

Fluctuation in Theocritus' Style

Gianfranco Fabiano

IN ANALYZING A STYLE one may have recourse to two different but complementary methods. The first consists of a linguistic analysis of the text in order to interpret its features with reference to their aesthetic meaning, so that 'style' in this case will coincide with the particular linguistic system in question. The second method will gather all individual features of language that differentiate this system from others, and then seek to ascertain the aesthetic aim of each deviation from established practice.

In Greek literature 'Hellenistic' is a very general style in itself: as such, it has been defined in terms of contrast with what is generally agreed to be 'Classical'. As a stylistic category it is so comprehensive that it embraces many tendencies shared by the literary, and other, productions of the period as a whole; at the same time such extension makes it so abstract as to be comparable with the concepts of 'Renaissance' and 'Baroque' in Wölfflin's general theory of the history of art, or in other similar typologies.¹ As a matter of fact the several characteristics of Hellenistic poetry often make it difficult to focus on the peculiarities of any given poet. The subject of this essay is one distinctive characteristic of Theocritus' poetry: the fluctuation of stylistic level in the *Idylls*. I shall investigate that fluctuation from two distinct viewpoints, for it can be either (a) an occasional occurrence determined by outside factors, or (b) a device that figures large in the com-

¹ The best-known theory of fundamental artistic styles concerns the history of figurative arts and dates back to H. Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (München 1915); Wölfflin's principles have been consistently applied to literary history by O. Walzel, *Gehalt und Gestalt im dichterischen Kunstwerk* (Berlin 1923). On the stylistic tendencies shared by all Hellenistic poetry see: L. Deubner, "Ein Stilprinzip hellenistischer Dichtkunst," *NJbb* 47 (1921) 361-78; R. Pfeiffer, "The Future of Studies in the Field of Hellenistic Poetry," *JHS* 75 (1955) 69-73; M. Treu, "Selbstzeugnisse Alexandrinischer Dichter," *Miscellanea . . . A. Rostagni* (Torino 1963) 273-90. On the peculiar way with which such common tendencies are assimilated and ulteriorly worked out by Latin poets see: W. Kroll, *Studien zur Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart 1924), esp. ch. 9 "Die Kreuzung der Gattungen" pp.202-24; E. Reitzenstein, "Zur Stiltheorie des Kallimachos," *Festschrift R. Reitzenstein* (Leipzig 1931) 23-69.

position of almost every idyll and therefore to be regarded as one of the most remarkable elements in Theocritus' poetics.

The outside factors which can provoke some strong ups and downs in an author's stylistic graph are likely to be essentially two, quite apart from the development of his style from earlier to later: (a) imitation, either slavish or free, of a literary model; (b) conditioning, either strict or loose, of the style by the literary genre. It is obvious that the more the influence of these factors in Theocritus' poetry is minimized, the more the variation in stylistic pitch will turn out to be a feature not only deeply rooted in the poetics of the *Idylls*, but also strictly connected with the very core of Theocritus' poetry.

Clearly style can be relevant to questions of authenticity and date: Plato's work, in particular, has revealed itself as a test case for the application of the statisticolinguistic method. But a recent monograph, *Studies in the Styles of Plato*,² not much inclined to chronological inferences, shows by its plural title how style may be conceived as something apart from the linear development of an author's language in time. It may be thought of as a varying linguistic composition which the author is always able to master easily enough. This radical alternation, that is to say the more or less rigid control under which the author can keep his means of expression by leading them in a certain direction, often undermines studies of stylistic development, for sometimes it is very difficult to decide between natural evolution and occasional deviation. To cite a clear example: on reading the short Oreithyia fragment (281 Nauck), shall the *Stilforscher* merely take note of an exceedingly bombastic stage in Aeschylus' style, or rather accept Stanford's suggestion³ of a deliberate connection between such a bombast and the speaker Boreas?

Theocritus' *Idyll* 11, the Cyclops in love, confronts us with this alternative. Since it shows both harsh metrical irregularities and rough Doric forms which do not occur elsewhere in Theocritus, Wilamowitz viewed them as the clear evidence of a technique not yet capable

² H. Thesleff, *Studies in the Styles of Plato* (Helsinki 1967). The subject of the monograph is the varying structure of Plato's writings as well as the function of the various styles which can be distinguished also within the same dialogue.

³ W. B. Stanford, *Aeschylus in his Style* (Dublin 1942) 10. Particularly F. R. Earp, *The Style of Sophocles* (Cambridge 1944), is well aware of the always possible alternative between the chronological evolution of stylistic features and the adjustment of style to theme, so that he can convincingly account for some 'archaic' features in the *Electra*, which as such are left outside the picture of 'normal' evolution.

of mastering the hexameter and therefore judged the idyll as juvenile production.⁴ On the same ground Rudolph Stark comes to a radically different and perhaps more reasonable conclusion—"zu einem Kyklopengesang gehört eine Kyklopenmetrik," to use his own words.⁵ As a matter of fact Theocritus never attained to Callimachus' flawless metrical technique; but if one takes into consideration how shrewdly in the *Συρακόσια* the hexameter of the dialogue is varied from the hexameter of the song of the *γυνή ἀοιδός*,⁶ it will be difficult to think that the metrical irregularities of *Idyll* 11, in perfect keeping as they are with forms such as *τεοῦς* and *τεῦς* (vv.25, 52, 55), *τίν* (vv.39, 55, 68), *ἀφίκευσο* (v.42), *μαθεῦμαι* (v.60), *λαθέσθαι* construed with the infinitive (v.63), are not aimed at as particularly fitting Polyphemus.

It is possible to date with some precision only *Idylls* 15, 16 and 17; however, in spite of its variety, Theocritus' style hardly shows any symptom of evolution: *Idyll* 11 would be a unique case. As far as themes are concerned, the *ἔκφρασις* of the cup in *Idyll* 1 (vv.27ff) and the descriptions of a spring and meadow in the *Hymn to the Dioskouroi* (*Id.* 22.37ff) certainly demonstrate that the epic Theocritus can be found in the pastoral, and the bucolic Theocritus can also be found in the so-called *epyllia*. In this respect already *Idyll* 16, one of the poet's first works, contains in embryo almost all the Theocritean possibilities of theme and of expression.⁷ In it the variety in style corresponds to the variety of the themes, either subtly hinted at or treated at length: a lively mimic foreshortening with proverbial sentences put into the mouth of anonymous characters (vv.16ff), a parade of Homeric figures

⁴ U. von Wilamowitz, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Bukoliker* (Berlin 1906) 159.

⁵ R. Stark, "Theocritea," *Maia* n.s.15 (1963) 374.

⁶ In the mimic part of *Idyll* 15 (vv.1–95) there are 12 instances of caesura after the fourth foot with monosyllabic thesis. P. Maas, *Griechische Metrik* (Leipzig 1929) 34, has acutely defined such a treatment of the 'bucolic bridge' "eine Parallele zu der Bedeutung der Porsonsche Brücke bei der Differenzierung des komischen Trimeters gegen den tragischen und paratragischen."

⁷ Scholars do not agree about the true nature of *Idyll* 16: see lately W. Meincke, *Untersuchungen zu der enkomiastischen Gedichten Theokrits* (Diss. Kiel 1965) 31–84, and, for a radically different viewpoint, J. H. Austin, "Theocritus and Simonides," *TAPA* 98 (1967) 1–27, who goes further in a direction first pointed out by R. Merkelbach, "Bettelgedichte (Theokrit und Simonides)," *RhM* 95 (1952) 312–27. However that may be, if G. V. Plekhanov, *Art and Society* (New York 1936), is correct in stating that the theory of art for art's sake is usually brought out when artists feel quite distinctly a hopeless contradiction between their own purposes and those of the society in which they are operating, Theoc. *Id.* 16 is in my view of prime importance to the study of Hellenistic poetry, inasmuch as it is the best evidence of a deep break between poets and a large audience.

which significantly does not forget either Eumaeus or Philoetius (v.55), a pastoral vision of the Sicilian countryside contrasted with the ruin caused by the Carthaginians (vv.90ff),⁸ even a rare allusion to a cult of the Charites in Orchomenos (v.105). In other words, already in his early poem addressed to Hiero, Theocritus appears as a mimic-bucolic poet, as an epic poet and even as a *poeta doctus*.

What I have mentioned before as an embarrassing alternative to studies of stylistic evolution, that is to say the adaptability of the language to the situation or to the character, is in Theocritus an appropriate method, especially where his poetry unfolds in swift dialogues as in the so-called Urban Mimes. In two of them Theocritus draws inspiration from Sophron, and even for the third some scholars would refer to an obscure Sophronean source;⁹ but for the proper appraisal of the sophisticated technique we must not forget that in this area Hellenistic poetry has also been able to turn to account the lesson of fourth-century rhetoric, in particular Lysias' sparkling ἡθοποιία. Thus Herodas' *Mimiambi*, though they are a linguistic compromise between an archaic impure Ionic vocabulary¹⁰ and an Attic syntax, aim nevertheless at a vivid reproduction of the characters' speech, even when they are applied to eccentric situations, as for instance Battaros' pleading in the tribunal of Cos (*Mim.* 2). In the mime, which is an

⁸ The sharp contrast between two situations, of which *Id.* 16.88ff is a first example, is often exploited by Theocritus in order to achieve dramatic results. A wide and sympathetic survey of the multifarious types of contrast in Theocritus' poetry has been worked out by U. Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes in Theokrits Hirtengedichten* (Hildesheim 1969). Ott's monograph is restricted to the Bucolic Idylls, but the best cases of dramatizing contrast can be found rather in the Epyllia: at *Id.* 22.44ff the wild giant Amycus is suddenly introduced after the idyllic description of a *locus amoenus*; at *Id.* 24.12ff the peaceful scene with the children Heracles and Iphicles lulled to sleep by Alcmene is followed by the invasion of the dreadful snakes; again at *Id.* 26.12 the calmness of the Bacchae celebrating their rites is abruptly broken off by the inhuman shriek of Autonoe, who has noticed Pentheus spying upon them. Laying stress on a whole series of polar oppositions H. Hommel, "Bemerkungen zu Theokrits Pharmakeutria," *WS* 69 (1956) 187–202, has exemplarily interpreted *Id.* 2: e.g. evocation of nature within a domestic setting; sorrowful reality against the unreality conjured up by the magic practice; Simaetha torn by love addressing an unmoved Selene; Simaetha, lower middle-class girl, in the arms of a lover clearly belonging to local *jeunesse dorée*. On similar grounds J. H. Kuhn, "Die Thalysien Theokrits," *Hermes* 86 (1958) 40–79, has discovered in *Id.* 7 many oppositions which are likely to be a keystone for understanding Theocritus' poetry as a whole.

⁹ See Ph. E. Legrand, *Bucoliques grecs*⁵ (Paris 1960) I.107f, and A. Olivieri, *Frammenti della commedia greca e del mimo nella Sicilia e nella Magna Grecia* (Napoli 1930) 198f.

¹⁰ That Herodas' language is by no means pure Ionic has been made clear by D. Bo, *La lingua di Eroda* (Torino 1962).

artistic form affected by Hellenistic poetry quite as much as the epigram, the ἠθοποιία is really a feature of prime importance; its practice brings many colloquialisms also into the language of Theocritus' mimes 14 and 15, which doubtless issue from a need for realistic representation: but what in them creates an impression of immediacy and closeness to everyday speech is not so much the sporadic appearance of vulgarisms as the breaking of the dialogue's structure by frequent ἀντιλαβαί and the piling up of proverbs and proverbial sentences. There are also many proverbs in Herodas and in New Comedy (here usually in the mouth of the slaves), but a note of Demetrius, *De Elocutione* 156, refers to their frequency in Sophron's *Mimes*, and thus we can see that proverbs were a peculiar feature of the literary mime from its very beginning.

This issue is connected with the general question of Theocritus' realism as it is reflected by the poet's language. As far as the Urban Mimes are concerned 'realism' is a pertinent category, and even if the origin of many proverbs is likely to be literary, that does not at all affect their colloquial aim. But also the Bucolic Idylls have been often judged in terms of realism by assuming, for instance, that in them the varying distribution of Doricisms depends on their greater or lesser realism.¹¹ We can hardly insist on such correspondence; furthermore we cannot appeal to critical parameters of pastoral which are inadequate to grasp the genre as a whole. Besides, *Idyll* 15 itself, in spite of all its colloquialisms and Syracusan forms,¹² will perhaps prove to be the best text to support the view that Theocritus does not seek realistic effects by means of linguistic coherence: in fact, when the ξένος finds fault with Gorgo's and Praxinoa's Doric (vv.87f), he does so

¹¹ Nineteenth-century scholars generally tended to think that the language of the *Idylls* was in close connection with the more or less realistic contents of the single poems. Such an approach is already implied in [Probus'] words *ad Verg. Buc. 326f* ed. H. Hagen: *Bucolica Theocritus facilius videtur fecisse, quoniam Graecus sermo sic videtur divisus, ut Doris dialectos, qua ille scripsit, rustica habeatur*. Thus for instance L. Morsbach, *De dialecto Theocritea* (Diss. Bonn 1874) 9, would have liked to find out "qualem in variis dialectorum formis eligendis vim habeant idylliorum aut argumenta aut personae aut ipse rerum locus quae aguntur." See now, for the many incoherences within Theocritus' linguistic system, C. Gallavotti, *Theocritus quique feruntur bucolici Graeci*³ (Roma 1955) lxiii ff, and *idem, Lingua, tecnica e poesia negli idilli di Teocrito* (Roma 1952).

¹² V. Magnien goes too far when in his stimulating paper "Le syracusain littéraire et l'idylle xv de Théocrite," *MémSocLingParis* 21 (1920) 43–85, 112–38, he tries to maintain that *Id. 15* is written in pure Syracusan dialect. Quite apart from a non-Doric future such as φυλάξομαι (v.72) and many other points, would 'Syracusan' Praxinoa have used e.g. θεεπέσιος (v.66)?

by using the same dialect. It cannot be a matter of parodic irony, since another foreigner has already spoken Doric at vv.72f, and many Doricisms appear also in the song of the *γυνή αοιδός*. To sum up, Theocritus never follows Aristophanes' procedure in reproducing dialects, not even in the Urban Mimes; on the contrary his artistic language always holds fast to its artfulness, so that stylistic variation inside the same idyll does not depend on breaks in the convention of the dialect but on differences of vocabulary, theme and feelings, as a simple comparison between the mimic and the sung part of the *Συρακόσιαι* proves.

Idyll 14 is full of colloquialisms. It begins, like Plato's *Ion*, with the greeting formula *χαίρειν πολλά* echoed by an *ἄλλα τοιαῦτα* exactly corresponding to Italian *altrettanto*; the will to imitate folk-speech is further apparent in the unusual number of proverbs (11 in the idyll's 70 lines), in prose sentences such as *παίδεις . . . ἔχων* (v.8) and in many verbal ellipses which affect not only the copula (vv.3, 11, 22, 46) but also other verbs (vv. 2, 21, 51, 68).¹³ Yet this time too the tone rises up suddenly at the end with the praise of Ptolemy Philadelphos; it rises up so high as to culminate in an image (vv.66f) whose origin is down-right Tyrtean (cf. *Tyrt.* fr.10.31):

. . . ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροις δὲ βεβακῶς
τολμασεῖς ἐπιόντα μένειν θρασὺν ἀσπιδιώταν.

The contrast between such a heroic sublimation of an Aeschines portrayed in the front line of battle and the comic way in which the same character had been introduced at vv.4f, with his beard and hair ruffled like a hungry Pythagorist,

χὼ μύσταξ πολὺς οὗτος, αἰσταλέοι δὲ κίκιννοι,
τοιούτος πρῶαν τις ἀφίκετο Πυθαγορικτάς,

could not be sharper.

¹³ For *ἄλλα τοιαῦτα* (doubtless a correct conjecture by Reiske) see A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus*² (Cambridge 1952) II.247; as for the colloquial color of *παίδεις . . . ἔχων*, Kühner-Gerth II.2.62 state: "Diese Redeformel wird stets in tadelndem Sinne gebraucht und ist ohne Zweifel aus der Volkssprache geflossen" (with many examples from Aristophanes and Plato); finally Gow has no word for the stylistic connotation of the ellipses in *Id.* 14: about them in Latin, especially when verbs of movement are concerned, J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Umgangssprache*³ (Heidelberg 1951) 171 says: "Eine ganze Reihe von Ellipsen sind speziell dem Briefstil eigen. So sind in Ciceros Briefen die Verben der Bewegung und Ortsruhe in gewissen Wendungen regelmässig unterdrückt."

The adaptation of the language to the theme is not always necessarily a realistic one as in the case of the colloquialisms in the Urban Mimes: it may be a far more eccentric adaptation, occasional or allusive. In Theocritus' poetic language there are adaptations considerably more complex than a Simaetha swearing *ναὶ τὰς Μοίρας* (*Id.* 2.160) with a formula peculiar to Cos,¹⁴ or than Syracusan women swearing *ναὶ τὰν πότνιαν* (*Id.* 15.14), where scholia hasten to note *εὖ δὲ τὰς Συρακοσίας ταύτην ὀμνῦναι*. For instance when, making fun of the lovesick Boucaeus, Milon says (*Id.* 10.18), *μάντις τοι τὰν νύκτα χροῖξείται καλαμαία*, certainly he chooses an image quite appropriate to the cornfield where the two reapers are working: in a way the setting, though it is not expressly mentioned, determines the language by projecting itself onto the characters. But at other times this same activity works far less directly. That is what happens at *Idyll* 2.51, . . . *λιπαρᾶς ἔκτοσθε παλαίστρας*, where Gow remarks somewhat pedantically that for the palaestra *λιπαρά* is the right adjective, "from the *ἀλειφόμενοι* who frequent it," quoting in addition the Latin *unctae, nitidae palaestrae*;¹⁵ I think that in fact *λιπαρά* anticipates the admiration of the protagonist for Delphis' shining breast, brighter than the moon as she says: cf. *Idyll* 2.79 *στήθεα δὲ ἐτίλβοντα πολὺ πλεόν ἢ τὴν Σελάναν*, and also 102f . . . *τὸν λιπαρόχρων | . . . Δέλφιν*. In this case the outside world is not any longer determining as the cornfield was; on the contrary it is itself determined by the inner emotional world, so that *λιπαρά*, far from being a descriptive adjective as Gow implies, turns out to be a highly affective one. Likewise at *Idyll* 7.53f, 57f the description of the sea-storm borders definitely on metaphor, which is so rare in Theocritus, for it is an open symbolic projection of the heart-quake of Lycidas in love.¹⁶

In the idyll which is the amusing reversal of the story of the Cyclops in love the poet says of Galatea that, in order to draw Polyphemus' attention, she *τὸν ἀπὸ γραμμᾶς κινεῖ λίθον* (*Id.* 6.18). Scholia state that it is a proverbial expression connected with some kind of game wherein the player who was about to lose made a final attempt with a decisive move.¹⁷ This passage is an example of what I have called 'allusive

¹⁴ The formula is likely to be characteristic of Cos, for elsewhere it recurs only in Herodas, three times: 1.11, 66; 4.30.

¹⁵ Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) II.45.

¹⁶ Ott, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 152f.

¹⁷ *Schol.* VI 18/19 g-k (Wendel).

adaptation' because, by pretending to be in love with the Cyclops, Galatea is really playing.

Some conclusions are now possible: (a) from a chronological standpoint there are no stylistic features which oblige us to distinguish an earlier Theocritus from a later one; (b) in a paradigmatic poem such as *Idyll* 16 the shifting of the style is synchronized rather firmly with the variation of the themes: on the other hand, since in Theocritus the fitting of language to theme can be quite varied (we shall see later opposite cases of significant clash), no general conclusion is here possible; (c) even in the Urban Mimes, whose stylistic webbing is the most uniform of all Theocritus' poems, we meet often with sudden changes of tone.

After the question of chronological development, the second point concerns literary models in so far as they can constitute a significant conditioning of an author's style. In order to understand clearly the relationships between Hellenistic poetry and classical literary tradition, namely the subtle complexities of the allusive codes of most Alexandrian literature and the real degree with which a literary model can provoke a particular atmosphere in the language and style of a Hellenistic work, we must turn our attention to the basic concepts of *μίμησις* and *ζῆλος* as they have been defined by Pasquali and referred to their corresponding Latin terms *imitatio* and *aemulatio*.¹⁸ Outside classical literature a further step in this direction has been made by W. K. Wimsatt, who in a brilliant essay entitled "Imitation as Freedom" has pointed out that in eighteenth-century English literature deviation from models led to freedom, individual expression and witty amusement only in so far as the models were kept in mind as bases from which new poetic meanings were derived.¹⁹

Theocritus' poetry as a whole is suffused with literary stimuli of quite diverse origin. In this respect it is significant that even *Idyll* 28—a lovely short poem which was to accompany a distaff as a gift for Nicias' wife and should therefore have been a quite occasional poem—has in Erinna's *Ἡλακάτη* a precise literary precedent. Many of Theocritus' models—Sophron, Stesichorus, Philoxenus among others—are

¹⁸ G. Pasquali, *Orazio lirico* (Firenze 1920) 119ff, and also A. Reiff, *Interpretatio, imitatio, aemulatio. Begriff und Vorstellung literarischer Abhängigkeit bei den Römern* (Diss. Köln 1959).

¹⁹ Wimsatt's paper, a lecture read at Columbia University in September 1968, has been available to me in an Italian translation: "Imitazione come libertà: 1717-98," *Strumenti Critici* (1969) 208-35.

lost or too little known to make a profitable comparison possible, but from the cases which we can control it is easy to argue that, when Theocritus happens to be imitating, he always presupposes the knowledge of his model in his learned reader. Thus the most perceptive reading of such a poem as the *Herakliskos* (*Id.* 24) will be an integrative one, recalling Pindar's *Nemean* 1, especially where Theocritus is conjuring up Pindar's narrative by contrast. Constant reference to Pindar's text is indeed the best way not only to a fuller understanding of the idyll as a whole but also to the proper appraisal of the slightest details of expression: for instance, when Theocritus qualifies Hera by the adjective *πολυμήχανος* (v.13), no doubt he will be thinking of *Iliad* 15.14, but at the same time he will imply a kind of moral judgement which in Pindar's magnificent *χρυσόθρονον Ἥραν* (*Nem.* 1.37) was quite absent; likewise for *χείρῃσιν . . . ἀπαλαῖσιν* (v.55), to know that Theocritus' *ἀπαλαῖσιν*, so in keeping with the feeling of his poem, has been substituted for the adjective *ἀφύκτοις*, which in Pindar appeared in the same connection (*Nem.* 1.45 *ἀφύκτοις χερσίν*), is just what gives us the measure of the deep gulf between Theocritus and Pindar. Again, at *Idyll* 22.98 Amykos is described as *πληγαῖς μεθύων* because of the many punches landed by Pollux on his face: if we recall *Odyssey* 18.240 . . . *νευστάζων κεφαλῇ μεθύοντι εἰοικῶς*, we can immediately see that Theocritus' expression must have originated not as a metaphor but as a witty concentration of the Homeric simile through two words. Many other examples like these and, more generally, an articulate stylistic typology of Homeric patterns throughout Theocritus' poetry²⁰ can demonstrate that the language of the model is often poetically generative in a style that, like Theocritus' style, never descends to a flat imitation.

The conditioning exerted by the literary genre on the linguistic expression and, as far as Greek is concerned, even on the choice of dialect, makes for a far more complex problem than the occasional convergence between style and more or less eccentric themes or than the dialectal relation between style and a given literary model. In *Mimesis* Auerbach repeatedly lays special stress on the separation of styles in antiquity,²¹ a procedure obviously connected with the same

²⁰ G. Futh, *De Theocriti poetae bucolici studiis Homericis* (Halis Saxonum 1876) should be superseded.

²¹ It is hardly necessary to point out here the weight of two concepts such as 'distinction of styles' and 'mingling of styles' throughout *Mimesis*.

rigid separation of literary genres. In this field studies such as Manu Leumann's article about the *Dichtersprache* of Latin poets²² have shown to what extent the *genos* treated by the poet conditions his expression: even Plautus uses in *Amphitryo* a much higher tone than in his other comedies, Catullus' *carmina docta* stylistically are poles apart from the *nugae*, etc. Furthermore a glance at the wide variety of style inside, e.g., the *Canterbury Tales* demonstrates that this phenomenon is certainly not limited to classical literature. On the other hand, if it is true that the weight of the principle of the *genos* is always to be kept in mind and never to be undervalued, still one must not go too far in the opposite direction: I think N. H. Pearson has here correctly pointed out the proper critical attitude, which would consist of considering literary genres as institutional imperatives, at the same time constraining the writer and being conversely constrained by him.²³

A procedure falling within the Hellenistic ideal of *ποικιλία*, of which Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* with its sophisticated skill of variations in content and form is perhaps the best example, is the blending of traditional genres inside the same poem; in this procedure, technically corresponding to the use of various dialects in their work, to the combination of dialects in the language of the same poem, to the mixture of elements of learned origin with others of popular derivation, Hellenistic poets are really constraining the genres as earlier poets had never done before. In this respect almost every Theocritean idyll is a mosaic: the intrusion of alien elements is more noticeable in the Epyllia, particularly in the *Hymn to the Dioskouroi*,²⁴ but it can be found in the Urban Mimes too (Simaetha's lyric monologue following the spell-mime in *Idyll* 2, Ptolemy's praise in *Idyll* 14, the *γυνή ἀοιδός*' song in *Idyll* 15) and is even the rule in the Bucolic Idylls, where an obvious stylistic distinction depends not only on the character of each poem but also on the color of various parts of the same poem, which

²² M. Leumann, "Die lateinische Dichtersprache," *MusHelv* 4 (1947) 116-38.

²³ N. H. Pearson, "Literary Forms and Types," *English Institute Annual* 1940 (New York 1941) 61-72.

²⁴ A. S. F. Gow, "The Twenty-second Idyll of Theocritus," *CR* 56 (1942) 11-18, has contested with good reasons the unitary composition of *Id.* 22, in which elements peculiar to the hymn mingle together with others which are narrative-epic and mimic-dialogic; many are also the areas of reference to previous literature: from *Hymn.Hom.* 33 to Pind. *Nem.* 10, including the likely use of either a comedy by Epicharmus or a satyr play by Sophocles, both bearing the title *Ἄμυκος*.

can consist of narrative, dialogue and sung sections at the same time. Furthermore the ancient scholia already speak of a *γένος διηγηματικόν, δραματικόν* and *μικτόν*, referring to the structure of the Bucolic Idylls.²⁵ Such a composite structure of Theocritus' poems makes it impossible to focus on them from a single standpoint; it also makes particularly inadequate any statistical and linguistic description of their vocabulary which, by abstracting words from an almost always unforeseeable context, would leave them bereft both of part of their fundamental meaning and of all their nuances of expression.

At this point one must ask oneself whether it will be possible from the critical point of view to propose a unitary interpretation of such a differentiated system of expression and composition, that is to say, whether it will be legitimate to speak of only one style in an author whose most conspicuous peculiarity is his mastery of all styles and genres in order to allow himself the refined pleasure of mingling them together. To such a question traditional stylistic analysis would give a negative answer and would limit itself to registering the differences of tone or, at most, to remarking mechanically the variation of style as it coincides approximately with the variation of genre.

In every poetic text the linguistic material appears in a certain form (Russian formalists would say more strictly 'deformation')²⁶ crystallized according to a certain technique which is to be identified with the *Kunstmittel* organizing the text; it also appears as a signifier of a certain signified. In poetry the signifier may be considered the syllable, the word, the structure of a poem, an author's work as a whole; the signified, on the other hand, is something much more complex and may be defined only approximately as the inner form which becomes sensible by displaying itself in lasting forms through the signifier, that is to say by ceasing to be inside.

With these theoretical remarks in mind I think the best way in which to grasp Theocritus' style in spite of its great unevenness is the method called by Leo Spitzer 'Motiv und Wort' (also 'Werk und Wort'): it relies on the postulate that between the elements of the signifier and those of the signified there is a precise parallelism strengthened by a chain of unbroken interrelations. By 'Motiv' is

²⁵ C. Wendel, *Scholia in Theocritum vetera* (Stuttgart 1914) 4, 11 and *passim*.

²⁶ For an excellent outline of a series of theoretical and methodological issues related to Russian formalism see S. J. Schmidt, "Alltagssprache und Gedichtssprache," *Poetica* 2 (1968) 285-303.

meant everything extraverbal in any poetic text (theme, conception of the work, outlook of the poet on the world, etc.), by 'Wort' the verbal system as the outside crystallization of the inside form, the peculiar way in which the various motifs are endowed with linguistic connotation, in a word the 'so-sein' of the poetic text. Clearly it is only and always the poet who has to determine both the motif and the word; even if tradition puts both elements at his disposal, it is still the poet who has to select those elements and not others. The most remarkable critical benefit of this method for the study of Theocritean poetry is that it will make possible a strict unitary interpretation of the system by applying to the *Idylls* the categories 'lyric', 'epic', 'dramatic', certainly not as synonyms of their respective literary genres but as 'Grundbegriffe der Poetik' according to the meaning pointed out by Emil Staiger on the phenomenological ground of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*.²⁷ Indeed, as a sympathetic reviewer of Staiger puts it, "nie kommt eine Gattungsidee rein und ohne Mitwirkung der andern zur Anschauung. Jede lebendige Dichtung hat Anteil an allen. Ihr Wert wird gerade bestimmt durch das *Mass*, in dem die Gattungsideen zueinander stehen. Dieses *Mass* bedeutet *Harmonie, Übereinstimmung und Zusammenhang* und ist in jedem Werk *Mitte des Seins*" (italics mine).²⁸ Now Theocritus' *Idylls*, in particular the Epyllia, have admittedly a complex character, consisting of narrative, dramatic and lyric elements mingled together and often, if not always, brought into a harmonic whole. A last general remark: when Spitzer, in keeping with the idealistic premises of his criticism, makes expression and intuition, 'langue' and 'parole', literary tradition and individual poetic imagination coincide, he is likely to get too dangerously near the abstract theory of pure poetry. In reality between the two poles there is never full coincidence, for in every poetic text the expression is 'langue' inasmuch as it draws on the linguistic tradition and, at the same time, 'parole' inasmuch as it organizes itself according to a peculiar strategy which tends to achieve an aesthetic aim.²⁹

What seems chiefly to characterize Theocritus' poetic language is the instability of the system at every level, from the least phonetic unity, which always enjoys a considerable autonomy inside the changeable

²⁷ E. Staiger, *Grundbegriffe der Poetik* (Zürich 1946).

²⁸ E. Thurnher in *AnzAlt* 1 (1948) 36.

²⁹ A good informative introduction to Spitzer's literary criticism is J. Hytier, "La méthode de Leo Spitzer," *Romance Review* (1950) 42-59.

convention of the dialect, to the structure of the *Idylls* as complex syntheses of different literary genres. In Theocritus' poetry it is usual to meet with extravagant elements which apparently derive from other fields and clash with the fundamental character of the poem where they appear (e.g., epicisms in the Urban Mimes and in the Bucolic *Idylls*, colloquialisms and local-Doricisms in the *Epyllia*): the impact of these elements on the others is so typical of Theocritus' poetry that it is to be envisaged as one of the features which most distinguish his style.

As Doric is no strictly local dialect, the Doric element alone is already so differentiated that it makes up an unlimited reserve of expression: from common-Doric forms, which may be occasionally endowed with the dignity of choral-lyric tradition, to strictly local and provincial Doric forms. In the *idylls* where the Doric element prevails phonetic surprises follow one another without any apparent rule; furthermore the plight of the manuscripts is such as to make it impossible for editors to restore the original dialectal form.³⁰ For instance at *Idyll* 7.104 an editor may well print the *κείνοιο* of papyri and manuscripts and explain it as the Homeric form of the demonstrative pronoun with stem and ending supporting one another; it is also true that Homeric borrowings such as *βίην καὶ κάρτος* (*Id.* 4.8: cf. *Od.* 18.139) prove generally refractory to the Dorization; but on the other hand, how are we to account for the surprising 'Αφαίστοιο of *Idyll* 2.134 or for an ἀμήχανος at *Idyll* 1.85, which is against Pindaric and Bacchylidean tradition? A form like *κομῶντι* (*Id.* 4.57) combines the epic assimilation -ωο- with the Doric termination -ντι; in ὅπως στασῆ (*Id.* 1.112) and in οὐ μὴ κικρτασεῖτε (*Id.* 1.152) the Doric future creeps into syntactical constructions which seem confined to Attic.³¹ These are only a few examples of incoherence among the very many it would be possible to give.

The same artificiality exemplified by a form like *κομῶντι* or by the use of different genitive endings for two connected words, as at *Idyll* 1.68 *ποταμοῖο . . . Ἀνάπω* or again *Idyll* 2.162 *Ἀκυρίω . . . ξείνοιο* (here of course also metrical convenience may be involved), may extend to an entire sentence, which thus turns out to be shaped by the union of

³⁰ On the difficulties which an editor is bound to face in his attempts to restore the original dialect forms in Theocritus see K. Latte, "Zur Textkritik Theokrits," *GöttNach* (1949) 225-32.

³¹ Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) II.25 and 32.

two syntagms of very different stylistical provenance. That is what happens, for instance, at *Idyll* 1.18 *δριμεῖα χολὰ* (a) *ποτὶ ῥινὶ κάθηται* (b), where (a) is a slight variation of *Iliad* 18.322 *δριμύς χόλος*, while (b) is an expression definitely vulgar, better known to us as a colloquialism from Herodas 6.37f: *μη δὴ, Κοριττοῖ, τὴν χολὴν ἐπὶ ῥινός | ἔχ' εὐθύς*. Shortly afterwards, quite similar is *τυρόεντα* (a) *λευκοῖο γάλακτος* (b) (*Id.* 1.58), that is to say (a) an elliptic and perhaps idiomatic expression for 'cheese' (cf. Sophron fr.14 Kaibel *ἄρτον τυρῶντα*, with the Doric form rejected by Theocritus) and (b) a Homeric clausula (cf. *Od.* 9.246). Still the same phenomenon recurs when an epic periphrasis is immediately followed by another one diametrically opposed to the former, as at *Idyll* 13.11f:

*οὐθ' ὀπόχ' ἄ λεύκιππος ἀνατρέχοι ἐς Διὸς Ἄώς,
οὐθ' ὀπόκ' ὀρτάλιχοι μινυροὶ ποτὶ χοῖτον ὄρῳεν.*

This tension of opposite elements in words and sentences and also in two sentences in succession is the dynamic device of composition according to which almost every idyll is built up. It is a matter of well calculated distribution of complementary stylistic tones which through their functional opposition warrant the poetic unity of the poems.

Since what concerns stylistic analysis is precisely the contrast between the linguistic system of a literary work and the general practice of the time when it was written, for the study of Hellenistic poets it is sometimes possible and helpful to turn to account the knowledge of Greek language which we get from the third-century papyri. In fact a system of expression is of interest not only for what it is (namely for the grid of the *syntagmatic* relations intercurrent among its elements) but also, to the same degree, for what it is not (that is to say for a complex of *paradigmatic* relations), for language becomes a procedure of style only when the possibility of choice is there.³² In the

³² The relevance of the Zenon papyri to the study of Theocritus' poetic language was first pointed out by K. Latte in a somewhat ruthless review of Gow's first edition (*Gnomon* 23 [1951] 252–57): "Wie man im 5. und 4. Jh. in Athen sprach, wissen wir nicht, und damit entgeht uns die Umbildung, die die Schriftsteller mit der gesprochenen Sprache vornahmen, um ihren Stil zu formen. Für das 3. Jh. sind wir durch den Fund der Zenonarchiv in anderer Lage. Weithin können wir in der Wortwahl das Äquivalent der Umgangssprache angeben, dem Theokrit auswich, gelegentlich sogar für syntaktische Gruppen, genau wie schon bisher die Umformung 'homerischer' Wendungen in dieser Poesie sich aufzeigen liess" (p.253).

Hellenistic period, when the *κοινή* asserts itself decisively, the 'Dialektisierung' as such implies in the poets a clear refusal of everyday speech, yet Zenon papyri and the later but linguistically archaic magic papyri put at our disposal not rare and occasional convergencies of vocabulary but a good gleaning of everyday expressions which have been transformed and often altered beyond recognition by Theocritus. To give a few examples: at *Idyll* 2.3 *καταδήσομαι*, aorist subjunctive with short vowel, is a *hapax* in that it is a middle of interest; but the active voice of the verb as well as the noun *κατάδεσμος* are technical terms frequently recurring in magic practice: cf. *Tab.Defix.* 71.2 (iii B.C.), *PMag.Par.* 1.2176 etc. Another word belonging to the same sphere is *τέλος* at *Idyll* 2.14, where the sentence *ἐς τέλος ἄμμιν ὀπάδει* is a solemn literary refinement of a concept which magic papyri express through the imperative *τέλεσον*: e.g. *PMag.* 4.2095. A strong wish to stray from the usual word often brings about obscure expressions: near the relatively simple *δρυὸς ἄκρα* (= *ἀκρόδρυα*) of *Idyll* 15.112 there is the similar but much more problematic *σταθμὰ κοῖλα θυράων* of *Idyll* 24.15, which is comprehensible only on the ground of the *θυρίδας κοιλοστάθμους* of *PPetr.* 3 p.143 (iii B.C.).³³

The high index of literary elaboration in Theocritus' style which emerges from comparison with the language of third-century papyri is hardly a matter of surprise in a poet who affects one poetic expression heightened from another, likewise poetic but more usual, such as e.g. *Idyll* 1.37 *ρίπτει νόον* for *τρέπει νόον*. Depending on the context this artificiality also gives rise to high tensions of style. The best example is perhaps the *Hylas* (*Id.* 13), where the *callidae iuncturae* *πολλοὶ δὲ μίαν* (v.33), *μίαν ἄμφω* (v.38) and the repetitions *Νύμφαι . . . Νύμφαι* (vv.43f), *κατήριπε . . . ἤριπεν* (vv.49f), *ἄθρόος . . . ἄθρόος* (vv.50f), *τρίς . . . τρίς* (vv.58f) indicate that particular formal effects are here aimed at by the poet. To my purpose it is however more relevant to note that in the *Hylas* words and sentences belonging plainly to prose, such as a *πεποναμένος* (v.14) which in this very meaning appears also in *PCair.Zen.* 59378.16, *ὦν ὄφελός τι* (v.18), *ὄσσα* for *ὅτι τόσα* (v.66), *ὁ δ' ἔπειδος ἄγον ἐχώρει* (v.70), alternate closely with a whole series of expressions in which more usual poeticisms are avoided and replaced by rarer ones:

v.21 *εὐέδρον*, very rare for the common *εὐσελμος*

v.28 *καθιδρυθέντες*, poetic for *ἐζόμενοι*

³³ The expression of *Id.* 24.15 is discussed at length by Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) II.419.

- v.30 ὄρμον ἔθεντο, poetic refinement of the usual ὄρμον ποιεῖσθαι
 v.43 χορὸν ἀρτίζοντο, an affected expression replacing χορὸν ἱστᾶναι,
 χορὸν ποιεῖσθαι.

Yet, in spite of the far-fetched side of his vocabulary, which together with the artfulness of the dialectal pastiche aims at novelty of expression, a descriptive analysis of Theocritus' vocabulary as a whole would reveal an almost unbelievable poverty. In this respect Theocritus and Callimachus are poles apart: it would be impossible to find in the former anything comparable to the procedure through which the latter substitutes e.g. εὐκαμπές ἄεμμα for the Homeric καμπύλα τόξα in the same metrical position (Callim. *Hymn.* 3.10).³⁴ Theocritus is not a great inventor of words, nor does he commit himself strongly to epithets or to compounds, which even if new are generally not very original.³⁵ A lexical investigation of *Idyll* 6, for example, would demonstrate this surprising simplicity of expression. There the adjective καλός, sometimes absolutely colorless, recurs very often in a few lines: v.11 καλὰ κύματα, v.14 χροὰ καλόν, v.19 τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται, v.36 καλὰ μὲν τὰ γένεια, καλὰ δέ μευ ἅ μία κώρα, v.43 καλὸν αὐλόν.

Exactly the same polarity between affected preciousness and extreme simplicity may be found in the syntactical field. Here the poet allows himself some attitudes peculiar to Homeric syntax,³⁶ some very bold attractions,³⁷ odd irregularities in the order of the words,³⁸ but with regard to the succession of sentences, parataxis rules uncontested, happily harmonized both with a tendency to make the end of the sentence and the end of the line coincide and with the shortness and

³⁴ See H. Herter, "Kallimachos," *RE Suppl.* 5 (1931) 445–52 ("Stil und Kunst").

³⁵ See Ph. E. Legrand, *Étude sur Théocrite* (Paris 1898) 233–403, where attitudes akin to Cobet's kind of criticism are not missing. A simple glance at such common words as ἀδύς, γλυκός, καλός in Rumpel's *Lexicon Theocriteum* (Leipzig 1879) could demonstrate that Theocritus is not deeply concerned with varying his adjectives; moreover, new but very easy compounds formed through e.g. βαρυ-, δακυ-, πολυ- are somewhat affected by him: cf. βαρυγούνατος 18.10, βαρυμάνιος 15.138, δακύθριξ 7.15, δακύκερκος 5.112, πολυκίτης 17.98, πολύνας 15.109, πολύσταχος 10.42.

³⁶ Among the most remarkable examples: (i) the construction called 'dativus sympatheticus' by E. Löfstedt, *Syntactica*² (Lund 1928) I.236, like *Od.* 6.155ff μάλα ποῦ εφει θυμός . . . ἰαίνεται . . . λευκόντων, of which there are in Theocritus three cases: 2.78ff, 2.82f, 7.25f; (ii) the feature ὡς . . . ὡς . . . ὡς . . . modelled on *Il.* 14.294 and appearing in Theocritus at 2.82 and 3.42.

³⁷ For instance *Id.* 17.66 ὄλβιε κοῦρε γένοιο, an attraction of vocative, on which see J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* (Basel 1920) I.308; *Id.* 15.148 χώνηρ ὄξος ἄπαν (instead of ἄπας): see Wackernagel I.52.

³⁸ On the order of words in Theocritus see Legrand, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.35) 369–75.

swiftness of the passages. (By the way, *Idylls* 7.148ff and 16.34ff are the longest periods in Theocritus.)

Although the varying convention of dialect shifts from an artificial Doric absolutely devoid of uniformity in the Bucolic *Idylls*, where the Doric coloring varies strongly in degrees according to the character of each idyll, and in the Urban Mimes (including also *Idylls* 18 and 26) to the pure epic-Ionic of the *Idylls* 12 and 22,³⁹ from an epic-Ionic with a slight admixture of Doric in the *Epyllia* and in the *Encomia*⁴⁰ to a learned attempt to reproduce Sappho's and Alcaeus' Aeolic in *Idylls* 28, 29, 30 and 31,⁴¹ Theocritus' language, no matter what the dialect, is almost always made dynamic in a series of oppositions between Homerisms and rough Doric forms, high artificiality and colloquialisms, realism in some details and refusal of a consistent realistic poetics, personal tone and literary stimuli.

Homerisms in the *Epyllia* have hardly any significance from the standpoint of style, for in such a context they are the rule; but when Homerisms peep out in the Bucolic *Idylls* or in the Urban Mimes (and in this second case the disruption of the style is still more violent), then they become dissonant elements loaded with meaning. Furthermore they are usually handled with so great a freedom that they turn out to be vectors of opposite values depending on the context: from straightforward parody to a real wish for solemnity. Thus in *Idyll* 4 Homeric expressions are likely to have meanings quite opposite to one another depending on the character with which they are associated. At the end of the same idyll the Homeric introductory formula $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi' \acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon \mu', \hat{\omega}$ (v.58: cf. *Il.* 9.673, 10.544) serves the purpose of bringing up an obscene topic, so that the stylistic diagram of a line like *Idyll* 4.58 $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi' \acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon \mu', \hat{\omega} \text{ Κορύδων, τὸ γερόντιον ἦ ῥ' ἔτι μύλλει}$ would certainly not be a straight line but an alternating series of ups and downs, viz. a Homeric introductive formula+an affective diminutive of the type usual in the language of comedy+two Homeric particles+a verb

³⁹ The hypothesis of the scholia at *Id.* 12 states explicitly $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\rho\alpha\pi\tau\alpha\iota \delta\acute{\epsilon} \text{ 'I}\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota \text{ διαλέκτῳ}$: are we to think of a particular influence by Anacreon for this short pederotic poem? As for *Id.* 22, to take literally the $\kappa\omicron\upsilon\nu\eta \text{ 'I}\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota$ following the title in the mss implies the removal of not a few Doric forms supported by unanimous tradition: it cannot however be denied that among Theocritus' poems *Id.* 22 is the $\delta\omicron\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\kappa\acute{\omega}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$.

⁴⁰ It is rather difficult to account for the Doric admixture in the language of these poems: see however U. von Wilamowitz, *Isyllos von Epidauros* (Berlin 1896) 26ff.

⁴¹ Linguistically the Aeolic poems are the most uniform group among the *Idylls*; on Theocritus' position towards Sappho's and Alcaeus' Aeolic see Gow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) l.lxxvii ff.

with obscene meaning no doubt taken from everyday speech and exactly corresponding to Lucilius' *molere* (278 Marx). In this case the fluctuation of the style in a single line is localized on a small scale, but it may of course extend as far as the structure of the idyll as a whole; if it does so, *loci* where style rises alternate with other *loci* where style sinks.

Idyll 3 is perhaps the best example: it is a comical *paraclausithyron* which, by comparing the personal plight of the goatherd in love with mythical love stories of the past, is demonstrably akin to Latin love elegy, where we also meet with variability in the level of style as Tränkle's analysis of some elegies of Propertius' fourth book has shown.⁴² Among Theocritus' poems *Idyll 3* is one of the most elaborate in its structure. After the introduction (vv.1–5; the opening verses are cited as an example of ἀφέλεια by Hermogenes, *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* 2.3, in an interesting parallel between the style of Theocritus and that of Anacreon) there is an unusual change of setting with the beginning of the serenade proper, which unfolds in a series of triplets interrupted by one line uttered emotionally as an 'aside' (v.24). Line 24 divides the introductory part (vv.6–23: at v.22 Ἀμαρυλλί φίλα echoing v.6 ὦ χαρίεσσ' Ἀμαρυλλί announces the end of one section through a formal device somewhat affected by Theocritus) from the central and most passionate part (vv.25–39); vv.40–51 (the song) contain the mythological examples and have a peculiar point as the goatherd awkwardly selects stories of unhappy love; the conclusion, closely related to Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazousae* 962ff, is full of a despair that the reader cannot take too seriously (vv.52–54). The clear structural distinction between monologue and song determines in the short poem a tangible doubling of style: whereas in vv.40–51 Homerisms are very frequent (v.42 ὡς ἶδεν, ὡς ἐμάνη, ὡς ἐς βαθὺν ἄλατ' ἔρωτα: cf. *Il.* 14.294 ὡς δ' ἶδεν, ὡς μιν ἔρωσ πικινὰς φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν; v.44 ἐν ἀγκοῖναισι ἐκλίθη: cf. *Il.* 14.213 ἐν ἀγκοῖνῃσι ἰαύεις; v.45 περίφρονος Ἀλφειβοῖα: cf. e.g. *Od.* 16.435 περίφρον Πηνελόπεια; v.49 ὁ τὸν ἄτροπον ὕπνον ἰαύων: cf. *h. Ven.* 177 νήγρετον ὕπνον ἰαύεις), they do not appear elsewhere in

⁴² H. Tränkle, "Die Sprachkunst des Properz und die Tradition der lateinischen Dichtersprache," *Hermes Einzelschr.* 15 (1960) 172–83 (ch. 5, "Wechsel in der Stilhöhe"), where the variation of the level of style is investigated in *Elegies* 2.29A; 4.2; 4.5; 4.8. In particular Prop. 4.2, the elegy of Vertumnus, dealing with such a protean god, is an almost symbolic case. Something like that occurs in three of Catullus' *Carmina*, namely 63, 64 and 68, where features of everyday speech are brought near archaic language in order to achieve a stylistic pastiche with a particular wit of its own.

the poem: on the contrary, at v.12 we meet a *θᾶσαι μόν* exactly paralleled by Sophron fr.26 Kaibel, and at v.37 a future *ἰδησῶ* may be idiomatic Doric, wrongly censured by Cobet, *Variae lectiones* p.42. It is also worth noticing the significant contrast between the proper names which appear in vv.25–39 and are taken from the goatherd's ambience to convey an impression of immediate reality (v.26 the fisherman Olpis, v.31 the gleaner Agroio, v.35 Mermnon's slave) and the subsequent wide range of gorgeous mythical names in the lofty language of vv.40–51.

Sometimes conventional expressions of epic language are upset not by being varied in themselves but by being used without reference to their standard function. Thus at *Idyll* 7.139 the sentence *ἔχον πόνον* is connected with chirping cicadas, whereas in *Iliad* 15.416 the same expression appeared in the same metrical position referring to Hector's and Ajax's efforts during the battle around the ships. Still more striking is the following case: apart from *Iliad* 4.421, where there is no reference to a particular individual, in Homer *ταλασίφρων* is a constant epithet of Odysseus (used a dozen times), but *Idyll* 24.50 applies it to Amphitryon's slaves, *δμῶες ταλασίφρονες*. A reverse example, and the more significant because it is again an adjective in *ταλα-*, is *ταλαεργός*, used only of mules by Homer as well as by Hesiod (e.g. *Il.* 23.654; *Hes. Op.* 46); Theocritus saddles Heracles with it (*Id.* 13.19).

Frequent epicisms distinguish the language of *Idyll* 2 from the language of the other two Urban Mimes, *Idylls* 14 and 15. At the level of morphology there are in *Idyll* 2 many genitives in *-οιο*, datives in *-οις*, *-αις*, unaugmented past verbal forms, all of which are rigidly banned from *Idylls* 14 and 15. As for the vocabulary, we find furthermore *ἐνπλοκάμω Ἀριάδνας* (v.46) a slight variation on *καλλιπλοκάμω Ἀριάδνη* (*Il.* 18.592), an *epitheton ornans* in doubtful taste such as *μέλαν . . . αἶμα* (v.55: cf. *Il.* 10.298), an *εἰ δ' ἄγε* (v.95) unique in Theocritus which brings in Simaetha's intimate disclosure to her slave, finally a Delphis who is introduced *ἐπὶ χθονὸς ὄμματα πάξας* (v.112) quite like the thoughtful Odysseus of *Iliad* 3.217 (the only substitution is *ἐπὶ* for *κατά*). But the most shocking and out-of-tune epicism is a long periphrasis which fixes the time of appearance of an old gossip, who comes in to acquaint Simaetha with the treachery of her lover (vv.147f):

. . . ἀνίκα πέρ τε ποτ' ὠρανὸν ἔτραχον ἵπποι
'Αῶ τὰν ῥοδόεσσαν ἀπ' ὠκεανοῖο φέροισαι.

Legrand rightly pointed out the extreme impropriety of such an epic circumlocution,⁴³ and it would be necessary to agree with him were it not possible to quote a counter-example where there is quite the same impropriety but in the opposite sense. In the *Herakliskos* Teiresias' appearance is preceded by a periphrasis which seems as little suited to the imposing soothsayer as it would be well suited to the 'Celestina' of the *Pharmakeutriai*: *Idyll* 24.64 ὄρνιχες τρίτον ἄρτι τὸν ἔσχατον ὄρθρον ἄειδον. In both cases the stylistic pertinence of these two circumlocutions is likely to reside in their being inappropriate to their context.

In conclusion, Theocritus appears to be working in at least two different directions by using the same device: into the epic-Ionic with a slight admixture of Doric of the Epyllia, where he aims at getting the heroic saga into middle-class habits, he brings in, as a disruptive element, colloquialisms and realistic details; on the contrary in a Doric-written mime, which really works out a bourgeois theme just as *Idyll* 2 does, reality loses its contours by shading into a scene of enchantment and into a lyric monologue portrayed as a pathetic dialogue with Selene: the disruptive elements are in this case the epicisms. Only an inversion of ratios takes place, but the technique is still the same.

Lately a critic of the pastoral has asserted that the most prominent feature of the genre is a complete lack of unity and therefore "a loose combination of elements" not only in Theocritus but also in Virgil.⁴⁴ After Klingner's famous analysis of Virgil's first *Eclogue*, pointing out a fundamental poetic unity where ideal bucolic world and Roman historical reality blend perfectly together through a counterpointing tension between 'Heil' and 'Unheil',⁴⁵ I fail to understand how it is possible to accept Rosenmeyer's dismembering criticism. As for Theocritus, I am inclined to think that variation of the level of style, which appears not only in the pastoral but in almost every idyll, is one of the main agents of poetic unification. No doubt this constant fluctuation is something more than a simple tribute paid to the Hellen-

⁴³ Legrand, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.35) 363.

⁴⁴ T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1969) 47. To offer a full criticism of Rosenmeyer's view of pastoral is not my purpose; I can point out in passing, however, that Rosenmeyer contradicts himself seriously when he speaks later on of a "larger harmony" and of a "harmonizing force" in Virgil's second *Eclogue* (p.61).

⁴⁵ F. Klingner, "Virgils erste Ecloge," *Hermes* 62 (1927) 129-53, now mostly reprinted in Klingner, *Virgil, Bucolica Georgica Aeneis* (Zürich 1967) 22-33.

istic ideal of *ποικιλία*, for it is a matter not so much of *variatio* as of meaningful *oppositio* reflecting all the polarities of Theocritus' poetry and mediating them in the song. Finally the pastoral provides us with a significant symbol which could be regarded as a kind of critical myth in the study of the stylistic fluctuation in Theocritus' poetry. When Priapus faces the dying Daphnis and addresses him with obscenities while the mythical neatherd goes on keeping his pathetic silence (*Id.* 1.81ff), we are likely to be at the poetic barycenter of a genre whose great complexity and ambiguity consist in its combining of tragedy and satyr play, scurrilous obscenity and deep pathos, scientific nomenclature of flowers and pathetic fallacy, occasional realistic details and allusive sayings.

A conclusion in point could be a glance at Quintilian 10.1.55. The Latin rhetor has his judgement on Theocritus follow immediately that on Aratus. No explicit comparison between the two poets is made, yet it cannot be denied that Quintilian finds missing in Aratus precisely what most distinguishes the style of Theocritus: *Arati materia motu caret, ut in qua nulla varietas, nullus adfectus, nulla persona, nulla cuiusdam sit oratio . . . Admirabilis in suo genere Theocritus . . .*⁴⁶

THE CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES and
UNIVERSITÀ DI GENOVA
June, 1971

⁴⁶ This paper is an enlarged version of a seminar lecture given at the Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, D.C. in May 1971. I am grateful to my colleagues there for helpful suggestions, to Bernard M. W. Knox, and to Christian Wolff also for having kindly reviewed the English version.