

Bucolic Experimentation in Theocritus' Idyll 10

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THEOCRITUS' TENTH IDYLL occupies a labile position in the Theocritean *corpus*, variously included among and excluded from the bucolic poems. Its problematic relationship to Theocritus' bucolic Idylls has relegated the poem to a subordinate position, as scholars have understandably focused their analyses on those Idylls that are indisputably bucolic. I would like to propose that Idyll 10 has much to offer discussions of bucolic because its unique mix of bucolic and non-bucolic elements affords a novel perspective on the subject. Theocritus enacts a literary experiment in Idyll 10 that brings a bucolic shepherd-poet, Bucaeus, into the world of the "reaper-poet" Milo, whose work song challenges and to some degree deconstructs Bucaeus' attempt at bucolic song. We must first consider what it means for a poem to be bucolic and what makes Idyll 10's bucolic claim so tenuous.

Perhaps Idyll 10 deviates most notably in its depiction of reapers at work instead of the leisurely herdsmen common to bucolic. The poem thus lacks the familiar trappings of Theocritus' traditionally bucolic Idylls, but it can be included among them on the basis of the similarity of their fictional worlds. Payne has observed that Theocritus' fictional approach does not reflect real-world possibilities. That is, unlike characters in tragedy, for instance, Theocritus' shepherd-poets do not represent behavioral models—either positive or negative—because their behavior does not accord with that of real persons.¹ Beginning from Payne's observation, one may further consider

¹ Mark Payne, *Theocritus and the Invention of Fiction* (Cambridge 2007) 2.

the Idylls as operating in a way similar to Conte's view of Roman elegy: a single theme—or, in the case of the bucolic Idylls, two themes—becomes the center of the poems' fictional world, to which all else stands in relation.²

The bucolic Idylls all revolve around the two themes of love and song, which are often integrated when the former becomes the subject of the latter. The resulting fictional world—in which shepherds become shepherd-poets, concerning themselves with song, especially erotic song, to the exclusion of other aspects of reality—is a consistent feature of Theocritean bucolic, and when one uses this criterion in consideration of Idyll 10, the poem proves to share in the fictional world found in the traditional bucolic Idylls. Even by the measure of its fictional world, however, Idyll 10 does not seem completely bucolic, standing on the periphery of bucolic poetry.

Scholars have addressed the problem in a variety of ways. Ott pointedly expresses his uncertainty about 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."³ Not all scholars would agree that Idyll 10 is not a "Hirtengedicht," though Ott's observation on its nature, casting the poem as one that simultaneously lacks the trappings of a bucolic poem yet maintains certain formal elements familiar to the genre, at least raises issues that problematize accepting the Idyll as a fully bucolic poem. As Stanzel notes,⁴ Idyll 10 is almost unmentioned in Gutzwiller's important work on Theocritus' bucolic Idylls⁵ and is absent from Lawall's work on Theocritus' Coan pastoral

² Gian Biagio Conte, *Generi e lettori* (Milan 1991) 54–55. See also Lowell Edmunds, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry* (Baltimore 2001) 95–107.

³ Ulrich Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes in Theokrits Hirtengedichten* (Hildesheim 1969) 57.

⁴ Karl-Heinz Stanzel, *Liebende Hirten: Theokrits Bukolik und die alexandrinische Poesie* (Stuttgart 1995) 22 n.21.

⁵ Kathryn Gutzwiller, *Theocritus' Pastoral Analogies* (Madison 1991).

poetry⁶ despite evidence that suggests Cos as a possible locale.⁷ Stanzel himself, however, argues that Theocritus includes Idyll 10 among his bucolic poems. In support he cites Idyll 7.27–29, in which Simichidas remarks that Lycidas is an outstanding piper among both herdsmen and reapers.⁸ Though Stanzel correctly connects Idyll 10 with Theocritus' bucolic poetry, such programmatic authority is difficult to ascribe 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 can one justify its obvious deviation from the familiar depiction of the herdsman who sings about love in his *locus amoenus*?

On this question, Payne once again offers valuable insight. He describes a bucolic character as one that "is shaped by its relationship to an imagined world, the fictional world of bucolic poetry itself, which is projected in bucolic song and encountered in the fictional experience of listening to it," citing the goatherd of Idyll 3 and Polyphemus as examples: "These characters are able to achieve a temporary distraction from their present suffering by invoking a more perfect version of their own bucolic existence."⁹ This view of bucolic has significant bearing on Idyll 10: it ignores references to herdsmen and their landscape, focusing on the character, rather than the poem as a whole, as recipient of the "bucolic" designation. By Payne's definition, Bucaeus qualifies as a bucolic character, that is, one whose song offers a fictional, idealized alternative to his lovesickness. Idyll 10, then, challenges the reader not because it lacks essential bucolic features but because non-bucolic features are equally present. Unlike his fellow reaper, Milo does not conform to the criteria for a bucolic character and thereby

⁶ Gilbert Lawall, *Theocritus' Coan Pastorals* (Cambridge 1967).

⁷ See Ph. E. Legrand, *Bucoliques grecs* (Paris 1967) 62. For an argument against Coan origin see Michele Strano, "Considerazioni sull'idillio X di Teocrito," *Helikon* 15/16 (1975–1976) 454–460; see her n.2 for sources favorable to Cos as the setting.

⁸ Stanzel, *Liebende Hirten* 22–23.

⁹ Payne, *Theocritus* 92–93.

exacerbates the initially perceived problem of the Idyll's bucolic status. Aside from the issue of generic classification, however, the interaction between Bucaeus, a bucolic character, and Milo, an unbucolic character, is unique among the Idylls and central to an understanding of Idyll 10. It is worth noting some textual indications that support this.

Even though bucolic poetry is divested of the herdsman as a defining characteristic, he remains an iconic figure. It is significant, then, that Theocritus associates Bucaeus with herdsmen through careful manipulation of imagery, which serves as a subtle signal of Bucaeus' bucolic affiliation from the outset of the poem, beginning with his name. Interestingly, scholars have been quick to assert an absence of herdsmen in Idyll 10 despite the scholiast's identification of the vocative Βουκαίε as a substantive rather than a name.¹⁰ Though the scholiast in this case was in error, his interpretation was not unfounded. Nicander confirms the possibility of a substantive use of Βουκαίος: σὲ δ' ἄν πολύεργος ἀροστρεὺς / βουκαίός τ' ἀλέγοι καὶ ὄροϊτύπος (*Theocritus*, 4–5) and βουκαίοι ζεύγεσσι ἀμορβεύουσιν ὄρηων (fr. 90). A Theocritean precedent also exists for identifying characters by their profession alone. In Idyll 1, Thyrsis refers to his fellow herdsman simply as “goatherd.”¹¹ The scholiast's lapse demonstrates the easy association between Bucaeus' name and the occupation it suggests. The bucolic significance of Βουκαίε increases when one considers its context.

Idyll 10 opens with Milo addressing Bucaeus as ἐργατίνα Βουκαίε. The intrinsic connection of “Bucaeus” with herding is immediately heightened by its juxtaposition with Bucaeus' 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 occu-

¹⁰ Cf. A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge 1950) II 193, on schol. arg. 10: the scholiast, failing to recognize Bucaeus as a name, supplied the name Battus because he and a character named Milo both appear in Idyll 4.

¹¹ Theoc. 1.1, ἀδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἅ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα. Richard Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge 1999) ad loc., notes that Idyll 1 is unique in not including a proper name within the first two lines.

pation, the initial uncertainty of the first line 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 both reaper and cowherd (ἐργατῖνα Βουκαῖε, τί νῦν, ὄξυρόε, πεπόνθεις; 10.1). The reader soon learns that Bucaeus has fallen behind in his reaping duties, but even Milo's comment on his companion's lack of progress compares him to a sheep with an injured foot (2–4).¹² Bucaeus' strong association with images of herding is significant because it brings to the reader's mind an important bucolic image, the herdsman, without admitting an actual herdsman into the poem. Thus Theocritus is able to conduct his bucolic experiment in an agricultural setting with reapers and yet create an expectation of bucolic influence.

Milo's name is also significant as an indicator of contrasting characterization. If Bucaeus exhibits patently bucolic characteristics, Milo proves to be a completely unbucolic figure. The name, though not uncommon, is most famously associated with the athletic feats of Milo of Croton.¹³ It is an apt name for one who so rigorously espouses the virtues of physical labor over the love and leisure preferred by Bucaeus. As Ott notes, the two characters not only advocate opposing views of love and work but even personify them,¹⁴ and their names reflect this personification.

Theocritus thus establishes Bucaeus as a bucolic shepherd-poet who reluctantly attempts to work, a characterization set against Milo's ardent enthusiasm for his task. From its first line, *Idyll* 10 sets the stage for a conflict between the fictional worlds of herding and agriculture. The setting is that of the reaper, but the Theocritean shepherd-poet lurks behind the figure of Bucaeus, generating a collision between his bucolic interest in

¹² John Whitehorne, "The Reapers: Theocritus' *Idyll* 10," *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 30–49, at 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."

¹³ Gow, *Theocritus* II 78.

¹⁴ Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes* 64.

soothing his lovesickness and the staunch advocacy of work espoused by a proper reaper, Milo. In light of these considerations, the novel milieu in Idyll 10 should not obscure the bucolic characterization of Bucaeus but should prompt the reader to examine him all the more carefully.

What role does bucolic's fictional world play in the poem and what effect does Theocritus create in relocating his lovesick rustic from the flock to the field? By changing the location and vocation of his shepherd-poet, Theocritus has removed him from the ἀεργία of a shady grove and placed him in a different world, one characterized instead by ἐργασία. Just as the shepherd-poet is the natural inhabitant of the *locus amoenus*, Milo the reaper is the natural inhabitant of this different world of ἐργασία. Though Milo's work song reflects a real-world practice, in the context of the poem it offers a point of comparison with the fictional world of the shepherd-poet. As Edmunds notes, "for any counterfactual, possible world, only a few properties of the actual world are 'blown up', and the rest are 'narcotized'."¹⁵ In the possible world of the shepherd-poet (i.e. the bucolic world), love is the characteristic that is "blown up." Milo's world, also a possible world though one in greater accord with the reader's own, "blows up" work instead of love. By transferring Bucaeus from the pastoral setting in which he naturally belongs to an agricultural environment, Theocritus playfully experiments with his bucolic character, setting him in a new, unexpected world that "narcotizes" love.¹⁶

Theocritus' setting for his bucolic experiment polarizes the two themes expressed 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

¹⁵ Edmunds, *Intertextuality* 102.

¹⁶ Similar experimentation, placing a character in a setting to which he does not properly belong, has been proposed for other bucolic Idylls. Stephen Lattimore, "Battus in Theocritus' Fourth *Idyll*," *GRBS* 14 (1973) 319–324, has proposed that Battus represents a city poet who has made a visit to the country. Simichidas, too, in Idyll 7 is a poet who makes both a physical and poetic journey from the city into the bucolic countryside. Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 31, also notes the experimental nature of Idyll 10.

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 shifts in the new setting. Milo urges Bucaeus to strike up a song, telling him that ἄδιον οὕτως ἐργαξῆ (22–23). In most bucolic poetry, song represents a fictional idealization that attempts to soothe the singer's emotional turmoil. In the fictional world of Idyll 10, it is not a remedy but rather a tool used to increase productivity.¹⁷

Idyll 10, indeed, presents many 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,¹⁸ though his discussion of the poem is by no means exhaustive and reaches few conclusions as to the significance of the antitheses he identifies. The remainder of this essay will consider the antitheses presented by the love- and work-centered characterizations of Bucaeus and Milo as well as the significance of moving a shepherd-poet from his own fictional world into that of the reaper-poet.

Some similar polarizations serve as background for the pairing of Bucaeus and Milo.¹⁹ Idyll 10's specific opposition of love and work echoes the more general polarity of labor and idle-

¹⁷ The adverb ἄδιον 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 (ἄδιον ἄσῆ / τεῖδ' ὑπὸ τᾶν κότινον καὶ τᾶλσεα ταῦτα καθίξας).

¹⁸ Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes* 57–66.

¹⁹ Some scholars consider the issue of polarization to have been settled by Francis Cairns, "Theocritus Idyll 10," *Hermes* 98 (1970) 38–44, 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, it would provide only a framework for the poem. Little about the poem, in fact, would be determined by Theocritus' adherence to the form of symposiastic poetry proposed 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 (38). Even following an *amator-irrisor amoris* scheme for his poem, Theocritus had considerable room for creativity.

ness expressed elsewhere in Greek literature. Already in Homer one finds Paris, often depicted in the literary tradition as a herdsman, indulging his sexual desire, the corollary of which is his neglect of the war.²⁰ Paris takes part in battle, of course, though his sound defeat at Menelaus' hands and his affinity for the bow suggest that he engages in even this manly pursuit in an unmanly way. Hesiod opposes agricultural labor and idleness in advising Perses ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος, ἀεργίη δέ τ' ὄνειδος.²¹ Euripides' *Antiope* stages a debate on the merits of work and pleasure. The extant fragments depict Zethus' and Amphion's views on what is best for the *polis*; the former condemns the idleness resulting from pleasure while the latter proposes that the *polis* benefits from citizens who are ἀπράγμων.²² The general polarization of idleness (pleasure) and work that is found outside Theocritus strengthens the notion of incongruity between Bucaeus and Milo, both rustic characters whose pairing might otherwise call little attention to itself.

While these examples correspond approximately to the themes opposed in Idyll 10, a final, more direct correlation occurs in Menander's *Dyscolus*. As Gorgias warns of Cnemon's misanthropy and advises Sostratus to abandon his desire for the old farmer's daughter, Sostratus in turn questions Gorgias: Σω. πρὸς τῶν θεῶν οὐπώποτ' ἠράσθης τινός, μειράκιον; Γο. οὐδ' ἔξεστί μοι, βέλτιστε. Σω. πῶς; τίς ἔσθ' ὁ κωλύων; Γο. ὁ τῶν ὄντων κακῶν λογισμός, ἀνάπαυσιν διδοὺς οὐδ' ἠντινοῦν. Σω. οὐ μοι δοκεῖς ἀπειρότερον γοῦν διαλέγει περὶ ταύτ' ἀπο-

²⁰ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 3.441–447, 6.326–331. See Gutzwiller, *Analogies* 27–28, for a discussion of Paris as both devoted to love and an ineffectual hero. W. T. MacCary, *Childlike Achilles: Ontogeny and Phylogeny in the Iliad* (New York 1982) 152–162, also argues for an opposition between sex and martial skill.

²¹ *Op.* 311; cf. 298–304, 397–400. A similar sentiment is in Eur. *Elec.* 80–81, ἀργός γὰρ οὐδεὶς θεοὺς ἔχων ἀνά στόμα / βίον δύναται' ἂν ξυλλέγειν ἄνευ πόνου). Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 31, notes of rustics and their setting “What tradition there was, is exemplified by down-to-earth fellows like Hesiod or the peasant farmer in Euripides' *Electra* or Menander's *Dyscolus*.”

²² Zethus' claim: ἀνήρ γὰρ ὅστις εὖ βίον κεκτημένος / τὰ μὲν κατ' οἶκους ἀμείλια παρεῖς ἔα, / μολπαῖσι δ' ἠσθεῖς τοῦτ' αἰεὶ θηρεῖται, / ἀργός μὲν οἴκοις καὶ πόλει γενήσεται, / φίλοισι δ' οὐδεὶς. Amphion's response: ὅστις δὲ πράσσει πολλά μὴ πράσσειν παρὸν, / μῶρος, παρὸν ζῆν ἠδέως ἀπράγμονα (frs. 187, 193 *TrGF*).

στήναι κελεύεις μ'. οὐκέτι τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐπ' ἐμοί, τῷ θεῷ δέ (341–347). This passage and that found at *Idyll* 10.8–11²³ both demonstrate the distance between lover and worker, especially in regard to the priority of love. The polarization that appears briefly in Menander's play is featured prominently throughout Theocritus' *Idyll*, resulting in the two interlocutors' complete failure to relate to or even understand each other's point of view and marking them as artificial advocates of their respective themes rather than as the plausible mimetic representations of Menander's play.

The goatherd's ephrasis 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*, 37) by love as they struggle in vain (*ἐτώσια μοχθίζοντι*, 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 themes 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.²⁴ 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 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 Bucaeus' lovesickness and Milo's endurance.

Love and work stand in natural opposition to each other and form a critical contrast between Milo and Bucaeus. The nature of bucolic fiction, however, creates a problem in fostering inter-

²³ Another possible parallel occurs at *Id.* 14.7 (*Αἰ. ἤρατο μὲν καὶ τήνος; Θυ. ἐμὴν δοκεῖ, ὀπτῶ ἀλεύρω*).

²⁴ See also *Id.* 3.25–26 (*τὰν βαίταν ἀποδὺς ἐς κύματα τῆνῶ ἀλεῦμαι, / ὅπερ τὸς θύννως σκοπάζεται Ὀλπις ὁ γριπεύς*), 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.

action 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 exist as self-contained units without any points of contact. In the absence of a bridge between fictional worlds, neither character's view on love or work could inform the other's, resulting in a loss of significance for the poem's many antitheses. Theocritus, however, has created just such a bridge between Bucaeus and Milo.

Song serves a thematic purpose in the Idyll by connecting the love- and work-centered fictional worlds of Bucaeus and Milo. Indeed, just as the love 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.²⁵ Milo, in the context of his song- and work-centered fiction, may therefore be termed a "reaper-poet" by analogy to the shepherd-poets who inhabit the other bucolic poems. Song's role as a central theme of the shepherd-poet's and reaper-poet's respective fictional worlds creates a thematic overlap or, in spatial terms, a location where the two 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

²⁵ Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 31. Milo's song, like the songs of herdsmen in the bucolic Idylls, is rendered in hexameters. Actual popular songs were in lyric meters. On this see Roberto Pretagostini, "Tracce di poesia orale nei carmi di Teocrito," *Aevum(ant)* 5 (1992) 67–87, at 82–83. As to the content of actual work songs, what clues exist must be culled from rather scanty remains. *PMG* 849 represents the closest analogue to Milo's song, and, brief though the fragment is, the line *πλείστον οὔλον ἴει, ἴουλον ἴει* bears some resemblance to Milo's invocation (10.42–43). The occasion for the song is not specified, and its classification (*τούς τε καρπούς καὶ τοὺς ὕμνους τοὺς εἰς τὴν θεὸν οὔλους καλοῦσι καὶ ἰούλους*) raises questions about how it stands in relation to Milo's *τὰ τῷ θεῷ Λιτυέρσα*. Milo's song is undoubtedly a literary piece, and though it has the potential to contain mimetic elements, the dearth of information about such songs demands extreme caution in asserting the mimetic quality of Idyll 10.

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, as both are singers despite their differing views on how one ought to sing.

Theocritus has thus set the stage for a comparison of disparate fictional worlds, but what are the results of his experiment? Bucaeus and Milo's conversation attempts to reconcile two themes incapable of coexisting as focal points within the same fictional world. Because there is a general balance in structure, 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 thematic antitheses. The opposition, however, is actually one-sided. The dialogue between Milo and Bucaeus depicts Milo challenging Bucaeus' bucolic notion of love, but Bucaeus does not challenge Milo in turn. Rather than structure the Idyll as a debate in which each character challenges the other's view,²⁶ Bucaeus is at the mercy of Milo's mockery throughout the Idyll, offering only apologies for his love. The one-sidedness of their conversation results because Bucaeus has entered Milo's work-centered fiction and finds himself subject to its rules. Furthermore, as Milo with his extreme pragmatism constantly confronts Bucaeus, he exposes the failure of Bucaeus' bucolic song and in so doing exposes the seams that bind the bucolic world. This becomes most apparent when one compares the two songs. Despite the differences caused by the singers' polarized characterizations, their songs form a diptych pattern similar to those frequently found in the bucolic Idylls. The juxtaposition encourages comparison that reveals a number of correlations between the two songs despite their dissimilarity in theme. Milo's introduction offers a useful starting

²⁶ But see Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 32, who considers the two views of love in the poem "as well balanced as a Platonic dialogue."

point for considering the inset songs.

At 10.41, Milo announces that he will sing τὰ τῷ θεῷ Λιτυέρῳ. It is unfortunate that our knowledge of Lityerses is as limited as our picture of Daphnis, though some conjectures can be made from the available evidence.²⁷ 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 passersby to a reaping contest and, when they lost, killed them and bound their bodies in the sheaves. 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.²⁸ This is an amusing possibility, but Lityerses may convey considerably more significance. As a mythical character associated with reaping songs, Lityerses 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 finds inspiration in the reaper Lityerses. The love-work polarization found throughout the poem is maintained in fruitful tension within the common ground of song.²⁹

Another possible source that connects Daphnis and Lityerses is a play by Theocritus' contemporary Sositheus.³⁰ The play, entitled Δάφνις ἢ Λιτυέρῳ, joined Daphnis and Lityerses in the same narrative, raising questions about Lityerses' role in the Daphnis tradition. Regardless of when Daphnis and

²⁷ See Gow, *Theocritus* II 204, for evidence on Lityerses.

²⁸ Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 40.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ *TrGF* I 99. Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 41, also proposes this reference.

Lityerses were first placed in the same narrative, Sositheus' play demonstrates that such an account was current in Theocritus' time. The tradition suggested by the play complements Milo's introductory remarks, in which he casts Lityerses in the role of an archetype for his work song and thereby calls attention to a notable absence of an archetype for Bucaeus' bucolic song. The archetype is important because, though not required by his definition of a bucolic character, the "imaginative escape" of bucolic singers often involves the singer impersonating another bucolic character; thus the goatherd of Idyll 3 invokes mythical models and Thyrsis impersonates Daphnis.³¹ The ability of a shepherd-poet to alleviate his suffering depends on the success of his impersonation, a point Bucaeus fails to grasp: Bucaeus' idealized song ends abruptly with his inability to describe his beloved (36–37).³² If this notion is correct, then Milo's closing remarks (ταῦτα χορὴ μόχθεντας ἐν ἀλίῳ ἄνδρας αἰδεῖν, 56) have added significance. The demonstrative ταῦτα encompasses more than just the poem's content; it refers to the poem as in some sense the work of Lityerses himself, perhaps even recalling the ταῦτα of line 41 (θάσαι δὴ καὶ ταῦτα τὰ τῷ θεῷ Λιτυέρσῃ). The type of song that a man working in the sun ought to sing is specifically the song of Lityerses, whom Milo insists Bucaeus take as his archetype as well.

Lityerses' appearance as an imaginative archetype reinforces the notion that the agricultural world is structured similarly to the bucolic world. Both worlds center themselves on their own particular themes, and both even trace the origin of their songs to a mythic archetype (even though Bucaeus' archetype is not invoked). The agricultural world thus 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 show characterization; they act as representative samples of the fictions of the two different worlds.

Similarity of phrasing and imagery suggests that Milo's song may reply to specific points in Bucaeus' song, in a manner akin

³¹ Payne, *Theocritus* 93.

³² Cf. Payne, *Theocritus* 103.

to other Idylls containing similar diptych structures.³³ The parallels between the songs of love and work are not so stark as those in other diptychs, but they are nevertheless present. The first is in the invocations that begin each song. Bucaeus and Milo both invoke deities appropriate to their respective songs, the former calling upon the Pierian Muses (Μοῖσαι Πιερίδες, 24) and the latter upon bountiful Demeter (Δάματρο πολύκαρπε, 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 differ, as shown by their musical styles.³⁴ These dual invocations create a clear initial parallel for the reader and, despite the temptation to dismiss them 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. They, 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.³⁵ The Muses, invoked in a variety of generic contexts, are appropriate to Bucaeus' bucolic love song and further suggest his alignment with the bucolic world's love-centered fiction. Milo, by contrast, calls upon Demeter, a goddess befitting his 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 intends his song to correct Bucaeus' song.

Each singer makes specific requests of the deities. Milo, in

³³ Idyll 10's juxtaposed songs are exceptional for their identical line counts.

³⁴ Bucaeus' song, brief though it is, shows a greater complexity than Milo's song in its use of ring composition and priamel. See Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 38–39; Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes* 62.

³⁵ Cf. the refrain of Idyll 1, Comatas' boast at 7.80, and Simichidas' description of Lycidas at 7.95.

pragmatic and perhaps realistic fashion, seeks a bountiful crop (42–43), while Bucaeus requests aid in singing about his beloved (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, consistent with literary depictions of laborers that establish the foundation for his fiction, sets work as the thematic focus of his song, which amounts to an amalgam of Hesiodic motifs.³⁶ The invocations, then, contain the same polarization found throughout the poem but also set the songs in different fictional worlds, 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.³⁷ The songs are more than opposites in theme: they, like their composers, operate on the basis of the conventions of different fictional worlds.

After calling upon the Muses, Bucaeus explains that everything they touch becomes beautiful (ὄν γάρ χ' ἄψησθε, θεαί, καλὰ πάντα ποεῖτε, 25). This line is significant for what it implies about the relationship between song and beauty. One could perhaps interpret it to mean that the Muses bestow beauty upon the songs they touch, since poetry and song tra-

³⁶ Giuseppe Lentini, “Amore ‘fuori luogo’. Presenze saffiche ed esiodee nell’Idillio 10 di Teocrito,” *SCO* 46 (1998) 903–907, at 905–906; Whitehorne, *AUMLA* 41 (1974) 42.

³⁷ Did Theocritus intend 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. Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, “Bucolic Singers of the Short Song,” in M. Fantuzzi and T. Papanghelis (eds.), *Brill’s Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral Poetry* (Leiden 2006) 25–52, at 34, also finds a parallel between the private songs of Bucaeus and Lycidas in contrast to the public performances of Milo and Simichidas.

ditionally fall under their auspices. But the relative pronoun could as easily refer to the subject of the songs they inspire, so that the Muses (that is, song) grant an artificial beauty to Bucaeus' Bombyca, whom Milo has already described in less than flattering terms. The notion that song lends beauty to its subject might not by itself attract attention, but the question of Bombyca's beauty appears with noticeable frequency and is treated in a remarkable way.

Bombyca provides perhaps the clearest example of the breakdown of the bucolic world's conventions caused by pressure from Milo's different worldview. In the difficult lines 17–18,³⁸ 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 might think of the Cyclops of Idyll 11 or Simaetha of Idyll 2, but those situations are not quite the same. The Cyclops 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 desire will not find satisfaction from their beloveds, yet they continue to idealize them. 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. Bucaeus asserts that, while others see Bombyca's imperfections, he sees her beauty: Βομβύκα χαρίεσσα, Σύραν καλέοντί τυ πάντες, / ισχνάν, ἀλιόκαυστον, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον (24–25). The lover's idealization of his beloved is frequent in literature, but the motif of the lover recasting his beloved's faults occurs most

³⁸ See Gow, *Theocritus* II 197–198.

famously in Plato.³⁹ At *Resp.* 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: *σιμός, ἐπίχαρις κληθεὶς ἐπαινεθήσεται ὑφ’ ὑμῶν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ γρυπὸν βασιλικόν φατε εἶναι, τὸν δὲ δὴ διὰ μέσου τούτων ἐμμετρώτατα ἔχειν, μέλανας δὲ ἀνδρικοῦς ἰδεῖν, λευκοῦς δὲ θεῶν παῖδας εἶναι· μελιχλῶρους δὲ καὶ τοῦνομα οἶει τινὸς ἄλλου ποίημα εἶναι ἢ ἐραστοῦ ὑποκοριζομένου τε καὶ εὐχερῶς φέροντος τὴν ὠχρότητα, ἐὰν ἐπὶ ὥρα ᾗ;* 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 degree of ridiculousness to love generally and to Bucaeus in particular. The Platonic intertext is particularly striking in contrast to 6.18–19, *ἦ γὰρ ἔρωτι / πολλάκις, ὦ Πολύφαμε, τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται.* This passage, 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 *Idyll* 10. On the contrary, Daphnis’ words repackage the same notion of idealization as a bit of gnomic wisdom. In *Idyll* 6, at least, Polyphemus may appear ridiculous, but love is taken quite seriously.

After their invocations the two songs diverge in both theme and overall structure. 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. 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 of her given by everyone else (26–27). Bucaeus sets himself unashamedly against the collective opinion of all the other reapers by proclaiming the beauty of his beloved Bombyca. Milo too follows his invocation to Demeter by introducing an external judgment into his song, but his method is opposite to Bucaeus’ approach. Instead of addressing a single person, Milo speaks to

³⁹ Robert Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex* (Leiden 1987) 128; for discussion of this motif with extensive citations of its use in ancient literature, 280–283.

the binders and warns them to bind the sheaves lest someone criticize their idleness: σφίγγετ', ἀμαλλοδέται, τὰ δράγματα, μὴ παριῶν τις / εἶπη, “σύκιννοι ἄνδρες· ἀπώλετο χούτος ὁ μισθός” (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 (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 44–45, a different significance for Bucaeus’ idealization emerges. Unlike Milo, who directs the workers in his song, Bucaeus appears as an isolated figure by setting himself against the majority opinion. Shepherd-poets, appropriately associated with Bucaeus, are solitary characters, particularly in their distance from the reader’s reality but also in their physical isolation from other characters. The shepherd-poet’s love isolates him both physically and emotionally.⁴⁰ 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.

Bucaeus’ own phrasing at 26–27 suggests his isolation as a lover (ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος) and his distance from the mindset of everyone else (πάντες). Yet Milo’s address to the binders and his warning that someone might think them lazy completely overturns Bucaeus’ isolation by emphasizing the collective nature of work.⁴¹ Because Bucaeus is a reaper instead of a

⁴⁰ For the lover’s isolation see D. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry* (Princeton 1994) 169; Charles Isenburg and D. Konstan, “Pastoral Desire: The Third Idyll of Theocritus,” *Dalhousie Review* 64 (1984) 302–315; G. Giangrande, “Aphrodite and the Oak-Trees,” *MPhL* 2 (1977) 177–186, at 179.

⁴¹ Acosta-Hughes, in *Brill’s Companion* 32, also notes the contrast between Bucaeus’ song meant for a private audience (Bombyca) and Milo’s meant for a public one.

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 *σύνιοι ἄνδρες* whose wages are wasted. The fiction of the bucolic lover's idle solitude comes to the fore through his transplantation into the agricultural world's fiction and fully emerges only when the songs of the two reapers are directly compared.

After the initial two couplets, it becomes difficult to discern structural patterns such as those that characterize the songs' beginnings. The central couplets show more contrast than similarity, as Bucaeus defends his beloved's beauty and Milo continues in didactic fashion; yet beneath the differences that set the songs apart are subtle thematic connections, the first of which emerges 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: *ἄ αἴξ τὰν κύτισον, ὁ λύκος τὰν αἶγα διώκει, / ἄ γέρανος τώροτρον· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ τὴν μεμάνημαι* (30–31). He 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 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 the bucolic imagery that constitutes the entirety of line 30 is all the more jarring given the sudden appearance of agricultural imagery at the beginning of the following line.

Theocritus here seems to be calling attention to his juxtaposition of bucolic and agricultural imagery. Such juxtapositions of course occur throughout the poem, but with an important difference: 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 one another in indicating the natural and instinctual qualities of Bucaeus’ love. Bucaeus implies that his desire for Bombyca mimics relationships natural to the bucolic world (the goat’s desire for clover and the wolf’s for the goat)⁴² as well as the agricultural world (the crane’s for the plow) and so suggests that the desire he feels is common to (or may at least be intelligible to) characters in both worlds. The image of the crane pursuing the plow is of interest 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 the same natural desire that drives the goat and wolf, focusing on the crane’s desire and de-emphasizing the plowman’s interest in the crane.⁴³

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 attempts to bridge that 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 note-

⁴² 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: ταῦτά τε οὖν χροῆ, ὦ παῖ, συννοεῖν, καὶ εἰδέναι τὴν ἐραστοῦ φιλίαν ὅτι οὐ μετ’ εὐνοίας γίνεται, ἀλλὰ σιτίου τρόπον, χάριν πλεσιμονῆς, ὡς λύκοι ἄρνας ἀγαπῶσιν, ὡς παῖδα φιλοῦσιν ἐρασταί (241C–D).

⁴³ For which see esp. Hes. *Op.* 448–451 and Arat. 1.1075–1076 (χαίρει καὶ γεράνων ἀγέλαις ὠραῖος ἀροτροῦς / ὥριον ἐρχομένας).

worthy, does little to overturn the antitheses present throughout the poem and succeeds even less in garnering sympathy from Milo.

A final point of comparison between the songs of Bucaeus and Milo: each singer addresses the topic of wealth in the second half of his song. 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, but it is always depicted according to rustic notions 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 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 an unattainable beloved. Instead, he wants to dedicate statues of himself and Bombyca to Aphrodite: αἶθε μοι ἦς ὅσσα Κροϊσόν ποκα φαντὶ πεπᾶσθαι / χρύσειοι ἀμφοτέρω κ' ἀνεκείμεθα τῷ Ἀφροδίτῃ (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 not only impossible to obtain but also uncharacteristic of a shepherd-poet. Bucaeus' expression, then, requires some explanation.

The unbucolic nature of Bucaeus' remarks at 32–35 and the position those remarks hold in the song—immediately before his *aporia*—are indicative of Bucaeus' overall failure to sing a successful bucolic song. The idealized bucolic existence initially present in the song shifts perspective as Bucaeus imagines himself a wealthy man. Lines 34–37 reveal not only his breakdown in thought but, more importantly, his jumbling of bucolic and unbucolic imagery. Bombyca will be represented by a golden statue bearing *auloi* and either a rose or an apple. This image already incongruously combines images of rustic wealth, flowers and fruit, with the gold of the imagined statue. The accoutrements featured in Bucaeus' statue further alienate the more rustic imagery in Bombyca's statue, as his imagination carries him further away from a bucolic idealization. His final description of his beloved thus becomes nearly incoherent as he uses knuckle-bones and nightshade to describe Bombyca's toes and voice, respectively, revealing the insufficiency of his

imaginative faculty. His previous use of rustic imagery to describe his love for Bombyca (30–31) makes the failure of the song's final lines even more pointed.

Milo's song, too, broaches the topic of wealth, as he expresses his envy of the abundance enjoyed by frogs: εὐκτὸς ὁ τῷ βατράχῳ, παῖδες, βίος· οὐ μελεδαίνει / τὸν τὸ πεῖν ἐγγεῦντα, πάρεστι γὰρ ἄφθονον αὐτῷ (52–53). Traditional notions of wealth do not intrude into Milo's song; instead, his consistent rustic approach offers a corrective for Bucaeus' divergence from bucolic song. Milo's song, of course, is not bucolic, but it does offer an idealization of work analogous to Bucaeus' attempt to idealize his love and, like bucolic song, maintains a rustic focus for its imagery. Milo's successful rustic idealization underscores Bucaeus' failure, further deconstructing the conventions of bucolic song.

The bucolic experiment of Idyll 10 provides a unique perspective on Theocritus' bucolic poetry and his fictional approach. Bucaeus' attempt to perform bucolic song meets with failure at every turn: he sings only at Milo's prompting, diminishes his idealization of Bombyca by repeating the derogatory claims of others, neglects his bucolic archetypes, strays from bucolic imagery, and, finally, proves himself incapable of maintaining his imaginative escape. The points at which his song breaks down are juxtaposed with Milo's successful song, which properly adheres to the form of a bucolic song despite its agricultural focus. Bucolic song, removed from its particular fictional world and failing in its instantiation, reveals its inner workings, as elements that are usually integrated smoothly serve as a jarring contrast to Milo's model of agricultural song. The confrontation of bucolic and unbucolic characters that affords the opportunity for this bucolic experiment also prevents the poem from being easily classified. Idyll 10's position in the Theocritean corpus must perhaps remain ambiguous, but its significance to studies of bucolic poetry should not be ignored.

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