray from the temples down, ἀπὸ κροτάφων πελέμεσθα πάντες γηραλέοι (68—69), and whitening time is creeping hair by hair down the cheekbone, ἐπισχερώ ἐς γένον ἐρπει λευκατών ὁ χρόνος (69—70).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. F. Fawkes, footnote to his 1767 version at lines 41—44, „There was necessity in this place to omit translating four lines in the original, which are infinitely too indelicate for modest ears,“ cited Holden, *Pastoral Poetry* p. 205, n. 10.

Now that we are no longer offended by such vocabulary we can recognize that Theocritus has been fully honest. Unlikeable as these two rustics are they are nevertheless completely believable.

*Idylls X and XIV* are not considered true pastorals for they take place in the wheatfield and the village. With the change of locale Theocritus has changed his characterizations. Milon speaks as a farmer not a shepherd, while Bucaeus' nearest pastoral relative is Polyphemus who is not a true shepherd. Aeschinus by his mode of expression delightfully characterizes the rustic moved to the city. He still thinks in terms proverbs and loyal love: out of his natural habitat he makes excuses for the one but is at a loss before the breakdown of the other. In his new world escape is the only cure for love. So has the city complicated life. In the pastoral world, as Battus knows, all can be set right again by the art of song.

*Florida.*

*K. V. Hartigan.*